

SPENSER'S ALLEGORICAL DECORUM:

ANALOGICAL AND EXEMPLARY ALLEGORY IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

CHARLES BUTLER

D. PHIL

THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND RELATED LITERATURE

MARCH 1989

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Abstract | iv |
| Abbreviations | v |
| INTRODUCTION | |
| Reading Allegory | 1 |
| 1 Analogy and its Application to Allegory | 1 |
| ii Allegory's Ends and Means: A Context for Spenser | 15 |
| iii Allegorical Decorum | 31 |
| iv Interlude: The Possibility of Interpretation | 45 |
| CHAPTER 1 | |
| The Allegorical Environment | 64 |
| 1 Time and Place in Faerie | 64 |
| ii Case Study: Guyon and Phaedria | 79 |
| iii Allegory and Ambivalence | 96 |
| CHAPTER 2 | |
| Iconography and Narrative | 123 |
| 1 Analogical Iconography | 123 |
| ii Emblematic Wit | 135 |
| CHAPTER 3 | |
| Character, Magic and Metamorphosis | 160 |
| 1 Two Ovidian Approaches to Character | 160 |
| ii The Empathetic Response | 183 |
| CONCLUSION | |
| 'That lovely band': Allegory and the Desire for Unity | 213 |
| APPENDIX | |
| Spenser and Petrarch's Canzone CCCXXIII | 242 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 250 |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My supervisor, John Roe, deserves my gratitude for many inadequately remunerated hours spent pondering draft chapters. So too does Martin Dzelzainis, who encouraged me to take up research in the first place; and the British Academy, who provided the wherewithal. I particularly wish to thank Alison Leslie for her constant encouragement and many suggestions. I am also grateful to my family and friends, who were always ready to talk about things other than *The Faerie Queene*. Finally, my thanks to Edmund Spenser, without whose sterling ground-work this thesis would never have come to fruition.

ABSTRACT

In Elizabethan literary criticism the term 'allegory' is used to describe two quite different phenomena. As might be expected, it can refer to an extended analogy, involving the (more or less) systematic substitution of the terms of the literal sense for those of the allegorical sense. But there is also a looser definition, encompassing exemplary moral fiction. Spenser's Letter to Raleigh draws on both these definitions, and both are apparent in the poetic practice of *The Faerie Queene*. The thesis explores the rhetorical and logical effects which follow from this fact.

The Introduction begins with a brief discussion of analogy, and maintains its importance in any definition of allegorical writing. This is followed by a historical survey, in which Elizabethan opinions on the structure and purpose of allegory are examined. Two types of allegory are identified - analogical and exemplary. An art of allegorical decorum is proposed, the purpose of which is to mediate between analogical and exemplary interpretations of a text.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 each explore different aspects of this decorum. Chapter 1 examines the allegorical environment of Faerie, including the intermittent analogy between narrative sequence and cause and effect, and between physical location and moral state. Chapter 2 concentrates on the use of iconography, and considers the empathetic effects of embedding emblematic descriptions within a larger narrative. Chapter 3 continues the discussion of empathetic response, focusing on the question of 'character'.

The Conclusion identifies two opposing concerns in *The Faerie Queene*: the maintenance of the fictive illusion, and an insistence on the artificiality of the mode. It is argued that this conflict becomes the basis of a dialectic which points the reader beyond the contradictions of the poem, towards ultimate union in God.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| <i>CC</i> | <i>Colin Clovts Come Home Againe</i> |
| <i>HHB</i> | <i>An Hymne of Heavenly Beavtie</i> |
| <i>FQ</i> | <i>The Faerie Queene</i> |
| <i>SC</i> | <i>The Shepheardes Calender</i> |
| | |
| <i>ELH</i> | <i>English Literary History</i> |
| <i>ELR</i> | <i>English Literary Renaissance</i> |
| <i>NLH</i> | <i>New Literary History</i> |
| <i>PMLA</i> | <i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i> |
| <i>RES</i> | <i>Review of English Studies</i> |
| <i>SEL</i> | <i>Studies in English Literature</i> |
| <i>SP</i> | <i>Studies in Philology</i> |
| <i>SRen.</i> | <i>Studies in the Renaissance</i> |
| <i>SSt.</i> | <i>Spenser Studies</i> |

INTRODUCTION

READING ALLEGORY.

1. Analogy and its Application to Allegory

First there is the paradox that, to the characters participating in an allegory, nothing is allegorical.'

C.S. Lewis

The young Socrates of the *Parmenides* has a problem. He has been explaining his theory of Forms, according to which individual objects acquire their various qualities by participating in essential Forms, or Ideas. Good things derive their nature adjectivally from the Form of Goodness, for example, and beautiful things from the Form of Beauty. In this exposition, Socrates assumes that Forms are themselves independent entities, and that they exhibit the very qualities of which they are the essential source. The Form of Goodness is itself good, therefore, and the Form of Beauty beautiful. Against this, Parmenides points out that, if a quality of an individual entity is derived from its participation in a Form, then Socrates' assumption will lead to an infinite regression. If the Form of Beauty is beautiful, both it and all other beautiful things must derive that quality from some further, transcendent Form, which in turn derives

1. C.S. Lewis, *Spenser's Images of Life*, ed. Alastair Fowler (C.U.P., 1967), pp.28-29.

its own beauty form yet another Form, and so on. This regression could be avoided only if the Forms did not exemplify their eponymous qualities. But if the Form of Beauty is not beautiful, what qualities can be attributed to it? And if all beautiful things are beautiful by virtue of participating in that Form's nature, what can the nature of this participation be?

Suppose, for instance, one of us is master or slave of another; he is not, of course, the slave of master itself, the essential master, nor, if he is a master, is he master of slave itself, the essential slave, but, being a man, is master or slave of another man, whereas mastership itself is what it is [mastership] of slavery itself, and slavery itself is slavery to mastership itself. The significance of things in our world is not with reference to things in that other world, nor have these their significance with reference to us, but, as I say, the things in that world are what they are with reference to one another and toward one another, and so likewise are the things in our world.

Parmenides, 133d-134a'

The philosophical problem that Parmenides' objection raises for Socrates' theory is not one I intend to pursue here. But for literary criticism it brings with it the seed of a related aesthetic problem, one which lies at the heart of all discussion of allegory. I highlight this passage because it represents, to my knowledge, the earliest clear statement of the distinction between metaphors of similarity and metaphors of analogy: that is, between comparison of objects based on a simple observation of shared attributes, and comparison based on a perceived equivalence within a pair of isomorphically mappable structures. Mastership and individual masters are related, not because they have any qualities in common considered in

1. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, ed., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1961), p.928.

isolation, but because within their respective, unmeeting worlds they are in *analogous* positions.

Dedre Gentner, in her essay 'Are Scientific Analogies Metaphors?', describes the nature of analogy in a more formal way:

A structure-mapping analogy from a base system B to a target system T is an assertion that

(1) there exists a mapping M of the nodes b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n of system B into the (different) nodes t_1, t_2, \dots, t_n of system T.

(2) The mapping is such that substantial parts of the relational-operational structure of B apply in T: that is, many of the relational predicates that are valid in B must also be valid in T, given the node substitutions dictated by M:

TRUE [F(b_1, b_2)] implies TRUE [F(t_1, t_2)]...

(3) Relatively few of the valid attributes (the one-place predicates) within B apply validly in T.

TRUE [A(b_1)] does not imply TRUE [A(t_1)].'

If (to use Gentner's example) I say that the sun is like an orange, I intend to convey that some of the sun's attributes - in this case its colour and shape - are shared by the orange. This is a simple metaphor, based on a coincidence of attributes. On the other hand, when Rutherford compared an atom to the solar system, he saw the sun as being equivalent to the atom's nucleus - not because they share individual attributes but because they occupy equivalent places in their respective systems. Both take part in relationships such as 'is the heaviest part of', 'is at the centre of', 'is orbited by', and so on.

To summarise, an analogy involves the establishment of a mapping between two separate systems. The terms of the systems may or may not

1. Dedre Gentner, 'Are Scientific Analogies Metaphors?', in *Metaphor: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. David Miall (Sussex and New Jersey: Harvester Press and Humanities Press, 1982), pp.106-32 (pp.108-109).

have attributes in common, but (given the mapping that has been made) the internal relationships of the systems exhibit a high degree of similarity. In the light of this definition, the sort of analogy made by Plato's Parmenides - the analogy between the particular and the abstract - emerges as a special case, for the condition concerning the similarity of relationships (Gentner's second point) does not necessarily hold. The relationship between Mastership and Slavery is as inaccessible as their individual attributes: Mastership is simply 'what it is [mastership] of slavery itself,' and slavery itself is 'slavery to mastership itself'. The relationships which exist between individual masters and slaves (relationships such as 'owns' and 'is master to') cannot be inferred as existing between the Forms of Mastership and Slavery. In fact, the only thing that can be known of the world of Forms is simply that an analogy between it and the phenomenal world exists.

We must now ask to what extent this characterisation is applicable to allegory, and in particular to *The Faerie Queene*. Is allegory no more than an extended analogy between literal and allegorical senses, in which the objects in one system have 'reference to one another and toward one another', but not to objects in the analogous system; or is there a more complex interaction?

For most of the last century, and for a large part of this one, the usual assumption has been that the first of these possibilities holds. Whatever else William Hazlitt meant when he made his assertion that if readers of *The Faerie Queene* 'do not meddle with the allegory, the

allegory will not meddle with them',¹ he at least implied that the allegory can be left alone, and the rest of the poem remain intact. If allegorical meaning is to be gleaned, it seems, there must be a conscious act of translation, a crossing of some conceptual void between the stories of knights and ladies and monsters, and any moral or historical meaning those stories might conceal.

Analyses such as this, in which a constant flitting back and forth between poem and meaning is seen to be necessary, served only to hasten allegory's decline into relative disrepute over the course of the nineteenth century. Allegory on this view involves (to put a Coleridgean objection in Coleridgean terms) a 'disjunction of faculties':² a separation of meanings lies at its heart. Even more damning perhaps is the observation that to perform the translation from narrative to underlying moral meaning the reader must already be in possession of the moral truths which the allegory is intended to shadow - otherwise how could the analogy between them be perceived? A narrative in which one must constantly refer to an external meaning to achieve understanding is clearly flawed as a means of unfolding that meaning. And if the narrative is not intended to convey its allegorical meaning, what is the point of yoking the two together in the first place?

-
1. P.P. Howe, ed., *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in Twenty-one Volumes* (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1930), V, 38.
 2. T.M. Raysor, ed., *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1936), p.29. For the Coleridgean view of allegory as involving 'a compromising relationship between the imagination and the logical powers of reason' see Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1964), pp.15-19 (p.16).

Over the last thirty years allegory has again begun to receive serious critical attention, and as a consequence this rather simplistic conception of its method has been drastically revised. Scholars such as Harry Berger, A.C. Hamilton, Thomas Roche and Paul Alpers¹ have, in their different ways, been at pains to show that in practice the distinction between literal and allegorical senses was never as clear cut as the pure 'analogical' view would imply - that the complexities involved in the reading of allegory are too great for such an inflexible and unresponsive distinction to reflect them adequately. Hamilton and Alpers in particular have argued that the allegory of *The Faerie Queene* is generally implicit in its narrative surface, and that the idea that one must look somewhere other than the poem for understanding is misguided.

For such critics a more congenial view of the nature and action of allegory is to be found in such texts as Sir Philip Sidney's *A Defence of Poetry* (first published 1595, but circulated widely in manuscript after its composition, c.1580).² In Sidney's eyes it is poetry's ability to move men to virtue that constitutes its main justification. Sidney's poet is the inspired architect of a new and 'golden'³ nature

1. See Harry Berger Jr, *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P. and O.U.P., 1957); A.C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in 'The Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961); Thomas P. Roche Jr, *The Kindly Flame: a study of the 'Faerie Queene' III and IV* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1964); Paul J. Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1967).

2. This title is actually a hybrid of the titles of the two earliest editions, but it is adopted in the edition cited here; Sir Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (O.U.P., 1966).

3. Sidney, *Defence*, p.24.

to which our 'erected wit' can aspire, a world peopled by practitioners of virtue on a heroic scale:

[Nature has not] brought forth so true a lover as Theagenes, so constant a friend as Pylades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus, so excellent a man in every way as Virgil's Aeneas.²

To witness such virtue 'in poetical imitation'³ leads the reader to noble desires of his own, partly amending his corrupted will: 'Who readeth Aeneas carrying old Anchises on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act?'⁴ Sidney's poet works by examples, yet he claims that the readers of poetry may through those examples 'steal to see the form of goodness (which seen they cannot but love) ere themselves be aware'.⁵ There is no great divide between example and essence here, one simply provides a perspective onto the other. Aeneas does not stand for filial duty, nor yet is his act a common or garden example of it. Its heroic context allows it to be both exemplary and also to share in a universal significance, which awakes and shapes the reader's own awareness and desire to partake of that virtue. Sidney does not systematically distinguish between literal and allegorical meanings: the mechanism by which examples of goodness may allow one to 'steal to see the form of

1. *ibid.*, p.25.

2. *ibid.*, p.24.

3. *ibid.*, p.40.

4. *ibid.*, p.41.

5. *ibid.*

goodness' remains obscure, buried within that smooth Neo-Platonic formula. The concern is rather to put the whole experience of poetry into the unifying context of moral improvement.

One modern exposition of this approach is A.C. Hamilton's, in the first chapter of his *The Structure of Allegory in 'The Faerie Queene'*. Hamilton stresses the particular application to Spenserian allegory of Sidney's poetics:

Once we allow that in reading Spenser's poem we should focus upon the image, rather than upon some idea behind the image, our understanding gathers around our response to the poem's literal level because it arises from it... Instead of treating the narration as a veil to be torn aside for the hidden meaning, we should allow Sidney's art of reading poetry by using the narration 'but as an imaginative groundplot of a profitable invention.' Once we allow this art of reading, then Spenser's allegory need not be read as a complicated puzzle concealing riddles which confuse the reader in labyrinths of error, but as an unfolding drama revealing more and greater significance as it brings the reader full understanding of its complex vision.'

Hamilton aims to guide the reader's attention back to the poem, away from ultimately inconclusive speculation about allegorical meanings which he regards as external to it. Although Hamilton still writes in terms of 'literal and allegorical levels', his is an approach which seems fundamentally antipathetic to the distinction between them. Rather, he seeks to present the poem as a unified structure which can be considered in its entirety. This stance is quite consciously a reaction to the earlier view of allegory which I have outlined:

My quarrel with modern criticism is that by turning all too quickly to allegorical levels of meaning, it shortcircuits the

1. Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, p.43.

poem, so that the meaning which is offered to our understanding (to switch metaphors) sells the poem short.'

This is certainly laudable, but Hamilton does not make it wholly clear to what extent he rejects the analogical approach to allegory. Is it simply that analogy-prone critics are hasty, 'turning all too quickly' to allegorical senses; or should the allegorical sense be rejected altogether? His description of the poem as 'an unfolding drama revealing more and greater significance as it brings the reader full understanding of its complex vision' betrays a similar lack of precision. Is this significance recognised through the perception of an analogy between it and the literal sense? If it is, then the distance between Hamilton and those critics with whom he declares himself to be in dispute largely evaporates. If it is not, then in what sense can an allegory be distinguished from any other text? This is a problem which Hamilton never really meets head on.

In the years since Hamilton's book criticism which treats allegory as having 'levels' has remained deeply unfashionable. Northrop Frye had denounced the term even earlier,² and subsequent gestures of disapproval have not been wanting:³

1. *ibid.*, pp.12-13.

2. Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1957), pp.72-73.

3. Although dissenting voices can be found. See, for example, Frank Kermode, '"The Element of Historical Allegory" (1964)', in Peter Bayley, ed., *The Faerie Queene: A Casebook* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977), pp.197-210; Maurice Evans, *Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism: a commentary on the 'Faerie Queene'* (C.U.P., 1970), pp.47-51; Brian Vickers, 'Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance', *NLH*, 14 (1982), pp.528-29. Michael Murrin writes in terms of levels, both in *The Veil of Allegory: Some Notes Toward a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance* (Chicago and London: Chicago U.P., 1969) and in *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in Its Rise and Decline* (Chicago and London: Chicago U.P., 1980).

As soon as the critic begins to talk about poets telling stories *on the allegorical level*, he confuses the tenor and vehicle of this continued metaphor and misses the beauty and economy of the allegorical mode. To leap at random from the concrete embodiment of the universal in the narrative to an abstract statement of it can only flatten out the narrative and dull the experience that the allegorical narrative is attempting to create in the reader. Like other men the readers and writers of allegory cannot serve two masters.¹

The notion of levels, unfortunately now a critical cliché, has served us very ill...²

[The poem is not best understood with] elaborate maps of levels of meaning and layers of analogy and allegory...³

...the metaphor of "levels" is... one that we ought to discard in speaking of allegory.⁴

To these two alternative approaches (not, I hasten to add, 'allegorical levels') we should perhaps add a third...⁵

Yet this vertical conceptualization of allegory and its emphasis upon disjunct "levels" is absolutely wrong as a matter of fact.⁶

-
1. Roche, *Kindly Flame*, p.6.
 2. Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: some mediaeval books and their posterity* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1966), p.413.
 3. Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1966, rpt. Archon Books, 1976), p.351.
 4. Isabel G. MacCaffrey, 'Allegory and Pastoral in *The Shepheardes Calender*', *ELH* 36 (1969), 88-109, rpt. in A.C. Hamilton, ed., *Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), pp.549-68 (p.551).
 5. Humphrey Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral; Book Six of The 'Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p.43.
 6. Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1979), p.28.

While I agree with the general desire behind these remarks to acknowledge the unity of Spenser's achievement, I would contend that the notion of levels of meaning (or of discrete senses, if 'levels' is too objectionable a metaphor) is as indispensable as it is dangerous, and that the sort of unity achieved by doing without it is necessarily reductive.

It is, to begin with, in terms of double senses that allegory has traditionally been defined, not least by its practitioners.¹ Time and again in classical and Renaissance discussions of allegory the same phrases have been used to define its method: 'when one thing is told and by that another is understood'.² To George Puttenham, author of *The Arte of Englishe Poesie*, allegory's 'duplicitie of meaning'³ is central enough for it to be dubbed the 'Figure of the False Semb-lant'.⁴ The etymology of the word itself [*allos* other + *agoreuein* to make a speech] suggests its doubleness, its capacity for ambiguity.

-
1. This argument cuts little ice with Quilligan, who declares that the traditional definition is simply erroneous (Quilligan, pp.25-29). However, this seems to beg the question.
 2. This is Sir John Harington's version of Plutarch - but similar declarations are common. Classical sources include the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (IV 46) ('Allegory is a manner of speech denoting one thing by the letter of the words, but another by the meaning') and the *Institutio Oratoria* (VIII vi 44) ('Allegory... either presents one thing in words and another in meaning, or else something absolutely opposed to the meaning of the words'). In Spenser's time, Henry Peacham provides a typical example: ('Aligoria, when a sentence hath another meaning, then the proper signification doth expresse...'). See the Preface to Sir John Harington, trans., *Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso* (1591), ed. R. McNulty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp.2-16 (p.5); *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Heinemann and Harvard U.P., 1954); Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H.E. Butler (London and New York: Heinemann and G.P. Putnam, 1920); Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577), ed. R.C. Alston (Menston: The Scolar Press, 1971), Sig. Dlr-Dlv.
 3. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), rpt. in G. Gregory Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (O.U.P., 1904), II, 1-193 (p.160).
 4. *ibid.*, p.169.

Richard Mulcaster, Spenser's headmaster at the Merchant Taylor's School, went so far as to declare that 'they be no *poetes* in that kinde of their writing: but where they cover a truth with a fabulous veele'.¹ Other factors connected with form, length, subject matter and didactic intent may be common or indeed invariable ingredients of allegory, but it is the conscious use of double senses which is insisted on as crucial for its definition as a genre.

(Perhaps this last word calls for some qualification. The question of whether allegory is better described as a genre or as 'a theory of poetry'² has proved somewhat contentious in recent years - a debate I have no wish to enter.³ By applying the word 'genre' to allegory I intend to convey merely that the knowledge that one is reading an allegory brings with it what E.D. Hirsch calls 'generic expectations'⁴ - a set of memories and biases (articulated with varying degrees of clarity) that together form one's idea of the typical features of a kind of literary production, and which determine one's receptive orientation for productions of that kind. In the case of *The Faerie*

-
1. Richard Mulcaster, *Positions*, ed. Robert H. Quick (New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1888), p.169, cited James Lem Atterbury, 'Bartholomew the Englishman and Edmund Spenser: Medieval Platonists', Doctoral Dissertation, Univ. of Texas, 1961, p.63.
 2. James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the 'Faerie Queene'* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1976), p.89.
 3. Nohrnberg is of the anti-genre party. The refusal to allow allegory the status of a separate genre derives ultimately from Northrop Frye's declaration that *all* texts are allegorical (*Anatomy of Criticism*, pp.89-90). On the other hand, Quilligan (*Language of Allegory*, pp.13-20) makes a strong case for allegory as a genre in its own right. For a summary of the argument, see Carolyn Van Dyke, *The Fiction of Truth: Structures of Meaning in Narrative and Dramatic Allegory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1985), pp.15-22.
 4. E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1967), p.73.

Queene the knowledge that we are reading an allegory (rather than, say, a Dickens novel) may make us more sensitive to such aspects of the narrative as temporal sequence - so that, for instance, we are inclined to notice the short interval between the defeat of Error and the appearance of Archimago (*FQ* I.1), and to make a causal connection between the two occurrences. Conversely, we may become less sensitive to apparent inconsistencies, like the unremarked disappearance of Una's lamb after the poem's fifth stanza. That allegory does impose such a set of expectations seems clear, and in that sense alone I would claim for it the title of genre.)

If we attempt to read allegory without an awareness of its constant potential for discrete meanings we shall be denying its most distinctive characteristic. We may avoid the dangers of treating allegory as a glorified crossword puzzle, but we shall also be depriving ourselves of the real pleasure to be gained from the sense of having 'discovered' meaning. In allegorical texts the fact that there is a more than negligible period between reading and enlightenment may, from one point of view, be seen as a flaw in the work's 'unity', but so far from vitiating its integrity it is the precondition for a distinctively allegorical kind of pleasure, that of the sudden recognition of meaning where it had previously seemed inaccessible. As Rosemond Tuve puts it:

Indirection is formally and by definition a trait of the figure of allegory; hence the common praises of the power of such a continued metaphor to illumine matters dazzlingly, as the enigmatic enclosed meaning explodes in a firework of suddenly grasped metaphysical meanings.¹

1. Tuve, p.246.

I would contend that the task of the critic lies not in establishing whether a distinction between senses exists but in characterising its nature, and describing how the awareness of it affects our reading. Where the metaphor of 'levels' of meaning offends it is because the image it conjures up - of two parallel, unmeeting planes - is so grossly insufficient to the task of describing a reader's experience of a complex allegory like *The Faerie Queene*. Yet this image (or one equivalent to it) continues to haunt discussion of allegory; not because it gives a subtle representation of the reading experience - admittedly it does not - but because it describes one of the principles underlying that experience - the mechanism of analogy. The image of 'levels' does not describe the reading experience; it is part of the experience, felt by readers of allegory rather as the tonic may be felt by a listener to a piece of tonal music - as a constant but intermittently realised potential, a norm in which the heart of the work resides. Perhaps only an inept allegorist would wish to maintain without deviation the strict division of senses envisaged by Hazlitt, but the principle of such a division is present no less in a felt departure from it than in its maintenance. The hypothesis adopted in this thesis will be that an approach to *The Faerie Queene* which takes account of a real or potential distinction between literal and allegorical levels puts Spenser's complex poem in a clearer perspective than one which ignores it, without necessarily creating the sort of destructive dichotomy against which Hamilton and the others reacted.

In the following section we shall trace some of the motives behind allegorical writing in Spenser's time, and see how the primarily ana-

logical basis of its method combined with other approaches, to reflect the concerns of allegorical writers.

2. Allegory's Ends and Means: a Context for Spenser

Francis Bacon, for whom questions of allegory (or 'poesy parabolical') exercised some fascination, was struck by an apparent contradiction in the purposes for which it was used:

Parables have been used in two ways, and (which is strange) for contrary purposes. For they serve to disguise and veil the meaning, and they serve also to clear and throw light upon it.²

This paradoxical tendency of allegory to be both a revealer and a concealer of meaning marks the confluence of two ancient views of its purpose: what Mark Caldwell has called the 'rhetorical' and 'exegetical' traditions.³ Illustrative images have always formed part of the rhetoricians' armoury, and *allegoria*, being no more than an extended metaphor, can be used for explanatory purposes. Allegory as a tool of rhetoric is by definition intended to persuade, and a precondition of its efficacy is that it should be comprehensible. To this purpose Quintilian enjoined orators not to use obscure or riddling images. Significantly he stopped short of extending this

-
1. Sir Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), in *The Advancement of Learning and New Atlantis*, pref. by Thomas Case (O.U.P., 1906), pp.1-254 (p.98).
 2. Sir Francis Bacon, *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609), in John M. Robertson, ed., *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon* (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1905), pp.815-858 (p.823). Compare *Advancement*, p.98.
 3. Mark Caldwell, 'Allegory: The Renaissance Mode', *ELH*, 44 (1977), 580-600.

rule to poets, recognising that the aims of poetry and oratory were not necessarily identical (*Institutio Oratoria* VIII vi 52). Even so, Sidney's account of poetry's operation and purpose can be located squarely within this rhetorical tradition: in his view poetry seeks to persuade men to virtue, and thence to virtuous action, the 'ending end of all earthly learning'.¹ Such a conception of poetry is easily married to the techniques of epideictic rhetoric, and it is noticeable that in the section of his *Defence* in which Sidney reviews the state of contemporary style, he turns not to any poetic models but to Cicero and Demosthenes - a 'slip' to which he himself brings elaborate attention, with the excuse that oratory and poetry 'have such an affinity in the wordish consideration, that I think this digression will make my meaning receive the fuller understanding'.²

Sidney chooses to demonstrate 'the strange effects of... poetical invention'³ with two examples of *allegoria* - the tale told to the Roman plebs by Menenius Agrippa, and Nathan's parable to King David.⁴ These, however, are stock examples, and in general Sidney considers the persuasive power of allegory to be limited, deprecating its overuse in the contemporary fad of Euphuism:

... For the force of a similitude not being to prove anything to a contrary disputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer, when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prattling, rather over-swaying the memory from the purpose whereto they

1. Sidney, *Defence*, p.29.

2. *Ibid.*, p.72.

3. *Ibid.*, p.41.

4. *Ibid.*, pp.41-42.

were applied, than any whit informing the judgement, already either satisfied, or by similitudes not to be satisfied.'

In addition to the rhetorical tradition, however, the Elizabethans were heirs to a long history of sophisticated exegesis, of both Biblical and mythological texts. In the field of Scriptural interpretation, where one might imagine that reverence for the text would inhibit the devout exegete from foisting upon it readings that were too 'far-fetched', Caldwell points out that the same reverence could lead to exactly the opposite effect:

Because it [allegorical exegesis] reached its greatest importance as a way of interpreting scripture, the inexhaustible mine of God's truth, it followed that a right-thinking reader might find meanings without limit in each passage, and no one could exhaust all its hidden senses.²

To this Scriptural superabundance can be added a secular equivalent in Sir John Harington's claim to be able to 'pike out' an 'infinite' number of allegories from classical myths.³ Rosemond Tuve has insisted that the exegetical readings of Scripture were never intended actually to undermine its literal sense, however they may have supplemented it,⁴ but this can hardly be claimed for the exegesis (using similar methods) of pagan myths. Here, as Jean Seznec has demonstrated, the wholesale replacement of the original sense was the

1. *ibid.*, p.71.

2. Caldwell, p.33.

3. Harington, Preface to *Orlando Furioso*, p.5.

4. This is a point Tuve stresses repeatedly. See, for instance, Tuve, p.48 & n., p.414 n.

raison d'être of exegetical interpretation.' To provide these tales of libidinous, non-Christian gods with an underlying moral meaning was a means of ensuring their survival in the face of Church disapproval.

In the Renaissance these same myths were held to conceal in allegorical form much of the learning of the ancient world, placed there by the wise as a means of preserving knowledge from the corruption that would inevitably follow its popular dissemination. Where rhetoric's aim of persuasion implies a need for lucidity, it was precisely the ability of analogy to *veil* meaning that appealed to the exegete, for the knowledge so concealed was of an arcane variety, to be shielded from the eyes of the vulgar.

Poetry's supposed function as a means of safeguarding ancient wisdom became one of its stock defences against the charge of frivolity:

...the men of greatest learning and highest wit in the auncient times did of purpose conceale these deepe mysteries of learning and, as it were, cover them with the vaile of fables and verse for sundrie causes; one cause was that they might not be rashly abused by prophane wits in whom science is corrupted like good wine in a bad vessell...²

This is Harington, but similar words can be found in Chapman³ and even (rather more lightheartedly) in the conclusion to Sidney's

-
1. Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological tradition and its place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, trans. Barbara F. Sessions (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1953). See especially Book I, Chapter 3.
 2. Harington, loc. cit.
 3. See George Chapman, *A Free and Offenceles Ivstification of Andromeda Liberata*, in Phyllis Brooks Bartlett, ed., *The Poems of George Chapman* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), pp.327-331 (p.327).

Defence.¹ As late as 1632 Henry Reynolds was able to revive this principle in his *Mythomystes*, an attack on contemporary poetic practice which was largely based on the accusation that poetry's true function as a medium of secret knowledge had been forgotten.²

Faced with two incompatible traditions - the rhetorical and the exegetical - both sheltering under the title of allegory, Caldwell attempts to reconcile them (at the risk of some damage to his own terminology) by suggesting that in Renaissance allegory the primary purpose is always rhetorical, and that the lip-service commonly paid to the necessity of keeping veiled secrets from the vulgar is, despite appearances, a way of revealing meaning by making an appeal to the reader's vanity, stimulating his desire to be one of the *cognoscenti*.³ This is plausible - although one suspects that it is rather too kind to some of the more obscurantist allegorists, whose own vanities may have been the main beneficiaries of their impenetrability - but Caldwell offers no evidence for the assertion. In most Elizabethan texts the contradiction is simply not acknowledged. This is easier to understand when we remember that many of the major treatises on poetics during this period were written with the aim of defence rather than of *a priori* analysis,⁴ and that their structure was consequently dictated by the desire to answer a series of specific charges rather than to build a coherent description of poetry as such. The

1. Sidney, *Defence*, p.75.

2. Henry Reynolds, *Mythomystes* [1632], introd. Arthur F. Kinney (Menston: Scolar Press, 1972).

3. Caldwell, pp.582-83.

4. Sidney and Harington are the most pertinent examples. But see also Thomas Lodge, *A Defence of Poetry*, in Smith, I, 61-68.

contrasting abilities of poetry to make men wise and to keep wisdom hidden from the multitude belonged in different categories of defence, and could therefore be kept from coming into direct conflict.

Harington provides a useful study in this respect. He characterises poetry by resorting to two popular metaphors, apparently equivalent but in fact belonging to very different traditions. The first is the comparison of poetry with a fruit or tree, whose pith is hidden by an outer rind. According to this analysis poetry contains several (at least two) meanings: a literal meaning on the surface of the text (the rind or bark), and a veiled meaning beneath (the pith or marrow). As the terms of the analogy suggest, it is the inner meaning which is to be preferred. The image lends itself to allegorical defenses of poetry, and in this spirit it was invoked by Richard Stanyhurst in the Dedication to his translation of Virgil (1582):

What deepe and rare poyntes of hydden secrets *Virgil* hath sealde vp in his twelue bookes of *Aeneis* may easelye appeere too such reaching wyts as bend theyre endewours too thee vnfolde thereof, not onlye by gnibbling vpon thee outward ryne of a supposed historie, but also by groaping thee pyth that is shrind vp wythin thee barck and bodye of so exquisit and singular a discourse. For where as thee chiefe prayse of a wryter consisteth in thee enterlacing of pleasure wyth profit, oure author hath so wiselye alayed thee one wyth thee oother as thee shallow reader may bee delighted wyth a smooth tale, and the diuing searcher may bee aduantaged by sowing a pretiouse treatise.¹

Stanyhurst relates the two senses to be found in the poem to two traditional aims of poetry, delight and instruction. But what is noticeable here is that *dulce* and *utile* are no longer inseparable, as in Horatian theory, but so widely differentiated that they actually

1. Richard Stanyhurst, *Dedication to the Translation of the Aeneid*, in Smith, I, 135-47 (p.136).

apply to different readers. The 'shallow reader' is content to stop at the literal sense, leaving the allegory to wiser heads. For those who reach this inner marrow, the value of the text ceases to be poetic at all; instead it is recognised as a 'treatise' containing 'hydden secrets'.

Harington accepts the rind-pith image, and further refines the segregation of readers. Now a middle group appears, not wise enough to grasp the allegorical mysteries of the poem, but able to appreciate its moral concerns:

First of all for the litterall sence (as it were the barke or ryne) they set downe, in manner of an historie, the acts and notable exploits of some persons worthy memorie; then in the same fiction, as a second rine and somewhat more fine as it were nearer to the pith and marrow, they place the Morall sence, profitable for the active life of man, approving vertuous actions and condemning the contrarie. Manie times also under the selfesame words they comprehend some true understanding of Naturall Philosophie or somtimes of politike government and now and then of divinitie, and these same sences that comprehend so excellent knowledge we call the Allegorie...

...another and principall cause of all is to be able with one kinde of meate and one dish (as I may so call it) to feede divers tastes. For the weaker capacities will feede themselves with the pleasantnes of the historie and sweetnes of the verse, some that have stronger stomackes will as it were take a further taste of the Morall sence, a third sort more high conceited then they will digest the Allegorie...'

This sort of analysis clearly owes something to the traditional four-fold divisions of medieval exegetical theory.² In particular we should note that Harington follows medieval practice in emphasising the *kind* of information that is contained in each sense of the poem.

1. Harington, Preface to *Orlando Furioso*, pp.5-6.

2. In fact it is quite a late use of this theory, which had suffered a fatal blow at the hands of Philip Melanchthon over fifty years previously. See Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.267.

Stanyhurst's simple two-level model enabled him to stress the *methodological* differences of his two sets of readers, one content to stop at the literal sense, the other continually seeking out analogies. His language reflects this active search for hidden knowledge: 'such reaching wyts as bend theyre endewours too thee vnfolding thereof', 'groaping thee pyth', 'diving searcher'. This simple opposition between literal and analogical is not possible within Harington's tripartite model: hence the poem's senses are distinguished not only by the way in which they are made accessible to the reader, but by the sort of knowledge involved - an epistemological hierarchy is superimposed onto a structural or methodological one. Historical knowledge is identified with the literal sense - an identification Harington explains by claiming that poetry 'must ground of a truth'.¹ Moral knowledge can be gleaned by generalisations from the literal sense, while references to such 'excellent' knowledge as politics, natural science and theology must be hidden by an allegorical veil.

Harington's division of the text into several different senses may be traced back to medieval theory, but his equation of these senses with different groups of readers derives from the more recent tradition of poetry's occult role as a receptacle for ancient wisdom, and has quite different implications.² Where the medieval exegete

1. Harington, Advertisement to the Reader, in *Orlando Furioso* (pp.17-18) p.17.

2. As all generalisations must be, this is an oversimplification. Harry Caplan has shown that medieval writers such as Gregory the Great (Epist.v.53a) commented on the power of Scripture to appeal to people of all abilities. But this has little to do with any doctrine of secret knowledge, and much to do with pleasure in the inexhaustibility of Scriptural meaning. See Harry Caplan, 'The Four Senses of Scriptural Interpretation and the Mediaeval Theory of Preaching', in *Of Eloquence: Studies in Ancient and Mediaeval Rhetoric* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1970), pp.93-105 (p.95). Caplan's chapter is a good general account of the by-no-means uniform history of medieval multi-level exegesis.

could rejoice in the awareness of his text's plenitude of meaning, Harington gives no hint that there can be any intercourse between the various strata into which readers are divided. Shallow readers are satisfied with a shallow reading, while those who are more 'high conceited' recognise that the literal sense is only a rind concealing the pith of 'excellent' knowledge which is their true object. Readers are thus differentiated not only according to their ability to find hidden meanings behind a *litera* but also in their desire for and understanding of particular sorts of information. They are not 'diving searchers' but guests at a feast, who may or may not happen to have 'stronger stomackes'. In this dual emphasis on the intrinsic organisation of the text and on the capacities of its readers to appreciate recondite information, Harington makes a tentative association between literary and moral competence - a point to which we shall return in the chapters that follow.

The passage of Harington's which we have been discussing forms his allegorical defense of poetry's nature. However, he is also concerned to provide a rhetorical justification of poetry's effects. Thus he cites Plutarch's recommendation of poetry as an educative tool,¹ and then turns to another equally traditional image, that of the sugared pill:

Likewise *Tasso* in his excellent worke of *Jerusalem Liberato* likeneth Poetrie to the Phisicke that men give unto little children when they are sick; his verse is this in Italian, speaking to God with a pretie Prosopopeia:

1. See Harington, Preface to *Orlando Furioso*, p.3. Compare Plutarch, *How to Study Poetry*, 14E, 36E.

*Sai, che la corre il mondo, ove piu versi
Di sue dolcezze, il lusingier Parnasso:
E che 'l vero conditio in molli versi
I piu schivi allettando ha persuaso
Così al'egro fanciul porgiamo asperso
Di soavi liquor gli Orli del vaso
Succhi amari ingannato in tanto ei beve
E dal inganno suo vita receve.*

*Thou knowest, the wanton worldlings ever runne
To sweete Parnassus frutes, how otherwhile
The truth well saw'st with pleasant verse hath wonne
Most squeamish stomackes with the sugred stile:
So the sicke child that potions all doth shunne
With confets and with sugar we begile
And cause him take a holsome sowre receipt:
He drinkes and saves his life with such deceit.'*

'The sugred stile' has an obvious similarity to the image of the rind and the pith: both involve the notion that the valuable part of poetry is hidden beneath a surface that is merely delightful. However, whereas a stratified description of poetry's structure is central to the rind-pith image it is only incidental to the image of the pill, where the whole point is that the sugar and the medicine are taken together. To give sugar to one person and medicine to another would defeat the purpose.

Here then we have two very different views of poetry's function. One, represented by the rind-pith image, is content to stratify both the senses of a text and its readers - a static conception. The other implies a substantive alteration in a reader's outlook, a capacity for leading him from more frivolous senses to profitable ones. Far from setting up impassable barriers between the *dulce* and the *utile*, between the ignorant and the wise reader, it is intended that *dulce*

1. Harrington, op.cit., pp.3-4.

should become the very path to *utile*, and that the ignorant should become wise. Harington himself has words to this effect:

...it [poetry] pleaseth fooles and so pleaseth them that if they marke it and observe it well it will in time make them wise, for in verse is both goodnesse and sweetnesse, Rubarb and Sugercandie, the pleasaunt and the profitable...¹

This rhetorical justification does not in fact depend on the presence of hidden knowledge recoverable by the exegete, or on allegorical analogies of any sort. It equally well fits a description of poetry as teaching by example - Sidney too uses the image of poetry as sugar-coated medicine:

...[poetry] doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue—even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste, which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of *aloes* or *rhabarbarum* they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth... glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Aeneas; and, hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice; which, if they had been barely, that is to say philosophically, set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.²

Harington's Preface, though deeply indebted to Sidney in many respects, makes little explicit use of this vision of poetry teaching virtue by the portrayal of heroic exemplars, relying instead on an allegorical defence of poetry's moral seriousness. It is true that moral lessons can be drawn from the action of the narrative ('In *Byreno* that abandoned his kinde *Olympia* in a desolate Iland and fell

1. *ibid.*, p.8.

2. Sidney, *Defence*, p.40.



in love with another we may note an example of ingratitude''), but this is merely 'somewhat more fine' than the literal sense, and it is those truths revealed by allegory which are most highly regarded. The allegory is both the pith of the poem and the pill which is coated with sugar - a point Harington makes explicit in the *Briefe and Summarie Allegorie* appended to his translation:

...[the allegory is] as it were the verie kyrnell and principall part or as the marrow and the rest but the bone or unprofitable shell, or according (as I said in my Appologie, using *Tasso's* comparison) like to the pill that is lapped in suger and given a child for a medicin who otherwise would not be drawne to take the simple drugge though it were to save his life.²

Harington's purpose in including the *Briefe and Summarie Allegorie* is to save the *Orlando Furioso* from charges of frivolity. Admitting that the dubious morality of Ariosto's narrative provides insufficient scope for such a defence, Harington once again declares his preference for allegorical justification: 'because I know in mine owne conscience that all the verses in this worke be not so full weight but, if they shalbe tryed in so severe a ballance, some will be found many graines to light, I would endeavour all I might to supply that defect with the more weightie and sober consideration of the Allegorie'.³

This is emphatic enough, but in the event it is also confusing.

The first part of the *Allegorie* is indeed devoted to allegorical exegesis - in particular of Rogero's adventures. For example, the three ladies Rogero encounters as he leaves Alcyna's realm in the

1. Harington, 'Morall' notes to Book 10 of *Orlando Furioso*.

2. Harington, *Briefe and Summarie Allegorie*, in *Orlando Furioso*, pp.558-568 (p.559).

3. *ibid.*, p.558.

tenth Book are identified as 'concupyscence', 'ease' and 'the mockerie and lewd use of the world'' - an identification, incidentally, which Harington does not make in his notes to that Book. As the *Allegorie* progresses, however, the proportion of allegorical interpretation steadily decreases, to be replaced by moral commentaries of the sort that Harington placed in the 'Morall' sections of his notes to the poem:

In *Angellyca* the excellentnesse of her bewtie bred such an exceeding pride that disdayning the greatest and worthyest Princes that live in the age, she cast her selfe away at last upon a poore serving-man for a just recompence of her to haughtie conceipt.²

But in the worthy *Bradamant* is a perfect patterne of true honourable love to *Rogero*, moved first by his value, by his courage, by his behaviour, by his worth, which made him worthy of her love.³

Rogero the verie Idea and perfect example of a true knight that will by no meanes breake his faith and his honour, that seekes no advantage of the inchaunted sheeld, that to be gratefull to *Don Leon Augustus* would leese both love and life, and finally, that in defence of his honour killeth *Rodomont*.⁴

So much for the moral lightness of Ariosto's fiction. The worth of the poem now seems to reside in the aptness of a narrative in which unworthy figures suffer 'just recompence', and in the characters of the heroes, who are held up as examples and patterns of true virtue in the Sidneyan mould. What I find significant is that Harington inter-

1. *ibid.*, p.561.

2. *ibid.*, p.564.

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid.*, p.567.

mingles such arguments with allegorical analogies, without showing any of his former awareness of the distinction between them. As with Sidney, it is poetry's moral power which is insisted upon, and both analogy and example are subordinated to that end.

We saw earlier that Harington's interest in the kinds of knowledge conveyed in allegory's various 'senses' was at least as important as the structural principles by which that knowledge was lodged in the text. At several points in his notes to *Orlando Furioso* this results in the distinction between the 'Morall' and 'Allegorie' sections being blurred, as moral allegories are placed under 'Morall' (because of their subject matter) rather than under 'Allegorie' (because of their analogical nature).¹ In the *Briefe and Summarie Allegorie* this process is accelerated, as the concern to demonstrate the poem's moral seriousness becomes pre-eminent, overriding methodological niceties. By the time Harington takes his leave, the meaning of the word 'Allegorie' has undergone a subtle shift, and now seems to encompass any means by which fiction may promote the moral improvement of the reader, whether by learned analogy or by cautionary or heroic example.

This double view of allegory, as a specific structural principle and as a broader category of poetry encompassing Sidneyan exemplary fiction, has obvious application when we consider Spenser's most important extant critical work - the Letter to Raleigh, published in 1590 with the first three Books of *The Faerie Queene*.² In his opening

1. This is the case in at least part of the Morall interpretations of Books 4, 6, 7, 11 and 15.

2. Quotations from the Letter to Raleigh and from *The Faerie Queene* itself are all taken from Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London and New York: Longman, 1977). The Letter to Raleigh can be found on pp.737-38.

remarks Spenser declares his poem to be 'a continued Allegory, or darke conceit', and offers to 'discover' to Raleigh its 'general intention and meaning'.¹ Immediately here the word 'meaning' strikes us as ambiguous. Does it refer to a static 'meaning' which can be dis-covered in the same way that a rind can be stripped away, to reveal the pith of a 'darke conceit'? Or is it simply a synonym for 'intention' - what Spenser 'means' to do by writing his poem? The meaning of 'meaning' is flexible enough to accomodate both the exegetical and rhetorical approaches.

Spenser's intention turns out to be that which Sidney had held proper to all poetry: 'to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline'.² Spenser spends some time (again in terms reminiscent of Sidney)³ defending his decision to have the pursuit of this end 'coloured with an historicall fiction': men who read the work more for the delight of the story than for 'profite of the ensample'⁴ will reap the latter in spite of themselves. That word 'coloured' does not only refer to fiction's ability to make moral precepts more lively; it also carries a suggestion that the story is only a 'colour', a pretext for the delivery of wholesome doctrine. Spenser is using his own version of the image of the gilded pill, but still presented in strictly exemplary rather than analogical terms. The literary precedents he cites in defence of his practice are heroic, patterns of virtue to be imitated:

1. Letter to Raleigh, p.737.

2. *ibid.*

3. Compare Sidney, *Defence*, pp.31-34.

4. Letter to Raleigh, p.737.

Homere... in the Persons of Agamemnon and Vlysses hath ensampled a good gouvernour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando...¹

So far this conceit does not seem particularly dark. But Spenser has no hesitation in referring to such exemplary fiction as allegorical:

To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather haue good discipline deliuered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they vse, then thus cloudily enwrapped in Allegorical deuises.²

If any narrative that teaches by 'ensample' may be called allegory, what term can be used to distinguish it from the kind of writing Spenser goes on to discuss, when he explains that in Belphoebe he intends to represent the Queen's private person; that Arthur is a portrait of Magnificence, and so on? This is allegory in its traditional role as a vehicle of double meanings. Arthur in some sense - however limited - stands for Magnificence, Belphoebe stands for Elizabeth. For Spenser, however, the two modes are not to be separated. Allegorical writing is not a matter of choosing between them but of combining them in a way that leads to enlightenment in the reader. I would argue that this is what Spenser achieves to an unsurpassed degree in *The Faerie Queene*.

1. ibid.

2. ibid.

3. Allegorical Decorum

The same Moral may... be express'd in different Fables, all of which may be lively and full of Spirit, yet not all equally elegant; as various Dresses may be made for the same Body, yet not all equally becoming.

John Hughes, *An Essay on Allegorical Poetry*¹

It may be useful at this point to pause and review exactly what constitutes the distinction between the two modes of allegory we have outlined. At the same time there is a terminological problem to be solved, for if both kinds of writing may be called allegory, we need a less circumlocutory way of distinguishing them.

The type of allegory dominant in the exegetical tradition (which in rhetoric goes by the name of *allegoria*) I shall call analogical allegory, to indicate that it is based on the systematic substitution of one set of terms for another. As I argued in the first part of the chapter, this substitution is the distinguishing mark of all allegory, and I know of no work (certainly up to Spenser's time) which has been called an allegory and yet lacks any analogical element.

Distinct from this is the sort of writing I shall call exemplary allegory. Exemplary allegory is writing which is seen to exemplify its own meaning at the literal level. In isolation it might not be thought of as allegory at all, but narrative with an exemplary moral content. However, exemplary allegory too has some claim to doubleness of meaning if we read 'meaning' in the sense of 'intention', for while

1. John Hughes, *An Essay on Allegorical Poetry*, rpt. in R.M. Cummings, ed., *Spenser: The Critical Heritage* (New York; Barnes and Noble, 1971), pp.248-76 (p.256). This essay originally formed a preface to Hughes' edition of Spenser (1715).

it appears to do nothing but tell a pleasant story, it is secretly inculcating moral precepts. To use a somewhat simplistic formulation, then, analogical allegory is allegorical by virtue its method, exemplary allegory by virtue of its purpose. For our discussion, however, we shall say that the exemplary technique becomes allegorical only when it is used as part of a wider strategy including analogical allegory, and that on these occasions it may be identified with the 'literal' level of the analogy.

The parable of the Good Samaritan - though not, in these terms, strictly an allegory - is a fine example of exemplary fiction. Its meaning is self-explanatory, since it is itself a demonstration of that meaning. The actions of one man become (as in Sidney, or Harington's 'Morall' readings) the model for all. At the end of it Jesus is able to turn to his listeners and ask for the moral. By contrast the rigorous analogical allegory of the parable of the Sower is a conundrum which cannot be solved until the analogies on which it is based - between the man and God, the seed and the Gospel, and so on - are explained: 'And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?' (Luke 8.9).'

In a moral allegory of any complexity both these types of allegorical writing are likely to be present. As readers of allegory, we are constantly exercising our judgement to decide which elements of a work may be read analogically, and which are 'untranslatable' into other terms.

It is here that one of the properties of analogy discussed earlier becomes very relevant. There is nothing in the nature of an ana-

1. All quotations are from the 1611 King James Bible.

logical 'mapping' between one set of terms and another that logically implies any sharing of attributes between particular pairs of terms. The sun may sensibly be compared to the nucleus of an atom, that is to say, without any implication that they are of comparable weight or temperature, or indeed that they share any other individual attribute. In the case of the analogy between particulars and universals, not even the relationships between analogous pairs of terms need be equivalent. When this principle is applied to the reading of Spenserian allegory, surprising results follow. Since the presence of exemplary as well as analogical writing means that not all the terms of the *litera* need be translated into their analogical equivalents, it is often unclear which of two very different sets of attributes and relations are applicable at any point: those of the literal figures, or those of the figures implied by the analogical mapping.

Consider, for instance, Guyon's destruction of the Bower of Blisse at *FQ* II.xii - possibly the most celebrated of all Spenserian cruxes. Throughout most of Book II Guyon is rather a passive hero, manfully resisting temptation rather than initiating action. Hence, as Hamilton has pointed out,¹ it is something of a *coup de théâtre* when in the final Canto he goes on the offensive in overturning Acrasia's realm. Is there a change of allegorical approach here? Guyon's passivity throughout the majority of Book II derives from his actual practice of temperance, a virtue in which abstention, restraint and self-discipline play a large part. To this extent Guyon's actions are naturalistic, the dominant mode exemplary. But with the destruction

1. Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, p.131.

of the Bower the case is altered, and an important ambiguity arises. If we continue to read this part of the poem as fundamentally exemplary allegory, then Guyon's act may seem (has seemed, to many critics)' quite unusually intemperate and blameworthy. On the other hand, Acrasia is rather more than a straightforward seductress: in some ways she represents Intemperance itself. Once we make this analogical mapping, the moral implications of the episode appear quite different. If Acrasia 'is' Intemperance, then the patron knight of Temperance must surely be her unappeasable enemy: her works should no more be tolerated than those of Error, or Lust, or any of the more obviously repellent vices. From this point of view it would be giving in to intemperance if Guyon did *not* destroy the Bower. The difficulty for the reader is that the poem allows both interpretations.

We may say in these more or less general terms that Guyon's career is conducted on at least two 'levels': on the literal level he is a temperate man resisting temptations to intemperance - a fact which encourages an exemplary interpretation; but on the analogical level he is the patron of temperance, or even Temperance itself, fighting the vice of Intemperance. This is a crude characterisation (I shall be attempting some more subtle analyses in the next chapter) but I believe that it fairly represents the dilemma which underlies much critical comment on this episode.

Socrates' philosophical problem becomes our aesthetic one. If Mastership's relation to Slavery is radically different from that of masters to slaves, the same can certainly be said of, for example, the

1. See Hamilton's notes to *The Faerie Queene*, p.168, for a representative collection of critical responses.

relations of Temperance, Intemperance and temperate and intemperate individuals. A temperate man may resist a temptation to intemperance, but the analogically allegorical expression of this might well be Temperance *battling* with Intemperance. If a character like Guyon can at different times (or at the same time) be read both as an individual and as an abstract figure, then his actions will be open to misreading from one side or other of the divide. As Maureen Quilligan has written, allegory has a 'tendency to slide tortuously back and forth between literal and metaphorical understandings of words, and therefore to focus on the problematic tensions between them'.¹ Given the nature of Spenserian allegory, in which both forms of allegory are continually present at least *in potentia*, this ambiguity is necessarily a constant part of our reading.

If this is so, however, it is also true that some parts of *The Faerie Queene* strike us as more problematically ambiguous than others. I have been at pains to stress the fact that an analogy between two terms does not *logically* imply that they have attributes in common, but this does not mean that the sharing (or otherwise) of attributes may not have an effect on the psychological plausibility of an analogical allegory, or on its aesthetic acceptability. In fact, the value of a discussion of the logical implications of analogy lies largely in its provision of a foundation for more specifically critical questions.

These are the questions of allegorical decorum. What makes some analogies seem to 'work' better than others? Which factors encourage us to read allegory in one way rather than another, either as ana-

1. Quilligan, p.67.

logical, or exemplary, or both? What, in short, constitutes that 'lovely conformitie, or proportion, or conueniencie between the sence and the sensible' which Puttenham prized as the chief praise of a poet?' The attempt to answer these questions will, in one form or another, occupy us for the rest of the thesis. In this section we shall confine ourselves to a consideration of some of the issues involved.

That allegory need not involve a wholesale *translatio* was recognised by Quintilian, who explained that most allegory was 'mixed', with the untranslated terms providing a gloss on the rest (*Institutio Oratoria* VIII vi 47-48). This point was taken up by the elder Henry Peacham: 'a comixt Aligorye, is when one word, or moe then one in the Aligory, haue their proper signification'.² Peacham's examples are of interest in their own right. The first is a quotation from Matthew's gospel (Matt 3.12), in which John the Baptist likens Christ to a farmer separating wheat from chaff. The second is a sentence from Cicero:

Whose fan is in his hand, and he shall purge his floure, and gather his wheat into his Barne, but will burne the Chaffe with unquencheable fyre...

Truely I alwayes thought, that Milo should abide other tempest and stormes, only in these waues of consciens.³

1. Puttenham, p.174.

2. Peacham, Sig. D2r. For John Hoskins, writing some twenty years later, the mixing of terms in allegory is so prevalent as to be its identifying feature, distinguishing it from emblem. See John Hoskins, *Directions for Speech and Style* (c.1599), ed. H.H. Hudson (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1935), p.10.

3. Peacham, Sig. D2r.

The second example is perhaps the simpler. Peacham cites the phrase 'waues of consciens' as a 'comixt' allegory because the word 'consciens' has its 'proper sygnification'. The role of 'consciens' as a gloss for 'waues' is made explicit by a standard lexical operator - 'of' - and seems to resist any subtler interaction between the two terms than that of simple substitution. Whatever sensuous qualities we associate with 'waues', they do not seem to be called upon in this image: everything is subordinated to the larger framework of the analogy.

In the passage from Matthew's gospel the interruption of the allegory by a term with its 'proper sygnification' is less obvious. The *translatio* is almost complete - wheat for the blessed, chaff for the damned, fan for judgement, and so on. However, in the reference to 'fyre' the analogy merges with its true subject: both the chaff and the damned are to be burnt. The adjective 'unquencheable' takes this process one step further, since it is appropriate not to the fire a farmer makes of the chaff, but only to the hellfire in which the damned are to be punished. As with 'consciens', the word acts as a gloss on the subject of the allegory, but its use is unsignalled and oblique. The effect is that we momentarily transfer the adjective 'unquenchable' to the literal level, an incongruity that sends us back to the meaning that underlies it. With 'unquencheable fyre' the parable drops the mask of its artifice, revealing its true significance not with any standard formula such as 'of', but directly, as if the weight and urgency of the meaning could not be so glibly hidden behind a veil of analogy.

In these two examples at least we have a *prima facie* case for thinking that the terms used in an analogy need not share individual

attributes with the terms to which they are analogous. In the first, the formula word 'of' seems to disclaim any pretension to such similarities, diverting our attention to the larger effect of the analogy. In the second, the inapplicability of the word 'unquenchable' to the literal meaning actually heightens the rhetorical effect of the passage.

The inclusion of incongruous elements in the *litera* was recognised both in classical and Renaissance times as a way of directing the reader's attention towards the fact of an underlying meaning. Bacon is one of several writers who comment upon this effect of allegory's apparent nonsensicality - what Michael Murrin has dubbed the 'absurdity principle':

But there is yet another sign, and one of no small value, that these fables contain a hidden and involved meaning, which is, that some of them are so absurd and stupid upon the face of the narrative taken by itself, that they may be said to give notice from afar and cry out there is a parable below.²

Perhaps the earliest use of this doctrine was in the exegetical practice of Dionysius the Areopagite. As Ernst Gombrich has explained, Dionysius believed that Scripture described divine matters by combining two methods - affirmation and negation - one acting as a corrective to the other. While use was made of 'such dignified concepts as Logos or Nous or... the image of Light',³ to describe God,

-
1. Murrin, *Veil of Allegory*, p.146. Murrin cites similar statements by Origen, Julian the Apostate and George Chapman.
 2. Bacon, *Wisdom of the Ancients*, p.823.
 3. E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in the art of the Renaissance* (New York: Phaidon, 1972), p.151.

there was a danger that if Scripture confined itself to these images then they would themselves be mistaken for the divine, instead of being recognised as mere analogies.

It is to avoid this confusion that the holy authors of the revealed writings have deliberately used inappropriate symbols and similes so that we should not cling to the undignified literal meaning. The very monstrosities of which they talk, such as lions and horses in the heavenly regions, prevent us from accepting these images as real and stimulate our mind to seek a higher significance.'

God is described precisely by those things which he does *not* resemble, because in fact he cannot be said to be like anything. But this strategy must be part of a combined approach which also includes more 'dignified' images, capable of leading our minds in the proper direction once the metaphorical nature of the discourse has been recognised. This double requirement finds a modern parallel in James Nohrnberg's dictum about allegory: 'the two patterns must be appropriable to each other—if they are to produce a recognition of "intendment" or aptness. And yet they must be alien enough to produce an allegory.'²

The obvious example of this technique in *The Faerie Queene* is the description of Error:

Therewith she spewd out of her filthy maw
A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe:
Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With filthy frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,

1. *ibid.*

2. Nohrnberg, pp.101-102.

And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthy parbreake all the place defiled has.

I.1.20

The unsettling presence of 'bookes and papers' in Error's vomit brings us up short, sending us back to the meaning which she embodies - the many ways that falsehood can be spread through the world. In one respect this passage differs from the Dionysian account, since the apparent absurdity is not really absurd at all, but a reference to the allegorical sense behind the *littera* - a mixed allegory. The detail is more than simply a gloss, however. The juxtaposition of elements from the literal and analogical levels of the allegory has an effect in its own right. The allegorical relevance of the following line, in which the frogs and toads are said to be born without eyes, becomes clearer in the light of these 'bookes and papers'. Although there is no intrinsic absurdity in their blindness which forces us to abandon the literal level, we are now more inclined to look for specific analogies in the details of the description. As with Dionysian interpretation, the metaphorical nature of the work as a whole is emphasised by the obvious impropriety of specific parts. More than this, by including the 'bookes and papers' in the narrative, Spenser ensures that the literal sense does not suffer a complete 'disintegration before the triumphant progress of the interpretation'.¹ On the contrary, the interpretation becomes a part of the literal sense, and produces an electrifying moment in which we seem to inhabit two allegorical worlds simultaneously. The use of such effects seems to me to constitute one of the best replies to the objection that analogical allegory involves

1. Caldwell, p.588.

a disjunction of the faculties. It is rather that the faculties unite the levels of the analogy.

Mixed allegory and the absurdity principle are both rhetorical tools at the command of analogical allegory. They suggest that a lack of similarity in the terms of an analogy, so far from spoiling the allegory, can actually enhance it by making the reader more aware of the presence of meaning in a text, and at the same time helping to unfold that meaning. Exemplary allegory, by contrast, depends on the ability of particular examples to open a perspective onto universals, and this is an exercise in which opacity is not a virtue: the Sidneyan poet shows 'all virtues, vices, and passions so in their natural seats laid to the view, that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them'.¹ A marked disparity in the attributes of the particular and universal senses here can easily work to the poet's disadvantage. A good example is C.S. Lewis' comment on a passage from Prudentius' *Psychomachia*. *Mens Humilis* has just defeated *Superbia* on the battlefield:

The moment has now come when Humility must triumph and yet remain humble. The unhappy poet, torn between the epic formula and the allegorical meaning, can only explain that she triumphs modestly:

Uplifts her face
With moderated cheer, and civil looks
Tempering her joy.

Os quoque parce Erigit - nothing could suggest more vividly the smirk of a persevering governess who has finally succeeded in getting a small boy into trouble with his father.²

1. Sidney, *Defence*, p.33.

2. C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p.70.

Prudentius' figures are of course personifications, and he attempts to combine in them both the meanings we associate with that word: the giving of human form to a particular quality, and the exemplification of that quality. Here, unfortunately, these meanings are incompatible. Although Lewis says that the poet is 'torn between the epic formula and the allegorical meaning', this is not quite accurate. Prudentius' allegorical meaning is that Humility is stronger than (and therefore superior to) Pride, a meaning which is perfectly compatible with the epic setting. The difficulty with this passage, and the reason it fizzles into unsatisfactory compromise, has more to do with decorum. As Lewis himself comments, 'Fighting is an activity that is not proper to most virtues.'¹ It is expected, in other words, that Humility will behave like the Forms described by Socrates, and exemplify the quality of which she is the essence. Prudentius has realised this, and attempted to make Humility humble, with the dire results described by Lewis. In this case, the *logical* independence of attributes in the terms of an analogy is not a sufficient *aesthetic* justification for so total an opposition between the *litera* and the meaning to which it refers.

Not all personifications are so dependent on this exemplary role, however. We may contrast the Prudentian passage with the opening of Daniel's masque, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*:

The Night, represented in a black vesture set with stars, comes and wakens her son, Somnus (sleeping in his cave), with this speech.

1. *ibid.*, p.69.

Awake dark Sleep, rouse thee from out of this cave,....'

This oxymoronic invocation seems to invite challenge, and yet, at the same time that it draws attention to the artificiality of its allegorical environment, it fulfils a genuine dramatic function, acting as an intensive: if Sleep must be awoken, one feels, the matter is urgent indeed. Daniel does not follow up this advantage, however. Somnus leaps to do his mother's bidding with a most unsleepy alacrity, and although he soon returns to his slumbers this seems to be as much a badge of identification as a part of his 'character', no more internalised than Vesta's lamp or Diana's quiver. Daniel is uncomfortable enough at the contradiction implied in Somnus' behaviour to feel compelled to justify it with an appeal to authority:

Which figures when they are thus presented in human bodies, as all virtues, vices, passions, knowledges and whatsoever abstracts else in imagination are, which we would make visible, we produce them using human actions, and even sleep itself (which might seem improperly to exercise waking motions) hath often been shewed us in that manner, with speech and gesture. As for example:

*Excussit tandem sibi se; cubitoque levatus
Quid veniat (cognovit enim) sciatur.*

*Intanto sopravvenne, e gli occhi chiuse
A i Signori, ed a i sergenti il pigro Sonno.*

And in another place:
*Il Sonno viene, e sparso il corpo stanco
Col ramo intriso nel liquir di Lethe.²*

To describe the waking of Somnus is for Daniel simply to take advantage of a convention which allows such seeming inconsistencies.

1. Samuel Daniel, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604), ed. Joan Rees, in *A Book of Masques: In Honour of Allardyce Nicoll* (C.U.P., 1967), pp.17-42 (p.31).

2. *ibid.*, p.28.

The watchers of his masque must be sensitive to the genre's true focus, and approach the action with an eye to what Somnus represents, not what he does - if they do not meddle with the literal sense, the literal sense will not meddle with them. Yet this solution seems to be just as reductive as Hazlitt's.

When Archimago's sprite is sent to wake Morpheus in the first canto of *The Faerie Queene*, the figure he finds is a much more thoroughgoing exemplar of the state he represents than Daniel's Somnus:

The messenger approaching to him spake,
But his wast wordes returnd to him in vaine:
So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake,
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,
Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatned vnto him the dreaded name
Of *Hecate*: whereat he gan to quake,
And lifting vp his lumpish heavy head, with blame
Halfe angry asked him, for what he came,...

I.1.42.1-43.5

Morpheus wakes, but sleepily. Humility triumphs, but modestly. If we ask why this passage succeeds where Prudentius fails, it cannot be on the grounds that one figure exemplifies the quality it represents while the other does not. Rather, it is that Prudentius shies away from the contradiction implied in the allegorical situation, where Spenser embraces it. To wake Morpheus - in *Faerie*, this is not just a verbal contradiction but an inversion of the natural order. How can it be achieved except by invoking 'the dreaded name/ Of *Hecate*'? The exemplary logic of the situation is not simply ignored, as in Daniel, but incorporated into the poem's world. Indeed, the violation of the

logic helps to define that world: the vivid sense of Morpheus' sleepiness is achieved by showing with what difficulty he is changed from his state.

The relationship of the analogical and exemplary modes of allegory in Spenser is not always harmonious, but he excels in the ability to turn the tensions inherent in his chosen form to poetic advantage. The figure of Morpheus is one focus for these tensions - yet the scene is described in such a way as to assimilate the struggle between the two modes of allegory into the structure of the narrative. Again, Guyon's action in destroying the Bower of Blisse is open to contradictory interpretations; but in the end this interpretative rivalry becomes a vehicle of meaning in its own right, communicating a genuine ambivalence about the legitimacy of sensual pleasure. If exemplary and analogical allegory can never sit easily together, this is clearly not a reason for artistic despair, but an opportunity to find new and original ways of expression - an opportunity Spenser well knows how to take.

4. Interlude: The Possibility of Interpretation

Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.

Hume, *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, (XIII,iii)¹

1. David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), p.173.

Until now we have been considering the different motives and methods that cohabit, however uneasily, in a complex allegory like *The Faerie Queene*. Since our subject has been the relationship between the literal sense and the referent to which it is analogous, it has been convenient to assume that we can know with reasonable confidence what that referent is. This would always be a dangerous assumption, but at a time when the possibility (or otherwise) of extra-linguistic reference of any kind is a live critical issue, it is a matter which cannot be left unaddressed. In this section, then, we shall consider a more fundamental question than any so far discussed. How secure can we ever be in making a statement of the form 'Image A represents Idea B'? Can such a statement ever be proved - to take up Hume's challenge - either by abstract or by experimental reasoning?

The root of the problem lies in the nature of analogy itself. Analogical allegory involves a leap of faith, for an analogy can only be perceived, not deduced. While the poet can provide clues to his intention, these will inevitably be ambiguous, and their identification a question-begging procedure, for what seems of fundamental significance to one reader may appear peripheral to another. Even when a character is given an apparently straightforward allegorical name - for instance 'Despair' - this does not necessarily solve our interpretational difficulties. In the case of *FQ* I.ix, for instance, it gives no indication of whether Despair is despair in a general abstract sense, or a personification of Redcross' spiritual state, or simply a man given to despair; still less does it indicate which of his words and actions are to be read as having particular allegorical significance. The reader is left to choose from many interpretational paths, and must seek methods to guide his choice as best he may.

For a critic like Hamilton, the ambiguity inherent in analogical reading vitiates the whole method, since there seem to be no sure grounds for preferring one interpretation to another. To prove his point, he attempts a *reductio ad absurdum* of the analogical method:

Why not allow Book I to be an allegory of modern Russian Communism? The Red Cross Knight stands for the working class armed with the Marxist faith: naturally his colour is red, and his cross refers to the crossed hammer and sickle. Una is clearly the spirit of Communism. The opening battle against Error refers to the Revolution. That monster's books and papers which she spews at the knight refer to the flood of Trotskyite writings, and her death marks the first triumph of the oppressed peasant class (the knight is *Georgos*, one brought up in ploughman's state). The scattered brood who feed upon Error's body represents the landed kulaks who used the time of distress to get rich; and the account of their swollen bellies 'with fulnesse burst,/ And bowels gushing forth' shows what rightly happened to them.'

We can take it that this interpretation is not intended seriously, but how do we know? In this case there is external evidence: the writer tells us it is a joke, and there are obvious anachronisms. These useful pointers, however, are seldom available to the would-be interpreter. True, the Marxist version is also highly selective in its use of the text, but the body of 'conspicuous irrelevance' (to use Harry Berger's phrase)² in allegory means that no reading can hope to interpret every facet of the text analogically. How can one justify one's own particular brand of selectivity?

Hamilton uses this reading to bolster his case against analogical allegory. What it demonstrates, however, is not that analogical interpretation is necessarily invalid, but that to be successful it

1. Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, p.9.

2. Berger, *Allegorical Temper*, pp.120-60.

must do more than fulfil the basic criterion of isomorphic consistency; it must also be psychologically plausible to the reader. Commonly, a reading is proposed, and it will 'work' insofar as it will fit those aspects of the text to which it addresses itself, but it will nevertheless feel 'far-fetched' or 'strained', or, as Rosemond Tuve would say, 'imposed'.¹ If we look for the cause of this phenomenon in the text alone we shall end either by distrusting all such interpretations, or by declaring that they are all equally valid, for in terms of structure there is no certain method of choosing between them.

This is not a new realisation. Boccaccio had stated the problem in his defense of poetry:²

Who in our day can penetrate the hearts of the Ancients? Who can bring to light and life again minds long since removed in death? Who can elicit their meaning? A divine task that— not human! The Ancients departed the way of all flesh, leaving behind them their literature and their famous names for posterity to interpret according to their own judgement. But as many minds, so many opinions.³

Boccaccio proceeded to interpret the myths anyway - a combination of scepticism and faith which was strangely echoed over two hundred years later by Francis Bacon, in his preface to *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients*. The main body of this work consists of a collection of well-known myths, each of which is interpreted by Bacon to reveal

-
1. 'Imposed Allegory' is the title of a chapter in *Allegorical Imagery*.
 2. This occupies the fourteenth and fifteenth books of his encyclopaedic *Genealogia deorum gentilium* (c.1340-1370).
 3. *Boccaccio on Poetry*, trans. Charles G. Osgood (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1930, rpt. 1956), p.11, cited Ronald Levaio, *Renaissance Minds and Their Fictions: Cusanus, Sidney, Shakespeare* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: California U.P., 1985), p.112.

certain moral and scientific points supposedly enshrined therein. Bacon does not, however, take the legitimacy of interpretation for granted: empiricist that he is, he actively considers the possibility that the concealed moral meanings traditionally adduced as the reason for the myths' composition might have been later additions:

I know very well what pliant stuff fable is made of, how freely it will follow any way you please to draw it, and how easily with a little dexterity and discourse of wit meanings which it was never meant to bear may be plausibly put upon it.¹

In the introduction to the *Wisdom* Bacon agonizes over this question at some length, but in the end he decides that at least some of the myths simply must have been composed with the conscious intention of illustrating a particular truth, so evident is that intention to the reader, and it is these interpretations which he means to include in his work:

I find a conformity and connection with the thing signified, so close and so evident, that one cannot help believing such a signification to have been designed and meditated from the first, and purposely shadowed out.²

However, turning to the main content of the *Wisdom* one finds that the interpretations often fall far short of inducing the *quietem in cognitione* promised by Bacon's words. The legend of Perseus, for instance, is an allegory on the 'art and judicious conduct of war';³ while the figure of Cupid represents nothing more or less than the

1. Bacon, *Wisdom*, p.822. Compare *Advancement*, p.99.

2. Bacon, loc. cit.

3. *ibid.*, p.832.

atom of classical materialism.' The words Jean Seznec applied to Boccaccio seem equally suited to Bacon: 'we find him rejecting this or that fable because of its improbability, and in the next breath accepting some no less absurd fabrication'.² It is inconceivable to me that the 'inventor' of these myths (if it is sensible to talk of such a person) could have written them with the intention of illustrating just these points, but in 1609 a person as consciously sceptical and intellectually rigorous as Francis Bacon found it not only plausible, but so 'evident' that it was impossible not to believe it. If there is such a discrepancy between the ways these myths can be read - the ways, in fact, that they can be allegorized - then it seems to imply a gap between the perceptions of readers in different ages that is well nigh unbridgeable. We can achieve an intellectual understanding of this sort of mythological interpretation, but how can it ever be imbued for us with the imaginative potency that it has for Bacon?

The proper area of consideration here is the selective nature of the reader's credulity. William James, in his essay, 'The Will to Believe' (1896),³ makes the observation that at certain times, and for certain people, particular beliefs are either psychologically 'live' or 'dead' (the metaphor being an electrical one), and that in the

1. *ibid.*, pp.839-41.

2. Seznec, p.222. Nor is this bemusement purely a modern phenomenon. John Hughes, writing barely a hundred years after Bacon, found his readings similarly implausible: 'his Interpretations are often far fetch'd, and so much at random, that the Reader can have no Assurance of their Truth'. See *An Essay on Allegorical Poetry*, p.257.

3. William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, with introd. by Edward H. Madden (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard U.P., 1979), pp.13-33 (pp.14-17).

latter case it is a virtual psychological impossibility to believe them. He uses religious belief as an example of this:

If I ask you to believe in the Mahdi, the notion makes no electric connection with your nature—it refuses to scintillate with any credibility at all. As an hypothesis it is completely dead. To an Arab, however (even if he be not one of the Mahdi's followers), the hypothesis is among the mind's possibilities: it is alive. This shows that deadness and liveness in an hypothesis are not intrinsic properties, but relations to the individual thinker.¹

This notion of 'live' and 'dead' options of belief seems to describe very well the different reactions of readers to proposed allegorical interpretations, for the determination of what a particular reader finds credible and natural will be affected by any number of cultural and personal factors, all of which go to define his aesthetic sensibility. Inevitably, too, any divergence in taste will increase with the changes in cultural context which mark the passage of time. Hence, many interpretations which now appear extremely implausible were respected and influential in the Renaissance. One need only read poetic annotations such as Harington's, or the mythological handbooks of Boccaccio, Conti or Bacon, and it will not be hard to find allegorical interpretations which startle by their very failure to provoke a responding inner 'chime' of belief.

In the end it is an old philosophical question, which is no more soluble in literary criticism than elsewhere: different people are convinced by different sorts of argument, not because they are less able to think clearly in their own terms but because those terms differ - they argue from different premises. Though analogical

1. *ibid.*, p.14.

allegory is my subject here, similar reasoning applies to any interpretation of the 'meaning' of a text: analogical allegory merely crystallizes the problem by making such interpretation the formal basis of its method. As long as the same set of phenomena can be interpreted in different ways it would seem that our eventual conclusion must be that of Paul de Man: 'The necessary immanence of the reading in relation to the text is a burden from which there is no escape.' Or, to express a similar thought in more familiar words - there's no arguing about tastes.

One apparent way out of this impasse is to deny the text's ability to refer to anything outside itself - thus obviating the need to show that one's chosen referent has a privileged status. The most important work of Spenserian criticism to treat the poem in this light is Jonathan Goldberg's *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse*.² Goldberg rejects the 'empirical commonplaces'³ that lure readers into forcing the premature closure of a text, and borrows instead the Derridean notion of freeplay and the Barthesian notion of the writerly text, to describe a poem that never finally resolves itself into definitive meaning. For Goldberg *The Faerie Queene* is constantly undermining its own statements, revising itself, deferring closure: and as the title of his book implies, this is a process which can never be completed. In the course of 174 pages that are by turns ingenious and disingenuous, Goldberg comes to the only conclusion that

1. Paul de Man, *Blindness & Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1971, rev. 1983), p.110.

2. Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins U.P., 1981).

3. *ibid.*, p.10.

is possible, if one starts from these premises: that the text is 'unreadable' - at least in the way that a New Critic would want to read it.

I shall return to this line of argument. But first let us reconsider our original problem, for it may seem that we have given up Hume's challenge too easily. Perhaps the meaning of a text cannot be recovered by abstract reasoning, but we have yet to prove that experimental reasoning is equally inapplicable. Stanley Fish's essay, 'Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics', which forms the final chapter of his *Self-Consuming Artifacts*,² is a manifesto for just such an experimental approach. I shall consider his case in some detail, since its strengths and weaknesses seem to me to be those which must attend any attempt of this sort.

Fish's main argument in this essay is with critics who treat the text as an isolatable and static object, when in fact the reader experiences it as a piece of kinetic art, with sentences constantly disappearing and being replaced, with expectations being manipulated and modified and surprised, as in a piece of music. The meaning of a text, for Fish, resides in the whole experience of its reading. He shows how the syntax of a text can lead its reader into projecting forward a sentence which may never actually materialize, and insists that the fact of this disappointed projection is just as much a part of the text's meaning as its actual 'content'. For Fish, the objectivity of the text in itself is an illusion.

1. *ibid.*, p.88.

2. Stanley E. Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London; California U.P., 1972), pp.383-427.

A criticism that regards "the poem itself as an object of specifically critical judgement"... transforms a temporal experience into a spatial one; it steps back and in a single glance takes in a whole (sentence, page, work) which the reader knows (if at all) only bit by bit, moment by moment... It is "objective" in exactly the wrong way, because it determinedly ignores what is objectively true about the activity of reading. Analysis in terms of doings and happenings is on the other hand truly objective because it recognizes the fluidity, "the movingness," of the meaning experience and because it directs us to where the action is—the active and activating consciousness of the reader.'

This analysis is certainly attractive, but, as Fish himself is well aware, its practical application raises just the interpretational problems we have been discussing. The difficulty lies in the inability of the critic to predict the state of 'the active and activating consciousness of the reader'. The critic, after all, only has access to his own consciousness, a woefully thin experimental base from which to extrapolate a general and predictable response. Fish's answer is to propose an ideal 'informed reader', whose sensitivity, intelligence and shared cultural and linguistic knowledge would be such that the critic could make reasonable assumptions about the progress of his or her reading experience. If this notion were valid it would go a long way to solve our original problem of evaluating allegorical interpretation, for candidate interpretations could be measured against the response of the informed reader. It is worth quoting the passage at length:

All of which returns us to the original question. Who is the reader? Obviously, my reader is a construct, an ideal or idealized reader; somewhat like Wardhaugh's "mature reader" or Milton's "fit" reader, or to use a term of my own, the reader is the *informed* reader. The informed reader is someone who

1. *ibid.*, p.401.

1. is a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built up.
2. is in full possession of "the semantic knowledge that a mature... listener brings to his task of comprehension." This includes the knowledge (that is, the experience, both as a producer and comprehender) of lexical sets, collocation probabilities, idioms, professional and other dialects, etc.
3. has *literary* competence.

That is, he is sufficiently experienced as a reader to have internalized the properties of literary discourses, including everything from the most local of devices (figures of speech, etc.) to whole genres. In this theory, then, the concerns of other schools of criticism—questions of genre, conventions, intellectual background, etc.—*become redefined in terms of potential and probable response*, the significance and value a reader can be expected to attach to the idea "epic," or to the use of archaic language, or to anything.

The reader, of whose responses I speak, then, is this informed reader, neither an abstraction, nor an actual living reader, but a hybrid—a real reader (me) who does everything within his power to make himself informed. That is, I can with some justification project my responses into those of "the" reader because they have been modified by the constraints placed on me by the assumptions and operations of the method: (1) the conscious attempt to become the informed reader by making my mind the repository of the (potential) responses a given text might call out and (2) the attendant suppressing, insofar as that is possible, of what is personal and idiosyncratic and 1970ish in my response. In short, the informed reader is to some extent processed by the method that uses him as a control. Each of us, if we are sufficiently responsible and self-conscious, can, in the course of employing the method become the informed reader and therefore be a more reliable reporter of his experience.

(Of course, it would be easy for someone to point out that I have not answered the charge of solipsism, but merely presented a rationale for a solipsistic procedure; but such an objection would have force only if a better mode of procedure were available. The one usually offered is to regard the work as a thing in itself, as an object; but as I have argued above, this is a false and dangerously self-validating objectivity. I suppose that what I am saying is that I would rather have acknowledged and controlled subjectivity than an objectivity which is finally an illusion.)'

Several objections can be made to this. First, there is something circular in Fish's 'conscious attempt to become the informed reader by

1. *ibid.*, pp.406-407.

making' his 'mind the repository of the (potential) responses a given text might call out'. Logically there would seem to be an infinite number of these potential responses, and the reader's mind could hardly be supposed to encompass them all on an equal basis. If, on the other hand, some responses are to be promoted at the expense of others (as more 'probable'?) then on what foundation of knowledge is this to be done? An informed reader might be able to make such a judgement in the light of his informed status, but as neophytes trying to *become* informed readers, our grounds for rejection are not clear. Hence it seems that to become informed readers we must be something like informed readers already. Fish goes some way to admitting this when he says that 'the informed reader is to some extent processed by the method that uses him as a control'. But to admit the problem is not to solve it.

The second suggested strategy by which we might become informed readers is also open to question. There are, as I am sure Fish would agree, bound to be immense practical problems in suppressing 'what is personal and idiosyncratic' in one's response, not only because such idiosyncracies tend to be rather resilient but because of the difficulty of identifying them with any certainty in the first place. More fundamentally, however, the process is self-defeating. Nothing is more '1970ish' in Fish's theory than this attempt to suppress his own contemporary and personal traits: in trying to turn himself into a chameleon of response he demonstrates the gulf which lies between himself and the informed readers of other ages, whose readings are not so self-consciously anonymous. Yet it is these very readers whose response he hopes to emulate - 'The critic has the responsibility of becoming not one but a number of informed readers, each of whom will

be identified by a matrix of political, cultural, and literary determinants.' In the end, the informed reader can only *imitate* the response of these other readers at one remove - were he to *become* them, he would not be an informed reader in Fish's 1970 sense: and an (inevitably imperfect) imitation of a previous reading seems a poor substitute for a reading of one's own.

Fish's account of his 'informed reader', moreover, is not consistent. We are told, first, that he is 'a construct, an ideal or idealized reader', and later that he is not 'an actual living reader'. Just four words after this, however, the informed reader is 'a real reader (me) who does everything within his power to make himself informed'. If a concerted attempt to inform oneself is enough to earn one the title of 'informed', why the earlier denial of the informed reader's corporeal existence? Is it that none of us can ever put in enough effort to merit this epithet? Is it a goal to which we can but aspire? Apparently not, for 'Each of us, if we are sufficiently responsible and self-conscious, can... become the informed reader and therefore be a more reliable reporter of his experience.' This last statement is particularly confusing, for having been assured that we can *become* the informed reader we are promptly relegated to being merely 'more reliable' reporters of his reading experience, which again seems to drive a wedge between his responses and ours.

The informed reader, far from being a 'hybrid', seems to be no more than a semantic smudge. Fish's claim to 'an acknowledged... subjectivity' is vitiated by his account of this figure, who is, on the one hand, an objective 'ideal' towards which we strive, and on the other

1. *ibid.*, p.407.

'a real reader (me)'. It is a case of objectivity by association. Far from keeping his own subjectivity before us, Fish tends to let his attitude of 'acknowledged... subjectivity' slide, via an implication that he is as objective as one practically can be, to a tacit assumption of objectivity.

Finally, I confess I do not understand Fish's answer to anticipated criticism. Why is the force of any objection lessened by the absence of 'a better mode of procedure'? In his assumption that of two flawed ways of practising literary criticism the least objectionable must be embraced, Fish does not consider the possibility (which surely cannot be ignored) that the whole literary critical enterprise may fall into Hume's category of 'sophistry and illusion', and that 'a better mode of procedure' would therefore be to give it up.

I hasten to add that we are not heading for such a depressing conclusion. Nor do I have any objection to readers attempting to make themselves informed - quite the contrary. However, I do not believe it is feasible to use the notion of 'the informed reader' as a technical tool of critical theory. The only unambiguous sense in which it might be used is to describe an ideal figure, rather like God - all-knowing, all-feeling, all-wise. The responses of such a character may be an interesting subject for speculation, but can hardly be inferred directly from the those of 'a real reader (me)'.

What the critic is left with, then, is his own response, and no guarantee that this will resemble the response of anyone else. If one insists on basing literary criticism on scientific principles, with their methodological requirement of repeatable experiment, this becomes an insurmountable obstacle. Fish errs in precisely this,

borrowing from empirical science the concept of a 'control' (the informed reader) against which his experimental results (the reading experience) can be measured. But no such control exists, for it could only be brought into existence by taking as objective the experimental results whose objectivity its own existence is necessary to prove.

I think it must be admitted that the nature of analogy is such that no proposed isomorphism between a text and its interpretation can ever be proved correct or incorrect. In the absence of such extra-literary factors as explicit authorial comment, I do not think that it is even possible to demonstrate in any formal way - either *a priori* or by quasi-scientific experiment - that one interpretation is more 'probable' than another.

However, before accepting Goldberg's position, I would make the observation that this scepticism with regard to the possibility of objective interpretation, though it may be intellectually compelling, simply cannot be maintained as a matter of psychological fact. Predication is ingrained both in our language and in our mental habits: we can hardly articulate a thought without implying some belief or set of beliefs about things perceived as external to us. We cannot avoid that instinctive leap from stimulus to perception which is the essence of interpretation. Hume himself cheerfully confessed that he was unable to put scepticism into practice:

Most fortunately it happens that, since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterates all these chimaeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hours' amusement I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find it in my heart to enter into them any further.

Here then I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act, like other people in the common affairs of life.'

James too commented, and confirmed in the very utterance: 'The greatest empiricists among us are only empiricists on reflection: when left to their instincts, they dogmatize like infallible popes.'² The same applies to the interpretation of texts - even deconstructionists of my acquaintance, I notice, speak in their unguarded moments as if texts do in fact mean things. May we say that, for all its philosophical credentials, the idea that the meanings of texts cannot be recovered simply is not 'live', in the Jamesian sense?

This may seem a trivial point. After all, a delusion is none the less delusory for being habitual, and we have already decided that there can be no objective basis for preferring one interpretation of a text over another. But are we correct in assuming that this is the proper goal of our reading in the first place? I mention the psychological difficulty of maintaining scepticism not to cast doubt on the validity of the sceptical argument, but to show how far removed it is from the way that people habitually react to their surroundings. If (as I believe) Fish is right to insist on the primacy of the experience of reading in literary criticism, I cannot see why the critic should be deterred from something which is central to that experience - the perception of meaning - by an argument which is extremely remote from it.

1. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Rigge, 2nd edition ed, P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p.269.

2. James, p.21.

I have insisted that literary criticism cannot be conducted in the manner of experimental science. However, its method might well be compared with that of a scientific theorist. A theoretical physicist aims to devise 'models' of reality, images that account for experimentally observed phenomena. Thus an electron may be thought of either as a wave or as a particle: each model accounts for some of its observed properties. Such models are not evaluated in terms of their correspondence to reality, since that reality is inaccessible, but rather by the number of phenomena for which they will account, and at what expense in terms of complexity. Whatever the degree of isomorphism between, say, the particle model of an electron and the properties exhibited by real electrons, the model remains nothing more than a mental construct. Its purpose is psychological rather than strictly scientific: it allows people to 'see' things the way the theorist does; it provides a mental architecture in terms of which the subject can be thought of and discussed. The development of such a model is entirely a matter of perception - it may not involve the empirical discovery of a single fact - and yet it may also represent as great an advance as the detection of a new planet.

The literary critic faced with the task of textual exegesis is, I would contend, in an similar position. When we read a text we do what in our natures we cannot help but do - we try to make sense of it. And the sense that we make is a model of the text, bearing much the same relation to it as the physicist's notion of a wave or a particle does to an electron. I believe that, just as the poet creates the taste by which he is enjoyed, interpreters (whether of allegories or subatomic particles) create the terms by which they are understood. Effective criticism opens new perspectives on our own reading, so that

experiences which had previously been confused or unarticulated seem to 'fall into place'. In the light of such criticism we are better able to speak the language of our own experience, for it provides the mental structures which allow its contemplation and discussion.

Literary criticism is not after all a science but a humanity. What counts in it is not the experimental production of facts about the objective meaning of texts, but the production of models which enrich one's own and others' reading. I prefer C.S. Lewis' bluff and openly unscientific rule of thumb for the evaluation of criticism - 'any *significacio* which does not seem natural... after a second reading of the poem, is erroneous' - to many more sophisticated schemas which maintain a false aura of scientific method. It is not that seeming 'natural' is simply the best we can hope to do in the search for an evaluative method which might lead us to objective meaning; it is rather that this is the way we *will* evaluate readings, by virtue of being what we are, and that as critics rather than philosophers we are concerned with nothing else.

In this thesis I present my own reading of a text - *The Faerie Queene*. It is a reading in which the distinction between analogical and exemplary allegory is given a more prominent place than is usually accorded it, and I hope to show that such a reading can place many aspects of the poem in a perspective that is both intellectually and emotionally satisfying. I have no illusions that I can use the power of brute logic to force my reader to agree that this is the case, however, any more than a poet can force a reader to be moved by a poem. At all times it will be true that my reading is provisional, a

1. Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, p.333.

description of my experience rather than of the poem itself. However, this will not be emphasised in the chapters that follow, since such an emphasis belongs to literary theory (of which this section is the only extended example in the thesis) rather than to literary criticism as such, and would if anything be likely to impede the truthful presentation of my reading. Thus, although in one sense it would be more accurate - though inelegant - if I prefaced every observation with some such phrase as 'It is my perception that...', it would be a misleading account of my experience of *The Faerie Queene*, in which a sense of conscious scepticism is not constantly maintained.

No writer on literature, and especially on allegory, can afford to ignore the question of the validity of interpretation - it is an issue which threatens to undermine any other conclusions that might be drawn about a work. Nevertheless, having shown why I think the threat is an empty one, I do not intend to pay this particular spectre very much further heed. This discussion forms an interlude rather than a substantive part of the argument of the thesis, and in literary critical as in other matters I would rather imitate Britomart, and push my way past such 'false charmes' (*FQ* III.xii.29.9), than share Malbecco's fate, lying in

... continuall feare
Of that rockes fall, which euer and anon
Threates with huge ruine him to fall vpon,
That he dare neuer sleepe, but that one eye
Still ope he keepes for that occasion...

III.x.58.3-7

In what follows, therefore, I will concentrate less on these meta-critical reflections, and more on the experience of reading *The Faerie Queene*.

CHAPTER 1

THE ALLEGORICAL ENVIRONMENT.

1. Time and Place in Faerie

One of the observations made in the Introduction was that, in a mixed allegory, there is always a formal ambiguity as to the priority of the literal and analogical senses of a text. Any figure, any action, any word can be read either literally, or as representing something else. These are not equal and random possibilities, however. Part of reading a text is the attempt to make sense of it, and to that extent, sensitive as we may be (from our generic expectation of allegory's operation) to the possibility of analogical significance, our 'default' reading is a literal reading. The impulse towards assimilation and integration of new information is too instinctive and immediate for this not to be the case. To encourage an analogical reading it is usually necessary to disturb or fragment the literal sense, and there are various strategies by which this can be done: from the use of conventional operators, such as the word 'of' in the phrase 'waues of conscions', to the application of the absurdity principle, for instance in the description of Error vomiting books and papers.

In some cases the choice between literal and analogical readings remains unclear. We have already touched on the example of Guyon's actions in the Bower of Blisse: the unexpected vehemence of Spenser's

comment ('And of the fairest late, now made the fowlest place' (FQ II.xii.83.9)) arouses a suspicion of some intended analogical significance, and yet there is nothing in the destruction of the Bower that strikes us as simply absurd, nothing that prevents a literal reading. Possible rationalisations contend with the desire to allegorise: we wonder about Spenser's attitude to sensual pleasure and to art, and the extent to which we are intended to approve Guyon's action as temperate.' Our confusion of method ('Is the episode analogical or exemplary?') reflects and becomes the medium of a moral confusion.

One of the distinctive experiences of reading allegory is an awareness of the difference between meanings that seem to be simultaneously implied by the text. In this chapter I will examine several passages in *The Faerie Queene* which play upon this structural ambiguity, and which in doing so present real complexities of thought and experience. In such allegory it is not necessary to reject one sense in favour of another: their incompatibility is itself a form of meaning. Yet this meaning can be hard to recover: the impulse to construct a unified interpretation can lead us to ignore, or leave unarticulated, our own

1. Another possibility is that there *is* an analogy, but that it is topical rather than moral. Spenser's words in *A viewe of the present state of Irelande* (c.1596, pub. 1633) on Lord Grey's equally destructive overseas adventure could stand as a commentary on Guyon's critical fate: '...all that was formerlye done with longe labour and greate toile was... in a momente vndone, and that good Lord blotted with the name of a bloddye man, whom whoe that well knewe, knewe to be moste gentle affable Lovinge and temperate. But that the necessitye of that present state of thinges forced him to that violence and allmoste Changed his verye naturall disposition...' See *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. E.A. Greenlaw, F.M. Padelford, C.G. Osgood *et al* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1932-49), *The Prose Works* (1949), pp.39-231 (p.160). For more on the analogy between Acrasia's isle and Ireland, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: Chicago U.P., 1980), pp.184-88.

doubts and confusions. Therefore what is platitudinously true of any literary text is vitally true of allegory - that we must establish a habit of reading that does not summarily dismiss aspects of the text which do not accord with our expectations.

Let us consider the poem's fictional setting - the land of Faerie itself. Is Faerie a consistent allegorical environment, whose nature can be known and predicted? What, to begin with, is its relationship to England? In one sense, of course, Faerie represents England, in a relationship of analogy. Cleopolis is Westminster or London, Belge is the Low Countries, Irena Ireland, and so on. This network of analogy forms the foundation of the historical allegory: the understanding of Arthur's and Artegall's exploits towards the end of Book V, for instance, depends on just such an isomorphic association. Here, Faerie is an idealised locale - idealised in the sense that the complex political issues of late sixteenth-century Europe are distilled into the morally simpler chivalric terms of knights, monsters and captive maidens; idealised also in that Spenser's historical account merges fact with a prophetic (or propagandist) vision of what Elizabeth's foreign policy will and should be.

In other places, however, it is England that is presented as the ideal:

So mought thy *Redcrosse knight* with happy hand
victorious be in that faire ilands right:
Which thou doest vaile in Type of Faery land
Elyzas blessed field, that *Albion* hight.¹

1. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London and New York: Longman, 1977), p.739.

This is the commendatory verse of *Hobynoll* (Gabriel Harvey). The punning association of England with the Elysian fields suggests that England is the blessed state of which Faerie is only a 'Type'. In the Proem to Book II Spenser makes the same point to Elizabeth, advancing a novel motive for the allegorisation of her realm:

And thou, O fairest Princesse vnder sky,
In this faire mirrhour maist behold thy face,
And thine owne realmes in lond of Faery,
And in this antique image thy great auncestry.

The which O pardon me thus to enfold
In couert vele, and wrap in shadowes light,
That feeble eyes your glory may behold,
Which else could not endure those beames bright...

II Proem 4.6-5.4

England under Elizabeth is too glorious to be described directly: it must be hidden under the more everyday fiction of Faerie. Here the redefinition of Faerie's status is a *nonce* device, a means of turning an elaborate compliment. This fluidity of conception is typical of Spenser's account. A few stanzas earlier he has suggested that Faerie may not be a fiction at all, but a real country, which simply has yet to be discovered:

Who euer heard of th'Indian *Peru*?
Or who in venturous vessell measured
The *Amazons* huge riuer now found trew?
Or fruitfullest *Virginia* who did euer vew?

Yet all these were, when no man did them know...

II Proem 2.6-3.1

This Faerie does not represent England, it is simply a country far distant from it. Again, Faerie is at the mercy of Spenser's immediate rhetorical purpose, which in this case is to prove that his poem does not consist of idle fancies.

From yet another point of view Faerie seems to be a kingdom which, though certainly exotic, is nevertheless coeval with Britain, accessible to the British knights - Arthur, Redcross, Britomart, Artegall - who appear in the poem's narrative. The presence of these figures forces the poem to deal with Britain not just as the referent of an analogy with Faerie, but as a geographical entity on the literal level, a circumstance which throws up several problems of historical and geographical consistency. For instance, when Arthur and Guyon read the British and Elfin histories in Alma's castle (FQ II.x), the presence of British history *in propria persona* means that Faerie cannot easily assume its habitual role as a metaphor for Britain: hence the 'Antiquitie of Faerie' (FQ II.ix.60.2) is left without a clear function, reduced to just five stanzas (although Spenser disingenuously claims that he has been forced to abbreviate it (FQ II.x.70.3-4, 74.5-6)) where Arthur's chronicle occupies over sixty.¹ Again, if Arthur 'before he was king'² is a suitor to the Faerie Queen, how can we square this with what we know about his historical role as king of Britain and husband to Guinevere? As Tuve has noted, 'We must... be so skilfully kept (in *The Faerie Queene*) in the short pre-Guinevere epoch, that we can be betrayed into forgetting her importance and her absence.'³ Spenser partly circumvents the

-
1. The elfin chronicle is not altogether without historical allusion; its final two stanzas (FQ II,x,75-76) clearly refer to Henry VII, Henry VIII, Prince Arthur (the Tudor version) and Elizabeth - a period of history not covered by the British chronicle, which ceases with the accession of Arthur. The identity of the monarchs prior to Elficleos (Henry VII) remains in dispute, however, and I am inclined to believe that they are without precise historical reference.
 2. See the Letter to Raleigh, *The Faerie Queene*, pp.737-38, (p.737).
 3. Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: some mediaeval books and their posterity* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1966), p.345n.

historical difficulty by using Artegall (the etymology of whose name suggests his equivalence to Arthur) to supply Arthur's place in Merlin's account of British history (FQ III.iii.27-29). Artegall and Britomart must return to Britain, after all: they are to provide the same service for Elizabeth as Ariosto's Rogero and Bradamant did for the Este family - that of illustrious ancestorship.¹

The identification of Artegall and Arthur is never more than equivocal: Spenser complicates the issue by making Artegall the son of Gorlois, whom Geoffrey of Monmouth identifies as Uther's predecessor as the husband of Igrayne - a relationship which would only make him Arthur's half-brother.² Nevertheless, in Merlin's account it is Artegall who is destined to drive back the 'forrein Paynims' and eventually to be murdered by treachery, and his son who is to take from Constantius (Arthur's successor in Geoffrey) 'the crowne, that was his father's right'. These indications of Artegall's Arthurian role are suggestive, if somewhat oblique. The necessity for vagueness derives from the incompatible destinies assigned to Arthur - British king, and consort of the Faerie Queen; a difficulty which in its turn stems from treating Faerie both as a metaphor and as a geographical location.

Also relevant here is the account of the arrival of the British knights in Faerie. Only Britomart undertakes the journey from Britain of her own volition: like a Sidneyan reader, she is inspired to seek out Faerie by a vision (FQ III.ii.21-26) - 'which seen' she 'cannot

1. Compare *Orlando Furioso*, 3,20-52.

2. See Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, VIII xix.

but love'.¹ Arthur, Redcross and Artegall are all brought to Faerie as babies, and grow up in ignorance of their true birth (FQ I.ix.3, I.x.65-66, III.iii.26). Contemplation tells Redcross how he was abducted from Britain:

From thence a Faerie thee vnweeting reft,
There, as thou slepst in tender swadling band,
And her base Elfin brood there for thee left.
Such men do Chaungelings call, so chaunged by Faeries theft.
I.x.65.6-9

To introduce the changeling legend is to give yet another characterisation of Faerie. Changeling babies are traditionally unpleasant, unmanageable creatures, ugly and wrinkled like old men: the legends connected with them are of a strain in which fairies appear as a malicious race whose offspring can fairly be described as 'base Elfin brood' - yet this description can hardly be applied to Guyon or Calidore, still less to the Faerie Queen herself. David Norbrook has written that 'before Spenser gave her a courtly apotheosis, the Fairy Queen of folklore was not a dignified and transcendent figure but a mischievous, black-faced trickster'.² This was certainly one current tradition - but then as now many different sorts of creature were gathered under the general title of fairy, and it is not true to say that there were no more dignified examples available to Spenser, from the courtly Daoine Sidhe downwards.³ What is noticeable about the

-
1. Sir Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (O.U.P., 1966), p.41.
 2. David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p.115.
 3. See Katharine Briggs, *A Dictionary of Fairies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp.69-72 (for changeling traditions), pp.90-91 (for the chivalric habits of the Daoine Sidhe), p.120 (for Spenser's 'slightly out of date' heroic fairies).

phrase 'base Elfin brood' is that Spenser seems to have changed his conception of Faerie for local purposes. In using the changeling motif he temporarily draws on less heroic fairy traditions, and draws too upon the unflattering language which is associated with them.

Faerie's capacity for manifold interpretation is the reader's inheritance and burden. Faerie is not a uniform backdrop to the narrative - it has an active role in forming our sense of the poem's meaning. Its shifting ontological status reflects the different strategies and motives of the allegory, controlling that uneasy relationship between literal and analogical senses in which the poem's power to find new modes of expression resides. Faerie is not a place that can be consistently characterised, because its character is not consistent, as Michael Murrin has said:

We must not look to the *meaning* of fairyland but to a rhetorical set of relationships, namely those between ourselves and the poem.'

So far we have confined our discussion of Faerie to its relationship with Britain, and the shifting combination of literal and metaphorical guises in which this relationship manifests itself. I now hope to show that the rhetorical flexibility evident in Spenser's treatment of this topic also extends to the poem's moral allegory, and in particular to the interpretation of time and place in Faerie.

1. Michael Murrin, *The Allegorical Epic; Essays in Its Rise and Decline* (Chicago and London; Chicago U.P., 1980), p.146.

Critical commentary on *The Faerie Queene* habitually endows time with moral significance. The Faerie universe is such that sequences of events between which there is no apparent connection may be read as having a causal relationship, simply because of their temporal proximity. Logical and temporal priority merge in this environment: every 'then' is a potential 'therefore':

...what appears as a temporal sequence in the image conceals another relation, usually causality, in the theme.'

In the allegory of *The Faerie Queene*, narrative sequence always implies cause and effect, and it is most important, therefore, to follow the details of the story.²

This is a conventional principle of allegorical interpretation. It was invoked in the last chapter to explain why Archimago might make his appearance so soon after the defeat of Error. Similar reasoning may lead us to suppose, for instance, that there is a causal connection between Redcross' dalliance with Duessa and the appearance of Orgoglio (*FQ* I.vii). Isabel MacCaffrey finds the same logic in Redcross' reaction to the parade of Deadly Sins in Lucifera's house:

His response can hardly be called an epiphany; it is rather a fit of the sulks, as Spenser suggests in having the Knight encounter, immediately afterward, Sansjoy.³

-
1. Graeme Hough, *A Preface to 'The Faerie Queene'* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1962), p.135.
 2. Maurice Evans, *Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism: a commentary on the 'Faerie Queene'* (C.U.P., 1970), p.62.
 3. Isabel G. MacCaffrey, *Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1976), p.87.

Such cases can certainly be made. But it is going a good deal further than this to say that 'narrative sequence always implies cause and effect' (my italics). The assumption implicit in such a statement is that Spenser's conception of his allegorical environment is consistent, and consistently carried through - an assumption which, in another context, we have already found cause to doubt. In fact, to suggest that all narrative sequences conceal a causal connection belies our experience. Consider this passage, which comes just after Redcross has killed the Dragon:

Then on her head they set a girland greene,
And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt game;
Who in her selfe-resemblance well beseene,
Did seeme such, as she was, a goodly maiden Queene.

And after, all the raskall many ran,
Heaped together in rude rablement,
To see the face of that victorious man:
Whom all admired, as from heauen sent...

I.xii.8.6-9.4

Are we to suppose that there is a causal connection between Una's being crowned and the appearance of the rabble who press to see Redcross? The suggestion seems absurd: but if some sequences of events imply a causal connection while others do not, how shall we distinguish them where the evidence is equivocal? What indeed constitutes evidence in such a case? If we expect to be able to answer these questions by reference to a monolithic concept of 'Time in Faerie' we shall be disappointed.

Walter Ong has suggested that allegorical time is merely a device to allow the depiction in narrative form of static relations which would otherwise be more suited to diagrammatic representation:

All real or dramatic actions take place in time, real or imagined respectively. A characteristic of the allegorical

tableau is that there is no human time element at work in it as a whole. Although it may involve figures depicted in action... it remains basically a diagram felt as committed to space in such a way as to be free of time... An epic here (in *The Faerie Queene*) has become a kind of panorama.'

This analysis suggests a purely analogical view of allegory, in which to describe, say, the battle of Redcross and the Dragon (*FQ* I.xi) is simply to make a series of statements about the relationship between Holiness and Unholiness, a relationship which is eternal, static - and hence non-dramatic. Against this I would argue, with Catherine Rodgers, that the 'temporal dimension identified with the sequence of fictional events is an inescapable presence in the *Faerie Queene*'.² To treat the episode entirely diagrammatically is to ignore Redcross' heroic, exemplary role, which can only be acted out in time, and the empathetic response that his actions provoke from the reader, moved to Sidneyan admiration. What we must acknowledge is that Spenserian allegory is a mixed mode in which both analogical and exemplary allegory play a part. Redcross' battle with the Dragon does imply that Holiness is, will be and always has been stronger than Unholiness. At the same time it is a piece of narrative fiction, in which a knight shows courage against a deadly enemy.

Still, we should not dismiss Ong's point too lightly. I think that an awareness of the presence of analogical allegory in *The Faerie Queene* does alter our sense of the poem's dramatic effect. The dis-

1. Walter J. Ong, 'From Allegory to Diagram in the Renaissance Mind', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 17 (1959), 423-40, pp.430 and 440, cited in Catherine Rodgers, *Time in the Narrative of The Faerie Queene*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature 5 (Salzburg: Institut Für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1973), p.1.

2. Rodgers, p.2.

tinguishing feature of a dramatic narrative is that more than one action is felt to be possible at any point - a feature that requires a 'temporal dimension', since there must be moment before the chosen action when alternatives appear possible, and a moment after, when the action enters the past and becomes fixed. If the characters in *The Faerie Queene* express the static relationships of an underlying set of referents, then even if they also have an exemplary role the extent to which their actions can be felt as dramatic might appear to be limited.

I think that this would be the wrong conclusion, however. It is true that a retrospective understanding of the analogical significance of an action may make us aware of an underlying pattern which 'was always there', and to which the action had in some sense to conform. But this is not to say that the narrative is undramatic: rather, it is to suggest that allegory belongs to that class of literature, by no means uninfluential in Western thought, which plays upon the central contradiction between the apparent experience of free will and the belief that all our actions are predetermined. This literature is more traditionally associated with stories of prophecy - Oedipus, Macbeth, Sidney's *Basilus*, and Spenser's *Marinell* are well-known examples. In these stories, a prophecy is made about the protagonist, the consequences of which he attempts to avoid, only to find that in avoiding his fate he fulfils it. The power of the motif lies in the combination of the protagonist's apparent free will with the discovery that all his decisions are transcended, and in some sense taken into account, by the terms of the prophecy. In drawing a parallel between these prophetic stories and allegory, I mean to suggest that the questions which they habitually raise, about the nature of will,

choice and character, are also raised by allegory: not by the device of prophecy but by time's dual nature as a diagrammatic, predetermined patterning of eternal verities, and as a medium of action, change and choice.

If we turn from allegorical time to allegorical place, I think that a similar argument can be made. Here again there is a pervasive convention for allegorical interpretation - the association of particular locations with moral states. Hamilton's notes frequently make this sort of connection: the fact that Archimago's hermitage is 'Downe in a dale' (*FQ* I.i.34.2), for instance, can be contrasted with the location of the true hermitage of Contemplation, which is situated on a hill (*FQ* I.x.46).¹ Such a generalised form of moral geography may not be wholly convincing, but it becomes more so when the physical surroundings literalise well-known Scriptural language, as is the case with the 'broad high way' (*FQ* I.iv.2.8) that leads to Lucifera's palace (see *Matt.*7.13). The Bower of Blisse (a locus that comes complete with its own Genius (*FQ* II.xii.46-48)) takes this process still further: merely to be there seems to be a metaphorical way of saying that one has fallen into the sin of concupiscence. Thus when Cymochles asks Phaedria who she is, her answer shows that, although he has apparently left the Bower, his spiritual location is unchanged: 'Vaine man (said she) that wouldest be reckoned/ A straunger in thy home' (*FQ* II.vi.9.5-6).

That some identification of place and moral state is intended here I find hard to doubt. However, this is not to say that the identification is always applicable, any more than the principle of assoc-

1. See *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.34,1-9n.

iating temporal sequence and causality. I know of no reader who has felt that the Palmer becomes guilty of wantonness by entering the Bower of Blisse, for example (FQ II.xii). Nor - to take a non-Spenserian example - does Mr. Greatheart commit sin when, in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, he leaves the road to the Celestial City in order to slay Giant Despair:¹ the analogy of the road with Christ - the Way - is subordinated to the fact that the pilgrims' enemy is killed, and that Greatheart exemplifies his eponymous virtue. If we feel any discomfort about the incident it is because it recalls perhaps too precisely Christian's and Hopeful's fate at the same point in Part I, when the analogical association of Christ and the road was indeed intended.² A more equivocal example is Guyon's journey through Mammon's domain. Perhaps he commits sin by accompanying Mammon - but we are also aware that Spenser is fulfilling the epic convention of a hero's journey to the underworld,³ and this knowledge tends to diminish the potency of the moral association. The extent to which it does so is a matter about which I, for one, find it hard to come to a settled conclusion.

As with time, so with place. In some cases it seems natural to associate a location with a particular moral state; in others such an interpretation fails to persuade. And, as before, we must conclude that the allegorical environment is defined not by immutable laws but,

1. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. J.B. Wharey, second edition rev. R. Sharrock (O.U.P., 1960), pp.281-82.

2. *ibid.*, pp.111-12.

3. Compare *Odyssey* 11, *Aeneid* 6, *Orlando Furioso* 34.

as Murrin says, by a set of rhetorical relationships - relationships that are not always logically compatible.

Even in rhetorical terms, however, the assignment of moral values to geographical settings remains problematical, confusing our empathetic faculties. For what are we to say of the knight who ventures in these places? To hold that he sins by being in a particular location is to maintain an uncomfortable combination of analogical and exemplary interpretations: a schematic association of place and moral state on the one hand, and on the other a naturalistic conception of character in which statements such as 'Cymochles has sinned' still make sense. If we were to insist on a thoroughgoing analogical reading, with not only places but 'characters' being treated simply as counters, semantically equivalent to their analogical referents, then a statement like this would be a category mistake, equivalent to claiming that 'Concupiscence has sinned' rather than 'Concupiscence is a sin'. On the other hand, the presence of allegorical pointers like the name 'the *Idle lake*' (*FQ* II.vi.10.2) makes it difficult to be satisfied with an entirely literal reading. The unresolved conflict between exemplary and analogical interpretations leads to a situation that is ambiguous and morally confusing. Location and character both lay claim to the same semantic territory, and we are left with no sure means of arbitration.

2. Case Study: Guyon and Phaedria

Let them deliver history to us rather as they receive it than according to their beliefs.

Montaigne, *The Art of Conversation*¹

Let us summarise the incident of Guyon's stay with Phaedria at FQ II.vi.

While on their way to defeat the enchantress Acrasia, Guyon and his companion the Palmer find their path blocked by the Idle Lake. Guyon calls a nearby ferrywoman, Phaedria, who promptly takes him aboard her boat, but who then refuses to admit the Palmer. Guyon attempts to persuade her to allow the Palmer on board, both with words and money, but in vain. The boat starts away from the shore unexpectedly, and Guyon is unable to rejoin the Palmer on land:

Guyon was loath to leaue his guide behind,
Yet being entred, might not backe retyre;
For the flit barke, obaying to her mind,
Forth launched quickly, as she did desire,
Ne gaue him leaue to bid that aged sire
Adieu...

II.vi.20.1-6

In the boat, he at first he makes polite conversation with his hostess, but

...when he saw her toy, and gibe, and geare,
And passe the bonds of modest merimake,
Her dalliance he despisd, and follies did forsake.

II.vi.21.7-9

1. Michel de Montaigne, *The Art of Conversation*, in *Essays*, trans. with introd. J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), pp.285-311 (p.311).

They arrive at an island, which Guyon immediately recognises is not his intended destination. He asks Phaedria to take him where he wants to go, but she claims that she cannot, since her boat is at the mercy of the winds and waves. Reluctantly, he disembarks. The island is very beautiful, and Phaedria tries to distract him, but again

...he was wise, and warie of her will,
And euer held his hand vpon his hart:
Yet would not seeme so rude, and thewed ill,
As to despise so courteous seeming part,
That gentle Ladie did to him impart,
But fairely tempring fond desire subdewd,
And euer her desired to depart.

II.vi.26.1-7

Now Cymochles, whom Phaedria has earlier laid asleep, awakes. He abuses and then attacks Guyon. They fight, each wounding the other, until Phaedria intercedes and persuades them to stop. Again, Guyon asks her to ferry him away, and this time she consents.

If this sort of paraphrase may be admitted as a fair representation of the episode, we will conclude that Guyon has behaved irreproachably, and that short of physically threatening Phaedria it would have been hard to avoid his separation from the Palmer or to cut short his stay on the island. He fights, moreover, in self-defence.

It is possible to see the incident in a very different light, however. Now, the Palmer represents Reason, and for Guyon to part from him is in effect to part from the way of reason and be cast adrift in a sea of idleness, a frittering away of time on a lake where no particular direction is followed. To be on the Idle Lake, or Phaedria's Wandering Island, is to indulge the concupiscent side of one's nature. The fact that Cymochles manages to wound Guyon indicates that he is at fault. Even his own words condemn him:

He wist himself amisse, and angry said;
Ah Dame, perdie ye haue not doen me right,
Thus to mislead me, whiles I you obaid;
Me little needed from my right way to haue straid.

II.vi.22.6-9

Phrases like 'amisse', 'I you obaid', and 'from my right way to haue straid' put the fact of Guyon's losing his path into an unmistakably moral context.

Critics, seeking for a unified reading, have tended to deal with these contradictions by choosing one interpretation, and sticking with it. Prominent among the literalists are Kathleen Williams, Rosemary Freeman, Peter Bayley, and more recently Elizabeth Heale:

To Guyon, of course, Phaedria is no real danger. She is so silly, and her views are so frankly and frivolously wrong-headed, that she merely embarrasses a mind as naturally serious as his. He is ill at ease and bored on the Idle Lake where everything is weightless and meaningless, and he does not need the palmer's help to get away with obvious relief (shared, it has been pointed out, by poor Phaedria, who finds him equally dull). He has moved now, it is true, into places where the palmer must be left behind, but we are not made to feel that this is altogether a fault in him. Rather, we feel that if temperance is to be worth anything it must know about things that the palmer would have hurried away from. A man is sometimes compelled to be idle, and a temperance sustained only by constant busyness is on no very secure foundation.'

...he [Guyon] has absorbed the principles of the Palmer so completely that he speaks like him and is in no danger from Phaedria or from Mammon. He is well equipped to deal with the temptations that he comes into contact with and acts calmly as the mouthpiece of Temperance rather than as the victim of the tempter.²

-
1. Kathleen Williams, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp.54-55.
 2. Rosemary Freeman, *'The Faerie Queene': A Companion for Readers* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), p.130.

She [Phaedria] is a charming, loose, immodest girl whom he [Guyon] quickly find tedious in her shallowness and empty mirth.¹

Guyon by no means acts irrationally or intemperately: both Phaedria and Mammon make an effort to seduce the knight, but neither is able to move him.²

These readings may have the virtue of consistency, but it is bought at the reductive price of ignoring the episode's analogical elements: the suggestions of guilt in Guyon's language, the moral implications of his presence on the Idle Lake and his separation from the Palmer. Williams, it is true, sees the need to justify the separation: there is a tacit recognition of the Palmer's allegorical significance in her admission that Guyon 'has moved... into places where the palmer must be left behind'; but this hint is swiftly neutralised by re-interpreting the Palmer, not as Reason but as a black-clad fuddy-duddy: 'if temperance is to be worth anything it must know about things that the palmer would have hurried away from'.

Against this we may set two more analogically-minded interpretations - those of J.E. Hankins and Pauline Parker:

The virtue of temperance is reinforced and counselled by prudence in the person of the Palmer; but for a time the two are separated when Phaedria refuses to ferry the Palmer across Idle Lake in her little boat. Externally, this may mean that a man imprudently exposes himself to the temptations of 'immodest mirth' (Phaedria) by attending a 'wild' party, where he is led into 'loose desire'. He resists the temptation, as the internal clash between Guyon and Cymochles would suggest;

-
1. Peter Bayley, *Edmund Spenser; Prince of Poets* (London; Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1971), p.172.
 2. Elizabeth Heale, *'The Faerie Queene': a reader's guide* (C.U.P., 1987), p.60.

but he abandoned prudence (Palmer) by attending the party in the first place.'

Guyon enters the trap innocently enough; he lingers, however, too long, and though escaping serious fault, Cymochles is able to wound him... Spenser knows well enough that this is a conflict not to be won outright. In the same way Pyrochles could not really be killed by Furor, though he might learn by bitter experience what it means to burn with fury.²

Again, I do not think these passages represent Spenserian scholarship's finest hour. If the literal readings were reductive, Hankins' 'wild party' analysis seems no less so, and deserves Hamilton's strictures on criticism which turns 'all too quickly to allegorical levels of meaning' in a way that 'shortcircuits the poem'.³ Pauline Parker mixes literal and analogical interpretation, without any indication of the difference between them: in his separation from the Palmer Guyon is acting 'innocently', but in being wounded by Cymochles he demonstrates his guilt. Worse than this, she distorts the narrative facts of the episode when she comments that Guyon 'lingers... too long' on the island - as if he had any choice in the matter. In fact it is explicitly stated that he 'euer... desired to depart'.

Parker is not alone in altering the narrative to suit her interpretation. The most blatant misreading of the episode is not by a modern critic but by John Hughes, who states that it is Guyon (rather

-
1. John Erskine Hankins, *Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory: A Study of 'The Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.129.
 2. M. Pauline Parker, *The Allegory of 'The Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p.128.
 3. A.C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in 'The Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp.12-13.

than Cymochles) whom Phaedria sends to sleep.' In recent years Graeme Hough - though recognising Phaedria's 'dotty charm'² - has written that Guyon 'deserts his Palmer and is briefly distracted by her wiles',³ an act which constitutes 'a brief holiday from the strict path of temperance'.⁴ But whatever else may be said of Guyon's separation from the Palmer, it cannot properly be glossed as desertion - the boat leaves the shore before he has a chance to disembark. And Spenser goes out of his way to say that Guyon is *not* distracted by Phaedria.

Perhaps the most sternly analogical view of the episode is taken by Maurice Evans. Evans recognises that Guyon is less culpable than Cymochles; he nevertheless blames him, first for a 'compromise' with Phaedria which consists in his being polite to her, and then for allowing her intercession to stop him fighting Cymochles. 'The proper course would have been' to show Phaedria 'the virtuous and merciless wrath which Arthur shows against Cymochles in Canto VIII'; or, if this is too severe, 'the contempt which the Palmer himself pours on Phaedria when they meet her on the way to the Bower of Blisse'. In

1. John Hughes, *An Essay on Allegorical Poetry* (1715), in R.M. Cummings, ed., *Spenser: The Critical Heritage* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), pp.246-76 (p.267). There seems to be something in this passage that makes it particularly hard to remember. Even Paul Alpers, normally such a sensitive close reader, confuses Cymochles with Pyrochles in his comments. See Paul Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1967), p.157.

2. Hough, p.159.

3. *ibid.*, p.156.

4. *ibid.*, p.159.

sparing Cymochles, moreover, 'Guyon has taken on something of Cymochles' wavering nature and is in part defiled'.'

I have no doubt that, insofar as Cymochles and Phaedria represent anything, they represent forms of vice. If one ignores any exemplary element in the episode, and treats these figures as equivalent to their analogical referents, then Evans' conclusion is unexceptionable: vice is certainly not to be tolerated by virtue. But in practice this is not how we read the poem. The literal circumstances of the episode have their own character, and impose relations, even moral relations, which are not necessarily those of the analogical allegory. The fact remains that Guyon is a knight, and Phaedria is a damsel who, though a nuisance, has not (in literal terms) done any more than delay his journey. In a narrative which draws so heavily on the imagery of chivalric romance, with all its emphasis on the duty of courtesy to women, it is surely doubtful whether a display of 'merciless wrath' against Phaedria would be an appropriate response for the patron and exemplar of temperance.

As for Evans' comments on the fight with Cymochles, similar objections apply. There may be truth in his view, but to present it as the whole truth is to distort the poem. What Spenser tells us is that Guyon fights Cymochles partly in self-defence and partly because his insults have annoyed him:

Sir *Guyon* grudging not so much his might,
As those vnknightly raylings, which he spoke,
With wrathfull fire his courage kindled bright,

1. Maurice Evans, 'The Fall of Guyon', *ELH*, 28 (1961), 215-24, rpt. in Harry Berger Jr, ed., *Spenser: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), pp.88-96 (p.89).

Thereof deuising shortly to be wroke,
And doubling all his powres, redoubled euery stroke.

II.vi.30.5-9

There is nothing here to suggest a recognition of Cymochles' allegorical significance - nothing to deflect us from a literal reading. If anything, the emphasis is on Guyon's lack of control in allowing words to make him 'wrathfull' - especially if this passage is contrasted with his reaction to Atin's insults, ten stanzas later:

With that he [Atin] stiffely shooke his steelehead dart:
But sober *Guyon*, hearing him so raile,
Though somewhat moued in his mightie hart,
Yet with strong reason maistred passion fraile,
And passed fairely forth.

II.vi.40.1-5

This suggests that, so far from being sinful for sparing Cymochles, Guyon may have sinned in fighting him at all. The reason they cease to fight is addressed by the poem, but only in such a way as further to confuse the issue:

They though full bent
To proue extremities of bloudie fight,
Yet at her speach their rages gan relent,
And calme the sea of their tempestuous spight,
Such powre haue pleasing words: such is the might
Of courteous clemencie in gentle hart.

II.vi.36.1-6

Does Guyon stop fighting because Phaedria flatters him, or because of his 'courteous clemencie'? Do both play a part? It may be that 'pleasing words' have more sway with Cymochles, and 'courteous clemencie' with Guyon. It may be that 'courteous clemencie' is the poet's sardonically high-minded interpretation of an act, the true motives of which he has revealed in all their baseness - like Ariosto's famous comment on the expedient pact between Rinaldo and

Ferrau: 'Oh gran bontà de' cavallieri antiqui!' All these rationalisations are possible - but I do not see that we have any warrant for choosing one to the exclusion of the rest: rather we must admit our moral uncertainty.

This uncertainty is fostered by the organisation of the Canto. The Argument begins by emphasising the analogical aspect of Guyon's association with Phaedria:

*Guyon is of immodest Merth
Led into loose desire...*

II.vi.Arg.1-2

The anglicisation of Phaedria's name (Greek for 'glittering' or 'cheerful') reveals her allegorical significance,² while the importance of spatial metaphor to the Canto's action is indicated by an idiom of physical displacement: Guyon is 'Led into loose desire'.

The first stanza reverses this, however, and links Guyon to his exemplary role, insisting that he is able to (and indeed does) resist the temptation to loose desire:

A harder lesson, to learne Continnence
In ioyous pleasure, then in grieuous paine:
For sweetnesse doth allure the weaker sence
So strongly, that vneathes it can refraine
From that, which feeble nature covets faine;
But grieffe and wrath, that be her enemies,
And foes of life, she better can restraine;
Yet vertue vauntes in both their victories,
And *Guyon* in them all shews goodly maisteries.

II.vi.1

1. *Orlando Furioso* 1.22.1. Spenser's version of this phrase - 'O goodly vsage of those antique times' (*FQ* III.i.13.1) - appears in a less ironic context, after the reconciliation of Guyon and Britomart.

2. Compare the identification of Archimago as *Hypocrisie* (*FQ* I.i.Arg.3), Una as *Truth* (*FQ* I.iii.Arg.1) and Malengin as *Guyle* (*FQ* V.ix.Arg.1).

From this ambiguous beginning the narrative proceeds with the story of Phaedria's seduction of Cymochles - an incident not mentioned in the Argument, although it occupies seventeen of the Canto's fifty-one stanzas. Guyon's and Cymochles' dealings with Phaedria mirror each other: in the fourth stanza Cymochles calls to Phaedria from the shore and is taken aboard her boat while Atin (his companion) is excluded; in the fifth stanza the boat abruptly leaves the shore; and in the sixth stanza we hear how Phaedria entertains her passenger with flirtatious talk. This pattern is repeated exactly in stanzas nineteen to twenty-one with Guyon, the Palmer taking Atin's place as the rejected party.

Such a close echo might imply either moral equivalence, or moral contrast. Here, paradoxically, it seems to do both.

Bearing in mind Spenser's comments on the relative difficulty of overcoming 'ioyous pleasure' compared to 'griefe and wrath' we may notice an allegorical implication in Cymochles' exchange of Atin for Phaedria - he has exchanged one form of intemperance for another, more insidious form. Certainly Phaedria presents a distinctly 'ioyous' picture, while Atin is already well established as a provoker of wrath, having introduced himself in *FQ* II.iv as servant to Pyrochles:

His am I *Atin*, his in wrong and right,
That matter make for him to worke vpon,
And stirre him vp to strife and cruell fight.

II.iv.42.5-7

In this case our tentative allegorical assumption tends to be confirmed, rather than subverted, by the narrative. Once with Phaedria Cymochles quickly forgets his vengeful purpose and succumbs

to the pleasures of her island. The narrative reinforces our inclination to draw moral conclusions from Cymochles' location and company - an inclination that is consequently more strongly established when we read Guyon's story.

If Guyon and Cymochles are placed in similar situations, however, their reactions are very different. The structural parallel emphasises this difference, the narrative comments on Guyon's behaviour recalling the equivalent but contrasting points in Cymochles' story. Here, for example, is Cymochles' initial response to Phaedria's flirtatious chatter:

Her light behaviour, and loose dalliance
Gave wondrous great contentment to the knight,
That of his way he had no souenance,
Nor any care of vow'd reuenge, and cruell fight,
But to weake wench did yeeld his martiall might.

II.vi.8.1-5

We have already seen that Guyon's reaction is very different:

...when he saw her toy, and gibe, and geare,
And passe the bonds of modest merimake,
Her dalliance he despisd, and follies did forsake.

II.vi.21.7-9

Against the comment that Cymochles 'of his way... had no souenance' we may set the fact that

...when *Guyon* of that land had sight,
He wist himself amisse...

II.vi.22.5-6

Cymochles is quickly subdued by the charms of the island:

Carelesse the man soone woxe, and his weake wit
Was ouercome of thing, that did him please...

II.vi.13.7-8

But Guyon, as we have seen, is never seriously tempted (see *FQ* II.vi.26.1-7, quoted above).

The equivalence of Guyon and Cymochles is implied only by a structural equivalence in the accidents of plot. Whether one draws a moral conclusion from this will depend on how far those accidents - meeting certain characters, being separated from others, moving from one place to another - are open to moral interpretation. But this is not a question the Canto allows us to decide satisfactorily, since the literal actions of the two knights alternately confirm and undermine such interpretation.

Here we may compare Guyon's experience with that of another knight in another morally significant locus - Redcross at the palace of Lucifera.

Despite his initial defeat of Error, Redcross becomes prone to interpretative error in the first part of Book I, failing to understand the true nature of Archimago (*FQ* I.i), the false Una (*FQ* I.i) and Duessa (*FQ* I.ii). He, like us, must learn to 'read' the allegory, to see the true significance of things.' Fradubio begins his education in the deceit of outward appearance, warning of Duessa's 'forged beauty' (*FQ* I.ii.36.1), and pointing out his own and his love's deceptive manifestation as a 'seeming tree' (*FQ* I.ii.35.5). At the beginning of *FQ* I.iv Spenser highlights the point by advising young knights to 'Beware of fraud' (*FQ* I.iv.1.3): but in Duessa's

1. On the importance of the word 'read' in *The Faerie Queene*, see Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1979), pp.254-60, and A. Leigh Deneef, *Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor* (Durham, N.C.: Duke U.P., 1982), pp.142-56. Quilligan's discussion is marred by her own misreading of the word *Ioue* (*FQ* I.i.6.6) as *Love* (Quilligan, p.255), a mistake which invalidates most of her comments on that stanza. Ironically, it also bolsters her wider case about the importance of learning to read the poem.

company Redcross continues to judge by appearances. To him, the palace of Lucifera 'seemd to bee' 'a goodly building, brauely garnished,/ The house of a mightie Prince' (FQ I.iv.2.6-7). But the privileged reader, who knows that Redcross has already trodden the 'broad high way' in approaching the palace (FQ I.iv.2.8), is told that it is built upon sand, using bricks without mortar, and looks 'brauely garnished' only because it is 'painted cunningly' (FQ I.iv.5.9) and covered with 'golden foile' (FQ I.iv.4.4). A literal reading might excuse Redcross on the grounds that he cannot be expected to know this, but the themes of the book - the distinction between truth and duplicity, the uncertainty of human virtue - are such as to undermine reliance on the literal, and lend a definite moral edge to his lack of interpretative skill. The hermit Contemplation exemplifies the contrast between natural and spiritual sight:

Great grace that old man to him giuen had;
For God he often saw from heauens hight,
All were his earthly eyen both blunt and bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly sight,
Yet wondrous quick and persant was his spright,
As Eagles eye, that can behold the Sunne...

I. x. 47. 1-6

It is perhaps inevitable that this distinction between outward appearance and inner truth should become associated with the contrast between literal and allegorical meaning - Una's veil and the veil of allegory have much in common.

In the palace, Redcross is introduced to Lucifera and witnesses the vanity of her courtiers, but he continues to act as if they were merely exemplars of vice rather than incarnations of it:

Yet the stout Faerie mongst the middest crowd
Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly vew,

And that great Princesse too exceeding proud,
That to strange knight no better countenance allowd.

I. iv. 15. 6-9

To be 'mongst the middest crowd' in such an environment is enough to cast doubt on one's own moral status, and for the reader the phrase tinges Redcross' thoughts with a self-important pride which might not otherwise have been detected; but Redcross' reading is determinedly literal, and remains so even after the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins:

But that good knight would not so nigh repaire,
Him selfe estraunging from their ioyauce vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far vnfit for warlike swaine.

I. iv. 37. 7-9

Redcross' reaction seems inadequate, but it is so only because his ability to interpret what he sees is inadequate. The reader, apprised of the significance of what Redcross witnesses in ignorance, finds it hard to maintain his literal 'reading' as an active psychological possibility.

In the description of the banquet this process is accelerated:

That night they pas in ioy and iollity,
Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall;
For Steward was excessiue *Gluttonie*,
That of his plenty poured forth to all;
Which doen, the Chamberlain *Slowth* did to rest them call.

I. iv. 43. 5-9

The ministrations of *Gluttonie* and *Slowth* cannot lightly be dismissed, and the normal moral associations of the literal action are suffocated by them. It is vain to point out that in most chivalric romance a great banquet would be seen as an admirable occasion; vain too to suggest that going to bed at night is not really a slothful

action. Redcross is tainted. As we anticipated in our discussion of Harington's allegorical theory, the distinction between interpretative and moral competence has become blurred.

Redcross is finally alerted to Lucifera's true nature not by any realisation of her analogical significance but by his dwarf's discovery of the palace dungeons, where 'huge numbers lay/ Of caytiue wretched thrals' (FQ I.v.45.8-9):

A ruefull sight, as could be seene with eie;
Of whom he learned had in secret wise
The hidden cause of their captiuitie,
How mortgaging their liues to *Couetise*,
Through wastfull Pride, and wanton Riotise,
They were by law of that proud Tyrannesse
Proukt with *Wrath*, and *Enuies* false surmise,
Condemned to that Dongeon mercillesse,
. Where they should liue in woe, and die in wretchednesse.

I. v. 46

The captives include famous sinners from Biblical and classical times, as well as 'endlesse routs' (FQ I.v.51.1) of nameless victims,

Whose case when as the carefull Dwarfe had tould,
And made ensample of their mournfull sight
Vnto his maister, he no lenger would
There dwell in perill of like painefull plight,
But early rose, and ...tooke his flight...

I. v. 52. 1-7

'So much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule.' Redcross is like one of Harington's middling readers,

1. See the Letter to Raleigh, p.737. The use of 'ensamples' to perform an educative function is a recurring theme in *The Faerie Queene*. The ensample may be either a warning or a worthy object of emulation. Examples from the first category include, as well as Lucifera's prisoners, Redcross (FQ I.iv.1.9, I.viii.44.7), Pilate (FQ II.vii.60.4), the wretches on the Rocke of Reproch (FQ II.xii.9.2), Marinell's victims (FQ III.iv.14.7), Hellenore (FQ III.ix.2.1), Blandamour (FQ IV.i.36.6), the Souldan (FQ V.viii.44.9), Turpin (FQ VI.vii.27.5) and Mirabella (FQ VI.viii.2.7). Examples from the second are the kings of Faerie (FQ II.x.74.8), the Saxon Angela (FQ III.iii.56.8), Belpheobe (FQ III.v.54.1-9), Amoret (FQ III.vi.52.4) and Calidore (FQ VI.iii.2.4).

unable to pierce the rind of the fiction as far as the allegory, but able to perceive the moral element and apply its lessons to his own life. The episode ends with an affirmation of the polysemous nature of movement in Faerie: emotionally, the dwarf's story moves Redcross to fear for his life, mortal and eternal; physically, it moves him out of the palace; and morally, it moves him away from the moral danger implied by his presence in the house of Lucifera.

Contrast the situation at *FQ* II.vi. Guyon, like Redcross, interprets his surroundings in a doggedly literal manner. Throughout, he judges Phaedria by her behaviour, rather than by what she may or may not represent. He thinks her rather vulgar, is angry with her for bringing him to the wrong place, kicks his heels on her island, maintains a strained civility, is irritated by the whole adventure. His disapproval of her looseness is reported in similar terms to Redcross' disapproval of Lucifera's court. In this case, however, the analogical aspects of the Canto are not sufficiently dominant to destroy the literal interpretation for the reader: we have already seen how Spenser maintains both literal and analogical senses in an uneasy equilibrium. If anything, it is Guyon's literal understanding which threatens to disintegrate the allegory, as Phaedria, unable to tempt him, is forced to ferry him to the other side of the lake. The movement involved here lacks any obvious analogical reference - it is no part of Phaedria's function to give knights lifts where they really mean to go. But the contradiction between Guyon's behaviour and his environment is a constant irritant, and 'She well pleased was thence to amoue him farre' (*FQ* II.vi.37.9).

Both Guyon's adventures in the Palmer's absence - the other being his tour of the cave of Mammon (*FQ* II.vii) - have been marked by critical disagreement as to the morality of his actions.¹ This is not surprising, since in Book II it is the Palmer, Guyon's spiritual mentor, who also provides him with interpretative guidance: a combination of roles which again tends to undermine the distinction between exegetical and moral accomplishment. One incident during the voyage to the Bower of Blisse provides a striking instance of this. Guyon sees a damsel calling to him for aid:

Which Guyon hearing, streight his Palmer bad,
To stere the boate towards that dolefull Mayd,
That he might know, and ease her sorrow sad:
Who him auizing better, to him sayd;
Faire Sir, be not displeasd, if disobayd:
For ill it were to hearken to her cry;
For she is inly nothing ill apayd,
But onely womanish fine forgery,
Your stubborne hart t'affect with fraile infirmity.

II.xii.28

The damsel's deceit is not discernible from her literal appearance; but to go to her aid would place Guyon in her power, and in some sense put him in a morally invidious position. B. Nellist's comment on this problem is instructive:

[The maid] appeals to the knight's basic chivalrous instincts but in the process weakens the heroic virtue of perseverance... As the Palmer shows, even had the maid not been part of the witchcraft, it would still have been wrong to succour individual need in preference to the eradication of universal ills.²

-
1. See Roger G. Swearingen, 'Guyon's Faint', *SP*, 74 (1977), 165-85, p.165n for a summary of this debate for the Mammon episode.
 2. B. Nellist, 'The Allegory of Guyon's Voyage: An Interpretation', *ELH*, 30 (1963), 89-106, rpt. in A.C. Hamilton, ed., *Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), pp.238-52 (pp.248-49).

This is the sort of distortion of the narrative which we came across in some of the criticism of *FQ* II.vi. Of course the Palmer says nothing at all about what the correct course of action would have been had the maid's distress been genuine. It is not a question one can ask, when the terms of the allegory are such as to identify moral and interpretative skill - if one is virtuous enough to resist the deceiving damsel, one is also virtuous enough to recognise her for what she is. This is one of the ways in which Faerie differs from our world, and the urge to find a rationalisation to bridge the gap is very strong, as Nellist's unconscious alteration of the poem shows. But it is a gap that the text will never finally allow us to close, for it lies between two ways of reading - the analogical and the exemplary - that cannot be harmonised. Spenser does not labour to make his two modes compatible, but to control the logical and rhetorical effects that flow from the fact that they are not. That is the art of allegorical decorum.

3. Allegory and Ambivalence

I have suggested that Spenserian allegory uses two modes of expression - the exemplary and the analogical - that are ultimately hostile to each other. In this section we consider how this double nature may be used to combine incompatible perspectives on a subject into a single sequence of narrative actions, so as to reflect or create a sense of ambivalence. We shall focus on two passages: Scudamour's entry into the Temple of Venus at *FQ* IV.x, and the truancy of Calidore amongst the shepherds at *FQ* VI.ix-x.

At the end of *FQ* IV.ix Scudamour, who has just been reunited to his love Amoret after many anguished Cantos, is entreated by the assembled company to tell, in the words of Sir Claribell, 'All that aduventure, which ye did assay/ For that faire Ladies loue' (*FQ* IV.ix.40.7-8). He agrees to the request, and the ensuing narrative accounts for all but one line of Canto x.

Given the circumstances of the tale's telling, and its position at the end of the Scudamour-Amoret story, we might expect one of its features to be a satisfactory conclusiveness. Scudamour's air is celebratory; his quest has been achieved, and the story of the Temple of Venus is introduced as if it were no more than a diverting interlude - after all, whatever dangers Scudamour faced they were clearly not of an order to prevent his present happiness. The tale seems to be insulated against too great an impact on the structure of assumptions and understandings built up in the rest of the poem.

Yet *FQ* IV.x has in fact had a disruptive effect. The strange content of the story, in which Scudamour boasts of kidnapping the woman he professes to adore, ignoring her pleas, and violating the Temple of the goddess of love, has led some critics to find in it a retrospective clue to the state of affairs at the end of Book III. There we discovered Scudamour languishing outside Busyrane's house, while Amoret was sadistically tortured within. It has been suggested that this lamentable situation was connected with a fear of male love on Amoret's part - the enchanter played on her apprehension by presenting her with a cruel and debased vision in which love led inevitably to reproach, repentance and death (*FQ* III.xii.24-25). Might not Scudamour's behaviour in *FQ* IV.x provide at least a partial explanation of Busyrane's power over Amoret? The excessive violence,

the capture by force - are these not just the things to effect 'a horrified withdrawal' from Scudamour? According to Hamilton, for instance, 'his act is a rape through which Amoret is bound'.²

I shall not discuss the Busyrane episode in detail here,³ but this critical reaction does indicate how unsympathetic a view of Scudamour's actions it is possible to take, if one treats his story primarily as a literal account of his courtship. However, I would argue that a literal reading is simply not sufficient for this Canto, and that in fact a full understanding requires the appreciation, not only of the literal and analogical senses of Scudamour's story, but specifically of the tensions between them.

First, though, it must be conceded that Scudamour's actions are inconsistent, *prima facie*, with the repeated condemnation in *The Faerie Queene* of attempts to 'force' love from other people. This sort of 'maisterie' is seen as incompatible with true love, as Britomart declares in Book III:

Ne may loue be compeld by maisterie;
For soone as maisterie comes, sweet loue anone
Taketh his nimble wings, and soone away is gone.

III.1.25.7-9

And in Book IV Arthur makes a similar point about the freedom of choice that should be accorded ladies:

-
1. Thomas P. Roche Jr, 'The Challenge to Chastity: Britomart at the house of Buysrane', *PMLA*, 76 (1961), 340-44, p.343.
 2. Hamilton, *Structure of Allegory*, p.154. See also A. Kent Heatt, 'Scudamour's Practice of "Maistrye" upon Amoret', *PMLA*, 77 (1962), 509-10.
 3. For a more detailed consideration, see pp.200-10 below.

...the world this franchise euer yeelded,
That of their loues choise they might freedom clame,
And in that right should by all knights be shielded.

IV.ix.37.6-8

Against these assertions Scudamour certainly seems to have offended: 'Sweete is the loue that comes alone with willingness' (FQ IV.v.25.9). Yet the organization of the Temple of Venus is such that it is hard to see Scudamour's role in any terms but those of physical force. The couplet inscribed on the pillar from which the Cupid shield hangs makes it clear that the winning of Amoret is a challenge: 'Whose euer be the shield, faire Amoret be his' (FQ IV.x.8.9). If Scudamour is an invader he has not come uninvited. The castle is equipped with twenty knights ready to contest his claim in fight, a practice reminiscent of other castle customs in romance literature, here especially Malecasta's at the beginning of Book III. It is true that Scudamour, unlike Redcross, is a willing contender for the lady of the castle's love, but in both cases it is implied that physical prowess is a sufficient qualification.

Again, it becomes clear that the only way to enter the Temple is to make a lot of noise at the entrance, to thrust your way past Delay, to wave your sword at Daunger. Scudamour's behaviour seems demanded by circumstances; and his attitude to Amoret is an extension of that behaviour: 'Folly seemed to leave the thing undone,/ Which with so strong attempt I had begonne' (FQ IV.x.53.4-5). As Roche comments, 'Scudamour's *keckheit* is... absolutely requisite for his task.'¹ Nothing in the Temple has suggested that persuasion is the right way

1. Thomas P. Roche Jr, *The Kindly Flame; a study of the 'Faerie Queene' III and IV* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1964), p.129n.

to go about things, or that the lady should be allowed free choice, as Britomart and Arthur have it. On the contrary, the inscription specifically offers her as a prize.

And really the reason for this is not hard to find. The allegorical mode of this story is vastly different from that in which Arthur's and Britomart's statements were made. Far from being a rapist's charter it is - in one sense - a careful demonstration of exactly the sort of earnest service and sincere persuasion which Britomart and Arthur would approve.

The metaphor of love as a siege, war or hunt is one of the most common in love poetry from Ovid onwards.' When Artegall woos Britomart, for example, he lays 'Continuall siege vnto her gentle hart' until he brings her 'vnto a bay' (*FQ* IV.vi.40-41). A similar image underlies *Amoretti* 14:

Retourne agayne, my forces late dismayd,
unto the siege by you abandon'd quite:
great shame it is to leave like one afrayd
so fayre a piece for one repulse so light.
Gaynst such strong castles needeth greater might
then those small forts which ye were wont belay;
such haughty myndes enur'd to hardy fight
disdayne to yield unto the first assay.
Bring therefore all the forces that ye may,
and lay incessant battery to her heart,
playnts, prayers, vowes, ruth, sorrows and dismay;
those engins can the proudest love convert.
And if these fayle, fall downe and dy before her;
so dying live, and living do adore her.²

No one reading this would think Spenser advocated wheeling in siege engines to threaten his mistress. Yet, perhaps because of its very

1. See, for example, *Ars Amatoria* I 45-50, III 1-7.

2. The text used for all Spenser's poems (other than *The Faerie Queene*) is J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, ed., *Poetical Works* (O.U.P., 1912).

familiarity, critics have tended to underestimate the force of the fact that *FQ* IV.x is a dramatisation of this commonplace image. In this analogy, the Temple and its environs are Amoret, and Scudamour's penetration of it is the story of her falling in love. In order to reach the Temple Scudamour has to fight his way past such stalwarts of courtly love poetry as Doubt, Delay and Daunger, all traditional obstacles which a lover may find obstructing his suit. Doubt here is a very different creature from his hesitant namesake in the *Mask of Cupid*. This is doubt as a device, a tool of coyness, a defensive weapon in the Lady's armoury by which she can ward off her lover, or test his ardour and persistence. His Janus face signifies her caprice, her ability to have it both ways; the 'mistrustful eyes' (*FQ* III.xii.10.5) of the earlier Doubt were by contrast more appropriate to the lover, placed in real doubtful fear by such a performance. Daunger, or disdain, has a similar role - it is a barrier erected by the beloved, either to discourage or to prove the lover. To the extent that the lover, like Scudamour, must face out his Lady's hauteur he is indeed in conflict with her expressed wishes, but there is an assumption, implicit in the pillar inscription, that the obstacle is put in place only to be overcome. Daunger, like Doubt before and Womanhood afterwards, is pacified by the sight of the Cupid shield which is Scudamour's earnest of true love.

The castle's inhabitants belong to a pantheon of psychological personifications whose significance is conventional and well established, a fact which makes it impossible to ignore the analogical meaning of Scudamour's exploits, whereby he represents himself as a faithful lover courting his mistress. This interpretation is reinforced by our previous knowledge of the Scudamour-Amoret story, in

which their love for each other is never doubted. In *FQ* III.xi, for instance, it is made clear that Amoret is resisting Busyrane out of fidelity to Scudamour - a strange way for the victim of a rape to feel about her attacker:

... the sharp steele doth rive her hart in tway,
All for she *Scudamore* will not deny.

III.xi.11.4-5

Even more revealing are the stanzas devoted to the story of Amoret's education at the end of *FQ* III.vi, the Canto which describes the Garden of Adonis. Here we are told that, while in the Garden, Amoret is committed to the care of Psyche, who is to train her 'in true feminitee' (*FQ* III.vi.51.5). With Psyche she is 'lessoned/ In all the lore of loue, and goodly womanhead' (*FQ* III.vi.51.8-9), and on attaining an appropriate age she is brought by Venus 'into the worldes vew' to act out her name as

th'ensample of true loue alone,
And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione,
To all faire Ladies...

III.vi.52,4-6

So Amoret comes to the Faery court, where her 'goodly haueour' (*FQ* III.vi.52.8) is much admired; and indeed many fall in love with her, but:

She to none of them her loue did cast,
Save to the noble knight, Sir *Scudamore*,
To whom her louing hart she linked fast
In faithfull loue, t'abide for euermore...

III.vi.53.1-4

J.W. Bennet points out that this story does not agree with the history recounted by Scudamour, and suggests that Spenser's plans

underwent some modification between the composition of the two passages.' This may well be so; but if we accept the metaphorical nature of Scudamour's account the two versions are hardly incompatible. To say that the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus are different 'places' suggests just the sort of emphasis on geographical consistency which, as we have seen, Faerie does not encourage. The Temple of Venus can be said to exist 'within' the Garden of Adonis, insofar as Amoret exists within it. In *FQ* III.vi, for instance, we learn that Amoret is taught 'goodly womanhead': in *FQ* IV.x we find her sitting in the midst of a group of virtues, the chief of whom is indeed Womanhood - this is not a change of meaning, merely of allegorical mode. The 'lore of loue' in this context concerns not so much the biological-cum-mystical learning with which the main part of *FQ* III.vi has been concerned as the sort of 'goodly haueour' commended in the Faery court, and specifically that 'haueour' deemed 'goodly' when courtship is in question. The fruits of this learning are amply demonstrated in the copy-book Petrarchan obstacles which Scudamour meets: Amoret has learned her lesson well.

The identification of Amoret with the castle and Temple, and of its inhabitants with her attitudes to a potential lover, is further supported by Scudamour's stress on the unique beauty of the building (*FQ* IV.x.5, 15.7). Already in *The Faerie Queene* we have had one example of a castle laid out on human lines, if with rather more emphasis on physical structure. The heart in Alma's castle was a 'goodly Parlour' (*FQ* II.ix.37.1) filled with affections such as

1. Josephine Waters Bennet, *The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene"* (Chicago; Chicago U.P., 1942, rpt. New York; Burt Franklin, 1960), p.174.

Shamefastnesse and Prays-desire - 'a louely beuy of faire Ladies' (FQ II.ix.34.2). In the Temple of Venus the heart is portrayed as 'the inmost Temple' (FQ IV.x.37.1), and again there is 'a beuie of fayre damzels' (FQ IV.x.48.8), this time virtues appropriate to woman.

But it is at this point that the analogical allegory we have been using so far begins to break down spectacularly, for here in the heart of the Temple which in some way represents Amoret we find - Amoret. What part of Amoret can Amoret possibly signify? The ontological paradox which Amoret embodies is the Canto's crux - the ground for which two interpretative systems contend.' Amoret's name identifies her with love, the ultimate object of Scudamour's quest: one could therefore follow the analogy of the Canto through and say that her kidnap is no more than a dramatisation of the phrase 'He captured her heart'. On the other hand, the appearance of Amoret in person cuts her loose from the framework of courtly imagery which the rest of the Canto has constructed, and creates (as in our discussion of allegorical geography) a semantic rivalry. When Scudamour first sees Amoret, she is described only in terms of her virginal beauty - attributes which might appropriately be applied to the love of a young maiden; but as he brings her out of the emblematic company of her tutor virtues the imaginative possibility of seeing her in their semantically limited terms becomes ever more tenuous. His act projects her into the narrative, and she acquires a more sophisticated set of characteristics as a result, manifesting in her own person the

1. Contrast the more complete *translatio* of the *Roman de la Rose*. Here the object of the lover's desires is not a lady but a flower.

attributes which elsewhere in the Canto appear as independent entities. Adept at the arts of Delay and Doubt, she leaves the figures who bear those names in a supporting role, backing up her efforts in a manner which borders on the tautologous.

She often prayd, and often me besought,
Sometime with tender teares to let her goe,
Sometime with witching smyles: but yet for nought,
That euer she to me could say or doe,
Could she her wished freedome fro me woe;
But forth I led her through the Temple gate,
By which I hardly past with much adoe:
But that same Ladie which me friended late
In entrance, did me also friend in my retrate.

No lesse did Daunger threaten me with dread,
When as he saw me, maugre all his powre,
That glorious spoyle of beautie with me lead...

IV. x. 57.1-58.3

If the absurdity principle has an inverse (the sanity principle?) this passage demonstrates its action. The conventional array of psychological abstractions encountered by Scudamour has made it impossible to read the Canto in an entirely literal manner; but having been encouraged, this elaborate courtly system is suddenly cut adrift by Amoret's appearance, returning us to a literal reading. In fact, neither a literal nor an analogical interpretation is adequate. Each implies the other: each is inescapable.

This pattern of interdependence can be traced on a smaller scale in Spenser's metaphorical effects. When Scudamour takes Amoret's hand - a crucial moment, since it is at this point that she effectively leaves the emblematic environment in which she is discovered - we are told that

... I which all that while
The pledge of faith, her hand engaged held,

Like warie Hynd within the weedie soyle,
For no entreatie would forgoe so glorious spoyle.

IV. x. 55. 6-9

What do these lines imply? In the first place, Scudamour refers to Amoret's 'engaged' hand as 'The pledge of faith', a phrase which would normally suggest that they had shaken hands to settle some mutual agreement, and that the faith referred to was Amoret's - in other words, that Amoret had given her hand of her own volition as a testimony of her fidelity. Yet we know that in literal terms Scudamour has taken Amoret's hand against her will, and it seems likely that it is this action, rather than the hand itself, which is the pledge of his faith - a sign of his determination to see the quest through.

The next image is equally confusing. The meaning of line 9 is clear enough - Scudamour compares himself to a hunter who will not give up his 'spoyle' - that is, Amoret. But in that case what is the proper reference of the previous line? Does it look forward to line 9, or back to line 7? If the former, it seems strange that Scudamour likens himself not to a lion or some appropriately predatory beast, but a 'warie Hynd within the weedie soyle', in other words a hunted animal at bay. What the hind is unwilling to forgo is not 'spoyle' but the refuge which prevents it from becoming 'spoyle' itself. Scudamour and the hind have stubbornness in common, but otherwise their positions are reversed. The alternative is to suppose that it is Amoret's hand rather than Scudamour which is 'like warie Hynd'. This has at least the advantage that the hunted Amoret is identified with the hunted animal, but presents an anomaly in that the hind has no desire to leave the 'weedie soyle', whereas Scudamour's grasp is in no sense a last refuge for Amoret, but rather capture itself.

This image is not 'ambiguous', in the sense that it is amenable to two independent, self-consistent interpretations. There are two ways of approaching the lines, but in each there is a contradiction which leads back to the values and associations inherent in the other. Hence we are led to understand that Scudamour is both hunter and hunted, and more importantly that Amoret is both willing and unwilling to be caught, an opposition which corresponds to the distinction between the analogical and literal readings of the Canto. The result is a sense of ambivalence concerning the moral status of Scudamour's enterprise, which superimposes a story of kidnap onto a highly visible framework of imagery conventionally associated with courtship.

I would suggest that this fact is not merely fortuitous: it is consistent with the way that Spenser treats courtship generally. The subject can be approached by way of a comparison between the lovers and the friends who people the demi-paradise around the Temple. The two classes are carefully distinguished - again we should note the unobtrusive association of moral and physical distance:

But farre away from these, another sort
Of louers lincked in true harts consent;
Which loued not as these, for like intent,
But on chast vertue grounded their desire,
Farre from all fraud, or fayned blandishment...

IV.x.26.3-7

The friends' love is Platonic ('on chast vertue grounded'), the lovers' sexual. The main difference in the description of the groups, however, lies in the contrast between the anonymity of the 'thousand payres of louers' (FQ IV.x.25.6) and the fame of the named pairs of friends. The lovers, it appears, are self-centred, interested only in each other: 'Ne euer ought but of their true loues talkt' (FQ IV.x.

25.8). Their self-sufficiency is like that of the hermaphroditic Venus, who 'begets and eke conceives, ne needeth other none' (FQ IV.x.41.9); and indeed the hermaphrodite was one Renaissance symbol for the married couple.¹ For the romantic lover the pains of love are associated with the frustration of attempts to break down the beloved's resistance, and the bliss is the bliss of success in those attempts - both stages are different forms of relationship between the two, keeping the process internal and inward-looking. In the friends' case, however, love is an inspiration to 'braue thoughts and noble deedes' (FQ IV.x.26.9) - an altogether more outgoing consequence, and representative of the sort of active virtue which Spenser, like Sidney, approved. For friends the pain is not so much in the establishment of friendship as in the endurance through danger of a friendship already formed - in being 'trustie tryed' (FQ IV.x.27.2).

The important point here is that the pattern of suffering which is demanded by virtue in Platonic love is analogous to the suffering imposed by romantic love in itself, though the effects of the two as they appear to the outside world are very different. That is why it is possible for Scudamour to present his courtship allegorically in the heroic terms of a chivalric quest, and why at the same time it is a questionable policy. For whereas the friend undertakes dangers unequivocally for his friend's sake, the lover (like Scudamour), in trying to persuade his mistress, to break down her defences, is in some sense attacking her. In all courtship there is an element of hostility, or even of deceit, insofar as each participant undertakes to play certain roles, to act out a ritual with such stock characters

1. See Roche, *Kindly Flame*, pp.134-36.

as Daunger, Delay and Doubt.' Friendship is to be preferred because it lacks this element of internal hostility and is unencumbered with such rituals. It is the friends rather than the lovers whose love is said to be 'Farre from all fraud, or fayned blandishment'.

Scudamour's relationship with Amoret outside *FQ* IV.x is in one sense a story like that of David and Jonathan or another pair of friends, of true love holding out despite unpropitious circumstances; yet it is also an exploration of problems like jealousy or Lust which can infect love and make it less than true. The similar dichotomy between the literal and analogical senses of *FQ* IV.x, whereby Scudamour both woos Amoret and captures her by force, suggests the complexity of the motives which lie behind romantic love - a recognition that in all romantic relationships there are elements of hostility, and that these are not abolished simply because they are embodied in conventions.

The Temple of Venus is Janus-faced in more than Doubt's physical appearance. It is a detailed exposition of the sort of dual view taken of the beloved by the lover, whereby she becomes both an object of veneration and, to use a central term in Book IV, 'spoyle'.² Much of Books III and IV have been devoted to detailing the disasters which can befall love when the second perspective becomes dominant, but Spenser shows that something of it is inevitable because of the way

1. Compare Britomart's 'womanish art' (*FQ* IV.vi.40.7) in hiding her love, which involves 'faying cholere' with Artegall (*FQ* IV.vi.27.2), and her 'faind gainesay' to Redcross (*FQ* III.ii.15.8). Florimell 'masked' her love, 'For feare she should of lightnesse be detected' (*FQ* IV.xii.35.7-8), while Amoret too knows how to combine 'tender teares' and 'witching smyles' (*FQ* IV.x.57.2-3).

2. The term is used in this Canto (*FQ* IV.x.55.9, 58.3), but women are similarly valued elsewhere in Book IV, either as spoil (*FQ* IV.ii.24.9, vi.11.5), wage (*FQ* IV.iii.4.8), prize (*FQ* IV.iv.8.6) or need (*FQ* IV.vi.28.4).

that courtship is carried on, by a process that lends itself easily to the terms and attitudes of military conquest.

FQ IV.x reflects a real ambivalence in human love, presenting an unstable synthesis of views which inhibits easy summary. If we turn to Book VI, and its titular virtue of courtesy, we shall again find a case in which rival definitions compete: the court and the country are both sources of a courteous ethic, and one of the features of the Book is the recurring tension between the two.

The Book begins unambiguously, with an argument from etymology:

Of Court it seemes, men Courtesie doe call,
For that it there most vseth to abound;
And well beseemeth that in Princes hall
That vertue should be plentifully found,
Which of all goodly manners is the ground,
And roote of ciuill conuersation.
Right so in Faery court it did redound,
Where curteous Knights and Ladies most did won
Of all on earth, and made a matchlesse paragon.

VI.1.1

As the Book progresses, the characteristic concerns of courtly courtesy emerge: an emphasis on rank, obligation, the maintenance of proper social relations. Spenser insists on the importance of breeding as a prerequisite to courtly virtue:

True is, that whilome that good Poet sayd,
The gentle minde by gentle deeds is knowne.
For a man by nothing is so well bewrayd
As by his manners, in which plaine is showne
Of what degree and what race he is growne.
For seldome seene, a trotting Stalion get
An ambling Colt, that is his proper owne:
So seldome seene, that one in basenesse set
Doth noble courage shew, with curteous manners met.

But euermore contrary hath bene tryde,
That gentle bloud will gentle manners breed...

VI.iii.1.1-2.2

O what an easie thing is to descry
The gentle bloud, how euer it be wrapt
In sad misfortunes foule deformity...

VI.v.1.1-3

This emphasis on natural order is reflected in Calidore's chivalric quest for the Blatant Beast - a creature who bites 'without regard of person or of time' (FQ VI.xii.40.9) - and in the resolution of several of the Book's subplots. In Book VI apparently low-born characters who display nobility - Tristram, the Saluage Man, Pastorella - have a habit of turning out to be of noble blood after all.

But the Book also develops a critique of these doctrines. When the youth Tristram, as yet unknighthed, kills an evil knight, Calidore at first upbraids him for breaking the law of arms in attacking one of higher rank (FQ VI.ii.7.3-5); but acquits him when it becomes apparent that the quarrel arose through Tristram's defence of a lady, and suggests that the defence of women is a natural principle overriding the demands of the chivalric code:

For knights and all men this by nature haue,
Towards all womenkind them kindly to behaue.

VI.ii.14.8-9

Similarly, when Priscilla refuses to carry her wounded lover on the grounds of her rank - 'him to beare, she thought it thing too base' (FQ VI.ii.47.5) - Calidore rebukes her fastidiousness.¹ Moreover, the presence of characters like Crudor, Briana, Turpine and Blandina, who are nobly born but disgrace their breeding, tends to undermine the connection between virtue and nobility of birth.

1. Compare Turpine's similar objection to bearing Serena (FQ VI.iii.39.7-9).

An alternative approach is provided by the shepherd Meliboe, who recommends a stoic indifference to fortune, and relies on his inner resources for happiness:

For wisdom is most riches; fooles therefore
They are, which fortunes doe by vowes devise,
Sith each vnto himselfe his life may fortunize.

VI.ix.30.7-9

Superficially, Meliboe's speech is perfectly compatible with the courtly view, especially in its emphasis on contentment with one's lot. Calidore too finds self-control a necessary concomitant of courtesy, as he says to Crudor:

For nothing is more blamefull to a knight,
That court'sie doth as well as armes professe,
How euer strong and fortunate in fight,
Then the reproch of pride and cruelnesse.
In vaine he seeketh others to suppressse,
Who hath not learnd him selfe first to subdew:
All flesh is frayle and full of ficklenesse,
Subject to fortunes chance, still chaunging new;
What haps to day to me, to morrow may to you.

VI.i.41

Nevertheless, Meliboe's emphasis on the ability of the individual to 'fortunize' his own life distinguishes his philosophy from the hierarchical and social concerns of courtly courtesy, and in particular from the militant, even proselytic, ideals of chivalry. One way in which this difference manifests itself is in his attitude to the chivalric desire for glory. Meliboe is content to live in obscurity with his sheep, but for practitioners of the active life fame is a constant spur: Arthur himself is associated in the house of Alma with a figure called Prays-Desire (FQ II.ix.36-39), while Calidore eventually leaves the shepherds' world to prevent 'the losse of so much loos and fame,/ As through the world thereby should glorifie his

name' (FQ VI.xii.12.8-9). Chivalric practice renders the world its due: this heroism is not performed entirely through a stoical sense of what is right. When Calidore binds the Beast and leads it through Faerie in triumph, we are told that the people 'much admyr'd the Beast, but more admyr'd the Knight' (FQ VI.xii.37.9): a spectacle Harry Berger has gone so far as to compare to a 'ticker-tape parade'.¹ But the virtue of courtesy is not so easily reconciled with a thirst for praise. Calidore's lack of a companion to witness his heroic actions is repeatedly stressed, first to Artegall:

But where ye ended haue, now I begin
To tread an endlesse trace, withouten guyde,
Or good direction, how to enter in,
Or how to issue forth in waies vntryde,
In perils strange, in labours long and wide,
In which although good Fortune me befall,
Yet shall it not by none be testifyde.

VI.1.6.1-7

And later to Tristram:

...I am bound by vow, which I profest
To my dread Soueraine, when I it assayd,
That in atchieuement of her high behest,
I should no creature ioyne vnto mine ayde...

VI.11.37.5-8

Calidore's insistence that his deeds shall 'by none be testifyde' recalls the injunction of the Sermon on the Mount: 'Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them' (Matt 6.1); yet it seems inconsistent with his own actions.

1. Harry Berger Jr, 'A Secret Discipline: *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI', in William Nelson, ed., *Form and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser: Selected Papers from the English Institute* (New York and London: Columbia U.P., 1961), pp.35-75 (p.43).

In practice the courtly and pastoral ways of life do conflict, and this is reflected in the view of the court taken by Meliboe. As a youth, Meliboe travelled to 'roiiall court' (FQ VI.ix.24.6), only to find a world of envious ambition, where courtesy was merely a stepping stone to advancement: 'There I beheld such vainnesse, as I neuer thought' (FQ VI.ix.24.9). Is this vain place the same Faerie court praised at the beginning of Book VI? The question is not raised by Spenser, but the two views of court life are hard to reconcile. Meliboe's disillusion recalls that of Colin Clout in *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe* (1591), a poem which divides into two jarring parts: the first a panegyric in praise of various individuals at court; the second a bitter condemnation of court life in general.¹ Book VI too maintains a double view of the court, as the fount both of courtesy and of envious vanity.

In sketching the principal points of difference between two rival conceptions of courtesy, I have tried to give some sense of the ambivalence on the subject prevalent in Book VI, an ambivalence which prevents a stable conception of the moral grounds of courteous action. From the point of view of the pastoral life, all worldly action appears as a vain chasing after shadows; while pastoral withdrawal itself can be regarded as a truancy from responsibility. In the world of the Blatant Beast, no action is free from blame.

These contradictions come to a head in FQ VI.ix-x. In this part of the Book Calidore leaves his quest for the Blatant Beast in order to pursue the love of Pastorella among the shepherds. Insofar as the

1. Compare also *Prothalamion* ll.6-8, and *Mother Hvbberds Tale*, ll.892-914.

hunt for the Beast represents the attempt to overcome the arch-enemy of courtesy, this must be seen as a more or less culpable abandonment of the Book's main moral purpose. And yet C.S. Lewis wrote that it was, so far from being a truancy, the allegorical 'core' of the Book,¹ and others have followed him in seeing the pastoral episode as an essential part of Spenser's definition of courtesy. Where the quest to defeat and bind the Beast presented only a limitingly antagonistic framework in which to discover that virtue's meaning, the example of the shepherds allows for what Humphrey Tonkin calls 'the positive element'² - a vision of how the courteous life might be lived. Spenser himself claims that the Cantos are relevant to his purpose:

Like as a ship, that through the Ocean wyde
 Directs her course vnto one certaine cost,
 Is met of many a counter winde and tyde,
 With which her winged speed is let and crost,
 And she her self in stormie surges tost;
 Yet making many a borde, and many a bay,
 Still winneth way, ne hath her compasse lost:
 Right so it fares with me in this long way,
 Whose course is often stayd, yet neuer is astray.

For all that hetherto hath long delayd
 This gentle knight, from sewing his first quest,
 Though out of course, yet hath not bene mis-sayd...

VI.xii.1.1-2.3

A partial reconciliation of these views of the pastoral Cantos - as both a truancy and an essential part of the Book's purpose - might be achieved through a recognition that the quest for the Blatant Beast and Calidore's stay with the shepherds are examples of different sorts

-
1. C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p.350.
 2. Humphrey Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of The 'Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p.122.

of allegorical action. In a Book which is less obviously a 'continued Allegory' than any of its predecessors, the Blatant Beast is one of the few analogically based figures. The binding of the Beast is the ultimate triumph of courtesy not because the Beast is literally discourteous, despite the railing of its 'hundred tongues' (FQ V.xii.41.7), but because of the slander and envy which its literal back-biting represents. The way of life outlined by Meliboe, by contrast, is a recipe for exemplary courtesy, in which the absence of envy is a literal fact:

Therefore I do not any one enuy,
Nor am enuyde of any one therefore...

VI.ix.21.1-2

In this sense we might suggest, as we did earlier when comparing the accounts of Amoret's early life in the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus, that the apparent conflict is in reality only a change of allegorical mode, in this case from analogical to exemplary allegory. Such a transition can I think be observed in the passage in which Calidore first comes upon the shepherds at the beginning of FQ VI.ix. He appears to them 'yet sweating' (FQ VI.ix.5.7) from his pursuit of the Beast, and has paused only to ask directions:

They answer'd him, that no such beast they saw,
Nor any wicked feend, that mote offend
Their happie flockes, nor daunger to them draw:
But if that such there were (as none they kend)
They prayd high God him farre from them to send.
Then one of them him seeing so to sweat,
After his rusticke wise, that well he weend,
Offred him drinke, to quench his thirstie heat,
And if he hungry were, him offred eke to eat.

VI.ix.6

This stanza juxtaposes the two worlds of pastoral and chivalry, and suggests their mutual ignorance. The distinction between Calidore's request, which was made 'courteously' (FQ VI.ix.5.8), and the 'rusticke' manner of the response, is reflected in the antithesis between the phrases 'as none they kend' and 'that well he weend'. The shepherds' ignorance of the Blatant Beast accompanies an ignorance of the nature of a chivalric quest: they look not to knights for their protection but to 'high God'. On the other hand they do recognise sweat: not as an allegorical sign of zealous virtue but as a cue to offer refreshments. Their interpretation of the situation is mundane and literal, and as such their offer of drink can be accepted - Calidore's lack of fastidiousness even allows him to see it as 'gentle' (FQ VI.ix.7.2) despite their rusticity. Contrast this - if a contrast is required - with Guyon's entry to the Bower of Blisse. That too was a place where 'toylsom sweat' might be 'wypt away' (FQ II.v.30.9), where a man could cease from 'seeking for daunger and aduentures vaine' (FQ II.vi.17.5), and in which the first two figures encountered by Guyon - Genius and Excess - both offered him drink. But the allegorical names of these figures, and the explicit authorial comments on their nature, made it impossible to view their offer as having purely literal significance, and Guyon rejected their 'idle curtesie' (FQ II.xii.49.7).

The morality of Calidore's action in entering the shepherd's world is not so easily assessed. Our suggestion that it represents nothing more than an uncomplicated transition from the analogical to the exemplary, from an allegory of courtesy to a demonstration of it, may be a useful starting point, but in practice the recalcitrant differences between the courtly and pastoral views of courtesy remain.

Unlike the unremarked alteration in Amoret's story, the contradiction between Calidore's duty to his quest and his courtship of Pastorella is never allowed to disappear from view. It is most famously addressed at the beginning of *FQ VI.x*:¹

Who now does follow the foule *Blatant Beast*,
Whilest *Calidore* does follow that faire Mayd,
Vnmyndfull of his vow and high beheast,
Which by the Faery Queene was on him layd,
That he should neuer leaue, nor be delayd
From chacing him, till he had it attchieued?
But now entrapt of loue, which him betrayd,
He mindeth more, how he may be relieued
With grace from her, whose loue his heart hath sore engrieued.

That from henceforth he meanes no more to sew
His former quest, so full of toile and paine;
Another quest, another game in vew
He hath, the guerdon of his loue to gaine;
With whom he myndes for euer to remaine,
And set his rest amongst the rusticke sort,
Rather then hunt still after shadowes vaine
Of courtly fauour, fed with light report
Of euery blaste, and sayling alwaies in the port.

Ne certes mote he greatly blamed be,
From so high step to stoupe vnto so low,
For who had tasted once (as oft did he)
The happy peace, which there doth ouerflow,
And prou'd the perfect pleasures, which doe grow
Amongst poore hyndes, in hills, in woods, in dales,
Would neuer more delight in painted show
Of such false blisse, as there is set for stales,
T'entrap vnwary fooles in their eternal bales.

VI.x.1-3

J.C. Maxwell, in his 1952 article on 'The Truancy of Calidore',² was one of the first to recognise that the pastoral Cantos are 'equivocal - both a truancy and an exemplification of the central virtue of the book'.³ In his comments on these stanzas he points out

1. Though compare *FQ VI.ix.12,3* and *FQ VI.xii.12*,

2. J.C. Maxwell, 'The Truancy of Calidore', *ELH*, 19 (1952), 143-49.

3. *ibid.*, p.146.

that Spenser's argument follows a logical pattern: 'Calidore abandoned his quest in order to woo a country love, with the intention of settling down in the country and abandoning the vain delights of the court. In leaving his quest he was to blame, but there were excuses for him since country life is in itself preferable to life at court.'¹ But as Maxwell goes on to explain, the way the stanzas unfold leads us to make certain associations which are absent from this paraphrase. There seems on the one hand to be an opposition between the life of retirement and the quest; and at the same time another opposition between the life of retirement and the vain court, with the effect that the quest and the vanities of court life are implicitly identified. By the time we read that Calidore 'set his rest amongst the rusticke sort,/ Rather than hunt still after shadowes vaine/ Of courtly fauour' we tend to associate the 'shadowes vaine' with the quest for the Blatant Beast, as well as the fickle glory which would accompany chivalric success - the use of the word 'hunt' seems especially conspicuous.

The first two stanzas both inform us that Calidore's interest has shifted from the Blatant Beast to Pastorella. The antithetical use of the word 'follow' in the first and second lines of *FQ* VI.x.1 emphasises the alteration, and is paralleled by the antithetical use of 'quest' in the second and third lines of *FQ* VI.x.2. But the terms of the stanzas are very different. In the first, Calidore's change of heart is described as an abandonment of a 'vow and high beheast', and even Gloriana herself is invoked, the ultimate exemplar of courtesy

1. *ibid.*, p.147.

and trump card of those who see its roots in the court. Calidore's love for Pastorella is a form of entrapment or betrayal - like Cymochles, he is too easily won from his martial purpose. His heart is 'engrieued' by her love, with a wound resembling those inflicted by the Blatant Beast - an analogy implicitly developed later in the Canto:

But that enuenim'd sting, the which of yore,
His poysnous point deepe fixed in his hart
Had left, now gan afresh to rancle sore,
And to renue the rigour of his smart:
Which to recure, no skill of Leaches art
Mote him auaille...

VI.x.31.1-6'

In the second stanza the tone is reversed. The quest for the Beast is now associated with 'toile and paine', and Calidore's passion for Pastorella is considered in relation to the 'guerdon' of her love rather than the difficulties of achieving it. As Maxwell observed, it is hard for the reader to avoid linking the quest with the courtier's hunt after 'shadowes vaine'; but the lines seem to go even further than that, for the dilatoriness of 'courtly fauour', 'sayling alwaies in the port', suggests that the courtly world is as vulnerable to the charge of truancy from any real engagement with life as the pastoral existence could ever be. It is a neat reversal of Calidore's dominant image in his discussion with Meliboe, in which it is his proposed stay with the shepherds which is compared with a ship's rest in port:

Giue leaue awhyle, good father, in this shore
To rest my barcke, which hath bene beaten late

1. Compare the description of the Beast's bite at *FQ* VI.vi.5.

With stormes of fortune and tempestuous fate,
In seas of troubles and of toylesome paine...

VI.ix.31.3-6¹

We noted earlier that the quest for the Blatant Beast provides an analogically based description of the Book's titular virtue, inasmuch as the binding of the Beast represents rather than exemplifies courtesy's triumph. This observation led us to speculate whether Calidore's stay among the shepherds, though apparently incompatible with the obligations of chivalric duty, might more properly be seen as a literal demonstration of those qualities represented by the binding of the Beast, revealing the apparent moral incompatibility as nothing more than an alteration in the method of literary exposition. Our knowledge of the allegorical nature of the text in which the pastoral Cantos appear gives the assertion that Calidore's truancy 'hath not bene mis-sayd' a degree of plausibility; and the manner of his entry into the pastoral world encourages such a reading. However, authorial comments such as those in the stanzas discussed above tend to subvert this separation of moral and methodological concerns, instating Calidore's abandonment of his quest as the focal point of the debate between the courtly and pastoral views of courtesy. Unlike the alteration to the story of Amoret's education, in which a change of allegorical method was unobtrusively effected between two passages sixteen Cantos distant, Spenser emphasises the moral implications of Calidore's changed behaviour, drawing our attention to the contrast between the literal and metaphorical senses of words like 'quest',

1. See also *FQ* VI.ix.19.3-5.

'follow' and 'hunt'. Chivalric duty is too insistent a presence throughout the Book for it to become nothing more than the analogical vehicle of a pastoral courtesy with whose values it is, as we have seen, significantly at variance. Spenser suggests the connection of the two ethics by hinting at the possibility of such a 'translation'; but his repeated questioning of its moral propriety prevents us from fully accepting it. As with our analysis of the Temple of Venus, we find in the pastoral Cantos an allegory which resists the impulse to use its capacity for ambiguity to effect the factitious resolution of real moral issues. Or rather let us say that, when there is an attempt to find an allegorical resolution of the conflict between court and pastoral, it is confined to the self-consciously fragile environment of the vision upon Mount Acidale. As for Acidale, however - 'That in another Canto shall be brought to end' (*FQ* VI.iii.51.9).

CHAPTER 2

ICONOGRAPHY AND NARRATIVE.

1. Analogical iconography

In the last chapter we considered some of the ways in which time and place in Faerie can be made the agents of allegorical meaning. Temporal sequence can imply cause and effect, while physical location can imply a particular moral state. The moral associations of time and place are only intermittently applicable, however, and in numerous instances it is impossible to decide whether or not such an interpretation is warranted, since the evidence of the text is contradictory or equivocal. In examining Scudamour's adventure at the Temple of Venus and Calidore's entry to the world of the shepherds, we saw that this indeterminacy also applies to the interpretation of narrative action. In each of these passages the exemplary and analogical senses of the text were at variance, but were both maintained as imaginative possibilities so as to encourage an interpretational, and hence a moral, doubt.

One important point about the allegorical approach to the interpretation of time, place and action is that the principles involved - such as the association of temporal sequence with cause and effect - are conventional principles, which we bring to an allegorical poem like *The Faerie Queene* because - knowing that it is in part a moral allegory - we expect them to be applicable. The text may encourage

such a reading, for instance through authorial comment, or the remarks of a trustworthy authority like the Palmer, or simply through a narrative in which the application of these principles often seems to be justified at the literal level - as it was in the story of Cymochles' exchange of Atin for Phaedria. Nevertheless, it is our generic expectation of allegorical significance which makes us sensitive to these clues, and lends them plausibility.

In this section I want to consider another, more self-consciously conventional method of imparting allegorical significance to a text: the use of iconographical material. Like the allegorical interpretation of time, place and action, iconography forms an interpretative method which can act in rivalry or in concert with the literal narrative, and is consequently a suitable vehicle for ambiguity or for the witty reinforcement of the literal sense.

First, however, it might be useful to make a distinction. Our subject in this thesis is the relationship between the analogical and literal interpretations of allegorical texts, and the ambiguities and empathetic confusions which can result when it is not clear which of these has priority. However, even when it is acknowledged that a text is intended to convey some analogical meaning, it is still quite possible to find it ambiguous, inasmuch as there may be more than one plausible analogy. This is the interpretational difficulty at the heart of all allegorical theory, which was discussed at the end of the Introduction. Similarly, an iconographical figure may be ambiguous simply because more than one meaning conventionally applies to it. Jane Aptekar, in her study of the symbolism of Book V of *The Faerie*

Queene,' finds an example of this in the lion who sits under the feet of Mercilla:

An huge great Lyon lay, that mote appal
An hardie courage, like captiued thrall,
With a strong yron chaine and coller bound,
That once he could not moue, nor quich at all;
Yet did he murmure with rebellious sound,
And softly royne, when saluage cholere gan redound.

V.ix.33.4-9

The 'rebellious sound' made by this lion suggests that it represents the forces of rebellion in Mercilla's kingdom, who are justly restrained by her power. However, the description also recalls Britomart's dream at the Temple of Isis two Cantos earlier. Under Isis' feet there is a crocodile, which, like Mercilla's lion, has to be restrained by force (FQ V.vii.15-16). In this case, however, the crocodile symbolises not rebellion mastered by the power of justice, but rather the power of justice tempered by mercy, as the priest of Isis explains:

For that same Crocodile Osyris is,
That vnder Isis feete doth sleepe for euer:
To shew that clemence oft in things amis,
Restraines those sterne behests, and cruell doomes of his.

V.vii.22.6-9

In the light of this, the symbol of the lion becomes harder to pin down. Does it represent the power of rebellion or the power of justice? Aptekar compares this image with an emblem of justice from Ripa's *Iconologia*. Again, there is a captive lion:

Now this lion is ambiguous. It may represent either the good force which is the instrument of justice but which Justice

1. Jane Aptekar, *Icons of Justice: iconography and thematic imagery in the 'Faerie Queene' V* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1969).

holds, like her half-drawn sword, in abeyance, or it may represent the evil force of domestic wrongdoers and foreign foes, which Justice holds, with sword ready against rebellion, tamed as her very throne—as, indeed, part and sign of her glory.'

This sort of iconographical ambiguity is an important branch of study in its own right, but it is not with this that we are primarily concerned in a study of allegorical decorum. Whether the lion represents judicial or rebellious power, the relationship between the analogical meaning and the literal representation of that meaning remains very similar - a powerful force is portrayed by a powerful creature. The ambiguity derives not from a doubt as to whether we should give priority to the literal or to the analogical sense, but from our inability to decide which of two analogical referents is the more appropriate - a question which is more likely to be resolved by research into iconographical history than by the sort of study we have undertaken here, which is concerned with the rhetorical relationship between analogical images and the literal sense of the text, especially where the literal sense is used to exemplify a quality.

Even within this more limited ambit, it will easily be seen that the use of iconographically significant objects in an allegorical narrative is open to the same sort of interpretative doubt that we discovered in our discussion of place and time, and for the same reasons. Ernst Gombrich puts the problem well in his essay on the iconography of Raphael's *Stanza della Segnatura*:

In iconography not less than in life, wisdom lies in knowing where to stop...

1. *ibid.*, pp.64-65. See Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Padua: 1618, first pub. Rome: 1593), p.207,

... take the personification of *Causarum Cognitio* on the ceiling of the Stanza. Care has been taken for us to know the meaning of the books she holds, for they are inscribed. Nor need we doubt that the decoration of the throne was intended to signify an aspect of Philosophy—the many-breasted Diana stands traditionally for Nature. Now Vasari also tells us in some detail that the colours of her garments, from the neck downward, are those of fire, air, earth and water, and are therefore symbolic. He may be right, but what of the garments of the other personifications? He does not tell us, but even if he did, we could always ask further questions. Are the configurations of the folds significant? Are the positions of the fingers?’

This discussion may be put into the terms of analogical and exemplary allegory. If we wish to portray Old Age, we may do so by picturing a old man leaning on a stick. The man represents Old Age by exemplifying it. Although his stick may have some independent iconographical significance, it is also appropriate to the literal situation portrayed - so that unless we bring some knowledge of the iconography of sticks to the painting we are relatively unlikely to demand any more arcane meaning. On the other hand, if we see a picture of a woman holding a pair of scales, then (supposing we are sufficiently certain of the painting's genre to be sure it is not a realistic portrait of a shopkeeper serving a customer) the presence of the scales will demand explanation - a visual manifestation of the absurdity principle.²

To understand that the woman represents justice we need one of two types of information. First, we may simply have learned by rote or by past association the declarative fact that a woman with a pair of

1. E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images; Studies in the art of the Renaissance* (New York: Phaidon, 1972), pp.95-96.

2. On the absurdity principle, see p.38 above, and p.135 below.

scales represents justice.' If our knowledge of iconography is more sophisticated, however, we will see that the association between justice and the scales is not arbitrary, but is based on an analogy: as the scales weigh objects, the just man weighs causes. What appears to be a comparison of two terms (justice and the scales) is in fact an association between four terms (justice, the scales, the objects weighed in the scales, the causes weighed by justice) and a relation - the act of 'weighing'.

This property of analogy (or the metaphor of proportion) was recognised by Aristotle, who described it as occurring 'when of four things the second stands in the same relationship to the first as the fourth to the third; for then one may speak of the fourth instead of the second, and the second instead of the fourth'.² As Gombrich has shown, the Aristotelian approval given to proportional metaphor influenced the iconographical doctrines of Ripa, leading him to prefer emblems in which the object depicted and its analogical referent were linked primarily by the analogical relationship, rather than by exemplification:

Ripa is anxious to make his attributes fit this kind of metaphor, explaining for instance, that the column may be used to characterize the concept of Strength, for the column is to a building what strength is to man. He prefers this method to

-
1. For many figures from myth or history who are habitually identified by some iconographical accoutrement - Jerome and his lion, Hermes and the caduceus, Peter and the keys of heaven - rote learning will probably be reinforced by a knowledge of some particular incident in the life of the person, or some role which they fulfil, which lends the iconographical attribute particular propriety. This sort of iconography is not of course 'analogical', and will not be addressed further here.
 2. Aristotle, *Poetics*, XXI 11, in T.S. Dorsch, trans. with introd., *Classical Literary Criticism* (Penguin; Harmondsworth, 1965), pp.29-75 (p.61). Compare the *Rhetoric*, III x 7.

the simple comparison as when Magnanimity is symbolized by a lion 'because in the lion this quality is largely found'.

Both procedures, however, are admissible because both define 'essential' qualities of the concept. What is inadmissible in his view, is to concentrate entirely on 'contingent qualities', as when Despair is represented by a man who has hanged himself or friendship by two people embracing each other. These, he implies, are illustrations of particular events and thus lie outside the realm of definition. True, within the definition such 'accidental' features are allowed and even welcomed. Melancholy would clearly have to show different physiognomic characteristics from Joy. However, it would be a mistake to represent Beauty simply by an image that is supremely beautiful, 'for this would merely be explaining *idem per idem*'. He has therefore represented Beauty with her head in the clouds and 'similar corresponding particulars.'

Ripa rejects emblems like that of the hanged man because they depict 'contingent' rather than 'essential' qualities. In the terms we have been using, we can say that the hanged man exemplifies despair rather than standing in an analogical relationship to it. The image of Old Age as an old man would presumably be rejected on the same grounds. However, our discussion of allegory has shown that, although objects which stand in an analogical relationship to each other are under no *logical* obligation to share any individual attributes, complex aesthetic effects can depend on the extent to which they do so - an observation which is the basis of allegorical decorum. Aristotle's examples of analogy reflect this: 'A nation without its youth is like a year without its spring'.² The skeletal basis of this metaphor is a proportional relation - nation is to youth as year is to spring - but its emotional force comes from the individual attributes of vitality, energy and fecundity which are shared by the spring and young people. Similar considerations apply in the field of icon-

1. Gombrich, pp.143-44. Ripa's discussion appears in the preface to his *Iconologia*.

2. Compare Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III x 7.

ography. Any picture contains elements which are extraneous to its analogical function, and these elements raise questions of decorum: to depict Melancholy smiling broadly would be perverse and confusing. In the emblem of the column as Strength, which Ripa regards as 'essential', the implied proportional relation - column is to building as strength is to man - provides the structure of the metaphor, but it 'works' not only because the column's function in supporting the building is similar to the function of strength in supporting the life of man, but because certain individual qualities of the column - solidity, permanence, and so on - are also qualities very closely allied to strength itself.

In the case of the column we may say that the process of interpretation, of finding the other terms of the proportional metaphor, is to some extent expedited by consideration of the literal attributes of the object with which we are presented. Confronted with a massive and decidedly strong-looking pillar, we are encouraged into the general semantic area of 'strength' whether or not we happen upon the relation 'supports'.

This is not the case with all analogically based iconography. Consider, for instance, the conventional representation of hope as an anchor. This comes much closer to the purely proportional metaphor praised by Ripa. Once it is known, the analogy is clear - the anchor secures the ship just as hope secures man's soul - but there is no attribute of the anchor *per se* (for instance being heavy, or made of metal) which indicates its connection with the quality of hope. An emblem such as this is enigmatic, and to be understood it requires a knowledge of iconographic convention.

If an object appears in a narrative context which encourages us to consider its iconographical significance, but the object's iconography is such that - like the anchor - it does not exemplify the quality to which it is analogous, ambiguities or tautologies may result, depending on the object's narrative use.

As an example we shall consider the flail carried by Talus, Artegall's right-hand man in Book V. The iconographical history of this instrument proves to be rather complex. As an attribute of Jove and Osiris it is a symbol of authority and dominion. In the hands of Osiris in particular it is also associated with judgement, since he holds it to judge the dead, a notion which accords with the Christian idea of God separating the wheat from the chaff at the Day of Judgement.¹ Aptekar has shown that, when associated with Jove, Hercules or Mars, the flail can also become an instrument of wrath, righteous or otherwise.² The flail therefore has a multiplicity of associations, of authority, judgement and punishment.

Of these, the use of the flail as a symbol of punishment is perhaps the most readily explicable: war and punishment are two of the purposes for which flails have historically been used. By contrast, the association of the flail with judgement is based on an analogy: an agricultural flail separates the corn from the husks as justice separates the innocent from the guilty. An emblem which symbolised judgement by showing a farmer threshing corn would have the 'essential' quality praised by Ripa, where an emblem which symbolised

1. An image we have already discussed in connection with its use by Henry Peacham; see Matt 3,12, Luke 3,17 and pp.36-38 above,

2. Aptekar, pp.44-48. See also J.C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* (London; Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1978), p.69.

punishment by showing a man being flailed would display only 'contingent' qualities. These two meanings are thus associated with two different literal activities: separating and striking. The extent to which the flail is employed for either purpose might be expected to influence the degree to which we centre our idea of its iconographical meaning around the notions of, respectively, judgement or punishment. The third meaning of the flail - as a sign of authority - is less relevant to the present discussion, and may indeed derive from its other associations: if a person has the power to judge and to punish, then authority seems to be a natural concomitant: 'For powre is the right hand of Iustice truely hight' (FQ V.iv.1.9).

The flail appears in the first description of Talus, a description which stresses his 'resistlesse' power:

But when she parted hence, she left her groome
An yron man, which did on her attend
Alwayes, to execute her stedfast doome,
And willed him with *Artegall* to wend,
And doe what euer thing he did intend.
His name was *Talus*, made of yron mould,
Immoueable, resistlesse, without end.
Who in his hand an yron flale did hould,
With which he thresht out falshood, and did truth vnfold.

V.i.12

The last line of this stanza manages to combine implications of both punishment and judgement, by playing on two key words. The word 'thresht' suggests both the separation of corn from husks and thrashing or striking, as if in punishment; while 'falshood' may mean either deliberate deceit or simple contrariness to the facts. One

1. The modern differentiation between 'thrash' (striking in general, and especially in punishment) and 'thresh' (specifically the action of an agricultural flail) was not current in Spenser's time; 'thresh' would have been the normal word for all these senses. See *OED* entry for 'thrash'.

implication of the phrase 'thresht out falshood', therefore, is that the vice of deceit is being punished. But when the line continues, to reveal the balancing phrase 'and did truth vnfold', we tend to reinterpret 'thresht out falshood' reciprocally, as the revelation of untruth. The action of the flail is not now to punish but to separate fact from fiction.

The difficulty with this latter function is that it is not substantiated by any subsequent narrative action. This is not surprising, since the only connection between threshing and judgement is an analogical relationship. Though Spenser is careful to mention that Talus can 'reueale/ All hidden crimes' as well as 'inflict most grieuous punishment' (FQ V.xii.26.5-6, 9), this is never associated with any narrative use of the flail. After his initial description, Talus' actions are never again identified with threshing - although at one point the effect of his flail appears to resemble that of the wind winnowing wheat:

...that yron man
With his huge flaile began to lay about,
From whose sterne presence they diffused ran,
Like scattered chaffe, the which the wind away doth fan.
V.xi.47.6-9

Here, even though the image of God separating the wheat from the chaff is evoked, the analogy with judgement is not enforced: there is no indication that anything other than chaff is produced by the action of the flail, which is used simply to punish, not to exercise discrimination. Even so, for readers who are aware of the flail's iconographical significance, its association with judgement cannot be ignored. The allusion having been made, the Baptist's apocalyptic image is too well known for it not to be a constant presence as we

read of Talus' inescapable flail, especially in a Book whose subject is Justice.

The dual significance of the flail tends to blur the distinction between the assignment of guilt and the punishment that follows it. In Book V this iconographical ambiguity is mirrored by Talus' chief moral limitation - his inability to show mercy. Like an embodiment of the Old Law, Talus continues to afflict wrongdoers until they are totally destroyed, unless he is restrained:¹

...when she saw the heapes, which he did make,
Of slaughtred carkasses, her heart did quake
For very ruth, which did it almost rive,
That she his fury willed him to slake:
For else he sure had left not one alive...

V.vii.36.4-8

...Artegall seeing his cruell deed,
Commaunded him from slaughter to recoyle...

V.xi.65.6-7

...Artegall seeing him so to rage,
Willd him to stay, and signe of truce did make...

V.xii.8.1-2

The narrative (that is, purely punitive) use of the flail shows the limitations of power as a component of the virtue of Justice. Power may be a prerequisite, as Spenser insists,² but it can be abused for evil,³ and even its use in the cause of Justice must be based on principles other than simple knowledge of guilt or innocence.

1. Compare the incident in *The Pilgrim's Progress* in which Christ restrains Moses from punishing Faithful; Moses 'spareth none, neither knoweth he how to shew mercy to those that transgress his Law'. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. J.B. Wharey, second edition rev. R. Sharrock (O.U.P., 1960), p.71.

2. See *FQ* V.iv.1.9.

3. See *FQ* V.ii.19 and *FQ* V.viii.20.4-5.

Mercy should intervene between judgement and punishment: and for a figure whose main limitation is an ignorance of mercy, an iconographical attribute which confuses judgement and punishment is peculiarly fitting. The distinction between the implied analogy of the flail, which indicates authoritative judgement of guilt and innocence, and its narrative use as an instrument of unlimited punishment, which so far from being authoritative must be restrained by mercy, makes it an appropriately ambiguous symbol of Talus' power, and indicates Spenser's ambivalent attitude towards it.

2. Emblematic wit

In the Introduction to this thesis we referred to what Michael Murrin has called the absurdity principle - the ancient tradition that allegory can be recognised by the inconsistency or ridiculousness of its surface narrative. One way in which this principle may be manifested is in the use of purely analogical iconography - that is, iconography in which an object and a quality are linked solely by an analogical relationship, rather than by any shared attributes or general semantic affinity. The scales of Justice and Hope's anchor are examples of this: their appearance in a narrative is likely to cause just the sort of dislocation of the literal sense which the absurdity principle describes, forcing the reader to seek other meanings. The exemplification of Old Age by an old man, by contrast, may not be recognised as iconographic at all in an extended narrative. Narrative is after all an exemplary medium.

In the narrative environment of *The Faerie Queene* iconographically significant objects sometimes seem to be independent of such exemplary vehicles as plot, appearing only when their analogical meaning becomes relevant, and disappearing when that relevance ceases. In this way, a static, emblematic sense can be given to iconographically loaded descriptions.

A good example is the opening description of Una:

A louely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Vpon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
Vnder a vele, that wimpled was full low,
And ouer all a blacke stole she did throw,
As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
And heauie sat vpon her palfrey slow:
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad.

I.1.4

This strange picture, coming as it does immediately after the account of Redcross, with its reference to the Christian armour of Paul's letter to the Ephesians¹ and its teasing hints about the knight's identity, encourages us to read Una's description in an iconographical light, easily attaching meaning to her veil and black stole, the lamb which follows her, and the lowly ass she rides. From this we gather the associations of innocence, sacrifice, humility and mourning that are traditional to these objects and creatures, using iconography as a sort of shorthand to glean Una's nature and situation. Even Una's sadness becomes largely a matter for interpretation: in a description such as this a reference to 'some hidden

1. An allusion pointed out by Spenser himself in the Letter to Raleigh - see Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London and New York: Longman, 1977), pp.737-38 (p.738). Compare Ephesians 6.11-17.

care' is an exegetical challenge. A empathetic boundary is drawn around the figure of Una, momentarily denying her any literal history or movement or feeling, subordinating these things to their analogical meaning.

The allegorical point having been made, however, Una's iconographical impedimenta become less relevant to the narrative. Hence, as I mentioned in the Introduction, the lamb is never heard of again after *FQ* I.1.5; while the 'lowly Asse' transforms itself by the stanza's seventh line into a palfrey, the conventional lady's mount of medieval romance.

This loss of iconographical potency finds a parallel later in the poem with the story of Florimell's girdle. At *FQ* IV.v.16 the False Florimell is awarded the girdle as a prize for her beauty; but the virtue of the girdle is such that it can only be worn by chaste women, and she is unable to keep it tied about her waist. Yet in the following Book, when the False Florimell finally melts away, we read that nothing remains of her 'But th'emptie girdle, which about her wast was wrought' (*FQ* V.iii.24.9). The visual effect overwhelms both narrative and iconographical consistency.

The description of Ate at the beginning of Book IV is also relevant here. Having briefly introduced her to the narrative as a companion of Duessa, Spenser gives a long allegorical account of Ate's dwelling place, genealogy and appearance. The physical description stresses her lop-sidedness, symbolic of the disharmony she (literally) embodies.

Her face most fowle and filthy was to see,
With squinted eyes contrarie wayes intended,
And loathly mouth, vnmeete a mouth to bee,
That nought but gall and venim comprehended,
And wicked wordes that God and man offended:

Her lying tongue was in two parts diuided,
And both the parts did speake, and both contended;
And as her tongue, so was her hart discided,
That neuer thoght one thing, but doubly stil was guided.

Als as she double spake, so heard she double,
With matchlesse eares deformed and distort,
Fild with false rumors and seditious trouble,
Bred in assemblies of the vulgar sort,
That still are led with euey light report.
And as her eares so eke her feet were odde,
And much vnlike, th'one long, the other short,
And both misplast; that when th'one forward yode,
The other backe retired, and contrarie trode.

IV.1.27-8

Much of this passage might describe a real woman, albeit a hideously ugly one. The filthy face, the squinting eyes, the different sizes of ears and feet, these are not beyond the bounds of nature. But Ate's divided tongue, which says contrary things at the same time, and even her way of walking (which, if tried literally, would result in her falling over) do not seem reconcilable with the way she acts and is treated in the narrative which follows. Certainly she is quite capable of speaking with one voice when slandering Britomart to Scudamour at *FQ* IV.1.47.

In fact the reader more or less unconsciously ignores these absurder (and hence more obviously metaphorical) details when Spenser returns to the main narrative - we recognize that this is a different, less stringently allegorical environment, and accordingly modify what was in any case a very difficult mental image to sustain. The intriguing point here is the extent to which that image is modified - for it is not rejected entirely. The general description of Ate as ugly is preserved in what follows: Scudamour calls her a 'vile hag' (*FQ* IV.1.48.1), and at *FQ* IV.1.18.7 she is distinguished from Duessa in not having disguised her ugliness: 'such as she was, she plaine did

shew'. But this image is never allowed to stabilise visually: we flit between two mental pictures, one of an ugly but anatomically possible hag, the other of an analogically based being whose physical absurdities cannot be imagined in action. Appropriately, Ate's iconographic description never quite harmonises with its narrative context; but the potential of narrative to distort and reshape an initial iconographic statement is clear enough.

Iconographically significant objects can disappear, or lose their significance, with disconcerting ease - but they can appear from nowhere just as easily. The account of Occasion at *FQ* II.iv is a case in point. Paul Alpers has written sensitively (in terms I will not attempt to paraphrase) of the way in which a full iconographical description of Occasion is given only over an extended period, so that the reader is forced into an awareness of the interpretative process involved in reading the passage, a process which culminates in Occasion's being explicitly named by the Palmer (*FQ* II.iv.10.9).¹ Later in the same episode, after the Palmer has revealed Occasion's particular role in inspiring fury (*FQ* II.iv.44.2), her resemblance to the Furies of classical literature (always one of the possible identifications competing in her initial description) is completed by the acquisition of

a flaming fire brond,
Which she in *Stygian* lake, ay burning bright,
Had kindled...

II.v.22.6-8

1. Paul Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1967), pp.209-14.

Spenser does not find it necessary to give any account of how Occasion comes by this object, which she certainly was not carrying before - in Canto iv it is ordinary stones, not firebrands, that she hands to Furor (FQ II.iv.5.5). The very presence of such conventional, iconographically-based figures as Occasion, with her highly meaningful forelock, creates an environment in which iconographic elements can be introduced without the establishment of a 'probable' narrative cause. Thus when Guyon finds it necessary to secure Occasion and Furor with 'an yron lock', 'a stake', 'an yron racke' and a 'hundred yron chaines' (FQ II.iv.12-15), the poet makes no attempt to suggest the source of these items - they are all miraculously ready to hand.' Indeed, the effectiveness of this passage lies largely in the fact that the extravagance of the liberty Spenser takes with normal narrative practice mirrors the extravagance of the precautions needed to prevent Furor's release. But it is also true in general that where iconographical figures are prominent in a narrative, such narrative considerations as probability, cause and effect tend to lose their domination of our response. Though the specific items in Guyon's collection of hardware may have no individual iconographic significance, this does not make us any more insistent in demanding to know their provenance: we recognise that collectively they are allegorical, inasmuch as the sheer scale of the assemblage tells us something about how hard a passion fury is to restrain.

1. A point also noted by Michael Murrin, in *The Allegorical Epic; Essays in Its Rise and Decline* (Chicago: Chicago U.P., 1980), pp.144-45. Also relevant here is Murrin's *The Veil of Allegory; Some Notes Toward a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago U.P., 1969), pp.141-43.

One of the consequences of introducing such anomalies into the narrative is that they affect our ability to *visualise* narrative events. I have already mentioned this in connection with Ate: it is impossible to imagine her as she is described, and yet the description we are given inhibits us from imagining her any other way. Similarly with Guyon's equipment: the nature of the text is such that we simply do not ask ourselves where the lock and stake and chains come from, hence we do not visualise the moment of their acquisition.

Iconography, with its affinity for discrete, emblematic images, tends to create such lacunae in our visual account of the text. In the Mask of Cupid, the figure of Fear is first described running away from the sound of his own armour, then in the next stanza (when he is no longer the centre of allegorical interest) he is said to be walking 'in rancke' with Hope (FQ III.xii.13.2). But we do not visualise him suddenly stopping and resuming an orderly pace - rather, we skip from one image to the other without any intervening rationalisation.

Again, consider the description of the trophies on the walls of Ate's cave:

And all within the riuen walls were hung
With ragged monuments of times forepast,
All which the sad effects of discord sung:
There were rent robes, and broken scepters plast,
Altars defyl'd, and holy things defast,
Disshiuered speares, and shields ytorne in twaine,
Great cities ransackt, and strong castles rast,
Nations captiued, and huge armies slaine:
Of all which ruines there some relicks did remaine.

IV.i.21

This stanza uses the figure of *auxesis* - a list of items, gradually increasing in magnitude to provide a climactic effect. The description starts by implying that the objects are displayed within Ate's

house, and indeed the first few items - 'rent robes', 'broken scepters' and so on - can easily be imagined hung as trophies of discord. But once we come to 'Great cities ransackt' and 'strong castles rast', we no longer attempt to picture them suspended for display; rather, we contemplate the effects of discord in the world outside Ate's den. The shift from the literal setting may not even be noticed, however, since it is camouflaged in the orderly progression of the auxesis. Only in the final line are we returned to Ate's house with a bathetic revision of the stanza's opening statement: it is not the cities and armies and nations which are hung on the wall, merely relics from their ruin. The effect of this is not to reassure us that our visualisation of the passage has been consistent, however, but by its own inconsistency with the opening of the stanza to alert us to the fact that we have been led away from the original narrative setting.

This sort of manipulation of the visual sense gives the narrative a surreal, dreamlike quality. Indeed, the traditional view of dreams as purveyors of hidden meanings - as a sort of allegory, in fact - may well derive in part from such distortions, which by a psychological (as opposed to literary) application of the absurdity principle might be taken to indicate the presence of arcane matter.¹ It is certainly

1. It is worth noting that when Freud drew an analogy between the language of dreams and the system of Egyptian hieroglyphs, he not only described them in terms very similar to those used by Quintilian to define 'mixed allegory' (see p.36 above), but found that they exhibited just the dislocations and ambiguities which we have claimed to be inherent in that mode: 'In both cases there are certain elements which are not intended to be interpreted (or read, as the case may be) but are only designed to serve as "determinatives", that is to establish the meaning of some other element. The ambiguity of various elements of dreams finds a parallel in these ancient systems of writing; and so too does the omission of various relations, which have in both cases to be supplied from the context.' Sigmund Freud, *The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest* (1913), in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey et al (London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1966), XIII, 163-90 (p.177).

no accident that so many allegories have been written as dream visions - in both dreams and allegory, the normal associations of cause and effect, of time and space, are only provisionally enforced. Hence the dreamer in *Pearl* can, from the same vantage point, see both the walls of the New Jerusalem and the expressions of the participants in a procession taking place within the walls - a fact by which he seems unbemused.¹ In *The Pilgrim's Progress* the same principle allows a temporal liberty to be taken in the Interpreter's house, when Christian is shown two brothers, one named Passion, the other Patience:

Then I saw that one came to Passion, and brought him a bag of treasure, and poured it down at his feet; the which he took up, and rejoiced therein, and withal laughed Patience to scorn. But I beheld but awhile, and he had lavished all away, and had nothing left him but rags.²

Coleridge commented on this passage in the margin of his copy:

One of the not many instances of a faulty allegory in P.Pr. - i.e. that it is no allegory - The beholding *but awhile* and the change into "nothing but rags", is not legitimately imaginable. A longer time & more Interlinks are requisite.³

Coleridge ignores, in the first place, a certain felicity which derives from this compression of time into what is presumably for Christian only a few minutes. Just as the exotically large amount of equipment needed by Guyon to tame Furor was highlighted by the

1. See *Pearl*, ll.1033-44, 1093-1109.

2. Bunyan, p.31.

3. *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, XII, ed. G. Whalley (Princeton and London; Princeton U.P. and Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp.811-12.

narrative liberty necessary to procure it, so here again the nature of the narrative distortion is such that it reinforces the point of the passage - that the time spent in possession of mere worldly goods is all too brief. A more general - and a more obvious - objection to his remarks, however, is that the sort of discrepancy to which he takes exception, though it would certainly be out of place in some kinds of fiction, is quite plausible in the relation of a dream, where distortions of time and space are commonplace.

I suggest that the use of analogically based iconography tends to disrupt normal narrative conventions, by introducing 'absurd' effects such as those we have described above. At the same time, the narrative context of these iconographical elements means that they too are unstable, appearing or disappearing, gaining or losing significance, according to the exigencies of the plot. Iconography continually pulls towards an environment which is static and emblematic, and hence is fundamentally antipathetic to the development of narrative.

This opposition between narrative exposition and the construction of emblematic images can be used to witty effect, wrongfooting the reader by inserting into isolated, emblematic descriptions details which are inappropriately literal, and which remind us of the narrative world beyond the emblem. The description of Malengin provides a minor example:

And in his hand an huge long staffe he held,
Whose top was arm'd with many an yron hooke,
Fit to catch hold of all that he could weld,
Or in the compasse of his clouches tooke;
And euer round about he cast his looke.
Als at his backe a great wyde net he bore,
With which he seldome fished at the brooke,

But vsd to fish for fooles on the dry shore,
Of which he in fair weather wont to take great store.

V.ix.11

The iconographical propriety of portraying Malengin (whom the Canto's Argument has identified as 'Guyle' (FQ V.ix.Arg.1)) as an angler with gaff and net is easily perceived, and we read the image analogically, understanding his piscatory attributes through their analogy to his practice as a deceiver.' The line 'With which he seldome fished at the brooke' comes unexpectedly in this context - it seems too earnestly concerned to provide a clarification of which we stand in no need. In its superfluous insistence that we should not imagine the net to have only literal significance the line is partly humorous; but by raising the possibility that we might have seen the net as a literal tool Spenser seems to question whether what we are reading is emblematic at all. Thus we are uncertain how literally to read the line which follows, offered as a true account of the net's use. Does Malengin literally fish for fools, or will this language be revealed as a metaphor applicable only within the confines of the emblem? In fact, Malengin does use the net to catch the maiden whom Artegall and Arthur set as bait (FQ V.ix.14). But the general point is that literal comments inside an emblematic description tend to destabilise it, engendering an uncertainty as to the border between the emblem and the surrounding fiction.

The effect here derives from a single line, but emblematic description and narrative action can be involved in witty interplay

1. Ripa has a similar figure - a shaggy man, with a net and hooks - under the title 'Inganno'. See Aptekar, pp.129-31.

over quite extensive passages - the analogical meanings shifting to adapt to new narrative situations, the narrative situation illustrating the emblematic imagery. As an example of this, we may consider Scudamour's visit to Care's house. *FQ* IV.v finds Scudamour at a low ebb, racked with the fear that Amoret has been unfaithful to him - a seed of doubt sown by Ate (*FQ* IV.1.47-49). He and Glauce are seeking shelter for the night, when they see a nearby cottage, belonging to a blacksmith. Although the Argument to the Canto does promise a visit to Care's house (*FQ* IV.v.Arg.3-4), at this point the identity of the smith has not been explicitly revealed. As Scudamour and Glauce enter, the narrative is suspended for a description of the smith, who

...was to weet a wretched wearish elfe,
With hollow eyes and rawbone cheekes forspent,
As if he had in prison long bene pent:
Full blacke and griesly did his face appeare,
Besmeard with smoke that nigh his eye-sight blent;
With rugged beard, and hoarie shagged heare,
The which he neuer wont to combe, or comely sheare.

Rude was his garment, and to rags all rent,
Ne better had he, ne for better cared:
With blistred hands emongst the cinders brent,
And fingers filthie, with long nayles vnpared,
Right fit to rend the food, on which he fared.
His name was Care; a blacksmith by his trade,
That neither day nor night from working spared,
But to small purpose yron wedges made;
Those be vnquiet thoughts, that carefull minds inuade.

IV.v.34.3-35.9

The identification of the smith as Care at *FQ* IV.v.35.6 casts an explanatory light over much of the preceding description. Care appears as the very type of the care-worn man, who, weighed down by some overwhelming care, is paradoxically careless of his appearance and health. In this he mirrors Scudamour's own obsessive state. As

an emblem this description is primarily exemplary, or, in Ripa's terminology, 'contingent'.

In the lines after the identification of Care the emphasis of the account changes. The poet turns from visual description to information about the purpose of Care's activity; the exemplary tone is displaced by analogical commentary, with the stanza being completed by (what is a highly unusual feature in Spenserian description)² a frankly interpretative authorial comment, linking the smith's products to 'vnquiet thoughts'. This gloss confirms the analogical nature of the account, acting like the 'word' of an emblem. Care previously seemed to exemplify the state of the care-worn man, but we are now encouraged to alter our view of his initial description. Where we had thought of his unkempt appearance as deriving from his 'carefull' state, it now seems to be a result of his continual work at the forge, which leaves him no time to rest or maintain his appearance.

But here there is an ambiguity in the terms of the analogy. We know that Care ceaselessly produces 'vnquiet thoughts': but is this because he represents a care-worn person like Scudamour, who is in his jealousy similarly productive; or is it that Care is care in the abstract, the daemonic agent (to use Angus Fletcher's habitual term)³ of all care, and therefore Scudamour's tormentor? The familiar

1. It is worth pointing out, though, that Care's suitability to reflect Scudamour's jealousy lies partly in the fact that, as a smith, he is also a type of the god Vulcan. Where Vulcan was cuckolded by Venus and Mars, Scudamour believes that he too has been betrayed, and by a couple whose names - *Amoret* and *Britomart* - suggest their connection with the deities of love and war.

2. Though compare *FQ* IV.1.20.9, 25.5.

3. See Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1964), pp.25-69.

problem of ontological status here becomes a problem of motivation. What drives Care to make these wedges - care or evil intent? This question touches on a fundamental issue in allegory, to be addressed in detail in the next chapter. For now, it is enough to notice that the ambiguity results from the dual emphasis in Care's description, first on his emaciated and unkempt appearance, and then on his analogical function.

The poet now turns to Care's assistants:

In which his worke he had sixe seruants prest,
About the Andvile standing euermore,
With huge great hammers, that did neuer rest
From heaping stroakes, which thereon soused sore;
All sixe strong groomes, but one then other more;
For by degrees they all were disagreed;
So likewise did the hammers which they bore,
Like belles in greatnesse orderly succeed,
That he which was the last, the first did farre exceede.

IV. v. 36

These lines elaborate the theme of care, but they do not continue the analogy introduced in the previous stanza. The setting of that analogy is retained, but its terms are rearranged to produce a new set of relationships. In the previous stanza, for instance, the 'iron wedges' are worrying thoughts which invade 'carefull minds'. The 'wedge' image suggests the way in which small worries can develop into larger ones. Now, however, the products of the forge are no longer mentioned, and it is the assistants themselves who grow in size, as if it were *their* progression which were analogous to the progress of care.¹ This shift enables our attention to be centred on the increas-

1. As William Nelson has pointed out, the six smiths also share a more arcane symbolism, alluding to the story of Pythagoras' discovery of the principles of musical harmony. See William Nelson, *The Poetry of Spenser: a study* (New York and London: Columbia U.P., 1963), p.250.

ing strength with which the anvil is struck, a force which in the case of the final (and largest) of Care's servants is more than human:

So dreadfully he did the anduile beat,
That seem'd to dust he shortly would it driue:
So huge his hammer and so fierce his heat,
That seem'd a rocke of Diamond it could riue,
And rend a sunder quite, if he thereto list striue.

IV.v.37.5-9

At this point the analogy between the 'yron wedges' and 'vnquiet thoughts' has become completely subordinated to a new relation, in which it is the action of the smiths in striking the anvil which is analogous to care. Just as Care's servant strikes the anvil till it seems that he will drive it into dust, so worry will beat unceasingly in 'carefull minds', which, like Scudamour's, are 'gauld and grieu'd ... night and day' (FQ IV.v.31.8).¹ The particular propriety of this image for a jealous mind has been elucidated by John Steadman, who notes that 'martello' or 'martello d'amore' (hammer of love) was a contemporary Italian idiom for jealousy.²

When the narrative resumes, and Scudamour attempts to go to sleep, this analogy is literalised in the actions of the smiths:

And if by fortune any litle nap
Vpon his heauie eye-lids chaunst to fall,
Eftsoones one of those villeins him did rap
Vpon his headpeece with his yron mall;
That he was soone awaked therewithall,

-
1. Compare FQ IV.V,35,7. Richard Hooker uses a similar metaphor for the ceaseless workings of the conscious mind upon the imagination: 'On this anvil it ceaseth not day and night to strike, by means whereof... the very thoughts and cogitations of man's mind... bewray themselves'. Richard Hooker, *The Works*, ed. Keble, Church and Paget (Oxford: 1888), II, pp.323-24, cited D.J. Gordon, *The Renaissance Imagination; Essays and Lectures by D.J. Gordon*, coll. and ed. Stephen Orgel (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: California U.P., 1975), p.120.
 2. John M. Steadman, 'Spenser's House of Care: A Reinterpretation', *SRen.*, 7 (1960), 207-33, p.208.

And lightly started vp as one affrayd;
Or as if one him suddenly did call.

IV. v. 42. 1-7

By making the smiths literally hit Scudamour's head, Spenser provides a gloss on their previous activity. Here again, however, the terms of the allegorical environment have not remained static. As well as being analogous to the general action of 'vnquiet thoughts' upon 'carefull minds', the smiths' assaults reproduce a specific experience often undergone by worried people, who do indeed suddenly wake up as if someone had called them. To assign the cause of this to a blow from the 'mall' of one of Care's grooms is to give a witty explanation of a real physiological phenomenon, as well as to illustrate an analogy.

This theme is elaborated with the intervention of Care himself, who strikes when Scudamour finally does get to sleep:

With that, the wicked carle the maister Smith
A paire of redwhot yron tongs did take
Out of the burning cinders, and therewith
Vnder his side him nipt, that forst to wake,
He felt his hart for very paine to quake...

IV. v. 44. 1-5

Care's tongs produce literally what is one of the most enduring metaphors associated with frustrated lovers - an aching heart. Once more the terms of the analogy of care have changed - and with the terms, the literal characteristics of Care and his assistants, who are now portrayed as unambiguously malicious, very different from the workaholics initially found by Scudamour, who 'for nought would from their worke refraine' (FQ IV. v. 38.5). But this inconsistency is hardly noticed, still less objected to, for the effect of the entire passage lies precisely in the exuberant facility with which the

original emblematic representation of Care is altered to accommodate the changing requirements of an extended narrative, by constantly juggling the same set of basic terms (smith, anvil, hammer, wedges, tongs) in a series of subtly different relations.

When Care pinches Scudamour the knight once again starts up, seeking revenge

On him, the which his quiet slomber brake:
Yet looking round about him none could see;
Yet did the smart remaine, though he himselfe did flee.

IV.v.44.7-9

The sudden inability to find the smith in what has until now been represented as an uncomfortably confined space imparts a surreal quality to the house of Care, suggesting that the whole edifice may have disappeared like one of the nightmares produced by Scudamour's 'ydle brain' (FQ IV.v.43.7). Certainly, although Scudamour spends the rest of the night in 'disquiet and hartfretting payne' (FQ IV.v.45.1), the poem makes no further mention either of the house or its inhabitants. The ease with which this suggestion of the house's metaphorical nature is made is an indication of the flexibility of interpretation with which we read the passage. The literal sense can be made the basis of a metaphor, metaphors can at any moment be literalised: and it is all done with an improvisational skill which is truly exhilarating.

Nor is this account by any means exhaustive. Other analogies of care can be found in the sounds which fill the cramped house. To begin with, when Scudamour and Glauce approach the cottage, they hear 'many yron hammers beating ranke,/ And answering their wearie turnes around' (FQ IV.v.33.7-8). In the context of Scudamour's obsessive

jealousy of Britomart, the weary echoing of the hammers suggests the way in which thoughts trace and retrace their own ground in the jealous mind. A little later, we find that the forge is kept alight by bellows which

blew amaine,
Like to the Northren winde, that none could heare:
Those *Pensifenesse* did moue; and *Sighes* the bellows weare.
IV.v.38.7-9

The analogy here between the action of a man working bellows and the action of pensiveness in producing sighs, and the earlier analogy between the echoing of hammer blows and the constant doubling back upon themselves of worried thoughts, each involves a literal consequence which is not central to the analogical relation: the production of loud noise. But this now becomes the ground of a further analogy, as the sound of the hammers and the bellows combine with the howling of dogs and the screeching of an owl to keep Scudamour awake, thus providing a literal analogue for his 'vnquiet' thoughts.

This elevation of peripheral literal features to new analogical significance may be compared with the similar technique used to describe Fear in the Mask of Cupid:

Next him was *Feare*, all arm'd from top to toe,
Yet thought himselfe not safe enough thereby,
But feard each shadow mouing to and fro,
And his owne armes when glittering he did spy,
Or clashing heard, he fast away did fly,
As ashes pale of hew, and wingyheeld...

III.xii.12.1-6

Fear is literally fearful, and in this sense his armour has an obvious narrative justification: he uses it to protect himself. And yet in the context of the Mask of Cupid the armour also has an ana-

logical meaning: it suggests the protective measures adopted by the insecure lover, an outward confidence and pretence to invulnerability. In either case, it is the armour's protective function which is central to the initial emblem. However, Spenser picks on what should be a peripheral or 'contingent' aspect of wearing armour - the fact that it makes a clashing sound as one moves - to provide the ground of a new analogical relation. Far from affording him comfort or composure, the armour only adds to Fear's insecurity, for the sight and noise of it is enough to send him scurrying - a vicious circle of inhibition, bluster and embarrassment that encapsulates the introverted and obsessive state embodied in the Mask.

The relationship between emblem and narrative becomes especially problematical in Spenser's large, emblematic set-pieces. In these, the main narrative may be suspended for an extended period, while a substantial body of emblematic writing intervenes, with its own structural organisation and its own style of concentrated iconographical symbolism. Yet the apparent separation of these passages can be called into doubt by the introduction of non-emblematic features, confusing the reader as to how to approach the text - as an independent body of emblematic writing, or as part of a larger narrative.

At *FQ* I.iv the story of Redcross' visit to the house of Lucifera is interrupted by an extended iconographical *tour de force* with little or no narrative motivation - the procession of the Seven Deadly Sins. The six counsellors of Lucifera have not appeared before (at least in such abundantly corporeal form), nor will they again. Their one contribution to the narrative is to effect Lucifera's exit in her state

coach. Their sudden introduction seems as capricious and arbitrary as Lucifera's whims themselves:

Suddein vpriseth from her stately place
The royall Dame, and for her coche doth call...

I.iv.16.1-2

It is *via* the description of Lucifera's coach that Spenser finds an opportunity to introduce his subject, but this narrow isthmus of a narrative cause is soon forgotten in the reading, as the poet settles down to a leisurely and highly stylised analysis of each Sin in turn.

The descriptions of the Sins are organised in such a way as to seal them off from any forward movement in the narrative. The repetition of the descriptive formula lulls rather than stimulates the expectation of such movement: three stanzas are allotted for each figure, detailing the beast he rides, his appearance and clothes, an object he carries, his style of life and a disease he suffers from, and concluding with a summary dismissal. This pattern is rigidly adhered to, and conditions the response of the reader, who becomes in the end more immediately interested in which synonym for 'company' (FQ I.iv.20.9), 'crew' (FQ I.iv.23.9), or 'traine' (FQ I.iv.26.9) the poet's ingenuity will provide to finish his account of the present Vice than with the furthering of Redcross' fortunes.

Passages such as this seem to be insulated against too great an involvement with narrative concerns. Each set of three stanzas forms a small essay on a particular vice, and is linked to the narrative of which it is an enclave primarily by its theme - the pulling of the coach being largely a formal device to enable this sort of sequential description. Nevertheless, at times Spenser upsets this state of affairs by insisting on the reality of the procession - thus, for

instance, he takes advantage of the fact that Envy rides directly behind Avarice to arrange a narrative demonstration of his vice:

Still as he rode, he gnasht his teeth, to see
Those heapes of gold with griple Couetyse,
And grudged at the great felicitie
Of proud *Lucifera*, and his owne companie.

I.iv.31.6-9

Similarly, in the Mask of Cupid Fear displays terror of his neighbour Daunger, and Dissemblance laughs at scowling Suspect, who in turn lowers at her (FQ III.xii.12, 15). These touches surprise our expectation. Having been prepared for a fundamentally emblematic passage in which such relationships as there are between the different figures will be based on order or relative position, matters for analogical interpretation, we find in these narrative insertions an unpredictable, improvisational quality.

At several points Spenser informs us of the habits and motivation of the Sins, matters which could not be known from their external appearance. Thus we learn of Lechery's success with the ladies, and of Wrath's occasional repentance (FQ I.iv.24-26, 34). In one way this sort of detail reinforces the isolated character of the description, cutting us off still more effectively from the narrative context of the Sins' procession by denying the perspective of those who are watching it in *Lucifera's* hall. However, to give the Sins a personal history is to force us to consider them outside the schematic setting of their allotted three stanzas, and hence to focus on their problematic ontology.

This is a widespread effect in Spenser's emblematic descriptions. The description of November in the Mutabilitie Cantos is a good example:

Next was *November*, he full grosse and fat,
As fed with lard, and that right well might seeme;
For, he had been a fattening hogs of late,
That yet his browes with sweat, did reek and steem,
And yet the season was full sharp and breem;
In planting eeke he took no small delight:
Whereon he rode, not easie was to deeme;
For it a dreadfull *Centaure* was in sight,
The seed of *Saturne*, and faire *Nais*, *Chiron* hight.

VII.vii.40

The description of the months shares the highly structured nature of the procession of Deadly Sins. The months appear in order, each associated with an appropriate agricultural task, and accompanied by a sign of the zodiac. This stylised arrangement belongs with an emblematic mode of description: the passage seems to be abstracted from particular time and place. Yet Spenser insists on including 'naturalistic' details: November has just been fattening hogs and is still sweating from his labour. Where has he come from? Where are these hogs kept? These questions are ones we cannot help but ask, even though we know at the same time that they cannot be answered in the emblematic terms of the procession of months. The situation is analogous to the incident of Guyon's temptation by a wailing maiden, mentioned in the last chapter.¹ There we were encouraged to ask the naturalistic question: what would have happened if Guyon had innocently gone to her aid? But the situation is not naturalistic, and because of this the question cannot be posed in this way - if Guyon had gone to her aid it would not have been an innocent act. In the description of November, as elsewhere, Spenser isolates a moment in which the worlds of particular action and of universal meaning may

1. See pp.95-96 above.

meet, and makes us conscious of the artificiality of such a conjunction.

A similar effect can be observed with regard to visualisation. I have said that we tend simply not to visualise narrative 'absurdities', but it is worth noting that there are occasions when the text forces us to do so. The procession of the months is again relevant here. Just as the parade of Deadly Sins had an ostensible narrative justification - the exit of Lucifera - so the account of the months is in principle part of a larger narrative. The months appear in response to the summons of Nature (FQ VII.vii.27.8-9), to whom they come in order, 'all riding' to their 'dew places' (FQ VII.vii.32.2, 43.9) on the creature whose zodiacal sign falls within their province. The idea of movement is therefore implicit in the narrative occasion for their appearance; though in practice the fiction of a moving procession is to a large extent a device to enable the months to be treated one by one, as if they were passing before a stationary point. Problems arise, however, in that not all the signs of the zodiac are creatures who may be ridden. One exception - with a simple solution - is the sign of Virgo, who appears with August: he 'rode... not, but led a louely Mayd/ Forth by the lilly hand' (FQ VII.vii.37.3-4). A more intractable case is January, the month associated with Aquarius:

Then came old *January*, wrapped well
In many weeds to keep the cold away;
Yet did he quake and quiuer like to quell,
And blowe his nayles to warme them if he may:
For, they were numbd with holding all the day
An hatchet keene, with which he felled wood,
And from the trees did lop the needlesse spray:
Vpon an huge great Earth-pot steane he stood;
From whose wide mouth, there flowed forth the Romane floud.

VII.vii.42

The suggestion that all the months are moving forward to their 'dew places' is more difficult to sustain here, since it is hard to see how the 'Earth-pot steane' can move of its own accord. The fiction breaks down, and we are forced to realise that the real structural principle of the passage lies in the formal arrangement of a group of emblematic descriptions, rather than in the continuance of a narrative. Yet we are not able to avoid visualising this image, which is the focus of the whole stanza. Do we see the pot gliding magically over the ground? Trundling on a cart? Stationary? We turn uncomfortably from one image to another, none of them in accordance with the contradictory demands of the text. The difficulty is compounded with the entrance of February, who is drawn in a wagon by the two fishes of the sign Pisces. These fish swim forward through the 'floud' flowing from January's 'steane': a detail which inescapably suggests their physical approach, and makes the isolated image of a stationary pot that much harder to sustain imaginatively. For if the pot is not moving, the fish must surely reach it, and what will happen when they do?

Naturalistic questions such as this are of course quite alien to the emblematic mode, in which each image should be treated as separate from those which surround it. John Bender puts the emblematic case well:

The places in *The Faerie Queene* tend to be set-pieces composed of medallions whose individual shapes are determined by what is represented within them. Moreover, the relationship of the discrete scenes to one another is more rhetorical than spatial, and the interstices of the galaxy of scenes that constitute a "place" are undefined and virtually blank.'

1. John B. Bender, *Spenser and Literary Pictorialism* (Princeton; Princeton U.P., 1972), p.136.

This is fine, as far as it goes - but my point is that this is an orthodoxy from which Spenser regularly departs, and that he does so precisely by defining those 'interstices' between supposedly discrete images which Bender claims are left undefined. Hence the emblematic nature of set-pieces like the processions of Sins and months is undermined by the introduction (at imaginatively awkward points) of explicit references to the spatial and narrative relations between the figures involved, or to the narrative occasions of the passages as a whole. That is why our immediate response to this sophisticated, artificial style of poetry is so often disconcertingly awkward, naïve, and literal. The inappropriate questions are also the inescapable ones.

CHAPTER 3

CHARACTER, MAGIC, AND METAMORPHOSIS.

Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

John Keats, *The Eve of St. Agnes*¹

1. Two Ovidian Approaches to Character

The question of character is easy to beg. Inevitably, perhaps, there being no alternative language available with which to speak of fictional figures, critics will succumb to stylistic convenience and write of these literary constructs as if they were real people, attributing to them emotions and desires and motives as freely as they might to their next-door neighbour. In one sense, indeed, this is a perfectly reasonable practice - to avoid it would require circumlocutions of elaborate inelegance. But when the point at hand is the nature of character itself, the matter becomes complicated.

If we think of character as an individual's distinguishing combination of traits and qualities, then we must surely picture it as being relatively constant, for if a particular set of traits and qualities is to be distinguished, enough of it must remain the same from one moment to the next for it to be recognisable. Any reader of

1. John Keats, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, ll.16-18, in *The Complete Poems*, ed. John Barnard (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p.312.

allegory is likely to ask at some time how the idea of character can be maintained when allegorical figures have such a marked tendency to act in ways that are dictated by the immediate didactic point, rather than making sense in terms of our previous impressions of their characters. In the face of such instability, on what basis does our confidence to make assertions about a particular figure's 'character' rest? As John Livingston Lowes feelingly puts it, 'Is anybody in the allegory at any given moment, what he is, or what he seems? And which in Heaven's name, we ask, is which?'

One possible solution has been proposed by Jan Karel Kouwenhoven, in his book *Apparent Narrative as Thematic Metaphor*.² Kouwenhoven is impatient (rightly, in my opinion) with those critics whose reading of Spenser veers randomly between analogical and exemplary interpretation: such readers 'steer an impossible middle course, allegorizing on and off in a most arbitrary fashion and tortuously reincorporating the meanings they come up with into the fiction'.³ His remedy is a drastic one - to remove the element of uncertainty by denying the validity of exemplary interpretation altogether. Kouwenhoven is concerned that we should take Spenser's description of his poem as a 'continued Allegory' quite literally - and in his view this means that no figures in the poem may be considered as having any exemplary sig-

1. John Livingston Lowes, 'The Pilgrim's Progress', in *Essays in Appreciation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936), pp.59-60, cited Carolynn Van Dyke, *The Fiction of Truth: Structures of Meaning in Narrative and Dramatic Allegory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1985), p.258.

2. Jan Karel Kouwenhoven, *Apparent Narrative as Thematic Metaphor: The Organization of The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

3. *ibid.*, p.30.

nificance. They 'do not exemplify what they represent: they symbolize it'.¹

If this insight were supported by the text it would certainly simplify the study of character, and of much else in *The Faerie Queene*. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Many of the poem's figures stubbornly persist in appearing to exemplify the qualities for which they stand. What is more, the text often compounds the offence by explicitly referring to them as doing so. Kouwenhoven admits that Spenser's figures are indeed to be found 'enacting' those qualities which they represent;² however, he would draw a distinction between enacting a quality and exemplifying it. What constitutes the distinction, apart from the necessity of Kouwenhoven's theory, is less clear. His only attempt at an answer (and it is an oblique one) is strangely circular - the poem's figures do not exemplify anything because they are not 'people'.³

This sets the tone for the series of question-begging procedures with which Kouwenhoven proceeds to amplify his argument. After the metamorphosis of Malbecco, for instance, we learn that 'Since such a transformation is logically impossible, Malbecco, and therefore the other characters in his episode too, must be personifications all along' (italics mine).⁴ In a discussion where the main point at issue is the status of Spenser's poem as a 'continued Allegory', this unsub-

1. *ibid.*, p.29.

2. *ibid.*, p.32.

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid.* See *FQ* III,x,54-60.

stantiated 'therefore' is purely mischievous. Even if the passage shows that Malbecco has always been a personification, this is a far cry from showing that the same is true of all the figures in the Malbecco episode. (Where does this designation of the 'episode' as an atomic unit of allegorical consistency come from, by the way?) But Kouwenhoven's case is far from convincing, even with regard to Malbecco himself. What, after all, is to stop us thinking that Malbecco has *become* a personification? Is that not exactly the reading which his physical transformation - to say nothing of his change of name from Malbecco to Gealosie - encourages? Kouwenhoven complains that 'such a transformation is logically impossible'. But there is nothing unusual in a narrative which relates logically impossible events - and as I shall argue in what follows, narratives involving magic find this trick easier than most.

Let us take another example from the same discussion. In considering the meeting of Arthur and Prays-desire in Alma's castle (FQ II.ix.36-39), Kouwenhoven is adamant that the reader must interpret the figures consistently: 'You cannot treat Prays-desire as a personification, which she undoubtedly is, without treating Arthur likewise: people do not converse with symbols.' But again, we must say that although real people may not converse with symbols, there is nothing to prevent Spenser or anyone else from writing a narrative in which their fictional characters do exactly that. Indeed, if we look four stanzas on, to the point in the narrative at which Guyon meets Shamefastnesse, we find that this is precisely the claim made by Alma:

1. *ibid.*, p.34 - and compare pp.121-22, p.134.

You shamefast are, but *Shamefastnesse* it self is shee.

II.ix.43.9

I agree that it is sloppy criticism to alternate between analogical and exemplary interpretation without any indication that one knows that this is what one is doing, or any awareness of the reasons why one is doing it. But the answer is not to contort oneself into a position in which this alternation no longer takes place (surely a doomed project, even if it were desirable), but rather to examine the rhetorical pressures which encourage or inhibit a particular sort of reading at any point in the poem. I suggest that such an approach is not only more practically useful (since it addresses the actual experience of readers, rather than sketching a dubious 'ideal'), but that it is more likely to reveal the rich complexity of *The Faerie Queene* than Kouwenhoven's Procrustean formula could ever hope - or even try - to do.

The answer to John Livingston Lowes, then, is that the decision as to whether a character 'is' or 'seems' at any one moment is only to be made in the context of an actual reading, and that this decision, and the confusion which prompts it, and the degree of certainty with which it is made, are all part of the vital experience of the poem, rather than a problem which can be overcome in some *a priori* fashion before one begins to read.

This sort of decision is not a phenomenon unique to allegory. Although the question of character may arise in allegory in a particularly noticeable form, the issue is inherent in all fiction. Novels which strive to give an impression of verisimilitude may nevertheless have 'themes' which the characters are made to serve, and between these more diffuse masters and the rigid allegorical imperative

lies perhaps not so much a sharp qualitative distinction as a gradual increase in the proportion and explicitness of allegorical elements. As Angus Fletcher writes, 'whether one thinks there is such a thing as pure storytelling, or only degrees of abstract thematic structure (Aristotle's *dianoia*) underlying every fiction, the main point is surely that in discussing literature generally we must be ready to discuss in almost any work at least a small degree of allegory.' A fictional character is no less fictional for being put in a 'naturalistic' setting. Certain genres attach more importance to the maintenance of the fictive illusion, but it is an illusion none the less.

For Jonathan Goldberg, the habitual shifting of figures from exemplary to analogical roles in *The Faerie Queene* makes it effectively impossible to read, since we are always denied the means to make even a tentative inference as to the text's meaning:

We witness textual transformations that disarm our abilities to make distinctions, to preserve the identities of characters, and to hold onto their meanings. Formalist criticism invites readers to take any moment in a text as definitive and exemplary; in this text, all moments are equally provisional. This text cannot be held to mean if we are to read the unreadable; what occurs textually conditions our understanding of theme. What are we to make of desire, how are we to understand the self, when those supposedly natural categories are revealed as textual creations?²

I would say that the very prominence of the 'textual transformations' to which Goldberg refers make it easier to read *The Faerie Queene* than is the case with more immediately accessible works. True,

-
1. Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1964), p.8.
 2. Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins U.P., 1981), p.88.

the supposedly natural categories of 'desire' and 'self' are textual creations, but this is not to say anything new about the nature of fiction, which has always been a matter of creating an illusion of reality. Where allegory, and *The Faerie Queene* in particular, differs from other genres is in the explicitness with which it admits its own artificiality, a fact which if anything seems likely to inhibit superficial misreading. While I agree with Goldberg as to the impossibility of definitive readings, this is not to say that provisional readings are without meaning. As A. Leigh Deneef has pointed out, to see all readings as provisional is not 'to concede to a pessimistic model of infinite regression or to plunge us into a Derridean void of absence'. On the contrary, it is the condition of life, the very seedbed of meaning, not its absence: 'the word means what we can make it mean... the word is both an opportunity of and an invitation to the making of meaning.' When one textual concern - the supposedly natural category of character - is affected by another - the unfolding of a series of actions which the reader is able to identify as analogous to some didactic point - then ambiguities will occur, and definitive interpretation will prove impossible; but this is no more reason to question the status of character as a product of the text than that of allegorical content. In fact, both have a provisional status, and exist only in the interaction of text and reader. In this chapter I shall be examining the nature of this interaction.

The first part of the thesis was devoted to a theoretical discussion of different 'levels' of allegory. We described what appeared

1. A. Leigh Deneef, *Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor* (Durham, N.C.: Duke U.P., 1982), p.176.

to be an impossibly wide conceptual gulf between the exemplary and analogical modes of writing. At the same time we maintained that these modes coexist, even that a single figure may at one or different times be subject to both sorts of interpretation. We have gone some way to give a historical explanation of these phenomena, and to show the ways in which the text accomodates and takes advantage of the contradictions they imply. But while we have been at pains to show that the account of Faerie presented in *The Faerie Queene* is not logically consistent, we have mentioned only in passing one principle which may provide Faerie with a means of resolving that inconsistency, and on its own terms. The startling juxtapositions of exemplary and analogical writing, the changes of direction which so abruptly undermine our confidence about plot and character, far from subverting our sense of Faerie as an imaginatively integrated location, actually enhance it. For Faerie, as its name implies, is a magical place, where wonders beyond ordinary experience must be expected. Faerie's rich unpredictability is the source of its variety - but is also its distinguishing mark. Where may we expect to find dragons and damsels in distress but in a story of Faerie? In what other locus do the magical and the supernatural appear so 'natural'? We have noted that many allegories take the form of dream visions, mimicking the lacunae and lack of probable sequence which characterise dreams, and so binding themselves less restrictively to the requirements of narrative consistency. In *The Faerie Queene* this function is served not by dream but by magic. In placing his poem in a setting which already has magical associations Spenser has made out of necessity one of the poem's chief virtues, its ability to awe the reader into wonder. In

this, at least, the much-vilified critics of the nineteenth century did not sell *The Faerie Queene* short. Spenser does present us with a world of marvels, of gorgeous panoramas. And, as Kathleen Williams insists, this adds to rather than detracts from our sense of the poem's coherence: 'The romance element... contributes to our sense of inwardness, of reality subjectively known, of facts which seem meaningless yet take shape within our minds as we live them.' The maintenance of illusion, which is the joint work of the storyteller and his audience, is a task much facilitated here by the terms of the illusion to be maintained, in which the textual transformations brought about by extra-literary (for example didactic) pressures may themselves be accommodated as magical or wondrous events in the narrative.

This interconnection of form and magic links *The Faerie Queene* with another poem which had an enormous influence on Spenser as on the rest of Elizabethan poetry - Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Particularly in its approach to character and identity, the *Metamorphoses* seems to foreshadow many of the concerns of allegorical poetry, and in this chapter I would like to examine Spenser's work through the perspective of the earlier poem.

In his recent book on the *Metamorphoses* Leonard Barkan has this to say about the function of metamorphosis in Ovid:

The universe is structured in layers - in this case divine, human and animal - and metamorphosis is the vehicle whereby individuals are transported among the layers.²

-
1. Kathleen Williams, *Spenser's Faerie Queene; The World of Glass* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p.xviii.
 2. Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh; Metamorphosis & the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1986), p.2.

Barkan is talking here about physical metamorphoses, from transformation into a cow to stellification and everything in between, but his language resembles that we have used to describe analogical 'levels'. In the *Metamorphoses* the means by which the different orders of being are linked is miraculous metamorphosis. Similarly, we have noted that *The Faerie Queene* maintains the integrity of its narrative illusion by making magic a component of its fictive universe, and allows the coexistence of analogical and exemplary elements to be expressed narratively in magical terms.

But the similarity runs deeper than this. The consistent delineation of character is, as we have seen, confessedly problematical for the allegorist, and Ovid's poem too inevitably addresses the question of identity, as Barkan says:

The experience of metamorphosis... raises essential questions about selfhood, typically for the first time. For identity, as soon as metamorphosis divorces it from corporeal shape, suddenly comes to be isolated as a thing in itself.'

The analogy between physical metamorphosis and transition from exemplary to analogical allegory should be clear enough. The sort of problem raised by Ovid's mythological treatment - 'Does it make sense to refer to that stone as "Niobe"?', and so on - finds its echo in the question of whether figures in allegory who are amenable to both analogical and exemplary interpretation can properly be said to have the same 'character' in both contexts.

1. *ibid.*, p.14.

In answer Ovid offers two solutions which are, it seems to me, virtually contradictory. Both have relevance to Spenser, however, and I shall consider them in turn.

First, there is a persistent idea in the *Metamorphoses* that in spite of any external transformation the 'essence' of a personality - the soul, to use a convenient term - survives, and even dictates the precise form of that transformation. A good example of this is the metamorphosis of the tyrant Lycaon into a wolf,¹ an event which seems to owe as much to the spontaneous eruption of Lycaon's true nature as to Jove's wrath. One more time I shall quote Barkan:

Jupiter does not produce the rabid wolf; the god merely hurls his thunderbolt, and Lycaon himself takes care of the rest because his own character is so intrinsically rabid and wolf-like from the start.²

Lycaon's change is not so much a loss of identity as a honing of it, a purification to essence. Echo, too, living entirely for and through another, eventually wastes away to nothing but her repetitious power of response.³

Ovid's 'spontaneous' metamorphoses (those in which divine agency is not explicitly invoked as the cause, though of course one is always at liberty to infer it) seldom exhibit such obvious propriety, but it is quite common for offended gods to mete out punishments designed to fit the criminal, where the transformed victim continues to behave char-

1. Ovid, *Shakespeare's Ovid; Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding (1567), ed. W.H.D. Rouse (1904) (London; Centaur Press, 1961), I 266-79. I consistently use Golding's translation and line numbering.

2. Barkan, p.25.

3. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III 489-97.

acteristically: hence the Pierides continue to chatter as magpies,¹ Arachne still spins,² and Alcmene's maid Galanthis, who as a weasel gives birth through her mouth because lies from her mouth helped a woman give birth, continues in the same house, 'free.../ as shee did before'.³

Physical metamorphoses are relatively rare in Spenser, but where they do occur they are usually of this 'appropriate' type. Lycaon's closest relative is the wicked Adicia in Book V. On learning of the Souldan's death, Adicia goes mad and runs into the woods:

There they doe say, that she transformed was
Into a Tygre, and that Tygres scath
In crueltie and outrage shee did pas,
To proue her surname true, that she imposed has.

V.viii.49.6-9

As with Lycaon, the emphasis is on the continuity of Adicia's cruel nature, even as a beast. Or rather, her nature leads her to *become* that beast - the change erupts from within herself. The role of magic here is to enforce a decorum between appearance and nature.

This can also be said of the transformation of Malbecco from jealous husband into the very person of Gealosie. Here, physical metamorphosis becomes the explicit means of crossing the void between exemplary and analogical representation. Malbecco, having lost both Hellenore and his fortune, hurls himself from a cliff in his mad fury, only to find that

1. *ibid.*, V 829-30.

2. *ibid.*, VI 74-181.

3. *ibid.*, IX 389-90.

...through long anguish and selfe-murdring thought
He was so wasted and forpined quight,
That all his substance was consum'd to nought,
And nothing left, but like an aery Spright,
That on the rockes he fell so flit and light,
That he thereby receiu'd no hurt at all...

III.x.57.1-6

Malbecco's manlike body seems to have atrophied, or been sloughed off, reducing him to his primary characteristic of jealousy. The phrase 'selfe-murdring thought' expresses this change, for although Malbecco's jealous thoughts have been the cause of his wasting away physically, they have also murdered his 'selfe', his identity as a man independent of his obsession. Eventually only jealousy itself is left, and this, in its cruel introspection, continues its own self-murder. Malbecco has in his long fall become a representative rather than an exemplar of jealousy. Deprived as he is of the two main objects of his passion, his money and his wife, his actions are now abstract and emblematic: instead of being jealous in any recognisable narrative way, the new Malbecco merely exhibits the restless anxiety of jealousy, as he fearfully watches a rock 'which euer and anon/Threates with huge ruine him to fall vpon' (FQ III.x.58.4-5). He loses even his human appearance, becoming a thing with 'crooked clawes' (FQ III.x.57.8), whose deformity grows in time so great that he forgets 'he was a man' (FQ III.x.60.9), distilled into the embodiment of his vice.

If Malbecco's experience corresponds to Lycaon's spontaneous metamorphosis, the appropriate but imposed transformations of Arachne, Galanthis and the rest find an equivalent in the enchantments of Acrasia. That Acrasia's former lovers are kept in the Bower in the form of monsters is first mentioned at FQ II.v:

[Acrasia] Does charme her louers, and the feeble sprighes
Can call out of the bodies of fraile wighes:
Whom then she does transforme to monstrous hewes,
And horribly misshapes with vgly sightes...

II.v.27.4-7

This is explicit enough, but the two inhabitants of the Bower described prior to *FQ* II.xii - Mordant and Cymochles - do not appear to have suffered any such physical debasement, however monstrous their lusts. True, in Mordant's case there is a transformation, but it applies to his powers of judgement rather than his bodily form - he is 'transformed from his former skill' (*FQ* II.i.54.4). And though real beasts are duly encountered by Guyon and the Palmer at *FQ* II.xii.39, this curious equivocation serves to remind the reader of the metaphorical propriety of the transformation. It comes as no surprise when, after Acrasia's capture, Guyon asks the Palmer, in effect, to interpret the monsters' significance: 'Then Guyon askt, what meant those beastes, which there did ly' (*FQ* II.xii.84.9). The Palmer's reply confirms that the basis of their transformation is the adaptation of their physical to their spiritual conditions. They are beasts because they are beastly:

Said he, These seeming beasts are men indeed,
Whom this Enchauntress hath transformed thus,
Whylome her louers, which her lusts did feed,
Now turned into figures hideous,
According to their mindes like monstruous.

II.xii.85.1-5

With Malbecco there had been an ontological shift from the exemplary to the analogical - he truly became Gealosie. In this case the narrative concern of Acrasia's enchantment predominates, and her lovers remain primarily men who have been transformed into a form

which is unnatural to them, if illustrative of their failings: 'These seeming beasts are men indeed'.

The Palmer follows his verbal interpretation by removing the spell with his staff and restoring the beasts' human form. Here as elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene* the distinguishing mark of beneficent magic is its capacity to reveal truth, particularly those truths concealed by evil enchantment. In Spenser the practitioners of magic are almost always placed in a definite moral perspective' which habitually defines their function. While evil enchantment deceives, disguises and conceals (Archimago, the witch of Book III and Acrasia being some of its exponents) the complementary function of good magic is to reveal enchantment and undo it. Hence Florimell's enchanted girdle exposes the False Florimell's unchastity at *FQ* IV.v; while the staff of the maleficent Genius of the Bower, which 'charmed semblants sly' (*FQ* II.xii.49.9), is matched against the virtue of the Palmer's staff, which can 'all charmes defeat' (*FQ* II.xii.40.3). Both sorts of magic may involve transformation, but, as becomes clear, the allegorical effect of such transformation is very different.

In an environment such as we have described for Faerie, where magic provides the narrative means for the integration of exemplary and analogical allegory, the undoing of magic can be associated with the interpretation, and undoing, of allegorical situations. The Palmer's reversal of Acrasia's spell achieves precisely this, removing the analogical element of the situation by destroying the correspondence

1. Stephen Barney claims that Cupid and Proteus, 'being gods', cannot be categorised either as white or black magicians. However, their individual actions certainly do not fall outside the ambit of moral interpretation. See Stephen A. Barney, *Allegories of History, Allegories of Love* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1979), p.277.

between the lovers' inner and outer states. Thus, to take away their outward beastliness is not to improve their nature: 'being men they did unmanly looke' (FQ II.xii.86.3).

Acrasia's lovers are disenchanted in more ways than one - none is glad of the restoration. The Palmer has done more than simply to explain the allegory. By using his staff to make the connection between animal form and the beastliness in men which it represents explicit he has destroyed the allegory altogether. What we are left with at the end of Book II is a naturalistic situation, where the 'hoggish mind' (FQ II.xii.87.8) of Grill inhabits a form that is 'naturall' (FQ II.xii.86.9). It is a neat manoeuvre by Spenser, and one that he executes not without humour, to allow the identification of enchantment and allegory to go so far that the breaking of one entails the interpretation and dismantling of the other.

Exegetes and revealers of truth are nothing new in romance; it is common for a hermit to be at hand to explain dreams or mysterious happenings. In *The Faerie Queene* his representatives include the hermit of Book VI, the priest of Isis, Merlin, and indeed the Palmer himself, all of whom are adept at interpreting allegorical events. But in using magic for this purpose the Palmer in effect makes the events interpret and unravel themselves. Just as the Elizabethan reader of allegory saw himself as stripping away the rind of fictional events to reveal a core of meaning, so the Palmer removes the outward appearance of Acrasia's beasts to reveal the intemperate men they signify allegorically.

So far our examination of metamorphosis in both Ovid and *The Faerie Queene* has been such as to suggest that, however disconcerting the transformations in themselves, there is some continuity of identity in those who undergo them. Magic, or one's own nature, may cause one to be shifted from one 'level' to another - in the case of Ovid, from human to divine, animal, vegetable, or mineral - but the distinguishing features of one's personality survive, manifesting themselves in ways appropriate to the new form - human or animal, exemplary or analogical. Ovid's Pythagoras, maintaining the immortality of the soul in different bodily forms, assumes that this correspondence holds:

And even as supple wax with ease receyveth fygures straunge,
And keepes not ay one shape, ne bydes assured ay from change,
And yit continueth alwayes wax in substaunce: So I say
The soule is ay the selfsame thing it was, and yit astray
It fleeteth intoo sundry shapes.'

In this imposition of coherence and rationality upon the flux of physical forms Pythagoras provides the basis for an optimistic view of the survival of 'character' which might usefully inform our reading of Spenserian metamorphoses, even when these involve shifts from exemplary to analogical allegory. Certainly, Spenser's few explicit cosmological statements in *The Faerie Queene* are such as to encourage the Pythagorean view of the soul's constancy.²

This, however, is only one side of the Ovidian equation. The *Metamorphoses*, for all the triumphalism of its ending, is a poem about change, not persistence. The sheer number of the metamorphoses

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV 188-92.

2. See *FQ* III.vi.37-38, *FQ* VII.vii.58.

related tends to leave us punchdrunk, undermining our sense of such transformations as rare and miraculous events, disorientating our idea of normality. The narrative structure of the poem reflects this, its serendipitous wanderings denying our expectation of set beginnings and conclusions. More, the *Metamorphoses* works within no consistent ethical framework. While some of those who undergo metamorphosis do so as a punishment, reward or mercy, others are transformed because of a chance action - Actaeon¹ and Dryope² are examples. The arbitrary effect on humanity of the Olympians' traditionally capricious loyalties and hatreds is emphasised in Ovid: his universe is an unpredictable place in which no certain rules for action can be inferred. Against the continuity and propriety we found in Lycaon's transformation may be set a large number of metamorphoses where no such decorum is apparent: there is nothing particularly bovine about Io,³ for instance, nor arboreal about Baucis and Philemon;⁴ Medusa's victims turn to stone not because the sight of her face triggers a latent tendency to stoniness, or literalises any characteristic of their own, but because of the properties of the face itself, which exert an influence external to the identity of its beholders.

Given that questions of identity and self are, as we have said, inevitably involved in metamorphosis, this lack of continuity becomes profoundly disturbing. Whereas with 'appropriate' metamorphoses one could at least perceive that the essence of the person was continued,

1. Ovid, *op.cit.*, III 205-208.

2. *ibid.*, IX 405-22.

3. *ibid.*, I 754-55.

4. *ibid.*, VIII 894-904.

and was therefore presumably independent of bodily form, now all such comforting certainties are removed. In place of Ovid's Pythagoras, with his assurance of the soul's immortality, we may place the views of another, less sanguine Pythagorean, Simmias from Plato's *Phaedo* (86.b-d), who sees the soul as an attunement of material substances which is destroyed at their dissolution. To insist on so intimate a link between minds used to thinking of themselves as rational and immortal and bodies which are subject to change and decay is to provide a powerful vision of the human condition - a fact which Ovid exploits to the full.

Time and again in Ovid's poem, the account of a metamorphosis focuses upon a halfway moment, a limbo where change is taking place, but its victim still retains enough human consciousness to register horror at it:

No sooner *Scylla* came
 Within this splash, and too the waast had waded in the same,
 But that shee sawe her hinderloynes with barking buggs atteint.
 And at the first, not thinking with her body they were meynt
 As parts therof, she started back, and rated them. And sore
 Shee was afrayd the eager cures should byght. But the more
 Shee shonned them, the surer still shee was to have them there.
 In seeking where her loynes, and thyghes, and feete and ancles were,
 Chappes like the chappes of *Cerberus* in stead of them shee found.'

My suster did not know so much, who when shee backward came
 Afrayd at that that shee had seene, and having sadly prayd
 The Nymphes of pardon, too have gone her way agen assayd:
 Her feete were fastned downe with rootes. Shee stryved all she
 myght
 Too plucke them up, but they so sure within the earth were pyght,
 That nothing save hir upper partes shee could that present move.
 A tender barke growes from beneath up leysurly above,
 And softly overspreddes her loynes: which when shee saw, shee went
 About to teare her heare, and full of leaves her hand shee hent.
 Her head was overgrowen with leaves. And little *Amphise* (so

1. *ibid.*, XIV 66-74.

Had *Eurytus* his Graundsyre naamd hir sonne not long ago)
Did feele his mothers dugges wex hard. And as he still them drew
In sucking, not a whit of milke nor moysture did ensew.'

For by and by he bound
The *Thracian* women by the feete with writhen roote in ground,
...eche of theis, when in the ground they fastned were, assayd
Aflayghted for to fly away. But every one was stayd
With winding roote which hilld her downe: her frisking could not
boote.

And whyle she lookte what was become of To, of nayle, and foote,
Shee sawe her leggs growe round in one, and turning intoo woode.
And as her thyghes with violent hand shee sadly striking stoode,
Shee felt them tree: her brest was tree: her shoulders eeke were
tree.

Her armes long boughes yee myght have thought, and not deceyved
bee.²

It is this moment of Ovidian horror which lives with the reader. It is in this discovery that one's nature may be dissolved and reconstituted differently that the question, 'What am I?' becomes unavoidable, and the assumption of some indestructible essence suddenly less plausible. Yet Ovid's account, of those who suffer arborification for instance, is not altogether clear. Does he consider them to retain human consciousness, to be 'trapped' inside the tree whose form they have taken, or have they simply *become* trees?

Of *Myrrha*, whose metamorphosis is granted at her own request, we hear that,

Shee made no taryence nor delay, but met the comming tree,
And shroonk her face within the barke thereof. Although that shee
Toogither with her former shape her senses all did loose,
Yit weepeth shee, and from her tree warme droppes doo softly woose:
The which her teares are had in pryce and honour.³

1. *ibid.*, IX 420-32.

2. *ibid.*, XI 77-93.

3. *ibid.*, X 571-75.

Myrrha loses her senses rather as Malbecco forgets 'he was a man' (FQ III.x.60.9), but she still weeps as if those senses were not lost. Is this truly contradictory, or are the drops of myrrh to be taken merely as a decorative coincidence, siezed on by the poet? When Myrrha's child is ready to be born, the tree apparently grows into the shape of a woman in labour: again this might not imply any consciousness on its part, but it also utters moans, indeed Ovid refers to its 'greef' (*dolores*).¹ Throughout, Ovid's language is ambiguous; but the suggestion that something recognisable as Myrrha is still part of the tree gives the description much of its power, as the reader tries to exercise his imagination on this seemingly impossible subject. Unused as we are to dealing with such miracles as physical metamorphosis, its accompanying psychological ramifications remain a subject for speculation - we are unsure how to respond to the woman-tree, and Ovid is not about to relieve our uncertainty.

In Spenser too we find a metamorphosed tree - the hapless Fradubio (FQ I.ii) - though his direct ancestry leads rather to Ariosto's Astolfo and, more particularly, Virgil's Polydorus, on the account of whose discovery Spenser's passage is largely based.² Fradubio's disturbance by Redcross is certainly horrific:

He pluckt a bough; out of whose rift there came
Small drops of gory bloud, that trickled downe the same.

I.ii.30.8-9

1. *ibid.*, X 581.

2. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* 6 26-51, Virgil, *Aeneid* 3 22-48. See also Dante, *Inferno* 13.

Redcross' reaction to this grisly sight resembles that of Aeneas, but with the added (and prophetic) implication that the tree's fate has become his own:

Astond he stood, and vp his haire did houe,
And with that suddein horror could no member moue.

I.ii.31.8-9

Here we have horror aplenty, but the horror is Redcross', not Fradubio's, and seems to derive not so much from the consciousness of metamorphosis *per se* as from the ominous reversal of the natural order implied by a branch which bleeds human blood. Redcross' is the horror of the numinous - his immediate interpretation of what he sees is a supernatural one:

What voyce of damned Ghost from *Limbo* lake,
Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
Both which fraile men do oftentimes mistake,
Sends to my doubtfull eares these speaches rare...

I.ii.32.5-8

In fact Fradubio's case is deceptive in its similarity to the Ovidian tree metamorphoses. His own account of his enchantment has none of the ambiguity to be found in the passage on Myrrha. There is no doubt that Fradubio retains full consciousness - unlike his Ovidian counterparts he even has unimpaired use of his voice. Just as Acrasia's enchanted lovers, though monstrous in form, were 'men indeed', so Fradubio and his mistress are simply 'enclosed in wooden wals full faste' (FQ I.ii.42.8), imprisoned but psychologically intact.

The only Spenserian creations who exist equally and paradoxically as both conscious beings and unconscious objects are his animistic local deities. The identity of Spenser's nymphs and river gods is

habitually confused with that of the pools and springs in their guardianship. This is not, however, a cause for horror but part of their traditional nature, the duality of which has been exploited poetically since Homeric times.' Spenser confines his treatment to a series of ingenious puns. The first extended instance of this occurs in *Colin Clovts Come Home Againe*, in the 'mery lay' (CC 157) of Bregog and Mulla, two streams-cum-nature-gods who consummate their secret love by running their courses together underground. The story of Mulla's sister Mollana (told in the first of the *Mutabilitie Cantos*) relates how, after helping Faunus, she is eventually received into the 'bed' (FQ VII.vi.53.6) of her lover Fanchin, despite being 'whelm'd with stones' (FQ VII.vi.53.4) by Diana's nymphs - a punishment which sounds disproportionately harsh until seen in its alternative light, as an explanation of why the river is so 'shole' (FQ VII.vi.40.7). The marriage of Thames and Medway (itself a geographical pun) affords opportunities for many similar plays on words. Thames is the 'son' of Thame and Isis, and is surrounded by minor rivers who pay 'tribute' to him 'as to their Lord' (FQ IV.xi.29.4). Stoure has six 'heads' (FQ IV.xi.32.2); Thame is bowed through the weight of Oxford on his back; and Isis must be 'sustained' (FQ IV.xi.25.1) by her two supporters, Churne and Charwell. These points are witty, but their wit seems self-sufficient, its own justification. There is none of the unsettling horror of Myrrha's dubious state.

1. See, for instance, the conflict between Achilles and the River Scamander described in the *Iliad*, Book XXI. Throughout, the ambiguity as to Scamander's status is maintained, and Achilles is unable to fight the god, who appears to possess the attributes of both river and human.

2. The Empathetic Response

We have seen that Ovid deals with two very different sorts of physical metamorphosis. In the first, there is an implication that the essential part of a being is continued, whatever physical form that being may assume. This 'decorous' type of transformation is sometimes used in *The Faerie Queene* as a device to mark the transition from exemplary to analogical allegory. In the second sort of metamorphosis there is no such propriety: instead, Ovid stresses the disturbing implications of metamorphosis for any concept of stable personal identity. Such a concern is rather less evident in Spenserian physical metamorphoses; however, analogous considerations do arise over our empathetic response to characters in allegory, who are prone to metaphorical transformations every bit as startling as the physical ones described in the *Metamorphoses*.

We can approach this subject via a restatement of our original problem. To what extent can we view a figure in *The Faerie Queene* as we might a character in a less obviously artificial mode of writing, or indeed a real person? Are they not, insofar as they are there 'to make a point', merely counters which can be pushed around at the writer's whim? Does not any attempt to speak of them as realistic characters show a wilful disregard of generic convention? Certainly, if we interpreted the events related in *The Faerie Queene* without reference to their allegorical application, and used them as the basis for a series of psychological portraits of the poem's main figures, the result would be a very curious set of case studies. Yet the opposite position, in which the existence of character is flatly

denied, seems to me equally unsatisfactory, since it conflicts almost absurdly with the common experience of the poem's readers.

Rosemary Freeman, comparing *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, distinguishes between personifications such as Shamefastnesse in the Castle of Alma (*FQ* II.ix.40-43) and Bunyan's pilgrims by declaring that whereas the pilgrims are human characters who exemplify the quality with which they are associated, Shamefastnesse is merely an abstraction, indistinguishable from the idea she represents. She concludes:

Such is the nature of the majority of the characters in *The Faerie Queene*, and as such they must weaken the persuasiveness of the allegory for all but the most philosophically-minded readers. Bunyan's method, by which an abstract quality is always seen as part of human nature and never merely as an idea, is without question the more successful.'

Now, it is clear that even within *The Faerie Queene* there are different degrees of sophistication in the presentation of 'character', and it is certainly not true that the majority of the figures in the poem are presented in quite so self-consciously allegorical a manner as Shamefastnesse. Nevertheless, Freeman's distinction between those figures who simply emphasise a particular quality in the context of a nature which is recognisably human and those who are 'merely' ideas is at first sight appealing, and might encourage us to attempt a division of the figures in *The Faerie Queene* along similar lines. Indeed, it would be relatively easy to draw up the rules for such a separation.

1. Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p.111.

The first group would comprise those figures, corresponding to Bunyan's pilgrims, who are seen as *undergoing* adventure. To give a passive characterisation, they are the figures to whom things happen, for whom monsters and enchanters lie in wait; more actively, they also tend to be the figures with quests to fulfil, either chivalric or amorous. In many cases their part in the poem is extended over several episodes, the most notable examples being the patron knights themselves. Often they come complete with a personal history, provided either by themselves (the Squire of Dames at *FQ* III.vii.53-60; Amylia at *FQ* IV.vii.15-18; Meliboe at *FQ* VI.ix.24-5) or courtesy of the narrator (Satyrane at *FQ* I.vi.21-30). They are usually knights, squires or ladies. The second group consists of the monsters, enchanters, paynims, and psychological and moral personifications who seem to form part of the Faerie landscape, who are not so much participants in adventure themselves, but adventures waiting to happen. With these figures allegorical meaning is much more obviously pervasive and inescapable, and the discussion of character consequently more problematical.

Having drawn this rough distinction, let us consider each of the groups in more detail. In the first category the question of character does not always appear in an unignorable acute form. Rather than accept or deny character as a point of principle, we tend in the process of reading about relatively complex figures, like Redcross and Britomart, to develop a *modus vivendi* between the two approaches. The habitual continuity and internal logic of these figures' actions creates an impression of character - Britomart's love for Artegall, for instance, is a constant feature of her representation, and as such is one of the distinguishing traits by which we define her. But this

impression of character is always provisional, and any break in the logic of a figure's actions can act as a signal for its suspension. This phenomenon might be compared with the experience of a person focusing his gaze first on a distant object and then on a nearby one. The two resulting images do not appear chaotic or contradictory because the differing focal length is unconsciously compensated for, and the conscious mind is presented with a unified model of the surroundings. Similarly, quite complex figures can, at particular times and for local purposes, ossify into allegorical abstractions without rendering nonsensical the reader's idea of their 'characters': that idea simply ceases to be the immediate point at issue, while the focus of conscious attention is turned on the passage's allegorical import.

Of course, the above paragraph represents an oversimplification. The decision as to whether a particular action constitutes a break in the internal logic of a figure's character or merely a development of it is bound to be attended by some uncertainty, and from this flows the ambiguity inherent in all allegory, which is to a large extent the subject of this thesis. In the terms of our visual metaphor, allegory is a kind of optical illusion in which the depth of objects is ultimately impossible to determine. For this reason, the 'suspension' of our idea of a figure's character can never be total: as I shall argue below, the literal sense of the text is not to be so lightly ignored. For now, though, the point which needs to be established is that, at least in the case of the patron knights and several other figures in *The Faerie Queene*, a putative conception of character does exist in the reader's mind, however much it may be altered by other considerations in the act of reading.

The status of the second category appears at first to be rather different. Figures like Shamefastness, Digestion, or the Dragon of Book I, whose names, appearance and actions all identify them inseparably with their allegorical roles, and who only appear in situations where those roles have direct relevance, do not seem able to claim the partial independence of allegorical associations which characterises the figures of the first group.

I would claim, however, that the apparent distinction between these groups is in fact illusory. It seems to me axiomatic that by the very act of giving an allegorical figure (or for that matter a statue, a picture, or any other product of representational art) human - or elfin - form, features, expression and attitude the text is inviting an empathetic response from the reader, an impulse to 'think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails'. As Harry Berger pointed out long ago, 'Though Image A is introduced into the fable to illustrate Idea B, the image has its own concrete character.' The concrete character of the image is the basis of a nascent narrative character. The text itself is only one side of the imaginative collaboration between poem and reader. Human nature abhors a vacuum, and will allow as much meaning into a given situation as it will bear, in spite of critical fiat: 'the word means what we can make it mean'.

This is true even of such radically allegorical figures as Concoction and Digestion, whom Guyon meets on his visit to the kitchen of Alma's castle, and to whom only five lines are devoted:

1. Harry Berger Jr, *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P. and O.U.P, 1957), p.122.

The maister Cooke was cald *Concoction*,
A carefull man, and full of comely guise:
The kitchin Clerke, that hight *Digestion*,
Did order all th'Achates in seemly wise,
And set them forth, as well he could devise.

II.ix.31.1-5

In terms of the physical allegory of Alma's castle, *Concoction* and *Digestion* seem to represent the digestive processes, breaking down food and distributing its constituents to the various parts of the body. This function of decomposition is presented as analogous to the preparation of food in a kitchen, a choice which seems paradoxical in that such preparation would normally involve bringing constituent ingredients together. The apparent contradiction is obscured by the ambiguity of the phrase 'set them forth', which may be taken to refer either to the distribution of the food or to its decorous presentation for serving. Yet this verbal obfuscation does not prevent a certain confusion as we try to visualise the process being described. The image of *Concoction* and *Digestion* carefully preparing dishes and the consciousness of their biological function in breaking food down cannot be held in the mind simultaneously: to which meaning should we give priority? In the course of our imaginative labours it seems inevitable that we will attempt to see the scene from the point of view of its main actors. What do *Concoction* and *Digestion* think they are doing? Do they realise the significance of their names?

As articulated here this sort of personal response seems at best inappropriate, at worst hopelessly naïve, even childish. But in the reading of a text such responses are not invalidated by articulation, because they are not articulated at all as part of a conscious interpretation. Interpretation will point out the paradox involved in the passage's conception, explain it by reference to allegorical

theory, and, perhaps, notice the way in which the alternative readings are reconciled by an ambiguous phrase. Interpretation can order and evaluate our response, but it has no power to act as a critical Canute to forestall a particular response: it cannot pre-empt. Indeed, the attempt to 'fix' the amount of naturalism with which it is proper to respond to any particular figure is one of the great wild goose chases of Spenserian criticism. The tendency to empathetic response lies in the reader, not in the text itself, and cannot be eliminated (though it may be frustrated) by anything in the text.

On the contrary, the text often seems actively to encourage such responses, for instance by presenting an episode (at least partially) from the point of view of a 'strictly' allegorical figure. This occurs several times in the account of Redcross' battle with the Dragon at *FQ* I.xi. On all these occasions the Dragon is startled and rather fearful at Redcross' tenacity:

No wonder if he wondred at the sight,
And doubted, whether his late enemy
It were, or other new supplied knight.

I.xi.35.2-4

Then fraught with rancour, and engorged ire,
He cast at once him to auenge for all...

I.xi.40.5-6

Then freshly vp arose the doughtie knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himselfe to battell readie dight;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To haue deuoured, so soone as day he spyde,
When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
He woxe dismayd, and gan his fate to fear...

I.xi.52.1-8

This reaction of the Dragon has no easily perceived allegorical significance -- it serves only to establish in the reader's mind an awareness of the Dragon's own viewpoint. Rather than being simply the unthinking personification of Unholiness, the monster is revealed as sufficiently self-conscious to speculate about the identity of his enemy, and to fear for his own fate. If this does not win him sympathy, it certainly encourages an empathetic response from the reader.

This is only one of several ways in which such a response may be elicited. Consider the figure of Shamefastnesse, whom Freeman sees 'merely as an idea'. The passage in which she appears is certainly one in which Spenser's fascination with the ontological anomalies implied by allegory becomes explicit, as we noted earlier when considering Alma's explanation to Guyon:

Why wonder yee
Faire Sir at that, which ye so much embrace?
She is the fountaine of your modestee;
You shamefast are, but *Shamefastnesse* it selfe is shee.
II.ix.43.6-9

The direct juxtaposition of the exemplary and analogical representatives of shamefastness forces on our consciousness the fact of their mutual existence in the same narrative, and our confusion leads us into a logically fruitless but imaginatively compelling consideration of how such a meeting can be possible. So far from being the unremarked norm in *The Faerie Queene*, it is the disconcerting unnaturalness of this meeting which is stressed: not only the reader, but Guyon too, wonders at the maiden's 'vncouth cace' (FQ II.ix.43.5). Shamefastness must here react rather than merely be. What causes her to blush?

Could she ever be brought to do anything else? These questions, though naïve in one sense, are in another demanded by the narrative context.

Again, we might consider the figure of Despair at *FQ* I.ix. Although the general structure of Book I leads us to consider Despair's role primarily in relation to the moral history of Redcross, his presentation is such as to draw the reader into speculation about his own psychological state. When he is first directly described it is not in the act of leading Redcross or any other knight into despair, but in a solitary moment of bleak and melancholy introspection:

That darksome caue they enter, where they find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullein mind;
His griesie lockes, long growen, and vnbound,
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,
And hid his face; through which his hollow eyne
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound...

I.ix.35.1-7

This suggestive picture, combined with Despair's subsequent attempts to kill himself (*FQ* I.ix.54), seems to encourage speculation as to his motivation. For all his gloom here, in persuading Redcross to suicide he shows every sign of job satisfaction, displaying an almost comic shopkeeper's pride in the range of implements available with which to do the deed:

Then gan the villein him to ouercraw,
And brought vnto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw;
And bad him choose, what death he would desire...

I.ix.50.5-8

It is the same problem we raised in the last chapter in connection with Care.¹ Is Despair merely a deceiver, or does he actually believe his own arguments, as the glimpses of his 'off-stage' existence suggest? One might translate this question into the formula: 'Does exemplary or analogical allegory have priority in Despair's presentation?' But as I argued earlier, this interpretation of the allegorical situation cannot *replace* the empathetic response, however well-versed the reader may be in the theoretical niceties of allegory. Despair's narrative presentation, his potential as a character, remains a fact to which we respond before such theoretical criteria can be applied.

When Ovid described the metamorphosis of Myrrha he maintained a double-view of her existence as a tree, at some points implying that consciousness had ceased, and at others, perhaps playing on the interpretative inertia of readers used to thinking of her as a conscious being, implying the continuation of her psychic presence. It is this persistent manipulation of the empathetic response, applied to allegorical figures, which in my opinion provides the strongest link between the imaginative sensibility behind *The Faerie Queene* and Ovid's masterpiece. Where the reader of the *Metamorphoses* must exercise his imagination on the experience of being a tree, a cow or a stone, the receptive Spenserian will find himself prompted into the equally anomalous position of looking at a situation from the point of view of an abstract moral quality. Theoretical questions of char-

1. See pp. 147-48 above.

acter are inevitably raised by these passages, but before such questions can be considered the anomalies which give rise to them must first be felt by the reader in all their disorientating strangeness.

We noted previously that one of the recurring centres of interest in the *Metamorphoses* is the particular halfway moment when metamorphosis is actually taking place, when the inescapability of change and bodily dissolution is most horrifically apparent, and the question of self-identity unavoidable. Is it possible to find an equivalent moment in *The Faerie Queene* - not in the field of physical metamorphosis, but at the border between exemplary and analogical allegory? Is there an analogous psychological limbo state, the horror of which can be exploited by the allegorist? In the rest of this chapter I want to explore passages which present just such a situation.

When Guyon is conducted through Mammon's domain, one of the figures he meets is Tantalus (*FQ* II.vii.57-60), who is depicted in his traditional position, up to his chin in water which he cannot drink, just below a bunch of fruit which continually flies out of his grasp. The description forms a tableau or emblem, in which Tantalus plays out the same small part in perpetuity, always hoping that *this* time he will be able to quench his hunger and thirst:

Deepe was he drenched to the vpmost chin,
Yet gaped still, as coueting to drinke
Of the cold liquor, which he waded in,
And stretching forth his hand, did often thinke
To reach the fruit, which grew vpon the brincke...

II.vii.58.1-5.

'Did often thinke/ To reach the fruit': it is not desire alone that remains alive in Tantalus: so does hope, and consequently disappoint-

ment. The repetition of Tantalus' actions suggests the time-bound nature of his predicament. The description is not of a single moment of frustration, but of an eternity. In this we may contrast his position with that of another figure forever unable to compass his desire:

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!'

Keats' tone is whimsical - the lover is granted his putative consciousness for no longer than the poet is prepared to sustain his conceit. But whereas the lover is frozen forever at a precise instant, Tantalus is presented as active and aware of his fate, though apparently unable to learn by the infinitely repeated experience of failure. He is sufficiently conscious of his environment to notice Guyon and importune him for food:

...if that thou be such, as I thee see,
Of grace I pray thee, giue to eat and drinke to mee.

II.vii.59.8-9

By making this appeal for pity Tantalus stakes his claim to be treated as a being like Guyon, a wretch in need of mercy; but as Guyon recognises, the nature of his eternal doom is such that he may only be treated as an allegorical sign. Hence, instead of helping Tantalus, Guyon merely *interprets* him:

Abide the fortune of thy present fate,
And vnto all that liue in high degree,

1. John Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, ll.17-20, in *The Complete Poems*, p.345.

Ensamble be of mind intemperate,
To teach them how to vse their present state.

II.vii.60.2-5

Tantalus is imprisoned by the contradiction inherent in his status, both conscious being and 'ensamble' to be interpreted. While the reader is presented with an unchanging tableau, part of the scene's potency lies in the imaginative invitation to extend its duration over an indefinite period of time. It cannot be wholly abstracted from the temporal sphere and made into a simple moral lesson - 'Do not be intemperate' - because the punishment which gives that lesson its force has precisely to do with the conscious passing of time in pain. Hence, rather after the manner of Despair and Malbecco, Tantalus is in his combination of the naturalistic and the abstract both mortal and immortal: 'He dally dyde, yet neuer throughly dyen couth' (FQ II.vii.58.9).

In the face of this paradoxical state of existence our powers of empathy are confused in a manner thoroughly Ovidian. Our efforts to comprehend Tantalus' situation, to place it in the context of our own experience and so defuse its horror, are frustrated. As with Keats' Beadsman, our 'weak spirit fails'.

The case of Mirabella in Book VI is in some ways similar, though its greater allegorical complexity tends to impede straightforward analysis.

Glimpsed briefly at FQ VI.vi.16.6-9, Mirabella is first described at length a Canto later, when Spenser prefaces Timias' attempt at rescue with an account of her history. Mirabella, we are told, is beautiful but low-born. In her pride she scorns the attentions of her worthy suitors, caring nothing that she sends many of them to their

deaths. This callousness attracts Cupid's attention, and he orders that the person responsible for the demise of so many of his followers should be arrested. Duly attached, Mirabella is at first defiant, but on hearing the sentence passed 'as is by law ordayned/ In cases like' (FQ VI.vii.36.5-6) she pleads for mercy, and Cupid relents so far as to abate her punishment. She is doomed to wander the earth, under the continual chiding of Scorn and Disdain, 'Til she had sau'd so many loues, as she did lose' (FQ VI.vii.37.9).

In the next Canto this story is retold by Mirabella herself, as she explains her situation to Arthur (FQ VI.viii.19-25). Her account is largely compatible with the previous one, with the major exception that there is no mention of saving lovers. Mirabella describes an alternative penance:

Here in this bottle (sayd the sory Mayd),
I put the teares of my contrition,
Till to the brim I haue it full defrayd:
And in this bag which I behinde me don,
I put repentaunce for things past and gon.
Yet is the bottle leake, and bag so torne,
That all which I put in, fals out anon;
And is behinde me trodden downe of *Scorne*,
Who mocketh all my paine, and laughs the more I mourn.

VI.viii.24

Mirabella's experience divides into three phases. In her early life of pride and disdain she is described in exemplary terms as a conceited young girl. By FQ VI.vii, however, she forms part of an allegorical tableau, chivvied by psychological abstractions, and carrying (what is rather hard to visualise literally) a bag for putting repentance in. The pivotal passage in effecting this transition from exemplary to analogical environments is the account of the trial at the court of Cupid (FQ VI.vii.32-37). The difficulty of this

passage stems ultimately from the dual nature of Cupid himself. Cupid may be read figuratively, as a poetic name for love; but he is also a god, and in a mythopoeic universe like Spenser's gods can be as objectively real as knights, monsters and proud young ladies. Inevitably in such a case, ambiguities arise.

If we emphasise the figurative definition of Cupid, we shall probably agree with Hamilton's note: 'In submitting to Cupid, Mirabella falls in love'.¹ To understand the account of Cupid's court in this way is already to move away from an exemplary reading. We are trying to find out what the court 'represents', to interpret it as an elaborate metaphor. Love here certainly has a claim to be the 'iudgement... as is by law ordayned/ In cases like'. Scorners of love from Chaucer's *Troilus* to Sidney's *Musidorus* (to say nothing of Spenser's own Prince Arthur) have traditionally been punished with an infatuation of their own.² On this reading Scorn and Disdain would seem to be the scorn and disdain of Mirabella's new love, her own weapons justly turned upon her.

The alternative is to let the literal truth of the account stand. If we think of Mirabella's arraignment as an objective experience, then the charge is one not of scorn but the murder of her lovers:

...foule *Infamie*, and fell *Despight*
Gaued euidence, that they were all betrayd,
And muredred cruelly by a rebellious Mayd.

VI.vii.34.7-9

-
1. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (London and New York: Longman, 1977), VI.vii.36.6-9n.
 2. See Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, I 183-273; Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p.38; *FQ* I.ix.10-15.

For murder, of course, the 'iudgement... by law ordayned/ In cases like' is rather more severe, and the effect of Mirabella's pleas is that her punishment is commuted to a period of community service, saving lovers where she had previously destroyed them. In this interpretation the figures of Scorn and Disdain mocking Mirabella suggest the bitter memory of her past misdeeds, driving her on to make amends.

In the end it is neither possible nor necessary to decide between these readings. Together they describe a prison of obsession and guilt which maintains and defines Mirabella's captive state. Significantly, the means by which she might escape her plight are pushed to the margin of the narrative, unfocused and apparently unrealisable. I have already mentioned the difficulty of visualising Mirabella filling her bag with repentance, but a similar objection might be made to her task of 'saving' lovers. What exactly are we to imagine Mirabella *doing* to save these lovers? Can she give her heart to all of them? In fact the formula, 'sau'd so many loues, as she did lose', disguises its lack of meaning in its own symmetry: the idea of making up for past misdeeds by doing an equal number of opposite good deeds seems so obviously just that we tend not to pursue its precise reference further.

This absence of imaginative realisation in her tasks suggests their futility - while Mirabella has 'saved' two lovers, there are still 'two and twenty more' outstanding. As the poet declares in apparent despair: 'Aie me, how could her loue make half amends therefore?' (FQ VI.vii.38.9).¹ The torn bag and the leaking bottle can never be

1. Twenty-two is of course a finite number, but its formulaic use here seems to be in the spirit of Matthew 18,22: 'I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.' That is, forever.

filled, and whatever she puts in is trodden down by Scorn. In both instances we are led away from the conception of Mirabella as a realistically drawn young woman with a definable and limited quest - a sort of female Squire of Dames - towards the idea that she is merely the representative of a psychological state, essentially unchanging and abstracted from the realm of action. Arthur cannot in the end rescue Mirabella - the nature of her condition is such that she is insulated from his intervention. In pleading for Disdain (FQ VI.viii. 17.8-9) she admits the extent to which she is to be identified with (and by) her allegorical companions.

Mirabella's constant search for lovers to save, her constant refilling of the bottle and the bag, has something of the perpetually disappointed efforts of Tantalus, whose anomalous position she shares. To the extent that she retains memory and self-awareness she remains a realistically portrayed lady whom knights may try to rescue, just as Tantalus could appeal to Guyon for help; but her static situation, the hopelessness of which declares itself in her vain attempts to fulfil the conditions of her release, makes her effectively an emblematic figure.

In all these examples of figures caught in allegorical or metamorphic limbo, it is possible to identify two apparently contradictory aspects of their environment, which form as it were the two poles between whose dual attraction they are suspended. With Myrrha it is the juxtaposition of consciousness and insentience, implied by her human and arboreal form; with Tantalus it is the placing of a mind which works in temporal terms - where consciousness of hunger expects its satisfaction - in the context of changeless eternity; for

Mirabella too the ability to communicate with the outside world, to tell her story, to remember and repent her past, is combined with an inability to move from a rigid, two-dimensional prison. In each case the contradictions inherent in the victims' position make imaginative participation in the relevant passages a profoundly unsettling experience for the reader, but the immanence of the supernatural in *Faerie* renders it narratively plausible.

Finally, I want to look in some detail at a major episode in *The Faerie Queene* in which a figure is again trapped in a situation whose ambiguity arises from the competing claims of two coexistent yet apparently incompatible views of her environment: the captivity of Amoret in the house of Busyrane at *FQ* III.xi-xii. The difference between this and the previous cases we have examined lies in the elaborate artificiality of Busyrane's house, which is raised entirely through his use of 'idle shewes' and 'false charmes' (*FQ* III.xii. 29.9). With Busyrane we are able say, as we could not with the supernaturally sanctioned metamorphoses of our other examples, that one view of Amoret's state is 'false' and must be rejected. Indeed, its rejection - and the consequent resolution of the situation's ambiguity - is the means of her eventual release.

The active participant in this process is not Amoret but her rescuer, Britomart. It is Britomart's ability to perceive the Mask of Cupid - and the house in general - in a way that is not Busyrane's way which provides her with immunity against his insidious spells: but to anyone reading the passage both ways must be apparent, or the crucial awareness of the choice will be lost. What is needed is an approach which takes its ambiguity out of the realm of analytic hypotheses and presents it to the reader directly and poetically.

Isabel MacCaffrey, in her book on Spenser's allegory, has a passage on Busyrane's tapestries that places the question of perspective in just such a context.¹ In mimetic theories, good art is that which by its skill blurs the distinction between itself and the reality it sets out to represent. The artistry of the tapestries is repeatedly praised on these grounds - three times the pictures are called 'liuely' (FQ III.xi.30.8, 37.6, 39.9), indicating that the border between art and life is close to being obliterated. For someone in Britomart's position, then, there is an element of uncertainty as to the exact status of the tapestries, arising from their likeness to their subjects. MacCaffrey shows that Spenser creates a similar doubt for the reader by failing to distinguish between straightforward description of the tapestries and authorial digression. We are viewing the tapestries through the medium of another work of art (the poem), and it is impossible to say exactly where one ends and the other begins. Hence the doubt which an observer of the tapestries feels as to whether they are works of art or the reality itself is reflected at a further remove in our doubt about the relationship of the poetic description to the objects described. This problem is analogous to our original question as to the relationship of fictional 'characters' to their textual environment.

The implication is that we, in reading Spenser's poem, are placed in a position similar to Britomart's, a fact which shapes our own response. Britomart's reaction to the works of art in Busyrane's house, as MacCaffrey points out, is never an indifferent or passive one, even when she is merely observing:

1. Isabel G. MacCaffrey, *Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1976), pp.105-106.

That wondrous sight faire *Britomart* amazed,
Ne seeing could her wonder satisfie,
But euermore and more vpon it gazed,
The whiles the passing brightnes her fraile sences dazed.

III.xi.49.6-9

[*Britomart*] Did greatly wonder, ne could satisfie
Her greedy eyes with gazing a long space...

III.xi.53.3-4

We are made to share *Britomart*'s fascination. Her curiosity, her puzzled ignorance of the significance of what she sees ('much she muz'd yet could not construe it/ By any ridling skill, or commune wit' (*FQ* III.xi.54.4-5)), her impotent desire to break through to the secrets of the third room, all find their equivalents in our own response to the passage.

Britomart's experience in *Busyrane*'s castle (and, through her, ours) is a quasi-aesthetic one: what she sees can be 'read' in more than one way, and it is this choice that determines success or failure. Her quest becomes an act of faith: just as *Guyon* in *Mammon*'s domain undergoes the threat of physical dismemberment if ever he casts a 'lustful eye' (*FQ* II.vii.27.2) on what he sees, so *Britomart* must reject an environment in which everything is calculated to place love in a cruel or debased light, and where the god of love is seen only in the distorting mirror of *Busyrane*'s art. The flame in front of the house, the tapestries, idol and maskers are indeed 'idle shewes' and 'false charmes', but only if regarded as such - as a scorched *Scudamour* finds to his cost.' Spenser's direct warning about Cupid's

1. As a test of faith, compare the river of Death in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which 'You shall find... deeper or shallower, as you believe in the king of the place.' John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. J.B. Wharey, second edition rev. R. Sharrock (O.U.P, 1960), p.157.

arrows seems to confirm that this is our proper area of concern: 'Ah, man beware, *how* thou those darts behold' (FQ III.xi.48.5. My italics).

It is worth briefly tracing the development of Busyrane's enchantment up to its culmination in the Mask: for the things which Britomart sees in his house, various as they are in form, all serve to confirm a particular sort of vision, a vision that rejects altruism, rejects love freely given and pleasure freely enjoyed, and replaces these with a flaunting of power, and a cynically sadistic view of love which finds its ultimate expression in Amoret's plight. Part of the power of these Cantos lies in Spenser's ability to sustain at such length and without lapsing into predictability the bombardment of images which confirm this perspective, disorientating both the reader and his protagonist and effectively excluding the world outside the castle. For her part, Britomart's feat is also one of stamina, since (again like Guyon at Mammon's house) she refuses to drop her guard throughout her three day ordeal:

Yet nould she d'off her weary armes, for feare
Of secret daunger, ne let sleepe oppresse
Her heauy eyes with natures burdein deare,
But drew her selfe aside in sickernesse,
And her welpointed weapons did about her dresse.

III.xi.55.5-9

The cornerstone of Busyrane's version of love is the doctrine that pleasure and pain are inseparable. Here Spenser takes his cue from the end of the previous Canto, where Gealosie (né Malbecco) personifies a state in which no pleasure is pure, but 'painefull pleasure turnes to pleasing paine' (FQ III.x.60.4). This interdependence is

typical of what we are to find in Busyrane's house. Thus the Dragon at the base of the altar-Cupid enfolds the idol's left foot with his tail, despite being irremediably wounded by him (FQ III.xi.48.6-9) - an emblem which suggests a dependence on the source of its pain similar to that we have seen in Malbecco. In its iconographic setting the dragon also shares Malbecco's fretful immortality - Malbecco too is transfixed with 'deathes eternall dart' (FQ III.x.59.9), though final death is as far from him as from Despair. Paradoxically, his wound is even the mechanism of his survival: he 'doth himselfe with sorrow new sustaine,/ That death and life attonce vnto him gives' (FQ III.x.60.2-3).

Both Malbecco and the Dragon prefigure Amoret, whose heart is similarly wounded by a 'deadly dart' (FQ III.xii.21.3) and whose failing steps are supported by her torturers, Despight and Cruelty, so that she is dependent on them for her life. She later makes this dependence explicit with regard to Busyrane. If he were to die, she tells Britomart, as Mirabella is to tell Arthur three Books later, 'her paine/ Should be remedillesse' (FQ III.xii.34.5-6). This is a condition which renders Spenser's question, 'Ah who can loue the worker of her smart?' (FQ III.xi.31.7) something more than rhetorical.

Everything within Busyrane's domain is calculated to reinforce this view. The tapestries of the first room, though their ostensible purpose is to reduce 'all the gods to emblems of lust', as Harry Berger has said,¹ nevertheless concentrate almost exclusively on rep-

1. Harry Berger Jr, 'Busirane and the War Between the Sexes: An Interpretation of *The Faerie Queene* III xi-xii', *ELR*, I (1971), 99-121, p.104.

resenting 'mournfull Tragedyes' (FQ III.xi.45.6), a choice of genre to be confirmed by Ease's entrance, 'in costly garments, fit for tragicke Stage' (FQ III.xii.3.9). Even the overt theme of the tapestries, Cupid's triumph over the gods, is a reflection of the psychological condition that the house implies. The uncertainties which underlie the jealous mind give rise to a tyrannous desire to control its environment. Busyrane's house, protected by magic from outside penetration and filled with costly artefacts, effectively bolsters and maintains (with a good deal of what Jonson would have called 'envious show') a highly grandiose self-image, a claustrophobic alternative to the universe in which everything is subordinated to the cruelty of its creator. The tapestries form part of a massive attempt to project onto Nature this suffocating singleness of vision. Following the Ovidian example of Arachne, they portray the Olympians in a series of distinctly undignified poses; but just as striking is the continual emphasis on Cupid as the 'Victor of the Gods' (FQ III.xi.49.2). Cupid, a jealous god, is Busyrane's cosmic alter-ego, and in these depictions he not only defeats but supplants the gods, assuming his own sufficiency to fill their offices. The most obvious example of this is his boastful usurpation of Jove's own seat:

The winged boy did thrust into his throne,
And, scoffing, thus vnto his mother sayd,
Lo now the heauens obey to me alone,
And take me for their Ioue, whiles Ioue to earth is gone.
III.xi.35.6-9

1. Ben Jonson, *To Penshurst*, l.1, in *The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p.95.

But there are other instances: his victory over Mars is expressed in the martial language of wounds (FQ III.xi.44); while the 'broken bowes and arrowes shiuered short' (FQ III.xi.46.7) which decorate the border of the tapestries are presumably intended as an insult to Diana, as in the similar passage in *The Parliament of Fowls*:

...in dispit of Dyane the chaste,
Ful many a bowe ibroke heng on the wal...'

Cupid's gesture of power in the mask -

With that the darts which his right hand did straine,
Full dreadfully he shooke that all did quake,
And clapt on hie his colourd winges twaine,
That all his many it affraide did make.

III.xi.23.5-8

parodies Neptune's earlier gesture in the tapestry:

His three-forkt Pyke
He stearnly shooke, and therewith fierce did stryke
The raging billowes, that on euey syde
They trembling stood.

III.xi.40.4-7

Neptune, after all, is one of Cupid's 'many'.

Cupid's next triumphant manifestation is in the idol of the altar, where the cosmic claims made for him in the tapestries are linked with the felt effects of love in the world. This is the object of daily devotion, in whose blindfold randomness infinite power is combined with zero responsibility. It is the executive side of Busyrane's vision, not only presenting a point of view but actively threatening. The description of the idol utilises the technique of ambiguity

1. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Parliament of Fowls* ll.281-82, in *The Complete Works*, ed. F.N. Robinson, second edition (O.U.P., 1966), p.313.

employed with the tapestries, obscuring the distinction between the idol and the power it represents, to sinister effect:

Blindfold he was, and in his cruell fist
A mortall bow and arrowes keene did hold,
With which he shot at randon, when him list...

III.xi.48.1-3

The impression is fostered that the statue itself is doing the shooting, presenting Britomart with a more immediately ominous spectacle, and, incidentally, an extra reason for not averting her eyes. The idolaters referred to at FQ III.xi.49 exist in the same conditional sense, more to emphasise the statue's status as an idol and the multitude of its worshippers than to suggest their physical presence. The idol implies and threatens activity, invites or demands worship, merely by virtue of the assumptions it embodies.

In his article on these Cantos Berger¹ makes unnecessary distinctions between lust, 'false loue', and 'cruell loue' (FQ III.xi. 51.8, 52.5). It is the unity of these features of love, the fact that they are part of the same phenomenon, that needs to be stressed. 'Loue' here is not, as his use implies, simply an abstract noun signifying an emotional state: 'false loue' and 'cruell loue' are not different varieties of such states, one characteristic of the male and the other of the female. 'Loue' is a name, if ironic, for Cupid. To call him 'false' and then 'cruell' is not to refer to two things or to change his character but to characterise him more fully. This is not a quibble, for Cupid in this house is not merely a personified abstraction of Elizabethan psychology who can without harm be divided

1. Berger, 'War Between the Sexes', p.105.

into subspecies to suit the analyst's convenience. Part of the perversity of Busyrane's house is that on the contrary he is perceived as external, uncontrollable and threateningly real.

The externalisation of Cupid is as necessary to Busyrane's version of love as the ascription to him of omnipotence and a tyrannical nature; indeed, it is a condition of these. Rather than see the Mask as a projection of Amoret's or Scudamour's psychic condition, I would suggest that it is just what (to the reader) it first appears to be - an elaborately constructed fiction, which Busyrane attempts to impose as an objective account of how love must inevitably progress.

The Mask is, in short, a lie. Like most persuasive lies, it includes a good deal of truth with its falsehoods. Many of the attitudes represented by the Maskers can be found in any relationship between lovers, although in reality they would temper and complicate each other rather than appear in such grotesque isolation. Busyrane's crime lies in extrapolating as inevitable the consequences which in the Mask follow as a 'confused route' (FQ III.xii.25.1) terminating in Death.

Felicity Hughes has summed up this situation well:

Thus there are internal, as well as external indications that the dream represented by the masque is false. But... it would be possible for an inexpert or perturbed witness to be misled into believing that it was true. The difference this would make is important since it would give the account of love conveyed by the masque the status of prophecy - that love ends in vile poverty and death with infamy.¹

With Amoret, as with Mirabella, interpretative ambiguity arises from Cupid's dual nature as both god and poetic trope. But whereas a

1. Felicity A. Hughes, 'Psychological Allegory in *The Faerie Queene* III.xi-xii', *RES*, 29 (1978), 129-46, p.141.

consistent interpretation of Mirabella's experience proved ultimately unattainable, here we are told quite simply that the elaborate apparatus of Busyrane's house is nothing more than a collection of 'idle shewes' and 'false charmes'. While it is perfectly possible to find a more arcane 'meaning' for Busyrane, as critics have proved, it does not seem necessary to go any further than Helen Gardner's straightforward formulation, 'the false enchanter'.¹ More important is that the version of love represented by the Mask should be perceived by the reader as false, for that perception is not only the moral concern of the Cantos, but also the narrative means of Amoret's release, as Maureen Quilligan has remarked:

Caught in a web of pernicious metaphor, neither [Amoret] nor Scudamour can escape from the abuse of language literalized by Busyrane's bloody versus, [sic] until Britomart breaks the "spell" and makes Busyrane those same bloody lines reverse. With the pun on "verse" Spenser completes the process of redemption and signals to his reader that the real subject of Britomart's adventures has been the terms in which one can define love.²

Amoret's problem is of the quasi-aesthetic kind described earlier, a danger that by being found amongst the two-dimensional personifications in the Mask she may come to be 'misread' as equally two-dimensional. Then she will be nothing more than Suffering Love, the role allotted her, emptied of all other facets by a tyrannical Cupid. Britomart's rescue cuts her loose from this emblematic

-
1. Helen Gardner 'Some Reflections on the House of Busyrane', *RES*, 34 (1983), 403-13, p.405.
 2. Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1979), pp.84-85.

environment, just as Scudamour's kidnap is to do in Book IV. When Britomart forces Busyrane to undo the spells that maintain the Mask we witness once again how the undoing of enchantment also entails the decomposition of an allegorical situation; but in this case the allegory is itself the prison that must be escaped. Amoret's torture is in effect ended by default, for everything that combined to impose Busyrane's vision is found to be 'vanisht vtterly, and cleane subuerst' (FQ III.xii.42.3); a state which makes possible (at least in the 1590 edition) the rapturous affirmation of love and pure pleasure with which the Book ends:

...she faire Lady ouercommen quight
Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,
And in sweete rauishment poured out her spright:
No word they spake, nor earthly thing they felt,
But like two senceles stocks in long embracement dwelt.
III.xii.45.5-9

In describing the embrace of Amoret and Scudamour Spenser alludes to another Ovidian metamorphosis, that of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, and again there are suggestions of a loss of identity that would in other contexts be disturbing; but here that loss paradoxically becomes a gain, as the lovers, lost in each other, also find a consummation.

I began this chapter by quoting Jonathan Goldberg's opinion that 'supposedly natural categories' such as desire and self cannot survive a reading of the *The Faerie Queene* without being revealed as 'textual creations' subject to 'textual transformations', a revelation which makes the text 'unreadable'. The fundamental weakness of this position is that it places all the responsibility for maintaining 'natural categories' upon the text, and none upon the empathetic and

fiction-making powers of the reader, whose collaboration in the creation of illusion is an essential part of the narrative aesthetic. Goldberg's complaint is not only reductive, it misses the point - as if he had pointed to a landscape painting and complained that its hills and lakes and clouds were impossible to perceive once they were revealed as mere brush strokes, and its apparent depth as a trick of linear perspective.

In the face of the radical textual transformations we have discussed in this and other chapters, the surprising thing is the extent to which the fictive illusion is maintained. Rather than the text being fragmented into unreadability by such transformations, the transformations themselves become the groundplot of profitable invention. *The Faerie Queene's* basis in romance creates for it a context in which magic, and hence metamorphosis, can be accommodated as part of the form. The effect of this is more than simply to camouflage a 'weakness' in the structure of allegory. By allowing transformations to become a matter for scrutiny within the narrative, the allegory provides models of itself, clues for its own reading. Busyrane's allegorical representation of love becomes the subject of interpretation and mis-interpretation, of reading and misreading, and hence an object lesson for the readers of Spenser's own fiction. Britomart, like the Palmer disenchanting Acrasia's lovers, exemplifies the action of the allegorical exegete.

The price of such understanding, however, is in both cases the destruction of the allegory itself. True, both Busyrane and Acrasia are seen as deceptive enchanters, whose evil works are manifestly deserving of destruction; but does not all allegory, as we have indicated, depend on the maintenance of illusion? And is not the act

of interpretation essentially the replacement of the fiction with its 'meaning'? These questions are never far away in any discussion of allegory, but when allegory becomes self-referential, self-unraveling, they assume a peculiar urgency. Is not all allegory, in effect, 'selfe-murdring thought'?

These are the questions I will be considering in the conclusion to this thesis. What I hope to have shown in this chapter is that the logically contradictory situations to which Spenserian allegory gives rise can still be imaginatively potent. For every case in which the understanding of allegory entails its decomposition, there are others, as with *Mirabella* and *Tantalus*, where understanding is yoked by divine decree to the continuance of the allegorical state, and where self-interpretation serves to emphasise rather than defuse the disorientating horror of that incongruity.

CONCLUSION

'THAT LOVELY BAND': ALLEGORY AND THE DESIRE FOR UNITY.

Allegory, runs the traditional definition, occurs when one thing is said and by that another thing is understood. In this thesis I have tried to explore the problems and opportunities presented by the fact that allegory is a divided mode. The problems include ambiguity of meaning, empathetic confusion, and inconsistency in narrative and description. The art of allegorical decorum lies partly in the ability to ameliorate these phenomena by finding terms for the allegory in which the literal and analogical meanings are not overtly or jarringly incompatible. But I have also tried to show that there are alternative strategies, by which these very difficulties can be acknowledged and turned to rhetorical advantage. Inconsistency or absurdity can be a means of signalling the presence of hidden significance in a passage. Ambiguity can be controlled so as to suggest ambivalence and moral complexity. The disjunctive nature of allegorical language can be made the basis of magical events such as metamorphosis, and thus pressed into the service of the explicit narrative.

As Bacon pointed out, allegory has been used both to reveal and to conceal meaning.¹ Allegorical decorum, an art which aims to mediate between the different ways in which an allegorical text may be read,

1. See p.15 above.

inherits this duality of purpose. On the one hand, it is the means whereby the fictive illusion is maintained, and the senses of the text kept in some sort of proportionable relationship. On the other, it accomodates allegory's impulse to push the reader to an empathetic distance by pointing to its own artificiality. In what follows I shall argue that the conflict between these two tendencies is the basis of a dialectic which forms (to borrow the terminology of medieval allegory) the anagogic sense of *The Faerie Queene*. The sheer imaginative effort involved in Spenser's attempt to find terms in which to marry particular actions to universal meaning reflects a deep faith in the inherent significance of human experience; but his constant undermining of his own fiction betrays an equally deep mistrust in the ability of language to achieve such a marriage. I shall suggest that the sense of this opposition becomes the means by which the reader is led to seek a source for the reconciliation of the particular and the universal beyond the realm of language, in God.

We may start by developing a point made in the last chapter. There, an analogy was drawn between the manifestation of Acrasia's lovers as hideous beasts in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* and the nature of allegorical fiction. Just as allegory uses fictional terms to communicate a veiled truth, so too the lovers' appearance is both truthful and deceptive. Truthful, because there is a decorum between their spiritual nature and their outward form - the 'sence and the sensible';' but also deceptive, since their 'naturall' state (FQ

1. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), in Gregory G. Smith, ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (O.U.P., 1904), II, 1-193, p.174. See p.36 above.

II.xii.86.9) is that of men, and Acrasia's enchantment has distorted them into monstrous shapes. When the Palmer reverses the enchantment he removes that distortion; but he also destroys the decorum. Similarly, the reading of allegory involves the recovery of a sense beyond the literal sense - and a recognition that what is said and what is meant are two distinct things.

Compare this with the stripping of Duessa at *FQ* I.viii.45-49, a metamorphosis no less radical, if not so obviously magical. In the tradition of morality drama which informs so much of Book I Duessa's role is a familiar one: a vice disguises herself as a virtue and acts as a misleading guide and counsellor to the fallible hero. Here, too, the removal of an outer layer (in this case Duessa's clothes) becomes an act of interpretation, and Spenser introduces it as such, with the ringing formula, 'Such as she was, their eyes might her behold' (*FQ* I.viii.46.6). Like allegory, Duessa's beautiful appearance 'says' one thing but 'means' another, and the stripping away of this duplicitous surface serves to reveal her true nature. However, whereas the interpretation of Acrasia's beasts moved us away from analogical allegory towards a more 'naturall' situation, with Duessa it is the apparently natural situation which must itself be interpreted, to reveal the abstract moral verities that lie beneath. Where Guyon's task lay in interpreting a situation recognised as allegorical, the problem for Redcross is to realise the allegorical nature of the situation at all. Compared with the deceptiveness of her literal surface the analogy between Duessa's physical and moral ugliness is easily, almost instinctively, perceived, and Una is quick to draw the appropriate conclusion: 'Such is the face of falshood' (*FQ* I.viii.49.4).

These two different sorts of magical exegesis exemplify the double strain under which the fiction of *The Faerie Queene* labours. Enchanters like Duessa, Archimago, Acrasia and Busyrane must be recognised as such; while the understanding of their enchantment often entails its unravelment. The first of these operations tends to affirm the supernatural basis of Faerie, centring its creatures in magic and abstraction: 'Such is the face of falshood'. The second moves the poem's focus towards what is 'naturall' in the world outside the poem - for example the existence of intemperate men. The effect of revelations like those of the Palmer and Arthur is to polarise these two categories of being. Duessa, revealed in all her physical malformation, ceases (until she can again transform herself) to be effective as a deceiver. She becomes an unnatural creature, who can exist only as part of a magical world, and cannot be related to the world of experience except by way of an analogical understanding of the vice she represents. The intemperate lovers of Acrasia, by contrast, are brought out of their enchanted state towards a more 'naturall' setting in which they exemplify, rather than represent, intemperance. They are changed back into human form, and the Bower, with its seductive magic, is destroyed.

The contrast between the natural and the magical, and the movement from one to another *via* metamorphosis, seems to me to be just as important an axis of Spenser's universe as the more widely addressed distinction between nature and art. The changes in representation occasioned by such transformations tell us much about the poem's imaginative environment. When Duessa is unmasked, we (with Redcross) see how apparently natural encounters can in practice be imbued with universal significance. His dalliance is more than a moment's lapse -

he has paid court to the demonic embodiment of Deceit. Equally, the unnatural monsters surrounding the Bower are not merely the idle fancies of a poet's brain - their transformation into men shows that the fiction derives its moral authority from the concerns of the phenomenal world. These metamorphoses bring to the explicit narrative something which is implicit in any use of the allegorical method: a concern with the ways in which the universal can be seen in the particular, and the particular in the universal.

Allegory's 'brilliant resolution of the problem of the relation of particulars and the general or universal'¹ is for Rosemond Tuve its major strength. 'It is because its particulars may at any moment be seen for their metaphorical meaning that allegory could keep them so transparently tied to universals...'² Our reading of *The Faerie Queene* has certainly involved the ways in which the universal and the particular can be made to stand for each other; but the recurring feature of such coexistence has been its instability: it is associated with ambiguity, empathetic confusion, fissures in the poem's imaginative realisation. Indeed, it is in part the presence of these disconcerting elements which keeps us aware of the interaction of the universal and the particular in the text: the very artificiality of the conjunction goads us towards understanding.

To read allegory, however, is to destroy that conjunction. By reading, we separate and distinguish what the poem combines into a single fiction. In trying to escape the text's apparent contra-

1. Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: some mediaeval books and their posterity* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1966), p.252.

2. *ibid.*, p.253.

dictions we are led to make distinctions between what is literally and what is metaphorically spoken. Like the Palmer and Arthur, untangling enchantment by separating the truly magical from the 'naturall', the reader of allegory reaffirms the polarity of the universal and the particular, and sends the different elements of the text hurrying back to their respective ontological categories.

To read allegory is to make it less allegorical. There is a constant desire - which is the desire for understanding itself - to unravel allegory, to interpret it and divide it into its discrete elements. As readers we seek a context in which the poem's contradictions may be resolved, and in doing so dismantle the world which the poet has constructed. The integration of the universal and the particular can be perceived only at the moment of its dissolution. In order to sustain his fiction, the poet must always be spending himself in spinning out new threads with which to bind his world. *The Faerie Queene* is the product of a prodigious stamina, not only because of its length, but because of the imaginative labour needed to find new terms in which to express and renew its meaning.

Essential to this point is the fact that Spenserian allegory is a kinetic, not a pictorial, medium. Walter Ong has written of allegory in diagrammatic terms,¹ but in fact it is only the set of allegory's analogical referents which may be described in this way, not the allegory itself. Allegory is a way of using language, and like all language it moves only in time. The experience of reading allegory comprises more than the instant at which an enigmatic text yields its meaning: it is also the pressure towards understanding which comes

1. See pp.73-76 above.

from the sense of that meaning inarticulately felt, the moment when the contradictions of the text are held before the reader like a sustained discord which must be resolved by some new harmony; and it is the moment of relief when that harmony seems to come, and the allegory lies disposed into patterns of meaning as if in final and definitive stasis, only to be cast into new relationships by the inexorable movement of the text, revealing what was said before as a provisional part of a larger argument whose character lies hidden in enigma, and so again building the desire to understand.

Allegory depends for its effect upon a succession of moments, a process which is bound to time. Yet time is also the agent of impermanence and decay. Mutabilite's case at *FQ* VII.vii largely depends upon her production of the signs of time, over all of which she holds sway: seasons, months, day, night, hours, life and death:

...*Times* do change and moue continually.
So nothing here long standeth in one stay.

VII.vii.47.6-7

Quod me destruit me nutrit. Allegory must work within time, for 'mutability... is the secret gate through which the universal invades the particular' - the condition for the experience which can reveal meaning beyond experience. But time is also the agent of allegory's disintegration. What we noted in the last chapter with regard to Malbecco, Amoret and Mirabella is also true of allegory itself - that it is sustained by the very force which tends to its destruction. The versatility and length of *The Faerie Queene* are a heroic gesture

1. Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Faber and Faber, 1958, rpt. with revisions 1968, rpt. O.U.P., 1980), p.196.

against the onslaught of mutability, but the constant effort of renewal is ultimately insupportable.

Time is the condition of the sublunary world. Still more important, it is also the condition of the sinful world. By being the opposite of God's ever-present eternity, in which all things are instantaneously and completely manifest, mutable time becomes the ultimate sign of man's fallen state. Thus Lucifera's house is topped with 'a Diall' to tell 'the timely howres' (FQ I.iv.4.9); while Mutabilitie, who presides over time's effects, is introduced in terms which suggest both Luciferan ambition and the sin of Adam:

Ne shee the lawes of Nature onely brake,
But eke of Iustice, and of Policie;
And wrong of right, and bad of good did make,
And death for life exchanged foolishlie:
Since which, all liuing wights haue learn'd to die,
And all this world is woxen daily worse.
O pittious worke of MVTABILITIE!
By which, we all are subiect to that curse,
And death in stead of life haue sucked from our Nurse.

VII.vi.6

Within this picture of a post-lapsarian world, the suggestion that the 'world is woxen daily worse' strikes a peculiarly Spenserian note.' Not only is time a sign of sin in itself, but its passing accompanies a steady deterioration in the world's state - a fact which, as I shall suggest, has disconcerting implications for allegory. Spenser's most extensive disquisition on the theme appears in the Proem to Book V:

1. See, for example, FQ I.xii.14.8-9, FQ II.vii.16-17, FQ III.i.13, FQ IV.viii.29-33. For references to other Elizabethan expressions of the same sentiment see Hiram Haydn, *The Counter-Renaissance* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1950), pp.532-33.

So oft as I with state of present time,
The image of the antique world compare,
When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
Such oddes I finde twixt those, and these which are,
As that, through long continuance of his course,
Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
From the first point of his appointed sourse,
And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse.

V. Proem. 1

Spenser goes on to draw a parallel between man's moral decay and the state of the universe, in which the constellations have moved out of their original position:

For who so list into the heauens looke,
And search the courses of the rowling spheares,
Shall find that from the point, where they first tooke
Their setting forth, in these few thousand yeares
They all are wandred much; that plaine appeares.

V. Proem. 5. 1-5

This principle can also be applied to language. Martha Craig, in her important essay on 'The Secret Wit of Spenser's Language',¹ has shown that Spenser's use of words corresponds with the view expressed by Socrates in Plato's *Cratylus*. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates rejects the suggestion that the names applied to objects are merely conventional, and claims that each object's true name is given to it by a legislator, who names it according to its nature. Although language has changed since objects were first given names, their true (that is, original) meaning can often be recovered by studying their etymology. Craig shows that Spenser's archaic language, which many readers have

1. Martha Craig, 'The Secret Wit of Spenser's Language', in *Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Paul Alpers (O.U.P., 1967), pp.447-72, rpt. in *Essential Articles for the study of Edmund Spenser*, ed. A.C Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), pp.313-33.

seen as an affectation,' might more usefully be considered as an attempt to restore words to their proper use: 'The search for older forms is a search for the true forms that are ideally expressive.'² Archaism becomes the means of redeeming the language from the decay imposed upon it by time.

Craig goes on to show how Spenser's etymological spelling of words can produce witty effects, providing an explanatory or ironic gloss on the use of contemporary words. What she does not stress is that, insofar as archaism is the mechanism of Spenser's wit, the fact of the language's decay becomes the necessary precondition of that wit. If the language had remained in its pristine state, no wit deriving from the difference between former and present use would be possible. As Angus Fletcher has written, 'puns generated from [an etymological] ground have the properties accruing to it, chief of which is a rooted characteristic of *structure in time*' (his italics).³ If we place this principle in the context of a philosophy in which time is a symbol of flux and impermanence, and its passing serves only to mark the deterioration of the world into further corruption, it appears that the ability to make etymological puns is the prerogative of a fallen world.

-
1. This is the most frequent complaint made against Spenser by his contemporaries, including Sidney in his *Defence* and Ben Jonson in *Timber*. Even E.K. felt it necessary to include a pre-emptive justification in the preface to *The Shepheardes Calender*. See Sir Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (O.U.P., 1966), p.64; Ben Jonson, *The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p.428; Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, ed. J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (O.U.P., 1912), pp.416-17. Other comments on Spenser's language and style are conveniently gathered in R.M. Cummings, ed., *Spenser: The Critical Heritage* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), pp.277-343.
 2. Craig, p.317.
 3. Angus Fletcher, *The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser* (Chicago and London: Chicago U.P., 1971), p.103.

I think that this is true of allegory in general, and it suggests another way in which allegory is destructively dependent on time. The decay of language means that what words mean and what they seem to mean become two different things - they no longer manifest that 'ideally expressive' quality which leaves no room for misunderstanding or deception. But allegory depends on just such a duality. The difference between seeming and being - between the literal sense and the analogical - is the structural basis of allegorical meaning.

The precondition for allegory is also the precondition for sin. The deception of Duessa relies on the difference between appearance and reality. The Blatant Beast, as Humphrey Tonkin has written, 'is able to flourish only in situations where being and seeming have parted company'.¹ Acrasia's base lover Grill can be changed into a form which expresses his moral state and yet is not 'naturall' only because his sin has destroyed the correspondence between his human and moral natures: he has 'forgot the excellence/ Of his creation, when he life began' (FQ II.xii.87.2-3). He seems to be a beast, and yet he is a man. Restored, he seems to be a man, and yet he is beastlike in his lusts. In playing on this fact, Spenser may attempt to redeem language; but he can do so only by taking advantage of the fact that it is not redeemed.

In Chapter 1 we examined two episodes from *The Faerie Queene* - Scudamour's adventure in the Temple of Venus, and Calidore's entrance

1. Humphrey Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral; Book Six of The 'Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p.410.

to the pastoral world of the shepherds - in which the exemplary and the analogical senses of the text appeared to be incompatible. We found that, despite this incompatibility, neither way of reading could be maintained independently of the other. The resulting aesthetic confusion became the medium of an underlying ambivalence about the natures of courtship and of courtesy: in these cases at least, allegory's theoretical distinction between discrete senses was not allowed to effect a factitious resolution of extra-literary issues. Nevertheless, because allegorical fiction does combine the metaphorical and the literal, it is liable to the sort of 'punning' use of language which can seem to resolve tensions in the world of experience. In such cases the ability of language to mean more than one thing becomes a way of figuring forth a paradox or mystery, and the allegorical text becomes visionary.

Perhaps the most important example of this in *The Faerie Queene* is the passage describing the scene upon Mount Acidale at FQ VI.x. We have said that in Book VI the poem addresses the competing claims of two definitions of courtesy: one courtly and formal, associating virtue with high rank; the other pastoral and stoical, locating virtue in the breast of the individual. The Book opens with an affirmation of the courtly view, relating courtesy to its etymological origin: 'Of Court, it seemes, men Courtesie doe call' (FQ VI.1.1.1). But in Book VI the court is no longer 'ideally expressive' of courtesy: its decay into vanity means that it has lost its claim to be the sole exemplar of its eponymous virtue. And with the change of the court, the language of 'courtesy' has become ambiguous and doubtful. Acidale seems to offer a means of resolving that ambiguity.

Acidale is in part a pastoral vision. Its rusticity is indicated both by its setting in the shepherds' country, and in the figure of Colin Clout, who sustains the scene with music from his bagpipes. But an equally prominent feature in Spenser's presentation is the emphasis on rank and formality, essentially courtly traits. One sign of this is the small court of birds at *FQ* VI.x.6, recalling Chaucer's *Parliament* in its insistence on precedence:

It was an hill plaste in an open plaine,
That round about was bordered with a wood
Of matchlesse hight, that seem'd th'earth to disdaine,
In which all trees of honour stately stood,
And did all winter as in sommer bud,
Spredding pavillions for the birds to bowre,
Which in their lower braunches sung aloud;
And in their tops the soring hauke did towre,
Sitting like King of fowles in maiesty and powre.

VI.x.6'

Nymphs and fairies sit on the banks of the stream at the bottom of the hill, ready to repel wild beasts and 'the ruder clowne' (*FQ* VI.x.7.4), while on top of the hill the maiden at the centre of the vision is surrounded by concentric rings of ladies and (nearer the centre) the three Graces. This part of the vision appears to allude to the April Eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*, in which the list of attendants at Eliza's pastoral court descends in due rank from gods such as Phoebus and Cynthia, through the Muses, the Graces and the 'Ladies of the lake' (*April* 1.127) (nymphs, as E.K. informs us, typically classicising Spenser's practice), down to mere shepherds' daughters. Such a hierarchy is appropriate, for Acidale too is a court, albeit a recreative one:

1. Compare Chaucer, *The Parliament of Fowls*, ll.323-29.

They say that *Venus*, when she did dispose
Her selfe to pleasaunce, vsed to resort
Vnto this place, and therein to repose
And rest her selfe, as in a gladsome port,
Or with the Graces there to play and sport;
That euen her owne Cytheron, though in it
She vsed to keepe her royall court,
And in her soueraine Maiesty to sit,
She in regard hereof refusde and thought vnfit.

VI.x.9

Venus does not appear in this vision, however. At the centre of the circle of Graces, where we might expect to find her, there stands instead a humble country girl. This is a shocking, even anarchic, inversion of the decorum established in the preceding stanzas;¹ yet Spenser insists that the sight is fitting:

She that in the midst of them did stand,
Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excell,
Crown'd with a rosie girlond, that right well
Did her beseeme.

VI.x.14.3-6

The exact status of this girl seems uncertain: a moment before Colin declares that she is 'certes but a countrey lasse' (FQ VI.x.25.8) he speculates as to whether she is 'a creature, or a goddesse' (FQ VI.x.25.4). In the next two stanzas the paradoxical answer emerges: the maid's many virtues have inspired the Graces to make her one of their number, thus conferring on her heavenly rank:

Another Grace she well deserues to be,
In whom so many Graces gathered are...

VI.x.27.1-2

1. As so often, the way that people *misread* the poem can tell us much about the manipulation of our expectation. Stevie Davies, for instance, unconsciously restores the decorum of this passage by writing that Colin identifies the girl to Calidore as Gloriana herself. Stevie Davies, *The Idea of Woman in Renaissance Literature; The Feminine Reclaimed* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1985), p.40.

This is the linguistic crux of the description, the point at which the punning capacity of allegorical language is utilised to rescue nature from its own contradictions. By using his mythopoeic powers to make the Graces both qualities in the maid and objective beings, Spenser unravels a contradictory set of doctrines about the conflicting claims of personal desert and social rank, and makes of them a consistent narrative. The maid is no longer simply a 'countrey lasse', because the favour of the Graces has made her a Grace. Yet what do the Graces represent but just those qualities which are praised in the maid as 'Graces'? The capitalisation of 'Graces' at FQ VI.x.27.2 highlights this equivalence. In a sense it is the maid's desert (which is her own despite lowly birth) which confers high rank, which in turn is the courtly prerequisite for the higher virtues constituting desert. The situation is logically circular, but this circularity provides the means for a punning resolution of the Book's major doctrinal tension. The vision of the girl is revealed as an icon in which contrary doctrines are infolded.

But *The Faerie Queene* is a product of language, not of visual art, and its pictorial visions cannot be sustained. The text moves on, stanza after stanza. As readers, we cannot let the resolution offered by the vision be definitive, for the narrative concerns of Calidore's quest and his love for Pastorella stand unresolved, and in unresolved opposition. Moreover, we, like Calidore, seek to understand our experience, and the vision's flight stands between us and Colin's exposition - 'a chastening sequence for interpreters to reflect upon':

1. Alastair Fowler, 'Emanations of glory: Neoplatonic order in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*', in Judith M. Kennedy and James A. Reither, ed., *A Theatre for Spenserians* (Toronto: Toronto U.P., 1973), pp.53-82 (p.63).

Therefore resolving, what it was, to know,
Out of the wood he rose, and toward them did go.

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;
All saue the shepheard, who for fell despight
Of that displeasure, broke his bag-pipe quight...

VI.x.17.8-18.5

To read allegory, I have said, is to make it less allegorical. Calidore, like a chivalric version of the man from Porlock, interrupts the process of creation, which 'by no meanes thou canst recall againe' (FQ VI.x.20.3). But his action is more than a piece of random 'ill fortune' (FQ VI.x.20.7): it exemplifies the process of all reading, which strives towards understanding, even to the point of destroying that which it seeks to understand. What the vision combines, Colin's explanation to Calidore separates and defines: his exegesis interposes itself between us and the beauty of the Graces' dance, freezing it into a set of analogical relations:

Therefore they alwaies smoothly seeme to smile,
That we likewise should mylde and gentle be,
And also naked are, that without guile
Or false dissemblance all them plaine may see,
Simple and true from couert malice free:
And eeke them selues so in their daunce they bore,
That two of them still froward' seem'd to bee,
But one still towards shew'd her selfe afore;
That good should from vs goe, then come in greater store.

VI.x.24

The paradox which enables Colin's love 'to be another Grace' (FQ VI.x.16.9) is not sustained. In the stanzas following Colin's interpretation the social distinctions which the vision had seemed to circumvent return with greater force. Spenser (in the person of

1. 'forward' in the 1596 text.

Colin) apologises to his sovereign for devoting two stanzas to the praise of his mistress, and already the woman is no more than a 'poore handmayd' (FQ VI.x.28.6), her status as a fourth Grace forgotten, or acknowledged merely as a complimentary fiction. By the end of the Canto Meliboe and his people have been carried off by a band of lawless brigands, who destroy the pastoral world as effectively as the Blatant Beast could ever have done; and by the end of the Book Calidore's country love Pastorella will have been revealed (by ostentatiously conventional means) as an aristocrat. This factitious narrative device does not solve the difficulty of defining courtesy - rather, it highlights the poem's inability to do so outside the fragile environment of Acidale, and thus foreshadows the final failure implicit in the escape of the Blatant Beast into Elizabethan England (FQ VI.xii.40-41). Allegory could never provide a definition of courtesy short of paradox, because the contradictions involved in such a definition are not something over which it has control. The world to which allegory addresses itself is corrupt, and the language of allegory mirrors that corruption. As Jacqueline Miller has said:

The act of creation that could produce the ideal Faeryland of Book II also insists that Faeryland ultimately is part of the actual world where those ideals cannot be permanently possessed, a world from which those ideals recede as soon as they draw near. The poet does not see conflict between Faeryland and actuality, he sees congruence; he does not so much acknowledge that "real life" contradicts his art, but that it defines and structures it.¹

Allegory does not have the power to achieve a perfect and durable harmony between the universal and the particular. In a fallen world

1. Jacqueline T. Miller, 'The Status of Faeryland: Spenser's "Unjust Possession"', *ESQ*, V (1984), 31-44, pp.40-41.

that is impossible, and one effect of Acidale's disintegration is to remind us of the impossibility.' Rather, the distinctive feature of allegory is the sustained effort with which it attempts to keep its intractable materials in a relationship of decorum. Allegory centres our attention where it should be centred, at the place where particular fact meets universal meaning. The allegorical universe is constantly unmade, but it is constantly remade by the Protean poet, whose skill shows itself in the discovery of new ways in which to reveal the immanence of meaning in experience.

If we seek a symbol of this poetic effort, we shall find it not so much in Acidale as in the description of Concord and the two half-brothers Love and Hate, a group found by Scudamour in the porch of the Temple of Venus:

On either side of her, two young men stood,
Both strongly arm'd, as fearing one another;
Yet were they brethren both of halfe the blood,
Begotten by two fathers of one mother,
Though of contrarie natures each to other;
The one of them hight *Love*, the other *Hate*,
Hate was the elder, *Love* the younger brother;
Yet was the younger stronger in his state
Then th'elder, and him maystred still in all debate.

Nathlesse that Dame so well them tempred both,
That she them forced hand to loyne in hand,
Albe that *Hatred* was thereto full loth,
And turn'd his face away, as he did stand,
Vnwilling to behold that louely band.
Yet she was of such grace and vertuous might,
That her commaundment he could not withstand,
But bit his lip for felonous despight,
And gnasht his yron tuskes at that displeasing sight.

IV. x. 32-33

1. The Appendix to this thesis suggests a possible source for the description of Acidale which tends to confirm the importance of this aspect of the passage.

The first of these stanzas depicts the 'contrarie natures' of Hate and Love analogically, through their physical antagonism. Neither party visibly exemplifies his eponymous quality: their simple oppositional stance could equally represent Night and Day, Life and Death, or any other pair of binary opposites. Those things which particularly distinguish them - age, strength and parentage - are not differences of temperament but analogical signs, requiring interpretation. Otherwise, the two figures are described in similar terms: each is a young man, each is armed, each is fearful for his safety.

In the second stanza this analogical description is elaborated. If the physical antagonism of Hate and Love symbolises the moral opposition of the qualities they represent, then one might expect that both would be unwilling to shake. Indeed, the two are not differentiated at the beginning of the stanza: both are 'tempred' by Concord, and 'forced' to join hands. However, while there is no reference to the specific reaction of Love to this coercion, Spenser lingers for several lines over Hate's detestation of the gesture. By this device he is able to insinuate the suggestion that Hate exemplifies, as well as represents, hatred.

Hate's reaction to the handshake is as explicit a manifestation of the tension between analogical and exemplary interpretation as any in *The Faerie Queene*. How can he shake hands, and yet be Hate? Hate cannot even bear to see his own action; but he is unable to refuse the command of Concord. Concord does not make these forces compatible, or turn Hate into Love, but their 'louely band' is sustained by her will. The unspeakable contradiction which makes Hate gnash his 'yron tuskes' is thrown into still greater prominence by the fact that Spenser does not describe *how* Concord's injunction is enforced. Her power is

implicit in the nature of the poetic universe. Like the poet, Concord must restrain and order the recalcitrant elements of a fallen world which continually threatens to lapse into chaos:

By her the heauen is in his course contained,
And all the world in state vnmoued stands,
As their Almighty maker first ordained,
And bound them with inuiolable bands;
Else would the waters ouerflow the lands,
And fire deuoure the ayre, and hell them quight,
But that she holds them with her blessed hands.

IV.x.35.1-7

Concord's unseen power might stand for the secret power exerted by all allegory, as it attempts to marry the universal and the particular. If the gesture which Concord sustains in the Temple of Venus seems to promise the existence of some wider perspective in which the apparent opposition of Hate and Love may be seen as part of a larger unity, allegory too is founded on an optimistic premise - that the apparent dichotomy between experience and significance is limited and ultimately illusory. The Canto in which Concord appears illustrates both these points: the literal kidnap of Amoret by Scudamour stands in apparent opposition to its own analogical significance; but his seizure of Amoret's hand - another handshake resented by one of the parties - meets with the approval of Venus, confirming the analogy of courtship which underlies its literal violence, and marking it as an example of Concord's *discordia concors*:

And euermore vpon the Goddesse face
Mine eye was fixt, for feare of her offence,
Whom when I saw with amiable grace
To laugh at me, and fauour my pretence,
I was emboldned with more confidence...

IV.x.56.1-5

Discord as the sign of a higher unity - this is a Neo-Platonic commonplace with which Spenser could hardly have been unfamiliar.' Here it expresses itself in the hermaphroditic Venus, who combines contrary sexes in her own body (FQ IV.x.41) - a motif which is to find its ultimate expression in the figure of Nature herself:

This great Grandmother of all creatures bred
Great *Nature*, euer young yet full of eld,
Still moouing, yet vnmoued from her sted;
Vnseene of any, yet of all beheld...

VII.vii.13.1-4

Paradoxical language of this kind is a recurring feature in *The Faerie Queene*. The language of the mutable world may be disabled by its own corrupt nature from direct reference to objects beyond that world, but by denying its own premises - like the axiom which forbids self-contradiction - it can at least point tropically to the existence of such objects. Nature, young yet old, moving yet still, lies beyond the power of Time and mutability. In Acidale the trees 'all winter as in sommer bud' (FQ VI.x.6.5); while in the Garden of Adonis, where Adonis lies paradoxically 'eterne in mutabilitie' (FQ III.vi.47.5), there is 'continuall spring, and haruest.../ Continuall' (FQ III.vi.42.1-2). Time is the agent of change and decay, and thence of contradiction, but contradictions such as these suggest the destruction of Time, as all its effects are gathered into one changeless and eternal moment.

There are similar implications in the use of the allegorical method itself. Allegory, in labouring to join the universal and the par-

1. See Wind, pp.191-217, for its occurrence in Cusanus, Ficino, Pico and Bruno amongst others.

ticular, the essential and the contingent, implies an aspect in which they are truly harmonious, even though the only terms in which this harmony can manifest itself are those of contradiction. Although the logical and empathetic complications involved in reading allegory betray themselves in absurdity, it is precisely in the destruction of the allegorical fiction that we can perceive the faith which its paradoxical nature implies. This ambiguity at the heart of contradiction is well described by Ronald Levaio, writing on that most subtle exponent of paradox, Nicholas of Cusa:

The coincidence of minimum and maximum recalls to us God as the absolute unity that unites all things. The manifesting of these points also recalls the dynamic potential of the human mind as it attempts to reconcile opposing geometrical forms, enlarging its domain even as it seeks to collapse its distinctions. Finally, the coincidence of opposites has symbolized the limit beyond which the mind cannot go; an illustration not of the divine but of the mystery that prevents the individual from comprehending it, because it is "far and away beyond our understanding, which is fundamentally unable by any rational process to reconcile contradictories." The coincidence of opposites, then, represents the infinite, the finite, the reconciliation of the infinite and finite, and the immeasurable gulf between them. It becomes a powerful symbol of the ambiguities of human discourse, not an escape from them.¹

Paradoxical or self-contradictory language - and in this description I would include the implicitly contradictory language of allegory - provides a means by which a world subject to mutability can refer to things which are immutable. It is thus the sign both of discord and of the impulse towards a transcendent harmony, and can be used as evidence for either. In the debate between Jove and Mutabilitie in Book VII, the fact that everything in the world is changeable provides

1. Ronald Levaio, *Renaissance Minds and their Fictions: Cusanus, Sidney, Shakespeare* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: California U.P., 1985), p.31.

the basis of Mutabilitie's case for rule of the heavens, but Jove, without challenging the evidence provided, gives it a different and transcendent interpretation:

Right true it is, that these
And all things else that vnder heauen dwell
Are chaung'd of *Time*, who doth them all disseise
Of being: But, who is it (to me tell)
That *Time* himselve doth moue and still compell
To keepe his course? Is not that namely wee
Which poure that vertue from our heauenly cell,
That moues them all, and makes them changed be?
So them we gods doe rule, and in them also thee.

VII.vii.48.1-9

To this argument Mutabilitie responds with Stratonician scepticism:

Ye may attribute to your selues as Kings,
And say they by your secret powre are made:
But what we see not, who shall vs perswade?

VII.vii.49.3-5

The basis of the debate does not lie in a dispute about the behaviour of things on earth, but in the question of whether there is a privileged perspective from which to view that behaviour. Mutabilitie refuses to admit the existence of any perspective beyond that of the mutable flux itself. Even the gods, she claims, are subject to her law: and in evidence she points to the eccentric orbits observed by the planets above the lunar sphere (*FQ* VII.vii.50-52). However, the very attempt to pursue her claim through due process of law tends to undermine her denial of a transcendent perspective, as James Nohrnberg has pointed out: 'By appealing to the *de jure* authority of Nature, Mutabilitie inevitably recognizes the existence

of a "nature" other than her own, a nature characterized as a law-giver, rather than a lawbreaker.''

Nature's judgement reaffirms Jove's view that time is in reality the servant of the objects it seems to destroy:

I well consider all that ye haue sayd,
And find that all things stedfastnes doe hate
And changed be: yet being rightly wayd
They are not changed from their first estate;
But by their change their being do dilate:
And turning to themselues at length againe,
Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
Then ouer them Change doth not rule and raigne;
But they raigne ouer change, and doe their states maintaine.
VII.vii.58

In this overarching perspective the sublunary view of change as a meaningless flux is denied. Instead, mutability is revealed as the means by which the universe fulfils its own identity. Things change, but only to become (in the Aristotelian sense) more perfect, more themselves. As R.L. Colie notes, 'The solution Nature presents is the paradox uniting Being and Becoming.'² The assurance that things turn 'to themselues at length againe' serves in part to show that the months and seasons who are Mutabilitie's witnesses actually contribute to a natural order whose state is maintained, not changed, by their cyclical progression. But Nature's words also allude to the Neo-Platonic doctrine whereby the universe is represented as taking part in a continuous process of emanation from and return to the One. In this theory, the changing state of time and space is simply the means

1. James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of 'The Faerie Queene'* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1976), p.744.

2. Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1966, rpt. Archon Books, 1976), p.345.

by which engendered objects fulfil their own, intrinsically mutable nature.'

One problem with this optimistic teleology is that it sits very ill with Spenser's repeated statements elsewhere in the poem that the world, so far from becoming more ideally expressive of its own nature, is in a state of chronic decay. Although her words do not disallow a belief in the original perfection of the universe, or even in a subsequent departure from that pristine condition, it is noticeable that Nature avoids, or at least defers, any direct reference to the tricky issue of why things turn from 'themselves' in the first place. This, after all, is a question to which Luther and Plotinus give very different answers. As more than one critic has observed, the Cantos makes it clear that Mutabilitie is both the cause and the result of the Fall,² and this logical contradiction inevitably frustrates any effort to find (within the terms of these Cantos) an extrinsic explanation for the original corruption of nature. The universe described in the first part of Nature's judgement exhibits mutability as an intrinsic principle of its own development. It is only in the second part that this development is placed in the context of eternity:

-
1. For the relationship of Nature's description to Plotinian and Boethian theory see Robert Ellrodt, *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1960), pp.68-70; William Nelson, *The Poetry of Edmund Spenser; a Study* (New York and London: Columbia U.P., 1963), pp.307-14; John Erskine Hankins, *Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory: A Study of 'The Faerie Queene'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.290-91; Patricia A. Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1979), pp.54-64.
 2. Maurice Evans, *Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism; a commentary on the 'Faerie Queene'* (C.U.P., 1970), p.231; Marion Campbell, 'Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos* and the End of *The Faerie Queene*', *Southern Review: Literary and Interdisciplinary Studies*, 15 (1982), 46-59, p.48. See *FQ* VII.vi.5-6.

Cease therefore daughter further to aspire,
And thee content thus to be rul'd by me:
For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire;
But time shall come that all shall changed bee,
And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see.

VII.vii.59.1-5

These lines attack Mutabilitie's position on ontological rather than teleological grounds. Within the limited perspective proposed by Mutabilitie, change implies a lack of decorum between being and seeming, essence and contingent effect. She describes a world of constant alteration, where things can no longer be ideally expressive of their own nature. For her rule to be extended to the heavens even the gods must be shown to be subject to the same chaotic tendencies. And yet, as we have pointed out, the very fact that Mutabilitie makes her claim through law, submitting herself to the arbitration of Nature (whose sergeant is Order (FQ VII.vii.4.6)), suggests that she accepts that Nature has authority to make judgements according to the true nature of things, and is therefore not limited to mutable appearance. In fact, not only does her claim admit this perspective, it actually depends upon it, for her right to rule everything that is mutable is based upon the perception of a correspondence between the mutability of things in the world and her role as Mutabilitie itself.

This paradox lies at the heart of Mutabilitie's position, and is made explicit in Nature's warning that her actions undermine her very nature. Mutabilitie is a product of the world she rules, and consequently any desire to impose a decorum which is antithetical to that world's nature threatens her own status. The reference to the Apocalypse brings this contradiction into sharp relief. At the end of the world being and seeming shall again be one: but for a creature whose existence depends upon their separation this is equivalent to

extinction - hence the perversity of pursuing such an end through law: 'For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire'. The logical manoeuvre used by Nature here is familiar in literature dealing with the transition from the temporal to the eternal world. It finds famous (and pertinent) expression both in Donne:

One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death thou shalt die.¹

and in Shakespeare:

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.²

In the two stanzas of the 'vnperfite' eighth Canto of Book VII Spenser turns from Nature, whose paradoxical nature implies the eternal, to a consideration of eternal God Himself. The poet, led by the divided language of his own allegory, contemplates the ultimate unity to which it points. But this is a task which Spenser recognises is not possible in the terms of mutable language, and the poem ends not in description but in a prayer to see that which is hidden to mortal eyes: 'O that great Sabbath God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight' (FQ VII.viii.2.9). As Michael Holahan comments, this is 'a new kind of invocation that marks the end rather than the beginning of poetic inspiration'.³

-
1. John Donne, 'Death be not proud', ll.13-14, in *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert J.C. Grierson (O.U.P., 1971), p.297.
 2. William Shakespeare, Sonnet 146, ll.13-14, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, Harry Levin *et al* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), p.1776.
 3. Michael Holahan, 'Janque opus exegi; Ovid's Changes and Spenser's Brief Epic of Mutability', *ELR*, 6 (1976), 244-70, p.267.

When, in *An Hymne of Heavenly Beavtie*, Spenser tries to describe the beauty of God, he finds that it cannot be stated in direct terms - 'How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse, / The image of such endless perfectnesse?' (HHB 104-105). However, it can be approached through seeing the ways that God's beauty is made manifest in creation. Nature is a 'looking glasse' (HHB 115), or a 'brasen booke' (HHB 130) in which God's beauty can be read. Behind its mutable surface Nature carries divine meaning - it is an allegory of God. The task of His creatures is to find Him in creation, and then turn from creation to Him. The *Hymne*, like the *Mutabilitie Cantos*, ends with a rejection of the world, and an embracing of the eternal sabbath:

...looke at last vp to that soueraine light,
From whose pure beams al perfect beauty springs,
That kindleth loue in euery godly spright,
Euen the loue of God, which loathing brings
Of this vile world, and these gay seeming things;
With whose sweete pleasures being so possesst,
Thy straying thoughts henceforth for euer rest.

HHB 295-301

Allegory deals with the construction of fictions: it enfolds meaning into itself, and thus imitates nature, in which the beauty and love of God are enfolded. But allegory is also concerned to unfold its meaning: by doing so it makes its purpose manifest, just as nature shows mortal creatures a way of viewing God's beauty, 'as in a brasen booke' (HHB 130). Allegory's ends and nature's ends are one: both point to ways in which they must be overgone. As the poet of the *Hymne* finally rejects the nature which shows him the way to God, so the reader of allegory must seek beyond its contradictions, for those contradictions are a sign of language's inadequacy to describe its ultimate subject. Allegory is part of 'this state of life so tickle'

(FQ VII.viii.1.6): although it may lead its reader to the edge of the mutable world it cannot go beyond the simple contradiction of terms which is language's nearest approximation to the mystery of the Godhead. That which is in itself ideally expressive stands in no need of description - and in the sabbath of eternity the language which depends upon the succession of moments will have no place. This is a conclusion which Cusanus foresaw: the doctrines of enfolding and unfolding, *complicatio* and *explicatio*, cease to have meaning or function in the presence of God:

When I behold Thee, my God, in Paradise, girt by that wall of the coincidence of opposites, I see that Thou dost neither enfold nor unfold, whether separately or together. For disjunction and conjunction alike are that wall of coincidence, beyond which Thou existest, set free from all that can be spoken or thought.¹

1. Nicholas of Cusa, *De Visione Dei*, in John Patrick Dolan, ed., *Unity and Reform: Selected Writings of Nicholas De Cusa* (Chicago and Crawfordville: Notre Dame U.P., 1962), pp.133-84 (p.152).

APPENDIX

SPENSER AND PETRARCH'S CANZONE CCCXXIII.

Petrarch's Canzone CCCXXIII is one of a series of poems lamenting the death of Laura. It begins with five twelve-line stanzas, in each of which the poet sees a sight of great beauty - a hind, a ship, a laurel tree, a spring and a phoenix - only to witness its sudden and violent destruction. Although the exact significance of these visions is a matter of dispute, it is generally agreed that each corresponds allegorically to some aspect of Laura's virtue or beauty, which is admired by the poet and then wasted by death.¹ A sixth stanza follows in which the lady herself is seen walking: but a snake bites her and she dies. The lady mounts up to heaven, and the poet reflects that on earth only tears are certain to endure. The Canzone ends with a short envoy in which the poet desires death:

Canzon, tu puoi ben dire:
Queste sei visioni al signor mio
Han fatto un dolce di morir desio.²

In 1569 a translation of Petrarch's poem appeared as part of the first English edition of John Van der Noodt's militantly Protestant work entitled *A Theatre, wherein be represented as wel the miseries*

-
1. See Stephen Minta, *Petrarch and Petrarchism: The English and French Traditions* (Manchester: Manchester U.P., 1980), pp.88-91.
 2. Canzone CCCXXIII, ll.73-75, in Minta, p.81.

and calamities that follow the voluptuous worldlings as also the greate joyes and pleasures which the faithfull do enjoy. An argument both profitable and delectable to all that sincerely love the Word of God. This volume also includes blank verse translations of several sonnets by Joachim du Bellay, and four sonnets based on the Book of Revelation, illustrated with woodcuts and gathered under the general title of *Sonets*.¹ The theme of du Bellay's sequence is 'the worldes unstedfastnesse' (*Sonets* 1.12). A ghost appears to the poet in his sleep, and shows him a series of visions of apparent magnificence - a strong building, a giant and the spirit of Rome, amongst others - all of which are subsequently undermined and destroyed. The ghost comments that 'onely God surmountes the force of tyme', and that therefore confidence should be placed 'in God alone' (*Sonets* 11.13-14).

The similarities between the visions of du Bellay and those of Petrarch are clear enough - indeed, it was Marot's translation of Petrarch which provided du Bellay's inspiration. Even some of the objects they see destroyed - a tree, a spring of water - are the same in both sequences. However, in Petrarch's poem, as I have said, each stanza represents not earthly glory in general but an aspect of Laura's virtue. Although Laura's death convinces the poet of the transience of earthly felicity, at this point in the *Canzoniere* he reacts not with the *contemptus mundi* of du Bellay but with grief and a simple weariness of life. Despite his confidence that Laura has gone to heaven, the poet's final wish for death seems concerned more with a

1. The poems from the *Theatre* are included as an Appendix in Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, ed, J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (O.U.P., 1912), pp.605-608.

release from pain than with any desire for the eternal. This difference is emphasised in Marot's version of the envoy, in which the poet, so far from asking to see God, wishes merely to rest in the earth ('sous la Terre').

The translation of the Canzone which appears in the *Theatre* (which is taken from Marot's French rather than directly from the Italian) is divided into six separate poems under the title *Epigrams*, each Epigram being illustrated with its own woodcut. In this way the appearance of the poem is made to resemble that of the sonnet sequence by du Bellay in the same volume - two of the Epigrams are even padded out to sonnet length, perhaps in an aborted attempt to impose some sort of 'house style'. The separation of the Canzone's stanzas also tends to disguise the very different tones of Petrarch's and du Bellay's work. Although Van der Noodt was aware of the allegorical nature of the Canzone,¹ the form of its presentation is such as to obscure its allegorical structure. The climactic prominence of the poet's last vision, in which he finally sees his beloved undisguised by allegorical devices, is largely dissipated, as each Epigram is made to stand alone, merely one in a series of images of transient beauty. From being an allegorical lament for the death of Laura, Petrarch's poem becomes, like du Bellay's, primarily a demonstration of the fickleness of earthly life.

The first suggestion that Spenser was the author of these translations came in 1591 when, following the success of the first part of

1. See Peter Bayley, *Edmund Spenser: Prince of Poets* (London: Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1971), p.29.

The Faerie Queene, its publisher William Ponsonbie produced a collection of poems by Spenser under the title *Complaints. Containing sundrie small Poemes of the Worlds Vanitie*, which included versions of the translations of du Bellay and Petrarch. Of these, *The Visions of Bellay* had been considerably reworked from their appearance in Van der Noodt's book. Several new translations had been added, and they had been converted from blank verse to Shakespearian sonnet form. *The Visions of Petrarch* were very much closer to their original state, except in two respects. First, those Epigrams which were previously left with only twelve lines were now expanded to fourteen. Secondly, Petrarch's small envoy was replaced with a new sonnet:

When I behold this tickle trustles state
Of vaine worlds glorie, flitting too and fro,
And mortall men tossed by troublous fate
In restles seas of wretchednes and woe,
I wish I might this wearie life forgoe,
And shortly turne vnto my happie rest,
Where my free spirite might not anie moe
Be vext with sights, that doo her peace molest.
And ye faire Ladie, in whose bounteous brest
All heauenly grace and vertue shrined is,
When ye these rhymes doo read, and vew the rest,
Loath this base world, and thinke of heauens blis:
Although ye be the fairest of Gods creatures,
Yet thinke, that death shall spoyle your goodly features.

The addition of this sonnet serves to accentuate the shift of emphasis given to Petrarch's poem in the *Theatre*. Where Petrarch's envoy had simply expressed a desire for death, here the destruction of beauty in the previous six sonnets spurs the poet to an emphatic rejection of all earthly beauty, and a wish for the everlasting bliss of heaven; while the death of Laura, which had been the climax of Petrarch's lament, is now the occasion for a warning to other women not to put trust in their own good looks. This altered version of the

poem is plainly in keeping with the other 'small Poemes of the Worlds Vanitie' in the *Complaints*, which include not only du Bellay's visions and his *Ruines of Rome*, but Spenser's own *Visions of the worlds vanitie*, and *The Ruines of Time*, with its closing injunction: 'So vnto heauen let your high minde aspire,/ And loath this drosse of sinfull worlds desire' (*The Ruines of Time*, ll.685-86).

Spenser's treatment of Canzone CCCXXIII, both in the *Theatre* and then again in the *Complaints*, is such as to turn it from a poem of mourning over the death of a woman into a meditation on the vanity of the world in general. I have gone to some lengths to show this, because it seems to me that it casts a significant light on his use of the Canzone in the account of Acidale at *FQ VI.x*.

Lines 37-48 of the Canzone, which became first Epigram 4 and then the fourth of *The Visions of Petrarch*, describe the destruction of a spring by an earthquake. It is rendered in the 1591 version as follows:

Within this wood, out of a rocke did rise
A spring of water, mildly rumbling downe,
Whereto approched not in anie wise
The homely shepheard, nor the ruder clowne;
But manie Muses, and the Nymphes withall,
That sweetly in accord did tune their voyce
To the soft sounding of the waters fall,
That my glad hart thereat did much reioyce.
But while herein I tooke my chiefe delight,
I saw (alas) the gaping earth deuoure
The spring, the place, and all cleane out of sight.
Which yet agreeues my hart euen to this houre,
And wounds my soule with rufull memorie,
To see such pleasures gon so suddenly.

I suggest that an adaptation of the first two quatrains of this sonnet became the stanza *FQ VI.x.7*, which forms part of the initial description of Acidale. Spenser has just been describing a wood:

And at the foote thereof, a gentle flud
His siluer waues did softly tumble downe,
Vnmard with ragged mosse or filthy mud,
Ne mote wylde beastes, ne mote the ruder clowne
Thereto approach, ne filth mote therein drowne:
But Nymphes and Faeries by the bancks did sit,
In the woods shade, which did the waters crowne,
Keeping all noysome things away from it,
And to the waters fall tuning their accents fit.

It is more difficult with Spenser than with most writers to be confident that he is alluding to his own work. To begin with, the repetitive rhyme scheme of the Spenserian stanza means that particular groups of words tend to recur in close proximity, which can give a misleading impression of allusion. Secondly, there are descriptive motifs to which he returns repeatedly in his work, where it would be implausible to suppose a conscious network of allusion to exist between all their occurrences. One of the details shared by the passages quoted above, for instance - that of voices singing to the sound of water - may also be found in the description of the Bower of Blisse, and twice in *The Shepheardes Calender* (FQ II.xii.71, April 1.36, June 1.8).¹ In a poetic output the size of Spenser's this sort of repetition is hardly surprising.

The point at which coincidence or mental habit becomes a less persuasive explanation than allusion for the mutual resemblance of two passages is not something which can be defined precisely. I can only record my own belief that in this case that point has been passed. In part this is indeed because of a similarity in language. The exact

1. Noted in *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. E.A. Greenlaw, F.M. Padelford, C.G. Osgood *et al* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1932-49), *The Faerie Queene*; Books Six and Seven (1938), p.247. Although the *Variorum* notes the occurrence of this motif both at FQ VI,x,7 and in the fourth Epigram, the wider resemblance between the two passages seems to have been overlooked.

repetitions of certain phrases - 'the ruder clowne' and 'waters fall' - are reinforced by the near-repetitions of other, larger units: 'mildly rumbling downe' and 'softly tumble downe'; 'Whereto approached not in anie wise' and 'Ne mote... thereto approach'; 'Muses, and the Nymphes' and 'Nymphes and Faeries'; 'did tune their voyce/ To the soft sounding of the waters fall' and 'to the waters fall tuning their accents fit'. More telling than particular phrases, however, is the near identity of the verses' general argument. In both cases the poet describes a spring flowing in or by a wood; he stresses that unclean creatures (whether beasts, shepherds or yokels) are not allowed to approach it, and that the spring is attended by nymphs, who sing to the sound of the falling water.

The idyllic scene at Acidale is not of course obliterated by an earthquake, but it is dispelled by the appearance of Calidore, at whose entrance the nymphs 'vanisht all away out of his sight,/ And cleane were gone, which way he neuer knew' (FQ VI.x.18.2-3). The couplet Spenser added to Petrarch's lines in expanding them to sonnet form (ll.13-14 of the sonnet quoted above) emphasises just this sudden loss of pleasure, and might serve as a gloss on Colin Clout's reaction:

Not I so happy, answerd then that swaine,
 As thou vnhappy, which them thence didst chace,
 Whom by no meanes thou canst recall againe,
 For being gone, none can them bring in place...

VI.x.20.1-4

If Spenser was thinking of his translation of Canzone CCCXXIII in the composition of FQ VI.x, what is the significance of this fact? Again, any answer must necessarily be speculative. Certainly there is no easy correspondence of tone between the Acidale passage and the

poems which appeared as *The Visions of Petrarch*. In particular there is no suggestion that the vision accorded to Calidore is one which should be rejected as a vain example of earthly pleasures. In the aftermath of the Graces' disappearance it is loss, rather than *contemptus mundi*, which is the dominant note. Nevertheless, the fact that Spenser drew for his description on a poem which, in his hands, had been modified from a lament for the loss of a beloved woman into a series of visions of the world's vanity, suggests the proximity of these two attitudes in his mind. For Spenser, the consciousness of the brevity of all mortal pleasures and the instinctive turning for assurance to God are never far apart. It is the constant theme of the *Complaints*; it is the concluding exhortation of the *Fowre Hymnes* (HHB 288-301); and it is the argument of the last lines of *The Faerie Queene*, as it has come down to us (FQ VII.viii.1-2). Spenser may have intended Acidale as a celebration of the power of earthly love to inspire poetic vision, but his choice of symbol - an image he repeatedly associated with the transient nature of all mortal glory - implies the reflexive way in which he tends to associate any human achievement with its ultimate futility. If Acidale affirms the claim of art to offer a vision of truth, its disappearance also emphasises the tentative nature of that claim. Even the inspired poet belongs ultimately to the fallen world, and it is grace, not inspiration, which provides an escape from it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(List of Works Cited)

Primary Sources

- Ariosto, Ludovico. *Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso*, trans. Sir John Harington (1591), ed. R. McNulty. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*, in Dorsch, trans. with introd., *Classical Literary Criticism*, pp.29-75.
- Bacon, Sir Francis. *The Advancement of Learning and New Atlantis*. O.U.P., 1906.
-
- The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. John M. Robertson. London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1905.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Boccaccio on Poetry*, trans. Charles G. Osgood. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1930, rpt. 1956.
- A Book of Masques: in Honour of Allardyce Nicoll*. C.U.P., 1967.
- Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. J.B. Wharey, second edition rev. R. Sharrock. O.U.P., 1960.
- Chapman, George. *The Poems of George Chapman*, ed. Phyllis Brooks Bartlett. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962.

- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Complete Works*, ed. F.N. Robinson, second edition. O.U.P., 1966.
- Daniel, Samuel, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604), ed. Joan Rees, in *A Book of Masques*, pp.17-46.
- Donne, John. *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert J.C. Grierson, O.U.P., 1971.
- Dorsch, T.S., trans. with introd.
Classical Literary Criticism. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965.
- Hooker, Richard. *The Works*, ed. Keble, Church and Paget. Oxford: 1888.
- Hoskins, John. *Directions for Speech and Style*, ed. H.H. Hudson. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1935.
- Jonson, Ben. *The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.
- Keats, John. *The Complete Poems*, ed. John Barnard. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, second edition 1977.
- Lodge, Thomas. *A Defence of Poetry* (1579), in Smith, ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, I, 61-86.

- Montaigne, Michel de. *Essays*, trans. with introd. J.M. Cohen. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958.
- Mulcaster, Richard. *Positions*, ed. Robert H. Quick. New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1888.
- Nicholas of Cusa. *Unity and Reform: Selected Writings of Nicholas De Cusa*, ed. John Patrick Dolan. Chicago and Crawfordville: Notre Dame U.P., 1962.
- Ovid. *Shakespeare's Ovid: Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding (1567), ed. W.H.D. Rouse (1904). Rpt. London: Centaur Press, 1961.
- Peacham, Henry. *The Garden of Eloquence (1577)*, ed. R.C. Alston. Menston: The Scholar Press, 1971.
- Plato. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1961.
- Puttenham, George. *The Arte of English Poesie (1589)*, in Smith, ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, II, 1-193.
- Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H.E. Butler. London and New York: Heinemann and G.P. Putnam, 1920.

Reynolds, Henry. *Mythomystes [1632]*, with introd. by Arthur F. Kinney. Menston: Scolar Press, 1972.

Rhetorica ad Herennium.

Trans. Harry Caplan. London and Cambridge, Mass.: Heinemann and Harvard U.P., 1954.

Ripa, Cesare. *Iconologia*. Rome: 1593, rev. Padua: 1618.

Shakespeare, William.

The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, Harry Levin et al. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974.

Sidney, Sir Philip. *A Defence of Poetry*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten. O.U.P., 1966.

The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia), ed. Jean Robertson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

Smith, Gregory G., ed.

Elizabethan Critical Essays. O.U.P., 1904.

Spenser, Edmund. *Poetical Works*, ed. J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt. O.U.P., 1912.

The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition,
ed. E.A. Greenlaw, F.M. Padelford, C.G. Osgood et
al. Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1932-49.

The Faerie Queene, ed. A.C. Hamilton. London and
New York: Longman, 1977.

Stanyhurst, Richard. *Dedication to the Translation of the Aeneid*
(1582), in Smith, I, 135-47.

Secondary Texts

Alpers, Paul. *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"*. Princeton:
Princeton U.P., 1967.

Aptekar, Jane. *Icons of Justice: iconography and thematic
imagery in the 'Faerie Queene' V*. New York:
Columbia U.P., 1969.

Atterbury, James Lem.
'Bartholomew the Englishman and Edmund Spenser:
Medieval Platonists'. Doctoral Dissertation,
Univ. of Texas, 1961.

Barkan, Leonard. *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis & the Pursuit
of Paganism*. New Haven and London: Yale U.P.,
1986.

Barney, Stephen A. *Allegories of History, Allegories of Love.*

Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1979.

Bayley, Peter. *Edmund Spenser: Prince of Poets.* London:

Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1971.

_____, ed. *The Faerie Queene: A Casebook.* London and

Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1977.

Bender, John B. *Spenser and Literary Pictorialism.* Princeton:

Princeton U.P., 1972.

Bennet, Josephine Waters.

The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene". Chicago:

Chicago U.P., 1942, rpt. New York: Burt Franklin,
1960.

Berger, Harry Jr. *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in*

Book II of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'. New Haven

and London: Yale U.P. and O.U.P., 1957.

_____, 'A Secret Discipline: *The Faerie Queene*, Book

VI', in Nelson, ed., *Form and Convention*, pp.35-
75.

_____, ed. *Spenser: A Collection of Critical Essays.*

Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc.,

1968.

-
- 'Busirane and the War Between the Sexes: An Interpretation of *The Faerie Queene* III xi-xii'. *ELR*, I (1971), 99-121.
- Briggs, Katharine. *A Dictionary of Fairies*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.
- Caldwell, Mark. 'Allegory: The Renaissance Mode'. *ELH*, 44 (1977), 580-600.
- Campbell, Marion. 'Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos* and the End of *The Faerie Queene*'. *Southern Review: Literary and Interdisciplinary Studies*, 15 (1982), 46-59.
- Caplan, Harry. *Of Eloquence: Studies in Ancient and Mediaeval Rhetoric*. Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1970.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor.
Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism, ed. T.M. Raysor. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1936.
-
- The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, XII, ed. G. Whalley. Princeton and London: Princeton U.P. and Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Colie, Rosalie L. *Paradoxia Epidemica*. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1966, rpt. Archon Books, 1976.

- Cooper, J.C. *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols.* London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1978.
- Craig, Martha. 'The Secret Wit of Spenser's Language', in *Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Paul Alpers. O.U.P., 1967, pp.447-72, rpt. Hamilton, *Essential Articles*, pp.313-33.
- Cummings, R.M., ed. *Spenser: The Critical Heritage.* New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971.
- Davies, Stevie. *The Idea of Woman in Renaissance Literature: The Feminine Reclaimed.* Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986.
- Deneef, A. Leigh. *Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor.* Durham, N.C.: Duke U.P., 1982.
- Ellrodt, Robert. *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser.* Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1960.
- Evans, Maurice. 'The Fall of Guyon'. *ELH*, 28 (1961), 215-24, rpt. in Berger, ed., *Critical Essays*, pp.88-96.
-
- Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism: a commentary on the 'Faerie Queene'.* C.U.P., 1970.

- Fish, Stanley, E. *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature.* Berkeley: California U.P., 1972.
- Fletcher, Angus. *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode.* Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1964.
-
- The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser.* Chicago and London: Chicago U.P., 1971.
- Fowler, Alastair. 'Emanations of glory: Neoplatonic order in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*', in Kennedy and Reither, ed., *A Theatre for Spenserians*, pp.53-82.
- Freeman, Rosemary. *English Emblem Books.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1948.
-
- 'The Faerie Queene': A Companion for Readers.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1970.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest* (1913), in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey et al. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1966, XIII, 163-90.
- Frye, Northrop. *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1957.

- Gardner, Helen. 'Some Reflections on the House of Busyrane'.
RES, 34 (1983), 403-13.
- Gentner, Dedre. 'Are Scientific Analogies Metaphors?', in Miall,
 ed., *Metaphor*, pp.106-32.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of
 Discourse*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins
 U.P., 1981.
- Gombrich, E.H. *Symbolic Images: Studies in the art of the
 Renaissance*. New York: Phaidon, 1972.
- Gordon, D.J. *The Renaissance Imagination: Essays and Lectures
 by D.J. Gordon*, coll. and ed. by Stephen Orgel.
 Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: California
 U.P., 1975.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to
 Shakespeare*. Chicago and London: Chicago U.P.,
 1980.
- Hamilton, A.C. *The Structure of Allegory in 'The Faerie Queene'*.
 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
- _____, ed. *Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund
 Spenser*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972.

- Hankins, John Erskine. *Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory: A Study of 'The Faerie Queene'*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Haydn, Hiram. *The Counter-Renaissance*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1950.
- Hazlitt, William. *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in Twenty-one Volumes*, ed. P.P. Howe. London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1930.
- Heale, Elizabeth. *'The Faerie Queene': a reader's guide*. C.U.P., 1987.
- Heatt, A. Kent. 'Scudamour's Practice of "Maistrye" upon Amoret'. *PMLA*, 77 (1962), 509-10.
- Hirsch, E.D. *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1967.
- Holahan, Michael. 'Iamque opus exegi: Ovid's Changes and Spenser's Brief Epic of Mutability'. *ELR*, 6 (1976), 244-70.
- Hough, Graeme. *A Preface to 'The Faerie Queene'*. London: Gerald Duckworth, 1962.

- Hughes, Felicity A. 'Psychological Allegory in *The Faerie Queene* III.xi-xii'. *RES*, 29 (1978), 129-46.
- Hughes, John. *An Essay on Allegorical Poetry* (1715), in Cummings, ed., *Spenser: The Critical Heritage*, pp.246-76.
- Hume, David. *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955.
-
- A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Rigge, second edition ed. P.H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- James, William. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, with introd. by Edward H. Madden. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard U.P., 1979.
- Kennedy, Judith M. and Reither, James A., ed. *A Theatre for Spenserians*. Toronto: Toronto U.P., 1973.
- Kermode, Frank. '"The Element of Historical Allegory" (1964)', in Bayley, ed., *Casebook*, pp.197-210.

Kouwenhoven, Jan Karel.

Apparent Narrative as Thematic Metaphor: The Organization of The Faerie Queene. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Levao, Ronald.

Renaissance Minds and their Fictions: Cusanus, Sidney, Shakespeare. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: California U.P., 1985.

Lewis, C.S.

The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.

Spenser's Images of Life, ed. Alastair Fowler.
C.U.P., 1967.

Lowes, John Livingston.

Essays in Appreciation. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936.

MacCaffrey, Isabel G.

'Allegory and Pastoral in *The Shepheardes Calender*'. *ELH*, 36 (1969), 88-109.

Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination.
Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1976.

- Man, Paul de. *Blindness & Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1971, rev. second edition, 1983.
- Maxwell, J.C. 'The Truancy of Calidore'. *ELH*, 19 (1952), 143-49.
- Miall, David S., ed. *Metaphor: Problems and Perspectives*. Sussex and New Jersey: Harvester Press and Humanities Press, 1982.
- Miller, Jacqueline T. 'The Status of Faeryland: Spenser's "Vniust Possession"'. *SSt.*, V (1984), 31-44.
- Minta, Stephen. *Petrarch and Petrarchism: The English and French Traditions*. Manchester: Manchester U.P., 1980.
- Murrin, Michael. *The Veil of Allegory: Some Notes Toward a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance*. Chicago and London: Chicago U.P., 1969.
-
- The Allegorical Epic: Essays in Its Rise and Decline*. Chicago and London: Chicago U.P., 1980.

- Nellist, B. 'The Allegory of Guyon's Voyage: An Interpretation'. *ELH*, 30 (1963), 89-106, rpt. in Hamilton, ed., *Essential Articles*, pp.238-52.
- Nelson, William, ed. *Form and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser: Selected Papers from the English Institute*. New York and London: Columbia U.P., 1961.
-
- The Poetry of Edmund Spenser: a Study*. New York and London: Columbia U.P., 1963.
- Nohrnberg, James. *The Analogy of 'The Faerie Queene'*. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1976.
- Norbrook, David. *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*. London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.
- Ong, Walter J. 'From Allegory to Diagram in the Renaissance Mind'. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 17 (1959), 423-40.
- Parker, Patricia A. *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1979.
- Parker, M. Pauline. *The Allegory of 'The Faerie Queene'*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.

- Quilligan, Maureen. *The Language of Allegory*. Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1979.
- Roche, Thomas P. Jr. 'The Challenge to Chastity: Britomart at the house of Busyrane'. *PMLA*, 76 (1961), 340-44.
-
- The Kindly Flame: a study of the 'Faerie Queene' III and IV*. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1964.
- Rodgers, Catherine. *Time in the Narrative of The Faerie Queene*. Salzburg Studies in English Literature 5. Salzburg: Institut Für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1973.
- Seznec, Jean. *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological tradition and its place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, trans. Barbara F. Sessions. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1953.
- Steadman, John M. 'Spenser's House of Care: A Reinterpretation'. *SRen.*, 7 (1960), 207-33.
- Swearingen, Roger G. 'Guyon's Faint'. *SP*, 74 (1977), 165-85.
- Tonkin, Humphrey. *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of The 'Faerie Queene'*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

- Tuve, Rosemond. *Allegorical Imagery: some mediaeval books and their posterity.* Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1966.
- Van Dyke, Carolynn. *The Fiction of Truth: Structures of Meaning in Narrative and Dramatic Allegory.* Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1985.
- Vickers, Brian. 'Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance'. *NLH*, 14 (1982), 497-537.
-
- In Defence of Rhetoric.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Williams, Kathleen. *Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.
- Wind, Edgar. *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance.* Faber and Faber, 1958, rpt. with revisions 1968, rpt. O.U.P., 1980.