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"Be Bold" or "Be Not Too Bold": A Renaissance Dialectic of Jouissance in the House of Busirane*

Jiyun Kim[1)]

Jiyun Kim. 2021. "'Be bold' or 'Be Not Too Bold': A Renaissance Dialectic of Jouissance in the House of Busirane." *Studies in British and American Language and Literature* 143, 229-251. This paper analyzes the silenced tropes of desire in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene III* (1590) as a twisted allegory of feminist jouissance in the Renaissance era. Notably, it sheds new light on Britomart's education in the House of Busirane, revealing how Britomart succeeds in subjectifying her fate based on the ethics of psychoanalysis. In the process, this paper refers to William Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1598) as part of Britomart's intertextual learning for the following three reasons. First, these two contemporary poetries formulate Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett's 'relativity of literature' regarding the politics of erotic taboos in the Renaissance era. Second, their original myths derive from Cupid's mischief and thus must have appeared in Busirane's tapestries. Third, Shakespeare's and Marlowe's narratives serve as a dialectic pair that corresponds to the aporic imperatives of Busirane's castle: "Be bold" and "Be not too bold." Thus, this paper investigates their rhetorics to delve into the Renaissance ethos of desire and locate Britomart's growth within Spencer's sociohistorical context. Such a line of discussion clarifies that Britomart is eventually reborn as an authentic subject of self-determined desire, not a passively chaste woman.

[Keywords: Ethics of Psychoanalysis, Desire and Civilization, Renaissance Intertextuality, *The Faerie Queene, Venus and Adonis*, *Hero and Leander*]

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1) Graduate student, Department of English, Yonsei University.

1. Introduction: The Hidden Ethics for Britomart

> And as she lookt about, she did behold, . . .
> *"Be bolde, be bolde,"* and every where *"Be bold,"*
> . . . At last she spyde at that rowmes upper end, . . .
> *"Be not too bold."*
>
> —Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene Ⅲ*

The third book of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590; hereafter abbreviated as *FQ*) reaches its climax in Canto Eleven, where the House of Busirane appears. Its entrance chokes viewers with "dreadfull horror" of flaming fire (Ⅲ.xi.21.6-8), but the heroine Britomart bravely dashes in it to save Amoret, the imprisoned lover of Scudamour. Inside the castle, Britomart first notices the tapestries on which "all of love," "al of lusty-hed," and "all Cupids warres" are embroidered (Ⅲ.xi.29.3-6); they describe a series of "mournfull Tragedyes" caused by Cupid (Ⅲ.xi.45.1-6), many of which end with death (Ⅲ.xi.33-37). Then, in the room of the statue of Cupid, Britomart encounters two imperatives: *"Be bold"* and *"Be not too bold"* (Ⅲ.xi.54.3-8).

While Britomart does not understand "what [they] might intend" to (Ⅲ.xi.54.9), Mary Adelaide Grellner interprets this episode as a pivotal event in Britomart's maturity where she learns how to "control the love of *Eros* in order to achieve *Agape*" (43), implying those contradictory commands teach Britomart that "passion must be subdued, not destroyed" (42). Further, Grellner, C. S. Lewis, and Edwin Greenlaw categorize the arras' representations as "false love" (Lewis 395; Grellner 43) or "negatively a philosophy of love" (Greenlaw 129), with which Britomart establishes the concept of sexually abstinent and morally pure love in comparison. However, it can still be questionable whether the imagery on the tapestries is indeed a *false* value, from which Britomart learns

about chaste love. This dissent has two reasons: first, even after Britomart saw the disastrous consequences of boldness from the arras, she boldly goes through the door on which *"Be not too bold"* is written without hesitation (Ⅲ.xi.33-37), and second, if Britomart has embraced the temperate lesson from the counterexamples on the tapestries and thereby rescued Amoret who may well be, as Grellner argues, an alter-ego of herself (36), the canceled reunion of Amoret and Scudamour in the 1596 revision seems to be unwarranted since it defers the due compensation of Britomart's education. Therefore, Britomart may have studied a different kind of ethics from Cupid's achievements, which is not false from another perspective.

Even so, *FQ* is certainly about holy chastity: physical and spiritual faithfulness within a marriage. As a protestant who privileges marriage between man and woman, God and humanity, and monarch and subjects, Spenser combines Aristotle's virtues with Protestant ideology in this educational allegory, creating Neo-Platonist morality. In Aristotle's view—who divides between virtuous and vulgar desire, excluding the latter in "necessary" objects to pursue (Aristotle and Brown 130)—the carnal lust on Busirane's wall is indisputably unethical and evil, as Grellner, Lewis, and Greenlaw insist. Nevertheless, we might get a glimpse of another variety of didactic doctrine—*the ethics of psychoanalysis*—from the tapestries full of sexual passion and the aporia of boldness, about which Britomart is genuinely learning.

From the psychoanalytic perspective of Jacques Lacan—who counters "masochistic" Aristotelianism, arguing that "bestial desires" should be given a natural right to exist in "a complete reversal of point of view" (*SVII* 13-14)—confronting desire is ethical because only when the subject knows the hidden truth about its

desire can it approach its authentic identity, which has slipped through the Symbolic. Further, only then can the subject finally strive to answer the oldest question of humanity in earnest—"who am I?" Thus, the goal of Lacanian psychoanalysis is to reach the point of the Real that has slipped through the crack of the Symbolic—as Sigmund Freud famously said: "*Wo Es war, soll Ich warden*" ("Where I was, shall I be"). In other words, our ineffable and disregarded existence in the realm of the Other, which yields *unethical* desire in terms of Aristotelian standpoint, should be revealed first; from that point, we can seek the right solution as valid subjects. For this reason, not oppressing but investigating one's desire is necessary and ethical to take the first step in becoming a genuine commander of one's own life, like Jove, Phoebus, Neptune, and Saturn in Busirane's tapestries do (Ⅲ.xi.30-43).

In that ethical process in the Symbolic, a rhetoric pair—*"Be Bold"* and *"Be not too bold"*—appears; it indicates the friction between human desire and society, which always has been recurring and thus is eternal. Lacan defines the Symbolic as a realm of the Other, a "terrain cleared of enjoyment" (*SXVI* 220), where its inhabitants subsist without sincere pleasure, getting proxy satisfaction from surplus delights. The lost delight—the Real jouissance—has been eradicated in the Symbolic by its linguistic law to maintain the society.[2] Thus, humanity is subjugated under the Symbolic order with its inevitable discontent because its true

2) One classic example of such forfeited jouissance is the desire for incest, which Freud famously theorized as the Oedipus complex. Freud introduces *Oedipus Complex*, a son's desire towards his mother, in "A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men" (1910), insisting that an infant son "does not forgive his mother for having granted the favor of sexual intercourse not to himself but to his father, and he regards it as an act of unfaithfulness" (171).

enjoyment has been taken away by civilization. This oppression leads humans to aim to *be bold*: they desire to transgress the Symbolic border and taste the complete jouissance in the Real. However, the Symbolic order, or the social rule, commands them: "*Be not too bold.*"

In this regard, this paper aims to prove the actual characteristics and location of Britomart's jouissance under the surface plot of *FQ*, taking note of the battle between humanity and the Symbolic order in Busirane's castle. However, before that, two things should be illuminated first: why most of the desires on Busirane's wall should meet disastrous deaths and how exactly Britomart discovers the ethics of psychoanalysis from them. To answer these curiosities, two Renaissance poetries—William Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1598)—will be analyzed as intertextual dialectic tools because these tragic romances are both caused by Cupid,[3] meaning that their original myths must have been embroidered on Busirane's arras. Of course, considering that Shakespeare's and Marlowe's texts were both released a few years after *FQ*'s publication, it is evident that Spenser cannot have borne these works of the near future in his mind during his writership. Nevertheless, this paper chose these Renaissance rewritings of forbidden mythological love to explore the particular representations of desire in Spenser's era. Only a few would dispute against that Shakespeare and Marlowe are the most

3) In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Venus falls in love with Adonis because of her son's arrow (X. 524-532). Eros's shafts also inflame Hero and Leander in Musaeus's tale (lines 29-30). Also, Marlowe's adaptation depicts Hero as "having swallowed Cupid's golden hook" (I. 333), while Cupid even "beats down her prayers [for chastity] with his wings" to make her stay in love with Leander (I. 369). That is to say, both myths are legacy of Cupid and thus would be included in Busirane's tapestries.

well-known contemporaries of Spenser; they have aroused significant literary assents in the public's mind both as poets and playwrights, formulating the ethos of their time or *relativity of literature* as Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett puts it in *Comparative Literature* (1886). Posnett has this to say:

> . . . Shakespeare's characters are . . . *the* men and *the* women of the particular time and place . . . [The] historical critic cannot forget that he who mistakes the social life of a group must misinterpret the characters of its individual units, that he who Londonises the public life of the Roman plebs is sure to Christianise or feudalise the private relations, feelings, thoughts of the Roman wife and mother and son and father. (29-30)

In other words, apart from the creator's conscious intention, Busirane's tapestries must have reflected the socio-cultural ethos of desires, passions, and emotions of Spencer's time. Pierre Macherey also insists on such a contradiction, arguing that the author cannot control his literature and its truth due to the text's "autonomy" (52). Thus, critics have to bear in mind such historical intertextuality, regardless of the slight temporal asynchronism of smaller than ten years, when interpreting Britomart's transformation in Canto Eleven. Besides, this critical act of contextualizing Spencer's text with younger contemporaries notices an essential fact that Renaissance readers may well have compared and contrasted each narrative in intertextual appreciation, creating the Elizabethan view on desire and chastity and aligning themselves with multi-faceted Britomart. Moreover, the theme of Shakespeare's sequence—the tragic legend of Venus and Adonis—plays an essential role as an anti-chaste example of desire in *FQ*, which is one of the central focuses of this paper.

For this reason, after investigating how Spenser, Shakespeare,

and Marlowe excavate the real essence and motivation of all desire from ancient mythology, the discussion will come back to the House of Busirane, where *"Be bold"* and *"Be not too bold"* are clashing with each other. By this dialectic polyphony, this paper will deepen the psychoanalytic understanding of desires in those three Renaissance poetries and enlighten the eternal conflict between individual desire and social order, which subversively lurks behind Spenser's narrative about chastity.

2. "Be Bold": *Venus and Adonis*

In Busirane's tapestries, where many love tragedies of "sweet consuming woe" are textured, two familiar victims of Cupid appear: Mars shedding "womanish teares" because of undevoted Venus and Venus who is the "deare mother" of Cupid (III.xi.44-45). Although Spenser does not pinpoint the scandal between "Venus and her Paramour, the fayre Adonis" (*FQ* III.i.4-5) in Canto Eleven, it must have emerged in the drapery since both Venus and Adonis suffer from the unfortunate conclusion of their love incited by Cupid: jealous Mars kills Adonis after transforming into a boar in one original version of the story (Mackenzie 87) and Venus is severely broken-hearted by the death of Adonis (Ovid X. 721-725). Besides, Spencer notably mentions Venus and Adonis in earlier parts of *FQ*, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Therefore, to figure out the sub-plots of jouissance within Busirane's tapestries, Renaissance representations of the Adonis myth would be worthy of analysis.

Before Britomart arrives at the House of Busirane, love between Venus and Adonis already has appeared in two parts of *FQ*: Malecasta's arras in Canto One (III.i.34-38) and the Garden of Adonis in Canto Six (III.vi.29-48). In Canto One, Spenser implies

Malecasta's lasciviousness and intemperance by the drapes in her castle, which portray how Venus wooed Adonis with "sweet allurements" (III.i.35.1). Since Venus and Adonis do not keep their chastity, enjoying extramarital affairs (III.i.37), they violate the Symbolic law and are thus punished by Adonis' death (III.i.38). This contravention indicates Venus and Adonis' resistance against the Symbolic to pursue their forbidden adultery desire beyond the Other's territory. In other words, their love is bound for the Real, the realm of *das Ding* and death. Further, this jouissance of Venus and Adonis could well be an allegorical exemplary of the Freudian mixture of *Eros* and *Thanatos*.[4] That is, love is always manifested with destructive force, as Adonis dies because of his desire. As such, Malecasta's tapestries seem to warn Britomart about the danger of immoderate desire or jouissance that infringes the Symbolic order, although it is not yet clear whether Britomart embraces such a lesson.

Afterward, in Canto Six, the Garden of Adonis—where Venus raises Amoretta—again embodies Freudian life and death instincts. With the spirit of *Eros*, which aims to strengthen and expand the communal bond in larger units (Freud, "Civilization" 109), "all the goodly flowres . . . [are] fetcht . . . [with] the endlesse progeny [of] all the weeds, that bud and blossome there" (III.vi.30.1-8). To this garden, not only the seeds of plants, but also of humans ("thousand naked babes") come to "grow afresh, as they had never seene [fleshly] corruption, nor mortall payne"

4) Freud divides human instinct into these two branches, which derive respectively from object-libido ("object-instincts") and narcissistic libido ("ego-instincts") ("Civilization" 117). While the former one, *Eros*, "strives after objects," working for "preservation of the species," the latter one, *Thanatos*, serves for an utterly egoistic drive to preserve the individual (ibid.). Freud further asserts that *Eros* and *Thanatos* never appear in isolation but "alloyed with each other in varying and very different proportions" (ibid., 119), and thus, love's best companion is, ironically, death.

(III.vi.32-33). Besides, the garden can produce "eternall moisture" which would nourish the "infinite shapes of creatures" (III.vi.34-35), implying the reproductive power of life instinct.

Nevertheless, the Garden of Adonis is not entirely free from the destructive force: "wicked Tyme" (III.vi.39.3). It makes all the fair lives in the garden be faded away, as "[all] things decay in time, and to their end doe draw" (III.vi.40.9). Also, there is "a pleasaunt Arber" in the deepest covert of the garden's shade, where "nether Phoebus beams could through them throng" (III.vi.45).[5] This shady place is surrounded by flowers, which are, in fact, transformations of "sad lovers" who met their death due to their desire (III.vi.45), like Adonis, who turned into "a dainty flowre" after he had died (III.i.38.8). In this way, the Garden of Adonis connotes both *Eros* and *Thanatos*, which reminds of the deadly desire in the original myth. Along with the scenery, Adonis is also called "the Father of all forms," who is "subject to mortalitie" (III.vi.47), implying he is also an emblem of both life and death instincts.

When we consider how Lacan developed the Freudian binary structure of human instinct into his concept of deathful jouissance, the symbolic implication of *Eros* and *Thanatos* in Spenserian Venus and Adonis becomes more evident. Whereas Freud separates the death drive from the sexual drive, though admitting that they always work together, Lacan argues that "the distinction between the life drive and the death drive is true in as much as it manifests two aspects of the drive" (*SXI* 257), meaning that "the death drive is not a separate drive, but is in fact an aspect of every drive," and thus, "every drive is virtually a death

5) Given the context in which Chrysogonee, the birth mother of Amoretta, was pregnant due to the sunbeam (III.vi.7), this sunshine-less shelter may symbolize the infertile *Thanatos*—the opposite of fertile *Eros*.

drive" (Evans 33). This radical conclusion results from the fact that in the Symbolic, where the real jouissance is erased, the subjects *desire* to regain their lost jouissance by "an attempt to go beyond the pleasure principle, to the realm of *excess jouissance* where enjoyment is experienced as suffering" (ibid.). Since the Real death is only one viable way to escape from the suppressive Symbolic entirely, Lacan argues that every desire heads toward death. Such Lacanian concept of desire clarifies that *Eros* always serves *Thanatos*. Granted, the combination of Freudian life and death instincts in Spenser's representation of Venus and Adonis connotes that human desire is productive but always carries the seed of death, the fatal drive to go beyond the Symbolic.

One of the other Renaissance texts inspired by Adonis myth is Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593), published just three years after *FQ*. Although they deal with the same mythical love story, Shakespeare further twists the original narrative, which would be worthwhile to enlighten how human desire produces its effect in *FQ*'s contemporary literature and what Britomart learns from this mythical love in Busirane's castle. The most noticeable diversion of Shakespeare's text from Ovid's or Spenser's is, unlike those preceding works where Venus eventually steals Adonis' heart and enjoys his love (*FQ* III.i.37), Shakespeare makes Venus' lust unrequited and unsatisfiable. That is, Shakespearean Venus, "the love-sick queen" (198), desperately implores Adonis for his love by sugary flattery ("Thrice-fairer than myself"; 30), stroking his cheek (68), and kissing him continually by force (77) like "an empty eagle" (78); she even chucks a dummy in order to make him kiss her (489-505). Although such Venus is perfect, "having no defects" (161), Adonis does not return any positive remark on Venus' aggressive wooing, continually saying, "I know not love" (433). This justification may mean that

Adonis indeed is not yet a subject of desire, being fixated on the Imaginary and thus not able to recognize his own lack. However, Adonis remarks that his only passion lies in boar hunting (434), which means he already is enjoying surplus jouissance (object *a*)—hunting boars—as a castrated subject ($) in the Symbolic and is not ignorant of his void and desire.[6)]

Moreover, Adonis' physical reactions to Venus—"his sweating palm" (48), "crimson" face flushed with embarrassment (99), and a willing kiss to her (505)—are contradictory with his own words, although he tries to be "cold and senseless" (234). J. D. Jahn also analyzes Adonis as "doing as much as he can to arouse [Venus] without violating the ground rule of coyness" (14), exemplifying the lines where Adonis is mounted on top of Venus without proceeding to sexual intercourse (Shakespeare 625), and thereby defines Adonis' "flirt" as "coquetry" (24). That is to say, although whether Adonis is seducing Venus or not might still be questionable, these "coy" (Shakespeare 119) behaviors of Adonis show that somehow he is refraining from desiring Venus, oscillating between cathectic "red" and anti-cathectic "white" (100).

Wayne A. Rebhorn tries to find the reason for such Adonis' oppression from the fact that "[Venus] is presented as a mothering figure in relation to Adonis, while he in turn is characterized as an infant of child" (2). Indeed, Adonis is repeatedly referred to by Venus as a "boy" who is flint-hearted" (95), "sweet" (609), and "more lovely than a man" (33); "a son that suck'd an earthly mother" (891); and "fondling" (229) which is a term of endearment

6) Surplus jouissance, or object *a*, means the allowed kind of pleasure by the Symbolic order. The master order makes the subject submissive by permitting it to seek such objects of desire. In this Adonis's case, hunting boars is not a taboo but a legitimate enjoyment that binds him tight to society. However, this presupposes the exclusion of the mother-Venus's warning, which makes hunting boars taboo.

usually reserved for infants" (Rebhorn 2). Besides, when Adonis is found dead, Venus reproaches death for it has killed "an infant's heart" (970), putting herself in the position of a mother who lost her son, like the Virgin Mary holding dead Jesus in Michelangelo's *Pieta*. Rebhorn further finds more detailed implications of the Motherly Venus mainly in her protection over Adonis (3) and infers the reason for Adonis' rejection as "a deep-seated male fear of emasculation through infantilization of the hands of a woman" (8), which is the basic fear of Renaissance men that "lay behind the characterizations given to the enchantresses . . . who appear in both courtly love lyrics and heroic romances" (1).

However, although Rebhorn refuses to develop the Motherly representation of Venus into the Freudian Oedipus complex (8), several pieces of evidence suggest Venus and Adonis' hidden incestuous desire. First, as mentioned earlier, the boar that kills Adonis can be Mars, an adult male lover of Venus and a possible father figure to Adonis. For this reason, this savage beast killing Adonis by thrusting its tusk into his "soft groin" (1145) may signify the father's disciplinary castration of the son for committing incest with his mother. Since Adonis sometimes fails to oppress his desire for Venus, showing coy signals and desiring to grow up to be a man (1209), he may get punished for such an incestuous crime. Second, the eyes of dead Adonis, which Venus especially pays attention to along with his thigh when encountered of his death, are portrayed as "two lamps, burnt out, in darkness lies" (1157), bringing the image of Oedipus who poked his own eyes to punish himself for sleeping with mother. In this regard, Adonis' fear for loving Venus is undoubtedly a castration complex, but is not by female dominance as Rebhorn infers, but by father—or Lacanian *nom-du-père*—who would execute him by the Symbolic order.

This verdict of Venus and Adonis's Oedipal desire makes their

relationship break a more serious taboo than mere adultery does and thus enhances their desire closer to the Real jouissance, the subject's fierce resistance to escape from the grasp of the Symbolic. However, this is not the end of the list of their violations. Since Venus is a mother-figure to Adonis, his disobedience of her advice not to put himself in danger by hunting boars (665-670) could also be another defiance of him against the order of the Other. Therefore, while Venus' Symbolic punishment of annihilation ("to immure herself and not be seen"; 1223) is the result of her double jouissance (adultery and incest), Adonis' eventual death could be a thrice jouissance, clarifying that jouissance leads oneself to the Real death. As such, after many twists and turns, Adonis, being an ethical subject of desire, leaves behind a flower of the Real jouissance.

Moreover, since Venus curses love to be always accompanied with "sorrow," "jealousy," "riot," "war and dire events" (1164-1193), this Shakespearean representation also could be read as an allegorical depiction of ambivalent human desire: the mixture of "love's pleasure" with even more prominent "woe" (1168-1169); *Eros* with overwhelming *Thanatos*. In this way, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* enlightens a psychoanalytically ethical aspect of the Adonis myth by depicting an odyssey of desire which rebels against the Symbolic and bounds for the Real death and thereby inspires us to get closer to the essence of Britomart's education in *FQ*: the ethics of jouissance.

3. "Be Not Too Bold": *Hero and Leander*

In Busirane's display of unchaste love, the Byzantine myth of Hero and Leander, which Musaeus tells as another legacy of Cupid, would also have been included. This myth presents a youth—

Leander—who falls in love with the priestess of Aphrodite—Hero—as "the Love his bow bent high, And . . . let one arrow fly" (Musaeus, lines 29-30). Likewise dramatized by the Roman poet Ovid, Hero and Leander's legend was reborn as Christopher Marlowe's poetry and licensed for publication in 1593,[7] around the same time when Spenser's *FQ* and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* were published. Besides, as Shakespeare has altered the original version to emphasize the two protagonists' rebellious jouissance, Marlowe also changes the story, ending it with the first consummation of the young lovers without the predestined death. While it is assumed that this was the intentional conclusion, examining the hidden plan behind Marlowe's modified narrative would disclose another aspect within the discourse of desire that was being circulated in Spenser's era and thereby help to prove the unconscious of the Spenserian text: Britomart learns about the ethics of psychoanalysis from the unchaste examples.

In its first stanza, Marlowe combines the imagery of love and death in Hero's blue kirtle which is "made with the blood of wretched lovers slain" (I. 15). Those wretched lovers are charmed by Hero, then become "poor soldiers [who] stand with fear of death dead strooken"; they are doomed to death because Hero will not return their love (I. 121-124).[8] Also, it is repeatedly forewarned to the readers that even the protagonists' desire will end with death as in the original myth (I. 1; 133-134; II. 334), which is nevertheless never disclosed by Marlowe. Haber interprets this "foregone conclusion" along with "a series of apparent consummations that turn out not to be the thing itself"

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7) Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* was eventually published in 1598 by Chapman, who expanded Marlowe's narrative.

8) The narrator further ensures that the sexual desire signifies the death instinct by stating that "dark night is Cupid's day" (I. 191) with the metonymy of bright *Eros* and dark *Thanatos*.

(43) as Marlowe technically embodies the nature of desire, which is enhanced as it is being postponed, by his "theoretically incomplete" narrative (39). In other words, Marlowe invokes the readers' desire by delaying and ultimately withholding the expected conclusion, rendering with "the blood of the (never-present) consummation" instead of "the blood of death" (Haber 49).

While this is a meaningful observation, we can further expand the meaning of the prolonged death in the frame of Lacanian desire. That is, it is worthy of discussion whether Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* indeed pursues the Real jouissance—the desire to go beyond the Symbolic—since if not, it would be reasonable in an allegorical sense that its protagonists' death is not yet to come. First, in terms of Hero, she breaks her vow of chastity with Venus, being persuaded by Leander's saying: "you exceed her far, / To whom you offer, and whose nun you are. / Why should you worship her?" (I. 211-213). Such sweet talk and Leander's beautiful complexion lead Hero to violate the Symbolic rule; she lets Leander visit her house ("Come thither"; I. 357) and makes love with him. Thus, at this textual surface, Hero may be a subject of jouissance who *boldly* defies the Symbolic for her desire, thereby risking her life.

Nevertheless, Marlowe refers to the morning after consummation as a "false morn" (II. 321) and the night of their sexual union as an "ugly night" which only gives Hero "anguish, shame, and rage" (II. 333). This transition may mean that Hero suddenly realizes that she and Leander were "*too bold*" in their transgression; they had "premarital sex" and also have not "performed the rituals that garner recognition of their relationship in the public domain" (Cleland 230). Thus, losing the courage to rebel against the Symbolic, Hero goes back from the realm of Real jouissance to the false jouissance. The Symbolic, which

she retreats, only allows surplus jouissance (object *a*) that never fully satisfies one's desire, as this story ends unfinished. When compared to Venus, who willingly pursues her jouissance by desiring Adonis till the end, or Adonis, who sought boars till his Real death, this change of Hero's attitude in Marlowe's text epitomizes humanity's surrender to the Symbolic order.

On the other hand, unlike Hero, who has to preserve her virginity for Venus in Sestos, Leander is tied to a different Symbolic order in Hellespont. This city has a specific set of values that resembles, as Katharine Cleland argues, the early modern Protestant England where Marlowe belongs: "chastity" in "marital monogamy" (226) and heterosexual customs.[9] In this sense, Leander's pursuit of Hero is not seriously against the Other's rule since he has no social duty to protect his virginity, so his father only "mildly" rebukes his son (II. 137). Leander also does not commit the crime of homoeroticism, stubbornly refusing to be tempted into Neptune's seduction (II. 192).[10] That is to say, as a limited subject within the Symbolic ($), Leander follows the social law relatively faithfully than Hero, being embedded with the Symbolic imperative: *"Be not too bold."* Thus, in the Symbolic, where the Real jouissance is outlawed, Marlowe's Hero becomes a substitute enjoyment for Leander. In other words, for Leander, Hero is the object *a* that might fill the void of Leander's Symbolic castration while safely remaining within the Symbolic. For this reason, as the shape of Hero's "turret" indicates (I. 351), or as the figure of number *one* implies when Leander says to Hero that "One shalt

9) Homosexuality was forbidden by law in Puritan New England as a capital offense (Borris 71-72).

10) Katherine Cleland also argues that although Leander's relationship with Hero is a "subversion of accepted societal norms and of the Protestant ideal"—traditional family values and protestant dogma in Elizabethan England—it still operates "within the legal framework" (230).

thou be" (I. 257), Hero becomes the object of phallic jouissance, the vain attempt to fill his "lack inherent" (-φ; Lacan, *Ecrits* 693). In pursuit of Hero, Marlowe's Leander would remain unsatisfied as a castrated subject in the Symbolic, since Hero does not stand for the Real jouissance, but a false one—*plus-de-jouir*—the object of phallic jouissance. Thus, Leander jumping into the sea to meet Hero in Marlowe's work may be a subject of desire traversing its fantasy to regain its lost identity through the object *a*: the false phallus.

However, as soon as Leander plunges into the ocean, crying "Love, I come!", lusty and homoerotic Neptune abruptly appears (II. 154-5), calling him "love" and embracing him so hard that Leander almost is being drowned (II. 167-170). In respect of the allegory of desire and jouissance, Leander's homosexual encounter with Neptune is significant in that it manifests Leander finally getting a glimpse of his Real-being while traversing the fantasy. In the ocean, which indicates the Real where the Symbolic order does not operate, Leander discovers a faint indication of his *ontological absolute*. This Real is the place of *das Ding,* or nothingness, where sheer death instinct dominates, the space beyond the pleasure/reality principle; thus, Leander nearly drowns. Although the sense of existence which the Symbolic bestows to him is imperfect, Leander cannot get it otherwise; so he refuses to stay in the ocean in Neptune's bosom. Still, Leander's true identity oppressed in the Symbolic of Hellespont indirectly surfaces in the sea as a homosexual and lusty God; this implies that Leander's genuine self may well be a homosexual, recalling Marlowe's alleged same-sex desire and homoeroticism. Being a faithful subject of the Symbolic, Leander does not acknowledge such bare face of his desire to the end. Not willing to die for the Real jouissance ("O, let me visit Hero ere I die!"; II. 178),[11]

he chooses to remain in the Symbolic, vainly seeking his imaginary phallus—Hero—instead of the real object of enjoyment. Such compromise implies that Marlowe's Leander cannot be "*too bold*" to violate the Symbolic order since even though he is the subject of desire, he is not the subject of jouissance. In this way, Marlowe created an anti-thesis of the jouissance, whereas Hero and Leander in Musaeus' and Ovid's versions—which Britomart must have seen in the House of Busirane—boldly resist against the Symbolic, and thus reaches their deaths in Real jouissance.

4. Synthesis: Britomart as a Subject of Jouissance

What Britomart witnesses in the tapestries of Busirane can therefore be the dialectics of jouissance: *"Be bold" vs. "Be not too bold."* Although Spenser hung the embroideries of bold lovers to educate Britomart on the concept of chastity, these rebellious subjects of desire instead may have secretly shown Britomart what they earned in turn for their autonomous jouissance. Thus, from the tragic but beautiful jouissance of resistant mythical figures—such as Venus and Adonis, and Hero and Leander—Britomart may have witnessed that Real enjoyment is possible only when she boldly rebels against the Symbolic order. However, at this point, she still does not realize what *"Be bold"* and *"Be not too bold"* might mean yet (III.xi.54.9).

Later, Britomart's lesson becomes evident with the mask "theater" of Busirane, an allegory of the Symbolic (III.xii.3.6). From the door on which the imperative of the Symbolic—*"Be not too bold"* is written—the procession of diverse human emotions,

11) As Lacan suggests, there is a deeply rooted wish not to know any of our unconscious (Fink, *A Clinical* 7). Thus, Leander's negative response toward Neptune can be his symptom of psychic repression.

"phantasies," "paines in love, or punishments in hell" comes out (III.xii.26), as if they form a small edition of the Universe structured by the Symbolic order. At first, Britomart is enchanted by them, gazing at the procession until it ends; thus, remaining in the Symbolic as Marlowe's Hero does, she fails to enter the door (III.xii.27). This mistake leads the education to continue while she stays one more day in the room of tapestries until she realizes the real meaning of the aporic imperatives: we should *"be bold"* to become the authentic subjects of jouissance like figures in the tapestries, even if the Other says to us: *"Be not too bold."*

Thus, becoming the "Bold Britomart" (III.xii.29), she successfully enters the room at her second try, stepping across the threshold of the Symbolic into the Real, like Leander bravely threw himself into the sea. There Britomart witnesses the reverse of the Symbolic: "the vile Enchaunter" torturing the subject (Amoret) with his evil words (the Symbolic order) (III.xii.31). Being raged at this violence of the Other, Britomart, the subject of jouissance, reduces Busirane to submission, making him undo the Symbolic castration posed on Amoret, another ego of herself. Now, since Britomart and Amoret are no longer passive subalterns within the Symbolic, Busirane becomes a captive for them (III.xii.41). Moreover, Britomart and Amoret confront their *das Ding*, the nothingness and void, where all the Symbolic illusions are disenchanted: "goodly rowmes," "their glory," and even "those dreadfull flames" all disappear (III.xii.42). This extinction is because, in the Real, nothing exists but the intact drive. In this way, as Freud declared, *"Wo Es war, soll Ich warden,"* Britomart ethically reaches where her suppressed-being reemerges.

In addition, to interpret this progression more fully, we should remind Canto Two, where Britomart wondered about her future husband in front of the prophetic crystal ball (III.ii.23) and is shot

by Cupid's arrow (III.ii.26). At that moment, "love's cruel law" (III.ii.38)—the Symbolic order—suddenly got hold of her and commanded her to pursue Arthegall as a vain *object a*. Since then, Arthegall has been Britomart's object of desire that may fill up her existential loss in the Symbolic but never does, at least in *FQ*. Meanwhile, Amoret has been similarly terrified immediately after discovering that Scoudamour is her fateful companion because he is not the object of her genuine desire but the surplus jouissance that the Symbolic allowed her. In this regard, Spenser's 1596 revision, the cancellation of the reunion between Amoret and Scoudamour, is especially noteworthy since it can be read as Britomart and Amoret eventually moving beyond the image in Merlin's mirror or the divination in the Temple of Venus. As Elizabeth Mazzola interprets, Britomart "learns to locate Artegall in a larger world outside herself" (11). That is to say, although Spenser may not have intended as such, this alteration sneakingly indicates the completion of Britomart's Real jouissance.[12)]

In this way, Britomart eventually succeeds in *subjectifying* her fate in the Symbolic, after the long odyssey of jouissance in Busirane's castle. Formerly, she was under the primal repression, "the roll of the dice at the beginning of one's universe that creates a split and sets the structure in motion" (Fink, *The Lacanian* 68), passively following the command of the Symbolic to seek Arthegall. However, after learning from the bold jouissances in tapestries and the Symbolic mask procession of the House of Busirane, she gets to realize the importance of boldness "to come to grips with the random toss" of the dice of her fate (ibid.), and thereby is reborn as the authentic and active subject of desire. From this

12) Besides, from a Hegelian perspective of Alexandre Kojève, Britomart is finally detaching "form"—the Symbolic discourse of Artegall—from "content"—her *real* desire—as a genuine "Subject opposed to the Object" (162n6).

moment on, although Britomart continues to seek Arthegall and eventually marries him, this pursuing of *chastity* would not be the previous passive action because she now has confronted the truth of her being-in-itself in the Real and became aware of the failing crack of the Symbolic in the House of Busirane. Therefore, *FQ* is a tale of jouissance, not of an old-fashioned value.

Further, the lesson from Britomart's jouissance to the twenty-first-century readers is also evident. The resistant spirit of jouissance— *"be bold"*—and the Symbolic disturbance— *"be not too bold"*—are what collectively have propelled humanity to create tremendous achievements throughout Time. Homo Sapiens has proactively fought like Britomart to resurrect from the Symbolic death, being bound for the Real death in the land of the prohibitive Other. Especially now, the current pandemic forces us to reconsider the new-normal ontology of human beings seated between such two types of death: one from quarantine and the other from disease. Thus, the autonomous ethics of psychoanalysis is required for us more than ever to balance the thin line between social and self-reliant beings. In Britomart's learning, neither her creator nor the Symbolic order became the catalyst, but her active meta-textual interaction with the imaginary subjects who retort in Renaissance way to their cultural ascendents. Therefore, she encourages us to continuously discover the ethical aesthetics of jouissance from the old legacies, traversing between the transgression and the compromise, to move forward into the future past.

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전자우편: jamesjoyce@yonsei.ac.kr