



Tasso's Aminta Part II (Special Issue for Retiring Professor Yukie Ando)

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Tasso's *Aminta*

Part II

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Foreword

Aminta is here discussed through Leigh Hunt's translation, *Amyntas, a Tale of the Woods*, as in my former paper, "Tasso's *Aminta*, Part I." Hunt does not give any line number to his translation, so I add them, according to one of original Italian editions by Jernigan and Jones.

1. Prologue

Amyntas begins with a "Prologue" by Love, who is disguised as a shepherd. This prologue clearly shows the theme of the drama: Amyntas' love for Sylvia. Love has managed to disguise himself as a shepherd so well that he cannot be recognized by his mother, Venus. Far from her sway and pressure, he stays in the woods and declares his aim to "Pierce with a deep immedicable wound / Into the hard heart of the cruelest nymph" (53-54) with his dart. In contrast to this "cruelest nymph," he refers to Amyntas as one whose "gentle bosom" (59) he pierced with his dart years ago.

Then he mingles "with the holiday multitude / Of flowery-crowned shepherds" (69-70) and is ready to strike "A blow invisible to mortal eye" (75). He boasts of his ability to "inbreathe high fancies in rude hearts" (80) and "To make the rural pipe as eloquent / Even as the subtlest harp" (87-88).

Lastly, he defies his mother, who scorns his wandering in the

woods, saying that "'tis she is blind, not I" (90) if she does not understand his noble task. He insists that he is not blind, but only "miscalled by blinded men" (91).

Here Love is depicted as an attractive young god, who is "no boy" (23), and who, independent of his mother, is able to "equalize" (85) rural and noble, men and women, with warm-hearted humor and compassion. This serves to charm the audience and sway sympathies from the outset.

2. Act I

In Act I, Scene I Daphne and Sylvia enter the stage. Daphne persuades Sylvia to be aware of "the delights of love" (9), but Sylvia insists that she enjoys chasing beasts with her bow and arrows. Sylvia explains her dislike of Amyntas: "I hate / His love, because it hates my honesty" (110-11). "Honesty" here means chastity. She clearly prizes her virginity. She declares, "what thou callest lover, I call enemy" (121). Daphne tries to advise her this way and that, but Sylvia is determined to go her own way to "join the accustomed chase today" (234). They then depart, to meet again in the bath.

In Act I, Scene II Amyntas and Thyrsis appear together. Amyntas complains of his unrequited love for Sylvia. Thyrsis asks him to explain the situation. Amyntas tells a story about how Phillis' cheek was cured by Sylvia's lips and her magic words, when Phillis was stung by a bee. Amyntas then pretended to have had his underlip stung as well, in order to win Sylvia's kiss. Love made him clever to think of such "a gentle stratagem" (142). But "the real and the mortal wound" (153) pierced him when her lips touched his. Amyntas confesses that "From that time forth, desire / And irrepressible pain so grew" (173-74) in his heart that he dared to whisper his love into Sylvia's ear while playing a game with other shepherds and nymphs, saying "I burn for

thee; and if thou help me not, / I feel I cannot live” (181-82). At his words Sylvia fled and has since refused to see him for three years. He is in despair: “Nothing remains indeed but that I die!”(194). He has been driven to the depths of despair by Mopsus’ prophesy of his hopeless situation. But Thyrsis advises Amyntas not to believe Mopsus, pointing out the fallacies of his predictions. Encouraged, Amyntas parts from Thyrsis, promising to meet “again in half an hour” (318).

A chorus enters at the end of Scene II. They praise the Golden Age, when honor did not control or rule human nature, saying that people then enjoyed freedom and there existed nothing but “That glad and golden law, all free, all fitted, / Which Nature’s own hand wrote—What pleases is permitted” (343-44). In that innocent age, “The lover and his love their merry bath would take” (357). The chorus blames “Honor” (358) for its constraint on human acts. They order “Honor” to remove “To the renowned and high”(378) and sing “We here, a lowly race, / Can live without thy grace” (379-80) as in the Golden Age. They encourage people to love, repeating “let us love” (382 & 384) and affirm that “life soon disappears” (383).

By separately showing both his heroine and hero with their friends in this way, Tasso sets their characters in sharp relief, the contrast turning all sympathy towards Amyntas, which the chorus then reinforces. At the same time, Tasso ingeniously inserts famous anecdotes referring to the d’Este court in the speeches of Daphne and Thyrsis, in order to secure the audience’s more immediate and personal interest, as I mentioned in “Tasso’s *Aminta*, Part I” (11-16).

3. Act II

In Act II, Scene I a Satyr enters to remind the audience of the erstwhile dramatic setting, that is, the days of classical mythology. He

begins his speech about a small bee, which stings and makes crucial wounds. Then he refers to Love, “who lurks in the minutest things, / And strays in the minutest” (4-5). He says that Love invisibly exists in every charming point of a girl and incurably injures the attracted one. In his own case, Love stores his weapons in “Sylvia’s eyes” (13).

He addresses Sylvia as a cruel girl, saying “thou in thy fair bosom hidest / Hate, and disdain, and hard impiety” (18-19). He complains that she throws away all of his gifts, such as flowers, apples, and honey, because she herself has sweeter ones similar to them. His lustiness becomes apparent when he says, “Thou [Sylvia] hast more sweet young apples in thy bosom” (28). He declares, “I give thee my own self” (34). He boasts that he is half man and half goat, to denote “strength and manhood” (43). He asks Sylvia, like a lecher, to “try” (44) his body. He despises young men for their girlishness. He concludes that he is scorned by Sylvia because of his poverty, not his shape. He also faults the times, saying, “This is indeed the age of gold” (57), not because it is Golden but because gold rules and reins people. He points out that “the nobleness of love” (67) is profaned by gold and that there exists “A venal love! / A love that waits on gold!” (68-69).

After lamenting his unrequited love for Sylvia, he decides to use “violence” (79) for his aim, that is, to rape her. He has a plan to go to the fountain where she is used to bathe and to hide there until she comes. He imagines he can there take his “opportunity / And run upon her” (88-89). He guesses that she cannot resist him but only cry and sigh. He considers his terrible “vengeance” (97): he will entwine her hair around his arm and will not let her leave until he gets what he wants.

The brutality of this vengeance is clear in his last words in the original Italian: “*nel suo sangue*” (97), which means “in her blood” in English. Hunt avoids such a savage expression and translates this: “till

I have drank [*sic*] my draught of vengeance” (97). Jernigan and Jones are, by contrast, direct: “until my arms are dyed / and reddened by her blood for vengeance sake” (96-97; p. 65). Malcolm Hayward translates this: “before I stain / my revenging arms in her blood” (96-97). Recent translations similarly follow the original Italian.

In Scene II, Daphne and Thyrsis reappear. Their conversation, including many jokes, reveals their own situation and relationship, as well as their opinions of the hero and heroine. Daphne complains of the difficulty of persuading Sylvia to love Amyntas. She says that Sylvia is “As foolish as she’s fair” (8). Thyrsis mentions that nature teaches girls the arts of love. Daphne acknowledges that “Sylvia is not quite / So simple as she seems” (32-33), remembering a scene in which Sylvia proudly adorned herself with flowers.

Daphne misses the days when “nymphs and shepherdess” (70) innocently loved and were loved. Thyrsis also longs for ancient times, saying: “The town, I guess, did not so often spoil / The woods and fields” (74-75). He deplors the profaning of the woods. Both characters thus represent a longing for an idealized pastoral world.

Thyrsis wants to arrange for Sylvia meet Amyntas. But Daphne doubts this is possible, saying: “She is now more coy than ever” (82). Thyrsis is also afraid that Amyntas is “more full of his respect” (83). In the original Italian this goes: “*E costui rispettoso è fuor di modo*” (83), which means: “And he is too respectful.” So Hunt’s translation should probably be interpreted as: “more full of his respectfulness.” At this Daphne says that “learning love is to unlearn respect” (84). But this “respectfulness” is the defining characteristic of Amyntas. He cannot do anything selfish, such as causing his sweetheart displeasure, much less pain. He is utterly different from Satyr, who wants to take Sylvia by force.

Thyrsis asks Daphne to help him “to help poor Amyntas” (102),

adding that Amyntas “will die else” (103). She suggests he go to the fountain called “Diana’s fountain” (111) where Sylvia will bathe her lovely and “naked limbs” (115). Hearing her advice, he asks her, “What then?” (116). Disgusted at his obtuseness, she says: “Think, and thou’lt know what then” (117). He understands, but he doubts if Amyntas has the courage to act on such a suggestion.

Daphne asks Thyrsis why he himself does not wish to love, as he is “still young, / Not more than four years over the fourth luster” (123-24). Hunt’s “fourth,” here is a mistake; the original has “*quinto*,” which means fifth. “Luster” means five years, so Thyrsis is twenty-nine years old. Tasso himself was the same age in 1573 when *Aminta* was written. He thus here suggests he has decided not to love any more. He enjoys writing poetry for “a God” (176), who gives him peaceful ease. As I pointed out in my former paper (15), the “God” here is Alfonso II. For him Tasso wrote *Jerusalem Delivered* and this *Aminta*. In Scene II, thus, Tasso again conflates the personal and mythological.

Lastly Daphne and Thyrsis agree to do their best to help Amyntas attain the love of Sylvia. Daphne then leaves, and at the end Thyrsis discerns far away Amyntas coming towards him.

Scene III begins with Amyntas’ words: “I wish to know what Thyrsis may have done” (1). He expects that Thyrsis may have done something to help him. If not, he declares, “I will go slay me right before the eyes, / Of this hard girl” (4-5).

At this, Thyrsis tells him: “I bring thee comfortable news, Amyntas” (12). Amyntas puts this in the sharpest, most ironic relief: “Life or death?” (“*O la vita o la morte?*” 15). Thyrsis answers “Life and salvation” (16), and entreats him to have courage. Amyntas promises to do so: “I will go treading fires, / The fires of hell itself, if she be there” (31-32) and implores Thyrsis, “Now, tell me all” (34). Thyrsis answers: “Sylvia is waiting for thee at a fountain, / Naked and

alone” (35). The next line, 36, begins like this in the original: “*Ardirai tu d’andarvi?*” (“Do you dare to go there?”). Hunt, however, omits this question. Amyntas’ reply comes, in the original, as follows: “*Oh, che mi dici?*” Hunt translates this: “Oh! what is it thou sayest?” Hunt thus again blunts the erotic charge of Tasso’s phrasing.

Instead, he has Amyntas stupidly ask: “Naked and alone, me!” (37). Thyrsis answers, “Alone” (38), but he does not forget to add that Daphne is with her and that she is on their side. Amyntas then asks, sensibly, “Naked? and waits for me?” (39). Thyrsis answers: “Aye, naked; but—” (40). Amyntas then blames Thyrsis, who explains that she is not aware of his coming. Amyntas is disappointed and accuses Thyrsis of increasing his misery. But Thyrsis encourages him, advising: “That thou go directly, and seize / What friendly fortune offers” (50-51). Amyntas, however, does not follow his advice, saying “God forbid, / That I should do the least thing to displease her” (52-53). He even says that he will go to death instead of the fountain.

At last Thyrsis succeeds in persuading Amyntas by saying that the plan has been devised by Daphne, who perhaps knows Sylvia’s mind, and that Sylvia may know about the plan. Amyntas’ doubt, “who will make me sure that she wishes it?” is suppressed by a rhetorical question from Thyrsis, “Who is to make thee sure she does not wish!” (97). Thyrsis mentions that “The doubt and risk are equal” (99). Amyntas still hesitates. He asks Thyrsis to stop and consider, but the latter hurries him on, saying “Upon the road then. / To think too many things, is to do none.” (106-7).

At the end of Scene III the chorus reappears. Addressing Love, they ask, “what school, / What mighty master’s rule” (108-9) can teach his art. They admit that neither Athena nor Phoebus could clarify the mystery of Love. They praise Love as “Sole manifester” (126), saying: “It is thyself alone / By whom thou canst be shewn” (124-25). They

describe those different features of lovers which are made by Love himself. Finally they implore: “Oh Love, let others read / The old Socratic scrolls” (143-44) and insist that love outdoes philosophy. Through the chorus, Tasso defines his drama as a “wild rhyme, / Which a rude hand cuts on the rude tree bark” (148-49), with an emphasis on the conflation of the sophisticated and the rustic that is the hallmark of the pastoral tradition.

Act III

Act III, Scene I begins with Thyrsis' indignation at Sylvia and his lamentation about Amyntas. He is afraid that Amyntas “has slain himself!” (9). He asks a group of shepherds, who are near him and play the part of a chorus, about Amyntas. They do not know where he is. The crucial point of the drama is clarified through his conversations with this chorus. The audience thus hears the story secondhand. When he and Amyntas arrived at the fountain, Daphne cried to them, “Help, help! Sylvia is forced!” (49). At this Amyntas ran “like the pard” (51) and Thyrsis followed him. They saw Sylvia “bound to a tree” (52) “naked as she was born” (53). To their surprise, “The rope that bound her was her own soft hair” (54). “Right fronting her” (63) they saw “a villain Satyr” (64), who, at that moment, “was finishing his fastenings” (65). Amyntas rushed on the Satyr with a lance and Thyrsis with stones, so the Satyr fled.

Amyntas then tried to release Sylvia, but Thyrsis saw “his visage sparkle fire” (77). This shows Amyntas' pure heart. He says to her:

“O heavenly Sylvia, thou must pardon
 These hands, if it be too presumptuous bold
 To come so near thy limbs of loveliness.
 Necessity compels them—hard necessity

To loosen all these knots; and so I pray thee,
 Let not the grace, which fortune thus concedes them,
 Be painful to thee.” (79-85)

Despite his obvious sympathy, she uttered not a word. “He loosed her hands with his” (99) and then “he stooped to set her ankle free” (102). At that moment, she told him not to touch her and said, “I am Diana’s: / Leave me to loosen them” (105-6). At this, Amyntas drew back and “stood apart in reverence, not even raising / His eyelids to admire her” (109-10). His respectful sincerity is palpable. As soon as Sylvia freed herself, though with much trouble, “without saying / A bare adieu, she set off like a fawn” (117-18), her apparent ingratitude equally palpable. Thyrsis ran after her to bring her back, but he lost her. When he came back to the fountain, he could not find Amyntas. Thyrsis dreaded that Amyntas might slay himself. The chorus then encourages him. Thyrsis, taking heart, says, “I’ll look into the cave of sage Elpino. / Amyntas, if alive, may have gone there” (135-36). Amyntas has often gone there to ease his suffering with the sweet and attractive sound of Elpino’s pipe. Thus Scene I ends.

Tasso leaves the most important parts of the play, that is, the scenes of Satyr’s binding Sylvia and Amyntas’ loosening her, for obvious reasons, to the imagination of his audience. Thyrsis’ descriptions appeal suitably and effectively. As a result, Amyntas, so innocent of mind and heart, seems to have become a model for lovers in many later dramas and poems, for example in Keats’s narrative poems.

At the beginning of Scene II, Amyntas and Daphne enter the stage. Amyntas wants to die in despair, but Daphne encourages him, saying, “’Twas but shamefacedness / That made her fly, not cruelty” (12-13). While he deplores his ill fate, she encourages him again, saying, “Live, live, unhappy one” (21).

Then Nerina, a nymph, appears. Hunt inserts here a stage direction in parentheses: “(*coming among the trees*),” which is not in the original. She talks to herself, referring to Sylvia’s father, Montano: “How wilt thou bear thyself, when thou art told / What has befallen thine own and only Sylvia?” Amyntas and Daphne notice her, and ardently ask her to tell them about Sylvia. Her story goes as follows: Sylvia, naked, came to her house and was dressed; they went to chase in the Wood of Holms; many nymphs were there and then “A most enormous wolf” (64) dashed among them with lips “all bathed in blood” (66); Sylvia shot him in the head with an arrow and he fled into the woods; she followed him, “Holding a lance in ready fierceness” (70). The “lance” here is “*un dardo*” in the original, that is, “a dart” in English, but Hunt adheres to an older meaning.

Hearing this, Amyntas is curious to know the result. Nerina continues her story: she followed Sylvia and the wounded wolf with a lance, but they disappeared; she pursued their traces and came to the deepest spot of the forest, where she found Sylvia’s lance and “a white net” (“*un bianco velo*,” that is, a white veil, 79), with which she herself had tied Sylvia’s hair; she saw “seven wolves, busy in licking blood / Among some naked bones” (81-82). Nerina fears that Sylvia may have been killed by the wolves. She shows her net, and Amyntas is so simple-minded that he swoons, saying, “Oh Sylvia, thou art dead” (90). Hunt inserts here another stage direction: “(*He falls to the earth*).” Such swooning became iconic, of Romeo, most famously, and of Lycius in Keats’s “*Lamia*.” So we can say here again that Amyntas is a model for the lovers of later dramas and narrative poems.

Amyntas, in deep despondence, declares that he wants to die, but Daphne advises him to wait until he has learned the truth. He does not listen to her, however, and Nerina laments: “Would I had held my peace!” (120). He asks Nerina to give him the net, that is, “the poor

remains of all that beauty” (123), to keep as his “companion” (124). Nerina refuses lest the net should hasten him to suicide. Disappointed, he says, “I vanish, never to return” (139). In spite of Daphne’s calling, “Amyntas! Stay!” (140), he flies away at high speed. Nerina decides not to say anything to Montano.

At the end of Scene II, the chorus again praises the value of love. They sing as follows:

There is no need of death
To bind a great heart fast:
Faith is enough at first, and Love at last. (III, ii, 147-49)

They mention the power of love to acquire “glory” (“*gloria immortal*,” that is, “eternal glory,” 155) in the end, foreshadowing the happy ending for the lovers.

Act IV

In Act IV, Scene I Daphne, Sylvia, and the chorus appear. Daphne is glad to see that Sylvia is alive and asks her to tell the story of her escape. She relates how she lost her way in the deep forest chasing the wolf; searching for her way out, she found the wolf, which had her arrow embedded near its ear, eating some dead animal with other wolves; it came towards her and she tried to shoot it with her “lance” (24), but in vain; she fled and the wolf followed, while her net or veil was caught by a bough; she succeeded in her escape. Hearing this, Daphne says, “Alas, that all are not so!” (49), referring to Amyntas. At this, Sylvia asks, “What? Dost grieve?” (50). Hunt thus elides much of the original, which runs: “*Che dici? ti rincresce / forse ch’io viva sia? M’odii tu tanto?*” (50-51), that is, “What do you mean? Do you regret / perhaps that I am alive? You hate me so much?” Perhaps Hunt wanted

to avoid Sylvia's seeming pettiness at this point, though Tasso spares her not.

Still, it may be enough, for Hunt, that Daphne blames Sylvia for being merciless: "O Sylvia, Sylvia, thou hast no conception / Of what love's fierceness in a heart can do" (66-67). She says that Sylvia should "have been / Embracing him for love and gratitude" (75-76) at her release thanks to his help. Daphne tells Sylvia that she prevented him from killing himself with his lance. She also explains his reaction when they heard Nerina's tale about Sylvia, how he swooned "with agony" (92), and then, coming to himself, "he flung away in fury, / To kill himself" (93-94). Daphne is sure that he must have done it finally. Hearing these things, Sylvia says:

Let us go;
Oh, let us find him! If he would have died
To follow me, he must live now to save me. (IV, i, 97-99)

For the first time, Sylvia now worries about Amyntas, saying, "he will die, unless we find him; die / Alas! By his own hand" (104-5). She regrets her own cruelty, which she called "honesty" (117). Daphne is surprised to see Sylvia taking pity and weeping for him. She regards Sylvia's tears as "tears of love" (123). Sylvia denies this, saying, "Not love, but pity" (124), but Daphne maintains that "Pity as surely is love's harbinger, / As lightning is the thunder's" (125-26). The chorus supports her idea: when love steals into a maiden's heart guarded with honesty, he takes "the countenance / Of his true servant and sweet usher, Pity" (130-31) and beguiles her. Daphne thus asserts to Sylvia, "Thou lovest? 'Tis so. Lovest" (134), and declares that the mighty power of Love is punishing Sylvia for having disbelieved in him. Daphne then apostrophizes Amyntas, believing him dead, saying,

“Behold them [her tears] and rejoice; loving in life, / Beloved in death” (143-44). She even says that “thou hast bought her love with dying” (149). The chorus agrees, and moralizes: “Dear price to give; useless and shameless one / To take!” (150-51). Sylvia takes this to heart and cries:

Oh! that I were but able with my love
To purchase back his life, or with my life
Itself; if he indeed is dead. (IV, i, 152-54)

Daphne jeers at this, saying, “Oh wise! / Too late! Oh pity, come at last in vain!” (155-56). Thus, at the end of Scene I, Sylvia has undergone a dramatic transformation.

In Scene II a messenger, the chorus, Sylvia, and Daphne appear. The messenger, Ergastus, brings news of Amyntas’ death. In his words, Amyntas is “the noblest shepherd of the woods” (9). Sylvia is too appalled at the news to accept it, at first, but finally she tells him, “I shall take it from thee as a thing / Most due to me” (27-28). He says that Amyntas finished his life while calling Sylvia’s name. Daphne asks him to tell the story, which goes like this: Ergastus was setting his nets on a hill and Amyntas passed him with an unusually disturbed look; he talked to Amyntas, who asked him to come with him and witness something he was going to do, but not to disturb him; Ergastus invoked “Pallas, Priapus, and Pamona, and Pan, / And midnight Hecate” (52-53) and swore; Amyntas took Ergastus to a steep precipice, saying, “See that thou tell / The nymphs and shepherds what thou shalt behold” (63-64); Amyntas called out to Sylvia, who had been his “life” (71), and hoped that his “wretched limbs” (72) would be torn by wolves like “that delicate body” (74) of hers; at last Amyntas cried, “Sylvia, I follow thee; I come” (84, 93) and threw himself down headlong.

The chorus asks Ergastus, "Didst thou not stop him?" (97), and he replies that he "caught by the scarf of silk, which girt him [Amyntas] round" (105), but it snapped in his hand. On hearing this, Sylvia regrets her mercilessness, saying that his scarf "Shall wreak its destined vengeance / On my most impious cruelty" (129-30). She takes the scarf to her bosom and announces that she should have been "Amyntas' companion / In life" (139-40). Apostrophizing the scarf, "'Tis thou shalt join me with him / Among the shades infernal" (142-43), she reveals her determination to die after him. The chorus then soothes her: "take comfort. / 'Tis fortune's doing this, and not thy fault" (144-45). She notices that the chorus is weeping, and says, "I do deserve no pity." She tells Daphne, "lock / Thy tears up in thy heart" (153-54). She asks them to weep for Amyntas, not for herself. Then she asks Daphne to go to "gather up his limbs" (157) and bury them. She is determined to do so and says:

This office will I pay him,
The only one I can,
For all the love he bore me. (163-65)

Daphne offers her help, but advises her not to think of death afterward. Sylvia regrets her egoistic life and says, "What now remains of life, / I wish to live for him" (177-78). Still, she is ready to die, saying, "no more / Shall I remain on earth" (182-83). Sylvia goes to the place guided by Ergastus and Daphne, bidding farewell to the chorus of the shepherds and the surrounding plains, rivers and woods, like her final parting.

At the end of Scene II the chorus again praises Love, who is described as a friend of peace and stronger than Death, because he can unite two spirits Death has separated. The chorus also emphasizes that

Love makes human hearts peaceful:

Thou, coming down
 Mak'st mild the human spirit, and dost ease
 From the only inward hatred, all that own
 Thy reign: dost ease a thousand madnesses: (200-3)

Spirits do not fight in heaven; no hatred nor death nor war exist there. But the real focus, of course, is on the heaven that love can create on earth.

Act V

In Act V, Scene I the chorus and Elpino announce the happy ending for Amyntas and Sylvia. Elpino praises Love for creating his “amorous paradise” (8). He refers to Amyntas as “fortunate” (12) and prays that his own love for Lycoris will be as lucky. This is a *roman à clef* interlude, since, as I mentioned in my previous paper, “Lycoris represents Lucrezia Bendidio” (12) and Elpino represents Pigna (13).

The chorus asks Elpino about Amyntas and he replies: “it was a false report / That told us of his death” (34-35). He explains Amyntas’ situation as follows:

. . . and now he lies
 Lapt in the bosom of his lady adored,
 Who is as kind as she was hard, and kisses
 With her own mouth the sorrow from his eyes. (40-43)

Elpino announces that he is going to Sylvia’s father Montano to get his consent to their marriage. He also explains to the chorus how Amyntas was rescued: Thyrsis and he were talking about Lycoris at his cave,

when Amyntas fell from the top of the hill into a pile of bushes and thorns, which saved his life; thence he tumbled down in front of them: he lay stunned for an hour; to revive him they sent for Alpheisibœus who was given healing power by Apollo; Sylvia and Daphne arrived; Sylvia recognized him and fell “Right on the prostrate body, face to face, / And mouth to mouth” (104-5); with her tears he came back to life; his life was not in danger, though his limbs were somewhat bruised; he was happy now, because his love had been requited.

At the end, the chorus reflects that it is better love with a little labor than with much labor, “let our refreshment be / Relished with no agony” (153-54). There is a lighted turn here, an attempt to offer some relief, as the audience is invited to imagine how there may be future troubles for the couple, but nothing to compare with the pains they have already undergone:

But with only pungent sweets,
Sweet disdains, and sweet retreats;
And warfare, such as still produces
Heart-refreshing peace and truces. (155-58)

Aminta is the first pastoral drama, and adds significant new developments to the pastoral tradition. First, it has a happy ending. In classical pastorals love is almost always unrequited. Second, the play is set in the age of classical mythology. Classical pastorals themselves tend to deal with contemporary events. Tasso indeed inserts some *roman à clef* allusion into the play, but he induces his audience to see them in a fairy-tale context. Third, this drama is not “wild,” and its characters are not rude, but refined and sensitive, with the exception of the Satyr. Tasso himself says that it is a “wild rhyme / Which rude hand cuts on the rude tree bark” (148-49), but this is a trope of

modesty, a wink, as it were, at a sophisticated audience enjoying some sophisticated rustification.

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