Studies in Renaissance Literature

The Heroines of English Pastoral Romance

SUE P. STARKE

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THE HEROINES OF ENGLISH PASTORAL ROMANCE

The genre of pastoral romance flourished dramatically in Renaissance England between 1590 and 1650. One of its key elements is that it is the daughter, not the son, of the gentle family who increasingly becomes the subject of the romance's attempt to define and illustrate heroism. The pastoral heroine's task is paradoxical: to break out of her pastoral paradise in order to ensure its reconstitution. She is the princess, the shepherdess, the Lady, or the virtuous daughter who becomes a repository of honor and virtue in a changing society where traditional chivalric definitions of honor hold decreasing purchase.

This groundbreaking book examines the typical challenges faced by the pastoral romance heroine as she matures within the pastoral locus amoenus: the foundling dilemma; the loop-shaped quest: the rhetorical battle; the chastity threat; the reconciliation of beauty to virtue; and familial reunification. It illustrates how the allegorical, symbolic, and psychological characterizations of pastoral heroines in the works of Sidney, Spenser, Wroth, Fletcher, Milton, and Marvell anticipate developments in the representation of female subjectivities normally associated with the novel.

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ABBREVIATIONS

EIRC	Explorations in Renaissance Culture
ELH	English Literary History
ELR	English Literary Renaissance
RES	Review of English Studies
SEL	Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900

Chapter 1

THE PASTORAL ROMANCE HEROINE IN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

THE ROMANCE GENRE in the Renaissance is known for its mixed properties; its associations are both high and low, martial and erotic, masculine and feminine, humorous and heroic. This capacious form, however, has been considered the most important secular genre of the age.[1] The purpose of this study is to examine one key aspect of romance's efflorescence in Renaissance England: the enduring vitality of pastoral romance between 1590 and 1650. This strand of romance, influenced by a newly discovered appreciation for fifth-century Greek romances, was particularly well received in aristocratic and gently born circles, while versions of medieval chivalric narrative cycles remained more popular with middle-class readers.[2] Why was this so? In English Renaissance pastoral romance, I will argue, the preservation and well-being of the family come to depend upon the vital presence and moral authority of the virginal aristocratic daughter. Under her aegis, the attractive but potentially enervating *otium* of Italian Renaissance pastoral is transformed into a morally regenerative experience of productive retreat within the bosom of the gentle family. From Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* through Marvell's pastoral lyrics, we may see the early development of an ideal of aristocratic domesticity: the pastoral *locus amoenus* becomes the residence of a nuclear familial unit revolving around the daughter. The writers included in the study use their heroines' relationships to pastoral romance themes as indices of moral development, for herself and for her kin. Despite their formal differences, these works share two common traits: the centrality of pastoral in the construction of the text's social ethos, and the importance of the romance heroine as a reflection of the poet's pastoral vision.

The romance itself was associated with women in the English Renaissance,

1 Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, 7, notes that romance becomes "a way of thinking" in Elizabethan England. See Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 22–23 for a discussion of the mixed characteristics and fluid status of the genre.

2 See Lucas, *Writing for Women*, 48–49.

offering an appropriate means of transmitting pastoral values in a different generic context from that of traditional lyric. Of course, the vast majority of romances in this period, including pastoral romances, were written by men, with Lady Mary Wroth the notable exception. There has been some debate about the extent to which we may associate women readers with the rise of prose romance fictions; nevertheless, the courtly code of manners surrounding the introduction of such works to the reading public frequently invoked the importance of securing a favorable critical reaction from an imaginary feminine audience. Lyly, Richard, and Greene specifically addressed their prose romances to female readers, while Sidney famously dedicated his *Arcadia* to his sister.[3] There does seem to exist a cultural assumption that women would be particularly interested in pastoral fictions, even if they were not the only ones to read them. The idealized fictional pastoral community (often a metaphor for the courtly circle) is frequently presided over by gentle shepherdesses possessing an enviable social and moral authority. Pastoral romance certainly exaggerates the traditionally strong romance interest in feminine desire and agency. Helen Cooper has argued that English romance, in comparison with its Continental variants, has always been especially rich in representations of female subjectivity.[4] The latecoming pastoral variant applies the traditional pastoral habit of conversation and introspection to the recounting of erotic suffering in such a way that women readers might enjoy a more detailed evocation of feminine subjectivity than is characteristic of, say, epic. The narrative conflict is almost invariably between the demands of honor and the impulses of love.

The increased cultural consciousness of women's subjectivity, training, and social role in the Renaissance is reflected in representations of women in several genres. Discussions of subjectivity, for example, have focused primarily on drama.[5] Pastoral literature, perhaps because it seems to us extremely conventional and schematic, does not immediately spring to mind as a rich source of female characterization. However, as a principal genre of aristocratic entertainment during the Renaissance, it is a mode of expression of aristocratic values. Elizabeth I imparted to it a unique feminine stamp and significance in her manipulations of its symbolic potential. I wish to examine pastoral to see how, to borrow Karen Newman's phrase, the genre helps to "fashion femininity" at a time when femininity itself was beginning to be construed, at least at certain levels of society, as a product of training and artifice rather than instinct. The complex interactions between nature and culture which produce definitions of gender role find no more potentially revealing

3 See Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 9–12 for a discussion of this authorial convention.

4 Cooper, 19, 226; female desire is central to romance in a way untrue of epic or history.

5 For example, Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama*; Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy*; Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters*; Mary Beth Rose, *The Expense of Spirit*; Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance*.

site than in pastoral, a mode specifically concerned with the distinction between the innate and artificial in humankind. The femininity of pastoral, already inherent in the values it carries with it from the Middle Ages, becomes intensified in this cultural milieu by the influence of Elizabeth I, who understood the potential pastoral convention offered her in particular as a site for a new set of national myths.[6] Certainly her anomalous situation as a woman of authority upholding a patriarchal system prompted an examination into the workings of the paradox, a paradox reflected in the texts here. Elizabeth's political manipulation of pastoral convention, however, is not the only angle of the story; pastoral provided an ideal vehicle for an exploration of the politics of the family, and, particularly, the place of the daughter.

The pastoral romance that flourished in the Renaissance is a border region between genres. It combines the features of epic with the contrasting elements of pastoral. It mediates between the separate worlds of *otium* and *negotium*, nature and culture, solitude and society. Within that border region is where we can see the work in progress of building the barriers that isolate the woman in a private, domestic enclosure. There is, however, a dangerous freedom for the pastoral girl, a freedom that derives from her generic heritage. For she is the descendant of the knight errant of that other mutant genre, medieval romance, in one important respect: she bears the burden of the honor of her family and class. She embodies the contradictions of an emerging ideology of gender relations, an ideology which seeks to erase the public importance of the feminine even while it depends on feminine sexual purity as the basis of its inheritance laws.[7] During the Renaissance, the typical preoccupations of romance with honor and chastity increasingly revolve around the problem of defining heroism in a world with little scope for epic deeds. The decisive shift to pastoral that the romance underwent in the sixteenth century results in the domestication of romance notions of honor. It is increasingly the daughter rather than the son of an aristocratic family that is the subject of the romance's attempt to define and illustrate heroism.[8] In the texts I discuss, the definition of chastity is a crucial question. Female chastity is the foundation of the social order. It is figured simultaneously as public good and private virtue.

From its Hellenistic form onwards, the romance has been a family narrative, a myth of origins concerning a great dynasty the founder of whom embodies all that is best about the people he leads. The genre combines the familial with the political. The interest in adolescent feminine development in Elizabethan

6 See Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of shepheardes' and the Pastoral of Power" 166 for this aspect of Elizabeth's self-characterization.

7 See Roberta Hamilton, *The Liberation of Women: A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism*, especially 18–19 and 94–96.

8 Cooper (41) argues that by Spenser's time, the ideal of knighthood was already considered old-fashioned. In this period, there is a consequent separation of the idea of honor from the idea of chivalry, which, as I argue, opens a space for the replacement of the knight by the pastoral virgin as the romance exemplar of honor.

pastoral romance can be linked to an underlying cultural anxiety about chastity, patrilineal integrity, and gender identity shoring up the transmission of property and power. My interest in the socio-political role of the daughter in these romances owes much to Claude Lévi-Strauss's observations about the exchange of women among men as a means of encouraging exogamy and the subsequent growth of the tribe. For Lévi-Strauss, the appeal of the tie of alliance with other families through marriage owes not so much to an instinctual revulsion against inbreeding as to a conscious awareness of its civilizing promise: "it ensures the dominance of the social over the biological, and of the cultural over the natural."[9] Exogamous marriage is necessary because it confers greater social benefits than endogamous unions. Thus, even though she lacks independent power, the daughter has the ability either to confirm or to disrupt the orderly transfer of her family's wealth, health and reputation. Renaissance pastoral romance adds a further complication to this dilemma by positing the problem of the weak, yet potentially powerful daughter in the context of the crisis of patriarchalism which developed as the English Renaissance progressed from the ascension of a queen without a husband to the execution of the father of the country. The pastoral romance is a site in which the contradictions of patriarchalism, both political and familial, are displayed. For the daughter to fulfill her role, she must be taught virtue, a word which in its Latin antecedent means "manliness." Virtue, as Milton argues, cannot be acquired in a cloister. Thus the romance girl must be allowed her quest in order to attain a marriageable maturity. Family honor can only be maintained if the daughter's sexual honor is tested and vindicated. Romance narratives frequently summon up the spectre of the failure of chastity in order to underline the necessity of private female virtue to the public order.

This study considers the pastoral romance as a mode defined at least as much by theme and style as by form. This allows me to include prose romance, pastoral masque, and lyric in my analysis of the pastoral romance metaphors that assume the status of leitmotifs in English Renaissance literature. Paul Alpers has argued for a more restricted definition of pastoral that downplays the importance of such concepts as the Golden Age or beautiful landscapes in favor of the *sine qua non* of the shepherd's presence.[10] Although Sidney and Fletcher, for example, obligingly fit this definition of pastoral, some of the Marvell and Milton poems examined here do not. I nonetheless wish to persist in my concern for the pastoral elements that Alpers finds secondary, because I believe that within pastoral visions of the Golden Age or the *locus amoenus*, the question of humankind's place in nature is fully and profitably engaged. Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* accomplishes such an engagement, although its "shepherds" are only field workers. For a bit of Renaissance justification (or permission) for my broad working definition of pastoral romance, we

9 Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, 479–80.
10 Alpers, *What Is Pastoral?*, x.

might turn to no less an authority than Julius Caesar Scaliger: he uses subject, rather than form, as the chief criterion of "kind" or genre.[11] The "kind" of pastoral romance and its literary invocation via a set of topoi such as the *hortus conclusus*, the circular quest, and the importance of chastity are my concerns here, not simply works classified strictly as pastoral romance. The texts I examine, however, all share a pastoral romance *narrative* (using the term as Clare Kinney does in her discussion of the interrelations between poetry and narrative.)[12] Judith Haber has pointed out that the variety of pastoral forms in the Renaissance share a tendency toward narrative, even collections of eclogues; narrative is, of course, a structural requirement of romance.[13] Sidney's Arcadian romance came to exercise a powerful influence over subsequent incarnations of Renaissance pastoral, to the point where pastoral, love, and femininity cannot be disentangled, no matter how much a poet such as Marvell in "The Garden" might have wished it. What Rosalie Colie says of the sonnet as a Renaissance topos might equally be said about pastoral romance: it operates in Renaissance texts as a metaphorical gesture toward a set of distinct values or perceptions.[14] Those values and perceptions, particularly as they are revealed through the representations of femininity in pastoral, are the object of my inquiry.

Another way of understanding the meanings of pastoral romance during the English Renaissance is to regard the genre as comprising a set of memes. Helen Cooper has applied this grammatical term to literature by defining the meme as "an idea that behaves like a gene in its ability to replicate faithfully and abundantly, but also on occasion to adapt, mutate, and therefore survive in different forms. … These motifs and conventions grew up with the genre of which they formed a part and which they helped to define."[15] Cooper applies the term to her study of the development of romance in England from the medieval period to Shakespeare, focusing primarily on elements of plot and theme that survive and mutate throughout the long and fruitful history of insular chivalric narrative. I borrow Cooper's concept of the meme to follow the elements that I consider central to the presentation of the pastoral romance heroine. Although they are not found in every example discussed here, a general pattern emerges. Some of these memes are traditional to chivalric romance, while others are associated with pastoral. They are: the romance foundling;

11 Colie points out that Scaliger's understanding of "kind" or genre is similar to our modern understanding of mode in *The Resources of Kind*, 28.

12 Clare Regan Kinney in *Strategies of Poetic Narrative: Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Eliot* argues that poetry and narrative are not mutually exclusive. For example, she points out that "allusive and dialogic" prose fiction (like Sidney's *Arcadia,* surely) are often "described in terms of the generic categories (such as epic and romance) we more usually associate with poetic narratives, as if their very intertextuality and heteromodality 'poeticize' them" (14).

13 Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction*, 53.

14 Colie, *Resources of Kind*, 107.

15 Cooper, 3.

her loop-shaped quest through the *locus amoenus*; the rhetorical challenge; the threat to chastity; the reconciliation of beauty to virtue via Neoplatonic ideas; and the alienation/reunification of the foundling with her father.

THE PASTORAL HEROINE AND HER SETTING: THE *LOCUS AMOENUS*

The classic division between *otium* and *negotium* in pastoral, between the contemplative leisure of the shepherd and the active striving of the hero, is complicated from the perspective of the female pastoral inhabitant. For if love is leisure for the male truant in the pastoral, it is the work of the marriageable virgin; his *otium* is her *negotium*. What occurs is an interesting revision of the function of love in the pastoral romance. The exclusion of history and erotic consequences from pastoral, among other things, constitutes a "poetics of autonomy" for the male poet.[16] Does it do so for the female protagonist? Is pastoral a paradise or a prison, and what attitude did the poets of the Renaissance take towards the notion of the pastoral as an escape from history and the demands of human relationships? The young woman in pastoral is often conceived as the custodian of the Edenic green world from which, through the transgressions of her ancestress, mankind was expelled. One purpose of this study is to examine ways in which several Renaissance texts illustrate her role in the maintenance and recreation of that green world as it increasingly is envisioned as a "domestic heaven."[17]

In these texts pastoral is a discourse by which the figure of the romance virgin is interpellated or constructed. Yet there is always the possibility of a space outside pastoral in which she has a rhetorical or poetic agency that her pastoral world does not encompass. This space outside, whether it is Maria Fairfax's platonizing gaze, the Lady's independent rhetorical power, Clorin's healing powers or Pamela's self-consciously ironic representation of the pastoral conventions that bind her, offers her the opportunity to test and vindicate her virtue with the awareness and risk Milton deemed essential for true wayfaring Christians. In all four cases, the space outside pastoral points to the artificiality of the constructed *locus amoenus* and all its social relations. The *locus* is a protected area of aristocratic play. The romance virgin's responsibility for occupying and maintaining that preserve reflects back upon the defensive self-definition of the gentle family during the seventy-odd years from Elizabeth's reign to the fall of the monarchy.

Renaissance ideology concerning the place of women dictates immobility, inaccessibility, and isolation from public affairs. An important part of the cultural work of Renaissance pastoral, however, is to show how the gentle-

16 Quint, *Origin and Originality in the Renaissance*, 47.
17 The phrase is from Marvell's *Upon Appleton House.*

woman is often responsible for maintaining the conditions of her own privileged seclusion. The *hortus conclusus*, or closed garden, becomes analogous to the cultivated soul, while its unbreached walls suggest bodily purity:

> A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
> A garden locked, a fountain sealed.[18]

Spatially, as a site, and emblematically, as a symbol, the *hortus conclusus* and its pastoral equivalent, the *locus amoenus*, contrast with the experience of the linear quest. The two images, line and circular enclosure, can be reconciled in pastoral romance by imagining the construction of the enclosing wall as a *circular* quest to be undertaken by the pastoral heroine. Movements out of and back into pastoral enclosure characterize the romance progress of Sidney's princesses, Wroth's heroines, Milton's Lady, and Marvell's Mary Fairfax, among others. In pastoral romance texts, the gentle family occupies a garden identified as a private and restricted site of feminine activity. The naturalization of the domestic space as a pastoral *hortus* or *locus amoenus* is a way of making legitimate the societal position of woman by describing it as an unchangeable aspect of God's universe. The world outside the garden can be described in generic terms as the arena for epic, that is, for masculine action and achievement in war and politics. In between the enclosures of the nursery and the enclosures of marriage, the heroine must make a loop out into the world that represents virtually the only chance for engagement (of the non-marital kind) she will get. The loop must hold; her adventures must not damage her "virgin knot," even though the plot interest is often derived largely from threats to her chastity. She strengthens her virtue through engagement with the world; if the threats and temptations of her circular quest are successfully negotiated, she marries an appropriate mate. If the loop breaks, on the other hand – if her chastity is damaged - her social value is destroyed. The pastoral romance provides multiple examples of such risky rites of passage for the female adolescent.

THE ROMANCE QUEST AS PASTORAL LOOP

The medieval romance focuses on a quest that typically brings the hero out of his accustomed world and into a savage, wild, and threatening one. The Renaissance pastoral romance, by contrast, brings its characters into a beautiful retreat distinguished from the workaday world by its pleasantness and ease. The pastoral environment is a static, satisfied one. It does not encourage linear quest. What occurs instead of the journey outside to the strange world is a journey inside the self. Newcomers to the pastoral retreat find themselves transformed, often in ways they are not willing to be (consider Sidney's

[18] Song of Solomon 4:13.

erring heroes, Pyrocles and Musidorus). The medieval romance quest tends to strengthen the integrity of the hero's identity; the Renaissance romance retreat fractures that integrity, in ways social and sexual. The prevalence of pastoral in Renaissance romance and the increasing incidence of female protagonists are integrally related. The solitary quest of the medieval knight is a masculine endeavor, in most cases; the women wait at home. The pastoral retreat of Renaissance romance, by contrast, becomes the environment for the new type of romance protagonist, the marriageable daughter, to enact her new kind of circular quest. Embowered spaces and domestic configurations dominate the English pastoral romance, replacing both the solitary linear quest and the anti-domestic camaraderie of men-at-arms typical of old romance.[19]

The introduction of romance elements into pastoral allows for a new brand of feminine heroism. Harry Berger Jr. has commented that the world of pastoral is in fact a kind of "Young Men's Pastoral Association"; women appear there "as Idea, Grace, Goddess, Muse, fairy, Queen, tormenter, victim, trophy, or commodity, but not as a person."[20] However much this assessment may be true of some English pastoral, it is not fair to the pastoral *locus amoenus* of the Renaissance romance. Embowered nature is indeed associated with femininity; but the romance girl's progress is often contingent upon her artificial placement in the pastoral matrix, an environment that is simultaneously beneficial and restrictive. The pastoral realm is a place where she enacts the struggle to develop a heroic morality and yet be recontained in marriage. Desire, either her own or others', forces action. Love remains the primary transformative experience promised for the romance virgin, not the epic feats which enable the young male pastoralist to transcend his initial attempts. For the romance virgin, love cannot be displaced into another arena; it is the only form of trial. Particularly in the case of Sidney's two princesses, the insularity and self-referentiality of the pastoral world serve to point up the drama of the internal transformation taking place in the feminine soul. Whatever her situation, the pastoral girl finds herself within a morally charged landscape that is responsive, for better or worse, to her animating influence.[21]

The presence of nature underscores her alienation from it as her Edenic innocence gives way to an awareness of the social implications of her sexuality. Traditionally, the pastoral mode represents a kind of poetic adolescence for the young male poet/shepherd; he hones his singing skills before progressing to the harder and more mature work of georgic and, ultimately, epic. One accomplishment of Renaissance romance is to expand the poetic significance of pastoral to include the concept of the artistic girl, the daughter who tests

19 Lucas (6) describes the change in romance paradigms as a shift in focus from the heroic man and his chivalric adventures to female-focused stories of love and friendship.

20 Berger, "Orpheus, Pan , and the Poetics of Misogyny: Spenser's Critique of Pastoral Love and Art", 46.

21 Chambers, "'To the Abyss'", 153, notes the key role of the "morally potent" landscape in two texts I discuss in this study, Milton's *A Mask at Ludlow* and Marvell's *Upon Appleton House.*

her rhetorical skills in the probationary environment of the pastoral *locus amoenus*. The key difference, of course, is that she will never be able to progress beyond pastoral; the scope of her life is confined to domestic heroics alone. If one imagines the pastoral realm as a kind of literary womb, male poets are carried to full term and emerge into different poetic identities, but the young women occupying the same gestationary space must emerge from it only to return like Jonson's brave infant of Saguntum. This study examines the implications of the romance heroine's circular pastoral career for representations of her maturation.

THE FOUNDLING AND HER FATHER

The chastity dilemma of the English pastoral romance heroine receives unusually detailed and sophisticated attention in pastoral romance. On her virtue, embattled from within and without, increasingly depend the futures of the gentle girl's family and even of her society. Her position within her family is a complex one: under the system of primogeniture she is not the heir, but she is nevertheless the fragile vessel of aristocratic blood purity. Lynda Boose has identified the anomaly of the daughter's absent/present position in the western myth of family as follows:

> In a peculiar way, the daughter inherits nothing from either father or mother. She essentially lacks parentage and is almost by definition illegitimate. Unlike the son, she is a temporary sojourner within her family, destined to seek legitimation and name outside its boundaries.[22]

Applying Boose's insight to romance narratives, one may see how the daughter becomes a romance foundling of the type identified by Northrop Frye and analyzed by Michael McKeon. Marriage may not be the last adventure open to the cowardly, as Voltaire would have it, but it is the only adventure available to the female protagonist of romance. Marriage turns Boose's temporary sojourner into a heroine with an established social identity. In the history of genres, the pastoral romance mediates between the male-centered medieval quest romance and the modern female-centered bourgeois marriage romance: the pastoral virgin is special because she is an aristocrat, but, because she is female, she is (in Boose's terms) a structurally illegitimate representative of her family. Her progress becomes an example of the absent/present potential of the aristocratic virgin in an age where patriarchalism was on its last legs as an openly acknowledged and accepted theory of political and familial govern-

[22] Boose, "The Father's House and the Daughter in It: The Structures of Western Culture's Daughter-Father Relationship", 21.

ance.[23] (Note that when the term "patriarchy" is used, it is meant to indicate a system of legal and social organization historically specific to the Renaissance.) The texts that constitute my primary focus pose the problem of paternal absence, either physical or functional. Western culture, Boose argues, positions the father as the present center of the family.[24] Yet in the set of courtly pastorals I discuss here, the situation of the romance virgin is created by paternal absence or deficiency. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, Basilius has absented himself from his legitimate function as ruler, and his political truancy is mirrored in the collapse of his authority over his family. Wroth's titular heroine Urania is a typical romance foundling, as is Spenser's Pastorella in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene*. In *A Mask*, the central narrative problem is formed by the obstacles preventing the Earl of Bridgewater's children from being reunited with him. Milton's Eve can be considered a lost daughter who forgets her duty and identity. In *Upon Appleton House*, Maria Fairfax's privileged position is only a result of her father's failure to reproduce himself in a male heir. In short, all of these family pastorals put the daughter in the place of the father: as the present center of the aristocratic family.

In keeping with her active role in Renaissance pastoral, the noble virgin is more a representative of the shaping forces of culture than an extension of the powers of nature. It is true that Renaissance pastoral frequently contains images that associate the virginal heroine with nature; however, these images contradict her actual role in the narrative. Natural imagery belies her status as mediator between nature and culture in the *locus amoenus*; she is an agent of civil development and temporal progress. Although she acts within the realm of the family, a "natural" construct, the family itself is imagined as a political and social phenomenon. Her choices and conduct make possible the epic attainment of men, be they family members or suitors. Because her sex limits her scope of action, she turns to the realm of language to make a difference. Love feminizes princes but enables girls to act like men, if only temporarily. Love is the arena, words the weapons for their "epic" achievements. The pastoral definition of love as an artistic career allows the romance virgin to be a poet figure, a vital link between "rudenesse" and civility. The development of the heroine in the Renaissance pastoral romance in turn helps reconfigure the genre itself.

[23] Schochet in *Patriarchalism in Political Thought* points out that detailed articulation of the ideology of patriarchalism took place only as it was dying (57).

[24] Boose 20: "To consider the father and the daughter in relationship means juxtaposing the two figures most asymmetrically proportioned in terms of gender, age, authority and cultural privilege. Each of these asymmetrics is controlled by the idiom of presence, which defines the father, or absence, which defines the daughter."

CHASTITY IN PASTORAL ROMANCE

Elizabethan and Stuart pastorals occupy a transitional position between what Renato Poggioli identified as the bucolic Italian strain, preoccupied with love and sexual passion, and the modern "pastoral of the self" in which all love is repudiated save for the self.[25] Sidney, who made Italian pastoral romance popular in England, stands at the beginning of this transition, while Marvell, the poet whom Poggioli identifies as the Renaissance precursor of Rousseau's pastoral self-absorption, stands at its end.[26] Poggioli's model assumes that pastoral is about man's, rather than woman's, relationship to nature, although the example he chooses to define the shift to "pastoral of the self" is the episode from *Don Quixote* involving the shepherdess Marcela.

The girl, a wealthy orphan, flees society and the oppressive courtship of young Grisóstomo in order to live as a shepherdess in the woods, a position offering her freedom from social restraints and emotional obligations. When Gristóstomo dies (as Poggioli points out, his suicide is implied if not baldly narrated), Marcela is blamed for his death. She breaks her self-imposed pastoral isolation long enough to make a surprise appearance at his funeral, not so much to grieve for the young man as to justify her choice of life. Poggioli notes how she defends her freedom in pastoral terms:

> The trees on these mountains are my companions, the clear water of these streams my mirrors; to the trees and the waters I disclose my thoughts and my beauty. … Only the earth would enjoy the fruit of my chastity and the spoils of my beauty.[27]

While Poggioli stresses that communion with nature is the only sort of relationship Marcela will admit in her life, it is also important that she describes nature as a lover, a successful rival to Gristóstomo for her affections. Her relationship with nature is described as an erotic one, an improvement over what mortal man has to offer (in this her argument for chastity resembles that of Marvell's "subtle nuns" in *Upon Appleton House*). For Poggioli, the episode illustrates a shift from the Italian pastoral, which celebrates passion and imagines the *locus amoenus* as a place for free love, to a version of pastoral in which chastity, purity and freedom from love are defined as the highest pastoral values.[28] We

25 Poggioli, "The Pastoral of the Self", 686.

26 Poggioli makes an important distinction between the classical "pastoral of solitude," in which love of woman is rejected out of "disappointed hedonism," and the modern "pastoral of the self," in which all human relations are rejected in favor of a complete turning inward, "an extreme and absolute narcissism", 699.

27 Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, ch. 14, tr. J.M. Cohen (Penguin ed.), rpt. in Poggioli, 691. The phrase "el fruto de mi recogimiento," which Cohen translates as "the fruit of my chastity," can also be translated "the fruits of my retreat or solitude." The connotations of "recogimiento," then, include the notion of chastity as a type of self-enclosure.

28 Poggioli, 692. Also see John Rogers, who argues that the discourse of virginity in seventeenth-

may see this revaluation most fully expressed in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* (an "Englishing" of Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*) and in Milton's Ludlow masque. Cervantes' Marcela uses the language of eroticism to argue for her right to freedom from it. But it is the redirection of her erotic drives, not their absence, that is portrayed as the true threat to her community.

The life of pastoral contemplation that Marcela embraces is thus described as an erotic relationship without reference to norms and institutions, most notably marriage, that delineate and control female sexuality in socially useful ways. Although she argues that her solitary way of life is beyond reproach, Marcela actually revels in a kind of unmediated, whole-body sexuality in which nature itself continually enjoys the "fruits of [her] chastity." One important pastoral paradigm, the solitary contemplation of nature, has traditionally carried with it an association of asceticism; the retirement from the social world in face of disillusionment or erotic disappointment is a retirement, too, from the urges of the body. Even the nostalgia for free love in Golden Age pastorals exists in a social context; solitude and love do not agree. The ancient concept of a fundamental choice to be made between the active life and the contemplative life sees the latter as a form of discipline for the male chooser; the roils and toils of the active life keep the man from focusing on the finer aspects of his being, those which link him to the divine. All these associations, however, are challenged when the gender of the pastoralist changes. For Marcela, to elect the contemplative life is to fall from discipline into looseness. Her community cannot imagine that she could improve herself spiritually this way. They assume that she can only devolve into a mere creature of nature, not evolve toward a greater understanding of the divine. Indeed, her rhetoric, in which she asserts a rapturous self-identification with nature, might seem to support that assumption. The solitary experience of man in nature often serves to underscore what is human, over and against what is animal, in the man. The solitary experience of woman in nature, however, is a dangerous opportunity for the "natural" woman to revert back to her original state without the civilizing forces of society to restrain and cultivate her. The only bar to this eventuality is something the community has no ability to influence or evaluate: the woman's internal sense of honor.

Cervantes' Marcela has something in common with Sidney's Pamela, Wroth's pastoral heroines, Milton's Lady, and Maria Fairfax, for in Poggioli's words, her "honor is no longer a social tie controlling moral conduct from outside, but an inner power ruled by no other law than itself;" she is free to use nature as "a mirror for her own soul."[29] Marcela's decisions, however, cast her out of human society in a way no male pastoralist would have to endure. It is a measure of Don Quixote's madness that he champions her, for she

century England used the figure of the virginal female as the embodiment of "the private realm itself" ("The Enclosure of Virginity", 238).

29 Poggioli, 692–3.

has brought down the weight of the community's moral condemnation on her head for her behavior. By declining to participate in the entire system of courtship and matrimony, she has not upheld her responsibilities to her small society. It is hard to imagine that the frustrated hedonist, exemplified by, say, Colin Clout in the *Shepheardes Calender*, would incur the community disapproval that Marcela does when he behaves in exactly the same way. By changing the expected sex of the pastoralist, Cervantes draws our attention to the fundamental narcissism of the pastoral retreat. Because Marcela was obviously expected to accede to Gristóstomo's importunities, her refusal to do so emphasizes her selfishness. Cervantes employs a female character in order to critique the veiled narcissism of the erotic idyll, which, as Poggioli points out, is only a "masculine dream."[30] Furthermore, Marcela the gentle shepherdess and Quixote the knight errant are two of a kind, both taking romance conventions seriously enough to embody them. Neither can live in the world as it is.

Cervantes' use of a female pastoralist to question some of the basic assumptions of the pastoral mode is a strategy anticipated by Sidney and developed by other English writers. Marvell's case is particularly interesting because, as others besides Poggioli have noticed, he seems to employ pastoral as an escape from the corrupting principle of femininity. Certainly the absence of love, rather than its flourishing, is the *sine qua non* of paradise in "The Garden." I wish to extend Poggioli's analysis of the changing role of love and passion in pastoral by suggesting that it is the values attached to the feminine principle itself that are at least partially responsible for the shift from the pastoral of love to the pastoral of the self. The change in the notion of honor that Poggioli finds so tellingly illustrated in Cervantes' Marcela is at the heart of the problem that Sidney, Milton and Marvell all in their turn must address in their pastoral fictions: how can a sense of honor defined internally be reconciled to the welfare of the society in which one lives? Since circumstances combined to associate the pastoral with the feminine more firmly in England perhaps than in other European Renaissance literatures, each of these writers saw fit to employ female characters as vehicles for examining the problematic relationship between an autonomous sense of honor and the demands of the world at large. Each rings the changes on the double meaning of "honor" as moral integrity and sexual virginity; each manipulates in fiction the unique feminine dilemma that full participation in society depends on surrendering the very thing that gives one potential value. Each expresses the ambivalent conflict between innocence and experience as an attempt to recover a balance between individualistic purity that shades into narcissism and social cooperation that shades into corruption, and each elects to express this effort via the narrative device of the feminine chastity dilemma.

The meaning of honor itself underwent a great shift during the early modern period. At the outset, honor was an aristocratic concept; in Michael

[30] Poggioli, 692.

McKeon's definition, "a unity of outward circumstance and inward essence" which reflected an implied analogy between the social order and the moral order.[31] By the end of the seventeenth century, however, this unity had been fractured, and ideas of honor had been severed from social rank and indeed placed in opposition to it.[32] Accompanying this change was a revaluation of honor as a feminine attribute:

> … as the progressive critique forces the detachment of "honor as virtue" from male aristocratic honor, it simultaneously encourages its relocation within not only commoners but women, who increasingly come to be viewed not just as the conduit but as the repository of an honor that has been alienated from a corrupt male aristocracy. … In associating female virtue with chastity, the eighteenth century is commonly thought to mark a low point of careless patriarchal cynicism. But it may be more accurate to see that association in the context of the progressive critique of patrilineal honor, a critique in which women, besieged by discredited aristocratic honor, come to embody the locus and refuge of honor as virtue.[33]

Renaissance pastoral romance is a midpoint in the process McKeon outlines. It engages the definition of feminine honor as virtue, but the division between honor and rank is not yet completely accomplished. The women in question are aristocrats themselves, and their virtue is a compelling argument for the superiority of their caste. The pastoral romance narratives they inhabit show that the identification of honor and sexual virtue developed by the progressive critique of aristocratic ideology can also be used in the *service* of aristocratic ideology, albeit a reformed one. The sexualization of honor, however, is already implicit in the importance of chastity in all the narratives. The changing function – indeed, the keenly felt decline – of the aristocracy under the Tudors and early Stuarts provided an environment in which the treatment of honor that McKeon associates with a later progressive critique could take hold within a context of hopes of aristocratic reformation and renewal, although this effort was a rearguard action. The gentlewoman is portrayed in pastoral romance as having a greater share of aristocratic honor than her simple instrumental value as conduit of property might suggest. Milton and Marvell especially insist on the intrinsic spiritual value of chastity, allied with but fundamentally separate from questions of family reputation, identity and continuation. The portrayal of the virtuous heroine in pastoral romance is an example of how conservative literary forms may contain their own progressive potential.

31 McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*, 131.
32 McKeon, *Origins*, 155–158.
33 McKeon, *Origins*, 158.

THE RHETORICAL CHALLENGE

Pastoral was identified, along with romance, as a specifically feminine genre in the Renaissance. "E.K.," in his Epistle Dedicatory to Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, makes a revealing description of the work to Gabriel Harvey: the effort is "the maydenhead of this our commen frends Poetrie."[34] In E.K.'s analogy, the pastoral poetic corpus is a female one. Pastoral represents that body's virgin state, untried and intact. Thus the poetic neophyte and the sexual innocent become one and the same. Pastoral is associated with poetic chastity, a point that takes us back to the importance of female chastity as a defining value in the pastoral romances discussed here. E.K.'s metaphor implies that greater art in poetry accompanies greater sexual knowledge, a dilemma confronted again and again by the female protagonists of the pastoral romance. At what point does the development of artistic consciousness constitute the breaking of the "maydenhead"? The young woman cannot leave the pastoral realm without damaging her own pastoral virginity. On the other hand, she cannot mature without testing her skill beyond the pastoral poetic conventions which structure her inscription. She therefore performs a delicate balancing act between perfecting her linguistic skill and throwing herself out of the Eden outside of which there is no place, no *locus*.

The Renaissance pastoral virgin has a special and ambivalent association with speech. She is often a remarkably skilled rhetorician, not only as a figure in an elaborate artful fiction but also in relation to other figures in the same fiction.[35] The romance heroines of Shakespeare are good examples of this characteristic: Rosalind, whose mastery of the conventions of courtship talk outdoes Orlando's; Marina, who seduces a would-be rapist to the cause of virtue by her eloquence; and Miranda, who helps to teach the savage Caliban to speak and thus unwittingly encourages his feeling of sexual entitlement to her. The romance virgin's power of speech is conceived as sexually potent. Her capacity for artful speaking, perhaps imaginable only in the context of increased humanistic education for well-born girls in the sixteenth century, is shown both to protect and endanger her virtue. The pervasive Renaissance injunction to women to remain silent expressed a metaphorical understanding that, in Karen Newman's words, "an open mouth and immodest speech are tantamount to open genitals and immodest acts."[36] Yet speech is necessary for any participation in social life. If the romance virgin is to play a social role, she *must* speak.[37] A significant risk in the perilous loop of freedom for romance

34 Rpt. in Loughrey, 32.

35 Lucas notes the probable appeal to Renaissance women readers of the typical rhetorical gifts of the romance heroine in "a space where women can argue on the same terms as men, in which their powers of speech and rhetoric equal, if not surpass, those of men …" (39).

36 Newman, *Fashioning Femininity*, 11.

37 Speech is a precondition for social relations. In Milton's *Mask*, the Lady ultimately takes refuge in silence. The power she has that extends beyond speech is essentially anti-social and

girls is the possibility that the well-managed speech will lose control of itself. If Pamela, for example, loses her debate with Cecropia, she also loses her body to Cecropia's son Amphialus. The pastoral heroine achieves a mastery of language that not only illustrates but helps to construct her spiritual superiority.

Language in these cases is a shield and a weapon against disgrace and loss of virtue. In this sense, these particular romance virgins, as fictionalized representations of the aristocratic girl, show themselves to be members of the ruling class where courtly talk plays a major role in creating a socially appropriate persona. Castiglione, in *The Courtier*, describes the role of language in the presentation of the gentlewoman:

> I say that for her that liveth in Court, me thinke there belongeth unto her above all other things, a certaine sweetenesse in language that may delite, wherby she may gently entertain all kinde of men with talke worthie the hearing and honest, and applyed to the time and place, and to the degree of the person she communeth withal … and therefore muste she keepe a certaine meane verie hard, and (in a manner) derived of contrary matters, and come just to certaine limittes, but not to passe them.[38]

She is to be a virtuoso of controlled speech, constantly aware of the strictures of decorum in the poetic sense. The Renaissance archetype of the loose-mouthed woman whose talk gets away from her, whose speech is like Penelope's web in its failure to achieve linear coherence or closure, may carry class associations: the garrulous Mistress Quickly could never be confused with, say, Rosalind, despite the latter's joking reference to her own feminine volubility.[39] Courtship, in all senses of the word, is comprised of linguistic acts. The pastoral gentlewoman must therefore be, to use Lévi-Strauss's terms, not only a sign in the context of Berger's "YMPA" (Young Men's Pastoral Association), also but a generator of signs.[40]

Even while standards of education for the Renaissance gentlewoman grew, her instruction in rhetoric was controversial, for rhetoric is defined as public speaking in the service of arguing a case. As Patricia Parker notes, the public

out of this world. By having the Lady abandon language, Milton points to the limitations of a purely social understanding of virtue.

38 Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 190–91.

39 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 27–8 discusses Renaissance imaginings of the "Penelope's web" of female speech. She cites both Rosalind and Sidney's Mopsa, whose "heaven'ly wide" mouth never stops issuing inanities. However, Rosalind's ironic self-consciousness in her remark about her running tongue sets her apart from lower-class examples of jabbering women. Her speech is clearly of a different nature than theirs. Also see Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 15.

40 "Woman could never become just a sign and nothing more, since even in a man's world she is still a person, and since in so far as she is defined as a sign she must be recognized as a generator of signs … [Each] woman preserves a particular value arising from her talent, before and after marriage, for taking her part in a duet" (Lévi-Strauss, 496). Note that in Lévi-Strauss's formulation feminine speech, in contrast to masculine speech, lacks value as a solo.

nature of rhetoric disqualified women from practicing it: the skillful employment of "commonplaces" was for men, but private places were a woman's appropriate sphere.[41] However, the pastoral virgins Pamela and Milton's Lady find themselves employing rhetoric precisely in the service of arguing a case: the case for sexual virtue. They use a public means of persuasion, a masculine skill, in order to defend private and feminine values. Thus they challenge and confuse the boundary between the public and private spheres upon which the traditional definition of rhetoric as public speech rests. By doing so they arrogate the power of rhetoric for themselves. The concept of private rhetoric seems oxymoronic, but the method of these pastoral romance heroines argues for the emergence of such a category of speaking, perhaps in relation to parallel trends in the position of women in the family. Although the development of the patriarchal nuclear family is usually seen as contributing to the sense of an absolute split between public and private, masculine and feminine spheres, on the level of the aristocracy these associations would have been complicated because of the difference from the lower social strata in the nature and definition of aristocratic work. Aristocratic women, as members of the class that displays itself, were in the public eye in a way that the middle-class woman was not. The public/private distinction upon which rests not only the definition of rhetoric, but also of feminine virtue itself, becomes increasingly hard to sustain when applied to women of the landed classes. The difference between the Renaissance theory of feminine behavior and its practice had, at the level of the aristocracy, its own contradictory manifestations, of which the representation of private rhetoric is one.

The pastoral virgin needs to disregard the injunction to be silent. Patricia Parker's identification of "dilation" as an indispensable transhistorical element of romance texts is relevant to my metaphor of the loop as the pattern for the quest of the pastoral romance virgin.[42] One of the tropic resonances of dilation as a broadening or opening up in the Renaissance concerns pregnancy and birth: Parker connects the Biblical injunction "increase and multiply" with the rhetorical tradition of *dilatatio*, a tradition she claims is identified with "the pregnant female body, promising even as it contains and postpones the appearance of an 'issue'."[43] In this context *rhetorical* virginity is a form of "premature closure," a danger to be avoided. The paradox of the pastoral virgin's rhetorical eloquence is the need to surrender rhetorical virginity in order to maintain bodily virginity. Her oratorical productivity corresponds to and foreshadows her physical fecundity within the bounds of sanctioned marriage at a later place and time. She creates, through dilation (or by being

41 See Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 104–5 for a discussion of the figurative conflict between public rhetoric and the private space or enclosure of the "household." Parker links the language of the *hortus conclusus* to the "privatization of the nascent bourgeois family."

42 See Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*; also, see her *Literary Fat Ladies*, 15 for examples of the trope of dilation in Renaissance discourse.

43 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 15.

dilatory, as in the case of Pamela or Milton's Lady), the space in which to fulfill a postponed erotic destiny that cannot be rushed without disaster. Sidney's Pamela of the revised *Arcadia* illustrates especially well, in her debate with Cecropia, how to create such a space through rhetoric. Productive virginity, then, requires the ability to sustain a figurative pregnancy of understanding that allows the romance virgin to employ rhetoric as a weapon against vice. Productive virginity is a rhetorical conceit; it not only permits, but *requires* a girl to speak. Within pastoral romance, virginity becomes linked to the generation of speech rather than its repression.

The relative values of poetry and oratory have been identified by Daniel Javitch as being linked, respectively, to courtly and humanist values. The flowering of English poetry in the late sixteenth century was linked to its greater appropriateness to courts than the ideals of classical oratory propagated by the humanists earlier in the century. A language of indirection, allusion and veiling (to use Puttenham's metaphor), poetry mimicked the verbal strategies of the courtier, for whom pleasing and negotiating were more vital than teaching and persuading. Thus, in Javitch's scheme, the values of poetry are opposed to the values of oratory. In phrases echoing Puttenham's, he finds the pastoral itself a paradigmatic courtly genre because

> its deceptions are peculiarly similar to the courtier's. The latter … arouses particular pleasure when his actions imply their opposite, when calculated artifice is made to seem natural, the difficult easy, the complex simple, and so on. Pastoral poetry assumes similar disguises: it veils sophisticated and complex meanings under its cloak of simplicity; it claims to praise natural things while it is designed according to the most artificial conventions; in general, it pretends to be very rustic when, in fact, it is most civilized.[44]

As for the courtier, so for the gentlewoman. The rise of "art" pastoral in English is deeply associated with a courtly milieu in which the "feminine" strategies of indirectness, allusion and false simplicity were an essential aspect of career survival, for the ruler and the ruled. Under the patronage of Elizabeth in particular, poetry dethroned oratory as the privileged category of courtly public language. The humanist proscription of women from oratory on the grounds that women should not take part in public affairs was not relevant to the courtly world in which poetry, not oratory, provided the rhetorical model.[45] The queen herself, as has been widely noted, manipulated the conventions of pastoral to great effect: her public image as the embodiment of pastoral femininity in all its variations was a great poetic act.[46] The presentation of femininity

44 Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England*, 80.

45 Although Castiglione's humanist text *The Book of the Courtier* involves a woman, Lady Emilia, who sets the terms of the debate over the ideal gentleman, the setting within the palace of Urbino is convivial and private, suggesting friends who are "sitting around talking." The public, formal, deliberative aspect of oratory, in the strict sense, is absent.

46 See Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of shepheardes,' and the Pastoral of Power", 153–182.

in a pastoral context frees it from the constraints of humanist assumptions about the role of women. Indeed, in a curious and paradoxical way, Renaissance pastoral texts often provide a stage in which female figures can speak, without loss of decorum, as orators. The pastoral romance virgin is usually granted, in the course of the narrative, a rhetorical set piece or speech in which she behaves as the spokesman (or, in the case of Maria Fairfax, the representative) for a stern humanist ideal of virtue rather than a courtly one (this is particularly true of the Lady, although Pamela also does so.) She employs the rhetoric of logic and clarity, that it to say humanist rhetoric, instead of the poetic rhetoric of indirectness. This she does at the time in which her private virtue is in great peril. It is as if, faced with ruin, she must "go public" in the mode of her address in order to preserve the privacy of her body. In her clear and uncompromising defense of virtue, the virgin in pastoral romance speaks as a humanist orator, not as a courtly ornament.

BEAUTY AND VIRTUE

A further aspect of the pastoral romance heroine's role as the "humanist conscience"[47] of the courtly pastoral is her ability simultaneously to embody and discipline the courtly admiration of beauty as an end in itself. Sidney's Pamela defines beauty dismissively as an "outward gloss, ... a pleasant mixture of natural colors, delightful to the eye as music is to the ear, without any further consequence."[48] Milton's Lady rejects Comus's identification of her worth with her beauty, along with his definition of beauty as "nature's coin" (l. 739). The speaker in *Upon Appleton House* distinguishes Maria Fairfax from the rest of her "fond sex" by her indifference to vanity's mirror. Although the poetic context of their presentation may be gorgeous indeed, these figures demystify beauty as a moral force. In Wroth's *Urania*, for example, a version of Platonic ascent is reserved only for two heroines, Veralinda and Urania, who discover their true identities in an enchanted theater. Many of these works address the courtly fad of Neoplatonism, with its assumption that aesthetic appreciation, particularly of a beautiful woman, can be a means to spiritual improvement. Although this suspicious attitude to the Neoplatonic elevation of feminine

47 The phrase is Gail David's, which she applies to the Pamela of the *New Arcadia* in her book *Female Heroism in the Pastoral*, 44. Her book posits an ahistorical mythic archetype in pastoral English fiction from the Renaissance through the Victorian novel in which the female protagonist of pastoral undertakes a heroic voyage from feminine nature to masculine culture and back again, having learned and developed via her sojourn in the "alien world" of the *urbs*. I agree with David that chastity is the test whereby the pastoral girl proves herself heroic, but I question her claim that pastoral always associates the feminine with nature and *privileges* it over masculine culture (229). David interprets the identification of the feminine with the natural as clearly positive rather than limiting, ambivalent, or problematic.

48 Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* [*The New Arcadia*], ed. Maurice Evans (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 485.

beauty is not at all a structural feature of courtly pastoral – indeed, the opposite is true for the Caroline court masque – it is a common thread among the exponents of pastoral I discuss in this study.

A moral problem with the Neoplatonic sublimation of erotic attraction is the ultimate barrenness of such sublimation. Despite Plato's argument for the superiority of spiritual progeny over physical progeny, courtship games must give way to marriage negotiations.[49] Many English Renaissance representations of the gentle family in a pastoral setting, indeed, as a pastoral phenomenon, involve a critique of hedonistic yet dynastically pointless eroticism or love as a mere courtly entertainment. In the process, the beautiful young girl is given a more active role in the moral constitution of her world. The importance of her beauty as the key factor in determining her value is invoked only to be denied. As Frank Whigham has noted in his discussion of the trope of "cosmesis" in Renaissance courtesy literature, beauty provides identity where one's role is strictly sexual.[50] Loss of beauty, for a woman, becomes loss of being. The pastorals examined in this study challenge this assumption; they offer a revisionary critique of Neoplatonism. Instead of being the ground for the ascent of the male mind, the pastoral heroine must herself respond to the challenge of spiritual ascension by devaluing what gives her value: her beauty.[51] Appearance is a changeable mask. The pastoral heroine, however, possesses a permanent and genuine ethos in the humanist sense. Her ethos replaces her beauty as the source of her authority.

Renaissance pastoral romance frequently employs Neoplatonic philosophical commonplaces as a way of framing the question of female virtue. The high status of women in Renaissance love poetry and romance owes much to the respect granted them within the Neoplatonic definition of love as desire aroused by beauty. Neoplatonism departs from other philosophical traditions informing Renaissance thought on law, ethics and medicine precisely because of the high status it accords to women in its schemes.[52] Although the founding

49 See Plato, *The Symposium*, tr. and ed. Walter Hamilton (Baltimore: Penguin, 1951): "When a man, starting from this sensible world and making his way upward by a right use of his feeling of love for boys, begins to catch sight of that beauty, he is very near his goal … the supreme knowledge whose sole object is that absolute beauty, and knows at last what absolute beauty is" (94).

50 Whigham, 116–17.

51 Joan Kelly is troubled by the passivity and dependent status of women in Castiglione's *The Courtier*, for example: the woman is not loved for herself, but for her instrumental value; see Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?", 46. Sidney, Milton and Marvell invert Neoplatonism to give the gentlewoman the task of active ascent. But what bothers Kelly, the use of "the love relation as a symbol to convey [Castiglione's] sense of political relations" (42), has plenty of analogues in medieval courtly literature as well. I also disagree with her argument that the Renaissance emphasis on chastity is a simple repressive strategy that renders women passive and inert.

52 See Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, 85. For a dissenting opinion see Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?", 43–45.

father of Neoplatonism, Marsilio Ficino, followed Plato in making contemplation of the beautiful boy the first step of contemplation for those wishing to ascend the platonic ladder, Pietro Bembo in his courtly treatise *Asolani* revised the terms of the ladder by making the lovely woman the basis of contemplation.[53] Thus the instrumental value of female beauty is reassessed; rather than a snare to sin, it becomes an enticement to virtue. Italian Neoplatonism, with its courtly rather than university origins, was new in its insistence that women had at least an equal, and in some cases superior, capacity for virtue. The court was also the only place in Renaissance culture where a woman was expected to display her wit and learning as *proof* of her virtue.[54] The elevation of female beauty in Bembo's revision of Ficino gives women a new status in philosophical thought, but it also presents a de facto identification of female beauty with female virtue that is at odds with Christian theology. In *The Book of the Courtier*, Castiglione raises this issue in the debate between his characters Bembo and Morello. To the latter's objections that "the beautie of women is many times cause of infinit [sic] evils in the world," Bembo replies:

> I say that beautie commeth of God, and is like a circle, the goodness whereof is the Centre. And therefore, as there can be no circle without a centre, no more can beautie be without goodness. Whereupon doth very seldom an ill soule dwell in a beautifull bodie.[55]

Pamela, Pastorella, Wroth's pastoral heroines, Milton's Lady and Maria Fairfax represent attempts to deal with this problem at the heart of the Neoplatonic definition of beauty. Through figures such as these, English Renaissance writers try to retain what is appealing in Neoplatonism while at the same time revising it: by making woman herself the representative of the philosophical mind. The Neoplatonic elements commonly found in the characterization of pastoral romance heroines are a legacy of a courtly discourse which was practically unique in developing a secular language to describe female virtue, although its understanding of that virtue ultimately proves insufficient for the writers discussed in this study. These writers attempt to employ a revised Neoplatonism in the service of productive marriage rather than barren and immoral courtship games. In these pastorals, the aristocratic *locus amoenus* is increasingly identified with the domestic paradise.

53 Mark Rose, *Heroic Love: Studies in Sidney and Spenser*, 19.

54 Maclean (64) notes that Book III of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* demands of the lady that she be well versed in the arts of conversation: "The *taciturnitas* for which the domestic woman is praised is abandoned; her private exclusive relationship to a dominating husband is replaced by a public, promiscuous social role in which, by convention, she is the dominant partner."

55 Castiglione, 308–9.

GENERIC CONTEXTS: RENAISSANCE PASTORAL ROMANCE AND THE VIRGILIAN HIERARCHY

This specific study hinges on the larger question of genre's relation to ideology. David Quint has argued that hierarchies of genres, whether derived from Virgil or Tasso, reflect ideologies of social hierarchy.[56] Because I consider pastoral and romance together, I must also consider the separate yet related position each genre, or more properly, generic label, occupies in schemes that classify literature by subject matter. The Virgilian hierarchy places pastoral in the earliest, probationary phase of poetic effort, in contrast to epic, which represents the culmination of the poet's career. Renaissance theorists of genre, notably Torquato Tasso, subordinated romance to epic even as they described a new mixed form of narrative that was capable of embracing both.[57] The terms "pastoral" and "romance," then, are each defined in relation to epic, the master discourse in western literature. Epic is a representation of martial, masculine values and significant public action. In Quint's scheme, epic is the story of the winners. The losers are associated with the exotic East, femininity, nature, emotion and disorder.[58] Epic is a term that helps define, albeit in opposition, both pastoral and romance before they are even joined in literary practice. The hybrid pastoral romance replies to epic assumptions about the order of society. It illustrates love as a strengthening rational force, Tasso's "noble habit of the will," rather than a destructive and distracting threat to epic achievement. The special influence epic has on both pastoral and romance is the reason for its presence as a background of my discussion. The relationship between the three generic concepts, epic on one side and pastoral/romance on the other, can be described as a constitutive tension. Running throughout each is an implicit critique of the other's values. I examine the operation of that tension particularly where it affects the way the linked spheres of privacy, femininity and nature are represented in Sidney's, Milton's and Marvell's family pastorals, works which consider the public impact of private acts. Although Quint characterizes the brief career of pastoral romance in the Renaissance as "a dead end,"[59] it is actually a transitional genre in literary history, reflecting not only dying aristocratic preoccupations but also emerging developments in gender

56 Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 261.

57 Tasso in *Discourses on the Heroic Poem* argued for the decorum of a love plot in epic narratives by arguing for the noble nature of love itself : "… it cannot be denied that love is a passion suitable to heroes … If love is not merely a passion and a movement of the sensible appetite but also a noble habit of the will, … love will be praiseworthy in heroes and consequently in the heroic poem." In Gilbert, 485.

58 Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 45. Another dichotomy to add to Quint's list is romance multiplicity as opposed to epic's singleness of purpose. Minturno in *L'Arte Poetica* distinguishes romance from epic by defining the latter as the imitation of "a memorable action carried to its conclusion by one illustrious person. The romance … has as its object a crowd of knights and ladies and of affairs of war and peace …" (In Gilbert, 278, tr. by the editor.)

59 Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 267.

ideology. It does so, however, in terms of traditional oppositions of generic values.

Within the romance tradition, the Golden Age and its literary rendering, the *locus amoenus*, have both been morally ambiguous. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the most sustained Renaissance attempt to combine the pastoral and the chivalric within a coherent whole, offers two alternative versions of the *locus*: Acrasia's Bower of Bliss in Book II, and Venus's garden in Book III. *Otium*, or idleness, is pastoral's major attraction, yet it is also a great danger for the knight errant who has other things to do.[60] Both Spenserian gardens are presided over by female enchantresses who strip their male guests of will, ambition and direction, the qualities necessary for chivalric achievement in the public sphere. This morally dangerous aspect of the lures of *otium* depends on a prior concept of purposeful public action as masculine, focused, and spatially linear, a concept that informs chivalric romance. English pastoral romance, however, revises the moral ambiguity of the *locus* and gives it a much more positive set of associations. The female figures presiding over the new *locus* actually encourage, rather than vitiate, the "masculine" qualities of will, ambition and direction; but, equally significantly, they redirect such qualities into the more circumscribed, domesticated sphere of family. The moral choice thus to be made is not between a suspect idleness and virtuous action, but between a bad kind of idleness and a good kind. Marvell's Maria Fairfax, for example, is a key reason why her father's retirement from parliamentary politics and war making is praiseworthy: she herself is the result of such retirement.

The reason for the transformation in the function of the *locus* within the romance tradition, I would suggest, is tied to the decline of the chivalric martial ideal as a viable model of aristocratic male behavior. In Milton's *A Mask*, the brothers' attempts to free their sister with a sword are comically useless. Ritual words, not martial deeds, provide the means of the Lady's escape. The new *locus* reflects a revaluation among the aristocracy of notions of idleness and work, notions that perhaps influenced both masculine and feminine ideals of courtly behavior. By the Restoration, the principal work of the aristocrat, male or female, had become the presentation of a polished, verbally accomplished, and symbolically potent persona. The salon had replaced the castle or the camp not only in practice but also in theory.[61] The pastoral virgin, of which Pamela, Urania, the Lady, and Maria Fairfax are exemplars, illustrates the dynamics of this replacement. In the morally ambivalent Bower of Bliss, the enclosed

60 See Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic*, 247–51 on the "active chivalric ideal" as exemplified in Book 2 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Parker also makes a similar point about the dangers of leisure for the knight in *Literary Fat Ladies*, 56.

61 Cooper notes that under James VI, the "gentleman" gradually replaced the "knight" as the social ideal in England (339–40). For a discussion of this historical phenomenon in France, see Bannister, *Privileged Mortals: The French Heroic Novel, 1630–1660*, particularly 3–4 and 26–28. Bannister discusses the evolution of ideals of heroism: the *noblesse d'epee* versus the upstart *noblesse de robe*.

garden is a figure for the female body itself, in which the knight becomes lost.[62] He forgets himself. However, in the view of the *locus* that evolved in the English Renaissance, the pastoral garden that represents the female body increasingly becomes a place to *remember* one's class role and dynastic destiny. Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, written before *The Faerie Queene*, plays with both valuations of the *locus*. Arcadia is at the same time the suspect site of pastoral truancy for Pyrocles and Musidorus, and the domestic state which, by providing them with suitable wives, allows them to grow up. The revaluation of the *locus* as a forcing ground of maturity is especially evident in Wroth's *Urania*, where her heroines frequently reflect on their identities and moral choices in pastoral settings.

The *rota Virgilii*, the diagram of 3 concentric circles demonstrating the Virgilian progress of genres from pastoral through georgic to epic, provides a spatial concept of pastoral which eschews the forward movement of romance.[63] For this reason, the term "pastoral romance" may itself be considered an oxymoron. In the pastoral romance of the Renaissance, for example, the plot is generated by the tension between stasis and forward movement. The pastoral world is constituted by another world outside, which breaks into and threatens the atemporal calm of the pastoral paradise. Although the medieval model of pastoral suggested by the *rota Virgilii* places the genre in an originary position in relation to the other genres, pastoral (as Puttenham argues) is a relative newcomer to the hierarchy of genres. The deployment of pastoral by poets is an after-the-fact attempt to delimit a space of calm and autonomy in opposition to worldly responsibility. What is so striking about Renaissance pastoral as a gendered discourse, however, is the fact that the romance heroine is often an agent of time and transformation disrupting the pastoral world, rather than that world's source or original inhabitant. The presence of woman in Renaissance pastoral romance, then, is both a precondition for the creation of a pastoral realm in fiction, and the catalyst for its destruction. Thus the genre provides a rich mine of representations of the contradictions at the heart of the patriarchal order. Woman is simultaneously pastoral's original inhabitant and the disruptive agent of its transformation. I believe that Renaissance pastoralists were aware of this ambiguity and deliberately exploited it.

Puttenham, in the *Arte of English Poesie*, argues against the old opinion that pastoral is the earliest and most primitive form of poetry. Indeed, pastoral is a latecomer:

> … I do deny that the *Eglogue* should be the first and most auncient forme of artificiall Poesie, being perswaded that the poet deuised the *Eglogue* long after the other *dramatick* poems, not of purpose to counterfait or represent the rusticall

62 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 58.

63 The rota is a medieval diagram from the commentaries of Aelius Donatus on Virgil. See Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 201, note 35.

> manner of loues and communications, but vnder the vaile of homely persons and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters …[64]

Here Puttenham shows an awareness that the Golden Age is an imaginative construct of civilized society, not an historical era preceding it. Puttenham is credited with writing the first original commentary on pastoral in English. At the start of the English tradition of pastoral criticism, he is already portraying the Golden Age not as a lost Eden, but as a promise or an ideal toward which to strive.[65] Any nostalgia directed toward the Golden Age is therefore misdirected. The effort to imagine a Golden Age is an effort to build a new world, not recreate a lost one: it is among the most complex and artful of poetic attempts. Puttenham was the first theorist of pastoral in Europe to argue for its relative sophistication in comparison to other genres.[66] His theory of the origin of pastoral foreshadows the way the genre would be used in England self-consciously to construct feminine virtue out of sophistication rather than innocence.

Renaissance writers recognized the subversive potential of the pastoral mode. Both Puttenham and Sidney wrote of its dual use "in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to have beene disclosed in any other sort"[67] and its ability to include, "under the prettie tales of Wolves and Sheepe, … the whole considerations of wrong dooing and patience."[68] Even Sidney nevertheless acknowledges a widespread distaste for pastoral because "where the hedge is lowest they will soonest leape over."[69] This comment in the context of Sidney's *Defense* can refer both to the little skill thought necessary to write a pastoral, and to the perceived weak points of pastoral which make it into the most apt subject of criticism for those who dislike all poetry. Among those weaknesses might be its "rudenesse"[70] and its subject matter, "poor, silly, & of the coursest Woofe in appearance."[71] Yet pastoral, as Empson commented, brings the complex into the simple, something Renaissance theorists and practitioners from "E.K." to Drayton understood. Its weaknesses became its strengths.

64 Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie,* in Smith II, 39–40.

65 In this Puttenham differs from Scaliger, who believes in the primitive origins of pastoral. For example, Scaliger argues that pastoral's preoccupation with love came from the fact that shepherds of both sexes were scantily clad in classical times and also had ample opportunity to observe animals mating.

66 Congleton, *Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England 1684–1798*, 162.

67 Puttenham in Smith II, 40.

68 Philip Sidney, *A Defense of Poesie* (ca. 1580), excerpted in Loughrey, 34.

69 Sidney in Loughrey, 34.

70 From E.K.'s introduction to Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar* (1579): "… for oftimes we fynde ourselves, I knowe not how, singularly delighted with the shewe of such naturall rudenesse, and take great pleasure in that disorderly order." From Oram et al., eds., *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, 15.

71 Michael Drayton, preface to *Pastorals* (1619); rpt. in Loughrey, 36.

The use of pastoral as a "vaile" for greater or more risky matters may in fact be its oldest use. Among other things, pastoral is a discourse of power relations, bringing into contact rural and urban, rich and poor, content and dissatisfied. In Virgil's Tityrus and Meliboeus, the dual perspective, one encomiastic and the other critical, of the existing power structure makes its most culturally influential appearance, so from the very start, the pastoral "escape" to rural purity has also been an act of allegorical engagement with the corrupt world of men. European writers have subsequently used Virgil's *Eclogues* as a model for constructing their own relationships as intellectuals and writers in order to define one's "responsibilities in relation to the power structure of his own place and time."[72] While male intellectuals certainly employed pastoral to that end in the Renaissance, I would suggest that they were also involved in a related, if subordinate, project: to map power relations between the sexes, via a genre or mode uniquely suited for such mapping. The young female protagonist in Renaissance pastoral romance is herself required to be an intellectual; she is herself required to exhibit some of the same kinds of rhetorical survival techniques that the male poets creating her used; and, often, her maneuverings must be equally tactful and self-protective as those of a Colin Clout or a Philisides. The romance virgin encounters feminized, fictionalized versions of many of the same threats and conflicts faced by a male intellectual in service to a power structure; the writer inventing her may have found in her femininity an apt metaphor for general helplessness or frustration at his marginal and hazardous position. This theory might account in part for the burgeoning numbers of pastoral heroines in the Renaissance and the sympathy with which they are held. As Louis Adrian Montrose has noted, Renaissance pastoral becomes "an authorized mode of discontent" within a dominant courtly culture.[73]

Pastoral is a vehicle for the intellectual of the English Renaissance not only to assess his relationship to the dominant power structure or culture, but also to comment within such an assessment on how gender relations help bring forth "culture" in a purportedly natural world. Among pastoral's widely acknowledged formal characteristics – simple, lowly subject, rude language, themes of merrymaking and rural life, the portrayal of a lost and backward world – one of the most important is the effect of love on the shepherd's perception of nature. The Virgilian progress of genres culminates in epic, the history of civilization, of cities (Troy, Rome, Troynovant). The circumstances of civilization, however, are at bottom provided by a courtship conducted in the pastoral realm. Thus, one of the most artificial codifications of human behavior, courtship ritual, is naturalized in pastoral as the foundation of all civilized life, the precondition for the Virgilian progress to take place. Wooing and winning and erotic

72 Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 61.

73 Montrose, "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form", 426–27.

frustration provide the impetus for everything else; sex is the motor of history which enables the pastoralist eventually to transcend pastoral.[74] Renaissance pastoral in particular meditates on the connection between love, poetry, and nature, for over and over again in these texts, love turns the hitherto unconsidered natural life into a work of art. The catalyst for such a process is a woman, whether she is named Rosalind, Eliza, Philoclea or Juliana. Contrary to traditional critical arguments associating women with nature, these female figures denaturalize their lovers. Love is the work, both in the sense of labor and of accomplishment, of the artist. In his *Defense*, Sidney speaks of the role art has of "reforming nature," of making a golden world out of a brazen.[75] Pastoral, more than any other genre, is directly concerned with the act of reforming nature, giving it moral meaning and attributing to it the expression of the human mind.

Renaissance pastoral practice is marked by a lack of interest in "true" rural illustration. There was no major debate over the representative purpose of the mode. The fictive nature of its rusticity was taken for granted; an accurate or convincing rendition of rural nature was not a goal of Renaissance pastoralists, as it was later on for eighteenth-century poets and critics.[76] Renaissance writers sought to reinvent the Golden Age as a proleptic ideal, not as a lost past or a simple rural present. In this type of pastoral, women are intimately involved as they demonstrate how innocence is a product of sophistication, and virtue, of experience. The rural becomes a "vaile" for the courtly. This essential paradox at the heart of courtly Renaissance pastoral distinguishes it from later English pastoral, which strove to approximate a "true" representation of rusticity.[77] Raymond Williams, in *The Country and the City*, his survey of what he calls the "structures of feeling" informing English pastoral, finds Renaissance pastoral especially unsettling because of its exclusion of the "living tensions" of classical pastoral which make the latter a convincing examination of rural life.[78] For him, the use of the shepherd as "a traditionally innocent figure through which, paradoxically, intrigue can be elaborated" is a dubious achievement in the history of English pastoral. His description of the concern for love and theatricality in Renaissance "neo-pastoral" portrays it as an alien graft onto a more morally persuasive and authentic classical model. Williams' emphasis is

74 Rosenmeyer in *The Green Cabinet* points out that the prospect of satisfied desire implies the kind of temporal narrative that propels the protagonist out of pastoral stasis (77–85).

75 Sidney, *Defense*, rpt. and ed. Gilbert, 412.

76 Samuel Johnson's famous complaint about the lack of plausibility in Milton's *Lycidas*, which he takes as an example of the "easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting" character of pastoral, is based on his view that pastoral's "inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind." From *The Life of Milton* in Cruttwell, ed., *Samuel Johnson: Selected Writings*, 409–10.

77 Eclogues such as Gay's *The Shepherd's Week* were intended as a satire to ridicule to the naturalistic pastoral theories of Ambrose Philips, but ended up admired as models of true rustic simplicity.

78 See Williams, *The Country and the City*, 18–22 on the exclusion of the "working man's perspective" from pastoral during the Renaissance.

of course on the economic basis of English pastoralism, the transformations of the country during the development of agrarian capitalism. His analysis of Renaissance pastoral is informed by a hostility toward the aristocracy for arrogating and deforming a poetic genre that, for him, should ideally recover and champion the rural perspective.[79] His view of Renaissance pastoral romance nevertheless slights the role that love has always played in bucolic literature from Theocritus onward. Of course Renaissance pastoral is "artificial," "enamelled," and "idealised," but its conjunction of innocence and intrigue which so greatly bothers him is often in the service of constructing an ethical ideal of behavior for the ruling class, an effort which was not necessarily in bad faith.

Following the lead of Williams, critics of Renaissance pastoral have occasionally displayed a suspicious and hostile attitude toward their subject because it lacks didactic realism, or because it obscures the reality of rural labor.[80] But Renaissance pastoralists never claimed to present a realistic picture of country life and class relations. It is true that they were interested in creating an image of ideal aristocratic life that did not take into account the existence of the rural poor upon whom their estates depended for labor.[81] I would argue, though, that pastoral in Renaissance England was from its inception consciously associated with courtly concerns. The status of pastoral as a metaphor or veil was well understood.[82] Furthermore, pastoral was also associated with the construction and social value of femininity, a topic that I consider a beneficial addition to the pastoral catalogue of "living tensions" that Williams analyzes so effectively.

By the end of the Renaissance, the French critic and influential pastoral theorist Rapin was able to come to the opposite conclusion from Puttenham regarding the origin of pastoral; for him, as for the English neoclassicist followers of Pope of the early eighteenth century, the pastoral was a primitive product of a historically specific Golden Age.[83] This view was not to hold, however, and by 1756 Joseph Warton was arguing that Golden Age convention

79 Williams' great book is dedicated to his four grandparents, "country workers" all.

80 For example, James Turner's moral suspicion of pastoral is evident in comments like this one from *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630–1660* regarding the trope of *topographia* commonly used in English pastoral: "Topographia is a recourse to those who are not prepared for rigorous argument." Instead, it is a tool of ideological mystification for "the emotive politics of the ancien regime" (106). Is argument, however, always a principal function of poetry? And are not all politics emotive?

81 See Williams, 18. Montrose also makes a similar point in "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds", 422.

82 Haber argues that Renaissance pastoral's "self-contradictory" practice was a deliberate strategy and a constituting characteristic of the mode (3).

83 Pope's *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry* (1717) opposed the subjective and psychological school of pastoral criticism advocated by Rapin's critical rival, Fontanelle. In particular, Pope argued for adherence to Virgilian models of pastoral, and opposed modernization. For an account of the Rapin/Fontanelle debate, and its effect on English pastoral criticism, see Congleton, 70–85.

and the accurate description of rural nature were more or less the same. As J.E. Congleton, following Lovejoy and Boas, notes, this development in genre theory saw the replacement of "chronological primitivism" with "cultural primitivism;" the Golden Age is always with us, available in a detailed examination of nature.[84] The Golden Age has become a state of mind. In this sense the Renaissance pastoral, with its presentation of the romance virgin as the guardian of the Golden Age mentality, anticipates the introspective, subjective notion of pastoral that had gradually evolved throughout the eighteenth century and reached its flowering in Romanticism.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS: THE VIRTUE OF THE RENAISSANCE GENTLEWOMAN

What would happen if the contemplative life of the pastoralist were a real option for the world's Marcelas? An anthropological constant across many cultures is the association of women with nature. Although women obviously occupy the realm of culture insofar as they instruct and help socialize the young in preparation for their responsibilities within a given society, the traditional restrictions on female mobility due to the biological demands of pregnancy, childbirth and nursing have seemed to have a "natural" cause.[85] Reproductive biology has a more visible and dramatic effect on feminine social roles than on masculine ones. The Renaissance emphasis on the female pastoralist brings to the mode a sophisticated treatment of the ambiguous status of the woman in the nature/culture dichotomy. What are the implications for society of woman's natural potency? The family, conceived as social organization at its most basic level, is the institution in which woman's biology is appropriated for communal purposes. Yet is is also at the level of the family, defined as such, that the woman enjoys her greatest power and her greatest subversive potential.[86] Within pastoral, the power of feminine archetypes such as Diana rests on her ability to opt out of familial restriction. It is easy to see why pastoral appealed to Elizabeth I as a source of images of female power and authority: Marcela's characterization owes much to the goddess Diana, who also declared her independence from the exigencies of courtship, marriage and procreation.

84 Congleton, 116. Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas define "cultural primitivism" as "the discontent of the civilized with civilization. … It is the belief of men living in a relatively evolved and complex cultural condition that a life far simpler and less sophisticated in some or in all respects is a more desirable life." See *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, 7.

85 Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" 73.

86 Renaissance thinkers had a clear sense of women's power in the family. Hobbes, anticipating by over 200 years Bachhofen's theory of original matriarchy, argued that in the state of nature the mother has authority over her child for only she can decide whether to nurse or neglect it: "The right of dominion over the Child dependeth on her will, and is consequently hers." See *Leviathan*, ch. xx, pp. 254–5, ed. C. B. Macpherson (Pelican, 1968; rpt. New York: Penguin, 1985).

Insisting on one's identity with nature, or making literal the literary association of the feminine with nature, has the effect of removing oneself from the strictures and structures of civilization. For women, this is liberating, but for civilization, it is hazardous.

The anthropologist Sherry Ortner, in seeking a reason for the universal second-class status of women across cultures, has suggested that woman is devalued precisely *because* she is associated with nature.[87] Ortner defines culture as the notion of human consciousness, a quality that allows humankind to persuade itself that it can control, through ritual and *techne*, the "givens of natural existence." Although women are not equated with nature, they occupy a lower level on the nature-to-culture continuum. The household, for example, is a cultural invention, but it is imagined to be at a low level compared to the social superstructure it facilitates. Ortner argues that "the domestic unit – and hence woman, who in virtually every case appears as its primary representative – is one of culture's crucial agencies for the conversion of nature into culture."[88] Woman, despite her marginal position on the outskirts of culture, becomes the figure in whom a virtuous consciousness, or consciousness of virtue, is most important in marking the shift from the state of nature to the state of culture. It is this aspect of the feminine role in culture-building that the figure of the romance virgin illuminates in pastoral, a genre that highlights humankind's relation to nature. As Edward W. Tayler has pointed out, pastoral is "the literary reflex of a philosophical controversy" between Nature and Art,[89] but within this controversy, woman has a special role as a symbol of divided humankind. Love, glorified by the romance, is the place where nature and culture meet on the continuum of human experience.[90] In romance, the woman embodies the contradictory symbolic meanings of love as animal and as angelic. She converts a biological instinct to a moral and social imperative.

In medieval romance, women's symbolic link with nature is expressed in the recurrent figure of the shape-shifter, such as the Wife of Bath's "loathly lady" or Melusine. Women's uncertain epistemological status in medieval romance reflects her alliance with the unpredictable and "uncanny" operations of the mysterious natural world.[91] Renaissance romance, on the other hand, tends to see in the virginal heroine the admirably stable repository of an unconquer-

87 Ortner, 72.

88 Ortner, 84.

89 Tayler, *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature*, 93.

90 In his discussion of twelfth-century romance's treatment of the problem of status inconsistency, McKeon describes its "focus on love" as "a strategic concentration on an exceptionally mediatory link in … the chain of signifiers for natural-cultural transformation" (*Origins*, 143).

91 See Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's* Canterbury Tales (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994) 84–89 on the significance of feminine shape-shifting in medieval romance: it "offers a striking concretization of female uncanniness, whether by mixing human with animal forms …, by juxtaposing contradictory images of woman …, or by simply deceiving the male gaze" (84).

able virtue. Despite the fragile fruit-and-flower imagery by which her beauty is evoked, the romance virgin herself remains the fixed center point in the changing pastoral landscape. Her persona is remarkably stable, particularly in comparison to the male figures around her. It is Pamela's lover, not Pamela, who is a class impersonator. The Lady confronts the shape-shifting Comus with her own integrity of body and soul. Maria Fairfax, the pastoral virgin who "vitrifies" and fixes nature, arrests and terminates the fanciful and restless movement of the lyric speaker through her father's estate, replacing it with a unified vision. The version of femininity encountered in all three of these cases is not that of strangeness, disorder and mystery. On the contrary, stability of persona in the face of temptation becomes a particularly feminine attribute. The pastoral virgin does not reflect nature; she reforms it, making it fit for human occupation.

In the Middle Ages, ideals of class honor were bifurcated according to gender: for males, martial prowess; for females, chastity and sexual fidelity. The Early Modern period saw the gradual redefinition of honor as a universal sexual temperance symbolizing spiritual purity, a change that was accomplished by the time Richardson wrote *Pamela*.[92] While this shift may seem like a contraction of the notion of honor, in many ways it can be seen as an expansion. Human sexuality, whether manifested in erotic literary idylls or in social institutions such as the family, is the place where nature and culture meet, and sometimes conflict, most dramatically. Organized warfare, the primary proving ground of honor in classical epic and *chanson de geste*, is a culturally produced and delimited activity. The traditional exclusion of woman from this activity illustrates their position in society outside any important notion of honor, although the simple equation of female chastity and woman's honor indicates what is expected of her. What occurred through the centuries was a gradual broadening of the application of the chastity=honor equation to encompass everyone, not only a select group. The chastity=honor formula has universal significance, a point Milton makes us aware of in the *Apology for Smectymnuus*.[93] The reasons for its broad applicability lie in part in the universal human experience of sexuality; another reason for its success in supplanting the martial model of honor is its metaphorical aptness for description and exploration of the nature/culture dichotomy that has so dominated thought about humankind's place in the universe in recent centuries. The pastoral mode in the Renaissance, poised between on the one hand erotic celebration

92 For a discussion of the elision of honor and chastity in *Pamela*, see McKeon, *Origins*, 366–67.

93 In summarizing his literary education, first through romances and then through philosophy, Milton describes how any "free and gentle soul" might learn "of chastity and love … and how the first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue." See "An Apology against a Pamphlet Call'd A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions upon the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus, etc.," in Bush, ed., *Complete Prose Works of John Milton Vol. I*, 890–91.

in the naturally beautiful yet artful *locus amoenus* of romance and on the other hand the solitude of a Romantic wild wilderness, illustrates most fruitfully the role of sexual honor in regulating one's behavior and place in both visions of nature. The dilemma of the virtuous, high-born female pastoralist in a corrupt social environment that forms the basic narrative of the three texts in this study reflects both social reality for some Renaissance women and the universally applicable metaphorical potential of honor as sexual virtue.

Medieval chivalric narratives are primarily concerned with testing and elaborating the definition of masculine honor, while feminine honor is an accessory to this definition. Courtship becomes a means by which men define themselves by using the female beloved as an object of regard.[94] The Renaissance focus on feminine honor in the romance, however, redefines it as as a self-justifying goal independent of masculine concerns. This separate emphasis is evident in figures such as Fletcher's Clorin and Wroth's Lady Pastora, and in Milton's *A Mask At Ludlow*, which shows the transformation of passive female honor into an active virtue reflecting the more inclusive concept of honor as chastity. The same can be said of Sidney's Pamela, especially in the revised *Arcadia.* Active virginity is creative and vigorous in Sidney's, Milton's and Marvell's works. It is not only defensive but offensive. It shapes the world. The chaste girls in this study disturb in some ways the traditional opposition between worldly experience and female virtue because their virtue helps to shape experience.

There has been much emphasis on the repressive life circumstances of Renaissance women. Whether their position was an improvement over that of medieval women is a subject of controversy. Joan Kelly sees new constraints placed on women during the transition from medieval feudal society to the early modern state. Her primary evidence is Renaissance courtly literature, in which she identifies a "new repression of the noblewoman's affective experience" in the emphasis on chastity, along with a decline in her cultural authority at court.[95] Margaret Ezell's caution against assuming that literary and documentary evidence "mirrors" social reality, however, is well taken.[96] Furthermore, it is clear that female freedom became an issue of discussion and debate, and this fact in itself suggests that Renaissance women were at least *perceived* as having more freedom than in the past. The more social freedom girls have, the more important their inner controls become. Thus the expansion of virginity from a physical to a spiritual or ethical value makes sense, and paves the way for a concomitant expansion of feminine secular honor from a physical quality to a universal spiritual quality of restraint and self-discipline, a *hortus conclusus* of the pure and isolated self. Virginity for the aristocratic girl is not simply a general virtue of womankind: it is a class signal of self-

94 Crane, 17.

95 Joan Kelly, 19–50, especially 22, 35. She assumes that the cult of adulterous love described, for example, in Andreas Capellanus's *Art of Courtly Love* reflected greater sexual freedom for medieval ladies, an assumption that is probably unwarranted.

96 Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, 163.

possession.[97] In Greek romances, for example, a girl's virginity was symbolic of the fact that her body belonged to herself: she was not a slave. The texts in this study are examples not only of the surviving topos of virginity as honor but of the emerging topos of honor as virginity. The redefinition of virtue as an internal quality radically divorced from social convention, a redefinition implicit in the "pastoral of the self," occurred, I suggest, in part through the fictional representations of productive virginity in these Renaissance pastoral texts.

Romance and pastoral are linked by their mutual preoccupation with chastity. The Renaissance collapse of martial activity as the chief source of honor left a void; this collapse was a problem for Sidney and other aristocrats during Elizabeth's reign who lacked an arena for their chivalric and martial ambitions. The ideal of single combat gave way to the clash of anonymous armies and machinery, not only in fact – the longbowmen at Agincourt fought long before the chivalric ethic died at the English court – but in perception, leaving the warrior class without wars with which to define itself.[98] Chastity is the other cornerstone of the medieval secular concept of chivalry (chastity as a religious value is often less important in romances than chastity as a social value, although that may not have been true of medieval society as a whole). It survived where military prowess could not. Since chastity had long been defined as the quintessential female virtue, its gradual expansion of significance into a secular metaphor for virtue and self-sufficiency in the pastoral of the self (aside from its meaning as a sign of spiritual purity) began in the Renaissance via female representatives in literature.

Mary Beth Rose identifies what she calls a "heroics of marriage" at work in tragedy at the turn of the seventeenth century.[99] She charts the development of a new sense in Jacobean drama of the dignity of private life in opposition to public or heroic deeds, and the centrality of women in the construction of an ideal of ethical behavior in tragedy which fuses both private and public realms.[100] I see another effect of changing social mores on generic convention, related to the phenomenon Rose discusses. The courtly opposition of love and marriage in medieval chivalric romances such as *Tristan and Iseult* and *The Knight of the Cart* is replaced by the "heroics of marriage" in Renaissance pastoral romance.[101] The refiguring of marriage itself as a heroic goal dictates a change in ideals of female education, since its new loftiness of purpose presupposes a more rigorous cultivation of the feminine discipline Rose designates

97 Frye, *The Secular Scripture*.
98 Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry*, 177.
99 Mary Beth Rose, *Expense of Spirit*, 116.
100 Mary Beth Rose, 115.
101 See Mark Rose, *Heroic Love* passim for an examination of this process in both *Arcadias* and in *The Faerie Queene*. Of course, not all of medieval romance was anti-marriage; one example in which aristocratic marriage is elevated and admired is *Erec and Enide*.

as "dynamic obedience."[102] The operation of dynamic obedience in Jacobean tragedy is linked to the feminine discipline of productive virginity in texts that employ the conventions of pastoral romance.

The evolution of the chastity topos in the early modern period via pastoral and romance is certainly influenced by the increasing emphasis on moral individualism that informed the Protestant Reformation. In addition, the shifting symbolic resonances of chastity reflect a new concept of the isolated self defined over and against society. Chastity came to symbolize not primarily religious purity, but ethical purity, a secular, self-imposed integrity of mind. In Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, we see a treatment of the social meanings of chastity that employs narrative irony to question the definition of this surprisingly elusive quality. Milton's *A Mask* is poised between two different concepts of chastity: as social value and otherworldly religious virtue. By linking chastity with charity, Milton links personal sexual purity to generosity. He thus unites social concerns and personal religious ones, while insisting that religious concerns remain ascendant. In Marvell's pastoral lyrics, chastity becomes a privileged site of poetic perception, a place for psychological retirement from a corrupt social world. In all three works, the question is: how far may one be involved in the world, and maintain purity of self? Pastoral literature takes place in a world where, ostensibly, civil organization is stripped down to its barest essentials, and what culture exists does so mainly to distinguish the humans from the animals they tend (in *A Mask*, one sign of Comus's false and degenerate pastoralism is the confusion between men and animals his rule encourages). The social relations in such a fictional world are imagined to be at the most intimate, immediate level. A pastoral *locus amoenus* is an appropriate site for a narrative in which sexual and family relations, as the simplest and most necessary of human social attachments, also become emblematic of the most inflexible, non-negotiable demands of the social world on the solitary self.

The idea that the relative virtues of men and women were products of social roles rather than divine law received explicit articulation for the first time in Renaissance courtesy books. Torquato Tasso believed that both men and women should practice the same virtues, although the dominant virtue for men was courage and for women, chastity. Thus, a failure of courage on the part of a man was more reprehensible than a failure of chastity, and a failure of chastity in a woman worse than a failure of courage.[103] The reason for this, however, was not natural law but rather social appropriateness. The differences between the sexes are subject to social rule and convention; if an aristocratic woman faces a conflict between the demands of her station and the expectations of her gender, she must choose to fulfill the obligations of her station first. If the situation demands it, she must speak forcefully with wit and learning while displaying both moral and physical courage. Pamela,

102 Mary Beth Rose, 123.
103 Tasso, *Discorso della virtù feminile e donnesca* (1582), cited in Maclean, 62.

Urania, the Lady, and Maria Fairfax represent the reconciliation of the conflicting demands of station and sex because they demonstrate how chastity and courage are integrally related. In the pastoral romance, a failure of courage can all too easily lead to a failure of chastity. The virtues appropriate to the gentlewoman require a deliberate inculcation in which simple isolation from the world is not sufficient. The gentlewoman is a public figure because of her status. Thus her self-discipline, her willingness to maintain a pure mind despite constant external temptation, is vitally important and comes to be seen as a heroic goal. The feminine version of the courtier is the courtesan: for the world of the aristocracy to maintain moral legitimacy, this obvious link has to be denied.[104] The gentlewoman must bear the responsibility for repairing the limitations of the courtly ethic by in some senses embodying its opposite. She must, on occasion, have the courage to reject the power, given by her beauty, to please. This aspect of her role is clear in English pastoral romance.

The sixteenth-century interest in formal education for girls went hand in hand with a nascent concept of adolescence for children of both sexes. In Renaissance England, young people of all classes tended to marry later than in Southern European Catholic cultures.[105] The marriage habits of the upper landed classes were a little different from those below them, since they tended to marry slightly earlier than the population at large, but the norm was a considerable lag between the onset of sexual maturity and the occasion of marriage.[106] Alan Macfarlane describes the relatively relaxed attitude that the English held toward the presence of the sexually mature unmarried young woman; he has identified relatively little concern for the threat to the family's honor that such a female might pose, in contrast to attitudes in Southern European societies where early marriage was an imperative of respectability for a girl.[107] Various other factors combined to create a group of unmarried gentle girls in England who may have, in their sheer numbers, required the invention of something like a category of adolescence to accommodate them in concep-

104 In *The Courtier*, for example, Castiglione avoids the use of the feminine equivalent of the title, "cortegiana," preferring "donna di palazzo." J.R. Woodhouse, 54–55 notes how this terminological replacement amounts to an evasion of "the moral servility of the male courtier's own situation."

105 Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England*, 211. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 512–18 cites anxiety about the number of unmarried apprentices in the late sixteenth century as evidence of social tension from the late age at which the English married in comparison to Southern European cultures. This pattern held true in the seventeenth century as well. The average age of marriage for women in the diocese of Canterbury between 1619–60, to take one example, was 24 for women and 27 for men. See Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 85.

106 The average age of marriage for aristocratic Englishwomen in the sixteenth century was 20; for men, 21. See Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 46.

107 Macfarlane, 215 claims that marriage was actually discouraged in early modern England for women younger than 18. If an aristocratic girl were married very young, she would live in the household of her in-laws without consummation while her husband lived in another household or traveled abroad (see Ben-Amos, 32).

tual schemes of the Renaissance social hierarchy. First of all, the suppression of Catholicism and the abolition of convents removed an honorable social option for extra daughters, and their parents were forced to find husbands for them. The increase of aristocratic girls on the marriage market and the necessity of providing them with dowries so they could marry within their class placed a huge burden on landed families in the sixteenth century.[108] The problem was intensified by the custom of primogeniture, which effectively restricted the number of aristocratic men who could "afford" to marry. Although ninety-five per cent of the daughters of the English nobility in the sixteenth century did eventually find husbands, it was an anxiety-fraught search at great cost to their families.[109] Furthermore, the next one hundred years saw the number of unmarried girls from landed families rise sharply, despite families' willingness to spend great amounts to marry them off. By 1675, almost twenty-five per cent of gentlewomen over fifty had never been married, more than double the rate of spinsterhood in the general population.[110] The number of marriageable girls exceeded eligible men even before the Civil War.[111] The abolition of convents, combined with the custom of primogeniture and the increasingly common male aristocratic practice of marriage downward for the sake of commercial fortunes, all made the fate that awaited Lady Alice Egerton, the inspiration for Milton's Lady, a distinct possibility for many like her.[112] This long-term disequilibrium in the aristocratic marriage market must have brought a new sense of urgency and significance in the minds of parents and daughters to the rituals of courtship. It also must have disrupted to some extent the expectation of an orderly transition from parental home to husband's house, thus creating a social space for the figure of the adolescent girl.

The idea of adolescence itself depends upon some prior idea of freedom, a space between the restrictions of childhood and the responsibilities of marriage.[113] The fact that, in the late sixteenth century, girls older than twelve could make a testament bequeathing their possessions is a sign of legal and social personhood independent of relations to parents or spouse. As long as girls are confined to one household until they are transferred by marriage to another, there can be no such thing as true adolescence for them. The idea that girls, however, *might* have such an adolescence appears in literature of the era. The sense that social protections are porous enough to allow danger and threat to slip in despite parental vigilance infuses these works. Sidney's princesses

108 Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 43.

109 Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 43.

110 See Hibbert, *The English: A Social History 1066–1945*, 385 and Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 39–40. Macfarlane notes that England never had laws prohibiting marriage among different social strata (257).

111 Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 646.

112 Alice Egerton, contrary to the model of early aristocratic marriage, did not marry until her thirties.

113 See Macfarlane, 81.

and Milton's Lady all find themselves in situations where they have a degree of choice in marriage or sex. Marvell's Maria Fairfax is so special precisely because her parents have managed to construct an artificial paradise where she escapes the problem of courtship altogether. The poet's admiration for the way the Fairfaxes can make "destiny their choice" in selecting a husband for Maria is admiration for a nostalgic ideal of total parental control over female adolescent sexuality. In Milton's masque, on the other hand, the Lady's experiences, while potentially disastrous, redound to the good of herself and her family. In each case, however, the physical custody of the daughter is the basic issue or problem that must be resolved. Where there is no threat perceived, there can be no problem. Therefore the issue of female adolescence, the regulation of youthful female sexuality, is a subject of some urgency, despite, or perhaps because, Renaissance England had a cultural predisposition to later marriage. The relatively greater religious and emotional importance that Protestantism attached to marriage in this era may also account, in part, for the way in which pastoral romances focus on the ethical implications of the heroine's erotic experience. What Stone calls the companionate marriage yokes what had been two antithetical models of sexual relations, the social necessity of marriage and the personal imperatives of love. Why a young woman is chaste becomes as important as the fact that she is. Active virtue in a female becomes a choice, not a constraint.

The influential Protestant intensification of emphasis on the emotional and spiritual benefit of marriage can be seen, ironically, in the remarkably devoted and affectionate union of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, his Catholic queen. The good wife was seen as more than a chaste and trustworthy conduit of the family bloodlines. Preparing for marriage, as opposed to merely awaiting it, becomes an object of training for girls. This is why it occurs to the Marquess of Halifax, the famous "Trimmer," to write a book of advice for his daughter in 1688. Marriage has become a more freighted enterprise, in psychic terms, than it had been in the past. The increased acknowledgement of the daughter's right to choice in marriage also would have implied a need to train her to choose appropriately.

The question of whether the interest in female education and social roles that emerged in the sixteenth century actually encouraged or reflected a greater overall freedom for women in the family and in society remains open. One historical narrative argues for a brief relaxation on the strictures placed on women, which was revoked under the increasingly overt patriarchalist character of both seventeenth-century monarchy and puritanism. Such a view is based on an examination of conduct books and educational tracts. It is challenged by Margaret Ezell: "The gap between theory and practice is suggested in ongoing debates in the seventeenth century over women's roles and rights."[114] Lawrence Stone, citing changes in the conditions attached to testamentary

[114] Ezell, 161.

bequests, suggests that aristocratic women, if not "free," did actually achieve a greater say in the disposition of themselves in marriage between 1560 and 1640.[115] The idea that children, even daughters, should have some freedom in marriage was gradually becoming more accepted among the landed classes. Family formation was becoming increasingly subject to female choice.

Renaissance pastorals about the family participate in widely held metaphorical equivalences between the disposition of authority in the patriarchal family and the organization of the state. The polemicist John Hayward, writing in 1603 in support of James I's accession, offers a paradigmatic analogy:

> The whole worlde is noethinge but a greate state; a state is no other than a great familie; and a familie is no other than a greate bodye. As one God ruleth the worlde, one maister the familie, as all the members of one bodye receiveth both sence and motion from one heade, which is the seate and tower both of the understanding and of the will: so it seemeth no lesse naturall, that one state should be governed by one commaunder.[116]

Renaissance political theorists, in examining the origins of political authority, often fell back to the moment in human history in which God ordered the human household by instructing Eve thus: "… in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). Adam's God-given authority over Eve, it was argued, was the first example of political power in history and the basis for many defenses of monarchy. The political organization of the Christian monarchy, it was believed, evolved from the domestic power of Adam over Eve. Read this way, the Biblical story implies that terrestrial authority derives not from epic conquest but from pastoral love in the *locus amoenus* of Eden. The Biblical origin myth is itself, then, a family pastoral. The use of pastoral as a political discourse combining observations on the organization of families with observations on the basis of state power is implicit in the theorists' interpretation of the Genesis story. At the same time as patriarchalism was articulated most intricately, however, the daughters of the Renaissance patriarchs apparently had more freedom than their elders thought advisable.

The family body is a vital symbol of civic and moral order, an order which the daughter of the family has a key role in maintaining. While the son's family identity is fixed at birth, however, the daughter's status as a member is one of pure possibility, of unrealized and unpredictable future exchange value. If the son represents the knowable future, the daughter represents the unforeseeable.

115 Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 597. Between 1560 and 1640, fewer parents attempted to exercise financial control over the choice of a daughter's husband: "by 1630 many parents were leaving their daughters' portions free of strings, payable whether the daughter was married or not."

116 Hayward, *An Answer to the First Part of a Certaine Conference, Concerning Succession*, sig. B_4. Hayward was refuting a 1594 tract by the Jesuit Robert Parsons challenging James Stuart's claim to succession.

Hayward's corporeal image illustrates the drive to reduce complex systems to the compact demarcations of a metaphorical body, be it familial or political. The daughter's functional instability, however, is an implicit challenge to such fixed concepts of human social organization. The pastoral romance's ideal of productive chastity prescribes a remedy for this structural anomaly by positing a fixed and unchanging source of virtue and strength for the one family member who is most likely to be "lost."

According to Lévi-Strauss, the legal transfer of the daughter from one family to another represented by marriage is "an arbitration between two loves, parental and conjugal."[117] He implies that it is the parental type of love that is most clearly the result of biological instinct. Conjugal love is a social institution designed to correct and discipline the natural but illegitimate parental urge to retain one's children. In the pastoral family narratives discussed here, conjugal love appears to be either a violently disruptive force, as in Sidney's *Arcadia*, or a vague possibility on the horizon, shaping the future of the romance virgin even while its premature eruption into the familial *hortus conclusus* is successfully avoided. In all cases, the youthful instruction the romance heroine receives comes to dictate and control the kind of courtship she will receive. These narratives imply that for girls, conjugal love is a discipline and an art, the training for which must occur long before matrimony. A balance must be achieved between the claims of the parents on their daughter and the structural necessity of her transfer. Basilius fights the transfer of his daughters tooth and nail. Wroth's Urania does not marry until she is reunited with her lost family. Milton's Lady is safely recontained within familial boundaries. Marvell's Maria Fairfax is to be the object of a wistful matrimonial sacrifice. There is a certain ambivalence about the inevitable exchange of the daughter. How she is taught concerning her erotic destiny helps to limit the risks she and her family may encounter while she pursues it. Despite the oppressive associations "patriarchy" evokes in the modern mind, the concept of the patriarchal nuclear family may have brought with it an increasingly frequent and nuanced treatment in literature of the role of woman in the constitution of the aristocracy. She is still a vessel of the line, but she is more than that within the nuclear family itself. As the most unstable element of family configuration, she becomes at the same time the symbol of the family's irreducible *arete*.

Unlike the male pastoral singer, a Tityrus or Colin or Philisides, the pastoral girl cannot be alone in a pastoral idyll for long. She is defined by her relationship with others, as a daughter, sister, or potential wife and mother. Male characters enter pastoral to flee contact with civilization. However, the female heroine challenges pastoral solipsism. She is rarely alone. The aloneness of the classical shepherd enables a "poetics of autonomy,"[118] a position from which he can criticize the larger world and maintain his independence in a kind

117 Lévi-Strauss, 489.
118 Quint, *Origin and Originality*, 47.

of atemporal stasis. The pastoral heroine's essential definition as a creature defined only in relation and interaction presupposes change and development. Perhaps for this reason, the shepherdess Alarina in Wroth's *Urania* is fated to break her vow to Diana and reunite with the lover who once spurned her. By challenging the solipsism of the hero, the romance girl shapes the lover who would shape her. But her interaction does not begin with him; it begins with the pastoral family, a group which according to all Renaissance cultural and religious models evolved from a pastoral origin. The pastoral *locus*, with her presence and influence, becomes the ideal *domus*. Thus pastoral romance is also family romance. In these texts, classical pastoral stasis is portrayed as a form of endogamy harmful to the family. In order for exogamy to triumph and for the family to survive, time must breach the pastoral stillness; domestic civilization must conquer the autonomy of the male pastoralist; and linearity must be introduced into the self-referential eroticism of eternal desire and frustration common to the pastoral lyric in a male voice. As for the family, so for the society at large: the pastoral heroine is instrumental in re-engaging her family in the business of civilization, even though she herself cannot wholly leave the pastoral realm.

Chapter 2

THE ARCADIAN PRISON: CHASTITY AND THE DEFENSE OF THE PRINCESSES IN SIDNEY'S TWO *ARCADIAS*[1]

IN BOTH VERSIONS of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, the first pastoral romance in English, the royal sisters Pamela and Philoclea are double heroines, offering two contrasting models of the ideal young gentlewoman. Pamela, variously described as "noble," "wise," "virtuous," and "disdaining," and Philoclea, whose epithets include "amiable," "sweet-minded," and "gentle," provide the reader with examples of how, and how not, to manage the perils of feminine erotic maturation. Sidney's characterization of the sisters has been seen as a rhetorical exercise in antithesis. According to this line of thinking, the reader is not required to judge their comparative merits but only to admire them: in the words of C.S. Lewis, each girl "can be praised without reservation."[2] Seventeen-year-old Pamela's greater strength of mind is attributed to her one year age advantage over her sister. Such strength, however, is thrown into relief by her younger sister's inadequacies, charming as they may be. Those inadequacies are due less to age, I would argue, than to the particular model of femininity Philoclea embodies. I suggest that Sidney's portrayal of the two sisters does in fact ask us not only to distinguish, but to judge between two different models of femininity. For each girl, the attainment of maturity is synonymous with the development of a sense of self-possession or self-entitlement. This evolving sense is manifested primarily through lyric moments in which the girls meditate upon the changes love has wrought in their lives and in their hearts. Together, the 1580 and the 1590 versions of Sidney's Arcadian romance construct a specifically feminine ideal of maturity in which the two crucial Renaissance feminine virtues of silence and obedience prove to be ineffective means of preserving the third, chastity.

1 A portion of this chapter appeared as " 'The Majesty of Unconquered Virtue': Pamela and the Argument of Feminine Nobility in Sidney's New Arcadia," *EIRC* 28.2 (2002): 181–206, and is reprinted with permission (copyright 2002 South-Central Renaissance Conference).

2 Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, 338. For a view of the princesses as a set of balanced antitheses see Danby, *Poets on Fortune's Hill*, 58–9; and Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia*, 27–33.

The difficult achievement of self-possession is a problem for all lovers in Sidney's pastoral, for the experience of love here serves as the crucible of self-transformation. Within the narrative, passion has a disordering effect, causing the ducal family to disintegrate as the girls' parents pursue their own erotic imperatives. Sidney's portrayal of the effects of passion calls into question Tasso's valuation of love as a "noble habit of the will,"[3] a manageable emotion which, within the context of the heroic romance, can serve as a form of self-improvement. In Sidney's romance, however, characters who believes that they can fully control internal passion are only deceiving themselves. Self-transformation, willing or unwilling, is literalized in the device of the disguise, adopted by most of the major characters at one point or another. For the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus, love requires a sacrifice of proper identity. Their respective disguises as Amazon and as shepherd are outer manifestations of internal change. Love initiates a crisis of self-possession, the disintegrating effects of "Cupid's deep incision" on identity: "O wretched state of man in self-division!"[4] Love shatters the unity of self-conception and, if desires are consummated, love replaces it. Pamela and Philoclea exemplify two different ways of negotiating these dangers. For the romance girl in love, however, the reattainment of an integrated self is more complicated, since that self is destined to be claimed by another.

The problem of self-possession for Pamela and Philoclea is a gendered version of the problem of identity encountered by their lovers Pyrocles and Musidorus; the girls, however, must not only grapple with the threat of desire, both their own and that of their lovers, but also with the claims of their parents over their bodies. For them, self-possession means not just unity of mind but possession of one's own body in the most literal sense. The *Arcadia* illustrates how much the stability of Arcadian society depends upon the prevention of domestic emancipation for the princesses. On the other hand, the work makes clear the contradictions of a social order in which female honor guarantees patriarchal prerogatives. Defined as chastity, female honor depends upon self-restraint and and vigilant awareness. This notion of chastity uncovers another contradiction, one embedded in the frequently articulated triad of chastity, silence and obedience.[5] A young girl must be trained out of passivity and sweetness, for attractive as these qualities may be, they do not ultimately serve the cause of female honor as it was defined in Sidney's era.[6] As I hope

3 Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, in Gilbert, 485.

4 Spoken by the shepherd Lalus in the First Eclogues of Sir Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* [*The Old Arcadia*], ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones, 56. All subsequent citations of the *Old Arcadia* [*OA*] refer to this edition.

5 See Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475–1640* for the comprehensive identification and analysis of these virtues in the English Renaissance literature of female pedagogy.

6 Lindheim in *Structures*, 29 argues that in Sidney's time, "ideal womanhood had never been rigidly defined. … Aside from the indispensable virtue of chastity, which guaranteed a stable

to show, the interlocking histories of Pamela and Philoclea demonstrate this point. Chastity becomes a heroic goal, a site where girls might prove their aristocratic fitness of purpose: it is not ensured by a lack of experience but rather by knowledge of the world and of the self. Additionally, the significance of female virginity extends beyond its use as a repressive social rule designed to make the assignment of property easier by ensuring purity of the line. It may also be a socially inconvenient value through which a girl tests her own sense of self-possession. Her concern for its maintenance encourages her to rebel against the interests of those who would control her against her will. In the *Old Arcadia*, it is the most attractively feminine sister, Philoclea, the avowed favorite of the narrator, who cannot fend off threats to her chastity, not because she is corrupt but because she is too innocent; her understanding is too weak.[7] The *New Arcadia* also shows Philoclea at a distinct disadvantage in her dealings with her crafty aunt Cecropia; she is incapable of the kind of vigorous and morally effective self-defense her sister mounts. In the love dilemmas of both princesses, Sidney's Arcadian texts explore the paradox of feminine chastity as simultaneous restraint and freedom. In the final 1593 version of the tale, it is chastity, not love, that emerges most clearly as a noble habit of the will.

THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE'S PASTORAL: THE *ARCADIA* AS A FEMININE TEXT

Pastoral carries an ambivalent significance in Sidney's work. The leisure that it glorifies is morally suspect for the man of action Sidney aspired to be. His own desire to cut a great figure and his status in the cult of chivalry sit uneasily with his literary identity as Philisides, the star-loving shepherd. In the *Defense of Poesie*, his attitude toward the genre he did so much to define is mixed, for he notes the low esteem in which the pastoral genre is held. The reason: "For perchance where the hedge is lowest they will soonest leap over."[8] In the text's dedication to his sister, at whose Wilton estate he most probably composed it, Sidney tries to reconcile the paradox of working in the realm of *otium*. The book, he says, is a "trifle," something he wrote as a hostess gift. A book written for a woman, the *Old Arcadia* is appropriately born of a feminized man: in his dedicatory letter, he imagines the text having been "delivered" of

society, women (at least in literature) were free to pursue perfection in ways that ranged from emphasizing those qualities they shared with men to emphasizing those that inhered in their special function as wife and mother." The very question Sidney poses in his picture of the princesses, however, is what definition of ideal womanhood best *serves* that indispensable virtue of chastity.

7 The narrator points to his greater pleasure in dwelling on Philoclea's story, for example, in Book IV as he signals a shift in the story's emphasis: "But so sovereign a possession the charming Philoclea had stolen into that her eldest sister was almost forgotten" (265).

8 Sidney, *Defense*, in Gilbert, 430.

his womb-like mind.[9] According to Fulke Greville, Sidney considered the book an "unpolish'd Embrio."[10] In his rhetorical pose as a pastoral author, Sidney presents the production and consumption of pastoral as women's work and familial pastime. His own relation to it, and to the courtly society reading it, is influenced by the Elizabethan identification of pastoral as a feminine genre.

The *Arcadia* itself originated in Sidney's attempt to turn a burdensome restraint into an opportunity for heroic effort, at least in the mediated form of literary labor. In fact, Sidney was at Wilton because he was involuntarily rusticated by Queen Elizabeth. His open opposition to the the queen's proposed marriage to the Duke of Anjou earned him her serious displeasure.[11] His attitude toward his queen's authority was itself ambivalent. Sidney's troubled relationship with Elizabeth is well known; he was constantly frustrated by her refusal to cooperate with his dreams of involving England in a grand Protestant alliance, with himself as a leading light. It is possible that the trial scenes in Book V of both versions and the treatment of the princesses represent in part a wished-for containment of feminine power in the political arena. Sidney's enforced country holiday makes real his metaphor of pastoral as a hedged place of confinement. Out of favor and out of the public sphere of court life, Sidney turned to pastoral as a means of accomplishing, as the *Defense* states, "whole considerations of wrongdoing and patience."[12]

The paradoxical operation of female chastity in the *Arcadia* as a virtue combining inherent limitation with moral freedom provides an analogy to Sidney's position as exiled courtier and unneeded knight, for he found himself in the same position as his feminine creations, the princesses Pamela and Philoclea. The two girls also find themselves hedged by their father Basilius in a pastoral prison. Their separate attempts to break out, by flight in Pamela's case and fraud in Philoclea's, lead them to a trial by the public authorities in which their pastoral confinement is turned to virtual imprisonment. I suggest that Sidney has imaginative sympathy for the plight of his princesses, using them as figures of his own plight. At the same time, he uses them as an example of the dangers of female authority in the political sphere, the same authority which "hedges" him into the realm of pastoral to begin with. Pastoral exile results in feminization and immobilization. Pastoral writing is an attempt to transcend these handicaps. The Arcadian princesses, experiencing while in prison their own exile from active life, are shown as having to resort to the same sort of

9 Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle*, 74.

10 Greville, *The Life of the Renowned Philip Sidney*, 17.

11 A.C. Hamilton in *Sir Philip Sidney* notes that Sidney's sojourn at Wilton was preceded by two events not likely to endear him to Elizabeth: his public quarrel with the Earl of Oxford in August 1579 and the letter he sent to the queen that autumn opposing the possibility of her marriage to the Duc D'Anjou. Sidney subsequently spent a large part of 1580 at Wilton.

12 Sidney in Gilbert, 431.

self-representation through writing with which, to borrow a term from the text's dedicatory letter, Sidney "toys" in writing the *Old Arcadia* itself.[13]

The *Old Arcadia* (ca. 1580), Sidney's first version of the work, is confined to a pastoral setting in which the plot, the several ways in which the strange Delphic oracle pertaining to Basilius and his family is brought to pass, unfolds in comedic progression interrupted by pastoral eclogues commenting upon the action. The epic history of the two young heroes is a secondary concern. Indeed, their characterizations are ambiguous; good fighters they may be, but the text does not exonerate them from almost raping Pamela (in the case of Musidorus) and making Philoclea the accessory of the capital crime of premarital sex (in the case of Pyrocles). The printed versions of 1590 and 1593, overseen respectively by Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke, excise Musidorus's violent urge and soften Pyrocles's irresponsibility. Because the sexual aspect of the relationship between the young lovers is so much stronger in the *Old Arcadia*, a separate discussion of its implications for the meaning of female chastity is in order. The confinement of the action in the *Old Arcadia* to the pastoral realm alone adds urgency to the princesses' attempts to escape their father's stifling paradise. In the *New Arcadia* they do leave, but end up facing another whole array of temptations and threats as they are transposed from the pastoral world into the epic one.

The first version of the story is told in an ironic, self-mocking voice. Although the earlier work engages questions of reason, will, and ethics, it is definitely not didactic in tone. The second, extended version of the story, which first appeared in print in 1590, is more consistently moralistic. It exemplifies Tasso's mixed mode, accomodating both epic and romance within a largely, although not exclusively, pastoral framework. It also offers a more earnest treatment in particular of sexual morality: in the *New Arcadia* the virtue of chastity is given a heroic cast, while in the *Old Arcadia* its value, both societal and personal, is an open question. The skeptical treatment of chastity in the older version is partly accomplished through the employment of a shifting narrative voice without a stable moral perspective. Pamela, who attempts most vigilantly to adhere to a code of honor in which chastity is a key component, is the victim of a narrative joke when she is unwittingly saved from a rape she could not have prevented. The evolution of the status of chastity from the old text to the new is significant because it constitutes an internal debate within Sidney's work about the nature and value of female virginity and its relation to female honor. Is chastity simply a physical state with social significance, or does it have an independent moral power? The *New Arcadia* concludes this internal debate in favor of the transcendent value of chastity: in Pamela's climactic debate with Cecropia, her chastity is shown to be a spiritual strength enabling her to make virtuous sense of the world and defeat her aunt's superficially compelling but

[13] See *OA* 3 for Sidney's dedicatory letter in which he uses the verb to describe his work.

flawed arguments for an arbitrary and meaningless universe. Its far-reaching powers ultimately make female chastity a heroic quality.

In composing his pastoral romance, Sidney collapses the distinction between active and contemplative lives that accompanies the split between epic and pastoral worlds. The redefinition of female chastity as an active and heroic virtue from the *Old Arcadia* to the *New* can be seen as an aspect of that collapse. The negative and passive preservation of bodily purity is transformed into an active moral principle that is primarily manifested in spiritual and intellectual vigor.

ERONA AND THE EROTIC CAREER OF THE "GENTLE" GIRL IN THE *OLD ARCADIA*

The action of the *Old Arcadia* constitutes simply one episode in the continuing epic career of the two princes beyond the text. Their history before arriving in Arcadia and the reasons for their travels is conveyed through hearsay. "Dorus" (Musidorus disguised) apprises Pamela of his identity, and us of his past, through a story which is purportedly about someone else. The story of the princess Erona, so crucial to the plot of the *New Arcadia*, is relayed in the old version twice: first by a shepherd who overhears the faithful Plangus bemoaning his failure to locate the princes who could save her from the evil Queen Artaxia, and second by Plangus himself at one of the nightly eclogues. The perspective of the *Old Arcadia*, however, is to make the tangential matter more important than the principal matter; the pastoral truancy of Pyrocles and Musidorus in Arcadia is the issue at hand, not what they must achieve when they leave. The plight of Erona, desperate as it is, is thrown in almost as if it ultimately does not matter. We hear about it in the eclogues themselves, as if the narrator is suggesting that heroic figures should actually learn about their epic responsibilities not through epic, but through pastoral lyric. Moreover, it is a sign of how far the princes have fallen from the epic ideal that they do not leave immediately to succor Erona; they prefer to pursue their own erotic imperatives.

One might ask, then, why the story of Erona is included in such great detail. It seems a digression in the text, just as it might seem a digression in this discussion about Pamela and Philoclea. It first appears in the First Eclogues (59–64) as a reminder that the princes have great epic gifts, but we are never offered its resolution. The fourteen-year-old daughter of the king of Lydia, embarrassed by the naked statues and images of Cupid which adorned the country, orders them taken down. She has confused chastity with prudery. In punishment of her presumptuous act, Cupid makes Erona fall in love with a low-born man, Antiphilus ("against love"). Her father tries to stop the match, but Erona will brook no opposition and after her father's grief-induced death, seeks to marry her beloved. Before she can do so, a rejected suitor, King Otanes of Persia,

and his sister Artaxia wage war on Erona and capture Antiphilus. Pyrocles and Musidorus arrive on the scene, kill Otanes, and rescue Erona's lover. She marries Antiphilus. Unfortunately, he is unfaithful, having fallen in love with Artaxia. He betrays Erona to her forces and Artaxia holds her prisoner, threatening to kill her if Pyrocles and Musidorus do not show up to champion her within two years.

Whether the princes show up is never stated. The Erona story seems a tease. Yet it not only serves to point out the heroism and prowess of the princes; it also serves as a cautionary tale for the aristocratic young girl who would reject her erotic destiny. Erona's "sacrilege" brings ruin not only upon herself, but on her kingdom. Her career has wandered from the political and personal standard of an aristocratic virgin. The story suggests that chastity is not to be chosen as an ideal in itself; it is only instrumental in the attainment of a larger goal, the preservation of the honor of the house. Erona punishes herself by choosing someone beneath her. Significant, too, is the form her sacrilege takes: she asks her father "utterly to deface and pull down" (60) works of art, showing herself to be a philistine of the imagination. Her punishment is to become subject to a brutish passion for a lowborn scoundrel, since she has made herself ineligible for the aristocratic art of love. As a cautionary tale, the story of Erona touches on the central elements in the sexual development of Pamela and Philoclea: the artistic aspects of love, the importance of self-possession and self-sacrifice, and the political implications of the gentle girl's choices in love. Erona is a negative example for Basilius's daughters.

As princesses, Pamela and Philoclea are associated in a number of ways with the body of Arcadia itself. The retreat of their father Basilius is a female-gendered *locus amoenus*. Pyrocles recognizes the feminine nature of the site after he has fallen in love with Philoclea's painted image but as yet has not seen her:

> Certainly, certainly, cousin, it must needs be that some goddess this desert belongs unto, who is the soul of this soil; for neither is any less than a goddess worthy to be shrined in such a heap of pleasures, nor any less than a goddess could have made it so perfect a model of the heavenly dwellings. [14]

Of course, the animating goddess he has in mind is Philoclea, but Pamela too is a kind of *genius loci*. One of the first things we learn about her is conveyed through geographical imagery: her breasts are "like two fair mountainets in the pleasant vale of Tempe" (34). "Thessalian Tempe's seat," to which Marvell would later compare Nun Appleton, is the archetypal *locus amoenus*. The princesses' association through imagery with landscape is reinforced as their characterizations are developed; in two separate incidents in which the girls literally write their desires into the landscape, their emotional development

[14] Sidney, *OA* 14.

can be gauged by their changing relationship with the natural world. Metaphorically equated with territory, the girls also represent the kingdoms their lovers hope to win. The erotic adventures of Pyrocles and Musidorus in Arcadia really amount to war by other means; by attaining his "life's traffic" (163) as the narrator calls Pamela, he wins her "dowry" (276), the kingdom of which she is the inheritrix. Together, the two sisters exemplify two contrasting ways of negotiating the limitations of their pastoral emplacement in their quest for erotic success.

LOVE AND ART: PAMELA AND THE PROBLEM OF RATIONAL EMOTION

The princess Pamela is not unlike Queen Elizabeth herself, a female heir whose marriage is of great political importance. The problems befalling Arcadia because of the sex of its heir parallel the problems of female inheritance of the realm in England. The association between Pamela and Elizabeth takes on even greater resonance in Book V, when the imprisoned Pamela must assert her right to rule. Elizabeth herself was imprisoned as a young woman because she was deemed politically dangerous. The political problems of the fictional Pamela rest on the liability her sex represents to her country.

Pamela's relative maturity in comparison to her sister is evident from the start in her theatrical self-fashioning. She is the only woman in the *Old Arcadia* whose dress is a means of deliberate self-expression. Her manipulation of symbolism shows a less-than-innocent awareness of the difference between pastoral ideal and flawed reality. Her dress as we first see her is an important emblem of her position as she conceives of it; she plays the part of the shepherdess, and her costume is a symbolic representation of her pastoral emplacement. Her "russet velvet" gown is a violation of decorum, a simple design worked in an incongruously rich medium (thus she shows the unworthiness of her present position). Her gown might also serve as an emblem of courtly pastoral itself. The jewel she wears around her neck is intended to represent her imprisonment: "[it] was a perfect white lamb tied at a stake with a great number of chains, as it had been feared lest the silly creature should do some great harm …"(34). Although she is required to present herself as a shepherdess, in fact she is chattel, the property of the gentleman shepherd Basilius. She is also aware of her status as a sacrifice, because her own private good has been superseded by what her father believes are considerations of state security. Her potential for disruption is already acknowledged in the ignominious confinement under her keeper Dametas, a true shepherd who is nonetheless silly and brutish. Her emblematic jewel is an assurance of her own harmlessness, an assurance which is actually as false as her lover Musidorus's pastoral costume is. Her counterfeit innocence echoes the strategy of Elizabethan pastoral as outlined by the theorist Puttenham, "to insinuate

and glaunce" [sic][15] at her own unpleasant bondage. Pamela knows that she is the possession of her father, and her chafing under that knowledge becomes a spur towards self-possession. In her case, her drive toward self-possession is implicated in her attempt to surpass her political "nonage" (308). The story of Pamela is a meditation on the anomalous position of the daughter who, given her father's power, must uphold a patriarchy in which she cannot ultimately participate. Pamela's latent power is finally dissipated by her marriage, but how she wields such power, while she has it, is significant.

Pamela differs from every other woman in the *Old Arcadia*, and most women of Renaissance prose fiction, in one important respect: her sense of honor is so completely internalized that she is morally autonomous. She represents the logical conclusion of the emphasis on honor as a female quality of self-restraint and educated judgment, rather than a male quality dependent on martial prowess.[16] Such an internalization of honor, not dependent on visible shows, diminishes the importance of community sanction for one's actions. Pamela is the only member of Basilius's family whose honor remains apparently uncompromised, even though what she does ought to damage it. Her mother Gynecia is consumed by an adulterous passion which stirs an unnatural hatred of her rival daughter; that daughter, Philoclea, has so little moral autonomy that she can hardly recognize evil unless it is identified as such by authorities. Pamela alone maintains the rational judgment which the narrator of the text praises so highly. In the very act of eloping with Musidorus, the narrator calls her "virtuous," an ironic designation, but one consistent with her view of herself. She takes an active role in furthering "Dorus's" deceit of her keepers. Furthermore, love has made her "act like a man" in the sense that her *virtu* is a well-developed sense of her own worth and prerogatives. Pamela does not care what people think: "Nothing bred from myself can discomfort me, and fools' opinions I will not reckon as dishonour"(270). In this, she is unique; even Musidorus and Pyrocles use false names to spare their relatives news of their disgrace. Her autonomous sense of honor proves to be the salvation of her foolish family.

Pamela's instinctive attraction to "Dorus" (Musidorus in pastoral disguise) is tempered by his low position, but this does not mean that she fears the reaction of others to her desires. In the world of Arcadia, nobility is a natural gift manifested through outward shows. Pamela's self-definition is largely

15 Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, in Smith II, 40.

16 See McKeon, *Origins*, 157: the equation of female honor with chastity gained strength in the early modern period, as the "political" or "geneaological" injunction against female promiscuity was increasingly emphasized more than the religious prohibition against it. But the "political" view of chastity, as opposed to the religious view, stresses its instrumental rather than intrinsic value. The honor of Sidney's Pamela is not based on community standards of behavior but internal convictions that require no external validation: hence, its "political" value, in the sense of assuring the orderly and just transmission of property and name, is only incidental.

dependent upon her identity as a princess. For her it is not an issue of social suitability, but of worthiness. Indeed, her initial attraction can be read as her instinctive understanding of the worth of another aristocrat. Nonetheless, she does not immediately accept Dorus's revelation of his identity. The moment of her capitulation to her feelings contains her admonition to herself "to be hard of belief" (93). Imagination is her enemy; she recognizes the threat literary courtship poses to her. Here, her situation is analogous to Erona's; she distrusts art, and she ends up falling in love with a "lowborn" man. Musidorus's ability to win her, however, is based on his aristocratic way with words. He demonstrates his worth through the use of courtly language to which Pamela, as another aristocrat, can respond (the shepherdess Mopsa, Musidorus's other female auditor, tellingly misunderstands him). Their growing attraction, then, is paradoxically natural, for they understand each other's artifice.[17] The gods do not have to intervene by upsetting the social hierarchy with the induction of an unnatural and base love, as in the case of poor Erona's passion for Antiphilus.

Dorus's next strategy is a song which harks back to Pamela's use of the lamb as an impresa for herself:

> My sheep are thoughts, which I both guide and serve,
> Their pasture is fair hills of fruitless love. …[18]

The irony visually illustrated in Pamela's enchained lamb, an innocent but dangerous creature, finds a second instance in Dorus's paradoxical linguistic evocations of guiding and serving, fair and fruitless. His song elicits a tearful and sympathetic response from Pamela, not because it is touchingly naive (for this, one must look to Lalus's addresses to Kala in the First Eclogues) but because its heaping on of metaphor calls attention to its own status as an artifact. Pamela emphasizes her own status as artifact in the symbolism of her costume. Dorus's song elaborates upon her symbol. Both the song and Pamela's impresa employ pastoral imagery in a highly self-conscious and ironic way, with each manipulator of pastoral imagery stressing the metaphorical quality rather than the literal meanings of pastoral.[19] The similar way in which they use pastoral convention helps construct the kinship between the lovers. Pamela and Musidorus are not only suited to each other socially, as oldest children with serious casts of mind and royal demeanor, but they are also drawn by aesthetic compatibility. In forcing his family into a pastoral retreat, Basilius seeks to render literal the pastoral conventions; the country is associated with the pure, unpretentious and virtuous, and the threats of fate and war can be

17 Mazzola in *Favorite Sons*, 62 makes a similar point about this episode.

18 Sidney, *OA*, 94.

19 Robinson in *The Shape of Things Known: Sidney's* Apology *in its Philosophical Tradition* notes that this particular poem's "invention … has no narrative value but simply serves as a formula for the rest of the poem" (182–3). Musidorus's conceit stresses its inherent artificiality.

avoided by leaving the *urbs*. Unlike her father, Pamela understands the artistic underpinnings of the "natural" paradise in which she is trapped. Her elopement is motivated as much by a negative desire to flee the pastoral realm as it is by a positive impulse to be with Musidorus. She wants to live in a world where pastoral is only a set of tropes, not a literal place. Her father's "Arcadia" is less a natural paradise than a Bower of Bliss to be escaped for one's moral good.[20]

The episode of Pamela's elopement constitutes the most extreme outer edge of her circular quest. At this point the efficacy of virtue is at its most important. Ironically, the *Old Arcadia*, situated at the very beginning of the pastoral romance tradition in England, undermines one of the most important tenets of belief concerning the efficacy of female sexual virtue: its absolute unconquerability. Chastity is accorded near supernatural powers in *The Faerie Queene*, *Pericles*, *Urania* (where female chastity erases the deficiencies of male infidelity), and *A Mask at Ludlow*, to name a few.[21] "The sun-clad power of chastity" (*A Mask*) is one of the most enduring topoi of pastoral romance. Yet in the text which marks the inception of pastoral romance in Renaissance England, chastity is shown to be as fragile and as subject to chance as any other weak human virtue. The extraordinary emphasis accorded to chastity in Renaissance romance narratives is in part a result of pervasive nervousness about the need, in a society where the theory of patriarchalism as a governing system was threatened by the demands of circumstance, to depend so greatly on the heroic qualities of the person least likely to be thought to possess such qualities: the adolescent girl.[22] Pamela's chastity, defined as an internal discipline of strong moral conviction in which an intact hymen is a metaphor for an intact identity, proves unable to protect her from the illicit desires of the man to whom she has entrusted herself. She is saved from rape by sheer chance, the arrival of bandits whose providential returning of their royal spoil to her family proves to be the only safeguard she has. The episode is straight out of Greek romance; pirates are continually kidnapping virgins on the verge of being raped; the difference, and it is a key one, is that the evil seducer is also the beloved kindred spirit. This fact further lends ironic emphasis to the "providential" aspect of the outlaws' arrival: the greatest threat, one might logically assume, would come from them, but it does not.

What Musidorus's near rape of Pamela shows is that chastity is meaningless.

20 A.C. Hamilton, 14; see his analysis of the "prison which tests man's [sic] worth" as a recurring leitmotif in Sidney.

21 *A Mask*, however, differs from these other texts in its treatment of chastity because Milton has a more expansive definition of the quality.

22 Regarding the conflict between the theory of patriarchalism and the circumstances of Renaissance English government: the position of Elizabeth, and earlier, that of her sister Mary posed problems for sixteenth-century thinkers like John Knox, for whom female authority was an anomaly. Despite the accession in 1603 of James I, the seventeenth-century articulators of patriarchalism as a political and a domestic ideology increasingly display an awareness of their own need to convince a sometimes skeptical audience (see Schochet, 57; Ezell, 15–20).

The Countess of Pembroke's revised 1590 edition of her brother's manuscript removes this episode, partly for reasons of decorum (the conduct is unfitting for a hero, and the salacious flavor unfitting for the secular saint Sidney became), but also because of the natural conclusion the episode enforces. Female sexual virtue cannot even protect its possessor, and if it cannot do so, how can it serve as a foundation of social order? In Pamela's sister, Philoclea, Sidney approaches another side of the chastity issue: what happens if the worst occurs, and chastity is irreparably damaged? What are the personal and societal origins and results of female unchastity? Pamela's story illustrates the first half of the problem, the helplessness of chastity. Sheer chance, not unseen moral order, maintains it. The elopement episode in Book III includes Pamela's pleas to her lover not to abuse the power he has over her, poetic interludes expressive of the effect of love on Pamela's self-conception, and the near-violation both of Pamela's body and of all the ideals earlier set up in the conversation between the two lovers.[23]

Pamela's characteristic rhetorical style is one of reasoned argument, of cause and result. Reason is a guiding principle; her initial affection for Dorus is guarded by her rational awareness of his unworthiness, an awareness strong enough to keep her feelings under control until informed of the truth of his origins via a fiction. In exhorting Musidorus to behave honorably as they elope, she appeals not to emotion, but again to structures of reason, even though she admits her willingness to leave with him is "contrary to all general rules of reason" (172). She describes her love as a response of her "mind," not her heart, to Musidorus's "shows" of affection, a response of mathematical commensurability ("due proportion," in her words, 172). By emphasizing the aesthetic affinities between Pamela and Musidorus, the narrator develops her attraction to him as an effect of an easily observable poetic cause. The Renaissance considered poetics as a branch of philosophy, a matter for rational inquiry. Pamela's description of her emotional awakening corresponds well with neo-Aristotelian literary philosophy, for Musidorus's skills as a storyteller and poet get him his girl by evoking a response to his work.[24] He not only conducts his courtship under false colors; he also uses a narrative to express his feelings to Pamela. While pretending to court Mopsa, "Dorus" recites the "dolorous tale" of "that pattern of ill fortune," Musidorus, and concludes, "the matters are too monstrous for my capacity. His [Musidorus's] hateful destinies must best declare their own workmanship" (93). Via his story, Dorus in

23 Lindheim notes a strong tension in the *Old Arcadia* between literary love conventions and "the subversive 'reality' that confronts them" (*Structures*, 140).

24 In the *Defense*, Sidney's criterion for successful lyric poetry is its affective power, "forcibleness, or *energia*": "But truly many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistible love, if I were a mistress would never persuade me they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings and so caught up certain swelling phrases ... than that in truth they feel those passions …" (Sidney in Gilbert, 453).

effect tells Pamela, "I am not I, pity the tale of me."[25] His skill induces Pamela to suspend her disbelief in "great feignings," despite her natural skepticism. Dorus achieves a poetic goal as well as a personal one: because "love began to revive his flames" in Pamela's heart, his "feigning" achieves the Sidneyan goal of persuading through delight. In this wooing scene, we see how Pamela's characteristic rationality is combined with aesthetic sensitivity.

In persuading him to hold her chastity inviolate, Pamela uses language which again refers both to hierarchy and to the control of reason: "… govern your love towards me as I may still remain worthy to be loved" (173). Love and reason, for Pamela, are not opposite elements but intrinsically related. Love without reason, she implies, destroys itself; Musidorus cannot logically love a woman whom he has debased, because she then becomes an unfit object of love. Furthermore, love requires self-governance, control over one's own desires. Pamela's association of love and reason flies in the face of all the evidence in the *Old Arcadia*; not only is Musidorus's humiliating disguise contrary to the rational impulses of a prince to display himself properly, but love is the most destructive and anti-rational force that Basilius's family has to encounter. One's own emotions, not outside perils from invaders or inside threats from rebels, pose the greatest threat to one's well-being. The presence of Pyrocles/Cleophila incites a love which even succeeds in overturning what could be considered the most rational love of any, the love of parents for children. Pyrocles's role in rupturing the emotional bond considered the basis of civilized society and his success in violating the other "rational" basis for love, the attraction of male/female opposites, is itself a major proof against Pamela's conception of rational love. Nevertheless, both she and Musidorus profess faith in the idea of a measured and appropriate emotion. Pamela's position within the reason/passion dichotomy typical of Sidney's work is therefore unique. It is an admirable if, at least in Sidney's universe, an untenable one.

Musidorus also alludes to the rationale of social structure and inherent hierarchies in his response to Pamela's concerns: "You do wrong to yourself to make any doubt that a base estate could ever undertake so high an enterprise, or a spotted mind be able to behold your virtues" (173). The phrase "spotted mind" assumes greater importance in the overall context of the work, one purpose of which is to define precisely what a spotted mind is, and whether a stained body and spotted mind go hand in hand. The examination of the "spotted mind" achieves its fullest expression in Philoclea's situation, but even here the question of moral responsibility and its relationship to chastity is implicit. After framing her decision to elope with Musidorus as a rational act born of explicit causes, Pamela concludes her appeal with a statement which confirms her moral confidence in herself: "… your action only must determine whether I have done virtuously or shamefully in following you." (173). She has an unspotted conscience, even while flouting the authority of her

[25] Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*, sonnet 45.

father and the laws of the state. Pamela has made her decision to elope on the basis of available evidence. She has entrusted all of her virtue to her lover. Effectively, her honor now resides with him, not with herself. As her following poetic meditations make clear, Pamela regards the surrender of control over one's own honor as the price of love. For her, giving up one's honor to another means giving up an important constituent of identity. Pamela is no longer responsible for herself. She has given up her self-possession to Musidorus.

The narrator comments on the wisdom of such a policy by arranging for the couple to enter "a fair thick wood which did entice them with the pleasantness of it" (173). This likely allusion to Dante's wood of error in the *Inferno* extends the usual geographical symbolism of pastoral by mixing the idea of the pleasant retreat with the harsh allegorical significance of the dark and (morally) confusing wilderness. Pamela's extensive reasoning away of any responsibility she might bear for her destiny leads her into error; despite the evidence of Musidorus's worthiness, she has misplaced her trust. In a cynical example of narrative irony, however, she is never made aware of the fact. Pamela's self-knowledge is based on an erroneous reading of those around her. She stands on a knowledge of her own personal sovereignty, but the narrative challenges the basis of her self-possession and her belief that she can freely bestow herself. The fair thick wood is the site of Pamela's own pastoral meditations. Like her sister, Pamela is moved to poetry only when alone or with one other person; the public nature of the pastoral eclogue recited by and for an audience of shepherds is replaced by a purely private meditation.[26] Her poetic artifacts (in the sense of things made through art) are also different from those of the male shepherds in the eclogue interludes because they are written, not sung. Writing also is a closet activity, a private act of expression.[27] Her poems' status as texts, however, is complicated by the implications of Pamela's materials: she carves her words into pine trees. The activity of writing on trees is an allusion to Angelica's and Medoro's similar activity in *Orlando Furioso*; thus the narrator places Pamela squarely in the lineage of romance heroines.[28] Sidney's handling of Pamela's poems, however, qualifies their conventional literary ancestry with the fact that among scenes of poetry-making in the *Old Arcadia* itself, writing as a means of transmission is actually quite rare. Angelica and Medoro were also infected with a wild passion which made them carve their feelings into trees, whereas Pamela remains eminently rational and deliberate.[29] To compose rather than to emote, the writer herself must be composed.

26 Here Pamela shows herself to be a practitioner of "art" pastoral, rather than the "organic" pastoral exemplified by the shepherds in the eclogues; one mark of art pastoral is its lyric solipsism. See Quint, *Origin and Originality*, 47, on the solipsistic tendencies of pastoral lyric.

27 Lamb discusses women's writing as a closet activity in the Renaissance in relation to the way the activity is represented in Mary Wroth's *Urania* (Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, 188–191).

28 Sidney, *OA*, Explanatory Notes, 377.

29 I am indebted to Michael Williamson for this insight.

Pamela's "artistry" is "natural," as she converts aspects of the landscape itself into her writing materials and her animate audience. In the following sonnet, she makes metaphorical equivalences between herself and the pines themselves:

> Do not disdain, O straight upraised pine,
> That wounding thee, my thoughts in thee I grave;
> Since that my thoughts, as straight as straightness thine,
> No smaller wound -- alas! far deeper have.
>
> Deeper engraved, which salve nor time can save,
> Giv'n to my heart by my fore-wounded ey'n:
> Thus cruel to myself, how canst thou crave
> My inward hurt should spare thy outward rine?
>
> Yet still, fair tree, lift up thy stately line,
> Live long, and long witness my chosen smart,
> Which barred desires (barred by myself) impart.
>
> And in this growing bark grow verses mine.
> My heart my word, my word hath giv'n my heart.
> The giver giv'n from gift shall never part.[30]

In the first stanza, by "wounding" the bark of the trees by carving her words into them, she is only making them an emblem of her own "straight" thoughts. Pamela, having been written upon by desire, "deeper engraved" by the sight of Musidorus, responds to the imagined protest of the trees by claiming her cruelty to herself is no greater than her cruelty to them. In stanza two, Pamela employs the language of Neoplatonic love theory, the wound through the eye engendering love, but she apparently rejects the deterministic implications of such theory; her wound is self-inflicted. She has only herself to blame for her situation.

By choosing the tree as the emblem of herself, Pamela expresses her own strength, also playing against Neoplatonic convention. Instead of choosing an emblem of her ruin by love, Pamela has chosen an emblem of strength and permanence, perhaps punning on "stately line"; since she herself is the heir of Basilius and the inheritrix of Arcadia, she may be suggesting that her love, far from resulting in ruin, in fact will reinforce her original destiny as eventual ruler of Arcadia and mother of royal progeny. The genealogical associations of the "fair tree" are reinforced by the language of heraldry in the third stanza: Pamela's "barred desires" are the subject of her emblem-making, just as an escutcheon is an emblem of noble origins.[31] She legitimizes her erotic feelings

30 Sidney, *OA*, 174.

31 Michael McKeon pointed out to me Pamela's pun on the heraldric significance of "bar." Her wordplay does not necessarily mean that she sees her "barred desires" as illegitimate or intrinsically taboo; the diagonal signal of bastardy on an escutcheon is correctly known as the "*bend* sinister." The bar, on the other hand, is a diminutive of the fess, a horizontal line across the

by describing them as a badge of honor. The repetition of the word "barred" twice in the same line invites us to read it both ways: first as a synonym for "forbidden," and second as an aspect of heraldric art practiced by Pamela herself as she chooses her own royal mate.

Pamela talks not about the wrack of love but its power as a creative force. She is explicit about her control of the situation; her wound is "chosen," caused by her own actions. The final stanza of the poem expresses the unity Pamela finds between her will, or "heart," and her honor, her "word," two terms more usually opposed in Renaissance love poetry. Erotic imperatives and social obligations in *Astrophil and Stella*, for example, and even in the larger world of the *Arcadia*, are often at loggerheads. Pamela, however, has no difficulty in reconciling the two. She has already made an easy equivalence between her thoughts, herself, and the tree, which in line twelve she extends to her verses: "and in this growing bark grow verses mine." It is unclear whether the imperative "grow" is used transitively, in which case the subject of the verb is the tree, or intransitively, in which case she has begun to apostrophize her own verses. The ambiguity is appropriate, however, to her task of making nature a vehicle and emblem of her own situation, as every pastoral poet does. In these happy meditations in her hour of supreme self-confidence, Pamela does not feel alienated from nature. She controls it and it reflects her, just as she believes that she has control over herself and her relationship with Musidorus. Her thoughts are "straight," her desires honorable. She succeeds in melding opposites in the final lines, where subject/object status is confusing. Since both heart and word are "giver" and "giv'n," the grammar enforces an equivalence between them. Pamela herself is also both giver and given, for in this poem she articulates her right to be both, to be the prize and the prize giver, to control her body and to give it away. Pamela uses the sonnet, a form associated with Neoplatonism, to question some of its essential assumptions about the nature of love. Erotic suffering becomes fertile and productive; the lover is not a victim, but a responsible agent; the quasi-military language of resistance and conquest is absent. Her poem breaks down expected oppositions and subject/object relationships, enacting Pamela's expectations for herself in her relationship with Musidorus.

Pamela's urge to write a living, growing document leads her to write a couplet, a small epigram suitable for a small space, on one of the tree's exposed roots:

> Sweet root, say thou, the root of my desire
> Was virtue clad in constant love's attire.[32]

Pamela makes a claim for the origin of her affection which strengthens her

middle of the shield that was originally a basic symbol of military authority. See Rotherhy, *Concise Encyclopedia of Heraldry*, 3–5.

32 Sidney, *OA*, 174.

perception of her love as an honorable course. Virtue, she claims, not lust based on physical attraction, led her to love Musidorus. Is it Pamela or Sidney, though, who is joking about the "attire" of her lover? The notion that constant love would be attired or costumed at all is paradoxical. The false pretenses under which the lovers conducted their courtship lend irony to Pamela's description of Musidorus as "constant." Virtue is not clothed in a disguise; otherwise, it is not virtue. This view is enforced by the conclusion of the *Old Arcadia*: since the princes abandoned their princely identities, according to Euarchus they have lost their princely virtues. In her epigram, however, Pamela invokes the inner nature/outer apparel dichotomy only to de-emphasize its importance.

She does the same thing in her subsequent song, part of a little eclogue she performs with Musidorus as they rest together under the trees.

> Like diverse flowers, whose diverse beauties serve
> To deck the earth with his well-coloured weed,
> Though each of them his private form preserve,
> Yet joining forms one sight of beauty breed;
> Right so my thoughts whereon my heart I feed;
>
> Right so my inward parts, and outward glass,
> Though each possess a diverse working kind,
> Yet all well knit to one fair end do pass:
> That he to whom these sundry gifts I bind,
> All what I am, still one, his own, do find.[33]

Again, Pamela employs natural imagery to convey a mental state. In the second stanza, she extends the image to apply to the relationship between her "inward parts and outward glass." The word "parts" refers to her inherent virtues; her appearance is a glass or mirror, itself a telling metaphor expressive of Pamela's unfortunate failure at this point to distinguish between appearance and reality. Her initial characterization demonstrated her conviction that her appearance and position as a shepherdess did not match her "inward parts;" now, after falling in love with Dorus and escaping her father's prison, she has regained a sense of integrity or continuity between self-conception and social situation. What she believes to be her outward status (liberated, independent, secure) and her inner nature (virtuous, authoritative, and independent-minded) meld in the grove. She is a free princess there. It is probably not coincidental that her song's final line ("All what I am, still one, his own, do find.") contains a translation of Elizabeth I's own motto *semper eadem*, "always the same" or "still the same." This motto has multiple implications, of course, but among others is the idea that the queen's virgin status helps to place her outside the temporal world of corruption (sexual and political) and change. Pamela's own theoretically inviolable chastity, both physical and spiritual, outward and inward, is

[33] Sidney, *OA*, 175.

similarly an emblem of her integrity and of her privileged class status.[34] The security of both is about to prove short-lived; Musidorus threatens her virgin wholeness and the vulgar outlaws again reduce her to a prisoner.

Her poetic set in Book III shows Pamela's characteristic habit of breaking down conventional dichotomies: in her sonnet, the divisions between giver and gift, desire and honor, suffering and pleasure ("chosen smart"); and in her epigram and eclogue, the distinction between interior and exterior selves. The narrator, however, reinstates these dichotomies when he ventriloquizes the thoughts of Musidorus. As the prince contemplates Pamela sleeping after their eclogue, her presentation undergoes a startling metamorphosis from that of an expressive artist refiguring convention for new purposes to an object described in traditional Petrarchan terms of gems and warfare. The narrator even points to the shift:

> … her lips (whose separating was wont to be accompanied with most wise speeches) now by force drew his sight to mark how prettily they lay one over the other …, the eye of his fancy delivered to his memory the lying (as in ambush) under her lips of those armed ranks, all armed in most pure white. …[35]

Pamela, deprived by sleep of the individuality of her speech, loses her identity as Pamela and becomes the "Petrarchan lady." That Musidorus's perception of her as such is his own subjective description, is clear from the way in which the narrator emphasizes the prince's imaginative construction of the images he chooses, the role of his "fancy." Only Pamela's breathing indicates to Musidorus that she is not "the picture of some excellent artificer." His reconstruction of Pamela along conventional Petrarchan lines leads to his attempted rape of her. In his mind she becomes a "bulwark" to be overtaken because the "watch" is so weak. The relationship Pamela imagined in her poems proves a fiction after all. Only the timely intervention of "a dozen clownish villains" saves Pamela from destruction at the hands of her hero: "she was in a shrewd likelihood to have had great part of her trust in Musidorus deceived, and found herself robbed of that she had laid in store as her dearest jewel" – her virginity, certainly, but also her false self-image as a free, rational and secure human being.

Pamela's quest revises her cynicism. Her poems, uttered at the outermost edge of her circular quest, essentially argue quite naively that what she wants to do, she ought to do; and that merit in her love is evident because her lover is so lovable. Pamela and Philoclea create a chiasmus in the plot of moral development; Pamela becomes more innocent and less cynical emotionally as a result of love even while maintaining a sense of ownership over her body, while Philoclea moves from total sexual innocence to defloration, both moral

[34] Maureen Quilligan ("Instability and Authority") notes the danger of Pamela's paradoxical situation expressed in the tree poems: "… her virtue offers no solution to the problem posed by her attempt to be giver of herself as a gift" (317).

[35] Sidney, *OA*, 177.

and physical. Of course, Philoclea remains naive in comparison to Pamela in their written appeals to the Arcadian judges. But in the collapse of her integrity, both of personal morality and of wholeness (she falls into self-division), she undergoes a more radical disillusionment than Pamela. Philoclea loves, although miserably, with what she agonizingly believes is a love detestable to nature, whereas Pamela would not allow her feelings for a shepherd to affect her behavior until she knew her beloved was more than a shepherd. Pamela's cynicism is qualified, but Philoclea's innocence is compromised. Each girl's progress is figured in different settings as well: Pamela faces ruin by leaving her father's country, while Philoclea is ruined in her own bedroom. Pamela's excessive faith in her own mastery takes her outside conventional safeguards; Philoclea's passivity means that even in the most private of sanctuaries she is not safe.

LOVE AND NATURE: PHILOCLEA AND THE FRAGILITY OF PASTORAL PURITY

The one-year difference in age between Pamela and Philoclea manifests itself in different levels of self-consciousness. When we first hear of Philoclea, it is through her portrait, a picture so beautiful it inspires Pyrocles to fall in love with her. When we actually see her, however, the narrator presents her in contrast to her deliberately theatrical and self-disguised sister; she is

> nymphlike … so near nakedness as one might well discern part of her perfections, and yet so apparelled as did show she kept the best store of her beauties to herself; her excellent fair hair drawn up into a net made only of itself. …[36]

The artificial image which initially attracted Pyrocles is replaced by the artless presence of a girl so innocent she does not yet recognize her own immodesty.[37] Pamela's self-adornment (her shepherdess costume, her chained lamb pendant) amounts to self-conscious symbolic commentary on her imprisonment, but Philoclea herself is "the ornament of the earth," unrestrained by her sheer, nymphlike apparel and natural adornment.[38] For this reason it is Philoclea, not Pamela, who is the "true" pastoral woman.

Although her dress, slashed in many places to allow her smock to show through, is described as enticing even to a "restrained imagination" (33), Philoclea is not conscious of the effect. She herself is not initially aesthetically self-conscious; rather, she is the ground for the imagination of others. That

36 Sidney, *OA*, 33.

37 Mazzola 58 notes the contrast between the self-presentation strategies of the two sisters, seeing it as emblematic of Sidney's narrative methodology as whole, both breaking and establishing generic boundaries.

38 Danby, 59: Philoclea is "nature" to Pamela's embodiment of virtuous will.

those others might read sexual significance into her apparel does not qualify her own essential innocence. To herself she is clothed, not costumed, and she is sufficiently ignorant to be embarrassed when "Cleophila" (Pyrocles disguised as an Amazon) praises her beauty (34). Philoclea is the narrator's avowed favorite, a personification of the beauties and deficiencies of the pastoral genre itself. She has a power over the imagination of the narrator that is described as a "sovereignity … stolen into" (265) by a young female character who does not possess an authoritative public persona or mask. Philoclea's lack of theatrical and aesthetic sophistication contributes to her downfall. To her, everything must be natural in order to be good. She knows she does not love Cleophila as a sister, nor does wishing that the Amazon were her brother satisfy her. She cannot explain her feelings for Cleophila as tidily as Pamela, using Aristotelian psychology, can explain her attraction to Musidorus. Philoclea's response to her emotions is passivity, in contrast to Pamela's "mastery": "… she would even yield to the burden, rather suffering sorrow to take a full possession than exercising any way her mind how to redress it" (86). Philoclea's morality is Milton's cloistered virtue; she chooses good because she does not know evil. Ironically, her "unspotted simplicity" (95) is compromised by the loss of her virginity, not even through rape but consensually, in an episode where the chief threat to honor is not action, but what others think of the action. Philoclea's morality is a matter of received truths. Unlike her sister, she cannot conceive of virtue apart from the expectations of others.

The scene in which the narrator showcases Philoclea's capacity as a poet occurs at the moment in which the girl has recognized that she has fallen prey to "self-division." In Diana's grove, she enacts the process of that self-division, a falling off from what she perceives as a previous integrity, by contrasting a poem she had earlier written on a marble stone in the center of the grove to an orally delivered poem she cannot now write. Philoclea's visit to the site where, "a few days before Cleophila's arrival," she celebrated her maiden self-sufficiency takes place at night; it represents an escape from her parents. Basilius and Gynecia, although not present, loom large in this scene. Following her poems, Philoclea's apostrophes to the stars above proceed from repetitions of parental teachings, to examination of such teachings, to a final repudiation. Nevertheless, her painful and compulsive struggle with parental expectations shows that Philoclea is far less separated, physically and emotionally, from her parents than Pamela is. It is no accident that her love for Cleophila occasions an entire family romance. "Cleophila" (Pyrocles) must work through Philoclea's parents to get to her. He must destroy the family structure in order to extract her from it.

Philoclea's poems, like her older sister's, assume a relationship between nature and the speaker. An aspect of the landscape is chosen as emblem of the speaker's state of mind. In contrast to Pamela's living, growing tree, however, Philoclea chooses a rock of white marble. Her maiden poem is a confident promise.

> This vow receive, this vow O gods maintain:
> My virgin life no spotted thought shall stain.
>
> Thou purest stone, whose pureness doth present
> My purest mind; whose temper hard doth show
> My tempered heart; by thee my promise sent
> Unto myself let after-livers know.
> No fancy mine, nor others' wrong suspect
> Make me O virtuous Shame, thy laws neglect.[39]

She is like the marble, she imagines, pure and "tempered." Of course, Philoclea has not been tempered at all. She has never been confronted with experience. Her naive conviction of her own spotlessness is indeed the impetus for the spotting of the very stone she chooses as an emblem of herself: she covers it with ink, which rain and exposure cause to be "foreworn and in many places blotted" (97). She does indeed make the marble an emblem of herself, but not in the way she expected.

Philoclea's private poetic interlude shows how she becomes alienated from the natural world. Her second, spoken poem expresses her awareness that her relationship with nature has been changed.

> My words, in hope to blaze my steadfast mind,
> This marble chose, as of like temper known:
> But lo, my words defaced, my fancies blind,
> Blots to the stone, shame to myself I find;
> And witness am, how ill agree in one,
> A woman's hand with constant marble stone.[40]

The narrator notes that darkness keeps her from writing her second poem down, but her inability to write onto the landscape also illustrates her alienation from it. Her sister Pamela affirms her relationship to nature by carving living words into growing trees; her ironic aestheticism has been tempered by love. Philoclea, originally presented as an ornament of nature in contrast to her theatrical sister, finds in her own poetic soliloquy how far she has moved from that identity.

The marble stone is not a living monument, like Pamela's tree; rather it is like a monument to the dead.[41] It serves as a funeral marker for Philoclea's old self-conception, as well as her innocence. The death of the "old" Philoclea involves a fall out of eternity and into time, like a fall out of Eden into mortality. The final line of her pledge to the "living powers" conflates life and death:

39 Sidney, *OA*, 96.
40 Sidney, *OA*, 97.
41 Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*,100.

> Till spotless soul unto thy bosom fly,
> Such life to lead, such death I vow to die.[42]

Philoclea seems not to recognize the difference between the two states, for they demand the same virginal conduct from her. The second poem, on the other hand, illustrates the results of a fall into sexuality: an awareness of dualism, the difference between life and death, between the metaphorical and the literal, between language and act. In the first poem Philoclea refers to her own "virgin life"; in the second poem her subject is "a woman's hand." The first poem contains a greater variety of personal pronouns than the second (my, myself, mine, I, me), some designating a wide variety of possessions and attributes (vow, life, mind, heart, promise, fancy, constant course, "sprites" or spirit). Compare these verbal habits to those of the second poem: "my words" is repeated continually, as if the phrase represents the only things truly belonging to the speaker. The same speaker also refers to herself in the third person: "a woman's hand." She has reduced herself to a piece of writing, whereas in her previous poem she evokes a complex inner life. She has also replaced individuality with impersonality; she is a woman, any woman, having fallen into the plight of Eve (that is, sexual corruption).The second stanza associates words themselves with the temporal world of the common and corrupt, by comparing the qualities of "words" (weak, commonplace, dark, hard to pick out) to those of the marble stone (strong, singular, white, salient). Philoclea sees her previous self-conception as a piece of language, self-composed and illusory. In an interesting reversal of common associations, concrete natural phenomena such as the stone become ideal and eternal, while the abstraction of language becomes corrupt and mortal.

In their poems, both sisters meditate on the nature of speech acts. Pamela's poem carved in the pine affirms her deeding of herself to Musidorus. It serves as a kind of quasi-legal document making concrete the emotional process of ceding which has gone before. It is a promise, her "word." Philoclea's first poem, written while she is still at heart a virgin, is another kind of speech act, a pledging of herself to Chastity. In its references to "after-livers," it seems like an elegy of sorts. Her second poem, however, makes "words unseen" the "witness" of her moral fall. Erased words paradoxically serve as the missing indicator or absent testimony of another loss, that of the "unspotted mind." The physical obstruction of the marble stone is contrasted with the lost writing which once decorated it; the stone also serves as a present reminder of a gap or separation, a concrete emblem of an absence. In this case the gap is the one now separating Philoclea from nature. The marble stone, chosen at first because of its metaphorical correspondences to Philoclea's mind, becomes a reminder of how impossible such correspondences between woman and nature can be. Originally associated with the landscape of Arcadia, the possession of her father in

42 Sidney, *OA*, 96.

the same way the realm is, Philoclea now is no longer a child of Arcadia. Her fall, as enacted in her poems, illustrates how efforts to use language in order to construct a relationship with nature are constructions indeed. Her second poem, in contrast to her first, uses words to underline their inefficacy; one cannot make a "real" world out of language. Philoclea is no longer a feature of the pastoral landscape. She is attaining the same awareness of her unnatural placement as Pamela displayed from the beginning. Whereas Pamela's poetic interlude in the wood, however, expresses how her sense of artistic irony has been qualified by the idealism of love, Philoclea's poems show how her growing sense of artistic irony is evidence of lost innocence.

In her prose soliloquy following her poems, Philoclea alludes to the moral instructions of her parents:

> [They] … have told me that in these fair heavenly bodies there are great hidden deities which have their working in the ebbing and flowing of our estates. If it be so, then, O ye stars, judge rightly of me; and if I have willingly made myself a prey to fancy. …[43]

Philoclea wants to find a reason for her suffering. Is she being punished for her own failings? If poetic awareness is a register of sexual awareness for the romance girl, it is significant that the first thing points to is the role of "fancy" in her downfall. Although Philoclea is clearly not using the word in its Coleridgean sense, the implied connection between desire and imagination in the word "fancy" suggests a connection between her own sexual will and her greater poetic sophistication, that is, her new awareness that words are not independent registers of virtual reality. The natural world may be self-evident, but the social world of love is a verbal construction. The ease with which the cross-dressed Pyrocles can damage the integrity of Philoclea's family and make her feel what she believes is an unnatural lust indicates the fragility of that social world. Philoclea has been taught to believe that human affairs are ordered by the stars. Plainly her father believes what he preaches, for he takes the oracle of Delphi seriously enough to try to avoid it. The oracle itself, though, is an example of how language can deceive. It is not a directive from the gods, but a riddle, a little poem, a language artifact itself.[44] It is a human interpretation, just like the two sisters' interpretations of nature to reflect their own self-conceptions. Philoclea's reference to her parents' belief in the stars as the ordering principle of human life is followed by her increasing uncertainty, marked by the repetition of "if" and instances of self-qualification culminating in her realization that "the stars cannot help me." Almost immediately she reverses herself, however, and chides herself: "[and] yet these are but childish objections"(98). In her soliloquy, as in her poems, she has moved from an immature acceptance of received truths to an awareness of her own "childish-

43 Sidney, *OA*, 97.
44 See Sidney, *OA*, 5.

ness," the awareness of which is itself a sign of growing maturity. Subsequent examples of her rhetoric in the *Old Arcadia* show a habit of hesitancy and self-revision. Love is already proving a transformative experience, by forcing Philoclea to examine her idea of herself and her position as a child under the hitherto unquestioned authority of her parents.

That "Cleophila's" bid to win Philoclea involves a challenge to the entire family structure turns upside down Lévi-Strauss's theory that the father's bestowal of the daughter on an eligible young man strengthens and extends familial and tribal prerogatives by forging a useful alliance and enlarging the family itself.[45] Pyrocles, on the contrary, must make himself as ineligible as possible even to get near Philoclea; he "becomes" a woman. He then must insinuate himself into Basilius's family structure in order to get Philoclea out of it. Shortly after Philoclea returns to the lodge from her nocturnal musings, the narrator describes Cleophila's domestic situation in that household with a telling metaphor: "… betwixt both [Basilius and Gynecia] (like the poor child whose father while he beats him will make him believe it is for love ...)" (98). As early as Book I, the effect of Cleophila's presence on the integrity of the family is made clear in the reaction Basilius and Gynecia display after "she" has saved Philoclea from the lion; they, "like a father and mother to a beloved child," rush to check the Amazon's welfare, but in their zeal to express their rival affections, "… as the over kind nurse may sometimes forget to give the child suck so had they, with too much kindness, unkindly forgotten" (45) to tend her wound! The pun on the meaning of "kind" as kin reinforces the implications of the familial metaphor: the parents are more concerned for the welfare of the guest than of their own daughter, and so Cleophila has already begun to supplant Philoclea in their affections. That the erotic attraction each parent feels for the newcomer is framed in terms of "natural" parental solicitude is even more striking. Cleophila not only defies gender boundaries, but blurs our certainty of the ultimate taboo: incest. Cleophila's role in upsetting (and ultimately reconstituting) Basilius's family structure attacks the patriarchal family from the inside. Basilius is a bad father. He abuses his power over his daughters and neglects his responsibilities to them. It is his perversity in the first place that entails the necessity of Pyrocles' disguise, since Basilius will allow no suitors to approach his daughters. Basilius, to use Lévi-Strauss's term, frustrates the accomplishment of exogamy. His "possession" of his daughters, if allowed to continue unchallenged, has the same effect that incest has in the clan: it gets in the way of exogamy and ultimately destroys the spread and the viability of the clan (and the kingdom). In order for exogamy to be restored in this case, the father's authority to reserve or give "his" girls, far from being strengthened, must be destroyed. Perversion must be cured with perversion. While Pyrocles' career in Basilius's household results in the inversion of every ideal of natural ethics (he ushers in the specters of adultery, homosexuality, and abandonment

45 See Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, 115 and *passim.*

of children), his actions are ultimately restorative of the very ideals they first appear to threaten.

The different nature of Pamela's and Philoclea's love for their princes is illustrated in a variety of ways. Pamela sees in Musidorus a consort appropriate in both personal and social terms; he is noble, he is dark, and he is masculine compared to the androgynous Pyrocles. Most importantly, he helps her assert her political rights as Arcadia's heir against her father's insanity. The contrasts between him and Pyrocles do in some way reflect those between the two sisters; Musidorus is more handsome, Pyrocles more beautiful; the older cousin defends his actions in front of Euarchus's tribunal by appealing to reason, while the younger excuses his actions by claiming the force of overwhelming emotion (342). Pamela, as we have seen, is continually associated with wit and reason, while Philoclea is a creature of physicality and emotion: "… the weight of her own woes … [had] so full a course in her as it did not a little weaken the state of her body" (190). Philoclea falls in love with someone much like herself: a fair, beautiful, passionate yet inexperienced "girl." Pyrocles' disguise allows him not only to enter the family but also to insinuate himself into Philoclea's heart. Cleophila's appeal is not that she seems to Philoclea a way out of the family (as in the case of Musidorus to Pamela) but her very familiarity. The concealment of Pyrocles' sex allows him to court her in such a way that she is not aware of it. His perverse charade allows for the maintenance of the appearance, at least, of erotic innocence. He becomes part of her pastoral family. Philoclea still understands all human relationships in terms of family relationships, love as for parents, a brother or a sister, and is mystified when her emotions cannot be placed in any of these categories. Eventually, however, the unnatural behavior of her parents frees her from such categories.

The revelation of Cleophila's sex to Philoclea comes during an interview in which she is supposed to be pandering for her own father (105–7). As Philoclea becomes aware that Cleophila is in fact a man, her emotions are compared to those of Pygmalion as his beloved statue gradually comes to life "with a perfect woman's shape." The metaphor is a strange one. If either one of the speakers in this episode has been artful, it has been Cleophila. Yet the narrator chooses to apply the metaphor to Philoclea. If its correspondences are carried out, Cleophila is the animated work of art and Philoclea the artist. The moment of revelation of the erotic possibilities of a relationship she formerly believed to be impossible is another key moment in her development, and one in which she finds her erotic "fancy" turned to reality; her imagination has been vindicated, like Pygmalion's. Her work of art is the imagining of a possible love. Although the Pygmalion metaphor is not explicitly poetic, it can be linked to the phenomenon of poetic activity on the part of the romance virgin as a necessity prerequisite to erotic success. Before Cleophila could reveal the truth, Philoclea's own mind must already have prepared itself. She admits this: "I have betrayed myself. It was well seen I was glad to yield before I was assaulted"

(106). Some of the terms she uses in her response to Cleophila echo those of her poetic soliloquy in the grove. She speaks of her "divided mind" and "the pureness of my virgin mind … stained" (106). While Pamela gives herself away willingly, Philoclea "betrays" herself. Although she cannot decide whether to call her beloved Cleophila or Pyrocles (this in itself being an illustration of her new awareness of the deception latent in language), she vows to keep "true simplicity" of her word in contrast, perhaps, to her lover! Perhaps this is why the scene ends in a betrothal, "the promise of marriage." In the speech act of betrothal, the lovers make right what is wrong. The sinfulness of Philoclea's anomalous emotions is reformed by placing her feelings in an appropriate context, the emotions a girl has for her future husband. Thus, what started out as Basilius's attempt to use Philoclea as a go-between for adultery ends in a reaffirmation of sanctioned sexuality. The process as it occurs in the interview between the young lovers is described as an artistic process; the Pygmalion metaphor describes the transformation of unnatural, evil desires to natural and good desires via artistic effort.

In her grove soliloquy, Philoclea laments her fall into time. Yet she eventually comes to see such a fall as liberating, too. When asked to sing to her father to take his mind away from his own erotic tortures, she devises a song which expresses her new-found awareness of time as a friend (182). Her song's opening alludes to one of the key characteristics of pastoral time, rather than "epic" or "historical" time:

> O stealing time, the subject of delay,
> (Delay, the rack of unrefrained desire). …[46]

The word "subject" can mean either "topic," or, more appositely, "vassal." In pastoral, the progress of time is indeed controlled by delay, unconsummation, an otium that blocks purposeful forward motion. Philoclea, in apostrophizing time, inverts the power relationship between time and delay by urging time, "the father of occasion dear," to act as "the chariot of my joys," the vehicle by which her desires might be consummated at last. Basilius's deliberate rejection of the world governed by time, his retreat to the woods of Arcadia, can be read as an embrace of delay, an attempt to live a pastoral in order to forestall an oracle of fate. Philoclea, his daughter and prisoner, shadows forth her yet unmentionable desires to her father (and rival) by urging the intrusion of time into pastoral stasis. The "occasion" she wishes is shortly to appear; her parents will be occupied in Gynecia's cave, and Pyrocles will visit her bedchamber to consummate their relationship.

The promise of marriage may mitigate somewhat the illicit shock of Philoclea's eventual defloration in Book IV.[47] Philoclea alludes to a "virtuous

46 Sidney, *OA*, 182.

47 According to Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*, many in Renaissance England considered the betrothal almost as good as the marriage, and many

marriage" between herself and Pyrocles "whereto our innocencies were the solemnities" as she pleads with Philanax, who finds them together (263). Pyrocles' seduction of Philoclea may not have seemed terribly shocking to sixteenth-century readers. The order of events in the narrative suggests some continuity between their sexual consummation and marriage, since immediately after the blazon poem "Who can her perfections tell" (used in the *Old Arcadia* as a poetic substitute for relating the sex act itself) is the celebration in the Third Eclogues of the wedding of Lalus and Kala.

Balancing this description, however, are the circumstances of the social world Sidney has constructed in his portrait of Arcadia. Fornication is a crime punishable by death there (257). Philoclea's protestation of innocence sounds hollow after she herself, numerous times, has expressed her feeling that her innocence has been irretrievably lost. Furthermore, the seduction scene takes place only after a long estrangement between the two lovers: Philoclea greets Pyrocles with bitter words when she finds him in her room. The fact that Pyrocles succeeds in deflowering Philoclea's body qualifies all high-minded speeches either one of them might make about the virtue of their action. The *Old Arcadia* poses the question whether a "virgin mind" can inhabit an impure body, but fails to provide a definitive answer. It makes the power of chastity into an open question.

One of the ways in which it does so is by suggesting that Philoclea grows in moral sophistication, if not strength, even as her physical purity is qualified. Her circumstances split the symbolic value of chastity from the moral strength it signifies. For one thing, Philoclea's painful awareness of her own "divided mind" in the first two books of the *Old Arcadia* is replaced with a conviction of her own essential innocence, as her description of her seduction as a kind of marriage suggests. She is no longer pained by the purported immorality or unnaturalness of her feelings for Cleophila. She seems to have developed a sense of the distinction between the demands of public morality and the requirements of a private set of ethics. Unlike her sister Pamela, however, she is more concerned with what people will think than with the act of sex itself. Pamela elopes without a thought of reputation, as long as Musidorus respects her virginity. Philoclea loses hers and subsequently (with Pyrocles' help) denies to the public that the loss has occurred. There is no doubt that the two consummate their love; however, are the lovers actually lying when they proclaim her innocence? The reaction the lovers display when caught is morally problematic. Assessing the attitude of the narrator is difficult; he offers no help to the reader trying, along with Philanax and Eudoxius, to weigh out responsibility. He describes the words and actions of the lovers without

betrothed couples had sexual relations before formal sanctification. However, a betrothal was a public promise, which Pyrocles and Philoclea lack. Furthermore, the virginity of a propertied man's daughter would have been deemed far more important than that of, for example, a maidservant.

departing from the effusively admiring tone he customarily employs, but that his characters have violated civil and moral law and lied about it cannot be disputed. The inviolable quality of chastity in this portion of the *Old Arcadia* is treated with considerable narrative levity.

When Dametas discovers Pyrocles sleeping with Philoclea in her room, he takes away Pyrocles' sword, leaving him defenseless for the ultimate arrival of Philanax and the soldiers. Pyrocles, waking to find himself weaponless and trapped in the bedroom, resolves to kill himself by dashing his brains out against the wall (a rather comical attempt repeated, in the different setting of Cecropia's castle, in the *New Arcadia*). Indeed, Pyrocles, deprived of his sword (a symbol of his manhood), behaves in a way which can only be described as adolescent: unwilling to take responsibility for what happened, he would rather kill himself and leave Philoclea to face the results. This solution is surprisingly described as the product of "an excellent wit, strengthened with virtue" (251). It pains him to think of Philoclea's "natural perfections unnaturally consumed, her virtue rewarded with shame" (by this meaning public condemnation and execution), but immediately afterward can only accuse himself of "negligence, that had not more curiously looked to all the house entries" (252). That it was a bad idea to seduce Philoclea does not cross his mind. The narrator's perpetual repetition of the word "virtue" in reference to the two lovers carries an ironic charge in this context.

Pyrocles apparently believes that if he kills himself, Philoclea will be able to say that she was raped, and thereby avoid the harshest penalty of the law. It falls to her to persuade him against this course: "Will you leave me ... not only dishonoured as unchaste with you, but as a murderer of you? … Now therefore kill yourself, to crown our virtuous action with infamy …" (259). Here she sounds almost like Pamela, redefining behavior that the rest of the world would find shocking as allowable, even virtuous. Philoclea claims that "honours or shames" are "nothing in regard of an unspotted conscience" (258, italics mine). Although she had lost bodily chastity, it distresses her not at all. The most traumatic loss, for her, has been the mental chastity which she praises and mourns in her grove poems. Throughout Philoclea's career, Sidney asks us to re-examine the real basis of female chastity. Is it an intact mind, or an intact hymen? The morning after, we are asked to believe that it is the former. Philoclea has recovered her "unspotted mind." And yet the narrator specifically disavows that she has undergone any real moral or philosophical maturation. Her arguments to dissuade Pyrocles from suicide provide an illustration of the "small difference in the working there is betwixt a simple voidness of evil and a judicial habit of virtue" (254). Philoclea's "innocent guiltlessness" is like Milton's cloistered virtue. Her judgment is undeveloped; she argues by alluding to authorities, prefacing her objections to suicide with such phrases as "I have heard my father and other wise men say," "(would they say)," "Lastly, they would say" (255). In contrast to her soliloquy in the grove, in which she challenges received teachings, her arguments to Pyrocles, dealing as they do

with an issue, suicide, outside of her narrow experience, display more child-like habits of mind. Only in the sufferings of new love does Philoclea show a greater independence and moral autonomy. Only concerning love does she prove herself able to equivocate like an adult.

The example of Philoclea indicates that Sidney does not consider sexual experience synonymous with worldliness. The loss of Philoclea's virginity does, however, create a set of circumstances in which she begins to develop a sense of autonomous sexual morality. By her lights, her behavior with Pyrocles is principled, not licentious. She is able to "lie" about what happened in her bedroom because she does not think it a sin. Love is the single most important transformative experience for Philoclea; the failure of any other event to alter her habits of thought and interpretation points to love as her primary source of education. The kinds of maturity engendered by love include a sense of alienation from nature and family, a fall from mental innocence, and an awareness of a difference between private and public codes of honor. Philoclea enacts the *Old Arcadia*'s division between the meaning of chastity as a signifier of moral integrity and independence, and the actual possession of such integrity and independence; but her version of the process differs from that of her sister because its results are confined largely to the erotic realm. Concerning issues beyond love, such as suicide and politics, Philoclea is still portrayed as a child-like innocent. Unlike Pamela, she is as yet unable to subordinate and judge her erotic experience within a larger frame. Love is separated out from other arenas of juvenile testing as the only one that a young girl such as Philoclea may naturally enter. It is nevertheless the source of an autonomous morality that only the princesses are shown to possess. In their speech and actions, they dismantle the equation of physical chastity and feminine virtue by redefining the substance of feminine honor as principled sexual freedom, the ability to bestow oneself.

The sexual morality of the princesses poses an interesting contrast to that of their lovers. Although in general the *Old Arcadia* is not confident about the ability of people rationally to control their emotions, the young women, once confronted with the inevitability of love, experience it as a process of self-possession through self-bestowal. They gain moral stature, albeit in varying degrees. The princes, on the other hand, are forced in the process of experiencing love to abandon their most precious precepts of masculine dignity (in the case of Musidorus adopting a lowly disguise) and even identity (as Pyrocles becomes a "woman" to woo one). Pyrocles, in his lyric "Transformed in show, but more transformed in mind," portrays his transvestitism as a self-betrayal, "my power transformed to your [Philoclea's] will" (*OA* 26). When Musidorus falls in love with Pamela, his emotions are described in terms of wounds, illness and madness.[48] The young men claim to be overwhelmed,

[48] See Musidorus's reaction to the sight of Pamela, *OA*, 73: "Whether indeed it were that this strange power [of love] would be bravely revenged of him for the bitter words he had used

unmanned, and unmade by love, whereas the princesses gain self-knowledge and an autonomous sexual morality that appears within both *Arcadia*s to be a feminine attribute.[49]

Sidney's romance exemplifies one characteristic trait of Renaissance pastoral romance: the agent of change in the static world is a young woman. It is true that Musidorus and Pyrocles, by their arrival, initiate the changes; however, their potential as transformative agents is made possible entirely by the princesses, who are shown as having a greater effect on the destiny of Arcadia than their lovers. By responding to the love of the princes, Pamela and Philoclea create the circumstances by which Arcadia is tested and transformed. Private acts, not public deeds, determine the political history of Arcadia, and these circumstances suggests the power of the restricted feminine realm to disrupt and shape the public masculine one.[50] This is true not only of Arcadia. Consider the story of Erona. In the *Old Arcadia*, it is a fragment. In the *New Arcadia*, however, it becomes the entire reason for the princes' quest. The figure of Erona structures time for Pyrocles and Musidorus; it makes their sojourn in Arcadia a truancy instead of a fulfillment of dynastic necessities. Erona's existence, her plight, give meaning to the princes' epic careers. It is she whom they must ultimately save. We do not learn if they are successful, but her background presence preserves the linearity of the epic narrative. Without Erona, the princes' feats would seem episodic and pointless.

We have seen that Erona serves as a negative exemplum of the erotic career of the romance heroine. In another way, however, she provides a model for how a woman's existence in the text structures time for the heroes. Pamela and Philoclea each help to structure pastoral time for Pyrocles and Musidorus. They help the princes achieve, if not on the epic, then on the domestic front, the necessary accomplishments of princes. To return to the model of pastoral as the original center of experience, as in the *rota Virgilii*: rather than occupying the position of an adolescent truancy, the princes' Arcadian educa-

[towards Pyrocles], or that his very resisting made the wound the crueller (as we see the harquebus doth most endamage the stiffest metal), or rather that the continual healthfulness of his mind made this sudden ill the more incurable …; but howsoever the cause was, such was the effect that, not being able to bear the vehement pain, he ran away through the grove, like a madman. …"

49 Although Gynecia, inflamed with illicit passion for Pyrocles, certainly does not undergo a process of moral improvement through love, she at least admits her own corruption and suffers privately for it. Basilius, in contrast, justifies his attraction to a younger woman and expresses no remorse until after "Cleophila's" identity is revealed.

50 In Polybius's *The Histories* (ca. 150 BC), Arcadia is noted for its peacable history. Polybius attributes this enviable tranquillity to the fact that Arcadians expected their citizens to concentrate on the performance of music and poetry until the age of thirty. This preoccupation diverted their martial instincts and cultivated a long-term peace (see the Loeb edition, IV, 20–1). Sidney's stress on the domestic and erotic over the martial in the *Old Arcadia* recalls, then, the traditional literary stereotype of the Arcadian setting: the archetypal subject of lyric poetry is love rather than war.

tion instead prepares them to become adult rulers by providing them with seemly wives. The Italian combination of pastoral and romance that Sidney reshaped contains its own paradox, since in the rota, epic represents maturity as opposed to the juvenile entertainments of pastoral. With the Renaissance melding of romance and pastoral, however, the Arcadian setting is the site of revelation and discipline as the domestic course of a noble family is unfolded into posterity. If a pastoral sojourn for the princes is indeed a truancy, as Euarchus might have it, then it is at least a necessary one. Erona is "error," not only because her own erotic career is marred by missteps, but also because she represents for the princes the eternal romance (and epic) temptation to wander from one heroic deed to the next. The domestic space of pastoral, on the other hand, disciplines the wandering impulse of the adventurer. A king must be more than a hero; he must be a father, for neither a family nor a kingdom can be built on the road. Despite its ambivalent portrayals of patriarchalist problematics, the *Old Arcadia* portrays the state as a domestic structure.[51] Epic deeds occur in the process of founding a nation or a people; but the maintenance of an already established civil culture requires deeds domestic rather than martial. The Renaissance pastoral romance adumbrates an emerging ideology of domesticity at odds with the glorification of fighting prowess and solitary adventuring. The romance hero must be domesticated by the pastoral maiden, who literally embodies her country. Pamela rebels against her role as the living embodiment of Arcadia, but her destiny ultimately conforms to the model of pastoral containment. She is not to rule, but be ruled.

While there is no question that Sidney intended in the *Old Arcadia* to make his royal sisters immensely appealing models of femininity, he is not at all clear about his stance on the most important feminine virtue as defined by the Renaissance: chastity. He seems nervous about the implications of the patriarchal culture's emphasis upon female chastity as a vital component of civil order. His narrative acknowledges the problems of such an emphasis: it makes chastity into the basis of the family, and by extension, the state. It gives women an enormous amount of unacknowledged power over their fathers. By choosing an explicitly pastoral setting for his narrative, Sidney places the story itself in the domain of femininity. Despite the narrator's claims of respect for feminine virtue, the logic of his narrative shows the weaknesses of mere physical virginity as a spiritual or social safeguard for the culture as a whole. The old romance definition of female honor as sexual chastity is already being examined and questioned even at the inception of a new form of romance in

[51] For a detailed examination of English Renaissance analogies between family and state, see Schochet, *Patriarchalism*. Although he confines his scope to the seventeenth century, Schochet notes the emergence of a self-conscious political ideology of patriarchalism during that period from a set of much earlier assumptions: "all relationships … were defined to a greater or lesser degree as familial" (65). Elizabeth Mazzola argues that Sidney presents the patriarchal family model in the Arcadia as "hollowed from the inside out" (76), requiring the saving aid of rejected daughters.

English, the pastoral.[52] Sidney's ambivalent treatment of one of the fundamental values underlying the cult of chivalry informing Elizabethan political culture could not have been readily acceptable. The radical implications of the *Old Arcadia* may have been one reason why Sidney himself purportedly requested on his deathbed to have it burnt:

> … he then discovered, not onely the imperfection, but vanitie of these shadowes, how daintily soever limned: as seeing that even beauty it self, in all earthly complexions, was more apt to allure men to evill, than to fashion any goodness in them. And from this ground, in that memorable testament of this, he bequeathed no other legacie, but the fire, to this unpolished Embrio.[53]

Greville's account of Sidney's death implies an abandonment of the idea that poetry could use beauty to seduce men to goodness. The questions the *Old Arcadia* raises about the fabric of the social order, one could argue, might prompt the ill-disposed to ill-considered conclusions. Both Greville and Sidney's sister Mary, the Countess of Pembroke, took pains in their editing of Sidney's material to expunge from it the inconsistent attitude toward the efficacy of female chastity it originally displayed (how much these revisions followed Sidney's own wishes is impossible to know). The *New Arcadia* offers Pamela and Philoclea opportunities to face the utmost of threats to their chastity, most notably in Cecropia's castle. There, Pamela in particular exhibits her rhetorical skill in a dazzling display of what Milton would later call the "sun-clad power of chastity." Sidney's original critique of chastity is revised considerably in the later editions, as I discuss below. The tensions and questions implicit in his first effort, however, remain a standard feature of the genre of pastoral romance as it developed in England, informing and complicating works to come.

Barred by Elizabeth I from the achievement of epic deeds himself, Sidney must have found his stay at Wilton a frustrating pastoral retirement. The story he produced there is, not surprisingly, a defense of the fitness of pastoral as a platform for social and political engagement. That the characters he uses to show this are female princesses who are not ultimately allowed to transcend their pastoral placement is a result both of Sidney's discomfort with feminine power and of the limitations of pastoral as a genre for expression of the values informing the active life. He is well aware of the dual nature of the pastoral hedge: protective shield and oppressive hindrance. The *Old Arcadia* is at once an illustration of the poignancy of pastoral isolation and a caution against lifting it. In the *New Arcadia*, the expansion of the setting to include chivalric

[52] The word "honor" as a *synonym* for female chastity attained wide use in the seventeenth century. It is telling that Philoclea can lose her virginity outside of marriage in the sixteenth-century *Old Arcadia* and still maintain her aristocratic identity. Her noble status, not her sexual behavior, is still the primary source of her honor.

[53] Greville, 16–17.

tournaments, pitched battles, and sinister strongholds offers an opportunity to explore more fully the contrasts between the active and contemplative modes; more particularly, it allows Sidney to envision a hybrid virtue that combines the two sets of values and embodies them in the aggressive virginity of Pamela.

"THE MAJESTY OF UNCONQUERED VIRTUE" IN THE *NEW ARCADIA*

For readers of Sidney in the Renaissance and beyond, the princess Pamela became his best-known and most admired creation. The Pamela they knew, however, was that of the printed *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, also known as the *New Arcadia*. This work, published with the approval of Sidney's sister in 1593 (although a 1590 version, overseen by Sidney's friend Sir Fulke Greville, was also published) includes new material in which Pamela's virtue is tested not by a male seducer but by the crafty Cecropia, her ambitious aunt. Cecropia has kidnapped both Pamela and Philoclea, imprisoning them in her bleak castle while she attempts to force one or the other of them to marry her son Amphialus, who was Basilius's heir until the birth of Pamela took the promised accession away from him. Like the purely pastoral material in the original *Old Arcadia*, the episode of Cecropia's castle in Book III offers two contrasting yet complementary models of feminine virtue in the differing responses of each princess to Cecropia's combination of flattery, cajolery, and outright threat. The experience of the princesses in the *New Arcadia*, however, offers a crucial supplement to their histories in Sidney's earlier fiction: a vastly more confident and positive view of female chastity as a moral force. The dangers of self-deceit caused by the disruptive erotic longings of the *Old Arcadia*'s characters have been considerably reduced, since in the *New Arcadia,* Musidorus and Pyrocles act like the perfect gentlemen they decidedly are not in the older narrative. Philoclea's virginity remains uncompromised. Pamela's trust in Musidorus and in herself is not misplaced. The internal feminine agon of temptation and resistance in the *Old Arcadia* is recast and supplemented in the new version by a rhetorical battle between women themselves: Pamela and Cecropia. The terms of their argument evoke several issues which were of concern to Renaissance theorists about the place of gentlewomen: what degree of choice should a maid have in marriage? to what extent should she enjoy the luxuries that signal her class identity? and how is the power of oratory a morally ambiguous skill for a girl of marriageable age?

The temptation of the princesses in the *New Arcadia* is carried out, too, in an entirely different kind of physical space. As I have argued, the physical movement from the center to the borders of Arcadia itself, the bodily freedom the princesses enjoy within the literalized *locus amoenus* of their father's dukedom, is an indispensable circumstance for the kind of trial and development they face. Each of the girls represents a different version of the body of Arcadia. In Sidney's reworking of his earlier narrative, however, they are taken

out of the place they represent. Cecropia's castle is a barren fortress "in the midst of a great lake upon a high rock" which replaces the lush accommodations of pastoral.[54] The *hortus conclusus* that simultaneously helped to create, protect, and restrict the princesses in the *Old Arcadia* has been replaced with the locked cell. The prison is without amenities, forcing the girls to fall back upon their own internal resources. There is no natural landscape to inspire or reflect moral or poetic consciousness, as so often happens in the *Old Arcadia*. Outside the castle, a continual tournament takes place by which Basilius's allies hope to defeat Amphialus and rescue the princesses. The ritualized gestures of chivalric conflict on the field outside contrast sharply with the more urgent struggle taking place within the castle.[55] The simultaneous conflicts, one martial, physical, outdoors and masculine, and the other rhetorical, ethical, internal and feminine, ideally illustrate two separate ways of proving honor: the first belongs to the older form of chivalric romance, and is destined to be superseded in history and narrative by the second.

The transition from pastoral *locus amoenus* to prison cell occurs in the narrative with such suddenness as to suggest a causal link between the enjoyment of the first and the occupation of the second. The misleading temptations that set the stage for the capture of Basilius's daughters make particular comment on some lapses in conduct most likely to threaten a well-born girl. The snare that Cecropia constructs for the princesses consists of a musical entertainment offered by six suntanned maids in scarlet petticoats "garnished with leaves," wearing floral wreaths "so as it was doubtful whether the hair dressed the garlands, or the garlands dressed the hair"(441). The combination of artful naturalness in apparel recalls the narrative technique of Philoclea's description in Book I of the *Old Arcadia*; it is difficult to tell, in both cases, what is art and what is nature in pastoral womanhood. The six maidens represent themselves as native Arcadians, which in fact they are not; they are malevolent agents sent by Cecropia.

The way in which Cecropia baits her trap and the substance of her arguments in the debate with Pamela about the nature of beauty are related. She argues that being and seeming are the same, and so does one of her false wood nymphs as she says to Pamela and Philoclea: "… vouchsafe our message your gracious hearing, which, as it comes from love, so comes it from lovely persons" (442). The beauty of the six girls is seductive to the princesses, causing them to neglect to ask permission of their father before going into the wood. Later, in Cecropia's prison cell, Pamela will refute the view that a beautiful appearance is necessarily linked to a moral purpose. Before her imprisonment, however, she shows herself just as susceptible as anyone else to the irrational power of beauty. The six nymphs lead Pamela, Philoclea and Miso, the wife of

54 Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* [*The New Arcadia*], ed. Maurice Evans, 443. All subsequent citations refer to this edition as *NA*.

55 Lindheim, *Structures*, 114.

Pamela's clownish keeper Dametas, into "the midst of the thickest part of the wood"(443). By this point we are beginning to realize that this is a wood of error. Sidney indicates that the imprisonment of the princesses, while originating in Cecropia's hatred, is partially a result of their own poor judgment. They believe unquestioningly in the appearance of beauty. They allow their senses to cloud their reason: offered a "collation" in the clearing to which they have been brought, Pamela and Philoclea partake of "swelling grapes, which seemed great with the child of Bacchus, and of the divers coloured plums, which gave the eye a pleasant taste before they came to the mouth"(443). This description of the tempting fruit emphasizes the role of the easily deceived eye in sensual delectation. Although the princesses demonstrate their innate temperance in their moderate consumption – they drink only "a little of their cool wine" – they are lulled into a false sense of security and thus are easily overcome by the twenty armed men who burst out of the clearing, cover their heads with hoods, and carry them off to Cecropia's castle.

The feminine susceptibility to beauty and luxury is a common theme of Renaissance humanists who addressed the issue of education for women. Of course, in Sidney's fiction the men are no less prone to temptation on this score, but the result of such temptation is potentially more disastrous for women than for men. There is, however, another aspect to the poor judgment the princesses display here. They allow the prerogatives and responsibilities of their rank to be forgotten. The suspicious character of the six wood nymphs is signaled by a class-specific characteristic: their merely "lovely" appearance "might have been [beautiful], if they had not suffered greedy Phoebus overoften and hard to kiss them" (441). Their excessively tanned skins, a sign of low birth, are also metaphorically suggestive of sexual looseness, so they are obviously not appropriate company for the ladies. The low-born Miso urges the doubtful princesses to accept the invitation, by way of proving to the locals "that they were not so squeamish as folks thought of them"(442). Thus, "glad to be warranted by her [Miso's] authority," they go into the wood. By speaking of authority in connection with Miso, the narrator employs heavy irony. The princesses, by willingly allowing themselves to be led by one whom nature has placed below them, open themselves up to all sorts of evils. By accepting the invitation of Cecropia's nymphs, Pamela and Philoclea forget themselves, and it is this forgetfulness they pay for with imprisonment.

They receive their chance to redeem themselves, if not physically, then ethically, in their separate debate scenes with their aunt. The topics of patriarchy, the family, and the civilizing function of the daughter are all engaged within the confines of Cecropia's castle; each sister separately must resist her seductive arguments. The validity of patriarchy as a principle of familial, social and religious organization is also tested: Cecropia, the matriarchal usurper whose son, despite his better impulses, is unable to break free of her power, challenges Basilius's authority to control both his dukedom and his daughters. She posits herself as an alternative source of authority; she urges Philoclea to let her "have

care of you, even as of mine own daughter," and addresses Pamela as "niece, or rather, dear daughter" (458, 487). The girls, addressed thus, are challenged to choose their true parentage.

The association between the continued viability of Basilius's patriarchal authority, both familial and political, and the ability of his virginal daughters to resist both physical and philosophical temptation, is suggested in the description of Cecropia's approach to Philoclea:

> Cecropia … though her pride much disdained the name of a desirer, took the charge upon her, not doubting the easy conquest of an unexpert virgin, who had already with subtilty and impudency begun to undermine a monarchy.[56]

What the older woman hopes to accomplish is a seduction by proxy. Philoclea's disheveled appearance, "left to a neglected chance," encourages Cecropia to think optimistically. The two sisters, in their separate encounters with their aunt, are portrayed as combating her in opposite ways. Philoclea does not pay attention to Cecropia's rhetorical blandishments, "no otherwise than one doth when a tedious prattler cumbers the hearing of a delightful music" (461). She even refuses to respond to or engage her aunt's arguments, which in her case have to do with the desirability of marriage in general. Philoclea begins with an ingenious example of self-disqualification for argument: she is not "mistress of my own mind," in a striking departure from her sister's attitude, and therefore cannot accept or reject any of her aunt's suggestions. She demonstrates a form of protective passivity, which contrasts with her sister's heroic and spirited response. If Pamela exemplifies the power of mind, her sister does that of "heart," which the younger girl has "set … to lead a virgin's life" (461). The older sister deploys speech as an offense, while the younger retreats into defensive silence.

Cecropia recognizes Philoclea's association with emotion rather than intellect in the construction of her arguments, designed to entice the girl to marry her son. She notes the affective power of motherhood, for example, the "heart-tickling joy ... to see your own little ones with aweful love come running to your lap" (460). In her description of the benefits marriage offers a woman, she attempts to validate and manipulate Philoclea's deferential passivity in her suggestion that "man's experience is woman's best eye-sight" (461). Cecropia's metaphor employs the operation of the senses, rather than the intellect, once again illustrating her sense of audience. The narrator, however, describes Philoclea's senses during this episode as dispersed rather than marshaled. As her aunt talks, the girl's "thoughts had left her ears in that captivity, and conveyed themselves to behold (with such eyes as imagination could lend them) the estate of her Zelmane" (461).[57] By focusing on the experience of her lover Pyrocles rather than on her own, Philoclea in fact does as Cecropia suggests, although

56 Sidney, *NA*, 457.

57 "Zelmane" is Pyrocles' Amazonian pseudonym, replacing the *OA*'s use of "Cleophila."

not with the intended consequences. Rather than asserting self-control and self-ownership, as her sister is wont to do, Philoclea takes refuge in a form of self-disintegration through a division of the senses. Cecropia is overconfident to the point where she even answers her own questions: "… But I will answer for you." Philoclea's answer is silence, and her silence creates an impasse that blocks her aunt's efforts.

The interview ends with Philoclea's definition of Cecropia's "persuasions" as rather "constraints," since forced marriage, to no matter how worthy a spouse, is abhorrent. Although Philoclea's words are "witty" and "more than eloquent," they fail to stir Cecropia, and in this the younger girl fails where her more aggressive older sister eventually succeeds. Philoclea's eloquence, moreover, is a function of her beauty; "passing through such lips" (462) makes her words more than they might otherwise be. She is eloquent at least partially because she is lovely; some of the authority she can muster in the course of the argument comes from her appearance. It is precisely this association of female beauty, female eloquence, and female authority that Pamela regards with scorn when Cecropia presents it. Philoclea's defense, appealing as it is, is ultimately deficient compared to her sister's. In the two opposing examples Sidney offers us concerning a girl's defense of her own virtue, Philoclea's policy of well-mannered passivity has decided limitations. Cecropia's varying responses to the girls shows this to be true: after her inconclusive sparring with her younger niece, she is described as "sucking up more and more spite out of [Philoclea's] denial," despite her "vizard of kindness" (462).

The narrator describes the "sweet and humble" Philoclea's method as avoidance, while Pamela's "majesty of virtue did beat … off," as if in active combat, Cecropia's spurious arguments (465). The older girl's method defeats Cecropia by forcing her to admit, within her heart, the rightness of Pamela's contention, even if she will not alter her behavior. Philoclea's approach simply leaves things as they were, in a stalemate, but Pamela's aggressive defense, not only of chastity but of an entire cosmology based on a virtuous system of governance from above, unites the personal with the universal and demonstrates the inadequacy of Cecropia's utilitarian approach to argument. The narrator notes that Cecropia concedes the debate within her own heart; she "found a truth but could not love it" (492) and will not admit it. In her combination of moral and rhetorical efficacy, Pamela represents heroic virginity, the essential quality of the virtuous female aristocrat, in action.

The description of Pamela's occupation at the beginning of the debate episode with Cecropia is a commentary on the construction of the ideal persona of the virtuous lady. Unlike her sister, Pamela is occupied: her hands are busy during her imprisonment with the embroidery of a purse. Embroidery, the typical art of the gentlewoman, is both work and leisurely diversion.[58] As such, it becomes a symbol of all art, the skill at which Pamela surpasses

[58] See Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, 46: since women lacked the strength to

all practitioners: "the cunningest painter might have learned of her needle" (483). Her greatest artistic achievement, however, is the arrangement of her own mind as she follows her design of the purse itself:

> … the colours for the ground were so well chosen – neither sullenly dark nor glaringly lightsome, and so well proportioned as that, though much cunning were in it, yet it was but to serve for an ornament of the principal work – that it was not without marvel to see how a mind which could cast a careless semblant upon the greatest conflicts of fortune could command itself to take care for so small matters.[59]

In this description, Pamela shows a peculiarly feminine version of aristocratic *sprezzatura*, the ability to appear casual under pressure, or at ease under difficult circumstances. At the opening of *The Defense of Poesie*, Sidney has his Italian equestrian affirm that the most important characteristic of a nobleman is "to be a good horseman. Skill of government was but a pedanteria in comparison."[60] If horsemanship is the quintessential symbolic accomplishment of the gentleman, skill at embroidery occupies the same role for the lady. Sidney goes on in the *Defense* to explain his interest in so trivial a matter as poetry as analogous to the Italian riding master's defense of the importance of horsemanship. "Poor poetry" is a trivial art until it is seen as the foundation of other intellectual achievements. Pamela's admirable concentration on her own art is both a source and symptom of her strong and pure mind, her ability to weather "the greatest conflicts of fortune."

Her concern for presentation extends to her own person, for despite her sorrow and imprisonment, and in contrast to her sister Philoclea's habitual dishabille, "she had not rejected the counsel of a glass, and … her hands had pleased themselves in paying the tribute of undeceiving skill to so high perfections of nature" (484). Pamela's theatricality is an essential aspect of her characterization in both versions of the *Arcadia*, but, in her time of utmost trial, we are able to see that she maintains the art of self-making even when there is no one to watch. She ignores her attendants, considering them her jailors, and she does not expect a visit from her aunt. Her art, then, is not for the purpose of misleading others but for composing her own mind.

The narrator's account of the actual process of embroidery is erotically charged: the cloth "lovingly embrac[es] the wounds she gave it" with the needle, which "would have been loth to have gone fromward such a mistress but that it hoped to return thitherward very quickly again" (483). The subject of her embroidery is apparently a floral pattern, but we learn this only through similitudes between Pamela's rose-like lips and lily-like hands, and the flowers

show their wit in heavy toil, the delicacies of needlework were considered the ideal way for "their white hands … [to] reveal their own sharp and pregnant wit."

59 Sidney, *NA*, 484.

60 Sidney, *Defense*, in Gilbert, 406.

she renders in the design of the purse. Pamela is involved in an artful reconstitution of nature according to her own nature. The flowers in the artificial garden she creates on her purse "grew there by the suns of her eyes, and were refreshed by the … air which an unwares sigh might bestow upon them" (484). Within the arid environment of Cecropia's fortress, Pamela makes her own version of a *locus amoenus*, her own golden world amid the brazen one. This activity is not portrayed as irresponsible escapism from grim reality, but rather as an essential stay against despair. The purse is an emblem of her ideal self, an emblem that Cecropia will attempt to appropriate for other ends.

That the debate in the *New Arcadia* is staged between two women might serve to obscure the fact that what Pamela must resist is a form of coercive and perverted courtship, in both senses, by Cecropia. The older woman employs the terminology of erotic Neoplatonism, courtly in origin, in order to flatter Pamela and render her receptive to her ultimate aim, which is to pander for her (admittedly unwilling) son and thereby gain political power. The conversation begins with a discussion of the purse upon which Pamela is embroidering, an artifact that quickly becomes the first means of illustrating how the two women differ in their approaches to language, sexuality, and ethics. Cecropia seizes upon the purse as an opportunity for broaching the sexually charged nature of her errand:

> Full happy is he … to whom a purse in this manner, and by this hand wrought, is dedicated. In faith he shall have cause to account it not as a purse for treasure but as a treasure itself, worthy to be pursed up in the purse of his own heart.[61]

Cecropia's compulsive repetition of "purse" in a context of erotic exchange recalls its slangy low usage in sixteenth-century English to denote female genitals. Pamela uses the purse as an emblem of her ideal self, but Cecropia seeks to seize and degrade the symbol to her own ends. She is thinking not of Pamela but of her son, assuming again that Pamela's art must be destined as a gift for a man in order for it to have meaning. When she looks at Pamela, she sees her as the bearer of a sexual and political dowry, a "treasure." The purse becomes a fetish, a form of sexual metonymy.

Cecropia is a clever woman whom, as Pamela says, "wit makes … foolish." Her punning on "purse" is designed to announce her rhetorical facility – she skillfully constructs ad hoc arguments – but she continually misunderstands the true implications of her words. Here, at the opening of her crucial encounter with Pamela, she piles on so many meanings that she is unaware of their irony. A purse is just a container for something else more valuable, but Cecropia exalts the purse itself. She inverts the relationship between the container and the thing contained: the purse eventually becomes empursed, as it were, in another purse, the heart of him for whom the purse is made: an empty heart,

61 Sidney, *NA*, 484.

certainly! Cecropia's image of the purse is like a set of nesting boxes containing nothing but each other, an image that illustrates quite well her subsequent arguments. In summary, she supports first the authority of beauty, then the validity of the *carpe diem* attitude regarding the employment of one's beauty, and finally the safety of trusting one's own unaided wisdom as the only true god.

Pamela eventually loses her temper when her aunt suggests that there may be no transcendent deity, but her response to Cecropia's opening gambit praising the purse as a treasure is poised and coolly amused:

> "And think you so indeed?" said Pamela, half smiling, "I promise you I wrought [the purse] but to make some tedious hours believe that I thought not of them; for else I valued it but even as a very purse."[62]

Her light ironic reply further illustrates her sense of *sprezzatura*; her work is a mere entertainment; although, as an object of lovingly detailed description in the narrative, it assumes symbolic importance as a model of art. She refuses to confirm the validity of Cecropia's metaphorical interpretation of her work by denying that it has any metaphorical value at all: it stands for nothing but itself. Pamela's strategy is to qualify and undercut Cecropia's elaborate idealization of common items or concepts. She continues to do so on the subject of beauty itself. The debate between the two women, which ends with questions about the order of the universe itself, begins with a disagreement about the nature of beauty. In short, Pamela denies that beauty has any agency in the moral improvement of either its possessor or its beholder. By doing so, she denies the validity of the Neoplatonic model.

Cecropia, justifying her excessive praise of Pamela's embroidered purse, adopts the Neoplatonic attitude: "It is the right nature … of beauty to work unwitting effects of wonder" (484). But there is nothing "unwitting" at this moment about Cecropia's words, every one of which is calculated. Pamela responds to her aunt's inflation of the value of beauty by questioning the attribution of a moral quality to such a characteristic:

> I never thought till now that this outward gloss, called beauty, which it pleaseth you to lay to my (as I think) unguilty charge, was but a pleasant mixture of natural colours, delightful to the eye as music is to the ear, without any further consequence, since it is a thing which not only beasts have, but even stones and trees, many of them, do greatly excel in it.[63]

Pamela describes beauty as a quality best seen in dumb and inanimate objects. It has no "consequence" beyond the visual; that is to say, nothing follows from it. Therefore it cannot be the basis or inspiration for a ladder of spiritual ascent. It is not that Pamela finds beauty necessarily pernicious: it is a legitimate goal

62 Sidney, *NA*, 484.
63 Sidney, *NA*, 485.

of art and, as her own case demonstrates, the pursuit of beauty in art helps to order the mind. Beauty is an object of aesthetic pleasure, but nevertheless it has no higher significance. Pamela is not an anti-art Puritan or an iconoclast, but she shows herself aware of the moral dangers of Neoplatonism, dangers which threaten primarily the beautiful woman herself.

Cecropia's first mistake is in misinterpreting Pamela's careful dress and grooming as a sign of receptivity to male advances, rather than as a sign of self-respect and aristocratic sangfroid; she hopes that "beauty carefully set forth would soon prove a sign of an unrefusing harbour" (484). Cecropia's goal is rhetorically to persuade Pamela to marry Amphialus, since the threat of brute force has been ineffective. The use and meaning of Pamela's beauty in this situation, however, is entirely private and self-referential. Cecropia has misread her signs. Cecropia's view of the function of female beauty echoes courtly Neoplatonism's emphasis on its instrumental value. Beauty, in her arguments, is the greatest source of feminine authority. Tuning her argument to her royal auditor, Cecropia stresses the power a fair woman has, not to demand love but rather obedience. Indeed, a beautiful ruler does not have to busy herself with learning the tiresome arts of rhetoric, politics or war:

> She need not dispute whether to govern by fear or love since, without her thinking thereof, their love will bring forth fear, and their fear will fortify their love; and she need not seek offensive or defensive force, since her only lips may stand for ten thousand shields, and ten thousand unevitable [sic] shots go from her eyes.[64]

These words are a good outline to the erotics of obedience that informed Elizabethan courtly literature, for example, Spenser's "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe" and Raleigh's Cynthia poems. The irresistible force of love makes palatable the fact of female rule, an unnatural inversion of hierarchy that can only be justified in emotional, not rational, terms. By putting such words in Cecropia's mouth, Sidney makes them suspect and ironic, perhaps as a way of deploring the cynical but inevitable use of Neoplatonic love talk as a tool of political advancement, a practice degrading to both "lover" and "beloved" alike. Cecropia's analysis of beauty's power also deprives the beautiful woman of the power of thought. As the object rather than the agent of effort, she need not exercise any self-discipline, ambition or reflection.

Of course Cecropia hopes that Pamela will not display any of these things. Her rhetorical strategy is to offer the princess an illusory freedom which is in fact contingent upon Pamela's surrendering her capacity for independent judgment and thought within the safeguards of parental authority. She flatters Pamela, complimenting her intelligence and her freedom from "bugbears of opinion" (487), and responds contemptuously to Pamela's insistence that she could not marry without the approval of her parents. This insistence

64 Sidney, *NA*, 485.

is itself merely convenient, since Pamela does in fact elope with Musidorus and without her father's blessing. In theory, however, she defends patriarchal prerogative, a value that is reflected in her spirited defense of the existence of God himself. Her self-referential concept of honor, then, is not without its own internal restraints and correctives. By having Pamela ultimately support both patriarchy and divine hierarchy, Sidney shows that her freedom of judgment is not dangerous to society, although she may not always be in accord with the judgment of those around her.[65]

Throughout both versions of the *Arcadia*, Sidney has constructed Pamela to be an ideal Elizabeth figure. The longer text retains the elopement episode with its poem in which she translates and expands upon Elizabeth's motto *semper eadem*, "still the same" or "always the same": "All what I am, still one, his own, do find."[66] Pamela defines constancy not only as loyalty to others but as a harmony between exterior persona and interior character, a rejection of strategic deceit in self-presentation and in love. The desire to symbolize this relationship between inner and outer selves motivates Pamela's concern for her toilette while in prison. Michael McKeon's definition of honor as "a unity of outward circumstance and inward essence"[67] can be used to describe Pamela's knitting of "inward parts, and outward glass." Her poem, addressed to her lover, rejects the erotic strategems of calculated deceit to which lesser women might resort (and to which Musidorus himself has already resorted in his lowly disguise). In her relationship with Musidorus, as well as in her debate with Cecropia, Pamela rejects the fluidity of persona and personality, adapting itself to varying people and circumstances, in favor of a fixed identity responsible only to its own notion of honor.

Pamela's response to Cecropia's skillful arguments denying the existence of God is, like her carefully groomed appearance, for no one's sake but her own. She believes that she cannot truly win this debate:

> But though I speak to you without any hope of fruit in so rotten a heart, and there be nobody else here to judge of my speeches, yet be thou my witness, O captivity, that my ears shall not be willingly guilty of my Creator's blasphemy.[68]

She does, however, succeed in touching Cecropia's intellect if not her heart. Pamela uses the tools of rhetoric, traditionally defined as public persuasion, in order to delimit a private space in which her spiritual purity can remain inviolate. She speaks to herself and to God. The notion that ears, instruments of passive reception, can be "guilty" is initially surprising, but spiritual pollu-

65 Dickson, "Sidney's Grotesque Muse," 52–3 discusses Pamela's embroidery as an art of self-containment, although she focuses on the restrictive rather than empowering aspects of that art. Pamela is "always in captivity."

66 Sidney, *NA*, 642. The poem is retained, unaltered, from the *Old Arcadia.*

67 McKeon, *Origins*, 131.

68 Sidney, *NA*, 488–9.

tion enters through the ear in a form of rhetorical rape. It is important for Pamela to resist this invasion, to redraw the boundaries that mark off her own self-conception. In medieval paintings of the Annunciation, the Virgin Mary is often portrayed as receiving the insemination of the Holy Spirit through her ear. The reception of the word is figured as a generative act with sexual resonances, analogous to sexual intercourse. Pamela has little power over her physical situation. Cecropia could easily force a marriage with her son, and Amphialus could rape Pamela if he wished. She knows that she cannot sway Cecropia. Her only reason for speaking, then, is to affirm and strengthen her spiritual chastity, over which she does have control. Milton recasts this situation in *A Mask*: the Lady, physically helpless and acknowledging her inability to persuade Comus to release her, speaks not to him but to herself and to God. The act of speaking, in both cases, establishes a form of moral protection against spiritual pollution, even in the face of bodily violation, by alluding to a higher reality beyond the physical. It is also exclusively self-directed, and suggests a concept of aristocratic feminine honor more evolved than simple virginity.

Pamela's defense of the existence of God revises her aunt's views of the implications of nature. It is here that she most fully illustrates one of the most important functions of the pastoral virgin: to order the natural world according to an ethical pattern. In her cosmology, she reconciles the contradictions of the physical world by positing their subordination to an all-powerful Creator who makes them agree:

> But, you will say, it is so by nature, as much as if you said, it is so because it is so. If you mean of many natures conspiring together as in a popular government to establish this fair estate, as if the elementish and ethereal parts should in their town-house set down the bounds of each one's office, then consider what follows: that there must needs have been a wisdom which made them concur. … [A] right heavenly Nature indeed (as it were) unnaturing them, doth so bridle them.[69]

The organization of the physical world is analogous to the organization of a human civilization: the essential task is one of "unnaturing" in order to shape and reform along beneficial lines. Pamela's metaphor for the operation of physical nature is particularly telling in view of the role of the pastoral *locus amoenus* as a carefully constructed site of aristocratic leisure: the world in her image becomes a "fair estate" the boundaries of which are set, not naturally but legally, during the course of a discussion in a "town-house." The temporal priority is given to the urban norm, which defines the structure of its rural opposite, rather than the other way around. Thus, ideal nature is figured not as the original perfection from which we have fallen off, but by contrast as the result of a prior "unnaturing" and "bridling" process, in other worlds,

69 Sidney, *NA*, 490.

the process of civilization. Pamela's creation in an embroidered purse of the enamelled world of pastoral is a recreation in miniature of the role of "heavenly Nature," that is, God, in making the world: her eyes are "suns" which cause the artificial flowers to "grow," and hers is the animating intelligence. Her virtuous understanding, of which her art is the reflection and the result, is also the source of her ability to imagine a denatured nature which is itself the proof of God. Pamela is a pagan: within the fictional frame of Arcadia, she lives before the Christian era. She therefore does not explicitly describe God as a heavenly father, but she does imagine a masculine Creator who continues to be intimately involved in maintaining his work. She thus implies and upholds a patriarchal cosmology.

Pamela ends her refutation of Cecropia's atheistic notions with "so fair a majesty of unconquered virtue that captivity might seem to have authority over tyranny" (492). The narrator's description of her moral victory recapitulates some of the terms with which the debate began: the question of whether the basis of feminine authority resides in beauty or in virtue has been resolved in favor of the latter gift. The episode demonstrates that love of virtue in itself is not "servile," as Cecropia argues (487), but rather the most reliable source of stable identity and rhetorical power. Philoclea exemplifies the feminine virtues of silence and obedience, but a comparison of her performance with that of her sister's shows that adherence to these minor virtues is not as effective against vice as is Pamela's employment of reason and debate in the cause of a unified conception of Virtue itself. In the *New Arcadia*, as in the *Old*, Philoclea's gifts and limitations are those of "natural" woman, meek, submissive and gentle. Imperious and skillful Pamela, on the other hand, shows how art may combat art. Her chastity is not a negative, embattled virtue but a strong and aggressive force: productive virginity, in both artistic and moral terms.

Pamela's provisional success in her debate with her aunt is based less on the power of her own beauty than upon her ability to create and manipulate beauty in art, be it her embroidery or her rhetoric. The possibility that Sidney lost faith in the ability of beauty in art to seduce men to goodness, however, is reinforced by Cecropia's reception of Pamela's efforts: the older woman's mind is convinced but her actions are unchanged. Thus the ultimate value of Pamela's display is less to the audience beholding it than to Pamela herself. In her performance, Sidney offers us a picture of noble feminine virtue as artistic self-cultivation. In the *New Arcadia*, the collective honor of the noble family is preserved by the virtuous daughter: Pamela rejects the spurious matriarchal authority embodied in her aunt, and gives her father Basilius the honor of a patriarchal authority his own actions do not warrant. Her defense of her family's honor, however, does not lie in a self-effacing act of self-sacrifice but rather in a strong sense of her own value and prerogative. She is able to strengthen the power of her father only because she has power over herself. So while Sidney's *New Arcadia* reclaims for female chastity the dignity it lost in the *Old Arcadia*, it retains the earlier version's sense that chastity is not simply or

even primarily a familial or social safeguard. The self-referential, self-possessive nature of chastity for the pastoral romance heroine is one of the enduring features of its representations in later incarnations such as Fletcher's Clorin and Milton's Lady.

Chapter 3

SPENSER'S ROMANCE HEROINES: THE HEROIC AND THE PASTORAL IN BOOKS 3 AND 6 OF *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

EDMUND SPENSER'S great mixed-mode romance *The Faerie Queene* (1591; 1596) is a capacious catalogue of Renaissance heroic archetypes. Not surprisingly, it offers its own shifting reflections of romance heroism between the chivalric and the pastoral generic models. Spenser's most extensive engagement with pastoral takes place in Book 6, the book of Courtesy. The shepherdess Pastorella, the beloved of the hero Calidore, provides a more typical model of the heroine of English Renaissance romance than does Britomart, the female knight of Chastity in Book 3. It is the last book, then, that provides an example of the "new" romance heroine who carries the honor of the class and line. Within the overall context of *The Faerie Queene*, Pastorella is undoubtedly a minor character, and I do not mean to suggest that she is more important to a comprehensive interpretation of Spenser's work than Britomart is. By comparing the two, however, we may develop a keener sense of the divisions between the chivalric and pastoral versions of romance honor as they relate to the virtue of the well-born girl. Each offers a different answer to the question: how does a romance heroine prove herself to be physically pure and ethically worthy?

In his 1590 "Letter of the Authors" to Sir Walter Raleigh, Edmund Spenser emphasizes the didactic impulse behind his work: *The Faerie Queene* is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (Spenser, *FQ*, 737).[1] Although the intended reader in this letter appears to be masculine, elsewhere in the text we may see how Spenser assumed a female readership as well, most notably in his address to Elizabeth I in the Proem to Book 3: "But O dred Soueraine/Thus farre forth pardon, sith that choicest wit/ Cannot your glorious portraict figure plaine; /That I in colourd showes may shadow it, And antique praises unto present persons fit" (Proem 2). Both forms of romance honor, the chivalric and the pastoral, rely on the observance of moral and social norms best described as courtesy. Both Britomart

[1] All citations of *The Faerie Queene* are from A.C. Hamilton's 1977 annotated edition (Longman).

and Pastorella undergo trials of the flesh and spirit which prove their fitness as objects of courtship. In these two characters, Spenser offers two separate, generically inflected versions of feminine honor for the well-born girl, thus supplementing his initial goal as outlined in the Raleigh letter to include trials of maturity associated with female coming-of-age. In addition, both Britomart and Pastorella occupy important educative roles for their respective suitors. Both the chivalric hero, as embodied by Britomart, and the pastoral heroine, as embodied by Pastorella, display the defining virtue of the gentlewoman: chastity. Both have experiences which test the extent to which bodily defilement can affect the chastity of the mind. Both have a difficult time in coming to terms with the power of their beauty. Britomart's initial power comes in disguising her beauty, while Pastorella's authority is enhanced by hers, but each must confront the unintended effects of that beauty on others. While Britomart must deal with the visual threat to chastity from Malecasta's rolling eye (3.1.41) and the lascivious knight Gardante (3.1.65), Pastorella must endure the threat to her body and very life at the hands of marauding brigands (6.9.19). By approaching the two versions of feminine romance heroism through the various experiences of fleshly violation and recovery in Britomart's and Pastorella's careers, we may see how Spenser imagines the difference between the chivalric and pastoral concepts of honor.

The didactic purpose of *The Faerie Queene* as a "discipline" of virtue embraces a wide audience of "noble persons," including women.[2] The romance envisions women as moral agents whose sense of honor is internalized as independent judgment rather than social approbation or censure. Spenser's view of feminine honor allies him with the authors of Renaissance defenses of women who emphasize the feminine responsibility for their own standards of conduct, developed independently from the dictates of masculine authority.[3] In his experiments with genre (romance, epic) and mode (pastoral, chivalric), Spenser offers various frames in which male and female agents may seek and prove their honor. The accommodating episodic structure and vastness of *The Faerie Queene* allows the two separate romance modes, chivalric and pastoral, to coexist within the same texts despite their fundamental tensions. When we examine Britomart and Pastorella together as exemplars of feminine romance heroism, we cannot help but oppose the two modes. In his analysis of Book 6 and its place within the poem as a whole, Humphrey Tonkin identifies the chivalric romance as a guidance narrative, a dangerous journey motivated by discontent, while the pastoral experience is one of redemption through passive

2 Maureen Quilligan has described the romance as a means of permitting a mixed readership to participate vicariously in the "heroism" of the other gender (*Milton's Spenser*, 181). For a dissenting view, see Sheila T. Cavanagh, who argues in *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires* that the female characters in *FQ* are incapable of being virtuous according to Spenser's own definition of the word "virtue" (8–9).

3 See Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of Renaissance Woman*, especially her discussion of Thomas More's defense of humanist learning for women (164–6).

absorption of natural wisdom in a garden space.[4] He even goes so far as to question the very possibility of heroism in pastoral: "The hero of pastoral romance (in so far as pastoral can have heroes) leaves a corrupt court and finds order and harmony in uncorrupted nature. He returns to society not with the carcass of a dragon but with a richer and more coherent idea of order and beauty, which in turn enriches society itself."[5] His description of the pastoral career corresponds well to the typical career of the pastoral heroine, whose experiences tend to reform and enrich her domestic world. The recognition of a pastoral form of heroism, however, is absent from Tonkin's view, because he can find no male parallel to the chivalric hero. As we have seen elsewhere, however, the pastoral virgin fills the role that the knight errant has vacated. There may be few heroes of pastoral, but many heroines.

BRITOMART, CALIDORE, AND THE GENDER OF ROMANCE HEROISM IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

The Spenserian heroine who has received the most sustained critical attention is Britomart, the knightly lady of Book 3, the exemplar of Chastity. Spenser's attribution of traditionally masculine chivalric traits to a woman (she uses physical force to defend the honor of others, and rescues weak women such as Amoret from Busirane's despoliations) has been seen as forward-looking, even revolutionary, in its willingness to attribute masculine virtue to a young woman. Britomart certainly does not fit the template of the pastoral romance heroine. I have argued that as a model of aristocratic honor in English romance, the chivalric knight is gradually replaced in the late Renaissance by the gentlewoman of pastoral. In light of this development, the prominence of Britomart in *The Faerie Queene*, perhaps the greatest English Renaissance romance, is not a step forward but a negotiation between earlier and later literary versions of romance heroism. Early in Book 3, Spenser acknowledges the belated quality of Britomart's prowess:

> But by record of antique times I find,
> That women wont in warres to beare most sway,
> And to all great exploits them selues inclind:
> Of which they still the girlond bore away,
> Till enuious Men fearing their rules decay,
> Gan coyne straight lawes to curb their liberty. … (3.2.2)

The accounts in Book 3 of Britomart's "warlike puissaunce in ages spent" (3.2.3) owe much to an earlier representative of female knighthood, Arios-

4 Humphrey Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*, 19.
5 Tonkin, 18–19.

to's Bradamante.[6] Britomart can be seen equally as a throwback to the medieval past as much as an adumbration of the tough woman warrior frequently seen in twenty-first century fantasy and science fiction.[7] She is an aristocratic heroine who attempts to realize her dignity by appropriating the traditional male chivalric identity, with mixed results. Britomart's relationship to her own femininity is a problem even in Book 5, where her future as the wife of Artegall is resolved if not realized.

The character of Britomart stands athwart the literary trend toward the feminization of honor by attempting to act in a traditionally masculine way. The career of the pastoral romance heroine is loop-shaped; her progress frequently requires an alienation or separation from her family of origin in the context of paternal absence or irresponsibility. Ultimately, she finds her place again within the idealized *locus amoenus* as the emotional and moral center of a new domestic order. Spenser's Britomart, as an explicitly non-pastoral figure, does not follow the career model of the pastoral virgin. She leaves her father's house voluntarily. The conclusion of her quest for love is deferred beyond the conclusion of her designated book, and even in Book 5 she is only permitted to apprehend her destiny as Artegall's wife through a vision. In Spenser's version of the female knight, the development of feminine honor through male impersonation cannot be fully realized, but only prophesied. The narrative loop typical of the pastoral romance is never closed.

One might approach Britomart's predicament as an illustration of the problems of representing female honor in masculine generic terms. In her quest to find Artegall, the rough knight whose image she sees in Merlin's magic mirror, she must, in a sense, impersonate him, seeking to become what she desires.[8] Her magic lance, which provides her with the unique advantage among knights of Faerie Land of invincibility, is a phallic symbol adopted as a pre-emptive defense against discovery of her feminine vulnerability. As long as she advances and maintains her honor in this manner, however, she cannot actually attain her true goal: to be united with Artegall in the same kind of rapturous hermaphroditic union she observes in Scudamour and Amoret at the conclusion of the 1590 version:

6 Benson, in pointing out parallels between Britomart and Bradamante, nevertheless argues that Britomart is actually a "refutation" of Bradamante's case for the technical equality of the sexes in *Orlando Furioso*; Britomart represents a different ideal of femininity, more romance-inflected, than Ariosto's masculine-centered epic framework (*The Invention of Renaissance Woman*, 257–67). In Benson's view, Bradamante is recognized as worthy in masculine terms, but femininity per se is not a value. By contrast, Britomart is not worthy until she can prove herself in feminine terms as well as masculine ones.

7 Mary Villeponteaux ("Displacing Feminine Authority," 55) directs our attention to Spenser's insistence on the old-fashioned nature of feminine military prowess in Book 3.

8 Villeponteaux, 60.

> … Britomart halfe enuying their blesse,
> Was much empassioned in her gentle sprite,
> And to her selfe oft wisht like happinesse,
> In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse. (3.12.46)

In the 1596 version, Spenser removes this ending to Book 3 and creates a suspenseful bridge to Book 4 involving the separation of Amoret and Scudamour, but even in the extended text, he does not permit Britomart the completion of her quest. After freeing Artegall in Book 5 from the control of the tyrannous queen Radigund and re-establishing the patriarchal order, she must watch him leave yet again to fulfill his own mission of justice:

> There she continu'd for a certain space,
> Till through his want her woe did more increase:
> Then hoping that the change of air and place
> Would change her paine, and sorrow somewhat ease,
> She parted thence, her anguish to appease. (5.7.45)

Britomart's resumption of the chivalric adventure is no longer a quest but an escape and a distraction from the pains of unrequited love. Although her union with Artegall is assured as a matter of fate, the narrative perpetually deprives her (and Spenser's readers) of its emotional satisfactions. As a woman, Britomart's experience of the linear chivalric quest is not fulfilling, but frustrating. Stripped of purpose, her journey becomes merely a random series of scene changes without the redeeming sense of closure.

As a symbol of chivalric prowess, Britomart's lance reflects her desire to possess her beloved's masculine virtues by embodying them, yet she ultimately finds that she does not wish to do so. The lance becomes a metonymic substitute for Artegall himself. There are parallels between the nature of Britomart's quest and the frustration she encounters in prosecuting it, and the career of another Spenserian knight, Sir Calidore, the hero of courtesy in Book 6. Calidore searches for "the bloosme [blossom] of comely courtesy" (6.Proem.4), a metaphor with feminine implications as marked as the masculine ones associated with Britomart's borrowed lance. As a man, Calidore is essentially searching for something outside of himself. Just as the virtues Britomart loves and seeks to emulate are embodied in a man, the goal of Calidore's quest is embodied in a woman, Pastorella, whose floral-shaped birthmark literalizes her metaphorical identity as the source and inspiration of courteous behavior in a well-ordered community. Pastorella herself is "the flower of courtesy," the culmination of Calidore's goals and the model of his ethical and social ideals.[9] Britomart's adoption of the masculine chivalric model of heroism parallels Calidore's pursuit of the flower of courtesy in that each of these figures must pursue a mode of virtue associated with the opposite gender. In this sense,

9 Tonkin, 20 notes the relationship between Pastorella's identifying birthmark and her status as the natural exemplar of beauty and courteous behavior.

Calidore's situation is not unlike Britomart's in reverse; by nature and training a chivalric knight, his inclinations do him no good at all in helping him locate the object of his quest. Similarly, Britomart must abandon her femininity and act as a male knight saving the honor of others in order to achieve the object of her own quest: union with Artegall. Each must act in ways fundamentally opposite to their generic nature. The maid must become "martial," while the knight must become as passive and peaceful as a shepherd. Britomart pursues the archetype of rough masculinity in Artegall, whom she will ultimately tame and civilize. By the same token, Calidore falls in love with Pastorella, the stereotypical feminine heroine of pastoral, and must himself become more feminine, eschewing the purposeful martial quest to win her. *The Faerie Queene* was written "to fashion a gentleman," but the centrality of the feminine in Book 6 is unmistakable. Pamela Benson Joseph, in relating Spenser's romance to sixteenth-century humanist literature on the woman question, has argued that "the feminine is an essential principle in the grand scheme of [the poem]; it represents an alternative order."[10] Nowhere is this clearer than in Calidore's vision of the Graces on Mount Acidale and his inability to sustain or participate in it. I have argued that pastoral romance is a vehicle for the articulation of a uniquely feminine ideal of heroism. Calidore's engagement within the pastoral world of Book 6 is analogous to Britomart's participation in the linear chivalric quest in Book 3. We may see a kinship in the careers of these two Spenserian knights, structured in terms of participation in an alien genre associated with the opposite gender.

Similarly, the two books share the strategy of narrative deferral of the culmination of the central figure's quest: Britomart does not achieve union with Artegall, while Calidore never conclusively defeats the Blatant Beast, the enemy of courtesy. Both books depend on what Bruce Boehrer has called "the structural centrality of absence," in that they provide neither a sense of closure for the quest, nor the consummation of the erotic relationship serving as a key motivation for the quest.[11] This similarity may stem from the nature and relationship of the virtues celebrated in each book: chastity and courtesy. In pastoral romance, these two qualities are intertwined to the point where one cannot exist without the other. Chastity and courtesy are the twin guides regulating the bestowal of the self on a worthy lover. One is struck, however, by the difficulty in *The Faerie Queene* of finding a definitive allegorical representation of either quality. The heroes of Spenser's six books are generally assumed to attain and enact the virtues they are meant to illustrate, but it is difficult to embody chastity. Surprisingly, it is also difficult to embody courtesy, a protean

[10] Benson, 253. Eva Gold ("The Queen and the Book," 4) has also noted the importance of "woman as cynosure" in the circular structures of Book 6.

[11] See Boehrer, " 'Careless Modestee'," 562–3. Boehrer argues that Book 3 attempts to represent the unrepresentable, that is, the bodily chastity of the Queen. He reads the narrative deferral of Britomart's and Artegall's union as a symptom of the displacement of dynastic anxiety over Elizabeth's embrace of chastity as a symbol and source of her authority (566).

virtue seemingly dependent on context. In *The Faerie Queene*, both chastity and courtesy are active and spontaneous virtues linked by impulses of feeling regulated by reason, but primarily originating as emotions. This similarity of generation sets chastity and courtesy aside from holiness, temperance, and justice, the subjects of other books, and while friendship, the topic of Book 4, is also based on an emotional impulse, it is a relationship enacted by multiple characters rather than embodied in one. The spontaneous and irrational origins of chastity and courtesy provide the poet with a challenge of representation within the ethical, rational framework set forth in the "Letter of the Author."

One may argue that courtesy may be inculcated through training, but Book 6 would seem to suggest that it is an inborn, natural and spontaneous quality manifested "on a lowly stalk" (6.Proem.4) or in a savage man (6.4.11) as often as in the court. The anti-courtly message of Book 6 is explicitly articulated by Pastorella's foster-father, Meliboe, who abandoned the courtly life in favor of the independence and simplicity of the pastoral life (6.9.24). Spenser offers no house of education in which one could learn courtesy; there are no analogues to the House of Holiness. Even Calidore's sojourn among the shepherds with Pastorella does not make him infallibly courteous. Similarly, Britomart has no institute of chastity to attend; she demonstrates her chastity in her actions and reactions from the very beginning of her adventures.[12] Within *The Faerie Queene*, chastity and courtesy are portrayed as spontaneous reactions rather than pre-existing principles of behavior. There is no code of chastity or courtesy to learn. This stands in marked contrast to the ethical idea of chivalry, articulated and codified as a set of expected ritualistic behaviors. In their shared responsiveness to shifting external realities, chastity and courtesy are more sympathetic to cultural stereotypes of feminine behavior as passive and reactive; they are, I suggest, coded as feminine within Spenser's romance.[13] Ficino's assumptions about the nature of poetic rapture are based on Christian values of purity, humility, and patience, postures considered feminine ideals in the Renaissance.[14] We have already recognized Spenser's difficulty in illustrating active chastity, but this difficulty is equally applicable to the task of illustrating courtesy.[15] Both virtues are ultimately represented in terms of Neoplatonic mystery.

12 John Bean ("Cosmic Order in *The Faerie Queene*," 74) makes this point about Britomart's spontaneous and untaught chastity, pointing out the lack of an analogue in Book 3 to the Red Crosse Knight's or Sir Guyon's formal training experiences.

13 Jon Quitslund, for example, has described Colin Clout's version of courtesy, articulated on top of Mount Acidale in Book 6, as "counter to the standard Elizabethan image of masculinity" (*Spenser's Supreme Fiction*, 21). Men have little or nothing to do with the foundation or maintenance of that rapturous vision of reciprocal generosity.

14 Michael J.B. Allen, "Neoplatonism," 437.

15 Stanley Stewart acknowledges the reactive rather than proactive character of courtesy in his discussion of Calidore's failures in "Sir Calidore and 'Closure'" (72).

In pastoral romance, chastity and courtesy together constitute the ideal courtship. Love literature of the English Renaissance is filled with a generalized language of Neoplatonism that serves to elevate the baser physical desires and save the reputation of love as an ennobling, even transcendent experience. The ideology of love in Spenser's poem has long been recognized as Neoplatonic. For Ficino, love had the power to create order out of chaos; what seems initially to be a destructive and anarchic emotion is actually a vehicle of both personal and social improvement. Pico della Mirandola defined human love as desire aroused by physical beauty, a desire that then leads the lover to a rapturous apprehension of the higher unseen beauties of heavenly and eternal forms.[16] Neoplatonism redeems the irrationality of fleshly desire by ironically transforming it into a conduit of spiritual rapture. For Spenser, Neoplatonic philosophy helps to bridge the gap between the erotic and the spiritual, a task necessary for an elevated exploration of chastity and courtesy, the two pillars of virtuous human love. As John Bean has pointed out, the relative spontaneity and naturalness of Britomart's chastity is compatible with the emphasis placed by Neoplatonism on rapturous emotion; one accomplishes an apprehension of eternal Beauty not through study or effort, but through love alone.[17] Both chastity and courtesy, as Spenser imagines them, are particularly amenable to a Neoplatonic treatment, as they are linked not only by their association with virtuous love but by their reactive and instinctive operation as impulses rather than thoughts.

Books 3 and 6 represent the Neoplatonic assumption that Beauty, properly contemplated, may lead to Wisdom. The two heroes of each book face climactic trials not of combat but of contemplation; they are tests of interpretation and discrimination rather than strength or courage. In the House of Busirane, Britomart enters a masque-like world of confusing tableaux, her only instruction to "be bold, be bold, but not too bold" (3.12.54). Boldness is a threat to chastity and to courtesy, and it is the same trait that causes Calidore to misread the situation as he mistakenly interrupts the dance of the Graces atop Mount Acidale. Britomart's experience in the house of Busirane requires her to play the role of the discriminating art critic: she must look at allegorical and mythological representations of erotic passion and its negative consequences without allowing herself to be moved by them. In a sense, she must resist within

16 For a useful and succinct summary of Renaissance erotic Neoplatonism as it pertains to Spenser, see Maurice Evans, "Platonic Allegory in *The Faerie Queene*," 133 and passim. Cavanagh (*Wanton Eyes*, 56–58), in discussing Una and Duessa, makes an interesting point about the gap between the Neoplatonic tribute to physical beauty as a vehicle of spiritual rapture and the inherently deceptive status of beauty as an indicator of inner worth. In other words, Spenser's philosophical invocations and his narrative implications sometimes contradict each other. Quitslund, in contrast, stresses the contradictions within Renaissance versions of Neoplatonism from which Spenser selectively borrowed, arguing that *The Faerie Queene* is primarily an imaginative and aesthetic response to a loosely related group of philosophical concepts (*Spenser's Supreme Fiction*, 93–102).

17 Bean, 74.

herself the platonic operation of Beauty in order to succeed in freeing Amoret from the deranged poet-wizard Busirane. Calidore's response to his own trial of interpretation is related yet inverse to Britomart's in that he confuses his vision of the eternal form of Beauty with its lesser bodily incarnation. The vision on Mount Acidale is the form itself, not the imitation; by mistaking it as an earthly convocation in which he might participate, he unwittingly destroys the fragile and contingent higher apprehension he has been vouchsafed. The cautionary formula to be bold, yet not too bold applies equally to both chastity and courtesy. Calidore's career trajectory differs from that of Spenser's other male knights precisely for this reason.

Calidore's challenge is to understand what he has seen, and, as readers, we find ourselves in the same position. Even the Proem of Book 6 leads the reader to expect the revelation of a mystery:

> Reuele to me the sacred noursery
> Of vertue, which with you doth there remaine,
> Where it in siluer bowre does hidden ly
> From view of men. … (6.Proem.3)

This site is the *locus amoenus* of pastoral romance, presided over by a feminine exemplar of beauty and virtue. Here the narrator signals one of the more unusual aspects of Book 6: the marginality of the putative hero to a great deal of the action. The entire narrative is organized as a series of concentric circles surrounding the pastoral cantos.[18] Instead of the linear quest so typical of chivalric romance, we experience Book 6 as a spiraling repetition of episodes centered around a female figure (Mirabella, Serena, Pastorella, the unnamed "fourth Grace") whose behavior and fate are designed to illustrate the operations of courtesy in different circumstances.[19] Courtesy is a constitutive virtue of harmonious social life. Book 6 is full of examples of violated social boundaries; the enemies of courtesy come from outside of the enclosed circle of community. Even Calidore himself violates the feminine circle of the Graces on Mount Acidale. One of the most important elements of courtesy, it seems, is to know your place, a lesson that even our knight of courtesy must learn. Courtesy requires battles within, as well as without, the self. Calidore's desire to kill the Blatant Beast once and for all, and his subsequent inability to accomplish his wish, objectively represent courtesy as a subjective and conditional achievement requiring constant maintenance and reconstitution. The circular nature of the plot of Book 6, with its recurrent breakings of the social and physical boundaries surrounding the communities of the courteous, reflects the eternal nature of the struggle to achieve this virtue.

The nature of Calidore's pastoral epiphany on Mount Acidale has been a

[18] See James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of* The Faerie Queene, 661. Frank Whigham in *Ambition and Privilege* has also discussed the circular structure of Book 6 as associated with panegyric of Queen Elizabeth (67).

[19] See Harry Berger Jr., *Revisionary Play*, 226.

subject of great critical interest and debate. His glimpse of the Graces dancing in a ring of maidens atop Mount Acidale, accompanied by the Spenserian shepherd persona, Colin Clout , is famously obscure yet admittedly central to the narrative:[20]

> All they without were raunged in a ring,
> And danced round; but in the midst of them
> Three other Ladies did both daunce and sing,
> The whilst the rest them round about did hemme,
> And like a girlond did in compasse stemme:
> And in the middest of those same three, was placed
> Another Damzell, as a precious gemme,
> Amidst a ring most richly well enchased,
> That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced. (6.10.12)

Spenser may have intended Calidore as a chivalric version of Sir Philip Sidney;[21] if so, then the encounter between him and Spenser's own pastoral persona, Colin Clout, enacts a conversation between two poets who honor the virtue and centrality of the gentlewoman through her emplacement in pastoral. Sidney's own pastoral persona, Philisides, has more in common with Colin than Calidore does. I wish to suggest that Book 6 may be read as an encounter between two romance modes, the chivalric and the pastoral, in which the putative hero's generic limitations become evident on Mount Acidale. Calidore cannot be the hero of pastoral romance because it has no hero, only a heroine. Thus, the defining event of his quest is a vision he observes rather than a feat he performs.

The sense that something vital and strange takes place atop Mount Acidale is the one thing that various readers of the episode have in common as they assess the function of the episode in Book 6 and in the romance as a whole, although most have located philosophical or mythological implications in the dancing ring of maidens. What does Calidore learn from this vision? The presence and role of Colin Clout, Spenser's own pastoral persona, has led to a general acceptance that the episode is an allegory of *poesis*; the maker, Colin (Spenser) controls his creations and is confronted by them.[22] The vision we see along with Calidore is a trial of interpretation, but Calidore's attempt to

20 C.S. Lewis most famously identified canto 10 as the "core" of Book 6 in his *Allegory of Love* (353).

21 H.S.V. Jones, *A Spenser Handbook*, 292.

22 Tonkin reads the episode as "a fictional representation of the poet's relation to the controlling idea of his poem" (138). Angus Fletcher (*The Prophetic Moment*, 93) has interpreted the scene as Spenser's own personal myth of poesis, while Elizabeth Bellamy (172) widens its significance to include the general origins of poetry as Spenser understood them. Harry Berger also sees the episode as fundamentally Neoplatonic in significance, illustrating the soul as a foundling that must turn inward and, through self-creation, regain its lost nature (*Revisionary Play*, 241).

move from observation to participation, his attempt to "resolve" and "know" (6.10.17) the nature of the vision, is what terminates it:

> But soone as he appeared to their vew,
> They vanisht all away out of his sight,
> And cleane were gone, which way he neuer knew … (6.10.18)

Colin Clout is so angry at the dissolution of the circle that he breaks his own pipe, but he nevertheless admits that despite his important instrumental role in providing the music for the dance of the Graces, he cannot actually summon them to appear (6.10.20). At this point, both Colin and Calidore alike express their mutual sense of frustration and marginality; Colin has failed as a poet/singer, while Calidore fears that he has failed in courtesy. The disappearance of the maidens causes each to question his competence at the central aspect of his self-proclaimed identity. Each is effectively excluded from the center of meaning. Calidore, the hero of the book, confronts his own marginality within its genre of pastoral romance. He is a chivalric hero in the wrong place. It is therefore perhaps unfair to speak of Calidore's failure at Mount Acidale, when in terms of generic structure he could never be given the central heroic role in the first place.[23]

Book 6 promises to reveal "the sacred nursery of virtue," also figured as a hidden bower, a womb-like space of generation. Calidore's impatient and ill-timed attempt to uncover the mysteries of the Graces takes on the flavor of a sexual violation. Katherine Eggert, discussing what she identifies as a tension between the poetics of rapine and the poetics of rapture in the poem, goes so far as to read Calidore's interruption of the Graces as a metaphorical form of rape.[24] There is, to be sure, a salacious element to the scenario of Calidore's observation of dancing naked women, and the breach and dissolution of the gynocentric interlocking circle by means of Calidore's intrusion certainly fits Eggert's critical template. That Calidore's interest in the vision is couched in terms of "knowing" is also significant; to reduce, label, and possess a material understanding of something is also, in Renaissance English usage, to have carnal knowledge. As long as he stands "rapt with pleasaunce" (6.10.17), he presents no threat to the vision, but when he "resolves," that is, decides to act, he crosses the line from innocent to complicit. Chivalric romance contains a bias toward action. Calidore is only acting in accordance with the requirements of his role as a knight errant who must move forward in a linear fashion to fulfill generic expectations. The pastoral vision before him offers no crisis in which to intervene; by attempting to create one, he loses the ideal. The epigraph for

23 Rosemond Tuve drew early attention to Calidore's faults as a knight in *Allegorical Imagery* (91). Bellamy in "Colin and Orphic Interpretation" (175) has remarked upon the critical tendency to view Calidore as a failure. I agree with her contention that this is an unfair summary of his career, although for different reasons. Richard Neuse (352) calls Calidore an "anti-hero."

24 Eggert, 10.

canto 10 draws our attention to the ironic juxtaposition of Calidore's rapture and Pastorella's actual rape by brigands:

> Calidore sees the Graces daunce,
> To Colin's melody:
> The whiles his Pastorell is led,
> Into captivity. (6.10)

Calidore's chivalric traits, symbolized by the sword he carries under his shepherd's weeds, enable him to rescue Pastorella and restore her to her parents, but they are also inevitably destructive to the ideal *locus amoenus*, the pastoral circle of love and beauty, realized atop Mount Acidale.

Spatially, the dance of the Graces makes the trope of the pastoral romance loop a literal one. At the center of the circle of naked dancing maidens is a nameless girl whose identity is subject to multiple interpretations: she might be an idealized version of Pastorella, or perhaps if we read intertextually, she is Rosalind from *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*.[25] She may be Elizabeth Boyle, Spenser's fiancée, or she may be another mirror of Queen Elizabeth, a pastoral maiden being honored by the Three Graces.[26] There can be little disagreement, however, that she is not a goddess but a mortal girl, and that she is intimately associated with the Arcadian landscape of Acidale:

> Such were those Goddesses, which ye did see;
> But that fourth Mayd, which there amidst them traced,
> Who can aread, what creature mote she bee,
> Whether a creature, or a goddesse graced
> With heauenly gifts from heuen first enraced?
> But what so sure she was, she worthy was,
> To be the fourth with those three other placed:
> Yet was she certes but a countrey lasse,
> Yet she all other countrey lasses farre did passe.
>
> So farre as doth the daughter of the day,
> All other lesser lights in light excel,
> So farre doth she in beautyfull array,
> Aboue all other lasses beare the bell,
> Ne lesse in virtue that beseemes her well,
> Doth she exceede the rest of all her race,

25 Berger (*Revisionary Play*, 237) identifies her as Rosalind but argues that she eventually comes to stand for every female figure the poet (Colin Clout) has ever meditated upon (241). I share Berger's sense of the multiplicity of this central figure, but with the caveat that she seems strongly associated with pastoral archetypes of femininity only. Some Spenserian heroines, such as Belphoebe and Florimell (suggested by Berger as possible avatars) are not particularly pastoral, and some, such as Britomart, are anti-pastoral.

26 Frances Yates (*Astraea*, 74) identifies the central figure in the circle as the queen, but Eva Gold argues that the narrator explicitly excludes that possibility by asking pardon of the queen for representing another woman in the central position (Gold, 6).

> For which the Graces that here wont to dwell,
> Haue for more honor brought her to this place,
> And graced her so much to be another Grace.
>
> Another Grace she well deserves to be,
> In whom so many Graces gathered are,
> Excelling much the meane of her degree:
> Diuine resemblaunce, beauty soveraine rare,
> Firme chastity, that spight ne blemish dare;
> All which she with such courtesie doth grace,
> That all her peres cannot with her compare.
> But quite are dimmed, when she is in place.
> She made me often pipe and now to pipe apace. (6.10.25–27)

The maiden at the center of the circle, I would argue, is Spenser's representation of the platonic form of the pastoral romance heroine. This heroine is the focus of pastoral order and harmony; she embodies and reflects the traits that permit harmonious and gracious life in the home and in society. She wears a garland of flowers, the prize of the pastoral queen, although Colin stresses her humble rural origins. The Graces give her

> … comely carriage, entertainement kynde,
> Sweet semblaunt, friendly offices that bynde,
> And all the complements of curtesie. … (6.10.23)

In addition, she is blessed with a beauty ("divine resemblance") that draws the mind of the beholder upward in the best tradition of Neoplatonic elevation. Finally, the unnamed "fourth grace" adds chastity to the gifts of the Graces, combining social accessibility with sexual temperance. Her chastity, invulnerable to "spite," is an innate quality that nothing external may damage. She is the moral and social cynosure of her world, the pastoral world.

The pastoral virgin celebrated at the center of the dance of the Graces combines the virtues of chastity and courtesy through her association with generosity. An association between chastity and generosity may seem counter-intuitive, as chastity is the practice of self-containment and withholding. Spenser, however, anticipates Milton's elision of chastity and charity in *A Mask* by drawing our attention to the connection between graciousness and chastity. According to Maurice Evans, Spenser's version of the dance of the Graces follows their mythical association with the elements of Neoplatonic rapture; the Graces represent Pulchritudo (beauty), Amor (love) and Voluptas (desire) respectively. In their intertwined dance, they have been thought to express the Neoplatonic cycle: love is desire aroused by beauty.[27] At the same time, however, Spenser's emphasis on chastity in this scene indicates his understanding of yet another related interpretation of the Graces: they are

[27] Evans, 133.

Pulchritudo, Amor, and Castitas (chastity). In this association, love is equated with chastity, a higher form of spiritual generosity than the granting of bodily sexual access.[28] In Book 3, the book of chastity, Spenser illustrates his understanding that chastity is far other than a barren self-withholding when he has Britomart defeat the virginal treasure-hoarder Marinell on the strand (3.4.17). Chastity is not the opposite of generosity but its essence. Colin's fourth grace, through her chastity, offers him the gift of poetic inspiration ("she made me often pipe and pipe apace"). She provides him not with fleshly satisfaction but with an ideal that guides his poetic practice and his conduct.[29]

The history of pastoral has encompassed a debate about the nature of human love. Golden Age nostalgia for a time of innocent natural promiscuity without the harsh constraints of honor, as we've seen in the prologue to Tasso's *Aminta*, is opposed to the insistence in the English pastorals of Spenser, Fletcher and Milton on the important constitutive roles of chastity and honor in the pastoral community. Spenser provides his own commentary on Golden Age sexual nostalgia in Book 3, in the story of Hellenore and Malbecco. Although Book 3 is a chivalric romance tale, it offers its own pastoral withdrawal from the purposeful quest in Canto 10, tellingly the only part of Book 3 in which Britomart does not play a role. Hellenore, the adulterous young wife of Malbecco, crowns her misadventures by running away to live in the forest with satyrs ("And euery one as commune good her handeled," 3.10.36). Her husband witnesses her innocent debauchery as she enacts a debased version of the pastoral circle of celebration so common in Book 6:

> The iolly Satyres full of fresh delight,
> Came dauncing forth, and with them nimbly led
> Faire Hellenore, with girlonds all bespred,
> Whom their May-lady they had newly made:
> She proud of that new honour, which they red,
> And of their louely fellowship full glade,
> Daunst lively, and her face did with a Lawrell shade. (3.10.44)

In his reading the Hellenore episode, John Bernard finds her to be a version of the Golden Age dream of "uninhibited female libido."[30] In the chivalric context of Book 3, she provides a counter example to the militant chastity of the heroine Britomart, who reserves herself for one man. Hellenore represents pastoral femininity without a conscience, generosity without discrimination. The terms of Hellenore's description anticipate the pastoral vision on Mount Acidale to a degree; like the fourth Grace, she is crowned with a garland, in this case laurel, which implies her power to inspire the music of her satyr lover/worshippers. The functional equivalent of the onlooker Calidore in this correspondence is

28 Evans, 143.
29 Richard Neuse, "Book 6 as Conclusion to *The Faerie Queene*," 348.
30 Bernard, "Pastoral and Comedy in Book 3," 16.

her jealous husband Malbecco, who far from deriving "rapt pleasaunce" from the sight of his wife in this position, is consumed with anguished jealousy and ends up being assaulted by the satyrs (3.10.52). Malbecco's resultant misanthropy and isolation contrasts with Calidore's commitment, however ineffectual, to courtesy and social harmony. Hellenore's beauty inspires hatred rather than love because it is not used in the service of *castitas* but *voluptas* instead. From the perspective of the chaste, Hellenore is the nightmare double of the fourth Grace, the platonic ideal of the pastoral heroine of romance. Hellenore's orgy in canto 10 of Book 3 requires a counterbalance in canto 10 of Book 6; the dance of the Graces reforms and purges pastoral celebration of its ancestral promiscuity and enshrines chastity as a central value of pastoral womanhood. Spenser utterly rejects Golden Age nostalgia for free love in the climactic episode of his book of courtesy. Without the formative force of chastity behind it, pastoral cannot inspire virtue or heroism, only license and mindless pleasure.

RAPE AND RAPTURE: PASTORELLA AND SPENSER'S ALLEGORY OF NEOPLATONIC DESCENT

Spenser wishes to reclaim pastoral as a moral discourse as well as a fashionable courtly one. Calidore's sojourn as a shepherd and his courtship of Pastorella invite criticism of his character as falling into a morally suspect *otium* at odds with his task of finding and defeating the Blatant Beast, figured in chivalric fashion as a dragon. However, as in Sidney's *Arcadia*, what seems to be a diversion from the main chivalric plot turns out to be the point of the narrative. The pastoral cantos of Book 6 are not a retreat but an engagement of a different kind.[31] Calidore's pastoral sojourn in Spenser's hands develops into a meditation on the relation between the Platonic world of forms and its shadow, the material world. Although Spenser's contemporaries associated the pastoral with rural retreat and idealized leisure, Spenser's version of pastoral *otium* evolves into an example of a life lived under the limitations of physical reality. Calidore, as knight of courtesy, must learn to apply the philosophical ideals of Platonic relations within the "shadow" world of danger, death, and ambiguity.

In the figure of Pastorella, Spenser offers a synthetic version of the pastoral romance heroine, with features recognizable from several other examples of the type. Her beauty, her virtue, her natural and effortless eminence above her putative peers, her hidden noble birth, the soft Neoplatonism inherent in her

31 Paul Alpers ("Spenser's Late Pastorals," 797) makes a similar point about pastoral in Book 6; he sees Spenser turning away from the Virgilian career trajectory by positioning pastoral not as a "preparation" for heroic poetry but as an "alternative" to the heroic world. Jacqueline Miller has also questioned whether the pastoral realm in Book 6 is truly an escape rather than an "intensification" of Calidore's mission ("The Courtly Figure," 58–9).

presentation, her encounter with brigands (straight out of Greek romance), and even her identifying birthmark all contribute to her status as a generic stereotype. When we extend the Neoplatonic interpretative framework down the hill to the lowly shepherds' plain, we see that the Acidale episode provides the form, or Platonic "real," for the material "shadow" that is Calidore's initial sight of Pastorella:[32]

> Upon a little hillock she was placed
> Higher then all the rest, and round about
> Environed with a girland, goodly graced,
> Of lovely lasses, and them all without
> The lustie shepherd swaynes sate in a rout,
> The which did pipe and sing her prayses dew,
> And oft reioyce, and oft for wonder shout,
> As if some miracle of heauenly hew
> Were downe to them descended in the earthly vew. (6.9.8)

This stanza points to a division between body (earth) and mind (Heaven) that is the basis of all Platonic philosophy, while at the same time using the conditional ("as if") to remind us of Pastorella's earthly corporeality. She will have an important educative role for Calidore, in that his love for her will enable him to apprehend, if only briefly, the eternal form of beauty and love atop Mount Acidale. She is the earthly beauty who inspires Calidore's desire for a wisdom he cannot even recognize, the grounds for Calidore's Platonic ascent. At the same time, however, Spenser offers us a view of Neoplatonic psychology as experienced by the beautiful maiden herself. While her lover is witnessing the mysteries of the Graces, she is undergoing a descent into gross corporeality that is the exact opposite to his motion of ascent. Through Pastorella, Spenser illustrates the descent into death that a misunderstanding of the proper role of beauty and chastity might unfortunately occasion.

Pastorella remains physically untouched only as long as her heart remains untouched.[33] In Book 3, the chivalric Britomart's absolute physical integrity is breached fairly early when Gardante, one of Malecasta's knights, is able to graze her in the thigh (3.1.65). The thigh wound in Arthurian romance is the external marker of damaged chastity for the male knight; in Spenser's treatment of the trope, the taint of impurity comes not from internal temptation but from the unlicensed eye of the outsider. Without her masculine armor, Britomart is vulnerable to violation in a way that the pastoral heroine is not, as the lewd glance has the power to dishonor Britomart without her complicity. Pastorella, however, is accustomed to being the cynosure of all eyes. When Calidore meets her, he is initially struck not so much by her beauty as by her self-possession,

32 See Tonkin, 127 and 137 for a recognition of the descriptive similarities between Pastorella's hillock and the dance of the Graces on Mount Acidale.

33 Stewart, 80 makes this point.

her "rare demeanure" (6.9.11). She is indifferent to her shepherd admirers, especially Coridon, because of her intellectual discernment: "Though meane her lot, yet higher did her mind ascend" (6.9.10). Although Pastorella remains a largely allegorical representation of courtesy, the poem's emphasis on her thoughts and reactions is distinguishable from other Renaissance meditations on Platonic love, most of which focus on the male lover's experience. The story of Pastorella explores the Platonic body/mind dichotomy from another perspective. The woman's physical beauty is conventionally the contemplative basis for the ascent of the male mind, but little more. Elizabeth Spiller has identified a common movement in Spenserian quests "from becoming to being, from physical reality to abstract idea" that makes the progress of Faerie Land heroes a Platonic one in the general sense.[34] Pastorella's progress, as Calidore simultaneously makes the typical movement Spiller has described, is precisely the inverse. In focusing on Pastorella's own Neoplatonic allegory of descent, Spenser also takes pains to illustrate the effects of the platonic experience on the feminine side of the couple, and indeed, redefines ideal platonic love as necessarily reciprocal, a generosity enabled by chastity and courtesy combined, despite the travails of the flesh.

Pastorella is primarily an allegorical figure. She is not equipped with a lyric consciousness, unlike Sidney's and Wroth's pastoral heroines. In considering the Pastorella episodes as an allegory of Neoplatonism from the feminine perspective, I assign her a tentative allegorical identity as the embodiment of Earthly Beauty. She plays for Calidore the same role as the fourth Grace, the nameless "countrey lasse," does for Colin on Mount Acidale: she raises his mind to the contemplation of Higher Beauty. It is possible for allegorical personifications to have more than one operative meaning. Pastorella is already the embodiment of natural courtesy, the "flower on a lowly stalk" that is the subject of the book. The use of pastoral itself as a veil for higher subjects was a well-accepted tradition in Renaissance literature, articulated by critics such as George Puttenham; as Jacqueline Miller has argued, pastoral is strongly allegorical by its very nature.[35] In her examination of Calidore's own allegorical incarnations, she shows how he comes to illustrate Puttenham's own definition of allegory as "false semblaunt," taking up and discarding social identities as knight and shepherd.[36] Even Pastorella, the romance foundling of high parentage, is not whom she appears to be, or rather, she has a multiplicity of allegorical significances.[37] In considering her as Earthly Beauty, I by no means exclude or replace her other "semblaunts" but only hope to add to a rich catalogue. There is even an affinity between her pastoral identity and her allegorical one as Beauty; Ficino, the great Renaissance theorist of Christian Neoplatonism, responded

34 Spiller, "Poetic Parthenogenesis and Spenser's Idea of Creation," 67.

35 Jacqueline Miller, "The Courtly Figure: Spenser's Anatomy of Allegory," 59.

36 Jacqueline Miller, 60–2.

37 Pastorella has also been associated with mythological figures: Tonkin sees her as a version of Eurydice (215), while Alice Fox Blitch has argued that Spenser had Proserpina in mind (22).

to Plato's banishment of the poets from the ideal republic by proclaiming that poets should leave the city for the country.[38] The pastoral movement from city to country is therefore associated in Ficino's model with the generation of poetic rapture through Beauty such as we see on Mount Acidale.

Pastorella teaches Calidore civility as he tries to win her approval in a communal setting in which he is an outsider. The high point of Calidore's courtship of Pastorella is how he treats his rival, the shepherd Coridon.[39] His courtesy to the other man, the concession of victory in a wrestling tournament, and the sensitive way in which he spares Coridon gratuitous humiliation mark the point at which Pastorella begins to regard him favorably. Calidore wins Pastorella's approval by combining self-effacement with self-control. In an allegorical episode reminiscent of Sidney's Arcadia, he displays control over his own "greedy fancy" by slaying a tiger "with fell claws full of fierce gourmandize/ And greedy mouth" (6.10.34). In presenting the tiger's head at Pastorella's feet, he signals his own transformation into a courteous lover who seeks to serve rather than devour. Self-control over one's own rapacity is a key qualification distinguishing Calidore from other suitors. The consequences of its loss are vividly illustrated in the subsequent attack and destruction of the pastoral village by violent brigands whose actions epitomize all the values that Neoplatonic idealism eschews.

The account of Pastorella's wasting illness in the brigands' cave may be read as an allegory of Earthly Beauty's decay when the attempt to apprehend the Divine through love is abandoned. Plucked from her hillock, Pastorella is imprisoned in a cave of materiality in which she is literally buried in piles of corpses. Her effect on the brigands themselves is the parodic opposite of her improving influence on Calidore.[40] The brigands' reaction to her physical attractions negates the corrective and inspirational power of beauty as a gift of the Graces, bestowed not only on the object but on her beholders as well. The most negative effect, however, of the brigands' misapprehension of Earthly Beauty is not on them but on Pastorella herself. Her resemblance to the fourth Grace is erased, as the gracious gift of beauty, "decayed and mard," (6.11.13), degenerates into "the spoil of theeves and Brigants bad" (6.10.40).

The environment the brigands call home recalls the allegory of the cave in Plato's *Republic*, representing the epistemological circumstances under which we live our mortal lives. Our perceptions of the physical world are compared to the shadows thrown on the cave wall by fire, while outside the cave, the sun, representing divine enlightenment, illuminates true forms. In Spenser's cave,

38 Michael J.B. Allen, 439.

39 For an more skeptical reading of Calidore's interactions with Coridon, see Alpers, "Spenser's Late Pastorals," 812, who finds Calidore contemptuous of the lesser man. Cavanagh (*Wanton Eyes*, 126) also finds Calidore's courtesy "suspect."

40 Alpers, "Spenser's Late Pastorals," 814 calls the cave episode a "demonic parody" of the simultaneous events on Mount Acidale.

> Darkeness dred and daily night did hover
> Through all the inner parts, wherein they dwelt,
> Ne lightned was with window, nor with lover [louver],
> But with continuall candlelight, which delt
> A doubtfull sense of things, not so well seene, as felt. (6.10.42)

Spenser's idiosyncratic spelling of "lover" for "louver" underlines the absence of chaste and courteous aspirations in the brutal and mercantile society the brigands have created. They are unable to apprehend beauty as a divine resemblance because they have no faculty for a Platonic understanding of beauty. Not surprisingly, Pastorella's imprisonment in their cave affects ("wastes") her own beauty, "which did fade/Like to a flower, that feeles no heate of sunne" (6.10.44). If beauty is defined as divine resemblance, it cannot exist where there is no reflection of the Divine.

Pastorella's external transformation comes with a corresponding shift in her demeanor. In her previous position as the cynosure of the pastoral community, she exemplifies the virtues of the courteous Graces as enumerated in 6.10.23; she is "mylde," "gentle," "simple and true from couert malice free," bearing herself impartially toward her admirers. In the brigands' cave, however, she is forced to abandon those very same virtues to defend herself from outright rape by the brigands' captain: "She thought it best, for shadow to pretend/ Some shew of favor, by him gracing small,/ A little well is lent, that gaineth more withal"(6.11.6). Pastorella's defensive dishonesties are a debased substitution for chastity's true generosity, a "lending" rather than a giving of the self. Her most successful subterfuge is a mysterious illness in which she makes herself "unfit to serve his lawlesse mindes behest" (6.11.7).[41] At first, this is pure playacting of the "not tonight, dear, I have a headache" variety, but eventually the illness becomes real in the Platonic sense: "Her sicknesse was not of the body but of the mynde" (6.11.8). In being forced to abandon the Platonic commitment to truth and divine semblance, she loses the divine resemblance that made her beautiful.

In Meliboe's pastoral community, as befits her status as an earthly shadow of Divine Beauty, Pastorella inspires social harmony. In captivity, however, she becomes the bone of contention and origin of violent clashes among the thieves themselves, as they murder each other over the question of her ownership. The consequences of the brigands' obsession with materialism, both commercial and sexual, are reflected in the denouement. Trapped in the dead Captain's arms, literally buried in a hill of corpses, she is as far as she can possibly be from Mount Acidale's vision of immaterial forms, and even her own pastoral hillock. Her exile, both physical and intellectual, is described in

41 Cavanagh (*Wanton Eyes*, 127) finds Pastorella's dishonesty to be consistent with her earlier life as a fake shepherdess: "Having lived a deceptive life, she easily fashions successful deceits." As Pastorella is trying to avoid rape, however, I see an ethical distinction between tact toward an importunate suitor and Pastorella's desperate subterfuges in the cave.

terms recalling her happier days: "And in his armes the dreary dying mayd,/ Like a sweet Angell twixt two clouds uphild:/ Her lovely light was dimmed and decayd" (6.11.20). Pastorella now requires a dramatic resurrection in which Calidore elevates her just as she had previously elevated him. Pulling her from the mound of slain bodies, he rescues her from the cave, "forth her bringing to the joyous light" (6.11.50) of the upper world, accessible to divine illumination, once again. The Neoplatonic ascent of the lover's soul is paralleled here by a literal resurrection of the heroine's body. The reciprocal nature of Calidore and Pastorella's platonic union distinguishes it both from Petrarchan erotic frustration and the ritualized, one-sided worship of courtly love. Both Pastorella and Calidore are compromised, Calidore by his unwitting and unavoidable violation of the Graces's circle, and Pastorella by her treatment as a sexual commodity rather than an earthly reflection of Divine Beauty. Yet both are redeemed by each other. Calidore fights down the brigand in himself, achieves self-control and tact in his courtship of Pastorella, and is thus able to rescue her from the perversions of love into lust, possession and slavery. He dresses as a shepherd, but acts as a knight when the time requires it. However, as the Mount Acidale episode shows, the chivalric mode of action is not sufficient for every situation, as it must be supplemented by the pastoral mode of thought exemplified by Pastorella. In fact, without the Neoplatonic idealism of pastoral, the chivalric emphasis on action, combat and victory might easily degenerate into the honor of thieves and brigands.[42] Stanley Stewart and Paul Alpers have seen parallels between Calidore and his enemy, the captain of the brigands. It is true that each man employs a decidedly unpastoral violence, but the difference is in the ideals each serves. Calidore, the knight, accompanied by the real shepherd, Coridon, saves the virtue of Beauty from those who would debase and destroy it for selfish ends. Seeing the divine resemblance in Pastorella enables him to raise her from the status of an animated corpse, Donne's "mummy possest."

As a pastoral romance heroine, Pastorella's destiny is to reconstitute the original family circle. Not only is she restored to herself, but she also learns her true identity as the child of aristocrats. Her parents' names (Bellamour, "beautiful love," and Claribell, "beautiful light") reinforce Pastorella's Neoplatonic allegorical "semblaunt" as Earthly Beauty. The flower-shaped birthmark, which I earlier noted as the literalization of her position in the narrative as the flower of courtesy, is instrumental in the discovery of her identity by her old nurse: "… a litle purple mold,/ That like a rose her silken leaues did faire unfold" (6.12.7). Spenser's account of Pastorella's reunification with her parents is in keeping with the emphasis on feminine perspectives and reactions that mark the book of courtesy. While Pastorella's return to her father's house indeed marks the closure of the pastoral loop, the narration primarily dwells

42 Stewart, 76; Alpers, "Spenser's Late Pastorals," 814.

on Claribell's ecstatic recognition of her long-lost child, an emotion beyond even the poet's capacity to describe:

> Who euer is the mother of one chylde,
> Which hauing thought long dead, she fyndes aliue,
> Let her by proofe of that, which she hath fylde
> In her own breast, this mothers joye descriue:
> For other none such passion can contriue
> In perfect forme, as this good Lady felt. … (6.12.21)

This moment of maternal joy is inaccessible to the representative powers of language. Claribell's ecstatic embrace of Pastorella is another form of feminine mystery, a reciprocal circle of generosity located in a domestic *locus amoenus.*

Lady Mary Wroth adapts the figure of Pastorella to her own purposes, most notably in her portrait of Candiana in the manuscript continuation of *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania.* The history of Wroth's pastoral heroine demonstrates many similar motifs: the foundling history, the flower-shaped birthmark, the role as cynosure of the community, the imprisonment and revitalizing release. Wroth also makes Candiana the object of a quest by the hero Floristello, who pursues her as a vision of imprisoned beauty. The *Urania*, however, furnishes the pastoral heroine with a developed subjectivity in which she may question and challenge her construction as the embodiment of courtesy and love.

Unfortunately for Spenser's Calidore, he is deprived of the pleasures and consolations of pastoral closure as he reasserts his chivalric identity, leaving Pastorella with her parents in order to pursue and contain the uncontainable Blatant Beast. The pastoral heroine, however, is restored to her original circle and has found herself. Spenser's conception of *The Faerie Queene* was grander than the accomplishment, in that he planned more books that the six complete and one fragmentary example we have. Nonetheless, there is a serendipitous decorum (in literary historical terms) in the that the last quest of the romance follows a circular pattern back to the center of the pastoral world, providing a closure after an educative journey in social and sexual ethics. The last complete book of Spenser's chivalric romance finds its resolution, however partial, in the *locus amoenus* of pastoral. Book 6 is a prescient illustration of the increasingly marginal status of the chivalric model of romance heroism.

Chapter 4

GROWING OUT OF PASTORAL: WROTH'S *URANIA* AND THE FEMALE PASTORAL CAREER

LADY MARY WROTH'S prose romance, *The Countess of Mongomery's Urania*, published in 1621, is known as the first romance written by a woman in English. It appeared around the same time as a reprint of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, by Wroth's illustrious uncle Sir Philip Sidney.[1] That Wroth wished her romance to be considered as a legacy of her uncle's work is evident, from the title announcing the dedication, to the inconclusive ending of an incomplete sentence. Wroth's romance is indeed as capacious and errant as her uncle's, and she honors his example with numerous allusions to the plot of the *Arcadia*, as well as adopting his long periodic style of sentence construction. The euphonious similarities of the two titles also invite comparison between the texts, but a key difference in subject is also implied. Sidney's romance title is explicitly pastoral: Arcadia is the region of Greece most associated with the production of pastoral eclogues. Sidney's fictional setting emphasizes the pastoral culture of Basilius' kingdom, especially in the *New Arcadia*, which features eclogues sung by shepherds as *entr'acte* entertainments between romance episodes. It is impossible to separate the action of Sidney's romance from the place of its performance; the plot involves a constant tension between the narrative forward drive of chivalric adventure and the pastoral impulse to remain inactive, lingering, loving, and singing poetry. Arcadia is not merely a location, but a mindset through which the chivalric martial ethic is examined and judged.

In Wroth's title, the emphasis on place gives way to an emphasis on person. Urania, the titular heroine, is a minor figure from Sidney's romance who becomes a major character in Wroth's. In Sidney's *New Arcadia*, Klaius and Strephon pursue the elusive shepherdess Urania, whose name recalls the Greek goddess of heavenly wisdom who has fled the earth (Sidney, 61–4). This introductory episode serves only as a lead into the plight of shipwrecked heroes Pyrocles and Musidorus; Urania herself does not figure largely in the subse-

[1] See Hackett, "'Yet Tell Me Some Such Fiction'," 51–2 for a useful overview of the circumstances surrounding the *Urania*'s initial publication.

quent narrative. Wroth takes Urania and opens her own romance from the shepherdess's perspective, filling the character with a past and a motivation independent of her previous status as lost object of desire. Yet even though Urania is honored as the titular heroine of Wroth's story, she remains a side interest to the primary figure Pamphilia, queen of her own eponymous realm. While Sidney's tale is about a pastoral society threatened by a chaotic and violent outside world, Wroth's romance does not privilege the pastoral vision per se. Both narratives combine elements of pastoral and chivalric romance. For Sidney, however, pastoral is one half of a constitutive dichotomy between Arcadia and everywhere else, while for Wroth, the pastoral realm is just one of many different locations where her emotional drama of female constancy and male perfidy is played out. The *Urania* is not strictly a pastoral romance; rather, it incorporates the pastoral among many different competing romance discourses.[2] In this sense, Wroth's text is closer to Spenser's *Faerie Queene* than it is to her uncle's romance.

What significance does the generic frame of pastoral hold in the *Urania*? Where do we find Arcadia within Wroth's geographically diverse fictional cosmos? It turns out that Arcadia ("Archadia") is denominated as the home of the shepherdess Veralinda, who marries Urania's brother Leonius and plays a key parallel role to Urania in the resolution of several erotic conflicts and trials of identity in volume one of Wroth's romance. Veralinda and Urania are both pastoral heroines who occupy pastoral spaces the demands of the romance narrative insist that they leave. They embody the virtues of the pastoral heroine as a character type, especially in conjunction with other heroines who are not specifically associated with a pastoral location or identity. Both Urania and Veralinda, linked by marriage, temperament and similar erotic destiny, demonstrate the virtues of the pastoral heroine as the humanist conscience of the romance world. They embark separately on a quest for identity that concludes by uniting them in a simultaneous revelation in the Enchanted Theater of Love as to their true identities (Wroth, 455).[3] Wroth expands on the Neoplatonic allegory hinted by Sidney in making Urania the embodiment of lost wisdom. In her text, Urania becomes the voice of reason and humanity when other characters fall prey to the savagery of passion.[4] She becomes the shepherdess of others within the wilderness of emotions to which most of Wroth's characters are cast. Her counterpart Veralinda, in courtship and marriage to Urania's apparent twin Leonius, exemplifies the experience of a happy and virtuous love that is sadly atypical of Wroth's troubled romance couples. As part one

2 The most complete examination thus far of Wroth's pastoralism in her prose romance has been Amelia Zurcher Sandy's article "Pastoral, Temperance and the Unitary Self in Wroth's *Urania*," 2002.

3 All citations of Wroth's *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania* are from Josephine A. Roberts' 1995 edition.

4 Sandy examines how pastoral operates as a means of diluting destructive emotion in the *Urania* through her reading of the Pastora episode (110–11).

of Wroth's narrative develops into part two, the domestic happiness of the family's pastoral branch stands in stark contrast to the painful vicissitudes of their courtly relatives. Urania and Veralinda, as Wroth's representative shepherdesses and romance foundlings, constitute the Arcadian narrative strain in counter to the tragic and chivalric elements that dominate the *Urania*.[5]

Another point of similarity between Sidney's *Arcadia* and the *Urania* is the use of a romance oracle to foreshadow the subsequent action. Wroth's oracle serves to unite two different romance realms, the chivalric and the pastoral, into one sphere of action. In Book III, the princesses Pamphilia, Urania, Philistella, and Selarina are shipwrecked upon an island in the Adriatic containing an empty, eerily beautiful Enchanted Theater (Wroth, 372–3), surrounded by pillars and furnished with four cushioned marble chairs. With the imprisonment of "the whole worlds beauty" (374), the knights of Wroth's cosmos set out in groups to attempt a rescue, but all subsequently get caught in the enchantment in their turn. The immobilizing spell may only be released "till the most most loving, and most beloved, used his force, who should release them, but himselfe bee inclosed till by the freeing of the sweetest and loveliest creature, that poore habits had disguised greatnesse in, he should be redeem'd, and then should all bee finished" (373). The wording of the oracle indicates that the salvation of those trapped in the theater cannot be accomplished solely through martial means ("force"), but must occur in a dual process whereby the force of feminine virtue and example supplements masculine chivalric efforts. As the narrator reminds us, however, "Oracles are never without Ambiguity" (421). By examining some of the suggestive ambiguities of Wroth's oracle, we may see how the *Urania* uses pastoral as a frame of reference to critique and supplement chivalric notions of honor. The effective resolution of the enchantment requires both a knightly hero, Amphilanthus, and a pastoral heroine, Veralinda. In keeping with Wroth's playful emphasis on ambiguity, we may even wonder whether the identification of Amphilanthus as "the man most loving, and best beloved" is not another one of Wroth's narrative ironies that romance oracles so frequently exploit. For there is another person present at the enchantment's resolution who fits both halves of the oracle's description rather well: "Leonia," the nymph who accompanies Veralinda to the theater and is revealed as Urania's brother Leonius.

Leonius, alone among the male characters in the *Urania*, absorbs the social and moral lessons taught by the female heroines. Although it is a stretch to consider Wroth's romance a didactic one, most readers have clearly seen in her work an idealization of feminine constancy and loyalty that puts the male characters to shame. The principal hero and Pamphilia's faithless lover,

[5] Of course, there are several other shepherdesses such as Alarina, Pastora, and Celina in Wroth's romance in addition to Urania and Veralinda, but they occupy separate episodes rather than providing a consistent narrative strand. Urania's and Veralinda's stories are also associated with the foundation of domestic order in a way that the others are not. Finally, both Urania and Veralinda are figures shadowing Susan Herbert, Wroth's honorary dedicatee.

Amphilanthus, provokes ambivalent reactions: hardy and brave, he is also fickle and lustful. He represents a hypertrophied example of masculine attractions and weaknesses for a female audience. In contrast, Leonius is a "new man" who attends to the example and tuition of Veralinda in Arcadia, effectively transforming himself inside and out into what he loves. In light of his relationship to his sister Urania and his beloved Veralinda, we may consider him an honorary pastoral heroine, as his developmental experience reflects and supplements theirs. As we follow the careers of Wroth's pastoral heroines, we may see how the *Urania* portrays the Arcadian *locus amoenus* as a reformative space rather than a site of immature or irresponsible truancy.

URANIA THE MODEL

The shepherdess Urania is Wroth's first reflection of her dedicatee, Susan Herbert, the Countess of Montgomery. Urania is the chief pastoral heroine within the sprawling romance, but her role in the narrative is secondary to that of Pamphilia, considered the emotional heart of the story. Pamphilia's status as the exemplary constant heroine is a reflection of Wroth's own frustrated love for her cousin, William Herbert, identified by Josephine Roberts as the model for Amphilanthus.[6] The unstable relationship between Pamphilia and Amphilanthus creates much of the romance's narrative interest, but this discussion will not focus on Pamphilia herself, as she is not a pastoral figure. Urania and Pamphilia do, however, constitute a pair of complementary yet quite different approaches to the issue of female virtue and fidelity within Wroth's romance. Urania offers a rational counter-perspective to Pamphilia's heroic yet extreme devotion to the unworthy Amphilanthus, speaking for the possibility of a virtuous inconstancy without guilt.[7] Of all Wroth's female characters, she is most often the one to introduce questions of expediency and public duty when other characters close to her are in danger of being overwhelmed with private despair or passion. While Pamphilia is the emotional touchstone of the text, Urania is the ethical touchstone, a role she plays not only for her friend in part one but also for her brother Amphilanthus in part two. In this regard, she lives up to the associations of her name with heavenly wisdom.[8]

Our introduction to Urania illustrates how she herself is capable of overcoming her own self-absorbed unhappiness when confronted by someone else's greater need. Wroth's romance commences with the sixteen-year-old

6 See Wroth, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, lxxi–lxxv for Roberts' introductory notes on this topic.

7 Sandy, 108 describes Urania's role in jolting Pamphilia out of "constancy tending toward stagnation."

8 Cavanagh in *Cherished Torment*, 168 reminds us of Urania's association with the Muse of Astronomy and notes how she guides her friends in complex ethical and emotional situations.

watching her sheep and bemoaning her lack of knowledge about her origins. Urania is presented as a mystery to herself as well as to the reader, and her subsequent story is one of self-discovery and appropriate social emplacement. As other well-born shepherdesses frequently do in pastoral fictions, Urania signals her gentle origins through her rhetorical abilities; she expresses her emotional predicament by means of a sonnet:[9]

> Unseene, unknowne, I here alone complaine
> To Rocks, to Hills, to Meadowes, and to Springs,
> Which can no help returne to ease my paine,
> But back my sorrowes the sad Eccho brings.
> Thus still encreasing are my woes to me,
> Doubly resounded by that monefull voice,
> Which seemes to second me in miserie,
> And answere gives like friend of mine owne choice.
> Thus onely she doth my companion prove,
> The others silently doe offer ease:
> But those that grieve, a grieving note doe love;
> Pleasures to dying eies bring but disease:
> And such am I, who daily ending live,
> Wayling a state which can no comfort give. (Wroth, 1–2)

In initially presenting Urania as a pastoral singer, Wroth presents her titular heroine as an heiress to Sidney's Pamela, who also expresses her frustrations at her limitations in lyric form. Urania, like Pamela, seeks solitude for this activity, beginning her career without company or context. While the disaffection and desire for solitude may be typical of adolescence, in some ways Urania is atypical in her emotional autonomy. Her sonnet itself is against type, as it is not a plea of unrequited love. As a shepherdess/poet, she also differs from other pastoral singers in her rejection of the pathetic fallacy; the surrounding landscape fails to animate itself for her solace. Urania's complaint is not about love but about her own sense of who she is.[10] As Urania is being sought, unbeknownst to her, she is also seeking to find her place in the world. Her goal is not to find a lover, but to find a family.

The sonnet evokes the dynamics of navel-gazing self-absorption quite well, but Urania's indulgent sorrows end quickly as she discovers someone in far greater trouble than herself: Perissus, whose own sonnet for the lost Limena inspires Urania with sympathy for his suffering. In this first encounter, Wroth delineates Urania's true vocation as shepherding people, not lambs. In an episode that becomes emblematic of her effect on others, Urania inspires

9 Lamb in "The Biopolitics of Romance," 113 notes the aristocratic associations of Urania's introductory sonnet and its allusions to Wroth's desire to establish a recognition between her own work and her uncle's.

10 Naomi Miller in *Changing the Subject* reads this passage as Urania's "emerging attempt to construct her own subjectivity" (55).

Perissus to stop sonneteering and act decisively to restore Limena's honor and his own: "Leave these teares, and woman-like complaints, no way befitting the valiant Perissus, but like a brave Prince … revenge her death" (15). Urania's advice is uniformly excellent, as subsequent experience shows.

As a romance heroine, Urania is instrumental in effecting change and transformation within others, as well as submitting to such forces herself. Her own experience of erotic maturity calls into question the clichéd standards of fidelity, as she has not one, but two relationships before marriage. Her first love for Pamphilia's brother Parselius, the prince who has been sent by her brother Amphilanthus to find her, is a false start. This unconventional twist in the traditional romance plot contributes to our understanding of Urania as a counterexample in the text against Pamphilia's almost masochistic loyalty to Amphilanthus. It is quite rare for a young heroine of romance to have more than one love. She may attract the affection of multiple suitors, but it is unorthodox and even suspect for a virginal heroine to feel love for more than one man. That Wroth allows Urania the possibilities of erotic maturation through multiple courtships without expressing any suspicion or condemnation is a sign of confidence in the wisdom of experience for the unmarried girl. Through the introduction in Book II of a cleansing ritual on the island of St Maura, the narrative tactfully allows Urania a second start after being left by Parselius for Dalinea. Urania is not defined by her love relationships in the same way as Pamphilia is. She is permitted to remain emotionally independent of male characters without being convicted of coldness or promiscuity.

Urania's plunge into the sea at St. Maura (230) is a romance test that recalls a similar episode in Montemayor's pastoral *Diana*, but the exposure of romance heroines to the perils of the sea has a long history in English romance as well.[11] Wroth conflates both continental and English romance traditions in her account of Urania's sea-going trial. This episode is a turning point in the shepherdess's quest to be reunited with her family of birth; it serves as a corrective to the potentially distracting detour of too-early romantic commitment. The romance quest has both physical and spiritual geographies; the water is a cleansing agent that removes Urania's love for Parselius, thus clearing the way for her attachment to Steriamus and her future as Queen of Albania, but her willingness to undergo the test itself is as important as its pragmatic results. Urania must demonstrate trust in her new-found brother Amphilanthus, who has been told by the seer Melissea that he must throw his sister off the cliff. As such, it is a test of Urania's solidarity with her hitherto unknown family, as well as an acceptance of her brother's patriarchal prerogatives in deciding her fate: "You wrong me much to thinke that I feare death, being your sister, or cheerish life, if not to joy my parents; fulfill your command, and be assured

[11] Carrell, 90 mentions the similarity with Montemayor; Cooper, 129 describes the persistent popularity of the "wandering boat" meme in English romance and notes its paradoxical transformation of the helpless into the powerful.

it is doubly welcome, coming to free me from much sorrow, and more, since given mee by youre hands. …" (230). By accepting Providence in the form of her brother's instructions, Urania proves that she deserves the blessings of her royal destiny. Her willing relinquishment of control paradoxically endows her with greater happiness and authority, as the operation of the waters simultaneously cleanses her of her affection for a faithless lover and results in the formal recognition of her aristocratic ancestry. Immediately after her rescue in the bay, Amphilanthus brings his sister home in triumph to Naples, where for the first time, "Urania [had] rich robes fit for her birth brought unto her, till then having worne her Shepherdesse attire, which she resolv'd to doe, as long as she liv'd unseene of her father, and only to receive them from his hands" (231). Her change of costume symbolizes her evolution out of a pastoral juvenility and into a mature womanly identity. Wroth's noble shepherdess conforms to the pastoral romance pattern of the lost girl whose quest takes place in the context of paternal absence, a pattern that is reconfirmed in the story of her future sister-in-law Veralinda. No longer "unseene, unknowne," her recovery of her rightful place in the family coincides with her new commencement in a morally virtuous and socially appropriate courtship.

When Parselius's sister Philistella questions how completely Urania has forgotten her brother, Urania defends her second love:

> … it was mee thought a wonderfull odde change, and passing different affection I did feele, when I did alter; for though I were freed from my first love, and had a power to choose againe, yet was I not so amply cured from memorie, but that I did resemble one newly come out of a vision, distracted, scarce able to tell, whether it were a fixion, or the truth; yet I resolved, and so by force of heavenly providence lost the first, and live in second choice. … (331–2)

Urania describes her first love for Parselius as a delusional infatuation that she overcomes by the combined influence of "providence" and her own resolve. Her ability to transcend an attachment to a fickle suitor is presented as both lucky and admirable. Experience, or "memory," is not completely erased by the waters of St. Maura, but enough remains to enable Urania to better know herself and make better choices. Happiness and virtue in love, Wroth suggests, are not matters of innocence but of informed self-knowledge that only experience can bring. Urania's new love and future husband Steriamus reiterates this idea in the closing couplet of a sonnet he writes to ease her concern that he "should despise my second love, not having given him my first as the best" (332):

> Pureness is not alone in one fix'd place,
> Who dies to live, finds change a happy grace.

In these lines, Steriamus reflects an acceptance of the value of love experience for the young girl, rejecting the equation of sequestration with virtue. This

insistence on the necessity of worldly encounters contributes to the redefinition of feminine romance heroism as an active process that risks the contamination of a girl's reputation in order to strengthen her possibilities for happy matrimony. The possibility that a tempered and considerate second love is superior to a thoughtless first love is expressed by Urania's metaphorical comparison of Steriamus, whom she meets before laying eyes on Parselius, to "a booke layd by, new lookt on, … more, and with greater judgement understood" (333). Urania undergoes a sentimental education through adversity that contradicts the supposed desirability of cloistered female virtue.

Urania's romantic history contrasts sharply with that of her cousin and friend Pamphilia. In her role as dispenser of wisdom, Urania attempts to convince Pamphilia to reconsider her painful attachment to the faithless Amphilanthus, Urania's own brother. By displaying tough-minded affection through a series of rhetorical questions, Urania urges Pamphilia to put aside her private sufferings for the good of her kingdom: "if your people knew this, how can they hope of your government, that can no better governe one poor passion? How can you command others, that cannot master your selfe; or make laws, that cannot counsel, or soveraignise over a poore thought?" (468) In this exchange, Urania articulates a different set of emotional priorities from those animating much of Wroth's text. While the excellence of Pamphilia is never in doubt, and while the narrator's and reader's sympathies clearly are with her, it is Urania who offers a rational alternative to the elevation of constancy as the paradigmatic feminine virtue animating the romance. Urania even goes so far as to doubt the value of heroic constancy as an ethical absolute:

> 'Tis pity … that ever that fruitless thing Constancy was taught you as a vertue, since for virtues sake you will love it, as having true possession of your soule, but understand, this vertue hath limits to hold it in, being a vertue, but thus that it is a vice in them that breake it, but those with whom it is broken, are by the breach free to leave or choose againe where more staidness may be found. … (470)

In this passage, Urania subjects the idea of heroic constancy to the demands of moderation and reason. While Pamphilia's suffering is of greater dramatic and narrative interest, which perhaps explains partially her status as primary heroine even in a romance not named for her, Urania's role as advisor shows that Wroth does not simply endorse a thoughtless constancy without qualification. She also critiques its possible effects on one's happiness and virtue: as with any other value, constancy without moderation shades into pathology. Urania articulates the pastoral romance ideal of temperance in emotions and in behavior; to love deeply, one need not love unwisely.

VERALINDA: TRUE BEAUTY

Urania's unusual sentimental experience (for a romance heroine) and independence of mind may reflect qualities possessed by Lady Susan Vere Herbert, Countess of Montgomery, to whom the romance is dedicated.[12] Josephine Roberts has speculated that Herbert might have suffered a failed early marriage prospect before her union with Sir Philip Herbert at the age of sixteen, a union the couple appear to have planned themselves without consulting friends and possibly even relations.[13] Wroth enjoyed casting Susan Herbert as a pastoral romance heroine, associating the characteristics of her friend with the strengths and virtues of this literary type. Another one of Susan Herbert's mirrors is Veralinda, another "unseene, unknowne" shepherdess who turns out to be the lost daughter of the King of Frigia. Veralinda's story becomes linked to Urania's through her suitor Leonius, the brother of Urania whose resemblance to his sister is so strong that Parselius remarks upon it when he meets her for the first time (24). Both Urania and Veralinda, "the delicatest shepherdess, now Urania had left that habit" (427), are raised in protected pastoral nurseries where their greatness is unknown to them; both embark on adventures around the age of maturity in order to find their true familial identity. Their quests merge in the Enchanted Theater, where they find their separate histories recorded in a magical book chained to a gold pillar: "The Booke Amphilanthus tooke and tryed to open, but though Urania had got it, she must have Veralindas help to open it, which being lent her she got …" (455). This account, impossible to open except by Urania herself, reveals Veralinda to be a princess. The moment of revelation within the Enchanted Theater precisely expresses the relationship between the pastoral and chivalric modes of romance as they interact in the *Urania*. Amphilanthus, the chivalric hero, has been able to free Pamphilia, Urania and the other ladies from immobility, but he cannot perform the final act of disenchantment that would explain or motivate the site of magic. His martial prowess has limited powers. The magic book itself is a metasymbol for the romance containing it: a riddle of identities and love alliances inexplicable except to the sympathetic feminine reader.[14] Resolution of the enchantment is a matter of successful interpretation. Veralinda and Urania, unlike Pamphilia, achieve narrative closure in the Enchanted Theater and in their personal lives.[15] Their pastoral histories and destinies control and domesticate

12 Josephine Roberts provides an overview of Susan Herbert's biography and her fictional reflections in Wroth's romance in the introduction to her edition of *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (lxxvi–lxxix).

13 See Roberts, "The Knott Never to Bee Untide," 123.

14 Naomi Miller (*Changing the Subject*, 221) reads Amphilanthus' inability to open the book as a sign of his incapacity to understand "this narrative of female agency and subjectivity" that relies on the bonds of two women to read correctly.

15 Lamb, "Biopolitics" points out that Pamphilia's devotion to a faithless man guarantees a lack of resolution to their story (113). Carrell imagines the imprisoned ladies as "dreaming of

the chaos of chivalric romance as embodied by the endless saga of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus.

Wroth's narrative melds Leonius's character into the identity of her other pastoral heroines. Veralinda marries the brother of the other figure based on Susan Herbert, Urania herself. Leonius, that brother, is a masculine mirror of Urania.[16] In his willing transformation into "Leonia," he makes himself into what he desires, but he also conforms to the image of the heroine after whom Wroth named her work, the bride/sister/shepherdess. Leonius become the living link between Urania and Veralinda, different fictional avatars of Susan Herbert's admirable qualities. Following the logic of reading the *Urania* as a *roman à clef*, one could argue that Leonius/Leonia presents a third avatar of Susan Herbert, resembling as s/he does the behavior and appearance of the other two.[17] The resolution of the enchantment presents an allegory of the discovery of identity; it reveals Urania's aristocratic ancestry along with Veralinda's .[18] The symbolism of this book of genealogy also suggests that for Wroth, Susan Herbert is the privileged reader of this romance text as well as the inspiration and means for its production. It is through her, for her, and about her; when the Countess of Montgomery reads "her" Urania, she will find multiple reflections of herself, even in such an unlikely place as a male character. Susan Herbert had the happy experience of marrying her choice without opposition from family or fate.[19] The combination of virtues and early good fortune in love that distinguish both Urania and Veralinda from Wroth's other heroines is a reflection of Susan Herbert's own biography.

Literary Neoplatonism in the Jacobean and Caroline eras consistently elevated beauty as a moral force having the power to stimulate appreciation of the divine. In the *Urania*, Wroth envisions the society of her characters as a series of interlocking courtly coteries where the influence of women such as Susan Herbert relies on the moral force of their beauty and accomplishments to persuade those around them to virtue. In her courtly and Neoplatonic

imaginary happy endings to their own love stories … [while] the center stage of romance is left empty" (98).

16 Parselius mentions Urania's strong resemblance to her brother Leonius as a grounds for believing that she is the lost princess that he is looking for (Wroth, *First Part*, 23–4).

17 Carrell has identified the myriad ways in which Wroth's text is "a carnivalesque (and empowering) house of magic mirrors" for the female reader of romance (Carrell, 80). The distorted yet apt reflections of various historical personages inspired constant attempts to decode the correspondences in Wroth's *roman à clef*. Carrell and Swift each separately cite the angry accusation of Edward Denny, Baron Denny of Waltham, denouncing Wroth herself as a "hermaphrodite" and "monster" (Carrell, 88; Swift, 330). Wroth herself did not seem to regard androgyny as a negative or monstrous quality, if my reading of the "Leonia" episode is correct.

18 Lamb, "Biopolitics," 14.

19 Roberts asserts that Susan Herbert may very well have contracted her marriage *de praesenti* and in secret, without the knowledge of her guardian, Sir Robert Cecil ("Controversy," 122–4). If so, she displayed an independence from the social restrictions of formal courtship that echoes the private nature of Veralinda's and Leonia's romance.

conception of feminine heroism as the power of example, Wroth presents an alternative to chivalry as the privileged criterion of aristocratic heroism. In his pastoral truancy, Leonius places himself under this new criterion and internalizes it, thereby (in Wroth's terms) enhancing his heroic status instead of damaging it. We may see him as an inverted parallel to Ariosto's Bradamante and Spenser's Britomart, romance heroines who impersonate knights in order to fulfill the code of masculine chivalry. Wroth's Neoplatonic code of feminine honor is as demanding, and as efficacious, as the chivalry of old. It does not find its testing ground in the lists or the field, but in the allegorical salon of the Enchanted Theater, an environment requiring moral discrimination and social courage more than martial prowess. Wroth's feminine honor of the salon is demonstrated in the private domestic space of the *locus amoenus*, represented in the *Urania* by the Arcadian forest to which Veralinda and Leonia retire.

The opening of the golden book as the culmination of the Enchanted Theater episode not only privileges the pastoral over the chivalric variety of romance, but it also offers a Neoplatonic allegory of the operation of feminine virtue. Wroth's romance participates consciously and consistently in the dominant intellectual frameworks of the Jacobean era, as Sheila Cavanagh has comprehensively demonstrated.[20] The prominence of early seventeenth-century Neoplatonism in English courtly literature is linked to this philosophy's elevation of beauty as a moral force. The Neoplatonic associations of our heroines' names are entirely complementary and express the paramount virtues of the Jacobean and Caroline courtly lady.[21] Enabled by Leonia, Urania, or Heavenly Wisdom, and Veralinda, or True Beauty, may open the magic book on a gold pillar which stands at the center of the enchanted island tableau, thus revealing Truth. Wroth designs Urania and Veralinda as embodiments of Platonic ideals. Each of these characters shows the exemplary moral effect of virtuous beauty in a woman; when we first meet Veralinda, for example, "such are her perfections, as teach us not to aspire higher, then to behold and obey her, other thoughts we are not permitted, but banish as treasons …" (425). She, like other Renaissance pastoral heroines such as Spenser's Pastorella, has the ability to subordinate lust to respect and to transform the desire to possess into the desire to serve. The ethical centrality of female beauty in the mythology of courtly literature reached its zenith during the reign of Charles I, but

[20] Cavanagh in *Cherished Torment*, 8–9 specifically mentions the Sidney family's associations with hermeticist John Dee, influenced by the Platonist Giordano Bruno. It is evident that Wroth herself was well versed in the popular Platonism of the age.

[21] For a thorough and detailed picture of courtly Neoplatonism in early seventeenth–century England and its importance as a form of feminism, see Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments*. For a discussion of the links between courtly pastoral and Neoplatonism, see Yoch, "The Renaissance Dramatization of Temperance: The Italian Revival of Tragicomedy and the *Faithful Shepherdess*," 115–38. On associations between pastoral romance, feminine honor, and Neoplatonism in seventeenth-century royalist culture, see Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance*, 188–102.

Wroth reflects its enduring importance as an intellectual and literary fashion throughout the English Renaissance.[22]

Neoplatonism also permits an emphasis on the affective power of example that counteracts the chivalric romance's emphasis on the action of arms. In this sense, it is especially useful in the development of a feminine ideal of honor that cannot rely on martial deeds. While Wroth's romance contains plenty of incidents involving ritualized chivalric combat, she supplements these with episodes where the heroines have the opportunity to display, rather than enact, their honor. The Enchanted Theater is one such episode; it is a symbolic tableau rather than a field of action. Therefore it is appropriate that Amphilanthus's skills as a knight are not sufficient to "win" the encounter, as there is no easily identifiable adversary. The motivations of the enchantment are to bring the characters together so that the truth of Veralinda's background might be known: the goal is not victory but enlightenment. Amphilanthus's own immobilization within the theater after he fulfills the first part of the oracle places him in a feminine position of passivity that makes impossible his further participation in the scene. When he tries to open the book upon being freed by Veralinda's arrival, it does not open itself up to him because he has the wrong frame of reference. His is the wrong kind of heroism in the Neoplatonic context of the Enchanted Theater. Neoplatonism is exceptionally well suited to the celebration and elevation of prized feminine attributes such as beauty, charm and affectionate fidelity, because it celebrates physical love as an illustration of cosmic love. Marsilio Ficino's influential rereading of Plato as a philosopher of love and beauty allows a reconciliation between the earthly and the divine; personal love attains dignity as a reflection of divine love.[23] Edmund Spenser, the most important literary advocate of Protestant marriage until Milton, uses the discourse of Neoplatonism to romanticize and elevate the marriage state. Wroth, in her romance, employs elements of Neoplatonism to dramatize the quest for identity and matrimonial happiness undertaken by her principal pastoral heroines, providing yet another example of the close relationship between pastoral and Platonism in the early seventeenth-century courtly literature of feminine compliment. The conventions of Renaissance pastoral romance, coupled with literary Neoplatonism, permit Wroth to dramatize a kind of feminine honor of the salon that differs from the martial honors of the fields and lists.

22 Jayne, "Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance," outlines the impact of Neoplatonism on English Renaissance literature; when the *Urania* was published in 1621, the golden age of English Platonic poetry was over, but the age of Neoplatonic drama was approaching its zenith (223). Jayne argues that English literary Neoplatonism is largely derived not from detailed source studies of Ficino, but from French literary examples such as the Pleiade; the French-born Henrietta Maria, several decades later, contributed to its revival in the court of her husband Charles I. As Jayne notes rather dismissively, Caroline drama frequently conflates pastoral and Platonism (237).

23 Jayne, 226.

We first see Veralinda in Arcadia ennobling her admirers and animating their courteous charity toward each other; while Urania functions as a giver of advice, Veralinda seems to function primarily as a virtuous example. However, Wroth employs the character of Veralinda to critique the abuse of patriarchal authority and the backlash that results from such abuse. Veralinda's own revealed biography casts her as a victim of masculine dynastic intrigue; the daughter of the King of Frigia, her natal horoscope predicts that she will wear a great crown. Her half-brothers, seeing her as a threat to their succession, pay a servant to kill the baby, but the servant instead brings the child to Arcadia to be raised in obscurity (456). Veralinda's own father is not a wholly sympathetic character, becoming an emblem for the cavalier exploitation powerful men may practice at the expense of weaker women. Veralinda and Leonius intervene in a strange torture scene in which the king is bound and whipped by "some sixe or seven" angry women with rods (562–3). As Veralinda tends to her father's wounds, one of the women, now controlled and placated, explains the motivation behind this "outrage": Veralinda's father had seduced her and then told one of his gentlemen, who subsequently asked her favors as well (564–5). This married woman, who had tried to live "as a maid" with her husband out of misplaced fidelity to the King, is doubly insulted both by his rejection of her love and his sullying of her reputation. The whipping episode reflects Wroth's preoccupation with feminine constancy and male perfidy, but it also reflects the moral disorder of Frigia's male-dominated polity. Veralinda, as a pastoral heroine, redeems the kingdom from the frailties and sins of her father and her blood brothers. In her anonymous exile, she is the repository of her family's honor. Through her discovery and marriage, her future husband, Leonius, becomes the next king of Frigia. Her pastoral upbringing equips her for the reformation of Frigia. Like Sidney's Pamela, she corrects paternal deficiency through a wise and honorable marriage choice.

This episode is yet another way in which Wroth's romance offers ambivalent perspectives on the morality of fidelity. The nameless married woman betrayed by the king of Frigia is an adulteress, but hers is a principled and perversely admirable devotion to her lover that recalls the central role of adultery in medieval French romance. In part two of the *Urania*, the young man Faire Design is hinted to be the love child of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus, although they are married to others as well. Adultery, as a motif of chivalric romance, sits uneasily with the pastoral narrative strand's emphasis on chaste and loving marriage for Urania and Veralinda. A key feature of English romance pastoralism is its characterization of domestic happiness. Urania and Veralinda are fortunate in their marriages in comparison to their peers in the romance. The ability of Urania and Veralinda to attain both emotional and narrative closure in their quests for love distinguishes these pastoral heroines from so many others in Wroth's fictional cosmos. Wroth's primary model of the prose romance, Sidney's *Arcadia*, uses pastoral as a position from which to critique the chivalric ethos. Wroth, in a gendered but related strategy, offers

contrasting romance models of feminine heroism: the adulterous courtly lady vs. the pastoral virgin. Pamphilia, who represents the first, and Urania, who represents the second, are sympathetic friends, but they have very different fates. Wroth most likely saw herself in the tragic and grand sufferings of Pamphilia, but it is significant that in her compliment to Susan Herbert, she chose the gilded simplicity of the virginal pastoral heroine to express the blessings of her friend's fortunate personal situation.

"LEONIA": AN HONORARY PASTORAL HEROINE

One way in which Wroth portrays this different concept of female honor is by treating it as a code of behavior assumable by willing men as well as virtuous women. The story of Veralinda is also the story of her lover Leonius, who adopts a feminine persona in order to woo her in Arcadian privacy. Male transvestitism is a plot motif common to romance narratives, from the Alexandrian Greek fictions of Heliodorus, through twelfth-century chivalric romances such as *Floire et Blancheflore* (in which the hero is mistaken for a woman in a seraglio), to the sixteenth-century pastoral tragicomedy of Guarini (*Il Pastor Fido*), to the fabulously popular and oft-translated *Amadis of Gaul*, among others. As Winfried Schleiner has pointed out, the presence of cross-dressing in Renaissance romance narratives indicates a high degree of "gender consciousness," of the qualities associated with conventional masculinity and femininity.[24] The meanings of cross-dressing for a male literary character, however, differ dramatically from the implications of the far more common female transvestite. While women in Renaissance romance adopt a public masculine persona in order to gain freedom of movement and action, men who do the reverse are portrayed as enslaved or deranged (for example, Artegall under Radigund's power in the *Faerie Queene* Book 5, or Mirtillo in the grip of lust for the well-chaperoned Amaryllis in *Il Pastor Fido*). Male transvestitism is either a punishment or a cynical fraud; in either case, it requires the man to set aside norms of ethics to which the female transvestite, on the contrary, aspires. In the world of romance, disguised women gain love and honor in the chivalric society of men, but there is no honor in a man adopting the persona of a woman.[25] Wroth's contribution to the history of the cross-dressing motif in romance is to suggest that perhaps, in fact, there is honor for a man in becoming a woman. The kind of honor she has in mind is not that indicated in the chivalric martial code, but one closer to the Neoplatonic courtly pastoral of coterie conversation and moral suasion, a feminine honor of the salon. In Book III, she creates

24 Schleiner, 194.

25 Hotchkiss describes how women passing as men in courtly romance are afforded an opportunity to prove themselves worthy of knighthood, a value exalted by the social code (122–4).

a male character who is improved, not debased, by the external and internal implications of cross-dressing.

Renaissance writers of romance participate in an ongoing intertextual debate about the morality of love and its effect on the mind. Is love, as Tasso claims, a "noble habit of the will" which improves the soul and character, or is it a dangerous passion that destroys those who harbor it? At first glance, both Sidney and Wroth would appear to agree that love is a madness that alienates one from oneself. When Leonius first sees Veralinda, his reaction is consistent with this view: he experiences "a senselesse passion … a sportfull madness, possessing, and taking the place his better wits" (423). The immediate effect of love on the masculine personality in both Wroth and Sidney is an abandonment of proper masculine identity: Wroth borrows from her uncle the romance motif of the duplicitous transvestite suitor who dresses like a woman to gain access to a forbidden female.[26] Prince Leonius recalls Sidney's Pyrocles, whose decision to impersonate an Amazon, Zelmane, in order to woo the Arcadian princess Philoclea occasions his mournful lament, "transformed in show, but more transformed in mind":

> Thus is my power transformed to your will.
> What marvel then I take a woman's hue,
> Since what I see, think, know, is all but you?[27]

For his cousin and companion, Musidorus, Pyrocles' change of outward habit reflects the dominance of destructive passion over the manly force of reason.[28] A hero's willingness to abandon masculine identity is a reprehensible weakness. Wroth would at first seem to confirm this view as she describes the effect of Veralinda's beauty on Leonius: "together her commanding beauty wrought so in the Prince, as a he was a new creature, yet part of the olde man" (423). Yet in echoing the language of the Pauline letters here, Wroth's narrator foreshadows the depth of Leonius's ultimate transformation, a change that goes far beyond dress and into the realm of behavior. In Ephesians 4: 22–24, Paul instructs, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts. … And that ye put on the new man" (KJV).[29] The narrator's allusion constructs a parallel between the moral effects of spiritual conversion, the transformation of the subject into a "new creature," and the internal effect of external transformation, the male lover taking on a female identity in order to pursue a love freed from the gender dualism inherent in the courtship conventions of both pastoral and chivalric

26 Lamb, "Biopolitics," 115; see Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 166–7 for a detailed comparison of Leonius's courtship strategies to those of Pyrocles'.

27 Sidney, *NA*, 131.

28 Mark Rose, 356.

29 Wroth may also have had in mind 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

romance. The comparison dignifies Leonius' conversion to femininity and gives his decision a moral motive absent in Pyrocles' disguise.[30] In this regard, Wroth replies to the values of her uncle's model text, displaying a positive moral judgment toward the effeminacy associated with Renaissance prose romance but certainly viewed with suspicious fascination in the *New Arcadia* and elsewhere.[31]

Wroth's hero Leonius owes a great deal to Pyrocles in both versions of the *Arcadia*. Nevertheless, these two Sidneyan cross-dressing heroes occupy different generic matrixes. Wroth thoroughly pastoralizes her cross-dressing knight, while Sidney allows his to retain the whisper of a martial identity. Leonius does not change his name to reflect his subsumption into his beloved's sphere of influence (as in, for example, Pyrocles' adoption of the name "Cleophila" in the *Old Arcadia*), nor does the change refer to another example of behavior (Zelmane, in the *New Arcadia*, is a tribute to Pyrocles' page, herself a cross-dresser). He simply feminizes his name, along with his dress. His chosen feminine persona, a nymph of Diana, constitutes a decided rejection of any residual chivalric associations. Leonia's alibi, her account of falling in love with a youth she sees sacrificing a deer to Diana, is a story of adolescent feminine sexual innocence destroyed by an inadvertent encounter with an outsider. Leonia is a passive sufferer and a devotee of chastity, adopting a subject position similar to female romance heroines. Unlike Pyrocles/Zelmane, "Leonia" never participates in activities that we might consider chivalric within the generic expectations set up by romance. It is when he attempts this, for example when he, as himself, saves Veralinda from a bear as Musidorus does in the *Arcadia*, that he is not able to attain familiarity or intimacy with his beloved. It is in acting like a woman within a private, feminine space that "Leonia" becomes the true lover of Veralinda. Even when he comes to the Enchanted Theater of Love, his role is as assistant, not savior; as a companion, not a fighter. Wroth's revisions of her uncle's use of the cross-dressing motif fail to emphasize the importance of the masculine chivalric model of behavior as the basis of honor. Indeed, the hypermasculine knightly hero Amphilanthus is captured by the circumstances of the Theater of Love, while curiously, Leonius escapes such consequences. The episode of Leonius and Veralinda in the *Urania* portrays a romance environment where, unusually, female characters are not knights manqué or prizes to be won.

30 Celovsky ("Pyrocles' Warlike Peace") emphasizes the positive associations of Pyrocles' chosen Amazonian identity. In her reading, the relationship between Pyrocles and Philoclea evolves into a hermaphroditic ideal that blurs the traditional gender dichotomies of reason and passion, activity and passivity (239). Her analysis is extremely germane to Leonius and Veralinda in the *Urania*. In my view, Pyrocles does not succeed in combining masculine and feminine aspects of himself as well as Leonius does, in large part because of the problematic nature of his Amazonian persona. Josephine Roberts, in her introduction to Wroth, notes Leonius's more "positive attitude" toward cross-dressing in comparison to Pyrocles' (lxix).

31 Lamb, "Exhibiting Class," 66.

As a character, Leonius conflates certain aspects of both Pyrocles and Musidorus. The accidental sight of Veralinda, whose "delightful neglectiveness" (423) of dress recalls Sidney's description of the artless Philoclea, inspires Leonius to fall into a pastoral truancy, his love being a distraction from the more urgent business of rescuing his female relatives Urania and Pamphilia from the Enchanted Isle. The same charge may be laid to Pyrocles and Musidorus, who reject their heroic and chivalrous mission on Erona's behalf in favor of the idle and selfish indulgence of personal desire in a setting of pastoral *otium*.[32] Leonius's initial courtship of Veralinda carefully follows the model of Musidorus, and he also attempts to impress her in athletic contests similar to those undertaken by Calidore in *The Faerie Queene* Book 6. Wroth surrounds her revision of masculine romance heroism with a thicket of conventional representations of pastoral courtship derived from the canonical examples of her uncle and Spenser. Significantly, however, Leonius's conventional efforts fail to bring the couple together. These lovers cannot breach the barriers of convention and express their feelings.

Leonius's unexpected ally in this impasse is another shepherd who is also in love with Veralinda, but whose pity for a fellow sufferer leads him to suggest the following:

> Pull off those habits unfit for these passions, and put on such as I wil provide for you, so well agreeing to your humour as the cloathes, and the action shall make her unable to withstand so much pitty as must breed love, and that if you their discreetly governe it, will procure your happiness.[33]

In Wroth's version of the pastoral courtship tale, cooperation between men replaces the time-honored motif of pastoral competition through eclogue, hunting and sport. Leonius is a Calidore figure without a Coridon, as his rival paradoxically turns out to be his savior.[34] This twist is typical of Wroth's characteristic employment of pastoral romance motifs; as with cross-dressing, she invokes yet revises them. Unexpected cooperation between suitors breaks the pattern of male rivalry for the shepherdess as the prize, disrupting the expression of masculine identity through competition and conquest. In fact, Leonius is encouraged to shed his masculinity with relative ease and absence of shame. Shortly thereafter, we are introduced to "Leonia," the devotee of Diana whose chaste heart has been pierced with unrequited love for a hunting youth (434). It is worth examining the crucial differences between "Leonia" and "Zelmane" as strategic personae. Zelmane, as an Amazon, retains a vestigial masculinity,

32 Mark Rose, "Sidney's Womanish Man," 361.

33 Wroth, *First Part*, 431.

34 This is just one of many Spenserian elements in Wroth's romance; although my topic here is the *Urania*'s relation to the *Arcadia*, Wroth frequently incorporates Spenserian motifs, as Quilligan has pointed out ("Female Authority and the Family Romance," 261).

while Leonia's loyalty to Diana has the opposite effect of intensifying the persona's feminine identification.

In the construction of Veralinda's and Leonia's atypical courtship, Wroth again nods to the *Arcadia*. When Philoclea begins to feel an attraction to "Zelmane" she can neither explain nor acknowledge, she fantasizes: "First, she would wish that they two might live all their lives together, like two of Diana's nymphs. But that wish she thought not sufficient, because she knew there would be more nymphs besides them who would also have their part in Zelmane" (Sidney, 239). Philoclea imagines a relationship that cannot be, as it fits none of the categories into which male/female union can fall in her world. Veralinda's sojourn in the woods with Leonia is the literal fulfillment of Philoclea's wish. This next stage of the courtship between Leonius and Veralinda is not played out in the social context typical of literary pastoral courtship, a world of game-playing, gift-giving, and group versifying. Rather, their relationship is wholly private. Veralinda flees to the woods in order to nurse her nascent passion for Leonius by herself; "Leonia," following her, appeals to her "pity" by sharing her own experience of erotic suffering. The two forge an emotional bond as "companions in woe" (432). They see each other as mirrors, identifying with each other's pain, forging an intimacy that extends far beyond the utilitarian goal of sexual seduction. Leonia embraces feminine passivity, seclusion, and restriction in addition to feminine dress. The habit of love, in this case, is to identify with the beloved, both internally and externally.[35]

Wroth presents Leonia as hermaphroditic in the ease with which s/he slips between gender identities as matters of imaginative will and emotional affiliation. Leonia never indulges in justificatory argument or self-debating soliloquy, and this absence of narrative reflection on the dangerous implications of the cross-dressing choice is telling in itself. In the *Arcadia*, the tension between Zelmane's true and feigned identities causes humorous complications, as when Zelmane has to fight off a sexually aggressive Gynecia, or sexual tensions, as when Philoclea laments her "unnatural" attraction to Zelmane because she believes him to be a woman.[36] Wroth's relatively relaxed attitude about same-sex attraction stands in marked contrast to the ignorant Philoclea's tortured sexual urges toward Zelmane in Sidney's romance. Indeed, at Leonia's suggestion, the two hold and kiss each other as substitutes for their unattainable desires placed elsewhere: "… let mee enjoy those sweete embracements you would yeeld to him and thinke I am your love, which I will doe by you, and in that thought till wee bee blessed with perfecter enjoyings, we shall have some ease" (435) Wroth emphasizes Leonia's self-control, in accordance with the shepherd friend's warning to "discreetly govern" one's love. The proto-lesbianism between Veralinda and Leonia is a stage of development

35 Naomi Miller makes a similar point in *Changing the Subject*, 220, noting Leonius's desire to "appreciate" rather than "deconstruct" feminine subjectivity.

36 Sidney, *NA*, 242–3

in their relationship; Leonia gains the attention and trust of Veralinda while bypassing the frustrations of conventional pastoral courtship and the restrictions of class and sexual mores. In several ways, their courtship reflects the idealized representations of female friendship found elsewhere in the *Urania*.[37] For example, Veralinda feels no shame, only "wonder," at her "strange love" for Leonia (431). Their time in the forest is spent in sentimentally articulating their shared erotic suffering, the pastime that distinguishes Wroth's other representations of female friendship such as Pamphilia and Urania, or Pamphilia and Antissia. The bond between Leonia and Veralinda is one of likeness rather than magnetic attraction of opposites. Helen Hackett notes the frequency with which female friends in the *Urania* exchange meaningful gazes as a means of expressing empathy or mutual identification, comparing the operation of such reciprocal glances to the operation of Lacan's mirror stage in infant development.[38] Leonia and Veralinda reinforce each other's thoughts, feelings and preoccupations in much the same way as adolescent girlfriends do, with the added element of embracing and kissing without sexual consummation. They exemplify the relationship that Valerie Traub, in her analysis of Renaissance literary representations of lesbianism, calls "chaste femme love," a licensed form of adolescent female eroticism that does not threaten the heterosexual marriage imperative.[39] In fact, Wroth's representation of chaste femme love actually prepares Veralinda to accept Leonius as her husband later on; she becomes known as a princess, while he reveals himself as a knight. These are social identities, however, whereas their private relationship develops along the lines of female intimacy.

Amelia Sandy, in pointing out that pastoral retreat is a typical response for Wroth's heroines to the disturbing effects of overwhelming emotion, speaks of "[p]astoral's offer of self-consciousness, put forward in the figure of another version of the self set slightly apart … opening up a space between the self and passion."[40] Leonia's presence enables this pastoral therapy to become a literal scenario, more or less becoming Veralinda's second self. Their sylvan courtship is practically Aristotelian in its reliance on the stimulation of pity and its consequent emotional identification; Veralinda remarks, "I pitty you … and love you, for in you I see (O deere remembrance) many things which represent my love unto mine eyes" (434).[41] Leonia does not communicate the

37 Naomi Miller ("Engendering Discourse," 160) points out that the friendships of Wroth's female characters predate and outlast their attachments to their male lovers. Female friendship becomes a valued relationship in its own right. Swift argues that Wroth's demonstrated awareness of the emotional intensity possible in female friendship is reflected in the respect with which she describes the romantic infatuation between Leonia and Veralinda ("Feminine Identity," 334).

38 Hackett, "Yet Tell Me Some Such Fiction," 61.

39 See Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, 181–2 and 229–31.

40 Sandy, 110.

41 Roberts' edition of *The First Part of … Urania* (434) notes an author's correction in 1621 from "thy love" to "my love."

will to pursue, consume or dominate the object of her desire. Her approach to Veralinda eliminates the potentially threatening aspects of heterosexual courtship. The push and pull of desire, conflict and betrayal that animates the central story of Wroth's romance, the passion of Pamphilia for her fickle cousin Amphilanthus, is largely absent. Leonius and Veralinda represent the only couple whose relationship is not marred by internal strife or external tragedy (i.e. Limena and Perissus). In their love, there is perfect equality and reciprocity, qualities sadly lacking in this tale of heroic female constancy and perfidious masculine ambivalence. They also present an admirable and rare model of narrative closure: their joint adventure to free the ladies on the enchanted isle results in their union as man and wife. They are never separated, nor is their mutual constancy threatened by the vicissitudes of Wroth's narrative. In this, they are alone in the company of Urania's panoply of star-crossed lovers. Their happy ending represents the one location in Wroth's narrative of deferral and loss where private desires and societal imperatives coincide, where love exists without dominance or betrayal, and where a man's and a woman's interests and wishes coincide. In Wroth's portrayal of Leonius as the only man who gives his beloved what she really needs and wants, we may recognize a plea that is the inverse of Professor Higgins's, "Oh why can't a man be more like a woman?"

Both Wroth and Sidney exploit the element of salacious humor inherent in the cross-dressing charade. Leonia and Zelmane are allowed physical access to a private feminine world in which the cultural taboos of modesty between the sexes are lifted. In the *New Arcadia*, Zelmane is invited to go bathing in the river Ladon with the princesses and their ladies, but begs off by pleading a cold (285). The symptoms that cause Zelmane to freeze and burn, however, are Petrarchan rather than Galenic. Zelmane places herself in the role of a voyeur whose privileged and illicit sight of the nude Philoclea inspires the lyric blazon, "What tongue can her perfections tell" (287–91). Wroth's version of the titillating near-revelation scenario is, like her uncle's, tongue-in-cheek, but the subject position of Leonia proves to be quite different from Zelmane's in relation to the beloved. As part of the Aristotelian method of courtship Leonia adopts, the couple agrees to kiss and embrace each other as they would their purportedly unattainable male lovers. There is the frisson of lesbianism in Wroth's description of this encounter, but at the same time there is an appealing reciprocity in their mutual erotic attentions that is even remarked on by the narrator:

> … wishing and loving, they remained, passing many such pleasant times, till at last the wonder of such affection twixt women was discovered, and it may be, had then bin brought to light, had not the Shepherdesses arrived to his griefe, and no way to her content, who truly loved the sweete conversation and discourse of this Nimph.[42]

[42] Wroth, *The First Part*, 435–6.

Having been interrupted in their intimacies, Leonia and Veralinda nevertheless continue to gaze and touch as the group passes the heat of the day at a fountain. It is as if the presence of others has no effect on their emotional privacy; Wroth juxtaposes their lovers' world with a social world as if to show how little bearing the company has on the emotional dyad of the couple. In their reciprocal gaze, they form a significant contrast to the pair of Zelmane, the watcher, and Philoclea, the watched. The conventional male/female subject positions of Petrarchan love lyric are replaced by an identification and union with the beloved.[43] Leonia's response to potential discovery is to reinforce the feminine behavior she has previously displayed. Leonia's identity collapses into Veralinda's at this humorous and sexually charged moment; unlike Zelmane, she makes no attempt to reassert a masculine subject position when under erotic stress. Zelmane's femininity in Sidney's romance is a fragile social fiction that breaks down easily into gendered dichotomies of perception, while Wroth's Leonia resists the temptations of Petrarchan reaction.

The male lover's internal struggle to avoid the effeminizing effects of passion, so important an issue in Sidney's *Arcadia*, does not seem to interest Wroth. She employs the plot motifs from her uncle's romance to tell a different account of erotic heroism. In the *New Arcadia*, Musidorus rebukes his cousin for adopting the garb of a woman in terms that reveal an underlying anxiety about the morality of women themselves:

> And see now extremely every way you can endanger your mind: for to take this womanish habit, without you frame your behavior accordingly, is wholly vain; your behavior can never come kindly [naturally] from you but as the mind is proportioned unto it; so that you must resolve, if you will play your part to any purpose, whatsoever peevish imperfections are in that sex, to soften your heart to receive them – the very first down-step to all wickedness.[44]

The power of feminine example here is entirely negative. Musidorus is remarkably insecure about the essential stability of gender identity, seeing it as susceptible to influence of external signifiers such as clothing. In doing so, he reflects the anxious fascination of early modern English society with the confusion of dress, a preoccupation that would explode into the full-blown pamphlet wars under James I.[45] His fears, however, contrast strongly with the friendly shepherd's view in *Urania* of women's dress of the fitting habit of love, whereby the mind is turned from masculine appetite to feminine self-governance and discretion. Wroth reverses the association of feminine habit, both internal and external, with moral imperfection. To become a "womanish man" is not a

43 For an analysis of the Petrarchan poet's subject relationship to his object, see Vickers, "Diana Described." For its application to Sidney's Pyrocles (Zelmane) in his blazon of the bathing Philoclea, see Clare Kinney, "The Masks of Love," 463–65.

44 Sidney, *NA*, 133.

45 Garber, 27–32 usefully summarizes Elizabethan and Jacobean attitudes toward cross-dressing, including the *Haec Vir* and *Hic Mulier* controversy.

debasement but an elevation. The willing effeminacy of Leonius is a heroic act in the context of Wroth's pastoral romance because he eschews in a principled, not merely instrumental, way the martial model of heroism demonstrated by the hero Amphilanthus, who also expresses disapproval at his brother's cross-dressing escapade even as he benefits from it (456). Leonius's singularity is further emphasized by Selarinus, Prince of Albania. He considers the difficulties of the enchantment and the oracle prescribing its failure, responds to the requirement that "the best lover and best beloved" break it, and concludes, "there lives none now they are there that hath worth enough to venture" the task (411). The masculine paradigm of chivalric heroism is not adequate against the test of constancy that Wroth sets up as the ultimate symbol of self-effacing, sacrificial love: "… I am the man, who for feare you lov'd me not, to move your love made myself a woman" (456). Leonius's success validates and ennobles his choice to impersonate the heroic femininity of Wroth's Neoplatonic ideal. His pastoral habit becomes a chivalric triumph.

Wroth's ambiguous oracle plays on the word "habit" ("poore habits had disguised greatnesse in"). In early modern English, the meaning of "habit" broadened from its earlier, more specific relation to dress, bearing and demeanor into a more general concept of "settled practice, custom, usage."[46] In the *Urania*, the pastoral habit is both garb and behavior. When Leonius puts on the apparel of an Arcadian nymph to ingratiate himself with Veralinda, he is signaling a more thoroughgoing internal transformation from the chivalric habit to the pastoral habit. For the female shepherdesses Urania and Veralinda, the pastoral clothing in which they spend their youth both disguises their "greatness" and conveys their virtuous purity. In a manner similar to Urania, Veralinda retains her pastoral garb as a statement of her identity when she is first presented to her biological father, the King of Frigia: "shee according to the Greeke fashion for Shepheardesses as having had her breeding there, and from those habits would not be altered, till she was received as a Princess" (484). Both Veralinda and Leonius maintain their pastoral dress until the enchantment is broken; Leonius publicly reveals himself as a man only after Veralinda's story is read: "he was ashamed of his habite, and yet that habite became that blush" (456). In this little aside, the narrator emphasizes the strange yet fitting decorum of Leonius's bashful revelation of his gender with the feminine costume he wears. In his person, Leonius thus reconciles both halves of the oracle: his habit (dress) is assumed through love, his habits (actions) discharged because of love, and his habits have hidden his greatness. The straightforward interpretation of the oracle's subjects as Amphilanthus and Veralinda may perfectly well coexist with the playful identification I have

46 The *OED* (2005 online edition) mentions the first recorded usage of "habit" in this sense in 1581.

just made, as Wroth's romance has been compared to a hall of mirrors in which figures have multiple reflections.[47]

OTHER PASTORAL HEROINES IN PART ONE OF THE *URANIA*

I have thus far argued that the pastoral romance plot concerning Urania and Veralinda serves in Wroth's romance as a counter-narrative to the chivalric and tragic story of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus. The principal pastoral heroines manage to accomplish narrative closure through happy and fruitful marriage, an extreme rarity among the romance's multiple strands. Of course, Urania and Veralinda are not the sole pastoral heroines within the work. A brief examination of Wroth's other pastoral figures permits us to refine a sense of the particular associations the pastoral genre has within this romance. Several of Wroth's other shepherdesses are courtly figures who adopt the "habit" and the rural isolation of the pastoral identity as a chosen life or as a matter of fashion. The pastoral persona as courtly fashion is seen in Book IV's description of Celina of "Great Brittany" who wins the heart of Leurenius, prince of Venice:

> … [C]lose by on the bank lay such a Shepheardesse as Urania was, and that is sufficient expression for her perfections, her Hooke and Scrip lay by her, her bright and delicate haire looked like straw in the Sunne; … She was tying flowers together, the rest lying in her Lap, and she picking out those she best liked, casting some others into the River, which smild in thanks to her for those favours. … As she thus playd, so did her Sheepe and Lambs by her; as free in joy, as shee was from love, or any such vexation. … (638–9)

This passage expresses the idealized psychological Golden Age of light labor that shades into leisure, combined with an innocent mind unspoiled by passionate erotic suffering. The natural world (the smiling river) colludes with Celina ("Light") in reflecting her happiness. Celina, in her chaste self-sufficiency, recalls Cervantes' Marcela, another pastoral heroine who makes an appearance within the chivalric world of *Don Quixote*. Like Marcela, she will not surrender her pastoral independence to a lover, even one as gentlemanly as the prince. She proudly proclaims her autonomy in terms of her chastity: "Wee are armed with strong resolutions … and defended by our own virtue, so as wee feare no enemy, if not lurking in our owne breasts" (640). The prince wonders at the apparent absence of "Knights Adventurers" in England, expressing his concern for the ladies' safety, but Celina's faith in her own inner virtue seems to preclude the need for a chivalric protector. Indeed, she ends up saving the man she falls in love with from drowning, in a reversal of the damsel in distress scenario (642). The journey undertaken by Leurenius to Great Britanny is one of the romance's many pan-European digressions, and it

[47] See Carrell, *passim*.

becomes an occasion for a travelogue detailing an idealized version of England that may be compared to the central European and Mediterranean locales that dominate the plot. This episode portrays England as an enclosed and safe pastoral *locus amoenus* when considered against the plains, rocks, forests, seas, and battlefields of Wroth's middle-European imaginative geography.[48] In this geography, England attains the status of a peaceful northern Arcadia, the nursery of virtuous, self-sufficient women and courteous men who rarely need to take up arms (640). Wroth's episode does not acknowledge the hard edge of pastoral, unlike Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*. The pastoral in the romance is removed from its base origins; more often than not, shepherds turn out to be aristocrats. In the Celina episode, the pastoral habit is clearly a marker for a courtly circle of feminine friends. Ensconced in sylvan groves, Celina and her clique, Rossalea, Lemnia, and Derina, articulate their disappointed loves through verse, Rossalea being especially "perfect in poetry" (649). The Celina episode reflects the Jacobean generic understanding of the pastoral romance heroine as an aristocratic persona within an idealized natural setting.

Another key pastoral episode for which the same can be said is the story in Book III of the Lady Pastora. Formerly called Silvarina, she lives on a rock near the island of Corfu with two maids and a flock of goats "to pass her time withal" (416). Wroth uses the pastoral landscape as the locus of the virtue of temperance, as when during their Arcadian courtship, "Leonia" does not take advantage of his opportunity to achieve sexual consummation with Veralinda. A pastoral setting is also a boon to the process of solitary self-reflection, as we see in Urania herself in the introduction. Within Wroth's romance, pastoral encourages characters to develop a detachment from their own passions.[49] The Lady Pastora, whom Steriamus mistakes from a distance for our heroine, is another one of Urania's doppelgangers, serving as an alternate version of the female pastoral career (414). Pastora has adopted the shepherdess's habit as an ending rather than a beginning.[50] Curiously, she combines elements of both the pastoral and chivalric heroine, relating a personal history of tragic and noble adultery that explains her anomalous position on the "Rocke as hard as her fortune, and as white as her faith" (421). Steriamus attempts to convince Pastora to leave off her self-exile and participate in the search for the lost ladies, believing that Pastora fulfills the conditions of the second half of the oracle, but she declines and stays put as an emblem of faithfulness and restraint, resistant

48 Cavanagh, *Cherished Torment*, 32–5 reveals how Amphilanthus, as future Holy Roman Emperor, reflects the ideal of a unified Christian Europe. Amphilanthus is associated with the West, while Pamphilia, the "Eastern Star," is his appropriate geographical counterpart.

49 Sandy, 113, 111.

50 Wroth appears to make a technical distinction between pastoral occupations: in *Urania* part two, for example, Veralinda's son, Verolindo, refers to "delicate shepherdesses and beautifull pastoras" (II, 96). As the Lady Pastora represents the "hard" pastoral perspective on life, her association with goats, raised in tougher, less hospitable terrain than sheep, is appropriate to her position on the rock.

to the narrative drive of the romance. Pastora has returned to the same place, figuratively speaking, as Urania begins: unseen and unknown, yet with experience and self-knowledge. Her pastoral habit is taken on as a penance for and a purification of her chivalric past. Steriamus, her sympathetic listener, is destined to be Urania's husband, thus saving her from the sterile fate of her double, who will not grow beyond her pastoral emplacement.

Pastora, having chosen the chivalric romance paradigm for her youth, does not find the domestic happiness that lies at the end of the successful pastoral heroine's career. Her rock is not a generative *locus amoenus* but a self-imposed prison.[51] Yet Pastora's redemptive and willing participating in hard pastoral is also a symptom of Wroth's flexible and forgiving attitude toward women's erotic experience. Pastora has cured herself of her passion and elevated her personal dignity by removing herself from the hothouse world of courtly intrigue that gave rise to it; she describes how she comes to the aid of her shipwrecked faithless lover in the spirit of charity rather than eros (420). Pastora has achieved a self-mastery over her own passions by removing herself from the generic settings (court and castle) within which such passions tend to be generated. Her refusal to leave her island is a rejection of the code of courtly love. Wroth's use of the topos of the pastoral setting in this episode indicates that pastoral may be restorative, as well as constitutive, of feminine virtue and dignity.

Another shepherdess who, like Pastora and Urania, is abandoned by a lover is Alarina in Book II. In these stories of innocent youthful affection betrayed, Wroth examines her central theme of female constancy in love, while offering a gendered version of the pastoral trope of erotic awakening. Alarina, in contrast to other pastoral heroines in Wroth's text, is a real shepherdess. Typically in pastoral literature, the ascendancy to sexual maturity is presented in terms of a new and painful self-consciousness that Sidney describes as "self-division." Decades later, Marvell's Damon the Mower describes Juliana's effect on his mind as a radical and violent disjunction between "my thoughts and me." The arrival of love precipitates a psychological crisis of self-alienation that is a prerequisite for further development. Alarina's pastoral career is typical, at first; she enjoys a contented youth until the age of fourteen, when she is afflicted by an inexplicable torment:

> I knew not what I ayld, till one day walking to a pleasant wood, which was upon a hill, I did consider with my selfe, what was the first originall of all this paine; I could not suddenly find out the ground, till at the last considering well each thing, I found his name most pleasing was to mee. … When this came to my mind, then straight I sighd, blush'd, and layd my hand upon my panting heart,

51 Sandy, 110 mentions the uncharacteristic inhospitality of Pastora's domain. Cavanagh (*Cherished Torment*, 89) explains Pastora's decision to remain on the island primarily as a gesture of solipsistic despair, rather than of autonomy and integrity.

> and then cryd out, "I hope this is not love"; but love no sooner was (by poore me) nam'd, but as if cald, he straight possess'd my heart. …"[52]

Alarina's story offers an interesting perspective on the theme of new passion. In this case, it appears to be a combination of hormonal changes at puberty, which inspire the initial physical longing without an object, and a conscious act of naming or self-recognition that provides an external focus for the internal upheavals. This dual process is not a madness or a character flaw, which opens the possibility that love can be sympathetically yet rationally managed. Alarina's account, like Pastora's, is a commentary on Pamphilia's emotional dilemma as she seeks to justify and endure her painful love for Amphilanthus. While Pastora's self-control and dignity lead her to renounce the hope, or even the desire, of regaining her faithless love. Alarina's story is more complex, for she experiences both the Pastora-like rejection of passion and its rekindling. From the age of fourteen to the age of nineteen she sees her beloved frequently, but her modesty forbids her to reveal her love, causing him to marry another.[53] When her affection is revealed, he reciprocates at first, but changes his favors for another as Alarina ages and loses her girlish charms (219–20). Like Pastora or Marcela, she attains a self-mastery through self-imposed pastoral exile: "I gave my selfe wholly to the fields, nor kept I any company but with my flocke," and, of course, she expresses herself in verse (223). Like Urania, however, she encounters magical waters that free her from her early and ill-destined affection:

> … soone I was alterd in al things but my truth, which now alone to me remains unharmed; my whole condition altered, I grew free, and free from love, to which I late was slave. Then finding this true vertue in my selfe, and poore selfe returnd to me againe, I did embrace it in the same true sort that love held me, and so we did agree. I love my selfe, my selfe now loveth me.[54]

Alarina's drink from a magic spring effects her recovery of a unitary self that is lost with the advent of erotic awareness. One might say that Alarina recovers a form of psychological virginity. After having experienced personal rejection and public humiliation, she describes the restoration of her honor and self-respect using a word with chivalric resonance: "truth." In this context, truth has similar connotations to its etymological relative "troth," one's word or promise. Alarina makes a commitment to the ideal of chastity, changing her name to Silviana as a reflection of her new status as Diana's acolyte

52 Wroth, *First Part*, 217–18.

53 Alarina's five-year courtship phase reflects Ilana Ben-Amos's analysis of life categories in Renaissance England: "adolescencia" occurred roughly between the ages of 14 to 18 (*Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England*, 11). Ben-Amos also notes that young women of humble rural origins had considerably more autonomy than their wealthier urban counterparts (150–1).

54 Wroth, *First Part*, 224.

(224). Alarina becomes another exemplar of the autonomous sense of honor frequently displayed by the pastoral heroine. Instead of vowing truth to a leader or a lover, she vows to be true to herself, as allegorized by a devotion to the self-sufficient Diana.

Pamphilia, the high-born queen, concludes that she has much to learn from this lowly shepherdess (225). Ironically, however, it is Alarina's fate to be reunited after several years with her original lover, causing Pamphilia to question her in much the same manner as Urania questions Pamphilia's devotion to Amphilanthus (483). Alarina's story is another wish-fulfillment fantasy; she ultimately does get what she wants. Alarina is a combination of all of Wroth's major heroines. Her adolescence reflects Urania's early jilting and her watery renewal rite; she suffers Pamphilia's passion for an ambivalent man; and she partakes in Pastora's virtuous self-reformation. Pamphilia, observing Alarina's wedding, asks whether the shepherdess has not violated her own vow, to which Alarina replies that she in fact has remained true to her original self in honoring her original love: "had I broke my vow, and my vow to truth in leaving Diana, and loving a new love, I had unpardonbly err'd, but Madam I am free from touch of fault in this, and only Fortune is guilty of all … no Madam, this is no changing, but a happy returne to my first blessed estate" (483). As she justifies it, Alarina's history exemplifies the loop undergone by the heroine of pastoral romance. She is happily recontained within a pastoral *locus amoenus* she had to leave in order to restore. Her lover's rekindled affection is the reward for the way in which she has regained her own honor. Pamphilia's unease with Alarina's marriage, however, is not entirely misplaced, because this resolution punctures the illusion of the possibility of self-control over passion. Alarina herself seems to abjure Pastora's message when she tells Pamphilia: "wee are fine creatures alone in our owne imaginations; but otherwise poore miserable captives to love" (483). Pastoral solitude provides the conditions for what Alarina now considers the self-delusion of emotional autonomy, but such delusions apparently cannot survive exposure to the real world. Thus, in its entirety, the Alarina episode offers an ambiguous view of the possibility of self-control and honor for the woman in love. Alarina happily throws away her truth and her freedom when her man comes back.

As we have seen, donning the pastoral habit in the *Urania* implies an affiliation with a clear set of associated qualities: self-control, temperance, wisdom, chastity in single life and marriage, loyalty to friends and loved ones without self-abasement. All of these qualities contribute to an unarticulated code of independent feminine honor that compares quite favorably to the chivalric code exemplified by knights such as Amphilanthus and Rosindy. While the Neoplatonism-tinged fashion for courtly pastoral in the 1620s and 1630s may seem superficial and politically manipulative, it also enables the theatrical illustration of feminine virtue in a direct and appealing manner. The narrator in the *Urania* even reflects humorously on the possibility of hypocrisy in the adoption of the pastoral persona in the story of the princess Nereana in Book

II (196–201). From her story, it becomes apparent that not everyone is fit for the pastoral habit.

Wroth is an often effective literary parodist. The *Urania* contains humorous and satirical sketches of Renaissance literary types, such as the buffoonish Petrarchan knight who writes an unintentionally racy aubade in his clumsy attempt to woo the Sad Widow in Book IV (486). Nereana herself is a version of the proud and discourteous lady of chivalric romance, exemplified by Briana in Book 6 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. She fruitlessly loves Steriamus, pursuing him without regard for her own dignity or the welfare of her people. She shows no capacity for self-examination or self-control, for example, blaming others for allowing her to wander "unchecked" (196). Having driven away all well-wishers, she encounters the love-deranged shepherd Alanius, who makes her an unwilling Belphoebe dressed in buskins, garlands, a baldric of flowers, and a "spear" made out of a white stick (197–8). Later, the same shepherd mistakes her for Arethusa in an Ovidian fantasy, supplicating his own costumed creation for her help in attaining his lost love Liana (200). Nereana ends up being forced to participate in a version of the pattern of pastoral reformation experienced by Pastora and Alarina: unable to convince the knight Philarchos that she is not insane, she ends up wandering through the harsh landscape alone, eating berries and ultimately ending up in a cave (334). Nereana's pastoral habit is so unfit an expression of her nature that she appears to have lost her mind. Her pastoral reformation takes a much longer time to effect because she derives her sense of personal honor from the wrong source, namely, a misplaced pride in ancestry.[55] While other pastoral heroines attain self-understanding in the pastoral setting, Nereana's exhortation to herself parodies their talk of a unitary self and its autonomous honor: "… thine own royall spirit shall never leave thee, and if once thou canst get free from this place, thy worth and deserts shall shine more glorious over these mishaps" (199). Nereana defines herself by external and relative criteria, rather than by internal and absolute "truth" and "freedom" expressed by Alarina. Precisely because she herself places such emphasis on external markers of honor, she is doomed to be interpreted through the pastoral literary archetypes imposed upon her unwilling form by the poor mad Alanius. To embrace the persona of the shepherdess is to embrace a sort of courteous yet non-servile humility that is alien to Nereana's conception of her own importance.

55 Sandy, 109–110 discusses the Nereana episode as an humorous illustration of snobbish refusal to acknowledge the positive moral potential of pastoral convention.

CANDIANA AND THE PASTORAL INHERITANCE IN THE SECOND PART OF THE *URANIA*

The discourse of pastoral not only continues, but expands in significance within the manuscript continuation of the *Urania*, most likely written between 1620 and 1630.[56] Although never published until 1999, the second part of the romance follows the interlocking stories of Urania and Pamphilia into the next generation. A large number of the episodes revolve around attempts to recover the lost children of Steriamus and Urania, Parselius and Dalinea, and Leonius and Veralinda. Collected and shipped to Urania's mother, the "brave and discreet" queen of Naples, for the sake of their education, the children have been scattered en route and obscured in various pastoral guises, much as Urania and Veralinda themselves are in part one (II, 22–23). The pastoral *locus amoenus* becomes the functional replacement for the court of Naples as the nursery of valor and virtue, not only for the girls but for the boys as well. Melissea, the wise woman of part one who supports Urania's cliff jump at St. Maura, returns along with her sister as the guardian of the two lost children of Parselius: Trebisound and Candiana (II, 225). As Parselius searches for his now-grown children, he evaluates their pastoral refuge as follows: "Mee thinkes thes pleasant and delightfull plaines should have fine sheapherds and sheapherdesses to inrich them selves and restore the decayed credit and spottles lyfe of this blessed and honored profession" (II, 212). Parselius reverses the associations of pastoral with lowliness, endowing it with the ability to bestow honor ("credit") instead of diminishing it. His guide, Lamprino, responds by describing the ten lost children as possessing "high carriage … butt extreame civile and curteious; grave, yet are they kinde and affable enough, and strangers they are, yett speake Greeke" (II, 212). This description is as good as any of the paradox of the Arcadian courtly shepherd, in which the rustic habit indicates the civil values of town and court without the regrettable pride and corruption. The formative and reformative value of pastoral is evident in the characteristics the lost children acquire during their pastoral upbringing.

Wroth also hints at the reformative powers of pastoral when Amphilanthus, in despair at hearing upon the betrothal of Pamphilia to the king of Tartaria, is comforted both by his sister Urania's support and by a shepherd's kind words (II, 139–43). Wroth has already established Urania's pastoral skill at counseling in book one; Urania reprises that role as she assures Amphilanthus of Pamphilia's constancy and reminds him of her track record in offering good advice: "Did nott I say thus much to Perissus, and did itt ott fall out soe? Did nott I for my everlasting blis redeeme and save my deerest Lord Steriamus, and

[56] All citations of *Part Two of the Countess of Mongomery's Urania* are taken from Josephine Roberts' edition, completed by Suzanne Gossett and Janel Mueller (1999). For clarification, I have included the Roman numeral II before in-text page number citations if a possibility of confusion between parts one and two exists.

his brave brother, and most worthy sister Selarina …?" (II, 139). Amphilanthus, returning to court as an unknown knight, encounters a shepherd who echoes the substance of Urania's encouragement: "My sheepe and that little art I have tells mee wee shall have faire weather. Then why showld you not hope for allteration, and see sorrowes turned into Joyes? Doe butt hope, Sir, and you will soone see itt; and then thinke of me who first told you soe, and soe it must be" (II, 142). Praising the shepherd for his gentle words in humble guise, the chivalric hero Amphilanthus accepts the shepherd's gift of his scrip. This pastoral emblem is "more pretious then can be valued because fild with hope" (II, 143). This episode reinforces the value of pastoral as a counter-discourse to the chivalric narrative of adulterous suffering and despair, while the "innocent plainness" (II, 143) of the shepherd's exhortation contrasts with the deceitful rumors of the courtly gossip which drive Amphilanthus to such extremes of emotion. Even the exemplar of chivalric prestige and glamour may be positively affected by the restorative possibilities of the pastoral mentality.

In the second part, Wroth also continues her practice of offering various mirrors for Susan Vere Herbert, reflecting the already established virtue and appeal of her original avatars in part one by adding a second-generation version of Urania herself. Indeed, these reflections of Urania proliferate to such an extent that they result in a certain narrative ambiguity. The heiress of Urania's function in part two is not, surprisingly, one of her own children or one of Veralinda's daughters, but Candiana, the daughter of Parselius and Dalinea. This princess is not related by blood to Urania, but her resemblance to both Urania and her brother Leonius is so marked that Verolindo mistakes her for his own lost sister, Veralinda (II, 106). Some readers agree with Verolindo; Candiana is given so many personae and names that her identity is easily confused with the other gentle-born shepherdesses in part two.[57] It is Candiana, however, whom Wroth intends to embody the force of Urania's wisdom and beauty in a pastoral guise. She is the primary pastoral heroine of part two, and in this lengthy two-part narrative of constancy, she is the fated means of accomplishing emotional and political reconciliation between her father Parselius and Urania, whom he betrayed in part one. Candiana is a hinge figure who recapitulates Urania's biological trajectory and redeems Parselius's faithless error in part one by becoming a living link between their houses.

Candiana's various guises also reinforce her role in the narrative as the heir

[57] In their completion of Josephine Roberts' edition of *The Second Part*, Suzanne Gossett and Janel Mueller provide their reasons for changing Roberts' identification of Veralinda in this passage to Candiana (Gossett and Mueller, xxxi). I accept their reading, for reasons outlined in this chapter. Cavanagh in *Cherished Torment* maintains that Verolindo's identification of the shepherdess as Lindavera, his sister, is a correct one, and that she is the destined wife of Urania's son Floristello (101, 197). Miller, in *Changing the Subject*, also identifies Lindavera as the destined bride of Floristello, seeing an allusion to *The Winter's Tale* in the betrothal of the 'shepherdess' daughter of Shakespeare's Leontes and the young prince Florizell" (106).

to Urania's virtues: rotating through an array of pastoral personae, including Doriany (92) and Clorina/Sophia (205), she is, respectively, the white one, the golden one, the floral one and the wise one. She is present from the beginning of the narrative, where Selarinus notices two beautiful and mysterious children cared for by Melissea's sister, the Grave Lady (4). The solution to the mystery of Candiana's identity is one of Wroth's major plot lines in the second part. The narrative gives us evidence, however, that Candiana can be traced by her resemblance, entirely symbolic rather than genetic, to the pastoral heroine of part one. Urania's son Floristello, lamenting his love for the shepherdess "Doriany," notes,

> Her spirit is as high as an Emperess. Was nott my mother a sheapherdes? Yes, and the fairest, loveliest Urania, yet she proved a kings daughter, and sister to the most renowned Emperour. Why showld nott I hope on that? Noe, noe, I love her as a s[heap]herdes only for beautie, and for a sheapherdes will I dy if Doriany relent nott.[58]

His lament is a meditation on the leveling effects of passion and a defense of the love match; in an inversion of received wisdom, he argues that it is "more honor to make greatnes and beestow itt Nobly then to match with equall greatnes" (92). His love for Doriany is pure and honorable precisely because it is based only on her personal attractions and no other economic or dynastic concern. As the inspiration for these subversive ruminations, Doriany illustrates the Neoplatonic power of her beauty to ennoble her lover in essential, not accidental, ways. There is a paradoxical nobility to her lowliness that Floristello associates with his mother's intellectual and moral authority. Later, in bemoaning Candiana's loss to an enchantment, he again posits a resemblance between his mother and his intended bride that is both physical and spiritual: "You, O you, the darling of the worlde, the ornament of Nature, the glory and onely miroir of her sex. … What way shall I take … to make thee mine owne, and mee in that the hapiest (butt my father in his Urania)? And yet, may I bee blest with thee, I showld bee almost soe bolde as to compare with him" (II, 332). Thus, Floristello's successful pursuit of this pastoral courtship becomes synonymous with his maturation as his father Steriamus's equal.

Doriany/Candiana's excellence is independently confirmed when Parselius sees her for the first time. No other heroine, either in part one or part two, receives more extravagant praise. Not knowing that she is his daughter, Parselius encounters the fifteen-year-old in the pastoral paradise of Tempe during his search for Amphilanthus. He sees both Trebisound and Candiana together, which is the narrator's opportunity to indulge in a lengthy blazon describing the great physical beauty of this sibling pair (204–7).[59] At this point, Candiana is under alias as "Clorina," a traditional pastoral name that asso-

58 Wroth, *The Second Part*, 92.

59 Wroth's Petrarchan exposition on the features of Trebisound/Bellario (i.e. "lips like cherris

ciates her with Fletcher's Clorin in *The Faithful Shepherdess*. As in the case of Clorin, Wroth's Clorina is renowned for her knowledge of natural lore: "the choisest knowledges in the cheifest of Natures workes … wisdome and exquisitt understanding in all things both in nature and the highest deserned … in the heavens, nor in the seaes, or any sort of hearbs, and the proper uses of them" (205). Clorina carries an air of "chaste liberty" (206) that inspires yet disciplines the affections of the beholder. Parselius hears the history of the pair from her brother "Bellario," who relates a charming tale involving an errant boat, a faithful dog, and eventual landfall on Melissea's island (224–5). Parselius begins to suspect their true identity as his own children, recognizing similarities between himself and Clorina/Candiana (226). Their ultimate recognition and reunification is deferred, however, and Wroth's romance ends before Candiana is acknowledged as her father's child. Nonetheless, there is a great deal of evidence that this is the direction in which the narrative is moving. One must wonder why Candiana becomes the bearer of so many pastoral identities. Her changes of name and status are not motivated by any exigencies of plot; rather, she is subject to magic arts that transfer and transform her and her brother into different enclosed pastoral locales throughout their youth. Candiana's superiority at all of these pastoral roles is unexcelled, but her identity within the narrative is quite unstable. In part one, stability of identity is conferred on the pastoral heroine through paternal acknowledgment and betrothal, the two things that elude Candiana in the unfinished part two. Floristello follows her throughout the narrative, loving her without knowing who she is, although he is promised in a vision by a disembodied "Voice" that he will one day attain her if he agrees to undertake other, unspecified chivalric tasks in the meantime (333). The instability of Candiana's identity may be in part because she is an ideal to be pursued as much as a flesh-and-blood character. In Floristello's vision, he sees her among "a dainty company of wood Nimphes," dancing, singing and feasting. She, like Spenser's Pastorella or Elizabeth Boyle in the circle of graces, sits "chiefe amongst them."[60] As he pursues her, she rises beyond his reach, until he becomes aware that she occupies a theater of gold bars and emerald ornaments (333). Candiana, the pastoral figure, has become a hostage to the fulfillment of Floristello's chivalric ambitions; he must earn her freedom by proving himself elsewhere. Like Colin Clout in *The Faerie Queene* Book 6, Floristello's attempt to embrace his pastoral idea transforms it out of recognition, causing it to disappear.

Wroth associates Candiana with self-transformation in yet another way, one that calls attention to the artfulness of the courtly pastoral persona. While

red and coule," 204) is an unusual reverse application of a gendered convention of representation.

60 Wroth may have taken from Spenser the idea of giving her pastoral heroine a distinctive birthmark mole: Pastorella bears a "little purple rose" on her breast (FQ VI.xii.18), while Candiana, in her guise as Clorin, is said to have a mole on hers in the shape of a heart with a dart through it (*Urania* II, 219).

Candiana's presence in the narrative is largely through the descriptions of other characters, the narrator does offer her a lyric moment that provides subjective insight into her character. This moment occurs directly before she is mistaken by Verolindo for his sister, whom he has not seen since she was two. She is overheard reciting a lyric on the occasion of weeping while burning with passion, an opportunity to exploit the paradox of how fire and water can coexist. Candiana rejects the possibility of a regenerative baptism for herself that would cure her passion in the same manner in which Urania was cured at St Maura:

> Beehold this sacred fire
> In waters curstest ire
> Remaines in mee,
> Desdaining change to see,
> As hee makes waters touch
> His prowd inclosing my desire
> And in his bosome keeps my fire
> While I lament too much.[61]

After exploring this paradox for another three stanzas, Candiana soliloquizes in a companion speech to Floristello's declaration of love for "Doriany": she recapitulates the debate about status from the perspective of the lower-ranked:

> … surely itt is noe fault for a woeman to accept of a chaste and worthy love, bee itt never soe high, never soe great. Destanie did never, surely, bestow her labour in Vaine, especially soe farr as to make mee beare such signes of her favour as to bee marked by her to noe end. … Noe, his thoughts ore his friends may think mee unworthy, butt why Urania, the beautie and wounder of the world for worth, was butt a sheapherdess as I ame in show when Steriamus first loved her, when Parselius first loved her.[62]

Candiana regards her beauty as a divine gift that could not possibly be bestowed without some higher purpose; it is the external sign of a special fate. This interpretation of the meaning behind her beauty corresponds to Floristello's platonic argument that beauty is worthy of love for its own sake. She even applies Floristello's example of his own mother Urania to herself, indicating that she shares with her fated husband the same ideals. Most important, in this speech Candiana reveals her intellectual and affective compatibility with Floristello.

Candiana associates the pastoral persona with a commitment to emotional constancy by vowing never to "change her habit" until she knows how Floristello now feels; like the Lady Pastora in part one, she adopts a penitential humility in response to her mistake in not yielding earlier to the prince. Yet

61 Wroth, *The Second Part*, 102.
62 Wroth, *The Second Part*, 103–4.

Candiana's protestations are themselves performances. Upon realizing that she has been overheard by someone else (the very Floristello, with his cousin Verolindo as companion), she claims, "You have heard mee, then, speake some thing. Alas, that was butt a part I ame to act shortly in a pastorall, and I was repeating itt to have itt the more perfect" (105). Floristello's response is to offer himself as a prompt for her lines. Candiana's equivocation on the truth status of her own claims to heroic constancy amounts to a defensive strategy of hiding behind representation. Her feelings are dictated, she claims, by convention: she is acting a role in a pastoral, subsuming herself into her own dramatis persona. In her dialogue with Floristello, referred to as "the Albanian" during this exchange, he keeps the beaver of his helmet down to hide his own identity, hiding behind his own generic identity as a knight (104). One is tempted to read this exchange between two lovers who nonetheless do not recognize each other as an allegory of the operation of Wroth's *roman-à-clef*. Candiana veils her feelings with a generically determined template of significance, elevating constancy while denying that she feels it. She is not willing to distinguish herself from her persona as a shepherdess. At the same time, as the readers are evidently expected to consider this union the honorable and happy outcome, Wroth presents an argument for the moral rectitude of pastoral drama and of ladies' participation in it. Wroth herself acted in pastorals and even wrote one, *Love's Victory*. The participation of women in courtly performances was controversial during the period; indeed, many still considered it questionable for women to act in public at all.[63] To act in a pastoral, however, is to represent virtues and values that cannot possibly harm a lady's reputation or her soul. In this episode, we see how acting well may translate into doing good, for Candiana and Floristello exemplify the moral efficacy of pastoral drama.

Candiana is clearly Urania's heir in a tangible as well as symbolic sense; she is destined to bring the Achayan throne of her mother Dalinea to her future husband, Urania's son. After Candiana's enchantment, Melissea informs Parselius that because of his old perfidy toward Urania, his own son Trebisound will not rule either Morea or Achaya, but she implies that he will help his wife, the Sultaness of Babilon, recover her throne (321). Melissea explains this matrilineal pattern of inheritance to Parselius as a matter of penance and justice, "for you know the bands you were tyed in to Urania, which must nott by fate ore fortune bee on your parte dissolved" (332). Thus Candiana reconciles the generations and becomes the vehicle of her inconstant father's chastise-

63 A contemporary example of condemnatory attitudes toward women performing at court is courtier John Chamberlain's letter of 4 December 1624 to Dudley Carleton: "a strange sight, to see a Queen act in a play" (cited in Smuts, 166). The most famous example of the controversy around aristocratic female performance centered around Queen Henrietta Maria's participation in Sir Walter Montague's eight-hour-long *The Shepheard's Paradise* on 10 January 1633. On the following day, William Prynne published his pamphlet *Histriomastix,* in which he called female actresses whores. His claims were interpreted as a direct criticism of the queen, and Prynne's ear was clipped as a punishment.

ment and reformation. Candiana's story, such a large part of Wroth's unfinished narrative, reaffirms the central value of female constancy in the romance and provides an example of cosmic justice directed toward inconstant men. However, unlike her role model, Candiana never gets the opportunity to grow out of her pastoral emplacement, as her anticipated marriage to Floristello is indefinitely deferred by the romance's absence of closure.

In both print and manuscript portions of the *Urania*, Wroth's pastoralism contributes to the development of a discourse of honor for single women. Not all of her shepherdesses are young girls. In this regard, she departs from traditional pastoral's emphasis on juvenility. Within the *Urania*, pastoral is a stage associated not so much with a specific chronological age, but rather a certain status as a virtuous, reflective yet unattached female. Urania, Veralinda and Candiana leave their pastoral identities behind them when they are reunited with their paternal families of origin and betrothed to appropriate suitors. In contrast, the Lady Pastora, not a young woman, deliberately adopts the habit of pastoral in order to reconstitute her lost emotional self-sufficiency and ethical independence. Alarina abandons her vow to Diana in order to wed her old love, in essence becoming a shepherdess again, but she is no longer young either; indeed, she undergoes her solitary pastoral trial after her shepherd lover has already rejected her in her twenties for losing her looks (219). Traditionally, a heroine's story ends in youthful marriage, while the aging woman is not of much interest. The *Urania* is unusual among romance texts for its interest in representing women who are not in the first flush of youth.[64] The pastoral heroine may be of any age, as long as she presents an example of ethical purity, simplicity, chastity, and courtesy. In Wroth's romance, to don the pastoral habit is not only a matter of external fashion but of internal conviction. As we see with Pastora, Alarina, Urania, Leonius, Veralinda and Candiana, pastoral becomes a potent vehicle of social and ethical transformation, providing an honorable alternative to the chivalric sphere. For the heroines of the *Urania*, one need not grow out of pastoral, but one may certainly grow through it.

64 Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 170–1 discusses Wroth's treatment of the signs of female aging as marks of honor in the case of Pamphilia.

Chapter 5

FLETCHER'S CLORIN AND MILTON'S LADY: THE PERFORMANCE OF CHASTITY IN PASTORAL DRAMA

THE PASTORAL MODE was a widespread and popular one in English Renaissance drama. Pastoral elements infuse everything from Lyly's plays to Shakespeare's comedies and later romances to the tragicomic entertainments of Daniel and Fletcher. The pastoral heroine of the stage is a major character type; Shakespeare's Rosalind (based on Lodge's Rosalynde) is perhaps his best-known non-tragic heroine, even today, but she combines conventional features of her pastoral predecessors. With her rhetorical facility and her own version of the pastoral romance loop, Rosalind falls squarely into the category of heroines with which we are concerned here. Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, however, is no longer chiefly read or appreciated through the pastoral lens. Its pastoralism is one of many elements that make it typical of its time, but that pastoralism is not the reason it is still performed and appreciated. Its generic association with pastoral is not an intrinsic element of its appeal. Other plays of the era, however, are less detachable from their pastoral contexts. A contemporary lack of feeling for the motifs of pastoral romance as they appear in a variety of generic contexts diminishes our pleasure and immediate grasp of Renaissance pastoral drama. The position of the pastoral heroine, her generic emplacement and natural and social relationships, delivers a significance to her travails that enriches our understanding of less approachable examples of English pastoral drama. Two such examples, linked by common language and themes, are Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1609) and Milton's *A Mask at Ludlow* (1634; published 1637).

Both of these pieces have posed interpretive problems for recent critics. Milton's *Mask* is a puzzle; it has been the subject of significant commentary within the last twenty years as attempts have been made to alternately justify or dismiss its purported obsession with sexual purity. For this reason, Milton scholars have regarded it variously as an early articulation of bourgeois values, a remnant of the author's personal psychosexual preoccupations, or the argument of an anti-Laudian political program; however, when we look at the masque next to an example of pastoral tragicomedy, the pastoral context may clarify some of the critical quandaries this work has presented to various

readers.[1] Ann Baynes Coiro, in examining the masque's publication history, has pointed out that its author was an unknown young dramatist, not the epic prophet he later became.[2] We slight the dramatic elements of *A Mask* because we look at it through the perspective of Milton's complete works, but the context in which we regard a text is crucial to our understanding of it. In this chapter, we will examine the puzzle of Milton's masque of chastity by approaching it as a descendant of Fletcherian tragicomedy. Most critical approaches to the conundrums of *A Mask* read forwards; that is, they seek illumination of the text's interpretive cruces through Milton's later published works. In this case, I will attempt to read backwards, examining the generic context of Milton's tragicomic play and what that context contributes to Milton's treatment of the chastity theme. Of course, the masque participates in a variety of generic modes, making its simple reduction to one set of framing conventions an impossibility. Nevertheless, an examination of *A Mask* as tragicomedy may allow a better appreciation of Milton's unique and transformative treatment of pastoral romance.[3]

The Faithful Shepherdess (first performed 1608–09) is an early Jacobean example of the theme of feminine virtue within a pastoral setting. It forms a useful bridge from Spenser's and Sidney's conceptions of pastoral femininity to John Milton's treatment of the same in *A Mask*. Fletcher borrows Spenserian names and images; for example, Fletcher's heroine is named Amoret; lovers undergo a chastity test involving fire recalling its similar use as a barrier around the House of Busirane. Yet Fletcher's interest in the difference between true chastity and reputation, along with the freedom and risk of a dark wooded setting in which identities are confused, assignations are made, and journeys are undertaken, looks forward to Milton's masque. Amoret, her reputation besmeared, is saved by a benevolent river god, anticipating the Lady's rescue by the female river spirit Sabrina. Fletcher's play clearly partakes of enduring pastoral conventions, but what makes it relevant here is its obsession with the sexual virtue of the young unchaperoned girl. The play illustrates different definitions of sexual honor in women and their practical results. If

1 See, for example, Kendrick, "Milton and Sexuality;" McGuire, *Milton's Puritan Masque*; Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*. William Shullenberger is unusual in arguing that Milton's strong emphasis on chastity is not, in fact, an anomalous "private obsession." ("Milton's Lady," 209). He reads the masque in the light of Reformation theologies of chastity as a form of social relation.

2 Coiro, "Anonymous Milton" (621) demonstrates that *A Mask* was originally (and anonymously) published with a companion piece, a pastoral drama by Milton's Cambridge peer Randolph that bears the generic marks of Jacobean tragicomedy. The joint publication thus frames the two pieces with the same set of audience expectations.

3 Lindheim has usefully addressed this question in "Pastoral and Masque at Ludlow." While she views pastoral from a classical, lyric perspective, I am more concerned with the pastoral mode in Renaissance romance and drama. Lindheim sees a problematic dichotomy between the idealism of Neoplatonism and classical pastoral's earthbound realism, but as I have noted elsewhere, Jacobean pastoral was far removed from its hard, rural origins.

offers a cautionary tale against confusing reputation with true chastity, while upholding the importance of self-discipline and physical freedom as necessary components of genuine feminine virtue.

Not only does *A Mask* contains verbal echoes of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, but it also shares in common the use of what Helen Cooper has termed the "memes" that help to define the particularly English variant of the romance genre. Milton's and Fletcher's pastoral romance heroines are threatened by a misogynistic and limited definition of feminine virtue in which a reputation for chastity becomes equivalent to the thing itself. These heroines either undergo or effect rites of social reconciliation that confirm, but do not cause, their essential and independent sense of virtue. In Cooper's terms, both Fletcher and Milton employ the "calumniated woman" meme, which she associates with an exposure of societal misogyny, and the meme of "magic that doesn't work."[4] Both plays contain scenes where magic is either mistaken or ineffectual, while the real drama is in the conflict between the heroic will and the corrupting designs of would-be seducers. Most importantly, Milton could have seen something in Fletcher's play that he cared enough to incorporate into his own: a way of illustrating the invisible, of making the silent, hidden quality of chastity show itself. Fletcher and Milton apply romance memes within a pastoral setting to make a complex point about the evidence and definition of female sexual virtue. Milton's masque occupied the same literary marketplace as Fletcher's earlier play; *The Faithful Shepherdess* was revived with great success in 1633 at court, despite its initial failure on the public stage. Milton extends Fletcher's treatment of female chastity and honor in ways that complement the earlier work.[5] Both *The Faithful Shepherdess* and *A Mask* illustrate chastity as an ordering ethical principle that is vitally implicated in, yet independent of the social world.

While Milton's masque presents a mysterious complexity to contemporary readers, Fletcher's play has drawn the contrasting reaction: it is too simple, too conventional.[6] The plot seems derivative, while the tragicomic mix of slapstick and blood puts off earnest sensibilities. Without a feel for the conventions that Fletcher employs, one cannot easily enjoy *The Faithful Shepherdess*; yet we should credit Fletcher for participating in a literary conversation initiated by his model, Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, answering Guarini's propositions in such a way that Milton, as literary heir to Fletcher, could profitably employ tragicomic motifs in his own atypical masque. Milton, in his turn, also adds

4 Cooper sees the "calumniated woman" meme of English romance as especially relevant to late-medieval insular varieties of the romance genre (270). Also see Cooper, 142–3 on the prevalence of magic that is superfluous to the resolution of romance narrative conflicts.

5 Dubrow, in "Masquing of Genre," 71, sees Milton as reacting to a debased courtly pastoral which she implicitly associates with plays such as *The Faithful Shepherdess*, but these two particular pastoral dramas have more affinities than differences, as I will attempt to show.

6 For an example of this assessment, see Finkelpearl, 289 on what he finds to be the "simplistic" portrayal of chastity in *The Faithful Shepherdess*.

to the pastoral conversation, revising Fletcher's relatively autonomous female social structure.[7] Milton's heroine, the teenage Lady, goes out on a romance loop in a quest not to find a husband but to get back home again. She is safely re-ensconced in the domestic space at the conclusion of the masque, but her independent adventures have tested and refined her moral strength and independence.

Both Fletcher and Milton offer a good sampling of what we might call the trials of pastoral romance, as distinguishable from the trials of chivalric romance. Combat is of a rhetorical nature, while such violence as does occur is emotionally motivated, stylized, and one-directional: men hurt women. A mistaken interpretation of social conventions during courtship can mean disaster. Survival and triumph in a pastoral quest depend on patience, interpretive skill and internal fortitude. All of these elements we find in Sidney's *Arcadia* as well, in the experience of the princesses, or in Wroth's *Urania*. While there are exceptions (for example, Parthenia's death in the tournament outside Amphialus's castle), heroines in pastoral romance must suffer rather than do. That is not to say, however, that they lack power to control their environment. A mystical connection between feminine virtue and the natural world is implicit in Fletcher's and Milton's dramas.

THE GOLDEN AGE AND THE PASTORAL IDEAL OF THE ARISTOCRACY

There is in English Renaissance pastoral an emphasis on the role of the heroine as a mediator between nature and culture that seems to be one of the era's signal contributions to the evolution of the genre from classical to modern. Inextricably wrapped up in its specifically Renaissance manifestations is pastoral's status as an expression of gender ideology for the aristocracy. Fletcher's play, an initial failure, found its stride in the masque-loving, neoplatonist milieu of Queen Henrietta Maria's court. Milton's masque was conceived as an aristocratic entertainment for a noble family. In pageants, masques, and coterie poetry, pastoral was a principal language of court entertainments for at least seventy-five years. It is unlikely that Charles I and Henrietta Maria could have found the pastoral such a congenial ground for the expression of their idealized hermaphroditic identity "Carlomaria" without the courtly model provided by Elizabeth I, "Cynthia" and "Diana" to those participating in her Petrarchan rituals of obeisance. Pastoral was well and truly "feminized" in English Renaissance courtly circles. What passed as pastoral convention now had a chance to be defined by powerful women themselves. The language of pastoral became a reciprocal discourse for aristocratic men and women to

[7] McMullan regards *The Faithful Shepherdess* as an exercise in nostalgia for the reign of Elizabeth (*The Politics of Unease*, 70). Clorin's moral force and social prestige certainly support this reading.

articulate the values of their class. Elizabeth's deliberate cultivation of pastoral as an effective source of myths of authority and virtue for aristocratic women points to a revaluation of the mode that affects its use by subsequent early modern writers.

Renaissance theorists considered the *genera mista* of romance to be history in verse. Pastoral looks back, too, but to the general youth of humankind rather than the specific origins of a nation. Indeed, the three great Renaissance genres, epic, romance and pastoral, all grapple in their own ways with the meaning of history. Epic is proleptic, however, while pastoral has tended to be nostalgic. However, one sign of cross-pollination between epic, romance and pastoral romance is the latter's shifting of the Golden Age from a historically specific past to an alternate imaginative universe that is at the same time a proleptic ideal. In England, the idea of the Golden Age achieved a poignant significance in the seventeenth century as a result of the political upheaval of the Revolution. In literature the multivalent imaginative and political meanings of the Golden Age are explored by Herrick, for example, in his *Hesperides*.[8] The Golden Age as a setting, a standard or a promise also exists earlier in the *Arcadia* (as an excuse for the unusual skill and erudition of the shepherds); in *A Mask at Ludlow* (as the promise of a millennial future); and in *Upon Appleton House* (as a fragile and conditional state of being the estate has managed to achieve under the aegis of Maria Fairfax). In all these instances, the Golden Age is an aristocratic ideal of society in which the role of labor is obscured and everyone is educated, witty and leisured. The state of nature is a state of culture.

In the play's second printed edition of 1629, prefatory letters and poems by Fletcher's famous friends and contemporaries, Beaumont, Chapman, and Jonson, all touch on the reasons why the crowd in the public theaters was unable to respond well to Fletcher's plot and themes. The fault is with the audience. Beaumont notes that critical opinion of *The Faithful Shepherdess* can only improve upon publication because

> Your censurers must have the quallitie
> Of reading, which I am afraid is more
> Then halfe your shreudest judges had before.
> ("To my lov'd friend M. John Fletcher, on his Pastorall," ll. 44–6)

Thus Beaumont implies that the literary nature of Fletcher's play makes it too sophisticated for the London public-theater rabble. Chapman, in his satirical poem, emphasizes the dual status of Fletcher's work as both "a poeme and a play, " a paradox as ridiculous as "a scholler that's a Poet." He goes on to assert that "this iron age, that eats itself" will never fully accept Fletcher's pastoral

8 See Coiro, *Robert Herrick's* Hesperides *and the Epigram Book Tradition*. The garden of the Hesperides, she argues, is "an extended metaphor … for a disintegrating national dream" (8).

setting, which "renews the golden world."[9] In his own preface, Fletcher defends the decorum of his characters, insisting that he only follows pastoral tradition in making them well-spoken, as befits the "owners of flocks, and not hirelings." In Fletcher's text and Chapman's response to it, we see a clear association of the Golden Age with an ideal of aristocratic leisure. Chapman introduces the word "golden" into English pastoral criticism.[10] The courtly pastoral girl renews the Golden Age, if not materially then morally. She becomes an essential element in the reimagining of a better world, either past or future. The revolution makes this a particularly poignant project; the social world of the aristocrat must be reformed or abandoned altogether, and the principal agent of reformation is to be the gentlewoman.

Fletcher's source of inspiration was Guarini's original pastoral tragicomedy, *Il Pastor Fido* (published 1590). In his *Compendium of Tragicomic Poetry*, Guarini demonstrates an awareness of a relationship between generic hierarchies and social ones as he argues for the decorum of a well-spoken shepherd:

> … one must know that the ancient shepherds, in that first age the poets call golden, were not distinguished from persons of rank by the distinction which exists today between countrymen and citizens, since all were surely shepherds. … [B]ut they ruled themselves and he who was of most worth was governor. …[11]

In this vision of social organization, all men are alike in their function: they all do the same kind of work. The urban mentality of modernity, that is, the awareness of the difference between "citizen" and "countrymen," is absent. The only form of distinction among the people comes from intrinsic merit by which the better ones rise to leadership. Guarini's account of Golden Age society describes the political constitution of the ideal *locus amoenus*. Those who hold authority there hold it naturally, without deceit or coercion. They are natural aristocrats. Guarini's nostalgic ideal is a vision of a particular ideal of aristocracy. The prerogatives of the ruling class are based on original and self-evident virtue, "worth," that was recognized by all at some distant point in the past.[12] This worth is not manifested in any separate designated action, for example fighting, since everyone did the same thing. Instead, it is evident superiority at the same tasks that everyone else performs. The aristocrat is portrayed as the natural and original leader of society. Guarini's imagination of the pastoral beginnings of humankind is informed by a wish to present

9 George Chapman, "To his loving friend, Master John Fletcher, concerning his Pastoral, being both a Poem and a Play," in Florence Ada Kirk, ed., The Faithful Shepherdess *by John Fletcher: A Critical Edition*, 8–9.

10 Congleton, 46.

11 Guarini, *Compendium of Tragicomic Poetry*, tr. and ed. Gilbert, 530.

12 Whigham notes the "fruitful concept of prehistory" in Renaissance political thought, a concept lending itself to "an account of the origins of stratification … that was collective rather than factional and so was theoretically binding for future generations …" (83).

pastoral as a high-prestige genre, not as a lowly simple one. He attempts to raise its status by arguing for its noble social origins. Although he sweeps away social distinctions in his account, he does so not to raise the lower orders but to isolate the upper ones in a pure world of refined leisure and uncorrupted meritocracy. The shepherd is a king among men.[13]

Since specialized labor is unknown and unnecessary, and all time is leisure time, the division between private and public life, *otium* and *negotium*, is meaningless in the Golden Age pastoral ideal. In his discussion of "the golden-age courtier" of Renaissance courtesy theory, Frank Whigham notes the effect of what he calls the Elizabethan "fetish of recreation" that came to be an enduring feature of court life under the early Stuarts as well:

> [Courtiers] played because play was in fact work, play would take them to the top or keep them there; they knew that because their play would be taken seriously, they too must take it so. The scene of play has been eroded; privacy has become public, and productive.[14]

What Whigham describes is the application of georgic values to *otium*, a pastoral attribute. Even love itself, which humanists regarded as a frivolous passion, becomes an arena for play-as-work. Within the sphere of courtly *otium*, the spheres of men and women are not absolutely separated. Love-talk is the primary activity. However, even within this commonality of occupation is a division to which Renaissance pastoral draws attention in its portrayals of pastoral heroines. Love is the courtly man's play, but the courtly woman's work, her primary reason for being, since she is not permitted access to direct political power.[15] Her social cooperation and social skill ensure the continued survival of the Golden Age ideal. Sidney, Milton, and Marvell respond to these paradoxical definitions of Renaissance courtly *otium*. The association of pastoral with feminine work increases its points of contact with georgic; this is particularly the case in Marvell's construction of the figure of Maria, simultaneously pastoral and georgic. The seventeenth-century Golden Age becomes an alternative virtuous world toward which to strive, rather than an escape from responsibility. To borrow Harry Levin's pun, the true Edenist can no longer be a hedonist.[16] It is largely the emphasis on the pastoral heroine that is the means of this shift in ideas of the Golden Age.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, at the close of his study on kinship patterns world-

13 Congleton quotes Scalinger's defense of the decorum of including high-born, even royal, shepherds in pastoral fictions: "it was common enough practice among the ancients for the princes to be given charge of the herds; instance Paris and Ganymede." (*Select Translations from Scaliger's Poetics*, trans. and ed. Frederick Morgan Padelford, New York, 1905, p. 32, quoted in Congleton, 97.)

14 Whigham, 92. See *Ambition and Privilege*, 88–93 for a discussion of *otium* as *negotium* in courtesy literature.

15 Elizabeth I being the exception that proves the rule.

16 Levin, 135; he makes this comment regarding Adam and Eve.

wide, creates an inverse relationship between the exchange of women and the universal dream of a golden age. For him, the essence of the golden age is the recurring cultural fantasy of transcending the need for exchange,

> that fleeting moment when it was permissible to believe … that one could gain without losing, enjoy without sharing … [seeing] the bliss of the hereafter as a heaven where women will no longer be exchanged, i.e. removing to an equally unattainable past or future the joys, eternally denied to social man, of a world in which one might keep to oneself.[17]

The vision of the aristocratic *locus amoenus*, uncontaminated by the baser elements of the hierarchical society, a self-enclosed and self-referential little world of leisure in which courtship is play and nothing more, is an attempt to realize the conditions of Lévi-Strauss's Golden Age. The presence of free love as a staple of Italian Renaissance views, inherited and revised by English poets of the Golden Age, seems to bear out Lévi-Strauss's argument. Any reference to family claims, marriage and children is an implicit reference to the regime of exchange of women upon which civilization is based. Including the idea of marriage, as the English pastoralists do, in representations of the Golden Age is to subvert the very foundations of the Golden Age fantasy, in which there is no economy/*oeconomia* (household) at all. It is to introduce a georgic element into the formerly carefree realm of the pastoral. On the other hand, it is also to expand and enrich the moral significance of the Golden Age. The pastoral virgin enhances her exchange value by delaying its realization. She becomes a sign, not only of familial wealth, but of familial honor and virtue.

Honor for the Renaissance gentlewoman is defined in such a way that it is a sign of an awareness of the difference between the circumstances of nature and those of culture. In other words, feminine honor is not completely instinctive, as an inborn aristocratic trait, nor is it acquired completely through training or education. The code of female chastity was seen as a cultural imposition upon nature. In Tasso's pastoral drama *Aminta*, the first chorus recalls the sexual freedom of the Golden Age in terms that emphasize this perception:

> [Honour] was not then suffered to molest
> Poore lovers hearts with new debate;
> More happy they, by these his hard
> And cruell lawes, were not debar'd
> Their innate freedom; happy state;
> The goulden lawes of Nature, they
> Found in their brests; and then they did obey.[18]

The hard and cruel regulation of sexuality is the foundation of civilization. Female chastity is unnatural but necessary in a fallen world. What is inter-

17 Lévi-Strauss, 481.
18 Tasso, *Aminta English'd*, 70, ll. 20–26.

esting about female chastity in English pastoral fictions, however, is its metamorphosis from an unnatural imposition to a source of "innate freedom" for the girl herself. Initially imagined in pastoral as a burdensome restraint, female chastity is redefined as a quality capable of repairing the Golden Age mentality. It is a form of conditional otherworldliness that grants the romance virgin a dignity and power she would not otherwise possess. Perhaps its redefinition in English pastoral from a burden to a benefit reflects an underlying understanding that humankind cannot be, and never has been, an innocent animal frolicking in a natural paradise. The "goulden lawes of Nature" have never applied except in the realm of nostalgic imagination. Chastity did not spoil the Golden Age. On the contrary, it may indeed help to create it, but only as a product of effort, experience, and knowledge rather than original innocence.

In his own use of the courtly pastoral to examine the moral basis of the aristocracy, Milton also transforms it. *A Mask* is not a simple panegyric. It lends to the genre a sense of the difference between "hard" and "soft" pastoral that changes the way courtly pastoral is employed as a basis for commentary on the upper orders.[19] The soft Elizabethan pastoral of ease, exemplified by Sidney's Arcadian eclogues, is transformed into a tougher landscape in which the trials the Lady encounters allow her to prove herself a worthy daughter of her house. Pastoral as a trope for aristocratic leisure changes into pastoral as a trope for aristocratic work. In *A Mask*, it comes to occupy for the nobility a similar symbolic function to that of georgic, because pastoral becomes the setting in which strenuous *self*-cultivation is valued.[20] Milton played an important role in the seventeenth-century revival of georgic, defined as a mode of thought and value at least as much as a formal genre. Given his affinity for georgic, it is not surprising that he employs pastoral romance conventions in his masque in order to point out the limitations of the traditional models of aristocracy. The chivalric warrior who inhabits epic and romance and the elegant idler who

19 The distinction between "hard" and "soft" pastoral points in part to its depiction of rural life, whether that depiction is rough or idealized. Lovejoy and Boas 9–11 discuss the divergence of primitivism into "hard" and "soft" varieties, the first exemplified by the ideal of the "noble savage" in a rigorous, harsh environment, and the second exemplified by the leisured shepherds of the idyllic Golden Age. Courtly Elizabethan and Jacobean pastorals in general portrayed a decorative, pleasant and artful landscape as a backdrop for clean, literate "shepherds," in contrast to the harsher tone of classical Theocritan pastoral. Milton's masque does not by any means aspire to rural realism; however, by complicating and questioning courtly pastoral's status as a recreative or self-congratulatory mode for the aristocracy, he is closer to the "hard" model of pastoral than, say, the masques of Ben Jonson. Milton draws a clear distinction between the qualities of the "real" shepherds in *A Mask*, and courtly impersonators such as the Attendant Spirit and his opposite number, Comus.

20 Anthony Low, in accounting for the sixteenth-century scarcity of the georgic term in the Virgilian triad (Spenser, for example, goes directly from pastoral to epic at the opening of the *Faerie Queene*), ascribes it to "a fundamental contempt for labor" among the aristocracy. He sees "the georgic spirit" as diametrically opposed to "the courtly or aristocratic ideal" (*The Georgic Revolution*, 5). For Low's comment on the georgic elements within Milton's early non-georgic poetry, see 306–310.

inhabits Renaissance pastoral have their versions in *A Mask*, but become in the first case the inexperienced and boastful young brothers of the Lady, and in the second, Comus himself.

GUARINI, FLETCHER, AND THE ENGLISHING OF TRAGICOMEDY

Chastity is a commonplace theme in Renaissance tragicomedy. At the beginning of Battista Guarini's influential and oft-translated 1590 *Il Pastor Fido*, we learn that the history of Arcadia has been blasted by the actions of a faithless female who betrayed her faithful shepherd love. In response to the young man's prayers for revenge, the goddess Diana strikes the land with a plague that could be assuaged only by a blood sacrifice by the shepherd's own hand, either of the "faithless nymph" or a substitute. The shepherd kills himself, as once the avenger and the sacrifice, but fails to entirely mitigate the goddess's ire. As a result, the community is required to sacrifice a young woman "past fifteen/And short of twenty" every year until "two of Race Divine/ Love shall combine;/ And for a faithless Nymphs apostate state/ A faithful Shepherd supererogate" (I.ii.569–72).[21] With this romance oracle, Guarini establishes the importance of female adolescent chastity as the basis of the social order, and its violation as the source of societal chaos and decay. But what does it mean to be chaste? How can the laws of chastity be reconciled to human instinct within the idealized natural setting of pastoral?

These questions, implicit within this tragicomedy, fascinated English Renaissance writers and in large part motivated the enduring popularity of translations of Guarini's play in England. It is useful to trace a brief genealogy of ideas about chastity within English pastoral tragicomedy by looking at Fletcher's own reworking of Guarini's themes in his *Faithful Shepherdess*, a play that extends the theme of female chastity as the guarantor of social order but inflects it with a Spenserian English tone. Central to these pastoral dramas are ritual scenes in which chastity is invoked, defined and established, indeed, literally performed. What emerges from tracing this genealogy of female chastity in Renaissance pastoral drama is its status as an instrument of social control. Fletcher's portrayal of chastity has been seen as simplistic, but I would argue that Fletcher develops Guarini's reconciliation of chastity and love by offering a complex interpretation of female sexual virtue as a form of artful negotiation and ritual.[22] The "faithful shepherdess" of Fletcher's title, the wisewoman Clorin, "performs" chastity through rituals which anticipate Milton's masque. Feminine control over nature, rather than subordination to it, becomes the

21 All citations of *Il Pastor Fido* are from Staton and Simeone's edition of Sir Richard Fanshawe's 1647 English translation.

22 See Finkelpearl, 298 for an assessment of the play as simplistic. Pearse (*John Fletcher's Chastity Plays*) has argued that chastity is a passive virtue, so that Renaissance attempts to dramatize it easily appear absurd (147).

necessary precondition for sexual virtue in English Arcadian pastoral. In the process, feminine sexual virtue is demonstrated as self-control in an environment of relative license. The pastoral *locus amoenus* provides female characters with an unchaperoned freedom of movement that the female members of the urban and courtly audience most assuredly did not have in reality. The imagined country freedoms of fictional shepherds and shepherdesses allow Guarini, Fletcher, and Milton to explore a theoretical concept of female chastity not defined by restriction and segregation, but rather by testing and ritual. *The Faithful Shepherdess* contains several chastity rites that, through their nature, suggest that feminine sexual virtue is not merely a violable physical state nor solely a matter of community reputation.

By entitling his own pastoral tragicomedy as he did, Fletcher invites comparison to Guarini, despite the fact that there are certainly few direct parallels in plot and character between the two plays. Was Fletcher simply adopting a popular Italian genre and attempting to legitimate his own attempt by punning on the title of the best-known exemplar in England at the time, or did he respond to and transform Guarini's themes? Fletcher chooses Guarini as a model perhaps because of Guarini's own response to an influential literary model: Torquato Tasso's *Aminta* (1589). Working within the same genre of pastoral tragicomedy, Guarini revises Tasso's evalution of sex in nature and culture. Instead of opposing love and chastity as irreconcilable opposites, as Tasso does (most famously in his prefatory speech in which the Golden Age is imagined as a time of innocent sexual license), Guarini makes chastity itself a necessary precondition of love. Without chastity, there can be no fidelity. Without fidelity, there can be no love. Guarini's account of the plague curse on Arcadia is a pagan, pastoral version of original sexual sin: the faithless woman destroys the aptly named Aminta, in a nod to Tasso's hero. The redemption of the Arcadian world must come through a compensatory marriage; the legal and religious restrictions on sexuality are literally the health of the village. Guarini, as we see, revises Tasso's Golden Age nostalgia for innocent sexual freedom and elevates restraint over freedom, chastity over appetite. Guarini's masque reforms the moral implications of the pastoral genre, a reformation fully developed by English pastoral dramatists.

There are obvious points of connection between Tasso's *Aminta* and Milton's *Mask*.[23] As pastoral dramas, they partake of several superficial similarities: the pastoral names borrowed from Virgil, the chastity test, the river deities and mythological references, and the rituals of reconciliation are but a few. Milton's thematic treatment of chastity, however, is far more congenial with Fletcher's and Guarini's, which suggests that Tasso's influence on the Ludlow masque is mediated through these other texts. Robert Entzminger has characterized Tasso's attitude toward chastity as negative, but English pastoral dramatists

[23] Some of these similarities have been elucidated by Cook, who in particular notes how Tasso anticipates Milton's "creative fusion of masque and pastoral drama" (130).

tend to celebrate and elevate this virtue.[24] Furthermore, both Fletcher and Milton contribute to the development of a distinct feminine pastoral persona, that of the chaste female prophet with a unique and powerful control over the operations of nature.

Guarini's portrayal of faithful chastity as the health of the community is consistent with Fletcher's views in *The Faithful Shepherdess*. However, where Guarini sees chastity as an inherited inclination rewarded by fate, Fletcher sees it as a deliberate choice influenced by thought and reflection.[25] Fletcher employs the language of plague and contagion, established by Guarini, to communicate the threat of unlicensed lust. Fletcher's dedication of his play to Sir Walter Aston mentions the plague in London, which shut down the theaters frequently between 1606–10. Fletcher's heroine, Clorin, is a nature healer and wisewoman who uses a homeopathic approach to the physical and spiritual restoration of her wounded fellows. In short, the cure for lust requires one to be exposed to it. Fletcher's concept of sexual honor is fully consistent with his English model Spenser's emphasis on the importance of testing to all forms of human virtue, even female chastity, in *The Faerie Queene*: exposure and temptation refine and temper inner virtue.[26] The rituals of chastity over which Clorin presides simultaneously call into being what they celebrate. They offer a second chance for characters to choose chastity as an active virtue.

It has long been recognized that seventeenth-century English dramatists reflected ritual-steeped folk culture in their own works. For example, pre-modern nature rites concerning the change of seasons, agriculture, and fertility are a persistent subtext in Shakespeare. Pastoral tragicomedy, set in an idealized natural world, shares this concern with fertility and sterility, in nature and in human beings. The courtly pastoral of Fletcher is a particularly artificial and self-conscious transformation of the fertility theme. In an evolving social world of increasing complexity, security, and individual autonomy, physical survival is no longer the primary concern of an urban, relatively wealthy audience. Rather than attempting to reflect the realities of rural life, Renaissance writers use the pastoral *locus amoenus* as a stage in which to present social conflicts likely to occur in evolving courtly and domestic situations. In other words, the evocation of fertility becomes less important that the management of fertility. For this reason, it is fitting that chastity replaces fertility as the object of ritual in the pastoral drama. Ritual is a repetitive enactment of a process designed to evoke a desired state of being. In *The Faithful Shepherdess*, Fletcher offers us examples of sacrifice, scapegoating and testing designed to prove and establish chastity above fertility, as the basis of a healthy society. Milton's masque addresses the issue of fertility by means of its debate between the Lady and Comus about the proper disposition of Nature's bounty

24 See Entzminger, "Tasso's *Aminta* and Milton's *Comus*," 472.
25 Yoch, "The Renaissance Dramatization of Temperance,"131.
26 Bliss, "Defending Fletcher's Shepherds," 302.

(including female beauty and sexuality). The maintenance of the pastoral *locus amoenus* now depends on the temperate and judicious use of its resources, and both Fletcher and Milton articulate the need for temperance through the voice of their pastoral heroines.

FLETCHER'S PASTORAL HEROINE: CLORIN

Clorin herself maintains a celibate life in tribute to her dead lover, "the truest man that ever fed his flock" (I.ii.2).[27] She resembles a pagan nun, married to a spirit.[28] By adopting his fidelity as her own signature characteristic, she accomplishes the gender translation from faithful shepherd to shepherdess. Clorin is also a kind of white witch. Her control over nature, her herbal remedies, and her forest isolation away from the pastoral community reflect the characteristics of sixteenth-century descriptions of *benandanti*, described in inquisition records as good witches who participate in rural fertility rites.[29] Significantly, however, Clorin presides not over fertility rituals but rather chastity rituals:

> In men or cattell, be they stung with snakes,
> Or charmd with powerful words of wicked art,
> Or be they love-sicke, or through too much heat
> Grown wilde or lunaticke, ther eies or eares
> Thickned with misty filme of dulling rume;
> These I can cure, such secret virtue lies
> In hearbs applied by a virgin's hand. (I.i.134–40)

Clorin combines the roles of veterinarian, healer, and psychologist within the pastoral community. Even her floral name reinforces her identity, as her use of medicinal herbs to restore physical and moral health informs Milton's masque, with its magical haemony. Clorin's skills as a healer elevate her in the play's moral hierarchy even above the priest of Pan himself, who takes her advice and abides by her judgments. In the social world of the play, she has the ability to define what chastity is, and to declare who does and does not live up to that standard. In Clorin, Fletcher supplants Guarini's character of Montano, the chief priest of Arcadia who is responsible for enforcing the terms of the oracle. Montano's role in Arcadia is instrumental in ensuring the regime of chastity; but Clorin's role is as a humanized Diana who rehabilitates rather than punishes. Clorin herself emphasizes her mortality and humanity ("Sure I am mortall, /The Daughter of a shepherd … pricke my hand/And it will bleed; a feaver shakes me", I.i.105–8). By pointing to her fleshly weakness,

27 All citations of *The Faithful Shepherdess* are from Kirk's 1980 critical edition.

28 Bliss (301) makes a similar point.

29 See Woodbridge and Berry, *True Rites and Maimed Rites*, 6 for a description of the *benandanti*.

she identifies herself with the human community in which she lives. She is not a goddess, nor is her code of chastity beyond the reach of other mortals. Lee Bliss has compared Clorin to Spenser's Belphoebe, who uses herbs to cure the squire Timias's wounds.[30] Similarly, Belphoebe is dedicated to a life of virginity. However, Belphoebe, raised by Diana herself, is also half-divine, while Fletcher firmly establishes Clorin's humanity. Her dedication to chastity is not an inherited attribute but a conscious commitment that gives her social and moral authority:

> Sure there is a power
> In that great name of virgin, that bindes fast
> All rude uncivill bloods, all appetites
> That breake their confines: then, strong chastity,
> Be thou my strongest guarde, for here I'll dwell,
> In opposition against Fate and Hell. (I.i.124–8)

In these lines, Clorin makes the the relationship between chastity and the social order quite explicit: the virgin's "name" civilizes "rude … blood" and encourages temperance in tastes and habits. This version of chastity, like Milton's in *A Mask*, is not a hermit's virtue cultivated in isolation from the world. Although Clorin lives alone, she serves the community's welfare by purging its wayward members of socially disruptive and morally impure appetites. As the conscience of the pastoral community, she performs the tasks of domestic maintenance necessary to the *locus amoenus*, following the contemporary model of the good housewife with her skill in herbal remedy.[31] She also restores her fellows' reputations, their "names" for virtue; the honor of the virtuous woman has talismanic value. In Milton's *Mask*, the Lady evidences a similar faith in the dual power of virginity to bridle "uncivil bloods" and defend virtue assailed. She alludes to the "Sun-clad power of Chastity" (l. 782) and the "sage and serious doctrine of Virginity" (l. 787) as defenses against both Comus's libertine world view and his designs to corrupt the freedom of her mind.

In a departure from his model, Fletcher has little interest in the romance convention of the oracle representing the force of fate. In *Il Pastor Fido*, the plague of infidelity finds its remedy through precisely the kind of fated twist that Clorin abjures. Montano believes that his son Silvio, descended from Hercules, must wed Amaryllis, a descendant of Pan, in order to fulfill the oracle, but Amaryllis is in love with newcomer Mirtillo. As it turns out, Mirtillo is a romance foundling who turns out to be Montano's long-lost son. He can marry his beloved and still fulfill the conditions of the oracle. Mirtillo is the faithful shepherd of the title, who pursues his love of Amaryllis despite

30 Bliss, 309.

31 Gervase Markham, in his 1615 treatise *The English Hus-wife*, identifies the principal virtue of the domestic woman to be "the preservation and care of the family, touching their health and soundness of body…" To that end, she is to understand "wholesome receipts or medicines for the good of their healths" (cited in Orlin, 109).

its hopeless nature and offers to be sacrificed in her stead when her honor is falsely slandered. All in all, Guarini's plot confirms erotic instinct as fate: in one titillating episode, Mirtillo, disguised as a woman, is kissed by Amaryllis as part of a lighthearted contest among girls to see whose kiss is "best and sav'rest" (II.i.1255–95). She judges his kiss the best and awards him the wreath, not consciously realizing his true identity but confirming through her choice the instinctual basis of the attraction between them. Their ultimate union in marriage is accomplished not through their own efforts or decisions, but rather by forces larger than themselves. Despite Guarini's defense of chaste fidelity as the basis of society, it seems a matter of fate who achieves it and who does not. Characters such as the passionate shepherdess Corisca ("the burning one") have constitutional tendencies toward lust that cannot be surmounted by will. In contrast, Fletcher offers characters such as the sexually frustrated Cloe, whose humorous line, "It is impossible to ravish me, I am so willing" (III. i.212–13) at least suggests the importance of will and choice in sexual morality. Fletcher's central pair of young lovers, Perigot and Amoret, have their relationship tested by deceit and violence. Amoret's incredible fidelity, even in the face of repeated physical violence, and Perigot's eventual remorse are said to strengthen their love beyond its innocent beginnings. Similarly, Milton's *Mask* emphasizes human will and discipline over fate and accident.

The title of *The Faithful Shepherdess* refers not only to Clorin, then, but also to Amoret. These women are the true self-sacrificing heroines of chastity in Fletcher's piece. Each is, in Cooper's terms, a "calumniated woman." Each displays fidelity and constancy to a lover who either cannot reciprocate, as in the case of Clorin's dead beloved, or who does not deserve such love, as in the case of Perigot, Amoret's murderous swain. Amoret plays the role of ritual scapegoat within the drama. She is an innocent sacrifice whose blood literally stains the hands of her misguided lover, who is so convinced by the appearance of her unchastity that he stabs her in the chest, not once, but on two separate occasions (the open, bloody wound in Amoret's chest of course recalls her literary namesake, Spenser's Amoret, whose breast is opened by Busirane's steel pen). Perigot's senses have been deceived because he has been tricked by Amarillis, a scheming shepherdess who immerses herself in a magic well and adopts Amoret's shape in order to seduce Perigot. The easy interchangeability of bodies suggests that chastity does not inhere in physical form, but is instead an internal essence. Amoret inherits from her Spenserian original a legacy of abuse and misperception at the hands of a man.

The Faithful Shepherdess opens and closes with ritual. At the beginning, Perigot and Amoret have already plighted their troth to each other through the exchange of gifts and promises. With other couples, they are blessed by the priest of Pan in a morning rite exhorting them to remain chaste even as they enjoy each other's virtuous company. They seem well able to maintain a chaste love; but events prove that their good intentions are no match for the machinations of other, less virtuous characters. Perigot's disproportionately violent

reaction to the sexual advances of Amoret's false double betrays a displacement of guilt onto the woman. He seeks to place all the blame for lustful contamination of their relationship onto her.[32] Instead of simply shunning her, he feels impelled to destroy her, proclaiming, "This steele shall pierce thy lustfull hart" (III.ii.83). As is the case with Spenser's Amoret, this chest wound is a form of symbolic defloration. When the dying shepherdess is found by Sullen, her rival Amarillis's co-conspirator, and thrown into a spring, the God of the River recognizes what has happened: " 'Tis a female young and cleare, /Cast in by some Ravisher" (III.ii.143–4). Perigot destroys what he values, true chastity, in the name of saving it. Fortunately, the River God is able to heal Amoret's wound by dropping a "pearl" of pure water into her exposed heart. Amoret regains a bodily integrity to match her moral integrity. Perigot realizes the graveness of his murderous acts when Amoret's blood refuses to wash off his hands. The parallel with Pontius Pilate reinforces Amoret's identity as an innocent scapegoat for the sins of someone else. Amoret's bloody ordeal not only establishes beyond doubt her own loyalty and virtue, but it also plays a role in reforming her persecutor. A remorseful Perigot, believing that Amoret is dead, dedicates himself to preserving and honoring his dead beloved's memory in sylvan isolation, as a male version of Clorin (V.iv.21–4). He adopts Amoret's fidelity and reciprocates it.

Fletcher's play, like Milton's masque, repeatedly emphasizes the deceptive nature of external appearances. Social reputation itself is one of these deceptions. Time and again in this tragicomedy, the division between appearance and reality confirms that true chastity is not dependent upon external validation and recognition. In order to cure the shepherd Thenot of his unproductive passion for her, Clorin allows him to think her unchaste, even though she remains as emotionally faithful as ever to the memory of her dead lover. In a good example of her homeopathic method, she treats his passion by offering him an overdose of what he desires. Thenot fetishizes chastity itself, loving Clorin not for her intrinsic qualities but because he allegorizes her as the personification of chastity. His inability to understand or respect her humanity, a quality always emphasized in Fletcher's drama, leads to a self-absorbed, immature, and sterile passion. Were Clorin to acknowledge Thenot's love, she would immediately be unworthy of it. This paradoxical absurdity makes Thenot the equivalent of Spenser's Marinell, the exemplar of barren celibacy who hasn't quite grown up and come to terms with the realities of mature love.

Chastity is easy to define, but for a quality whose positive value is asserted

32 In her discussion of the "calumniated woman" romance meme, Helen Cooper has pointed out its frequent role in reflecting and critiquing male misogyny in English romance narratives (270). Fletcher's vigorous adoption of this meme may also reflect his "Englishing" of his Italian antecedents, as, according to Cooper, it is vastly more evident in English narratives than in Continental ones (Cooper, 274).

as self-evident, it is remarkably difficult to recognize.[33] Even Clorin is fooled; after Perigot wounds Amoret a second time, Clorin's faithful Satyr brings the unfortunate girl to the wisewoman for a cure. When Clorin's herbs, applied directly to the wound, fall off, Clorin takes it as a sign that Amoret is "not sound, /Full of lust" (V.ii.40–1). In fact, the surrounding air is corrupted by the hidden presence of Cloe hiding in a tree. The humorous misunderstanding is resolved, but the scene underscores the unreliability of appearances and the contagious nature of sexual impurity. Joseph Loewenstein, in his study of pastoral's modal transformations in the Renaissance, sees Battista Guarini's pastoral tragicomedy as "a publication of the private, a dramatization of lyric."[34] The Renaissance marks a moment in the history of pastoral where a hitherto lyric mode moves into dramatic representation. The dramatic possibilities of pastoral are particularly well suited to the dramatization of the invisible: the substance and operation of female virtue. Milton's pastoralism in *A Mask* is generically appropriate to his subject matter of virginity; it assists him in representing a quality best understood in the negative effects of its absence.[35] The tragicomedies of Guarini and Fletcher abound in violence, some of which is disturbingly sexual. The lack of nudity and bloodshed in Milton's drama is a concession to the participation of the Egerton children, but the threats evoked by Comus are identical in nature to those in Guarini and Fletcher.

Clorin offers different cures in different circumstances. However, there are some similarities in her chastity cures. Water and fire cleanse and purify. The "foule infection" (V.v.90) of lust pollutes the Arcadian landscape as well as the mind. Some of Clorin's purification rituals, namely the confessions, the distribution of incense, and sprinkling of holy water, recall Catholic ritual.[36] It is important, however, that all of these externals would be pointless without a sincere desire on the part of the impure characters to change. All those who are reformed begin with a self-recognition of their fault. Perigot realizes his own culpability before he seeks to be absolved. Similarly, Amarillis, who is responsible for the destruction of Perigot's love and who has promised to give her body to the Sullen Shepherd for helping her accomplish it, changes her mind of her own accord and vows to live a different life. The external validation of their conversions (Perigot's successful washing after Amoret forgives him, Amarillis' ability to place her finger in a flame without flinching) reflect a prior internal reformation. The rites of chastity over which Clorin presides

33 Finkelpearl ("John Fletcher as Spenserian Playwright") contrasts Fletcher's consistent unquestioning support of chastity with Milton's inclusion of a differing point of view in the introduction of *Comus*. However, Fletcher's play dramatizes the difficulty of isolating, maintaining or identifying chastity properly, saving it (in my view) from charges of dogmatism.

34 Loewenstein, "Guarini and the Presence of Genre," 42–43.

35 Schwarz in "Chastity, Militant and Married" notes the problematic nature of chastity when it must "perform itself as true" (271), because it is not a straightforward attribute but an attitude and a practice.

36 Yoch, 130.

do not so much create as confirm what they evoke. Fletcher's denouement replaces the cruel sacrificial ethic of Guarini's pastoral with a gentler spirit of rehabilitation. Even Cloe changes her ways. The only character who remains outside the reformed pastoral circle at the play's end is Sullen, who refuses to be a part of the Arcadian community. Sexual immorality is antisocial, but its punishment is self-imposed. As in Milton's masque, chastity becomes a metonymic virtue that reflects and involves associated personal and societal goods: it is the basis of a just social order.

Far from being simplistic in its treatment of chastity, *The Faithful Shepherdess* refutes the traditional association of women with looseness and sexual appetite, but neither does it refuse to entertain the possibility of female sexual depravity. Not all women are chaste in the play: the nymphomaniac Cloe presents a comedic foil to Clorin, for example. Nevertheless, the reformed Amarillis's conversion to the cause of chastity shows that absolutely no one is beyond redemption. The outcome of the chastity trials proves the reflexive misogyny of Thenot ("thou art of womens race and full of guilt," IV.vi.78), Perigot ("Men ever were most blessed, till Crosse fate/ Brought love, and woemen forth, unfortunate", IV.iv.67–9), and Sullen to be both spiritually delusional and socially destructive.

A particularly important rite of chastity in this drama is the taper test. To prove one's purity, one must touch a hand to a flame held by Clorin's faithful Satyr. The use of the taper as an antidote to lust reflects Clorin's own medical language. As she tells Alexis, another shepherd afflicted with love, "… thou canst not possible take rest,/ Till thou hast laye asyde all heates, desires,/ Provoking thoughts, that stir up lusty fiers" (IV.ii.106–8). Purgation is the underlying mechanism here; Clorin fires out impurities by exposing her patients to what afflicts them. The taper rite follows the same homeopathic logic as Clorin's decision to cure Thenot of his passion for her by reciprocating it. In each case, the development of spiritual health is the result of exposure to the agent of infection. Fletcher, like Spenser, emphasizes the importance of trial and experience in the evolution of true chastity. To be chaste is a willed choice in the face of alternatives, not a state of prior purity to be maintained without contact with the flawed and sinful world. This definition of chastity as an active achievement rather than a passive state also informs Milton's Ludlow masque. Pastoral romance becomes a vehicle for the elaboration of a new understanding of female chastity.

Clorin calls on her loyal assistant, the Satyr, to perform the taper rite on a repentant Amarillis:

> … Goe, Satire, goe,
> And with this taper boldly try her hand.
> If she be pure and good, and firmely stand
> To be so still, we have performed a woorke
> Worthy the gods themselves. (V.v.139–43)

This passage is of interest because it raises the question of agency. Who, exactly, is included in Clorin's "we"? What, precisely, has been "performed"? Clorin herself has not made Amarillis chaste; but she has just provided the theatrical evidence of *a priori* chastity in front of the Arcadian audience of onlookers, including the Priest of Pan. Clorin's "we" includes herself, her Satyr, and, logically, Amarillis. The work performed here is the public probation of an internal reformation, a version of sacred theatrics reintegrating Amarillis back into a virtuous pastoral community ("Yonge shepherdesse, now ye are brought againe/ To virgin state, be so, and so remaine …", V.v.56–7). This formulation of the "virgin state" implies that virginity, once lost, is not irrevocably so. From dismissing her own gender during her attempted seduction of Perigot ("Still thinkst thou such a thinge as Chastitie/ Is amongst Woemen?", III.ii.65–6) to embodying the quality whose existence she earlier denied, Amarillis's conversion is a redefinition of self. The symbolic repair of her virginity parallels the operation of baptism, in which the willing recipient is symbolically cleansed of sin. In Fletcher's scene, the priest of Pan, analogous perhaps to Milton's Attendant Spirit, blesses and cooperates with this performance of true virginity, but does not control or initiate it. Clorin runs the show.

Milton's characterization of his teenage heroine, the Lady, owes much to Fletcher's figure of Clorin in several ways. Although Clorin has a romantic past and the Lady only a vaguely adumbrated erotic future, they both are lone female figures whose chastity is as a shield against rape and the social contagion of unlawful lust. Both rely on the inner resources of a willed chastity as a kind of physical and moral shield within a wild landscape. Fletcher also bequeaths to Milton the idea that true chastity and a chaste reputation may actually conflict. The Ludlow masque remains the object of controversial interpretation, and its elevation of chastity as a virtue on the same level as Christian love strikes many readers as reflecting a cramped and prudish ethic.[37] However, if we view the Ludlow masque as a continuation of the theme, initiated by Guarini and developed by Fletcher, of chastity as the foundation of civilized social order, then the Lady's substitution of Chastity for Charity in her evocation of the Pauline triad of spiritual virtues (*A Mask*, ll. 213–15) is both thematically and generically appropriate. Both Fletcher and Milton define feminine chastity as an autonomous, self-controlling code of behavior that does not mistake external appearance for internal essence.

[37] In *A Mask*, ll. 213–15, the Lady famously substitutes the word "chastity" for "charity" as the ultimate term in the Pauline triad of spiritual gifts. Kendrick notices this elevation and comments on how it apparently narrows the scope of human virtue (62). Hunter finds Milton's treatment of chastity "shallow and embarrassing" (2).

MILTON'S LADY AND THE REFORM OF PASTORAL

In the Lady's elision of chastity and charity, Milton attempts to reconcile archaic notions of aristocratic honor with emerging concepts of the isolated patriarchal nuclear family. This emerging notion of family stands in contrast to the feudal organization based on the continuity of the noble line, defined not as a nuclear unit but as an extended clan. In *A Mask*, the Egertons represent an ideal noble family at least in part because they are also an ideal nuclear family. The occasion of the masque, the accession of the Earl of Bridgewater to the Lord Presidency of Wales, is celebrated by a tale of familial threat and reunification centering on the adventures of the Lady, played by fifteen-year-old Lady Alice Egerton. Along with her brothers, Lord Brackley and Thomas Egerton, she acts a part that is not really a part.[38] She is herself. Milton's presentation of the young actors in the masque accords with the printed title's insistence on historicity. The aristocratic children play aristocratic children, and the threats they face are elaborate versions of the age-old threat to the integrity of aristocratic identity: the threat to female chastity.

The destructive temptations threatening the aristocracy are sexualized specifically as threats to daughters. The enemy is not only without but within: Comus, in his libertine philosophy and false Arcadianism, represents the direction in which the aristocracy has been leaning and must not go. Possibly the subject of the masque does allude, however indirectly, to the Castlehaven scandal as a negative exemplum of aristocratic behavior in stark contrast to the admirable Egertons.[39] More important for my purpose, however, is the role of the Lady not as a recipient or conduit of family honor but also as a source of it.

A MASK AND THE REFORM OF COURTLY PASTORAL

The masque's participation in pastoral is complex and ambiguous.[40] It tries the moral discrimination of the audience in many ways, and pastoral is one more field in which it does so. The description of the Ludlow wood itself is a revealing example of the way in which the perspective of the masque wavers

38 Tuve points this out in her discussion of the masque's "double reality" in "Image, Form and Theme in *A Mask*," 130–31. Orgel also sees *A Mask* as "a production wherein, when the lords and ladies became masquers, the real world became indistinguishable from the world of the masque …" (102).

39 See Breasted, "*Comus* and the Castlehaven Scandal," and Mundhenk, "Dark Scandal and the Sun-Clad Power of Chastity: The Historical Milieu of Milton's *Comus*." For a challenge to the idea that the masque is a response to the Castlehaven scandal, see Creaser, "Milton's *Comus*: The Irrelevance of the Castlehaven Scandal."

40 Chaudhuri in *Renaissance Pastoral and its English Developments* identifies in Milton's work a continuous critique of pastoral while at the same time contending that pastoral itself is not one of his main concerns (406). I agree with the first observation, but not the second.

between pastoral and anti-pastoral.[41] Unlike several court masques which employ mythological pastoral settings, *A Mask* is specifically located in the Welsh border region. As a pastoral *locus amoenus*, the site is an odd one. Clearly the area was thought of as wild and somewhat hazardous. In making the pastoral topos literal and specific, Milton rejects the idealized pastoral landscape so often employed in other Caroline masques. There is no conventional and absolute distinction between the *locus amoenus* and the hostile wilderness, only potential differences in perception and interpretation. The *locus* inhabited by the romance virgin in pastoral is separated from the rest of the world by a wall or boundary; in *A Mask*, however, the breach and repair of that protective wall is a verbal act of social recognition only. The Lady's purity is not ensured by a protective garden or an enclosed pastoral preserve. The protective enclosure must be imagined in spiritual and social, rather than concrete, terms; in other words, a revised and reformed image of the *locus amoenus*.

The Attendant Spirit suggests the ambiguous nature of the masque's setting as he makes the brothers aware of the threat Comus poses:

> Within the navel of this hideous Wood,
> Immur'd in cypress shades, a Sorcerer dwells,
> …
> … this I have learnt
> Tending my flocks hard by i'th' hilly crofts
> That brow this bottom glade … (ll. 520–1, 531–2)[42]

The topography of this passage signifies the relative moral positions of the Attendant Spirit and Comus, but it is still the same landscape. The true pastoral activity of the one and the false pastoral revelry of the other exist "hard by." Comus and the Attendant Spirit pursue their opposite ends in the same physical space. This fact suggests that the construction of a virtuous pastoral space is a willful act of interpretation, rather than either a physical isolation from worldly temptations or a hedonistic withdrawal from worldly responsibilities.

A Mask presents a revealing example of the potential paradoxes demanded by genre decorum. In Milton's imagination of the woods surrounding Ludlow Castle, true pastoral becomes a setting less for *otium* than for the difficult but virtuous labor of moral perception, and that labor is the task of a young girl. Placed within pastoral by the demands of her class and sex, the pastoral virgin of whom the Lady is a type nevertheless has a georgic role that comes to be most fully elaborated later on in Marvell's poems. Georgic convention, unlike pastoral, does not permit the portrayal of upper-class women because they

41 Ettin believes that Milton's concept of pastoral is as a neutral space, "inherently … neither good nor bad but can be made the embodiment of our conceptions of goodness and evil" (*Literature and the Pastoral*, 172). This may be partially true of *A Mask*, but Milton's use of pastoral to illustrate Eden in *Paradise Lost*, for example, indicates that it is not always neutral for him.

42 All citations of *A Mask at Ludlow* are from Hughes' 1957 edition.

are structurally excluded from georgic activities. This is a simple point, but it partially accounts for what Anthony Low sees as the unfortunate erasure of georgic from late sixteenth-century courtly poetry, a corpus aimed largely at the sensibilities of a feminine courtly milieu.[43] The incipient bourgeois division of labor by gender and the effective segregation of women within the private home obscure the work women actually do and allow their use as symbols of leisure. The identification of aristocratic women with leisure, however, predates the flowering of bourgeois domestic ideology which enshrined it. The courtly lady is barred from manual labor by a double taboo: class and sex. An aristocrat as gentleman farmer is conceivable by the mid-seventeenth century, but the pastoral fruit-and-flower imagery is retained in order to describe his female relatives. Georgic is a "masculine" and non-aristocratic genre that is also incompatible with cultural ideals of the feminine. Milton's choice of pastoral for the Ludlow masque was overdetermined in part by the need to celebrate a daughter of a great house; but Milton's georgic values are evident in his representation of the Egerton children, "fair branches," "nurs't in Princely lore" by their attentive parents (ll. 969, 34). The Egerton family illustrates the georgic aspect of successful dynasty-building, even if decorum demands that their cultivating effort be shown in a pastoral setting. *A Mask* implies a model for the aristocratic, patriarchal family in which the maintenance of the family's honor and position requires continuous effort and vigilance. Such effort, however, is to be directed toward neither martial conquest nor elegant self-presentation, the two traditional modes of aristocratic behavior that Milton's masque downplays. The plot gestures toward a different concept of what "labor" now means for the erstwhile fighting class.

A Mask plays off rival versions of pastoral convention, Christian and secular, courtly and primitive. Comus and his masquers furnish the illusion of pastoral perfection through art, the sorcerer's charms. The forest through which the children travel, however, is savage and gloomy. The attainment of the castle at Ludlow is the attainment of safety and civilization. While it could be argued that the provincial and distant Ludlow is itself a pastoral site, it is also the origin of local law and government. The Earl's seat is not a space for free play beyond the constraints of urban public life. In this regard, is not the typical *locus amoenus* of Renaissance pastoral. The Attendant Spirit himself introduces the Egerton children as courtly dancers, not rural travelers. Although this may at first seem to contradict the anti-courtly tone of the masque, the Attendant Spirit employs the term "courtly" in its reformed sense: the court of just authority and loyal retainers exemplified by the Ludlow seat. Comus represents the potential corruption of the aristocracy; the Egerton family, its potential regeneration. Milton's masque portrays a conflict between two different types of courtship, exemplified by two different kinds of aristocrat.

Although *A Mask* certainly demonstrates characteristics typical of the

[43] Low, 28.

Caroline masque in its Neoplatonic language, supernatural machinery, and pastoralism, some of its elements recall chivalric romance archetypes. The "perplex't paths of this drear Wood" (37) in which most of the masque takes place is the same wood of error, or wandering, found in *The Faerie Queene* or the *Inferno*.[44] It recalls the forest waste through which Gawain, on his way to a chastity test, meandered in search of the Green Knight. The Lady is on a quest or pilgrimage of her own: she seeks to recover the security of her father's house. Furthermore, she is solitary. By accident, she has been separated from her two brothers, so she faces her quest and temptation ordeal alone. In the absence of her brothers, would-be knights, she is forced to defend her own virtue. The masque emphasizes the notion of wandering: even the Attendant Spirit is on an "errand" (15) in the sense that he too is exiled from his home and must accomplish his own quest, to deliver the children safely. The definition of honor is the definition of nobility; the testing and development of honor proves that the hero is worthy to belong to his class and enhance its prerogatives. Some romances of Chrétien (*Erec and Enide*) and almost all the Middle English romances (*King Horn, Havelok*, and *Guy of Warwick*, for example) are tales about the founding and maintenance of families. Marriage enhances the romance hero's social standing, but often the integrity of the family is threatened by hostile pagan foes or jealous political rivals. The family is scattered and eventually reunited in a reaffirmation of familial solidarity and power. *A Mask* offers its own modest version of this archetypal narrative pattern, beginning with a fragmented family and ending with a united one. In this case, however, it is the heroic effort of a young woman, rather than a young knight, which preserves the family unit. The brothers enact the traditional role of the chivalric champion; they attempt to defend a lady's chastity. In the *Apology*, Milton acknowledges how the efforts of knights in romance to defend chastity kindled in him a respect for the quality that was worth so much pain and risk. Yet in his own version of romance, the chivalric efforts on behalf of the lady fail. The boys have honorable intentions but cannot execute them.

Milton's masque seeks to recuperate and reform the role of the noblewoman in order to combat the idle ideal propounded by Comus, who tempts the Lady to accept his perception of life as an endless and pointless succession of "courts, at feasts, and high solemnities" (746). Attendance at these events, for him, constitutes all there is to the work of the aristocrat. The noblewoman, without the work of the family, has a role approximating that of a courtesan, valued for her beauty and not her work. The freedom Comus offers is the freedom accorded to the superfluous person. Appearance is everything; there is no fundamental link between inner and outward selves, between reality and appearance. In Comus's debased version of courtliness, role-playing is all. By making him the representative of the cynical view that public knowledge creates wrongdoing rather than simply demonstrating it, Milton places in Comus's

[44] Lewalski, "Milton," 60.

mouth the strictly pragmatic view of virtue, the notion of sexual restraint as a social convenience.[45] Thus Comus reduces chastity to the status of a form, a convention of behavior rather than a principled commitment. Milton, on the other hand, re-imagines the aristocratic family as a superior bourgeois family.[46] The work of the noblewoman is less to administer a material microcosm of the social order than to serve as the spiritual conscience of her own family. The honor of the line, formerly evinced in public martial deeds, is domesticated as personal morality within a rural *locus amoenus*. The Lady herself is the defender of conscience. She speaks from a tradition of *noblesse oblige*, but the mode in which that tradition is demonstrated shifts from largesse to temperance.

Donald Friedman has argued that Comus tests the audience's powers of moral discrimination.[47] The test of discrimination even applies to the characters within the masque. Before the Lady even appears, Comus senses her chastity. He is aware that a virgin approaches "for so I can distinguish by mine Art" (149). He means his magic, of course; but Comus's apprehension of the Lady's virginity is a low physical understanding. Not only can Comus sense her virginity, he can manipulate it, or so he believes, with spells, because for him it is merely a bodily attribute. Like the animal forms his other victims take on, the lady's anticipated debasement is a form of physical degradation. The audience is asked to distinguish between chastity as a social convention and a truer, more difficult version of chastity as heroic virtue in the face of possible disgrace. In this trial of moral discrimination, only those with salacious minds would find the Lady's innate chastity damaged by her encounter with Comus. The Lady, Milton's ideal version of aristocratic femininity, both acts and is herself. She does not "play" a role. In Milton's construction of the Lady, he counters a debased courtly theatricality in which gentlewomen had become deeply implicated.

THE LADY AS PSYCHE: THE QUEST FOR VIRTUE

A Mask associates the Lady with Psyche, whose original story is a digression in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*. One of the Greek romances, it is a set of tales which, becoming widely known only in the Renaissance, contributed to the stock of themes and motifs informing the pastoral versions of romance. The

45 See Kelso on feminine virtue in courtly Neoplatonism: "The truly chaste woman had nothing so much to fear as suspicion and malicious defamation of her character. … It was of little use to her to be chaste, she was cautioned incessantly, if men thought her otherwise. Hence the easy descent in this so-called Platonic system of love to a morality that feared only discovery and put a premium on secrecy and cleverness at circumvention" (*Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, 172).

46 Both Kendrick and Halpern note bourgeois values at work in *A Mask*.

47 Friedman, "*Comus*," 121.

myth of Cupid and Psyche was frequently used in the 1630s as an allegory of the Neoplatonic ascent of the soul. In this interpretation, Psyche represents Beauty, while Cupid embodies Desire. Their union enacts the Platonic definition: "Love is desire aroused by beauty." Christianized, the myth suggests that the contemplation of heavenly beauty kindles a desire for the divine which leads one to a greater love of God. Henrietta Maria especially liked the story of Cupid and Psyche. Its iconographical possibilities for the way in which Charles and Henrietta Maria imagined their marriage are self-evident.[48] The myth combines the earthly and the divine, participating in the Platonic ladder: the mortal girl proves her worthiness to marry a god.

Milton's use of the Psyche story, however, downplays its erotic significances in favor of its potential as an allegory of self-knowledge. Here is his gloss of the myth in *A Mask*:

> But far above in spangled sheen
> Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc't,
> Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranc't
> After her wand'ring labors long,
> Till free consent the gods among
> Make her his eternal Bride,
> And from her fair unspotted side
> Two blissful twins are to be born,
> Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn. (ll. 1003–11)

By alluding to the story near the end of the masque, Milton demonstrates an awareness of court fashions. However, in his treatment of the story, he hearkens back to the action of the masque itself. Psyche is not only "the Soul," she is also the archetypal romance heroine. Like Psyche, the Lady herself has had to endure a journey of travails which have included an "entrancement" at the hands of Comus. Both Psyche and the Lady have careers which exemplify the pattern of looping which informs the erotic careers of the Renaissance pastoral virgin. Each has to go out into a hostile world and encounter threatening trials in order to be recontained or, in the terms of the masque, immobilized in a respectable and fruitful marriage. Milton's allusion to Psyche's romance career, however, stresses the process rather than the conclusion.

The Psyche myth is especially relevant to Milton's view of true virtue. Not only does he allude to the story in *A Mask*, casting the Lady as a type of Psyche, but he also employs it later in the *Areopagitica* to illustrate the problem of moral perception and discrimination that is one of the main topics of the masque.

> Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned,

[48] For a discussion of the royal couple's use of the Psyche myth, see Parry, 196–97.

> that those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labor to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixed.[49]

This passage displays some of the same congruences in Milton's thinking that inform his earlier masque. The Lady's first problem is not the maintenance of physical virginity but rather the attainment of moral discrimination: even with her purity and good intentions, she is deceived by Comus, whose "cunning resemblances" she takes at face value upon meeting. Milton's emphasis upon the hard and persistent work of moral discrimination in the masque reappears here as an "incessant labor" of georgic harvesting and sorting. This effort, both in the *Areopagitica* and in the masque, is analogous to the romance testing of the medieval knight, in which he must distinguish between reality and appearance. The Psyche example, however, provides a feminine model for heroic discrimination that is particularly well suited to *A Mask*'s notion of ideal female virtue. The mixed nature of good and evil requires worldly experience in order to distinguish good *from* evil. Innocence, then, is an inadequate sign or guarantee of virtue, in either man or woman. The Lady's encounter with Comus does damage her innocence, but in Milton's scheme innocence must be replaced with knowledge for true virtue to operate. The Lady, like Psyche, must work at her redemption.

Milton's masque responds to courtly philosophical fashions in other ways as well. The masque form under the Stuarts allowed the women of the court a forum, however limited, for public action.[50] In her analysis of court entertainments patronized by Henrietta Maria, Erica Veevers notes the role of the female character in court plays and masques as exemplars of virtue for the male characters.[51] In many plays, the women seek to reform the sexually corrupt morals of the men. The entertainments the queen favored suggested a role for women that allowed them a mild instructional role in the lives of the powerful men who love them. Women in these courtly entertainments display the qualities of the *honnête femme* as defined in the *precieux* salons of Paris; they display a tolerant wit combined with personal virtue. The improving role of the women in the lives of the male characters is not imagined as that of the distant *donna* of the *dolce stil nuovo* nor of the lady in chivalric romances, whose beauty inspires knights to lofty achievement in the masculine realm of battle. Instead, the women in the Neoplatonic entertainments of the Caroline court provide through example and precept an example of the virtuous life applicable equally to both men and women; their role anticipates the develop-

[49] Milton, *Areopagitica*, in Hughes, 728. In Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, a displeased Venus punishes Psyche for gaining the love of Cupid by making her sort out a huge pile of mixed grains.

[50] See Wynne-Davies, who in "The Queen's Masque" reads the court masque as "a collective cultural construct which allowed the women of the court … access to a politically resonant discourse" (80).

[51] Veevers, 66.

ment of the bourgeois domestic ideology of femininity. Veevers argues that Henrietta Maria espoused a "moderate feminism" aimed at enhancing the reputation and status of women as advisors to powerful men, although the degree to which she achieved her goal is debatable.[52] The queen even patronized literature which advanced her views.[53] Such literature emphasized the role of women as moral exemplars in everyday social life. For his part, Milton also employs a female character as a moral exemplar in his masque. In doing so, he employs yet another aspect of courtly masque convention against itself.[54]

Milton's masque does not concern itself so much with the reforming power such a heroine can exercise on a man as it does with the process by which a girl becomes a heroine. Similarly, Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* challenges misogynistic assumptions of women's sexual looseness. Both Milton and Fletcher present striking dramatizations of the strength of female virtue. Contemporary court entertainments patronized by the queen offered an idealized version of male-female social relations. The ideal of love informing such entertainments was not the Petrarchan version employed by Queen Elizabeth. Instead, Neoplatonism linked chaste erotic love to Christian charity.[55] The female characters in the entertainments "seek to extend the concept of love beyond its sexual connotations to the whole range of virtuous human actions and relationships."[56] The beauty and virtue of a Caroline Neoplatonic heroine give her a direct connection to heaven. Certainly Milton's Lady is a part of this tradition. There is, however, no knight for the Lady, nor for Clorin. When the Lady encounters Comus, she does not attempt to reform him, but to refute him. In fact, the Lady is not civil at all, but quite rude to him.[57] The theme of polite guidance present in many of the court entertainments has no place in *A Mask*. The Lady rejects Comus's courtship, both in the sense of wooing and in the sense of skill at courtly behavior. Her evolving virtue is not used as a tool for the reformation of the male lover. Its primary value is not instrumental, but intrinsic. The demonstration of the Lady's virtue is not a cooperative project of polite persuasion, but rather a process by which a hostile irritant produces a pearl of great price. Throughout the masque, the focus remains on the Lady's development and responses, not on her suitor's. (Only at the conclusion does

52 Veevers, 72. The degree of influence the queen had on her husband is played down by Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 173. Hill in *The Century of Revolution: 1603–1714* takes a more traditional view in ascribing to her the role of Charles's "evil genius" after the death of Buckingham (9).

53 A telling example is the English translation by Thomas Hawkins of Nicolas Caussin's *La Cour Sainte* (The Holy Court), dedicated to her in 1626. The book is full of stories of powerful women, such as Esther and Clotilda, who use their feminine appeal to influence men toward God. Cited in Veevers, 83.

54 See McGuire's *Milton's Puritan Masque* for a thorough examination of Milton's versions and subversions of masque convention.

55 See Sensabaugh, "The Milieu of Milton's *Comus*" for an account of Milton's anti-courtly attitudes regarding love; see also Veevers, 69.

56 Veevers, 66.

57 Dyson, 119.

the masque shift its emphasis from chastity's intrinsic power to the instrumental aspect of chastity as dynastic guarantor.) The masque is a lesson on maintaining virtue not within, but in spite of, the polite world.[58] The teacher, and principal exemplar, is the Lady herself. The *scala caritatis* implied by the Lady in her invocation of the Platonic forms of Faith, Hope, and Chastity does not have its foundations in the experience of erotic love. As a heroine, her role is not to provide the grounds for a male hero's spiritual improvement, as in the Neoplatonic model of courtly love, but rather to articulate and exemplify an ethic of temperance applicable to all. The same can be said of Fletcher's Clorin.

THE LADY AS A PASTORAL FIGURE

As noted earlier, Milton's masque employs an important element of Caroline courtly entertainments, the pastoralism so often used in conjunction with Neoplatonic themes.[59] The pastoral genre had a special attraction for Henrietta Maria herself.[60] Yet even here, Milton complicates the situation of the woman in pastoral: instead of a static placement, her role becomes a dynamic progress. The association of worldly experience with pastoral placement is paradoxical. By describing within a pastoral framework the Lady's ethically necessary if socially compromising experience with Comus, Milton strains the boundaries of her generic inscription. The Lady's shifting relationship to pastoral is an index of her moral development in the masque.[61] Taken out of her proper Hesperian context, she faces a trial of experience that, while it strengthens her, also has the potential to corrupt her. Her exposure to the unknown world is portrayed as a mixed blessing. Her progress in the masque is a circular one, to and from enclosed domesticity. The language used by those who seek to control her movements, for good or for ill, indicates that they see her as a figure whose generic home is some form of pastoral. The Lady is unmade and remade as a pastoral figure, and how she perceives herself against the generic framework by which other figures within the masque define her. The Lady is

58 Norbrook has claimed that Milton "challenges courtly notions of female virtue" (250).

59 For example, in Aurelian Townshend's *Tempe Restored* (1632), the pastoral bower is saved from the tenancy of Circe. In the same year, William Davenant's *Luminalia* shows the dark City of Sleep superseded by the fresh and sunny garden of the Britanides. In 1633, the queen acted in Walter Montague's *The Shepheard's Paradise*, the title of which is self-explanatory. In all these examples, the rural *locus amoenus* is elevated over the city as the site of true illumination and virtue.

60 See Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 168–73 for an account of the queen's love of country games as well as courtly entertainments. He believes that her affinity for pastoral reflected "a deep yearning for simplicity" (170).

61 Martz sees the distance between the "rude wassailing" image of pastoral and the "true pastoral music" of the masque's conclusion as the course that the Lady must travel (*Poet of Exile*, 10).

not a shepherdess in the strict sense, but she plays a pastoral role within the masque.

Among pastorals, *A Mask* is unusual in its emphasis on a promising new beginning for the Egerton clan and a paradisical destiny for all: the masque looks ahead, not back to a lost Golden Age.[62] The possibility of redemption through Christian progress in this pastoral is largely a product of the Lady's presence. The promise of a redeemed future, for the family and for all hearers, is an important way in which the daughter's temporary deviation from the structural constraints of patriarchy is structurally necessary to the patriarchal culture's advancement. The Lady ultimately belongs in a *hortus conclusus*, not in a dark wood, but her temporary displacement makes possible the re-establishment of domestic and civic tranquility at the end of the masque. When the Lady makes her appearance, she displays a pastoral mindset immediately. Having heard the roar of Comus's rout, she likens it to the sound of shepherds who

> … for their teeming Flocks and granges full
> In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
> And thank the gods amiss … (ll. 175–77)

She continues the critique of pastoral that the Attendant Spirit initiates. The Lady shows that she is prepared to criticize any version of pastoral, high or humble, courtly or peasant, that encourages immoral and corrupting behavior. Her reforming role extends from her own class downward, strengthening her symbolic significance as the conscience of the leisure class. The Lady, like Thyrsis, casts a critical eye on pastoral conventions. By doing so she demonstrates her position both inside and outside those conventions: she, with Thyrsis, shares a role as the conscience of pastoral practice.

Despite her role as a critic of pastoral, the Lady herself is interpreted as a pastoral figure by others. That is certainly how Comus sees her:

> … Hail foreign wonder,
> Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
> Unless the Goddess that in rural shrine
> Dwell'st here with *Pan* or *Silvan*, by blest Song
> Forbidding every bleak unkindly Fog
> To touch the prosperous growth of this tall Wood. (ll. 265–70)

Those inclined to read his address as hyperbolic flattery should consider the context: he has just heard her song and has been seduced by the "home-felt delight" it inspires. At this point, she has not yet rebuffed him and I think we may read his praise as sincere. She is unlike any woman he has encountered. The way he assimilates her into his experience is by assigning her a pastoral identity as a sylvan goddess. By pastoralizing her, so to speak, he fits her into a

62 Entzminger, 476.

familiar scheme.[63] The way Comus imagines her is remarkably similar to the way Sabrina is described later in the masque: a real goddess, she also rectifies nature. The power Comus imagines the Lady to have contrasts with the magical manipulations in which Circe and her sirens indulged. The Lady banishes "unkindly," that is, unnatural, fogs or illusions from the natural environment. She is anti-magical. From the start, Comus's own view of the Lady should have made it clear to him that he would not succeed with her.

Even after Comus's courtship of the Lady has degenerated into coercion, he does not abandon the pastoral metaphors which shape his image of their putative relationship. After he has enthroned her on the enchanted chair and, in a sense, made her his queen against her will, he imagines himself as Apollo to the Lady's Daphne (662). The myth offers a neat allegory for the relationship between pastoral and epic: the laurel crown of the epic poet is the transformed and immobilized body of the pastoral woman. In his appropriation of the myth, Comus forgets, however, that Daphne was turned into a laurel tree because she asked to be. Her immobilization was granted as a defense from Apollo's lust, not as an accommodation to it. The Lady's detainment offers her an opportunity to refute the intellectual bases of Comus's libertinism. As a type of Daphne, the Lady in her freeze is allowed a defense of chastity. Her words force Comus to revise his generic vision of her. The Lady's speech, in contrast to the effects of her song to Echo, are "as when the wrath of *Jove*/ Speaks thunder" (803–4). Comus now sees the Lady as a godlike epic figure, not a pastoral nymph. She is the representative not of pastoral innocence but of heroic chastity, of a virtue that is an effort, not a passive state. Her encounter with Comus is her chance to display her feminine version of epic heroism. The association that Comus makes between the Lady's words and the wrath of Jove also links the Lady to the supreme deity in the masque's cosmology. Jove occupies the same status as the Christian God. The Lady, then, speaks from a perspective both Christian and heroic, one that offers a critique of Comus's pagan pastoralism. She saves herself from the enchanter; Sabrina and the others simply validate what she has already done.[64] The threat to a maiden's chastity, a staple of pastoral romance, is usually resolved by the intervention of a knight. In Milton's masque, however, the maiden in question meets and resolves the challenge herself. As a masque, Milton's drama contains several unconventional elements, one of which is the presentation of the Lady as the central speaker for the moral order.[65] As we have seen in previous chapters, however, the pastoral romance heroine is the conscience of her community. It is not at all unusual for a Pamela, Urania, or Clorin to argue on behalf of an

63 For a different perspective see Halpern, 102; he emphasizes the Lady's foreignness to the Welsh milieu.

64 Orgel ("The Case for *Comus*," 39) sees Sabrina as another version of the Lady herself; her trial is initiated by her Echo (one version of self) and resolved by the appearance of her pastoral double.

65 Shullenberger, 222.

ethical ideal. If Milton conceived of the Lady primarily as a pastoral heroine, this conception would explain her unusual rhetorical prominence within the masque genre.

Her temptation at the hands of Comus brings out a heroic aspect to her characterization, its expression allowed only in the extremity of her trial. In Angus Fletcher's account of *A Mask*, the Lady evolves from a "cryptic individual" to a "revealed person" who knows herself and can therefore be known in society.[66] On the other hand, when she ventures out of pastoral, the Lady transforms herself from a known quantity into a mysterious force. Her refusal to confute Comus's arguments against chastity are not a result of rhetorical inadequacy or prudery, but a form of self-retention. The Lady's refusal to say more to Comus is actually a chosen silence, a refusal to make herself "known" in any sense. Although Comus and Sabrina serve opposite interests, they both use pastoral to make the Lady familiar again, to place her in a known context. Sabrina succeeds where Comus could not. This outcome nonetheless does not obscure the fact that the Lady is truly herself at her most cryptic: the moment at which she *chooses* not to explain herself to Comus. She is "herself" not in the sense of revealing a "true" personality but in displaying a sense of self-possession indicated by deliberate silence.

> Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc't;
> Yet should I try, the uncontrolled worth
> Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
> To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
> That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
> And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
> Till all thy magic structures rear'd so high,
> Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head. (ll. 793–99)[67]

After demonstrating her rhetorical abilities, she models the restraint she advocates by relinquishing them. At this point in the masque, silence symbolizes the Lady's asocial, otherworldly virtue, after she has already demonstrated her social virtues. It becomes an aspect of the Lady's power and independence, however momentary and provisional.[68] The Lady's choice for silence at the climax of the plot is thrown into relief by the dramatic context of the masque;

66 Angus Fletcher, *Milton's Transcendental Masque*, 218.

67 Rogers notes that this speech was not in the original 1634 manuscript; he sees its addition as a sign that Milton turned from arguing for a temperate married chastity to advocating absolute virginity ("The Enclosure of Virginity," 231). However, as the Lady is a fifteen-year-old virgin herself, it's perhaps more in character for her not to speak of a subject, married sexuality, of which she would know nothing.

68 Simons warns against the unequivocal association of the Lady's silence with defeat or powerlessness: "The Lady … declares that she could save herself with sublime speech powers, but she chooses to remain motionless and speechless. Held within the conjunction of speech and powerlessness we have been following is the reverse equation: that silence and power reside together" (83).

she is shown to limit her own participation in the play, an act that distinguishes her from the aristocratic actresses in other courtly entertainments. She also recalls Fletcher's Clorin, who eschews the chance to defend her own reputation by allowing a calumny on her virtue to go unchallenged for higher reasons.

The Lady imagines a different version of the pastoral Golden Age, one more fitting to Guarini's or Fletcher's conceptions than Tasso's. Instead of thoughtlessly scattering riches and love, she works according to "sober laws/And holy dictate of spare Temperance" (766–7):

> If every just man that now pines with want
> Had but a moderate and beseeming share
> Of that which lewdly-pamper'd Luxury
> Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
> Nature's full blessings would be well dispens't
> In unsuperfluous even proportion … (ll. 768–73)

In this passage, the Lady imagines the possibility of achieving, through effort and self-discipline, a Golden Age of material sufficiency as a result of considered distribution. Comus's vision of Nature, by contrast, sees the world in its natural and original state strangling itself in its own over-abundance without the counterbalance of human overconsumption. He paints such overconsumption as a demand made by the nature of nature. The Lady and Comus offer two opposing ideals of the Golden Age. The enchanter's is one of an original state of thoughtless and effortless abundance that is also a *locus* of aristocratic play. The girl's is a promise, a possibility of a future attained through work and adherence to difficult moral codes, "sober laws, and spare dictates." The Golden Age is a pastoral fiction, portrayed through pastoral conventions. For Comus, it is an artificial playground for the satisfaction of the aristocrat's jaded "curious tastes." For the Lady, the achievement of a Golden Age for "the good" and "just men" requires a dilution of pastoral ease with a strain of georgic effort.

Comus, echoing the viewpoint of the preface to Tasso's *Aminta*, looks backward toward a version of the Golden Age that is an infantile state of total satisfaction of one's desires; another resonance of his mining imagery is the suggestion that getting precious metals and jewels is a process of returning to our mother Nature's womb. The Lady, however, imagines the Golden Age of Temperance as a construction, a process of social and personal development requiring self-discipline and deferral of gratification. Duty has intruded upon hedonism.[69] The attainment of her vision of the Golden Age requires an acknowledgement and subordination to patriarchal discipline and struc-

69 Harry Levin discusses Milton's revision of the Golden Age myth as a result of his focus on the Christian dogma of the happy fall: "Between religious reformation and political revolution, the millenium seemed near at hand in the seventeenth century. The idea of the golden age as a lost paradise, in the anticipation of that advent, became a paradise to be regained, either in the next world or alternatively in this one" (*Myth*, 138).

ture.[70] In the Lady's view of Nature, chastity and charity become allied as one against the enemy, "lewdly-pamper'd Luxury," that product of what Clorin would term "rude uncivill bloods." Her phrase encapsulates both ancient and modern definitions of Comus's major vice. His praise of luxury is consistent with his sexual amorality. *Luxuria* is the mortal sin of sexual incontinence. The Lady, by contrast, argues for a temperance that informs not only the distribution of worldly goods but also the distribution of oneself; in other words, she advocates continence as a controlling value of life. The opposite of *luxuria* is *castitas*.[71] In their debate about the nature of nature, we come to see that Comus is semantically confused: he is not talking about nature, but luxury. He and the Lady cannot agree on their terms. She opposes "innocent" Nature (762) to "lewd" Luxury, in a paradoxical pun that invokes the older meaning of "lewd" as ignorant while at the same time contrasting the sexual sophistication of Luxury against the innate chastity of Nature. Comus, too, reflects this etymological paradox: he knows too much, yet knows nothing. Literary critics who insist upon the Lady's total identification with bourgeois values might consider the implications of her rejection of economic language in her vision of the temperate society. It is not a bourgeois paradise that she imagines. It is her Cavalier antagonist, Comus, who most persistently employs the language of buying and selling in order to describe human relations of any sort, including familial relations. It is this instrumental and pragmatic economic valuation of female chastity that the Lady's experience denies. Her chastity is no less valuable for its being threatened. On the contrary, the masque demonstrates that chastity is literally invaluable, beyond the scope of economic assessment.

Milton supports the prerogatives of patriarchy; but the Lady's chastity gains its true significance irrespective of its economic convenience for the patriarchal order. The Lady refuses to debate her sexuality in the terms Comus has set.[72] Her silence is not a rhetorical failure except to those who share Comus's assumptions about sexuality. Her response to Comus dramatizes the split she makes between the conceptual and verbal frameworks in which he places her and those in which she sees herself. There can be no rapprochement. In this sense, the masque enacts a virtue that is extremely difficult to represent through language or action.

70 Simons invokes the notion of the patriarchal superego in her discussion of Conscience in the masque (69).

71 See Tuve, "Image, Form and Theme" in Diekhoff, 145.

72 Scheidenhelm has argued that both the Lady and Comus lack a "a common discourse" (63), but she finds the Lady as much at fault as Comus: "She understands the concept [of virginity] intuitively but is unable to put her knowledge into speech" (65). What Scheidenhelm sees as a failing, I see as a strength resulting from an awareness that virtue cannot be entirely socially defined. Julie Kim also sees the Lady as reintegrated into the patriarchy that controls her; she is not a "subversive figure" or even, ultimately, an independent one ("The Lady's Unladylike Struggle," 17–18).

CHIVALRIC VS. PASTORAL: THE LADY AS HEROIC ALTERNATIVE

Milton's generically mixed masque introduces elements of chivalric romance into the world of pastoral.[73] There are two important debates in Milton's masque. One is contained within the conversation of the Lady's two brothers: the Elder Brother seeks to convince the Second Brother that the latter's concerns for the welfare of his lost sister are groundless (331–479). Although their talk is not a formal debate, it forms a challenge to, and a defense of, the superiority of "divine philosophy" over the material exigencies of earthly life with all its numerous threats. The topic of the other, their sister's debate, is materialism; theirs, idealism. The Elder Brother reasons away all of the Second Brother's fears about the Lady's physical safety. Reason, as the Elder Brother employs it, is the capacity to see past the evidence of our earthly experience. Although the Lady is alone, female, and physically weak in a strange dark wood of unknown inhabitants, these physical threats are invalidated by the strength of Heaven and "the sacred rays of Chastity" (425). The Elder Brother reinforces the Platonic hierarchy invoked by the Attendant Spirit in the masque's opening, establishing ultimate truth in the realm of the immaterial; however, the boy's vision of the relation between the world of ideals and material reality erases the difficulty and messiness of life in this "dim spot/Which men call earth" (5). In the Elder Brother's version of Platonism, virtue is unrealistically easy to maintain. The Second Brother's fears reflect wider cultural views of honor. The Lady's sojourn in the wood comes as a side consequence of a necessary trip with her brothers to meet their parents. During that journey, the brothers act as little father-substitutes, masculine familial protectors to whose care they imagine their sister is consigned for its duration. When they become separated, the brothers feel they must prove their own honor by recovering her from harm via martial intervention.

Despite the Attendant Spirit's warning that "thy sword can do thee little stead" (611), both boys "rush in with Swords drawn," enabling the enchanter to escape.[74] Lynda Boose has identified a conflict between male and female definitions of honor in traditional Western societies. As she describes it:

> Since the code of masculine honor depends upon sexual conquest, and since an unenclosed daughter culturally signifies a 'loose' commodity available for competitive male possession, even a father who is conscientiously trying to give his daughter the same spatial freedom that sons have always enjoyed is faced with a genuine dilemma …[75]

The Second Brother invokes this cultural problem. Masculine honor in the aristocratic sense depends not only upon sexual conquest but also upon its preven-

73 Dubrow, "The Masquing of Genre," 68–9.
74 See stage directions, Hughes, 109.
75 Boose, 63.

tion: a man who cannot protect his female relatives loses face, and his family its putative purity of blood. The only way to combat this threat is to pratice the virtual imprisonment of daughters and wives. Such imprisonment, however, is incompatible with the virtue of the Christian wayfarer. The Second Brother shows an awareness of this contradiction between the aristocratic ideology of honor, and the demands of Christianity. He points out that while solitude is for men the retiring place of Wisdom and her nurse Contemplation (375–7), the same improving capacity of solitude is problematic for girls because of the danger into which they may fall. For them, the paradigm of intellectual and moral development that depends upon a condition of solitude is fraught with additional gendered hazards. The proper place for a girl such as the Lady is in a protective garden, not a savage wood. The Second Brother's objections and fears essentially disqualify a woman from any independent encounter with the wider world. That the Lady's moral worth is proven by such an encounter is an ironic comment on the Second Brother's fears, just as her immobilization contradicts the sanguine predictions of the Elder Brother. Finally, her salvation does not depend on the intervention of any of her male relatives.[76]

Both Milton and Fletcher, in their pastoral dramas, engage the following problem: appearances, not reality, determine social judgment. The Lady seems to recognize this in the way she describes the enchanter's attack on her:

> To him that dares
> Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
> Against the Sun-clad power of Chastity
> Fain would I say something, yet to what end? (ll. 780–83)

As long as she fights him on his terms, she cannot win. Comus himself is a creature whose sense of propriety is entirely socially based: " 'Tis only daylight that makes sin" (l. 126). The battle over chastity is fought on interpretive grounds: in what light is virtue best seen? Just as in the masque, pastoral is portrayed as an act of virtuous perception, chastity too is an achievement of the mind and spirit, not the body.[77]

The Lady's final speech enacts the paradox of the compromised girl's social predicament: she cannot protect herself without exposing herself. The Lady "had not thought to have unlockt my lips/In this unhallow'd air" (756–7). The metaphorical correspondence between the woman's open mouth and her sexual availability was a Renaissance commonplace; hence the emphasis on the twin qualities of chastity and silence.[78] Magic structures are all the polite fictions upon which a certain kind of corrupt social life is based, the appear-

76 Dubrow, "The Masquing of Genre," 68.

77 For a differing view emphasizing the material contingency of chastity in the masque, see Bradburn, who argues that the masque "insists on the corporeality of moral agency" ("Bodily Metaphor," 24).

78 Stallybrass quotes Francesco Barbaro: "… the speech of a noble woman can be no less dangerous than the nakedness of her limbs" (*On Wifely Duties*, quoted in Stallybrass, 127).

ances which are taken as reality. The Lady exposes the hypocrisy of virginity as a social convention. The truly noble family is a spiritually chaste one; compared to it, the old concept of nobility as blood purity is vulgar indeed.

FLETCHER, MILTON AND THE RITES OF CHASTITY

As in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, pastoral ritual reconfirms the presence of virtue. In Milton's masque, the Attendant Spirit introduces the river nymph Sabrina in a way that emphasizes her pastoral associations. He notes that his knowledge of the river goddess came from Meliboeus, "the soothest Shepherd that ere pip't on plains" (823).[79] Her impeccable pastoral ancestry includes an appearance in the work of the poetic shepherd Spenser, to whom Milton nods here.[80] Sabrina's function before freeing the Lady is an explicitly pastoral one: she visits the herds and protects them from mischief, for which the local shepherds offer wreaths of flowers in thanks (844–51). Unlike the Attendant Spirit, she does not put on the garb of pastoral but truly inhabits it. Her ritual cleansing of the Lady serves to change how the other characters of the masque perceive the Lady in relation to pastoral. Both Milton and Fletcher present performances of chastity through public ritual. Just as Clorin rehabilitates Amarillis in the eyes of the pastoral community, Sabrina comes to the aid of the virginal Lady trapped on bacchic Comus's chair:[81]

> Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
> Drops that from my fountain pure
> I have kept of precious cure,
> Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
> Thrice upon thy rubied lip;

Also see Newman, *Fashioning Femininity*: "An open mouth and immodest speech are tantamount to open genitals and immodest acts" (11).

79 In keeping with his addition of a "hard" element to courtly pastoral, Milton chooses to give the Virgilian name "Meliboeus" to Spenser. In Virgil's Eclogues, it is Meliboeus who is the often negative counterpart to Tityrus, who more unabashedly celebrates the pleasures and virtues of pastoral. Certainly both Virgil's and Spenser's versions of pastoral are ambiguous, as Milton evidently realized.

80 In *The Faerie Queene* 2.10.19, Sabrina is the illegitimate daughter of King Locrine. His wife, Queen Guendolene, kills her because she is the fruit of "disloyall love." It is interesting that Milton would make an illegitimate child the saving force in a story about family solidarity and legitimacy, unless by doing so he suggests a relation between the collapse of the legitimate family and violence in the realm; Guendolene defeated her husband Locrine in war, depriving him of his kingdom. Sabrina is a sacrificial victim. In this case, however, the origin of war was male rather than female sexual license. Milton might have been thinking of the presentation of the Sabrina story in Drayton's *Polbyolbion*, a treatment in which none of the tragic aspects of the story figure. As Cox suggests, Milton might have used Sabrina for her poetic, rather than historical, resonances, that is, as a rural deity in a masque privileging the country over the court. See Cox, "Poetry and History in Milton's *Country Masque*," 633–37.

81 Finkelpearl sees echoes of Fletcher in Sabrina's speech (285).

> Next this marble venom'd seat
> Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat
> I touch with chaste palms moist and cold. (*A Mask*, ll. 910–17)

Sabrina's purifying waters echo the operation of Fletcher's God of the River. She reaffirms the essential purity of the Lady's heart with her baptismal ritual, while at the same time she frees the Lady from physical bondage to the false shepherd Comus's lust. Milton has earlier made Comus articulate the strictly pragmatic view of female virtue, the notion of sexual restraint as a social convenience (" 'tis only daylight that makes sin," l. 126). Thus Comus reduces chastity to the status of a form, a convention of behavior. Sabrina, on the other hand, restores the ideal unity of inner virtue and outward freedom that allows the Lady to continue her journey to her father's house. Milton thus honors and perpetuates Fletcher's rites of chastity in his own pastoral drama. As in Fletcher's play, pastoral redemption is an act of self-recognition and perception. Sabrina has placed her back inside the domestic pastoral enclosure. The Attendant Spirit, in his explanation to Sabrina as to why she is needed, identifies the Lady specifically as a "true virgin" (905). Sabrina's actions enable the Lady to reassume her dynastic role as virginal daughter of a great house. She reverses the *social* despoliation of the Lady by replacing her within a familiar, and familial, pastoral context. Sabrina's rites make visible an internal reality, in the same sense as Clorin's taper test confirms Amarillis's internal adaptation to chastity. In both cases, the value of ritual is not to effect internal change, but to represent the invisible reformation.

The *locus amoenus* of English pastoral romance develops into a domestic space in which the young heroine is developed and tested. As a home space, it is associated with the private sphere in Renaissance categories of thought. Women dominate the *locus amoenus*, ordering social life and presiding over the games and song contests; we see the importance of female authority in Fletcher's tragicomedy, in Sidney's *Arcadia*, Wroth's *Urania*, and in the various courtly entertainments designed as panegyrics for queens from Elizabeth to Henrietta Maria. Although it seems strange to associate courtly pastoral, with its Neoplatonic gloss and pagan mythology, with the writings of seventeenth-century female dissenters, both kinds of works share a concern with the definition of the private, feminine sphere as a place of moral freedom and personal autonomy. Katharine Gillespie recognizes the odd kinship between these dissimilar genres by reading Milton's Ludlow masque as a myth of possessive individualism for women that illustrates a similar dynamic to the works of dissenting Protestant prophets such as Anne Wentworth and Elizabeth Poole.[82] These women vindicated their rights to a possessive individuality that enabled and justified their nonconformist religion through their

[82] Gillespie, *Domesticity and Dissent*, 1–11, 39. Rogers has also made the connection between "the … model of virginal freedom" and the idea of "liberal selfhood" ("The Enclosure of Virginity" 239).

preaching and writing.[83] The Lady's freedom of mind and spiritual chastity entitle her to vindicate herself through heavenly-inspired language. As in the case of Pamela speaking to Cecropia in the *New Arcadia*, the Lady's allusion to the "sage and serious doctrine of virginity" is not successful if judged by the standards of secular oratory, because she does not succeed in persuading her auditor, Comus, to adopt her views. Nonetheless, by asserting her moral independence and dignity regardless of pragmatic consequences, she enacts the very untouchability of her mind's freedom.

Helen Cooper has pinpointed the effect that the shift in European Christendom from a shame culture to a guilt culture has on the representation of honor in chivalric romances such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, noting that the genre, which represents the external signs of honor, sometimes sets the two concepts at odds: "The shift from shame to guilt, renown to conscience, presents problems for a genre that is so dedicated to … the recording of outward events."[84] Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* and Milton's *Mask* are also poised between the shame culture and the guilt culture in their shared concern for the gap between the conviction of conscience and the perceptions of the larger community. Why doesn't Clorin care more for her reputation? Why does the Lady need a purification ritual if her chastity is defined by the inviolable freedom of her mind? What is the relationship between essence and sign, and indeed, is there one at all? The trajectory of these tragicomic plots ultimately reasserts the old romance equilibrium of internal essence with external circumstance, but their post-Reformation status as artifacts of the guilt culture elevates the internal self-maintenance of chastity as an independent process of reflection and will. The pastoral magic encountered by our heroines confirms, but does not create, their heroism; it serves only to dramatize their untouchable inner virtue.

83 Gillespie notes the etymology of vindication as a verbal act of self-ownership or self-claiming (160).

84 Cooper, 83.

Chapter 6

MILTON'S EVE AND MARVELL'S MARIA FAIRFAX: WIVES AND DAUGHTERS IN THE PASTORAL FAMILY CIRCLE

THE LAST TWO authors discussed in this study revisit the figure of the pastoral romance heroine toward the close of the English Renaissance. Eve, humanity's mother in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), presides over the *locus amoenus* of Eden but nonetheless rejects her generic casting in favor of adventure and intellectual risk, while General Fairfax's young daughter Maria in Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* (ca. 1652) reverses Eve's effect on nature and mankind with her magical ability to stop time and fix nature. Eve and Maria engage in reflective solipsism with vastly different ethical results. While Eve falls to the temptation of becoming the platonic object of contemplation, Maria domesticates nature through the power of her reforming subjective vision. She is the observer, not the observed; her vision rivals and supplants the poet's own, creating a paradise of the mind that compensates for the loss of Eden.

A common thread throughout the examples of pastoral romance discussed in this study is the prominence of Neoplatonic love philosophy in the elevation of female beauty as a virtue. The pastoral romance heroine, in her ability to inspire loves both earthly and divine, fulfills a long list of dynastic, religious and ethical imperatives in an increasingly bourgeois society, while in the process offering a humanist model of virtue which provides a metaphor for simple chastity in the service of larger ideals. Sometimes, her beauty is a moral force for others but not for herself, as in the case of Pastorella in *The Faerie Queene*. In the figures of Eve and Maria Fairfax, however, Milton and Marvell examine the moral effect that the pastoral heroine's beauty has on herself. Kathleen Kelly, in her discussion of how Milton and Marvell each employ the myth of Narcissus in *Paradise Lost* and *Upon Appleton House*, argues that together these late Renaissance poets "disenchanted" the love lyric by discrediting Platonic claims for the improving nature of love itself. By submitting the rapture of love to the critique of reason, Kelly claims, Restoration literary representations of love differ markedly from their Renaissance predecessors in their attitude toward erotic rapture.[1] Love becomes suspect rather than elevating, a madness

[1] Kathleen Kelly, "Narcissus in *Paradise Lost* and *Upon Appleton House*," 211 and *passim*.

rather than a gift of divine vision. Milton's Eve and Marvell's Maria present different reactions to the challenges of Neoplatonic self-contemplation, that is, feminine narcissism. Both Milton and Marvell associate pastoral femininity with narcissism, yet Marvell finds a way to present this trait as productive rather than destructive or morally culpable. The pastoral heroine's inward-looking tendency ruins Eden in *Paradise Lost*, but redeems it in Nun Appleton.

MILTON'S EVE AS A PASTORAL ROMANCE HEROINE

The trial of Milton's Lady is in the course of a necessary loop outside the *hortus conclusus*, whether that place is imagined as a prelapsarian Eden or a protected aristocratic nursery. The garden in *Paradise Lost* is also a *hortus conclusus* in which many of the same domestic and political issues explored in *A Mask* are played out. In fact the story of Eve sets up the circumstances under which the Lady's foray into the dangerous and deceptive world becomes a structural requirement of Milton's pastoral vision. The role of Eve as a pastoral romance heroine has not been investigated, perhaps because she is not a virgin.[2] She apparently has already achieved, before the fall, a marriage with Adam, as if marriage is not only the natural but also the created state of the human female. Eve was created betrothed. As the original garden girl, however, Eve is unavoidably associated with Golden Age pastoral. What follows is a Virgilian reading of Eve as a failed pastoral heroine.

The narrative logic of the pastoral romance form demands a challenge or engagement with the world outside the *hortus conclusus*. Eve initiates that challenge by disobeying her Father. Her actions initiate a circular romance plot line for humanity; expelled from the original *hortus conclusus*, she and Adam must wander through a "dark wood" of hardships, threats, and temptations before achieving paradise again. But Adam and Eve do not bring forth children until they are expelled from the garden. Struggle is the crucible in which dynastic and national identities are created. Like much of medieval romance, *Paradise Lost* is a founding myth about the aristocrats of humankind. Pastoral romance is defined over and against the epic component of quest romance: retreat versus engagement, *otium* versus action, stasis versus progress. The "happy fall" begins human history, which enables epic deeds. As long as humanity remains in a *hortus conclusus*, the only epic figure is God. Similar to the Lady in *A Mask*, Eve is an agent of time and progress introduced into the static pastoral

[2] Patterson in "Last Chance" has said that Adam and Eve's story is "the original pastoral romance … from which all other decadent forms derive" (199). She notes that Milton exalts pastoral over chivalric models of romance. However, her essay does not delve into Eve's role in detail. Barry Weller ("The Epic as Pastoral") also recognizes pastoral as "one of the generically plural possibilities that the reading of [Paradise Lost] generates" (155), as it is a poem about "the happy garden" that is the object of the narrator's nostalgia in the opening to *Paradise Regained* (see Weller, 142–3).

setting. Her fall enables her and Adam's progeny to perform acts of heroism in an imperfect, wild, and harsh world. She and Adam, wending their solitary way at the end of *Paradise Lost*, are the protagonists now of the first quest romance. Eve's actions initiate generic transformation from pastoral to epic.

Unlike the Lady, however, Eve is hubristic. Her immodesty extends beyond the sexual concupiscence initiated by the Fall. Eve uses her cultivating gifts incorrectly to disrupt the patriarchal order, while the Lady's are subordinated within it. One way in which Milton signals Eve's fallen imagination is her use of romance and epic topoi to describe her evolving situation: a model of generic progress is implicit in her development. This model, however, leaps directly from pastoral to epic and romance, omitting the intermediate georgic mode of experience and perception that is an ethical necessity in the development of true Miltonic virtue.

Lynda Boose has argued that the daughter, in Western myth and literature, is a "liminal or 'threshold' person in family space – symbolically … at the boundary/door, blocked from departure by the figure of the father."[3] At adolescence, particularly at menarche,

> the loss of family blood that marks the threshold of her maturity symbolically asserts the subtraction she signifies and physically defines her as the breach in the wall of family enclosure.[4]

Milton's Eve fits this analysis. From the perspective of family romance, Milton's Eden is the original domestic space in which Adam and Eve live and love childishly, under the supervision of the Father. Eventually, Eve begins rebelliously to imagine an alternative and preferable parentage for herself: she replaces God with Adam, "from whose dear side I boast me sprung" (*PL* 9. 965).[5] Eve's transgression and the subsequent exile from the garden illustrate psychological maturation and the attainment of independence from the Parent.[6] Her disobedience results in the attainment of a separate consciousness, an awareness of her own subjectivity. That the disobedience is a mark of adulthood is clear in Eve's soliloquy after she has eaten: "I grow mature/ in knowledge" (9. 803–4). Her own position in prelapsarian Eden is analogous to the uneaten fruit itself:

3 Boose, 33.

4 Boose, 35. Using textual variants, Sokol ("'Tilted Lees'") has that *A Mask* actually contains specific references to the onset of menses. Certainly the threat to the family is a threat to the Lady's virginity. The blood symbolism could be extended to the blood of the maidenhead. Following this line of thought, the glue on Comus's chair can be semen (see Flosdorf), menses (see Sokol), or blood from sexual violation. Admittedly Milton is spinning in his grave at this.

5 All citations of *Paradise Lost* are from Hughes, ed., *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 207–469.

6 See Robert, *Origins of the Novel* for an analysis of the operation of Freudian family romance in literary plots, specifically novelistic ones.

> … hitherto obscur'd, infam'd,
> And thy fair Fruit let hang, as to no end
> Created … (IX, 797–9) 9 or IX???

Unlike Adam, Eve knows she has no independent role in Eden. She lacks a direct relationship to her Father: the formulation "he for God, she for God in him" assigns Adam the mediating role between the woman and God. As Eve apostrophizes the fruit that she has made into an emblem of herself, she reveals a capacity for imagination; she sees herself replaced, her uniqueness denied. The "fair Fruit" Eve praises is also her own, the children of her womb who, kept in Eden, would have been denied the scope for epic action, "as to no end" born.

Eve speaks, of course, from a human secular perspective, forgetting that the end of humanity is to glorify God. This spiritual shortsightedness is evidence of Eve's fallen status even before the Fall. Although Boose sees the fruit as a phallic symbol which Eve appropriates in the act of defying the patriarchal God, it can as easily be read as a symbol of feminine fertility.[7] Eve steals her children from God; she takes them for herself. By positioning herself as a matriarch, she defies divine patriarchy. In the act of plucking the fruit from the tree, Eve performs a symbolic defloration of herself, losing her spiritual chastity. The resultant loss of innocence is an accurate, if fallen, understanding of her position in the prelapsarian world. Her self-harvesting also presages the georgic life; her plucking of the fruit plunges both her and Adam into the necessity of harsh labor. Eve does not, however, understand the implications of her georgic act. In her generic classification of experience, she jumps from pastoral to an imagination of epic and romance heroism without confronting in her scheme the georgic demand for work.

The confrontation between Adam and Eve immediately after her fall offers an instructive allegory of the progress of genres, and the role of the feminine in such a progress. Adam's construction of Eve as pastoral queen must be revised, for she has left Eden even before her physical expulsion. Waiting for her return, he makes a

> … garland to adorn
> Her Tresses, and her rural labors crown,
> As Reapers oft are wont their Harvest Queen … (9. 840–2)

He still thinks in pastoral terms, not yet aware of the nature of Eve's "harvest." If life in Eden is a pastoral poem, however, Adam's perception of the threat of unwelcome change is described in terms of poetic alteration: "hee the falt'ring measure felt" (846).[8] The transition from pastoral to epic is mediated by

7 See Boose, 54.

8 Cf. Comus's response to the Lady's approach in *A Mask*, l. 145.

romance: the first words Eve says to Adam upon her return recall the definition of romance as a narrative of erotic suffering:

> Thee I have misst, and thought it long, depriv'd
> Thy presence, agony of love till now
> Not felt … (9. 857–9)

She does not merely fill Adam in on the facts, she specifically offers an artful narrative:

> Thus Eve with Count'nance blithe her story told,
> But in her Cheek distemper flushing glow'd. (9. 886–7)

She is the first storyteller in human history, the first artist.[9] Confronted with this new poetic sophistication, Adam drops the garland, now inappropriate, he made for Eve. Now they are both beyond pastoral innocence.

Even before Adam eats, the change in his relationship to nature signalled by Eve's disruption of the pastoral *locus amoenus* is apparent in his fears. The lush garden becomes "these wild Woods forlorn" (910) as he contemplates living there without her. She is the civilizing influence. Adam ultimately accepts what she has done and, in language anticipating the highest stage of generic development, offers ambivalent praise: "Bold deed thou has presum'd, advent'rous Eve" (921). This epic language forecasts the future of mankind. Adam's instinctive leap to such an interpretation of his wife's actions reveals his affinity for the most "masculine" of genres. When in imitation of her he eats the fruit, Eve responds with another generically loaded reading of his actions:

> O glorious trial of exceeding Love,
> Illustrious evidence, example! (9. 961–2)

This too could pass as a definition of the romance genre. She continues by expressing pride in her aristocratic lineage, not as a daughter of God, but as a product of Adam, "boasting" of her human ancestry. She retells Adam's imitative disobedience as a romance tale of the trials of love, involving the aristocratic hero and the foundation of a house.[10] She invents history via romance. Although Adam does not follow her example, he cannot imagine an epic world until she has imagined a romance one. In Milton's version of the beginning of human history, the first woman mediates between pastoral and epic, childhood and maturity, for the male. Although Eve's displacement out of pastoral will ultimately be replaced by redomestication in a millennial future, it is she who must drag Adam out into the world of heroic engagement. The biblical narra-

9 Ferry argues that Eve, rather than Adam, is "connected with the powers of the soul that belong especially to poetry, with imagination, sensation, and feeling" (130).

10 Lewalski points out that Satan encourages Eve to think of herself as a knight errant ("Milton," 67). Eve, in her turn, encourages Adam to think of himself in chivalric terms.

tive, as Boose notes, "moves out of myth and into history"; as it does so, the daughter-father relationship of Eve to God is "visible only in the structure of Adam's paternal authority over the wife/mother."[11] The transition from myth to history shows up in *Paradise Lost* as an evolution from pastoral to epic via romance. Georgic, the intermediary term in the Virgilian progress, is an aspect of the curse placed on Adam because of his disobedience; it is the mundane work of survival which lays the ground for future epic achievements.

Georgic, however, has little place in Eve's vision of a heroic future. In this omission, she is distinguished from Milton's Lady, who, in part because of her georgic mentality, qualifies as one of the redeemed daughters of the fallen Eve, a Psyche who retraces upward the steps of the fallen soul. The temptations she faces from Comus are couched in language that anticipates the following argument that Milton's Satan presents to Eve:

> Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
> By gift, and thy Celestial Beauty adore
> With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
> Where universally admir'd: but here
> In this enclosure wild, these Beasts among,
> Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
> Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
> Who sees thee? (9. 539–46)

Satan's persuasions assume that the ultimate feminine virtue is beauty; if unseen and thus unappreciated, a woman has no face value. In Neoplatonic philosophy, as in Satan's speech, the beautiful woman rules through love.[12] Satan also portrays the pastoral "enclosure wild" of Eden as a rustic backwater, inferior to some posited "elsewhere" where throngs of sophisticated people give Eve her due admiration. These elements of Satan's arguments recall Comus's insistence that the Lady's beauty is wasted at home: it rather should "be shown/ In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities" (*A Mask*, 745–6). Without the display of her beauty, a girl has no social existence. Since no one "sees" her, she lacks an identity. Both Comus and Satan offer the Lady and Eve respectively a social identity based on the ontological equation of beauty and being.[13] Beauty, they suggest, is the uniquely feminine version not only of power but of self. Eve, in her subsequent seduction of Adam away from the dictates of God, proves the pernicious results of the Satanic definition of female identity, not only for herself but for all humankind. The Lady, in resisting the version of the same argument offered by Comus, adheres to a different definition of female identity and power: instead of displaying herself, she withholds herself. Her

[11] Boose, 56–57.

[12] Comus and Satan, in this, are similar to Sidney's Cecropia in *The New Arcadia*. Cecropia argues that Pamela's sway over others should be based not on political principle or ethical force but on erotic domination.

[13] See Whigham, 116–17 on the trope of "cosmesis" in Renaissance courtesy literature.

ultimate refusal to speak is a rhetorical analogue to a veil which in this case protects, rather than obscures, her identity. She will not be known. Unlike Eve, she controls the distribution of her artful speech as she controls herself. She has learned the power of self-containment.

Romances are stories of the founding of families, whether they are quest romances or pastoral romances. Boose's analysis of the daughter as liminal figure shows how she both forms and dissolves the bonds which form the family unit. Milton's pastoral romances focus on the daughter in a way that medieval romance does not: he shows the interplay between the pastoral and epic realms, the familial and the political worlds, and the ways in which the aristocratic virgin daughter mediates between these separate realms in a way the heroic son cannot. Milton is concerned with the difference between being "inside" and "outside" the family in an era when birthright as the origin of political power was increasingly coming into serious question, and when the bourgeois idea of the family as an isolated unit apart from the wider world was gaining ascendancy. Especially in his subsequent prose tracts, he grapples with a major political issue of the age: what is the origin of secular power in a society in which most relationships are imagined as familial?[14] In his versions of pastoral romance, he suggests that while the daughter wields little power, she supplies much. The story of Eve implies that the position of unmarried daughter, far from being the original state of sexual and social innocence, is actually a result of the Fall. The first woman was created as a wife. The very fact of unmarried virginity makes an aristocratic daughter errant, and aberrant, by definition: the Lady is on a wandering journey. She, not her brother, has to go out of the family on a quest to get back into it. The Lady's venture beyond pastoral innocence is itself a result of the Fall: as Milton argues in *Areopagitica*, in our fallen state we are doomed to know good only through evil.[15] In Milton's Eden, Eve mediates human knowledge of the difference between the two realms.[16] Milton's Lady, the most complete Miltonic example of pastoral heroism, inherits her predicament from Eve and has learned from her ancestress's interpretive mistake. She refutes her tempter, is granted her heroic moment, and is reinstated within the father's household as a repository of pure potential, the symbol of the "uncontrolled worth" that marks the spiritual aristocracy her family embodies. The figure of Maria Fairfax in Andrew Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* extends Milton's treatment of the pastoral daughter as the center of the gentle family.

14 See Boehrer, "Elementary Structures of Kingship" for a discussion of Milton's anti-monarchist stance in *Ikonoklastes* and elsewhere, and its uneasy implications for sacredly held ideals of family: "… in opposing the royalist theory of monarchy, he must at the same time oppose a venerable tradition of representation that ultimately invokes not only the king, but also God, created nature, and the very structure of the family" (110).

15 Milton, *Areopagitica*, in Hughes, 728.

16 Boose, 53.

THE PASTORAL NURSERY AND ITS FEMALE PROGENY IN MARVELL'S *UPON APPLETON HOUSE*

Andrew Marvell's poem *Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax* (ca. 1652) is marked by the use of traditional romance and pastoral themes to celebrate new historical developments. The work follows a dynamic similar to Books 3 and 6 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, portraying chivalry as history while placing the pastoral heroine at the center of the world. Marvell's poem confronts an epideictic challenge in celebrating the representatives of the new Parliamentarian political order, while using literary themes and devices most often associated with the old monarchist order. To this end, Marvell nods to romance, masque and pastoral, all courtly in their associations; but most of all, *Upon Appleton House* represents the culmination of the country house poem, exploiting to the fullest the conservative symbolic links between family, estate, and country.[17] The poem's conundrum is how to portray a noble family whose individual configuration does not lend itself to the traditional forms of aristocratic compliment, the glorification of martial exploits and the anticipation of male heirs to those exploits. The Fairfax name faces extinction because there is no son; thus part of the difficulty facing the poet is the need to praise a family for characteristics normally felt to be unfortunate. Not only is a new sense of caste destiny to be articulated, but also a new sense of the value of the family itself.

This discussion is an attempt to chart the way in which Marvell manipulates established generic boundaries not only to make sense of new political values but also to gesture toward a developing emphasis on the nuclear family ideal, rather than the extended linear one, as the most "noble" of family types. The ostensible reasons for praising someone like General Fairfax turn out not to be those for which he is ultimately praised: by the end of *Upon Appleton House*, the source of the family's pre-eminence is not the patriarch but the daughter. General Fairfax's crowning achievement, one learns, is not his skill at arms or politics, but rather his child. The poem undercuts both cultural and generic expectations. Muriel Bradbrook has discussed, for example, how Marvell employs disparate and confusing images of masquing to the precisely opposite effect intended by the Stuart court productions, designed to create a coherent and attractive political myth.[18] In addition, the poem's Thwaites episode is a small mock romance with a chivalric hero in the person of William Fairfax,

17 See Williams, 57–58 on the political and social significance of *Upon Appleton House* within the country-house poem tradition: the poem offers "a true reification of the houses themselves: the house, and then by derivation its occupants, being the evident sign of an order, even thought this order was being continually reconstituted by the political and economic formation of a new aristocracy and then a new agrarian capitalism." Cousins has claimed that the poem constitutes "at once an appropriation and … a comprehensive rewriting of the country house poem" (54).

18 Bradbrook, 210.

General Fairfax's grandfather, who storms a convent and kidnaps a bride. This first Fairfax, however, is no model of decorum, acquiring as he does an estate through virtual theft. In handling such an ambiguous family history, Marvell exploits the self-made aspect of the Fairfax fortunes as a symptom of energy and fitness for public life and honors, especially during the Interregnum, by portraying the founding of the Fairfax dynasty itself as a revolutionary, iconoclastic act. In turn, he performs a subsequent iconoclasm: by ultimately celebrating Mary Fairfax, the daughter of the house, he praises and anticipates not the continuation, but the collapse of the Fairfax line and name. Mary's traits recall the qualities and gifts of the Renaissance heroine of pastoral romance, charged with the maintenance of the *locus amoenus* and its moral order.

In his description of the Fairfax estate, Marvell introduces time into the *hortus conclusus*, thus ensuring that the garden is never really closed again. History is imagined as a continual destruction and reconstitution of closed gardens: Eden, the convent, the estate itself. The destruction is a necessary prelude to the reconstitution; they are in a dialectical relationship to each other. Certainly " 'tis not, what once it was, the world" (761), but the energy of the change, the rude overthrowing, is what constituted the Fairfax house in the first place, in the violent courtship of Mary's ancestress, Isabel Thwaites. Thus the wistful tone of the poem, its nostalgia for a purer, younger world, forms a contrast to the actual mechanics of historical development portrayed. Marvell's poem reflects and modifies the traditional figure of the pastoral romance virgin through the person of Mary Fairfax. What role can she play in a social system where lineage is no longer of vital importance? Among other things, I will argue that in his construction of "Maria," Marvell extends a set of concerns from his short pastoral lyrics in which a male persona addresses girl children. An examination of these poems, "The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers" and "Young Love," yields a fuller understanding of "Maria's" pastoral role in the universe of Nun Appleton and the universe at large. Within Marvell's corpus, she has literary siblings, and their relationship sheds significant light on Marvell's unique conjunction of female prenubility and poetic fertility in a pastoral and familial context.

The speaker's description of Maria has posed a problem of tone and decorum for some readers. Its very extravagance seems out of place in a poem dedicated to the praise of modesty and retirement. It has even been suggested that Marvell was in love with his pupil.[19] The hyperbolic gap between the historical Mary and the quasi-mythological "Maria," however, is likely a humorous and affectionate tribute from a fond tutor. She also provides, as Lee Erickson points out, the "unifying principle" for a wandering poem.[20] *Upon Appleton House* is particularly notable for the way Marvell, as Harry Berger Jr. notes, "sustains

19 See Kiehl , "Love Sublimated," 90.

20 Erickson, "Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* and the Fairfax Family," 159.

and modulates the lyric experience of withdrawal and return."[21] The speaker's experience, as formulated by Berger, reflects the circular path of the pastoral quest, but complicates it with paradox: going outside the house is a withdrawal inward to the self, going back in represents a turning outward to the world. The figure of Maria presents a counterpoint to the poet/speaker's progress; her withdrawal, her escape from love, allows her to assume her involvement in the world as the culmination of her parents' hopes.[22] The circular quest of the pastoral romance heroine in this poem becomes a model for the speaker's imagination of an ideal lyric experience. Unlike the speaker's meditations during his perambulation of the estate, Maria's voiceless reformation of the landscape for her personal use is neither fanciful nor solipsistic, but historically appropriate and necessary. Maria repairs the pastoral world damaged by our general mother Eve.

Within the poem, pastoral is the serious discourse of family honor, while heroic modes of epic and chivalric romance are mocked as part of a distant family history.[23] The effect, however, is to create a continuous interplay between pastoral and epic, flowers and forts, contemplative and active perspectives. Maria's role as a unifying agent between warring elements (which seems to have been her role as a bride as well) extends to her position vis-à-vis the Virgilian genres with which the speaker toys in the poem. Maria's role as a cultivator or reformer of wild nature is partially georgic, even though she descends generically from a line of pastoral heroines. She acts as a corrective to the contemplative excesses of her father. The speaker's attitude toward General Fairfax, while respectful, is ambivalent; while the General's modesty is praised, his retreat from the active life of politics and warfare is slightly suspect. This narratorial ambivalence toward the General might be said to reflect Fairfax's own mixed reaction to the course of recent politics.[24] The poem meditates on the desirability of the contemplative life versus the active life for a man of affairs such as Fairfax, but comes to no firm endorsement of either course. The place to look for resolution of this important issue is in the figure of Maria herself. Within the Fairfax family, it is she who will lead the active life in the

21 Berger, *Second World and Green World*, 298.

22 Haber remarks that pastoral offers "mutually exclusive, reflecting alternatives. … The paradoxical processes of pastoral recoil upon themselves" (9). She also notes that in *Upon Appleton House*, Marvell deals with the "dilemmas" of pastoral romance (10).

23 *Upon Appleton House* employs mock epic devices, probably largely to mock D'Avenant's *Gondibert* and its values elevating the active life. See Wallace, *Destiny His Choice*, 239–40 for a discussion of Marvell's response to the philosophical assumptions of D'Avenant's work. For a detailed analysis of the relation between *Gondibert* and the parodic opening stanzas of *Upon Appleton House*, see Hodge, 142–44.

24 Fairfax opposed Cromwell's plan to invade Scotland in order to nip in the bud any effort based there on behalf of Charles, Prince of Wales. Earlier, he had opposed the execution of Charles I. See Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 140–42 for an account of the General's ambivalent participation in politics and speculation on the ways *Upon Appleton House* reflects his situation.

sense that all dynastic hopes are pinned on her.[25] In a redefinition of the traditional association of femininity with privacy, she will take the family out into the world again.

General Fairfax made his name through military activity, the repository of epic virtues. Yet his estate is a pastoral shrine, and the description of the mowers is a georgic scene. The speaker constantly describes the activities belonging to one Virgilian genre in terms of another; for example, the mowers' harvest is described in epic terms as the slaughter of battle (394, 418–24). In the midst of this "massacre" and "pillage," however, the only one of the mowers who is particularized is "bloody Thestylis," a pastoral name for a very unpastoral figure.[26] George de F. Lord sees *Upon Appleton House* as a transitional poem in Marvell's corpus, marking the passage from the private lyric phase to the public preoccupations of his later works; in this sense, he argues, the poem sums up the Virgilian progress.[27] While it is certainly true that Marvell engages questions of poetic decorum and value attached to Virgilian genres, the poem itself blurs the clear Virgilian line of achievement. Strictly speaking, there is no progress, only unexpected juxtaposition. The effect of these generic displacements is a disruption of the normal hierarchy of the Virgilian triad, in which epic is the culmination of poetic and cultural development. Pastoral, the lowliest of the kinds, embraces and replaces them all.

The wood at Nun Appleton, for example, is a "sanctuary" from the rest of life, from purposeful activity, from public affairs. The metaphorical connections between forest tree and family tree encourage one to think of a retirement to the wood as a kind of retirement to the family. Family seems to mean a place of retreat from the rest of life. The speaker's forest reverie takes place within a pastoral *hortus conclusus* of the type celebrated in "The Garden." In stanza 65, the nightingale, symbol of the lyric poet, sings her "high music" in "low shrubs:"

> But highest oaks stoop down to hear,
> And listening elders prick the ear.[28] (ll. 517–18)

The oak is the symbol of military achievement, as in the "palm, the oak or bays" to which men aspire in "The Garden." In the forest at Nun Appleton, however, the power of the pastoral nightingale's song is such that it conquers the symbol of conquest. This is the place where the speaker chooses to have his

25 Patterson in *Marvell and the Civic Crown* points out that in the dialectic of action vs. contemplation exemplified respectively in the figures of Cromwell and Fairfax, Mary Fairfax belongs not with her father but with Cromwell (109). Lewalski emphasizes Mary's "remarkable" dynastic and social importance in "The Lady of the Country-House Poem," 270–73.

26 Wilding (*Dragons Teeth*, 157) notes that Marvell employs Thestylis as a self-critiquing voice. In addition Thestylis, like Maria, interrupts the poet's reverie and disciplines his imagination.

27 Lord, *Classical Presences in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, 84–96.

28 Marvell, 91. All citations of Marvell's poems are from Donno's edition.

mind "encamped" (602). On the Nun Appleton estate, the heroic must respect the pastoral.

Philomel's story, the one which inspires her sad song, is a tale of rape and violation, of innocence destroyed.[29] In the woods at Nun Appleton, however, the nightingale sings not of the trials of her life but of the "trials of her voice," that is to say, her song itself. The treatment in stanza 65 of the Philomel myth suggests that poetry can be divorced from experience. In a poem in which the animating spirit is a young virgin, one might expect some connection between her fate and Philomel's, even if that connection is a reversal or an admonition.[30] Pastoral is the "trial" or probationary genre, the lowliest and earliest in the hierarchy of poetic modes. So it would seem that the nightingale herself sings pastoral, and that her subject is her own pastoral song. Experience, the result of age and disappointment, has no place here. Even the ordinary hazards of sylvan life do not apply:

> The thorn, lest it should hurt her, draws
> Within its skin its shrunken claws. (ll. 519–20)

Nature is solicitous after the nightingale. Judith Haber notes how the imagery of the thorn indicates a withdrawal of a sexual threat.[31] Relieved of her sad and violent history, then, the Philomel figure of the nightingale sings only of the products of her own imagination. It is not difficult to see the singing nightingale here as an emblem of Maria herself, who is not only a virginal figure in the pastoral landscape of Nun Appleton but also, along with the speaker himself, its commentator and creator. Her virtuous imagination creates what she sees.

In a conscious echo of the description of haemony in Milton's *A Mask at Ludlow*, the speaker praises the way in which Fairfax cultivates private conscience in preference to public ambition:

> A prickling leaf it bears, and such
> As that which shrinks at every touch;
> But flowers eternal, and divine,
> That in the crowns of saints do shine. (ll. 357–60)

For both writers, the private realm of retirement and contemplation does not lack action; rather, the action it contains does not work toward the same ends as action in the world. In *Upon Appleton House*, the publicly significant is described in private terms; for example, the images of General Fairfax's garden fort stress the recreational activity of gardening over the martial past to which the shapes of the flowerbeds allude. Later on in the poem, Mary Fairfax's

29 Haber, 103.

30 See, for example, the Attendant Spirit's comparison of the Lady with Philomela in Milton's *A Mask*, a comparison which also invokes the association of the nightingale's song with lyric poetry, albeit within a context of sexual threat.

31 Haber, 103.

active destiny in the world is suggested through "vitrifying" images in a *hortus conclusus*. Elsewhere, the relation of private and public is reversed: private concerns are conveyed through public language when, for example, William Fairfax's politic pursuit of a rich bride becomes a romantic matter of national destiny. The reversal of status associated with the realms of private and public fits into the overall pattern of inversion in the poem, whereby the high is made low, the low elevated, and the overlooked looked over. The "flowers eternal, and divine" cultivated by the Fairfaxes represent the spiritual benefits attained by such a reversal. The General is a Protestant hero for whom less public forms of spiritual and familial discipline yield an eventual reward that can only dimly be imagined as a form of "universal good." The haemony image present in both Marvell's poem and *A Mask* is a convenient emblem for the reversal of expected values that each work accomplishes: its unsightly humility paradoxically indicates great power and efficacy.

All of these examples of generic inversion prepare for the appearance of Maria. By the time she arrives, we are used to having our expectations confounded. The important presence of a virgin daughter as family representative and future hope in both Milton's masque and Marvell's poem is a symptom of the elevation of private achievement. The girl, traditionally the denizen of the strictly private world, represents in each case the best hope of private achievement to form a link between the corrupt physical world and the heavenly one. It is not someone else's contemplation of her beauty in Neoplatonic fashion that does this, either; it is her own perception of the beauties of nature, her own ability to perceive the "flowers eternal" which those in the public, active sphere of life often miss. The virgin daughter brings an active quality to the contemplative realm of the pastoral by building a link between real and ideal worlds, not by being the ground of such imaginative or spiritual effort, as with Ficino and the Neoplatonists, but by being the agent who does the imaginative and spiritual work. The future of the house, instead of lying in the hands of the male scion, lies in the hands of a girl whose familial identity as a Fairfax will inevitably be "translated" and thus erased. The virtues of military action that guarantee public power and social and familial permanence in conventional aristocratic panegyric are transmuted in Maria to the seasonal pastoral virtues which guarantee nothing and portend continual flux. Although she is compared to Isabel Thwaites, Maria is also like her ancestor William Fairfax in her function within the poem: the action of her marriage will destroy the immuring *hortus conclusus* of Nun Appleton. It is clear that the static perfection of the estate, its pre-eminent status among all "woods, streams, gardens, meads," is a temporary and doomed condition contingent upon Maria's virginity, a "meanwhile" state that will end with her marriage and "translation" into another realm of poetry and life. Unlike Thwaites, who was presumably unwilling, Maria understands what she must do for "the universal good," thus avoiding the narcissism of the false pastoral retreat exemplified by the "subtle nuns" (94). Her future husband will not have to storm the walls

of the house to obtain her. The poem's substitution of the virginal daughter Maria for the impetuous young swordsman William Fairfax as the effective agent of family progress and identity exemplifies the shift in the emphasis of romance from chivalry to love as the arena of socially meaningful action. The poet's manipulation of generic frames helps to accomplish the substitution.

In reversing the expected generic values of the romance modes, Marvell gives status to humility. The poem's opening section, with its architectural conceits, also contains in stanzas 7 and 8 the extended metaphor of pregnancy and labor: the house itself, a relatively small and humble one, sweats and swells to contain Fairfax, all to prove that "honour better lowness bears" (57).[32] The incongruity between Fairfax's intrinsic nobility and his unpretentious lodging is transformed into a causal relationship; because the house is modest, it helps to produce the General's greatness, just as his presence makes it great. Thus the house, rather than the great man himself, is the origin of the nobility of soul characterizing the speaker's modest and retiring patron. The physical surroundings animate the family, rather than vice versa. Another important implication of the pregnancy metaphor is the gendering of the house as female. Appleton House is the daughter of another feminine dwelling:

> A nunnery first gave it birth
> (For virgin buildings oft brought forth) … (ll. 84–5)

Although these lines glance at the nuns' alleged promiscuity, they also express the paradoxical power of productive virginity which finds its best representative in Maria herself, another "virgin building" upon whom the fate of the house will rest. The "house," as dynasty and as dwelling, is uniquely dependent on the female line, and the speaker emphasizes this fact in the way he chooses to relate its history. General Fairfax, the family's current patriarch, is figured as the child of the house rather than its great progenitor.

Unlike the pastoral settings in the *Old Arcadia* and *A Mask*, the Nun Appleton estate is portrayed as a private "domestic heaven." The hierarchical yet organic social relations between lord and peasant or shepherd which characterize Sidney's imagination of Arcadia and Milton's picture of Ludlow give way to a view of the pastoral as a strictly private domestic space in which matters of power or authority, except within the nuclear family, do not come into play. Public affairs are marginal to the pastoral *locus amoenus* in the poem; the pastoral and the private merge almost entirely. Even the mowers are curiously distanced, both aesthetically by the elaborate imaginative frameworks in which the speaker places them, and socially by the absence of any interaction between them and their employer. The poem contributes to the construction of the family as a private space defined against the public world. It embodies uneven developments in the history of the family; employing old forms and tropes from a time in which the family as a line represented political power,

[32] Colie, "*My Eccoing Song*", 229.

it nevertheless portrays the virtue of this particular family as its ability to create for themselves an inviolate place apart from the world. The idea of the country estate as a microcosm of society typical of, for example, Jonson's "To Penshurst" has been replaced by the idea of the estate as a site of playful family retirement.[33]

Marvell's emphasis on the private life of the Fairfaxes, a family notable in the first place precisely because of their public achievements, complicates the traditional dichotomy of private and contemplative life versus active and contemplative life. Private dynastic history is illustrated as heroic exploit; for example, the lengthy account of the founding of the Fairfax dynasty in stanzas 11 through 35 is tongue-in-cheek. There is no evidence to suggest a factual basis for Marvell's story; the dissolution of monasteries occurred in 1542, long after Isabel Thwaites and William Fairfax wed in 1518.[34] The poem's telescoping of time, however, serves to illustrate the causal relationship between family formation and national affairs that Marvell is anxious to establish in his praise of Maria and her married destiny. In attempting to do so, he works counter to the cultural identification of domesticity with privacy. The rhetorical conventions of panegyric in praise of a public figure are inapplicable to the Fairfax family's situation, not only because General Fairfax himself occupies a difficult political position concerning the Parliamentary government he supported but cannot bring himself to join, but also because the accidents of genetics have deprived him of the son who would continue his martial legacy. The poem celebrates what it can about his situation, downplaying or parodying that which it cannot. The Thwaites episode helps to set up an exculpatory contrast between virtuous retirement and false retreat, and links the upbringing of the young aristocratic virgin with the fate of the house in a way that makes the poem's ultimate celebration of Maria possible.

Paradoxically, it is the untried girl whose social "retirement" or isolation her society cannot afford, rather than the proven warrior. The Fairfax family history, as redacted by Marvell, illustrates the consequences of defining virginity as a private matter. Clearly, the virginity of the nuns who tempt Isabel Thwaites with their luxurious chastity is far more perverse than the lawful deflowering, the trimming of the bud, anticipated for Maria. In the Thwaites episode, virginity is shown to be a social virtue on which depends "the universal good." Kept for its own sake, it becomes, ironically, a form of luxurious degeneration. The nunnery episode shows how virginity can devolve into a vice harmful to the larger good. While Milton saw a radically otherworldly quality in absolute chastity, Marvell emphasizes its social implications. The communal consequences of such chastity become Marvell's back-door

[33] O'Loughlin, "This Sober Frame," 122. Also see Lord, *Classical Presences* 96: "hospitality and social interaction … are all but ignored," a subversion of one's expectations of a country-house poem.

[34] Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, 148.

way into the realm of public concerns. Marvell's treatment of virginity in the Thwaites episode contrasts, however, with another important significance of virginity in his corpus as a whole: in young girls, it helps create a unique gift, poetic in function, for "reforming the errors of the spring" ("The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers"). The two different views of virginity form an uneasy counterpoise to each other in the poem, where eternal perfection and the flux of history form the poem's temporal dialectic.

In the poem's version of the Fairfax family history, the old concept of martial honor animates the description of William Fairfax's actions in the recovery of his bride. The poem devotes some space to the examinations of conscience William makes in order to take the correct course. Although in this episode might justifies right, it does not exactly make right. William Fairfax, after debating what to do, lets conscience be his guide and obtains a warrant before he goes ahead with the "storm" of the convent (233–4). The description of his actions as a chivalric siege contrasts with what is evidently a circumspect, legalized, considered acquisition of a wealthy bride.[35] Nevertheless, the elder Fairfax's triumph, is described as a struggle:

> Is this not he whose offspring fierce
> Shall fight through all the universe;
> And with successive valour try
> France, Poland, either Germany;
> Till one, as long since prophesied,
> His horse through conquered Britain ride? (ll. 241–6)

In this, the courtship of Thwaites is cast to resemble an episode from *The Faerie Queene*. The romance aura of prophecy and magic continues in the account of the nuns' final defeat,

> As when the enchantment ends,
> The castle vanishes or rends.[36] (ll. 269–70)

Fairfax's rising through the walls and breaching "th'unfrequented vault" (258–9) is obviously a jokingly salacious description of just how a convent can be "in one instant dispossessed" (272): his attainment of Isabel is a legal, martial, and sexual conquest which abolishes the virginity which privileges the nuns. By the end of the poem, however, Maria, the new genius of the Fairfax family, has reincarnated its honor as a form of productive chastity, a virtue she shares with other virgins of pastoral romance and which leads outward, rather than turning inward. In the burlesque romance episode of the convent,

35 See Erickson 159: "… there was little romance or grandeur in their shrewd marriages and careful acquisition of property for the historian or poet to celebrate."

36 Colie, "*My Eccoing Song*", 266, compares William Fairfax's destruction of the convent to Britomart's destruction of the House of Busirane in *The Faerie Queene*. This would imply that Isabella Thwaites and Amoret have something in common: being imprisoned by art.

the culmination of family history is "prophesied" to be General Fairfax; yet in the serious parts of the poem, it is Maria. For a poem of praise, *Upon Appleton House* is surprisingly light about the military achievements of all the Fairfaxes, even at a time when the civil war was still a matter of deadly seriousness. By relegating the martial feats of the family to the territory of romance burlesque, the speaker is able simultaneously to denigrate their importance and acknowledge their symbolic value in the construction of the family's reputation, its public identity. It is ultimately the private identity, however, that concerns the speaker.

Marvell portrays Maria as a Protestant improvement on the idea of a numinous virgin goddess. Her productive chastity is subordinated to the needs of the patriarchal social order under which she is born: she serves the family rather than transcending it through immaculate conception. On the other hand, the poem presents her as supplanting her father as the primary representative and bearer of her family's honor and future. His career is finished, while hers is yet to come. As she lends herself to be used by her parents in matrimonial negotiations, she also becomes the indispensable element of familial virtue without which there can be no Fairfax heroism. Within the poem, the Nun Appleton convent exemplifies the limitations of Roman Catholicism in relation to aristocratic ideology. Female sexual purity in the self-referential context of the nunnery is useless to the noble family. The poem suggests that the institutions of Roman Catholicism are actually harmful to the aristocracy.[37] It sets up two subtly different versions of female honor, one Catholic, the other Protestant, in which the virginity of the Brides of Christ is shown to be competitive with the purity of the virginal Protestant aristocrat. The Roman Church is figured not as a rival patriarchy, but as a matriarchy; Isabel Thwaites is courted with the promise of a future as an abbess (ll. 157–58). Patriarchy is identified with Protestantism. The patriarchal nuclear family exemplified by the Fairfaxes emerges from a struggle with an older, tenacious tradition of communal Christianity in

[37] Although Roman Catholicism remained strong among certain English aristocratic families in the seventeenth century, the English revolt against the Church of Rome was initially an aristocratic phenomenon initiated by Henry VIII, whose dynastic problems were not unlike General Fairfax's one hundred and twenty years later. Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* notes the irony of that earlier religious revolution: while the move for ecclesiastical reform in England was widespread, "it proceeded in a very unrevolutionary way, from the top down" (168). Henry VIII faced a typical aristocratic problem, the lack of a male heir, which prompted the fall of the Roman Church. Marvell's association of the Church with dynastic obstruction, then, is influenced not only by the Church's attitude toward marriage but also specific historical conflicts between the ruling class and the Church.

Goody's book imagines the development of the Western family as profoundly affected by institutional Christianity. The Church, with its relatively restrictive definitions of incest and ban on practices such as polygamy, assured that almost half of all families would eventually lack an heir. The Church was then able to appropriate familial property by default in a massive, centuries-long transfer of wealth (although Goody stops shy of suggesting that this was a deliberate strategy to aggrandize Church power).

which marriage was seen as a second-best alternative.[38] The Catholic ambivalence about the spiritual status of marriage and childbearing is abandoned in favor of a Protestant endorsement of heterosexual domesticity; yet such domesticity, as embodied by Fairfax and his wife Anne Vere, is only valuable because its ultimate result is another self-sufficient and divinely gifted virgin.

The nuns are a parodic version of a chivalric company:[39]

> Here we, in shining armour white,
> Like virgin Amazons do fight. (ll. 105–6)

The images the nun chooses to describe the prerogatives and functions of her order mimic the prerogatives and functions of an aristocratic knighthood, repelling the "wild creatures called men" (l. 102), a lower order of humanity.[40] The nuns represent not only the Catholic, but also the chivalric aristocratic past. The poem's implicit criticism of the old political order of pre-revolutionary days is displaced, to some extent, onto the nuns themselves. Although Maria clearly stands in structural analogy to Isabel Thwaites, she represents a break with the idea of ancestral continuity. Her familial destiny, her ultimate identity, is uncertain. The poem celebrates that very uncertainty. The patriarchal nuclear family, unlike the aristocratic line, must periodically be reconstituted, that is, broken and re-formed. Like Maria's pre-eminence on the estate, the nuclear family is a "meanwhile" thing. Marvell's criticisms of Roman Catholicism are also displaced criticisms of the aristocratic familial model of the line, in which the continuity of the name matters more than the actual members of the family at a given point in time. The family tree, as the poem makes clear in a clump of arboreal imagery, is too easily cut down to be celebrated without ambivalence.

The poem invokes the importance of lineage only to disregard it. This is partially demanded by the biological impasse to which the Fairfax line had come. Yet by focusing on the personal qualities of Maria Fairfax and elevating them above her family identity, the poet suggests that she is more important to her family than her family might be to her. If the family is not the origin of government, and if, as Locke was shortly to suggest, the government holds its authority by the social contract and not by God and Nature as expressed in the notion of filial obligation (i.e. the king as the father of his people), it is fair to ask what the role of the great family and its heirs might be in the new society that people like Fairfax helped bring about. The great family was in the process

38 Cf. Paul's injunction that it is better to marry than to burn; also, Jerome's misogyny in *Against Jovinianus*. The perception of marriage as a necessary but distasteful accommodation of man's basic sinfulness is implicit in both examples of early Church doctrine.

39 Griffin, "'Twas no Religious House," notes that the historical counterpart of the abbess was Lady Anna Langton, who actually served as Isabel Thwaites' guardian, her legal parent, as it were (64–6).

40 The nun's rhetoric is unwittingly accurate about the erotic atmosphere of the convent as well: note the juxtaposition of "spouse" and "queen" (i.e. prostitute),

of losing its position as a respected model of authority in the public arena. Its contributions to the social order are increasingly harder to define in public terms.

The poem's examination of the family through the model presented by the Fairfaxes suggests that in terms of family structure, nuclearity is associated with femininity. The lack of a male heir dictates a certain familial solipsism; questions about the future social destiny of such a family in a patriarchal society are unanswerable. The implied relation in the poem between Maria's private virtue and her public destiny as the wife of some great man remains vague, as it must, in part because there exists no epideictic language to describe it. The "universal good" for which Maria must be sacrificed in matrimony may be the hoped-for birth of her own son, especially in view of her name and her association with the Virgin. The tactful poet, however, makes no explicit allusion to Maria's postnuptial fertility, and the language of mating is used only to illustrate a relation between Maria and the estate itself, a poignant temporary connection (see stanza 94). The particular familial situation that Marvell is called upon to describe and praise is coincidental with certain developments in the ideology of the family that privilege the nuclear unit as a "domestic heaven." He treats the fact that Mary Fairfax is a girl not as if this were a misfortune, but rather an opportunity of unknown dimensions. Although Fairfax is the current patriarch of his relatively new family line, within the nuclear family he is not as significant. He is the child of the house, not its father, and the "womenfolk," in Colie's words, dominate the world in which he resides.[41] The Protestant model of the patriarchal nuclear family is shown to be heavily dependent upon its female members for its survival and ultimate value.

The achievement of the Fairfax and Vere lines in the field of war, the public arena of the aristocrat, is not the defining factor in this version of the family tree. The importance of the Fairfaxes to the specific history of the nation recedes in the face of the teleology of the Christian world view. What is true of the Fairfaxes, in this version of history, is true for all families. Figured in line 739 as mistletoe, Maria is tied to her family but not essentially a part of it. This sprig will be cut for transplantation to some other family's masculine oak. However, another important effect of the mistletoe imagery contrasts with the arboreal implications of the Fairfax-Vere family history. In the wood, the speaker sees fallen trunks and meditates on death. Even in the live and thriving trees, he sees an ascent to heaven and an awaiting of "nature's hearse." The cycle of death, decay, birth and growth is present in the likeness of the family to a forest. Mistletoe, on the other hand, is perpetually green, even as its host tree is subject to the cycles of season and age.[42] So Maria herself, it would appear, is exempt from the temporal turmoils and reversals that her family has

41 Colie *My Eccoing Song*, 212) notes that Fairfax's presentation is "an odd way to present a warrior hero so domestically and cozily among his womenfolk."

42 O'Loughlin, 140.

suffered. She is the agent of immortality, even though, as the speaker implies in line 736, she herself will age . The speaker identifies the feminine branch of the family as the source of its immortality; it is not the male scion, with his active achievements in arms, who perpetuates the family name and honor, but the daughter, whose role is imagined as parasitical yet regenerative.

MARVELL'S "LITTLE INFANTS" AND THE GENDER OF PASTORAL VISION

Marvell does not unequivocally identify female honor with female virginity, as his attitude toward the nuns indicates. In the convent episode, Marvell engages the question of the morality of poetry. The image that one of the "subtle nuns" uses to describe the process by which "pleasure piety doth meet" in the *hortus conclusus* of the convent is that of preserve-making:

> So through the mortal fruit we boil
> The sugar's uncorrupting oil;
> And that which perished while we pull,
> Is thus preserved clear and full. (ll. 173–76)

So the nun claims to have found a way of enjoying the evanescent pleasures of the flesh without the corruption to which flesh is the heir. What is this, really, but the speaker's wish in Marvell's shorter pastoral lyrics, especially the erotic ones addressed to "infants"? The combination of pleasure and piety is typical, too, of the Golden Age pastoral eclogue, in which humanity enjoyed free love without moral taint. The domestic arts of the nuns reconstitute that Golden Age, albeit meretriciously. For their preserve-making is analogous to the art of poetry: both render nature eternal and incorruptible. The nun's speech in stanzas 22 and 23 discusses the uses of nature:

> For such indeed are all our arts,
> Still handling Nature's finest parts … (ll. 177–8)

The slightly salacious tone of these lines anticipates the fancies of the solitary speaker in the grove, in which aspects of the landscape become, to borrow the nun's terms, "baits" for the speaker's own "curious tastes."[43] This combination of sexual isolation and poetic potency is appealing to Marvell's speakers when they imagine themselves alone in Paradise, but in the nunnery it is somehow wrong.

Sex and age create the differences between the Marvellian speaker's imagination of solitary lyric musing in "The Garden," for example, and the nuns'

[43] Marvell's nun echoes Milton's Comus, for whom nature's gifts are "to please and sate the curious taste" (Milton, *A Mask*, l. 714).

creation of an enclosed creative paradise in the form of their convent. The environment of the convent is simultaneously sophisticated and stunting: Isabel Thwaites is offered eternal virginity that at the same time will develop into a form of artful moral degeneration. The convent is an artificial extension of the poetic prerogatives possessed by innocent, barely verbal young girls in Marvell's other poems. The nuns, by refusing to surrender their virginity, seek to retain the creative powers such as are granted, temporarily and provisionally, to girl children such as Little T.C. and Maria herself. They will not be sacrificed to the public world through marriage. In short, the nuns, despite their sophistication, seek the powers of eternal feminine childhood, an immaturity that is associated in Marvell's corpus with immense poetic and perceptual powers and pleasures. They refuse to move on. They seek what many of Marvell's adult male speakers seek: a recovery, by means of art, of the original *hortus conclusus* of the mind.[44]

The intensely feminine atmosphere of the convent is sinister, because the nuns, like Marvell's pastoral little girls, do not need men; but the fallen sexuality of the adult women ensures that their efforts to recreate the *hortus conclusus* are just as vain as those of the male speaker. Female sexuality, when not directed toward masculine ends, is associated in Marvell's pastoral lyrics with a potentially dangerous power to re-form the natural world. The romance parody of William Fairfax's sexual breach of the convent walls ironically puts an end to the paradise of eroticism without consequence that the nunnery offers:

> Where you may lie as chaste in bed,
> As pearls together billeted,
> All night embracing arm in arm
> Like crystal pure with cotton warm. (ll. 189–92)

There is no point to this kind of eroticism except pleasure, no dynastic considerations or consequences. Free love, in the Golden Age sense, abides in the convent which the would-be dynastic progenitor destroys. Marvell's poem, very much concerned with the proper use of virgin sexuality, is profoundly hostile to female eroticism. There is no erotic energy to Maria's imagined marriage; the description of it is much less sensual than the adumbration of the Lady's matrimonial future in Milton's *A Mask*. Even the speaker's sense of autoeroticism as he, "languishing with ease," lies "on pallets swoll'n of velvet moss" (593–4) in the forest, is only a symptom of a desire for profound isolation, not an approval of male sexual energy. The poem's refusal to consider erotic love in itself as a positive value, despite or perhaps evidenced by the burlesque use of romance convention, places it apart from both Sidney's *Arcadia* and Milton's masque. *Upon Appleton House* is an anti-romance.

[44] See Haber, 129–131: the nuns seek to maintain the "enclosed circles of their convent and their virginity."

The nuns' attitudes toward Isabel Thwaites offer a parody of the Neoplatonic definition of love as desire aroused by beauty. In describing the activity of embroidering "altar's ornaments," Isabel's persuader says:

> But much it to our work would add
> If here your hand, your face we had:
> By it we would Our Lady touch;
> Yet thus She you resembles much. (ll. 129–32)

The Virgin Mary is the principal female archetype in the poem, the frame of reference in which Maria and Isabel are placed. The nuns, as artists, wish to use the beauty of Isabel as a means of approximating the Divine in their art, an art which in its turn would be used to motivate love of the Divine in a devotional setting. Instead of seeing the Virgin as an example for Isabel, however, the nuns reverse the relation by the end of the passage: Isabel, not Mary, becomes the feminine Ideal whom the mother of God only "resembles." The theological error into which the nuns fall, the worship of beauty for its own sake, is also the chief problem of Neoplatonic erotics: instead of using beauty as a means toward apprehension of heavenly virtue, it is all too easy to make virtue a mere accessory to beauty. One can go down as well as one can go up the Platonic ladder. The accommodation of classical philosophy to Christian beliefs and the justification of sensual pleasure for higher ends that Ficino's philosophy attempts to accomplish is perverted by the nuns into a form of epicureanism. The nuns offer the speaker a model for creating art in more ways than one; the nun who speaks for them persuades Isabel through praise. Marvell's speaker, too, is in the business of praising; yet he avoids the philosophical error and sacrilege in his praise of Fairfax by concentrating on humility. He does not try to make his patron into a demigod, the way the nun tries to do with Thwaites. Instead, he becomes the tongue-in-cheek "devoto" of Fairfax's daughter, who has earned such devotion by not wishing it. In the figure of Maria Fairfax, however, the speaker provides an alternative moral function for the figure of the beautiful virgin, one that preserves the prerogatives while avoiding the dangers of the Neoplatonic model.

The arrival of William Fairfax destroys the artistic insularity of the convent just as Maria's walk interrupts the speaker's solitude later in the poem. The speaker in *Upon Appleton House* is complicit with the nuns in the same tainted, mediated enterprise of poetry making, which in Marvell's lyrics is primarily a doomed and poignant attempt at recreating a lost Golden Age. Marvell, the poet of the "double mind," is very much aware of the doubleness of the pastoral. It represents for him, in addition to the Golden Age, such things as the Christian Eden and the escape to contemplative solitude.[45] However, as is the case with any art form, it is also a debased reconstitution of experience necessitated by the Fall itself. In "The Coronet," for example, Marvell's

[45] Friedman, *Marvell's Pastoral Art*, 14.

speaker finds himself unable to employ nature's floral gifts as a tribute to the Lord without the "wreaths of fame and interest" that become indistinguishable from the flowers themselves. Unlike the mature male poet's, however, the virgin daughter's mind is not yet "double." In straightening and sweetening nature, the young girls of Marvell's poetry initially use artlessness as a creative force, but the speaker who frames them according to his own fallen, self- and time-bound imagination vitiates their productive unartificiality. Marvell's pastoral representations of childish female innocence are permeated with an ironic realization of their own tragic and corrupting inaccuracy.

The process by which one perceives the "flowers eternal" through the veil of the earthly life is an important subject to Marvell's typical lyric speaker. According to Philip Sidney, poetry is the making of a golden world out of a brazen; the virgin daughter in pastoral is implicitly a poet when she participates in this process. While Sidney's Pamela and Milton's Lady are characterized by their rhetorical ingenuity, however, Marvell's pastoral virgins display a preverbal or superverbal ability to rectify nature, to remake the Golden Age through the privilege of uncorrupted and unmediated perception.[46] They make language unnecessary or obsolete. In Marvell's pastoral lyrics, the *locus amoenus* is the primary site of poetry making; while female characters abound here, they are often portrayed as invaders in a private preserve ideally solitary and ideally male. Thus the relation between the lyric speaker and the pastoral girl child he portrays is often a strangely rivalrous one which, while couched in terms of erotic conflict, ultimately repudiates the value of gross corporeal sexuality. Marvell employs the traditional Petrarchan analogy between the quest for love and the quest for poetry, only to dismantle it.[47]

"The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers" illustrates the construction of this kind of relationship between speaker and girl through unconventional use of conventional imagery. As he watches the child, the speaker describes the progress of her play with nature:

> In the green grass she loves to lie,
> And there with her fair aspect tames
> The wilder flowers, and gives them names:
> But only with the roses plays;

46 Berthoff in *The Resolved Soul* notes that T.C.'s reforming power is similar to Maria's (126). Colie also describes what she calls their "naming magic" (*Eccoing Song*, 101).

47 See Stillman, 53: Petrarch's "love for Laura is simultaneously a moral quest, an attempt to identify an ideal spiritual development for man within the context of Christian platonism, and an attempt to give that development greater authority by locating its roots in nature." The love quest and the poetry quest are the same. This combination of erotic, poetic, and pastoral impulses is the generic legacy within which Marvell works and against which he reacts, most famously in "The Garden" ("No white or red was ever seen/ So am'rous as this lovely green," ll. 17–18.) In Marvell's poetry, woman becomes a bar against divine communion with nature, rather than a means of achieving it.

> And them does tell
> What colour best becomes them, and what smell. (T.C., ll. 3–8)

T.C.'s interpretive games move from simple taxonomies of wild flowers to artistic judgment of cultivated ones: the rose is the quintessential garden flower, bred and transformed to suit the aesthetic requirements of the gardener. She observes, names, classifies, and finally manipulates nature with the aid of her "fair aspect," which in its doubleness refers to her face and to her perception, her outside and inside. In this first stanza, T.C. fulfills the ambition of the pastoral poet, because her relation to nature is one of successful artistic reformation. Her power to name the flowers is akin to Adam's in naming animals, and like his indicates not only her tremendous power but also her tremendous isolation.

T.C.'s future is subsequently portrayed as a progress from the genre of pastoral to that of epic, as the mock-martial imagery of the next stanza suggests:

> Who can foretell for what high cause
> This Darling of the Gods was born!
> Yet this is she whose chaster laws
> The wanton Love shall one day fear,
> And, under her command severe,
> See his bow broke and ensign torn.
> Happy, who can
> Appease this virtuous enemy of man! (T.C., ll. 9–16)

The culmination of the female child's maturation is the erotic battlefield. Her success there, however, is a denial rather than a fulfillment of love. She is a version of Petrarch's "sweet enemy," without the sweetness. Presenting T.C. as a poet-figure herself, the speaker proceeds to outline the terms of his rivalry with her as a form of erotic conflict from which he begs to be excused. The notion of T.C. as a poetic rival for the speaker finds support in his desire to "parley with [her] conquering eyes" (18) now, before she gets any older. In addition to the obvious Neoplatonic use of the eyes as the origin of love, the phrase contributes a suggestion of the respective powers the antagonists possess. The speaker has the ability to talk, to use language to create better worlds; but T.C.'s vision, her perception, presents her with a world which actually is pure and unfallen. The speaker, for all his adult linguistic powers, envies the solipsistic unity of the "infant" child with the natural world and her innocent and unambivalent acceptance of its gifts. Her eyes conquer and reshape nature without conscious effort on her part. The poet who uses language to idealize nature and "reform the errors of the spring" will never be able to achieve the unmediated appreciation of its perceived perfections this simple child can. The poem's title puns on its issues: the "picture" in question can be either the speaker's or the child's, and "prospect" can mean "view" or "future." The poem juxtaposes T.C.'s innocent present and her uncertain destiny.

The historical counterpart of T.C. is believed to be Theophila Cornewall, a child whose situation in the family bears some analogy to Mary Fairfax's.[48] Theophila ("Darling of the Gods," in Marvell's translation) was baptized in 1644, and the poem itself was probably written in the early 1650s. She was not the first Theophila in her family; an elder sister, also named Theophila, died shortly after birth. The younger child, sharing the name of the lost sibling, supplements a prior loss; she offers her family an alternate future. In this function, Theophila is similar to Mary Fairfax. Although Mary was an only child, as far as is known, her gender places her in the position of being a second-choice replacement for the expected son. She cannot extend her father's name and her family's ownership of the estate, but her birth offers her parents the opportunity to forge a new set of expectations for the future. Like Theophila, she compensates her parents for something lost, or never had: in this case, the male heir. Both "Maria" and T.C. have unknown, yet potentially heroic, destinies.

In both "Little T.C." and *Upon Appleton House*, the dangers of courtship that maturity brings are illustrated by the martial metaphors of Petrarchan love convention. Maria avoids the potentially contaminating experience of courtship by acquiescing to the arranged marriage her parents will plan for her, difficult as it might be:

> But knowing where this ambush lay,
> She 'scaped the safe, but roughest way. (ll. 719–20)

Although there are many parallels between Maria and T.C., an illuminating difference between the two is their position in the war of love: T.C. is the potential aggressor, while Maria is the threatened one in her relationships with would-be suitors. T.C.'s imagined future as the "virtuous enemy of man" in her feminine maturity is diffused in Maria's situation because, in contrast with T.C., we already know "for what high cause/ This darling of the Gods was born" (T.C. 9–10). Maria was born to marry to her family's advantage. Little T.C., on the other hand, is free to refuse, and this freedom makes her into the ambiguous figure she is in Marvell's short lyric. The poem itself offers its own threat in turn: a premature death for T.C. The issue in each situation, Maria's and T.C.'s, is latent power, the true meaning of "potential": how will the girl employ it? Maria, while she shares many of T.C.'s gifts, is firmly circumscribed by familial dictates, while the much younger T.C. still possesses a somewhat frightening indifference to social custom and prescribed roles. She is in her "golden days," a phrase meant perhaps to recall the Golden Age and to suggest that T.C.'s biography will recapitulate human history. The corrupting influ-

[48] H.M. Margoulioutth, who edited the first twentieth-century edition of Marvell's poems, suggested this theory in 1922 (see Margoulioutth, 357), and it is widely accepted. Little T.C.'s mother, also named Theophila, was the sister of Cyriack Skinner, friend of Milton and subject of two of his sonnets (XXI and XXII).

ence in her case will be love of men, or rather, men's love for her; and the poem even intimates that she herself will be responsible for initiating such corruption. She is paradoxically innocent and impure, for she carries the seeds of her own fall. The child has an erotic relationship with nature, who "courts" her "with fruit and flowers," anticipating her future courtship by men in the form of chivalric battle. T.C., however, has an adversarial relationship with both nature and mankind. She belongs wholly to neither realm. Her marginal status is the source of her uncanny power as "virtuous enemy," a power that the poem portrays as morally ambiguous. In *Upon Appleton House*, however, Maria's similar marginal status, however, is the source of a purifying "discipline" rather than a corrupting dictatorship over men. In T.C.'s case, chastity is a form of cruel aggression against men, while in Maria's, it becomes a protection against male aggression.

Like Maria, T.C. as pastoral heroine has a short-lived opportunity to perfect nature before she enters the world of culture, the epic world of the social contest, where her eyes will become like the "glancing wheels" of chariots (T.C., line 20). Her childish innocence means that she sees no evidence of mortality or danger in nature. She inhabits a perceptual Golden Age all by herself. She alone can therefore do what the speaker wishes:

> Reform the errors of the spring;
> Make that the tulips may have share
> Of sweetness, seeing they are fair;
> And roses of their thorns disarm:
> But most procure
> That violets may a longer age endure. (T.C., ll. 27–32)

The speaker, through his idealizing injunctions, requests that she create a *locus amoenus* of the imagination. He wishes to forestall or even to prevent entirely her inevitable translation into the epic sphere where she will be an enemy to man. He evokes the fearful result of Flora's ire should T.C. overstep her bounds and pluck unripe buds:

> Lest Flora angry at thy crime,
> To kill her infants in their prime,
> Do quickly make the example yours;
> And, ere we see,
> Nip in the blossom all our hopes and thee. (T.C., ll. 36–40)

The puns play on the definition of "prime." The "infant" buds forbidden to T.C. are both young and, as aspects of dumb nature, speechless; yet the speaker, by saying that they are in their prime, confounds our expectations that the "prime" of a flower would be its blossom stage. As are flowers, so is the child; the speaker clearly feels that her "golden days" are now, her prime in its zenith, even though, or perhaps because, she has not "blossomed" yet. The locution in the final line is a revision of the expected "nip in the bud." The speaker's hopes

may be in full blossom, but their object, the child herself, is not. Her blossoming can only be a falling off from initial perfection. The speaker harbors mutually incompatible hopes; that T.C. will survive, and yet never mature. Marvell invokes the Virgilian developmental hierarchy of pastoral, georgic and epic in "T.C.," but forbids the child from the georgic action, the plucking of the buds, that would indicate her clear graduation from one mode to the next. Georgic is the intermediary mode between childish and mature artistic achievements. The speaker, by refusing to allow the child permission to act in the georgic mode, is effectively forestalling her development from pastoral through georgic to epic. In other words, he invokes the Virgilian hierarchy as if deliberately to frustrate it. The speaker's containment of T.C. within pastoral is the evidence of his desire to block the normal progression of maturity, that is, "in time [to] compound" (l. 17). Only by stunting the child within pastoral timelessness can he make her endure a longer age, like the fragile violet he asks her to prolong. "T.C." can thus be read as a meditation on the Virgilian model of maturation as it applies to female rather than male participants.

The female child is not actually a poet, and the female adult cannot be: her creativity is displaced into the realm of the erotic. T.C.'s heroic future as a virtuous enemy of man is the same as that of the cruel mistress in "The Gallery," an

> … inhuman murderess
> Examining upon our hearts
> Thy fertile shop of cruel arts … ("The Gallery," ll. 1–12)

In "T.C.", on the other hand, the speaker may dictate the nature-reforming activities that the child can perform safely, for her own sake and for his. She becomes a tool by which the speaker himself can idealize nature. He alludes to Flora's ire in order to warn her away from something he does not want her to do, an action that foreshadows the destruction he fears she will wreak in the future. In particular, she cannot prune; she cannot exercise artistic judgment to the point of gainsaying generative nature as embodied by Flora. T.C., like Maria, "seems with the flowers a flower to be" (*Upon Appleton House*, l. 302), but she occupies an unclear position between nature and humanity. Her artistic consciousness regarding the roses, for example, is new, but it is there, a sign of potential maturity and of potential corruption. She is simultaneously Flora's infant, along with the other buds, and Flora's possible rival. Were T.C. to cull the buds around her in a georgic manner, she would extend the "reform" of nature too far. The speaker dreads her unpredictable freedom once she has matured beyond pastoral, for then he can no longer appropriate her vision, her pictures and prospects, for his poetic ends. In "The Gallery," Marvell employs a speaker who describes the gallery of his soul as furnished with different images of his mistress. Not surprisingly, it is the painting of the "tender shepherdess" that "likes [him] best." Situated at the entrance of the gallery, the pastoral image of woman is the least threatening of the gallery

of enchantresses, murderesses, and Venuses, all of them female archetypes or "genres." Like the speaker in "The Gallery," the mature man of "Little T.C." wishes to hold the girl in a pastoral context over which he has some control.[49] Love and artistry are linked, as in Petrarchan tradition, but erotic maturity and aesthetic sophistication as they are embodied by women become frightening. The innocent, simple and "tender," or young, female is the ideal. Maria Fairfax in *Upon Appleton House* offers an alternative, and more comforting, biography for T.C.; she has waived the power love would give her by allowing her parents to make her destiny their choice.

Tempering the nostalgia of Marvell's speakers for pastoral control, however, is their evident respect for the figure of the female pastoralist as a rival and a model for their own poetic visions, a respect that is most fully articulated in *Upon Appleton House*. A recurring motif of Marvell's lyric work is the presence of the innocent female child whose virginity is artistically productive, not barren. All artistic efforts are attempts at recovering this initial fruitfulness of the imagination. The speaker, from a position of corrupt maturity, woos the child not for the pleasure of corrupting her as well but out of a nostalgic desire to share in her productive innocence.[50] In "Young Love," for example, the very project of addressing a love poem to a speechless infant demonstrates the insuperable language barrier between them and represents the vast gulf between a fallen mind's reconstitution of innocence and its genuine state. The presence of language implies the necessity, caused by the isolation of consciousness, of mediated experience. Language offers an approximation of the thing, but not the thing itself. The child who is too young to talk is also too young to feel isolated in her own self-consciousness. The advent of language, however, signals the breakdown of the child's complete identification with the world around her. An important characteristic of man's unfallen relation with nature is the sense of identification with, not separation from, nature: little T.C., for example, is not opposed to nature, but instead considers it an extension of herself. (Her observer says she "names" the flowers, but only in a figurative sense, for that naming is not the same process of linguistic abstraction adults perform). Once self-consciousness sets in, however, that unfallen relation to nature is forever spoiled. Similarly, once the beloved infant of "Young Love" is capable of understanding and responding to what the speaker asks of her, she will no longer be able to offer the prelapsarian innocence he seeks. The speaker, since by nature of his fallenness he is unable to talk of innocence in anything

[49] Although Cunnar sees Marvell as rejecting the Petrarchan (and patriarchal) act of naming female beauty so as to "capture, control or preserve it" ("Names on Trees," 132), I do not believe that Marvell's poetry about love is at all consonant with present-day feminist sensibilities. In much of Marvell's work, women pose a problem.

[50] Here I part company with Hirst and Zwicker, who see "T.C." as a pedophilic lyric ("Andrew Marvell and the Toils of Patriarchy," 634); however, I follow their emphasis on Marvell's interest in "pre-pubescent idealizations" (635).

but corrupt terms, would coax a verbal sign from her that would paradoxically indicate the incipient presence of the very corruption he wishes to escape.

In "Young Love," the speaker employs Petrarchan imagery again, paradoxically to escape the typical Petrarchan predicament of erotic aggression and rivalry with the "sweet enemy".[51] His premature wooing of the child is not to forestall the encroachment of any rivals for her affection:

> Thus as kingdoms, frustrating
> Other titles to their crown,
> In the cradle crown their king,
> So all foreign claims to drown,
>
> So, to make all rivals vain,
> Now I crown thee with my love… (YL, ll. 25–30)

The speaker sets up the following correspondences: kingdom=speaker; crown=the speaker's love; king=the child. The "foreign claims" are to the "crown" of the speaker's, not the child's, affection; they would be those of other, perhaps older women. However, to make the child's rivals vain, the speaker crowns her with his love so as to eliminate for himself the temptation of more mature women. He is not trying to eliminate the risk of other male rivals for the child's affection, rivals who will appear as she reaches the appropriate age for courtship. Thus, the poem is not itself libertine, although it uses the language of libertinism.[52] Instead, the speaker voluntarily takes himself out of the arena of adult male/female relations, in order to try to establish a love untainted by fallen lust. When he asks the infant to "Crown me with thy love again," he asks her to reciprocate the honor; but the first concern is that the speaker's other, more corrupt loves not be allowed to invade his own perception of this pure relation between him and the infant. He tries to assign to her an impossible role, creating her function in his universe through the strength of his own longings for innocence. As in "The Coronet," however, his fallen nature prevents the accomplishment of his ideal. The language of Petrarchan competition, like the serpent entwined in the flowers, becomes impossible to separate from the act of communication itself.

The wide dissemination and imitation of Petrarch's lyrics institutionalized the format of erotic conflict in European love poetry. In the "little girl" poems, Marvell recasts this rivalrous and hostile relationship between male speaker and female subject to reflect a different, if related, set of preoccupations. The latter has in her possession something the former desires, but it is not sexual. In Petrarchan lyric, the battle is over possession: of the woman's body, of the man's heart. Marvell's adult speakers, addressing girl children, attempt to avoid this conflict by prizing erotic immaturity as the fulfillment of the female condi-

51 Petrarch's epithet for Laura, "la dolce mia nemica," in *Rime Sparse*, 125.

52 A.J. Smith discusses a mid-seventeenth-century vogue for poems in praise of young girls "whose natural charms stir wistful guilt in the worldly admirer" (*Metaphysics of Love*, 251).

tion, but only end up raising the stakes of the conflict: instead of sexual possession, what now is at stake is the possession of poetic and moral authority. By delaying the erotic potential of the female child, the Marvellian speaker intensifies her current power as "virginal spirit of the woods," an uncanny creature with mysterious control over the natural world. By means of such control, these female children diminish the need for language at all. Their experience of the world is not mediated through corrupt linguistic paradigms. Their gifts mock the compositional anxiety of the Petrarchan poet/lover, who must remind himself to scorn the over-fanciful invention of the "sun-burn'd brain" and to allow his heart be inspired by a vision of the beloved: "'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write.'"[53] The little girls of Marvell's poetry do not confront this problem, as they do not yet suffer a division between heart and brain. They live a lyric rapture that the poet can only dream of.

The male speaker who evokes these children envies their position as pure selves, free, as Barbara Estrin describes the narrator of *Upon Appleton House*, "from the imperializing agency of poetic convention."[54] In a discussion of the Damon poems and *Upon Appleton House*, Estrin analyzes the Marvellian speaker's tentative identification with "the woman in the self" as a way of approximating the freedom of the elusive and finally ungraspable feminine principle that the Laura figure represents in Petrarchism.[55] In other words, Marvell the poet seeks to escape the binaries of Petrarchism that are as restrictive to the male speaker as to the imagined female subject. I would extend Estrin's analysis by suggesting that Marvell's model of poetic freedom is not only feminine but childish. If women in Marvell's corpus are "verbally disempowering" to the poet, as Estrin suggests, the speaker's response in the "little girl" poems is not to silence the feminine but rather to seek to appropriate it.[56] The pastoral girl's pre-sexuality, however, is a privileged state that the adult male poet cannot achieve.

In his Latin poem "Upon an Eunuch: a Poet," Marvell opposes sexual potency and poetic fertility:

> Nec sterilem te crede …
> … Tibi Fama perenne
> Praegnabit; rapiesque novem de monte sorores …[57] (11. 1,3–4)

53 Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*, 1.

54 Estrin, *Uncovering Gender and Genre*, 303.

55 Estrin, 279–303; see also 227–54 on Damon and "The Gallery," suitably subtitled "Appropriations of Female Power."

56 Estrin comments on Damon the Mower: "Marvell fuses the sexually castrated man unto the verbally disempowered woman" (239).

57 "Don't believe yourself sterile. … Fame will be continually pregnant by you, and you will snatch the nine sisters from the mountain. …" Trans. by William A. McQueen and Kiffin A. Rockwell, *The Latin Poetry of Andrew Marvell* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina 1964). Rpt. in Marvell, *Complete Poems*, 137.

The man who is not, or cannot be, a lover of women is portrayed as a better poet, a stance implicitly opposed to the Petrarchan lyric model in which the ever-postponed attainment of Laura/the laurel is the spur to poetic achievement. This little poem affirms his poetic autonomy by means of radically diminishing the overt importance of the woman as the ground of the male poet's imagination. In her discussion of the Mower poems, Estrin describes Marvell's complicated participation in Petrarchism as a form of inversion:

> If the Petrarchan sigh signals the lover's desire for a body he can't have, the Marvellian moan signals the lover's dismissal of the forms the poet can have.[58]

In "To A Eunuch," the language of poetic greatness is nonetheless expressed in terms of sexual conquest, raping the muses instead of being enraptured by them. The gift of independence and autonomy that is bestowed by celibacy turns out in this case simply to be another form of intercourse. The model of sexual potency through poetry implicit in the Petrarchan ideal of the poet/lover is less challenged than ironically reinscribed in "To a Eunuch." To escape this coil, Marvell's other poems imagine a model of poetic agency which is anti-sexual. Male celibacy, even when chosen, cannot give its practitioners the same perceptual gifts as female virginity gives its youthful possessors.

The chastity of the woman is a cruel weapon in Petrarchan lyric, but the chastity of the child in Marvell's twist on Petrarchan convention makes her even more powerful than the woman. Little T.C., Maria Fairfax, and the infant in "Young Love" are alone capable of the "green thought in a green shade" which is the ideal form of consciousness in Marvell's corpus. They do not need to write poetry, which serves only to create a corrupt approximation of "that happy garden-state" they already enjoy ("The Garden," l. 57). The successful poet in the Petrarchan tradition is rewarded with an emblem of ideal nature, the laurel, signifying perennial freshness and regeneration. He achieves such a garland by artificial means, "overpowering" nature through technical and stylistic means.[59] Marvell's pastoral version of the quest for the laurel ignores worldly glory and sexual conquest in favor of the recovery of the sisters Quiet and Innocence ("The Garden," ll. 9–10). His speakers seek solitude the way that Petrarch's seek love. In a sense, one finds the Laura figures in Marvell's verse in his little girls. They are attractive because, unlike women, they embody the asexual and solipsistic character of "The Garden." Unlike adults of either sex, Marvell's female children are ontologically complete. They need no supplementation, either through sex or poetry.

These readings of Marvell's other lyrics contribute to an understanding of

58 Estrin, 239.

59 Vickers ("Vital Signs") comments on the different registers of the laurel/Laura ideal: "At base the speaker's investment in his song reveals itself to be not only – if at all – in winning the lost lady … but rather in winning a lost, or as yet unwon glory (the poetic champion's crown of laurel, "lauro") through the exercise of an overpowering stylistic mastery" (187).

Maria's function in *Upon Appleton House*. The poems represent a moment in literary history where the figure of the virgin daughter can contain meanings that are not primarily erotic. The language of eroticism in Marvell's poems is chiefly ironic, and strictly subordinated to other concerns. Marvell's attitudes toward love have been linked to a general late- seventeenth-century "disenchantment" with the love lyric as a vehicle of important issues.[60] The status of erotic idealism as a primary discourse in pastoral, or in any other genre of poetry, was in decline.[61] In Marvell's poetic corpus, chastity is a lost treasure, a focus for nostalgia and envy, not the free love of the Golden Age. The speaker in Marvell's "The Garden" is someone who has carried out the implications of the other anti-love lyrics:

> Two paradises 'twere in one
> To live in paradise alone. (ll. 63–4)

Erotic love is but a debased attempt to recapture this heaven. Renato Poggioli, in his reading of "The Garden," finds it the "turning point" in literary history at which

> the pastoral of solitude gives way to the pastoral of the self. While the former rejects man's love for woman, the second repudiates all love for any object other than the subject itself.[62]

The meanings Marvell gives to chastity anticipate its transmutation into a universal, genderless metaphor of individual purity, integrity and self-sufficiency. What is more, the privileged exemplars of such qualities are not wise, experienced and mature men, but innocent, youthful, isolated and in some cases speechless girls. The Marvellian speakers' admiration of youth, artlessness and innocence does not look back to Renaissance cultural values, but rather anticipates future developments in the Romantic rehabilitation and enlargement of the "pastoral of the self."[63]

Marvell employs the figure of the pastoral girl as a poetic rival not only in "The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers" but also in *Upon Appleton House*. Maria Fairfax and Theophila Cornewall are poet figures, in the Sidneyan sense; they "reform the errors of the spring" through a Platonic process of perfecting nature, translating it through her vision from a brazen world to a golden. T.C.'s abilities, however, are preverbal, while Maria's are superverbal.

60 See Kathleen Kelly, 207: the woods episode in *Upon Appleton House* demonstrates that "the essentials for lyric rapture remain outside of sexual love."

61 A.J. Smith, 221–53 outlines the falling fortunes of the seventeenth-century love lyric.

62 Poggioli, 697.

63 The eighteenth century, although not without examples of "serious" formal pastoral, did not generally find it a congenial mode; Samuel Johnson's complaints about "Lycidas," for example, and the mock pastorals, are symptomatic. See Congleton, 116–50 on the growing eighteenth-century disregard for formal and generic definitions of pastoral, and the increasing association of pastoral with "true" descriptions of rural life and emotional response.

The latter's universal knowledge of languages (see line 708) and her effortless power over nature give her a status to which Horace's "vita brevis, ars longa" does not apply. She effectively silences the narrator, for after describing her he has no more to say: "Let's in." She surpasses her tutor's skill as local poet, for she herself is not only the object of compliment but the source of all the beauties to be praised at Nun Appleton. Maria does not share T.C.'s innocent barbarism. She is educated, her "judicious" mind being at least partially the product of cultivation. Unlike T.C., she also talks; although we do not hear her, the emphasis the speaker makes on her mastery of languages indicates that she has already entered the stage of life in which experience is perceived through a mediating veil of language, rather than being apprehended directly in a prelapsarian unity with nature, as in T.C.'s case. Maria, then, occupies a borderline position between nature and culture, childhood and adulthood, innocence and knowledge. The fact that her arrival coincides with the twilight nods to pastoral convention, but it also suggests the ending of a phase of her life. There is an elegiac quality to the speaker's celebration of Maria's matrimonial "sacrifice."

"The Picture of Little T.C.," "Young Love," and *Upon Appleton House* all express an ambivalence towards maturation, a process portrayed as the acquisition of dangerous knowledge. Instruction itself is dangerously close to corruption. The libertine's erotic logic directed toward the speechless infant; the uneasy adult's admonitions to a playing child concerning a yet-distant future of sexual combat; the subtle arts the nuns attempt to teach Isabel Thwaites; or the tutor's language lesson to his young pupil: all these different forms of pedagogy are potentially tainted. The only way to escape the sinister analogy between the development of sexuality and of intellect is to show that the student in fact needs no teaching, that she is complete unto herself. Maria represents the fulfillment of this resolving paradox.

MARIA AND THE "PASTORAL OF THE SELF"

The first mention of Mary Fairfax is in stanza 38, in which the masses of flowers in the garden fortress let go "fragrant volleys" of scent as a salute towards their "Governor" and "Governess" (General Fairfax and Anne Vere Fairfax). However, they do not exude their scent for Mary, "the virgin Nymph," who, like Spenser's Pastorella, is associated with flowers:

> … for she
> Seems with the flowers a flower to be.
> And think so still! Though not compare
> With breath so sweet, or cheek so fair. (ll. 301–4)

Marvell makes her a part of the estate that her parents govern. Yet the naturalizing effect that is so often the goal of the female/flower metaphor is vitiated

by the position of the flowers in an elaborate garden designed to resemble a fort. The flower image is used, not to express the girl's affinity with nature, but her distance from it. Maria, like the flowers themselves, does not grow amidst wanton profusion but rather is the product of careful cultivation.

The stanza contains another example of reversal of expected relationships between the human and the natural. The speaker addresses the flowers themselves; he exhorts them to continue in their perceptual mistake. Maria is not like a flower to us; she is like a flower to flowers. By crediting metaphor-making power to the gardens themselves, the speaker suggests that the relationship between humanity and nature at Nun Appleton is a reciprocal process of mutual recognition. Maria improves upon nature within nature; she is a better flower than the flowers themselves. Therefore, the speaker's introduction of "Maria" is couched in terms forecasting the development of her role as a mediator between the realms of nature and culture in the poem. That role, in turn, is part of a larger function that the figure of Maria serves: as a restorative force for the family and for the estate, she reconciles several opposing concepts, including corruption and growth, leisure and work, age and youth, virginity and marriage. In a larger sense, Maria's attributes close the rift between ideal and reality that lend pastoral its poignancy. She cancels the poet/narrator's isolation, if only temporarily, by embodying a resolution to the pastoral contradictions of which he is such a telling exponent.[64]

The "easie philosopher" reminds us that he is a scholar of languages, particularly in the way by which he imposes human meanings on natural phenomena:

> Already I begin to call
> In their most learn'd original:
> And where I language want, my signs
> The bird upon the bough divines … (ll. 569–720)

The speaker's conference with the birds takes place by means of an "original" recovered form of communication, only partly verbal, in which he takes some pride. His musings on nature share this sense of primeval, prelinguistic colloquy with both little T.C. and Maria, but in his case he must recover, by means of art and learning, something the girls have not yet lost. The ascribed meanings of nature during Maria's evening walk, on the other hand, are quite different. Nature is seen to humanize itself for her; she does not need to exercise any self-consciously clever wit in reforming her surroundings. Nature offers itself as a true mirror of Maria's mind without requiring "studies" of

64 One such contradiction involves the introduction of the female farm laborer "bloody Thestylis" (stanza 51), whose back talk to the narrator punctures the grandeur of the poet's Biblical allusions and whose unsentimental attitude toward the slaughtered rail she picks up in the field forms an implicit contrast to her classical shepherdess's name. She contributes to the speaker's self-mocking tone and stands as an implicit refutation of pastoral ideals concerning labor and femininity.

the type in which the speaker indulges. Her vision replaces his, as her arrival puts him in his proper subordinate place (and restores the hierarchy of employer and employee). From this point on the pastoral "angle" is the sole one, no longer intermingled with the other Virgilian genres. The new generic consistency is consonant with Maria's clarity of poetic vision; she does not "trifle," but instead creates a new and better world. The speaker describes her as if she replaces him as the animating poetic consciousness interpreting the surrounding landscape.[65]

Mary's role as heiress to the estate parallels her appearance as the speaker's poetic successor. Poetic and familial prerogatives devolve to her alone. The poem invokes both definitions of "line," genealogical and poetic, in a form of conceptual punning.

> Hence she with graces more divine
> Supplies beyond her sex the line;
> And like a sprig of mistletoe
> On the Fairfacian oak does grow … (ll. 737–40)

Maria grants the house immortality in two ways, poetically/perceptually and physically. The evergreen mistletoe does not share the fate of the doomed oaks in the forest. It becomes an emblem for the ideal pastoral realm that Maria inhabits in her youthful perception of her home. Following Maria's twilight appearance, the estate is compared favorably to "Thessalian Tempe's seat" and other well-known *loci amoeni*. In Marvell's corpus, a pastoral landscape is often the home of a young girl whose innocence and virtue qualify her to perceive, and thus create, an ideal nature.[66] The speaker accords this girl great powers; her sex and age, the very things which place her in a subordinate position, become sources of extraordinary perception and potency. Maria both inhabits and creates "paradise's only map":

> 'Tis she that to these gardens gave
> That wondrous beauty which they have;
> She straightness on the wood bestows;
> To her the meadow sweetness owes …
> She yet more pure, sweet, straight and fair,
> Than gardens, woods, meads, rivers are. (ll. 689–92, 695–6)

The introduction of Mary Fairfax as a poetic figure, "Maria," registers simultaneously as an extension of the compliment paid to her father and family, and as an interruption of the poet/narrator's solitude and fertile fantasy. After turning everything he sees into elaborate emblems, the poet's ever-mobile fancy is arrested by the presence of Maria, by whom nature is frozen in glass, fixed in immutability (line 688).

65 Griffin describes a "transferral of the guiding vision" of the poem (73).

66 See Evett ("'Paradice's Only Map'"): Maria "explicates the implications of the *locus*" (512).

The rivalry between the young girl and the adult speaker for poetic ownership of the estate begins with a fundamental similarity in their positions. In stanza 76, the speaker describes the trees as a shield from the "shot" of "beauty's useless dart." This language recalls Maria's "safe but roughest way" from which she flees "watery shot" and "Love's cannon" (tears and sighs). The speaker constructs identical situations for the two. He wants to stay forever in the wood ("That I may never leave this place," l. 612). But he must leave, and so must she. They are in similar, but not identical, relation to the natural world of the estate, and the differences in that relation prove to be crucial. During his walk through the meadows, for example, the speaker calls attention several times to his self-conscious making of similitudes:

> Where men like grasshoppers appear… (l. 371)
>
> Who seem like Israelites to be … (l. 389)
>
> The women …
> Do represent the pillaging. (ll. 423–4)
>
> They seem within the polished glass
> A landskip drawn in looking-glass. (ll. 457–8)

These examples of simile contrast with Maria's mode of perception during her walk. The speaker's dependence on likeness is replaced by the virtual ontological equivalence of metaphor:

> Nothing could make the river be
> So crystal pure but only she … (ll. 693–4)

Maria's twilight survey of the grounds is morally purposeful, while the speaker's is only "idle." The speaker moves through, but not within, the world of the estate, but Maria is wholly integrated into the landscape, which is shown to re-form itself for her. Nature for him is a "light mosaic," a "mystic book" (l. 582–4). For her it is an extension of her home. She inhabits, he only visits.

Another result of Maria's vitrification of the landscape is transparency; she replaces the confusing multiplicity of meanings that the narrator finds in the masque of nature with a single coherent vision of nature, a reflection of her own virtue. Nature ceases to be mysterious and is actually domesticated.[67]

> The meadow, carpets where to tread;
> The garden, flow'rs to crown her head;
> And for a glass, the limpid brook,
> But, since she would not have them seen,
> The wood about her draws a screen. (ll. 699–704)

Although it has been noted that the poem praises the Fairfax land more than

[67] Colie, "*My Eccoing Song*", 270.

the modest Fairfax house, in these lines Marvell reforms the elements of the landscape to suggest the creation of a boudoir, with its carpet, adornments, mirror and screen, a private domestic setting for Maria's retreat. In the forest, the speaker personifies elements of nature; however, with Maria's arrival, he describes nature as the artificial, man-made dwelling for the daughter of the house. Maria's arrival makes the speaker re-imagine the environs not as a playground for his own fancy, but instead as an extension of the Fairfax house in the most literal sense. By making the traditional elements of the *locus amoenus*, the meadow, the water, and the garden, into furniture for Maria's private use, the speaker also extends the praise of Maria's modesty and places himself in the position of an interloper or voyeur, rather than a "great prelate of the grove" (593). By making the lands of Nun Appleton part of the "domestic heaven" Maria occupies, her virtual bedroom, the speaker collapses the distinction between inside and outside.[68] When Maria arrives, she makes his final injunction, "Let's in," superfluous. Her presence unites the natural world through which the speaker wanders and the "sober frame" of the house; the realms of nature and culture meet in Maria's unifying presence.[69] The speaker even suggests how Maria's perception of nature is different from his in terms of the way she imagines her relationship with it: as the "great prelate of the grove," the speaker constantly employs elements of the landscape as objects for his own use and pleasure. Nature becomes a mirror for his personal preoccupations. Maria, on the other hand, explicitly refuses to use nature as a mirror: she will not use the "limpid brook" as a "glass," although it inevitably becomes a reflection of her virtues (701). She does not willfully perceive herself in nature. She thus avoids the corrupt artistic solipsism of the speaker's forest reveries.

In stanza 94, the speaker addresses the estate as if it were an animate force, advising it to mate, so to speak, with Maria herself:

> Employ the means you have by her,
> And in your kind yourselves prefer;
> That, as all virgins she precedes,
> So you all woods, streams, gardens, meads. (ll. 749–52)

On one level these lines could be paraphrased thus: "Nun Appleton, become in fact the perfect estate that Maria perceives you to be." However, the way in which this improvement is to be accomplished is through a productive union between the land and the girl. The locution "by her," in combination with "kind," which puns on offspring, suggests breeding. Just as in marriage Maria is to be the conduit of her family's line, "supplying" it, she also has a fertile association with the estate of Nun Appleton. The estate, married, so to

68 Colie, "*My Eccoing Song*", 275.

69 See Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* on the Renaissance taste for ordered, rather than wild, landscapes: "Neatness, symmetry, and formal patterns had always been the distinctively human way of indicating the separation between culture and nature" (256).

speak, to the daughter of the house, produces the "means" by which it attains the status of a paradise on earth. The result of the union between Maria and the estate is a new and better world, "paradise's only map."[70] Through the language of lineage in stanza 94, the speaker illustrates the paradox of productive virginity.[71] Maria's power over nature here is not a metaphor for her erotic attractiveness; on the contrary, it springs from her lack of eroticism. In this way the speaker reverses pastoral love convention: he does not describe Maria's beauties in pastoral terms – i.e., "There is a garden in her face." The love garden becomes the chastity garden. The girl's virtuous imagination becomes the means of reproducing ideal nature.

Maria's inevitable marriage is described in ambivalent terms. The speaker's comparison of her progress to that of a "new-born" comet or a "new-slain" star (683–4), for example, anticipates her paradoxical status as privileged heir and familial sacrifice: she will fulfill her highest purpose, to serve her family's destiny, at the same moment as she leaves her home. In stanza 93 the speaker imagines her future nuptials as the pruning of a "sacred bud" for purposes of "universal good." The sacrificial quality of this description fits within the romance tradition, noted by Northrop Frye, of virgin sacrifice as "the crucial episode of romance."[72] The ambivalent tone of the marriage proceedings is strengthened by the preceding stanza, in which the speaker berates women in general for their vanity and foolishness.

Stanza 92 occurs amidst praise of Maria's virtues as an heiress on whom virtue entails itself in the absence of a male child (lines 727–28). Positioned thus, it is simultaneously a jarring interruption to the speaker's serene imaginings of Maria's triumphant future, and a reminder of her exceptional status.

> Go now, fond sex, that on your face
> Do all your useless study place,
> Nor once at vice your brows dare knit
> Lest the smooth forehead wrinkled sit:
> Yet your own face shall at you grin,
> Thorough the black-bag of your skin,
> When knowledge only could have filled
> And virtue all those furrows tilled. (ll. 729–36)

70 A common misreading of the poem's literal sense equates Maria herself with "paradise's only map" (for example, Erickson does so, 168). In stanzas 94–96, however, the speaker is directly addressing the estate, not the girl.

71 Maria shares this paradox with Milton's Lady. See Bennett, "Virgin Nature in *Comus*," 23: The Lady shares with Alain de Lille's Nature the three traits of beauty, temperance and virginity. Bennett reminds us that the word "temper" also means nature, so that "temperance," balance, is a natural quality and a creative principle. Maria Fairfax fits into this tradition, since her virginity is also a "creative principle." Also, see O'Loughlin, 125: "But there is a broader sort of 'marriage' informing the poem's imagery, one which often implicates the language of sexual union. …"

72 Frye, 81 and 83.

These lines reintroduce the reality of mortality into the celebration of Maria's youthful potential. The women's faces have been lavished with care to prevent the ravages of age, but the skull beneath the skin shows regardless. Only Maria's attributes of knowledge and virtue promise a salvation from the morally dangerous effects of experience in the world, even though they paradoxically mark the face with the evidence of such experience. She alone is protected from the fate of other, lesser women; but underlying this uneasiness is a realization that Maria will enter sexual maturity and face the sexual fate of other women, regardless of her childhood role as virginal spirit of the woods. The cosmetic cares that women lavish on their faces are a form of art, the rectification of nature's flaws, akin to that which Maria herself practices in the midst of her family's woods. In her youth, nature reflects her virtue and she reflects nature's beauty. In maturity, without the mirror of nature, will she be able to escape the fate of old age? The "black-bag" stanza is at the same time the speaker's acknowledgement of the threat maturity holds for Maria, and his advice as to how to diffuse it.

The speaker, by choosing cosmetic manipulation as the typical site of female artistic endeavor, participates in the Renaissance debate over the morality of face-painting. Frances Dolan has observed that in the terms of this debate, the body is "the only [female] arena of creativity, the site of and limit on female art."[73] In Marvell's use of the cosmetic topos, he aligns himself with those who see face-painting, and indeed, the pursuit of physical beauty itself, as not only futile but dangerous. Only by ignoring her inevitable physical decay will Maria transcend it. The speaker finds a lined skin a sign of virtue, for youthfully smooth skin on a mature woman becomes a sign of deliberately stunted morality in which facial expressions of outrage at vice are unnaturally suppressed for the sake of appearance. The "useless study" of cosmetic art, however, mimics the very attempts to stave off age and time through art in which other Marvellian speakers engage constantly. The appearance of youth is maintained by a willful moral innocence that is not so very different, for example, from the mature Marvellian speaker's nostalgia for the child's uncorrupted pastoral vision of the world in the "little girl" lyrics. Women, it seems in this case, should nevertheless not fight time. An unlined face on a mature woman is a "mask," for it is not natural. The speaker in this poem finds the artificial extension of youth in females grotesque rather than desirable. Maria's accomplished yet innocent perception stands as the sole example of virtuous feminine artistry. Any other attempt by women to ward off the signs of age and impending death is imagined as frivolous and pernicious.

The speaker's condemnation of the "fond sex" highlights the way in which Maria's sacrificial marriage and entrance to the outside, non-pastoral world is imagined as a falling off from an original identity with nature. He nonetheless accepts the onward passage of time, justifying why Maria should go ahead with

73 Dolan "Taking the Pencil out of God's Hand," 236.

the course of action decided for her and enter "the historical world."[74] Not to fall would be, paradoxically, sinful. The misogynist "black-bag" stanza suggests that part of Maria's special role, her importance to "the universal good," is to reconcile in her own person corruption and eternity. In her, the signs of decay are not the wages of sin but the signs of virtue. The other women are vain, bending their efforts toward the results in their mirrors. Maria, as we know, is modest, and will not willingly behold herself (l. 703). Her gaze, by contrast, directs itself outward at the world. In Maria, Marvell finds an answer to the problem of age and corruption: her chastity of mind, her knowledge and virtue, redeem her life, even if she is unavoidably caught up in the world of art, deception and experience. She carries her garden within herself, and perpetually renews it through virtuous perception, by seeing everything as straight and recollected.

Here lies her significance for the "universal good," for she offers a model of virtuous perception for all. The problem other Marvellian personae have experienced in their doomed attempts to find in girl children an innocent perspective to redeem their corrupt one, that is, the tragic situation of human aging and decay, is turned into an emblem of triumph in Maria, whose age the poet transforms into a sign of virtue. She is a field, tilled and planted by the qualities she has retained from her original garden nursery. The georgic image replaces that of pastoral as adulthood supplants childhood; yet Maria is associated with natural processes, in opposition to the artful mirror-gazing women. Although as the bud Maria is harvested by someone else, she is imagined to maintain her virtue in maturity through vigorous moral self-cultivation. Her purposeful georgic "tilling" will contrast with the frivolous art of other women as they apply cosmetics.

In its contempt for women's beauty, the poem rejects centuries' worth of Neoplatonic love philosophy. It manages to praise a girl of (almost) marriageable age without employing the justifying erotics of Neoplatonism for doing so. In that alone it is iconoclastic. This is not to say that Marvell is not a Platonist; Platonism is an undeniably important feature of his intellectual landscape. What is unusual, however, is his employment of a young girl as the representative of the "platonizing" mind, rather than the means of its exercise. Colie points out that Isabel Thwaites is "victimized by art."[75] She certainly is the inspiration for the nuns' perversion of Neoplatonism. Maria, on the other hand, restores proper Platonism and is herself the agent, not the medium. She is not the raw material for the sinful imagination of other people. Even the speaker who conjures her image credits her with autonomy. For all the metaphors associating Maria with nature, as a bud, as a field, as a bird, she is also the rectifying intelligence of the poem. Ficino's account of the operation of the intellect is especially relevant to Maria's function:

74 Dubrow, "The Country-House Poem," 174.
75 Colie, "*My Eccoing Song*", 217.

> What, then, does the intellect seek if not to transform all things into itself by depicting all things in the intellect according to the nature of that intellect? [76]

Marvell's image of the woman beholding her face in a mirror as if it were a mask simultaneously betokens self-absorption and self-alienation; she does not actually behold herself. By turning inward to the garden of the soul, one avoids such alienation even in what seems like an act of profound narcissism. Here is Ficino again:

> … the holy Angelic Mind, because it is unimpeded by any attendance upon the body, reflects upon itself where it sees the face of God engraved within its own breast, and seeing it there, is struck with awe, and clings most avidly to it forever.[77]

Human beings, by contrast, are distracted by their very corporeality, "servants to the needs of the body for a very long time."[78] Maria, too, is human; she cannot be conflated with the Angelic Mind. But her virtuous nature inclines her more toward the model it offers than that of the painted ladies in stanza 92. The enclosed garden, the *hortus conclusus*, is traditionally an emblem of the soul. Maria, the spirit of Nun Appleton, will physically depart from the estate, and lose her corporeal virginity, as the "Thwaites" of her generation. However, she will continue to carry in the *hortus conclusus* of her virtuous soul the perfection of nature she imparts to the estate while she is physically there. Marvell puns on the common and Platonic meanings of "universal": by reflecting upon herself, in the habit of the Angelic Mind, Maria paradoxically contributes to the "universal good," while her private moral cultivation leads to unforeseen benefits for others. Thus Maria unites the contemplative and active virtues in her person. It is her fall into history, via her marriage, that allows both kinds of "universal good" to find expression.

A poem about house-building and pride of name begins with a an allusion to a sacred myth illustrating the futility of both. The allusion to Babel informs the poem from the very beginning in the architectural conceits which form the introduction:[79]

> What need of all this marble crust
> T'impark the wanton mote of dust,
> That thinks by breadth the world t'unite
> Though the first builders failed in height? (ll. 21–4)

The position of the Babel myth in the Genesis narrative is itself ironic and suggestive. It is placed between two long Hebrew generational catalogues as a

76 Ficino, *Five Questions Concerning the Mind*, 200.
77 Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*, 170.
78 Ficino, *Commentary*, 170.
79 Cousins identifies this allusion, noting the connection between "architectural extravagance and overreaching" ("Marvell's *Appleton House*," 57).

reminder, perhaps, of the futility, in heavenly terms, of human ambitions. Its presence as a subtext in Marvell's poem has much the same effect. Appleton House itself is not a reflection of the master's earthly glory. Its dimensions and features bear an inverse relation to Fairfax's own virtues. It is the other aspect of the Babel story, linguistic rather than architectural, that nevertheless illuminates the role of his daughter. Through her mastery of languages, Maria Fairfax repairs the results of that early architectural collapse which recapitulates the Fall itself. She is associated with the overcoming of the curse of Babel. If the first Fall represented the lapse into sin of humankind's nature, the fall of Babel was a result of the moral lapses in human culture, the misuse of the unique human gifts of building and speaking for the advancement not of God's ends but of man's. Maria takes the role of language in human society full circle; just as everyone originally spoke the same language, Maria, by subsuming all languages into her own, returns us via her person to that blessed original state. This subsumption, moreover, is described as a result not of a miracle but of deliberate effort and intellectual mastery. Maria pours her energies into her education, not her self-presentation. Unlike the Virgin Mary, she cannot redeem humankind from original sin through her efforts, at least not in Protestant theology; but she may be able to redeem human culture by substituting a pure, universal language for a fallen, fragmented one, just as she replaces the speaker's multiple perspectives with a unified pastoral one. Her contribution to the reformation of the world, then, is not primarily in her "natural" ability to bear legitimate heirs, for her physical purity, while not unimportant, is not nearly as vital as the cultural effect of her intellectual expertise. Her salient virtues are neither natural nor thoughtless, as is the case with the rest of Marvell's little girls. M.J.K. O'Loughlin notes how the conversation of the "easie philosopher" is replaced by the silent stillness of the twilight scene dominated by the presence of Maria: "… one may now ponder … the ineffable plenitude of meaning in the silence of the virgin who has just hushed the world."[80] This effect is not because of Maria's verbal ineptitude. On the contrary, her universal skill at languages allows her to make language itself superfluous; by mastering words, she renders them unnecessary. Thus she transcends the poet's flawed and contingent medium for making a golden world out of a brazen.[81]

Complicating the poem's treatment of the active versus the contemplative, and the georgic versus the pastoral, is Maria's paradoxical function as a symbol of private leisure and of public work. The parallels between her activity and the speaker/poet's extend to the most literal: both are taking evening walks.

80 O'Loughlin, 139.

81 I read Maria's lack of speech as empowering and transcendent, similar in operation to the Lady's rapture in *A Mask* or the nonverbal ecstasies of Mount Acidale. For a different view, see Monette, "Speaking and Silent Women in *Upon Appleton House*," in which she identifies feminine speech with subversion. Monette identifies female silence as the price of participating in dynastic history (167–8).

There is no indication that Maria's walk has any purpose besides recreation, although it is impossible not to see the importance that her re-creation of nature has to the future of her family. In Maria, we see the paradox of feminine pastoral *otium* as *negotium*. Unlike the speaker's, her private ruminations and perceptions as she walks do have public significance. Her gender and social position lend her recreations a meaning and authority that the "idle youth's" do not possess. In this sense Maria's femininity in pastoral is more than play. She collapses the pastoral distinctions between play and work. The speaker describes her as enjoying her free time, in more ways than one, before her georgic harvesting.[82] Yet her free time as virginal spirit of the woods is an essential part of her preparation for her life outside the sylvan enclosure. Her future work as the well-dowered bride gives her present recreation its universal significance.[83]

Maria adds another dimension to the history of the female pastoralist's experience of *otium* as *negotium*. She takes the eroticism out of such experience. In the case of the princesses in Sidney's *Arcadia*, love is work; finding a mate is the most important task for them as women to accomplish. For their lovers, on the other hand, love starts out, at least, as play. While love is still Maria's work, it is exiled from the *locus amoenus* of Nun Appleton. She neither distracts nor is distracted by the male pastoralist, the way the princesses distract and are distracted by their lovers; instead, she supplants him. Only by barring love from her pastoral proving ground can she achieve it after she leaves. The absence of love in Maria's *locus amoenus* allows her to obtain the same level of poetic power that the male pastoralist can achieve; she is not distracted or compromised by

> Tears (watery shot that pierce the mind);
> And sighs (Love's cannon charged with wind). (ll. 715–16)

In Marvell's corpus, love initiates the fatal severance between self and thought that curses the mature imagination: his artful gardens are thus "as double as his mind" ("The Mower Against Gardens," 9). Maria, by contrast, is allowed to retain her blessed single-mindedness because she does not experience love. The speaker imagines a world in which Maria can achieve marriage without the risks of courtship.[84] Marriage, is, of course, the only imaginable social destiny for her; but the route by which she gets there is cleared (or deprived) of the erotic trials which characterize the experience of other pastoral heroines. In *Upon Appleton House*, Marvell finds a way of making pastoral a preparation for marriage without involving eroticism. The young Maria's pastoral work

82 Rogers in "The Great Work of Time," 232 describes the harvesting of Maria's "sacred bud" as a georgic act.

83 Mary Fairfax married George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in 1657. The marriage was childless.

84 Berthoff comments that "marriage plays no role in [Marvell's] metaphysics of love" (128).

is self-directed, just as her georgic work will be. She is already completed; she does not need love. If it is true, as Leah Marcus suggests, that the poem in its portrayal of the convent and even the nation itself presents a series of "broken enclosures … overrun by violence,"[85] then Maria herself is fated to be another broken enclosure. In her virgin state, she creates and embodies the *hortus conclusus*, but she is not to remain this way. In Marvell's twist on pastoral convention, sex, linked to marriage, becomes a duty rather than a pleasure. It becomes a demand from outside the garden, rather than the garden's principal attraction.

In his examination of nature in Marvell's lyric poems, Joseph H. Summers points out the alienation of man from nature that is a constant theme: "Man can only live in nature either as its observer or its destroyer."[86] Maria Fairfax is a wishful fantasy of the possibility of an ideal relationship to nature, a relationship that allows the human being to retain what is distinctively human--the impulse to build, the ability to use language--while avoiding the tragic disseveration from the natural realm for which these two archetypal human gifts are both cause and compensation. It is precisely sexuality, the location where culture and nature interact most violently, that is absent from Marvell's ideal. Marvell revises the traditional associations of the feminine with nature, and the commonplace ascription of voracious sexuality to the feminine. In Maria Fairfax, femininity on the horizon of maturity retains its fecundity without the taint of eroticism. By elevating the family above society, Marvell actually places the family firmly in the social realm: family becomes a substitute for society, a utopia. One can imagine a repair of the Fall in a "domestic heaven" where there is no eroticism except in the safe and distant past. Yet the family is the one social institution where the demands of fallen nature are most explicitly accommodated.

Protestantism in the poem is allied with propagation of families, while in Catholicism resides the dangerous allure of art. Maria is the fruit of virtuous Protestant marriage, which in the Thwaites episode is associated with productive rather than barren virginity. The nun who tempts Isabel sees her as an artist's model who resembles the Virgin. Her features are suitable for imitation in embroidery:

> Some of your features, as we sewed,
> Through every shrine would be bestowed.
> And in one beauty we would take
> Enough a thousand saints to make. (ll. 133–36)

Isabel's powers of generation here are not physical. The "saints" she would produce are not living, militant Protestants to swell the impulse of reformation, an impulse expressed by the aggressive Protestant appropriation and

85 Marcus, *Politics of Mirth*, 240.
86 Summers, "Marvell's 'Nature'," 48.

redefinition of the word "saint" to denote an uncanonized but elect believer. In the convent, the womanly art of embroidery supplants the natural method of propagation, depriving the world of true and living "saints." The nun sees Isabel as an ideal progenitrix, not of children but of artistic images. The "line" she would found in the convent is in direct rivalry with the line of children she ought to originate.[87] The convent episode sets up a conflict between two different kinds of reproduction, sexual and artistic, that is never resolved. The poet/speaker's use of the figure of Maria illuminates this conflict. The description of Maria's virtues reinscribes some of the same values of solitude and artistic potency for which the nunnery stands. The reasons for which Maria is idealized turn away from the values for which the Fairfaxes are praised, values expressed through their hostility toward what the convent represents. Thus the poem contains a tension between the worldly advantages of Protestant marriage and the Protestant model of productive virginity Maria embodies. Her virtue is self-referential, a quality that in theory could deny dynastic imperatives. In this sense, her virtue is nun-like in its self-sufficiency.

The ending of this pastoral poem of family forms a contrast to the endings of Sidney's *Arcadia* , Wroth's *Urania* and Milton's masque: these other works end with an allusion to family continuity and future triumph.[88] *Upon Appleton House*, on the other hand, stresses the "meanwhile" quality of the estate's preeminence, and Maria's virtue is ultimately personal rather than familial. Despite its constant evocations of the triumphant Fairfax family history, the poem ends bathetically. The final stanza, in which the poet muses on the salmon-fishers as "rational amphibii" before deciding to go inside, is very different in tone from the one preceding it, a paean to the estate. The final stanza is private, fanciful, seemingly irrelevant to previously explored themes. The speaker steps back into his "private" self, away from the family and its concerns. Although Rosalie Colie has shown how the emblem of the tortoise relates to several of the themes in the poem, the stanza does mark a deliberate break in the panegyric mode which informs so much of the work.[89] It is as if the poem is revealed at last as the musing of an isolated consciousness with its own problems and priorities, rather than as a voice which is the transparent mirror of the Fairfax family glories. Even Maria herself, who parallels and rivals the speaker within the poem, will enter the world "translated," speaking not for the Fairfaxes but for someone else, and her future success will depend less on her family identity than her private spiritual self-cultivation.[90]

87 The nuns are also compared to gypsy child-stealers in line 268.

88 Although Wroth's romance is incomplete, the narrative implies that Faire Design, the unknown young knight, will find his father (probably Amphilanthus).

89 See Colie, *"My Eccoing Song"*, 248.

90 While I agree with Lewalski's formulation that Maria, "as the only child of aspiring parents and the sole hope of her family's perpetuation, is cast in the remarkable role (for a woman) of founder of a new dynastic line" ("The Lady of the Country-House Poem," 272), I feel that

The fall of Babel as the paradigmatic tragedy of human culture makes its reappearance in the poem's penultimate stanza. The world at large is

> But a rude heap together hurled,
> All negligently overthrown … (ll. 762–3)

In the adjective "rude," the speaker suggests that the civilizing efforts of culture to reform nature have largely failed, just as the hubristic attempt to build a tower to heaven collapsed. The poem, which began with images of architectural ingenuity, concludes with an acknowledgement of the futility of such efforts. The "negligence" of these worldly ruins, however, is opposed to the "more decent order tame" of Nun Appleton, which enjoys the restoring effects of Maria's virtuous artistic consciousness. Maria herself embodies a reunification of man and nature through art, the reunification that human culture in general cannot achieve. Within herself, she repairs the alienation from nature that is the topic of so many of Marvell's lyrics. Nevertheless, that alienation is finally reasserted, present in the image of Nun Appleton as the "only map" of paradise. The estate itself is only an image of an absent original which can be recovered only through a form of delimiting art, however provisional. It is Maria herself who is the map-maker.

Maria's imagined career suggests that the end of the poetic line is the beginning of the genealogical line. The opposite holds true as well: the end of the Fairfax line is compensated for by the exceptional power and presence of Maria. Are the two lines mutually contradictory? Maria's tenure as a virginal spirit of the woods is nearly over. She is at the apogee of her powers during her twilight walk, a liminal time that fades into night. The speaker is incapable of imagining adult women (except for "starry Vere," Mary's mother) in any terms except the negative. Maria's poetic fertility and her use as a muse will both be over when she marries and has children of her own. This poignant situation illustrates the tension between the Protestant appropriation of female sexual purity in the service of familial aims, on the one hand, and the Protestant ideal of independent virtue. The poem counterpoises two different kinds of reproduction, artistic and familial, and tries but fails to reconcile them. Time, the issue of temporal corruption, is the problem Marvell cannot surmount. Physicality, sexuality, generation, and decay cannot be disentangled. Art is an alternative way by which one might proliferate images of oneself. Yet art, too, is a corrupt way to transcend corruption. How does one pick those "flowers eternal" that Fairfax is on his way to achieving: through art, or through propagation? Even religion finds itself subordinated to this Marvellian dichotomy, as Roman Catholicism is linked to art and Protestantism to (virtuous and lawful) sex. The poem invokes the traditional analogy between poetic and sexual fertility, only to reject it.

these dynastic considerations ultimately take second place to personal reformation in the poem.

In Marvell's corpus, juvenile femininity is associated with privacy, with solipsism, and with poetic autonomy, characteristics linked to pastoral lyric rather than heroic poetry. By closing the poem with a celebration of Mary, rather than her father, the speaker manages to have it both ways: he praises the Fairfax family while at the same time he elevates the values of privacy, contemplation, independence and retreat that the young heroine of Renaissance pastoral has now come to represent.

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