

**SACRED FURY**

**SACRED FURY: SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS  
AN  
INTERPRETATION OF THE FAERIE QUEENE**

**By  
THOMAS HARTNEY, B.A.**

**A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Master of Arts**

**McMaster University**

**July 1963**

....I see, by thy new taken taske  
Some sacred fury hath enricht thy braynes

Hobynoll, "To The Learned Shepherd"

## PREFACE

This study of The Faerie Queene has developed from work undertaken at McMaster University in the Session 1962-63. I found a curious lack of balance in the approaches taken by many writers on the poem. There were exceptions, notably Professor Millar Maclure, but the overall tendency seemed to be to neglect the poetry, while bringing an enormous scholarly apparatus to bear on matters which, to me, were of lesser importance.

As the interpretation I suggest and the points upon which I disagree with Spenser scholars are discussed at length in the essay, there is no need to attempt any pithy statement of my conclusions here, even if such a statement were possible. I do not pretend to have produced a complete analysis of The Faerie Queene; that would be the work of many lives. What I have attempted is to suggest fruitful directions for re-examination of the poem, to indicate ways in which critical balance may be restored, rather than to restore it myself.

I have tried to acknowledge such critical debts as I am aware of, in the course of the essay. Footnote references are inadequate; a critic influences us not only when we quote him, not even only when we are conscious of his influence. The ideas of a good critic become so much a part of our own consciousness that we present them, in all

honesty, as original. I have stood upon the shoulders of giants, and if at times I have failed to acknowledge their assistance, it has not been for want of will. One critical influence, however, is so all-pervading as to demand special thanks. Professor C. S. Lewis has from the beginning conditioned all my thinking about Spenser. Practically the whole of this essay is, I suspect, to be found, in embryonic form, in The Allegory of Love.

My sincere thanks are due also to Professor B. A. W. Jackson, for his acute criticisms and generous assistance as my thesis supervisor.

Note: The text used throughout this essay, for quotation from The Faerie Queene, Spenser's letter to Raleigh, and Three Proper and wittie familiar Letters is that of the Works of Spenser, ed. R. Morris, 12th edition, London: Macmillan, 1902,

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Preface</b>	iii
<b>I The Allegorical Inadequacy</b>	1
<b>II Narrative and Verse</b>	16
<b>III The Focussed Image</b>	31
<b>IV Shadows of Reality</b>	43
<b>V The Primary Imagination</b>	61
<b>VI Conclusion</b>	77
<b>Appendix</b>	84
<b>Bibliography</b>	85

## THE ALLEGORICAL INADEQUACY

Recent interpretations of The Faerie Queene have been chiefly concentrated either on the political or the moral allegory of the poem.<sup>1</sup> It is true that some attention has been given to narrative, particularly to its sources in Ariosto, Boiardo, and Tasso;<sup>2</sup> and a few critics, such as Professor Hamilton<sup>3</sup>, have considered Spenser's patterns of imagery. Such investigations have usually, however, been secondary to the elucidation of an allegorical dark conceit.

Political interpretations, though they held sway for some years, are not nowadays looked upon with favour. The critical attitude which led to an identification of Sansjoy with Cardinal Pole:

the execution of More was the chiefest of the crimes for which Reginald Pole excoriated his royal cousin, and Sansjoy can hardly be other than the fearless and austere Cardinal. . . . Again, the mysterious way in which Sansjoy is snatched away from his adversary, and the vain efforts of the Red Cross Knight to discover him find a close counterpart in Pole's hurried departure from England at the summons of Rome, and the baffled efforts of the infuriated Henry to recover him.<sup>4</sup>

or which makes Una's parents in I, xii into figures of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, is an attitude which ignores completely the reader's

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix

<sup>2</sup>In particular by Graham Hough, A Preface to "The Faerie Queene", p. 9-81.

<sup>3</sup>The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene", p. 1-88.

<sup>4</sup>E.A. Greenlaw et al., The Works of Edmund Spenser, I, 468.

response to the poem. It is bad criticism because it is irrelevant. Furthermore, the search for historical parallels is all too easily rewarded. It is always possible to find events in real life corresponding to any given event in fiction. Antigone caused riots in Paris during the German occupation; and modern works of fiction carry as a matter of course a disclaimer of "resemblance to any person either living or dead" because such resemblances are inevitable. This is not to deny any connection between political or personal allegory and The Faerie Queene. No one would deny that Gloriana is Elizabeth, but so is Belpheobe and so, in another way, is Britomart: the political elements come and go in the poem. Thus, in I, xii, when Duessa attempts to prevent the marriage of Red Cross and Una, she represents in the political allegory the Church of Rome, and on a personal level Mary Stuart; but this does not mean that Duessa is always a representative of that organization and person. The Faerie Queene is not an early Absalom and Achitophel, and attempts to read it as just such a political roman à clef lead inevitably away from the poem. To a modern reader the political aspect is more a hindrance to poetic response than a valuable level of meaning. Gloriana's being Elizabeth is, unfairly from Spenser's point of view, suggestive of toadying: in our enlightened times it is hard to believe that anyone ever admired those whom they believed were set over them by God. And where the poem is



most politically allegorical, in Book V, it is generally agreed to be least satisfactory poetically. The rescues of Belgae and Irene are dull and tedious; the latter is also infuriating, as it suggests that Ireland should be freed through the massacre of that unhappy country's inhabitants, a suggestion unpleasantly reminiscent of Arbeit Macht Frei, the terrible slogan over the gate of Auschwitz. Those who follow a historical will o' the wisp in the interpretation of The Faerie Queene, and who find themselves lost in marshes far from Faeryland have only themselves to blame. Spenser himself warned them "how doubtfully all allegories may be construed".<sup>5</sup> Political allegory should not be entirely ignored. It must be borne in mind, for a full response to the poem, that there are what C.S. Lewis has called "fugitive historical allusions";<sup>6</sup> but these must not be allowed to dominate the reading of the poem. It is a poem, not a history book.

Of late years, the futility of the historical approach as a means for reaching the core of The Faerie Queene has been realized. Emphasis has shifted to the elucidation of the moral allegory. This is not entirely a matter of climbing out of one pit to fall into another, for investigation of the moral side of the poem is justified not only by Spenser's own statements about it, but also, to some extent by the response it evokes.

<sup>5</sup>Letter to Raleigh.

<sup>6</sup>English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, p. 384.

The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: Which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction. . . .<sup>7</sup>

Or, again:

I have already undertaken a work, tending to the same effect /to set down in English the precepts of those parts of moral philosophy whereby our youth might . . . speedily enter into the right course of virtuous life/, which is in heroical verse under the title of a Faery Queene, to represent all the moral virtues, assigning to every virtue a knight to be the patron and defender of the same, in whose actions and feats of arms and chivalry, the operations of that virtue, wherof he is the protector are to be expressed, and the vices and unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same are to be beaten down and overcome. . . . I have taken in hand to discourse at large in my poem.<sup>8</sup>

Modern criticism has, on one way or another, led us to look with some distrust upon statements of the intention of a work of art. Dr. Leavis defends the books Lawrence wanted to write, to the perplexity of those who read what Lawrence did write. Professor Empson suggests that part of Pope's brilliance is his failure to conform to his own explicit ideal of unambiguous clarity. But this means, not that we should entirely disregard intention, but rather that we should not consider it to be a final immutable criterion of the nature of a work of art. Explicit intention is to be regarded as evidence, not as conclusive proof.

<sup>7</sup>Letter to Raleigh.

<sup>8</sup>Record of Spenser's conversation by Ludowick Bryskett, quoted by H. W. Schofield, Chivalry in English Literature, p. 143.

In the case of The Faerie Queene, it is clear that our response to the poem is in part to a moral allegorical structure. This does not mean that attempts, like that of Jusserand<sup>9</sup>, to demonstrate how Spenser intended fulfilling his plan of illustrating the Aristotelian virtues, are of value. Virtues like Holiness and Chastity have no place in Aristotle's system; a good deal of special pleading is required if the Aristotelian virtues are to add up to twelve; and Spenser's treatment of Justice suggests that he had forgotten, if he had ever read, what Aristotle said on that subject.

The moral allegory certainly affects the reader of The Faerie Queene, but not in a way which would involve a clear awareness of Aristotelian ideas. To see in what way it does operate, let us consider an allegorical interpretation of Book I.<sup>10</sup> Revealed Truth and Holiness, accompanied by Natural Reason (the dwarf), are pursuing their quest. Holiness has never experienced temptation (lx66) though he has, by coming to Gloriana's court, and by following the call of Una, taken steps towards personal virtue. He fights with Error, but this is not so much temptation as difficulty, for Error is immediately recognized as hideous. The first real temptation is Archimago's presentation of the fake Una at the Red Cross Knight's bedside. This temptation does

<sup>9</sup>See Greenlaw et al., The Works of Edmund Spenser, I, 327.

<sup>10</sup>The following interpretation is derived from that of M. Pauline Parker, The Allegory of "The Faerie Queene", p. 66-113.

not work in the way intended: but Holiness, shocked by the apparent whoredom of Truth, is unsettled, and at the second temptation (to jealousy and anger) he abandons her. It would have required a heroic faith on the part of Holiness if he were to believe in Una's virtue against the direct evidence of the senses. The sequence of events is now completely logical. Holiness, separated from Truth, is spiritually lost: "Will was his guide, and griefe led him astray" (I, ii, 12). Reason does not help him: presumably he cannot, or will not, listen to Reason. He has not, however, deliberately rejected Truth, but Una, whom he genuinely believes to be false. Immediately, he is tempted by Sansjoy, against faith itself; for if Una is false, can there be any truth? But though his judgment is deluded, his heart is still pure: "Curse on that Crosse (quoth then the Sarazin) / That keepes thy body from the bitter fit" (I, ii, 18). Loss of faith is thus overcome, and Duessa/Fidessa is accepted as the true faith: an honest mistake. False Faith's first act is to lead Holiness to the House of Pride. Even here, Red Cross is not wholly deceived. He is in a grave occasion of sin, but his full consent is withheld, "Him selfe estrainging from their joyaunce vaine" (I, iv, 37). More dangerous than worldly pride however, which is hardly a serious temptation to one who, like Red Cross, has already, allegorically speaking, renounced the world, is Sansjoy. Self-regarding gloom is an aspect of religious pride, and the overcoming of that temptation is a hard struggle. It is important, too, that Sansjoy cannot

be killed. The temptation is one that will recur. Holiness, his wounds of sadness unhealed, recognizes, with the help of Natural Reason, the dangers of Pride, and flees from Lucifera's castle.

Joined again by Duessa, who still appears to him as Fidessa, the Knight is now persuaded to a spiritual complacency after his struggle with Sansjoy: he relaxes, and takes off, for the moment, the armour of a Christian, and loses the restraint which he had always showed towards Una. At this moment, Orgoglio, Spiritual Pride, seizes the Knight, who is taken unawares and already weakened by his combat with Sansjoy. He is kept prisoner and his strength is sapped by an intense depression resulting from the prideful realization that he is not so good as he thought.

In the meantime, Natural Reason, the dwarf, is neither deceived nor in prison, but free in search of Truth. Further, Duessa has revealed her evil character to the Knight, so that he is no longer deceived by her. As the servant of Truth, Reason was a laggard; but as the only companion and helper of Holiness he becomes clear-sighted and active, and goes now straight to Una. She herself has meanwhile been undergoing various tribulations. The lion, Strength, can protect her for only a short time. He is a guard against Kirkrapine, but not against lawless power, represented by Sansloy. The innocent rustic people, the Satyrs, are required to provide protection against

such potent lawlessness.

Satyrane, who seems to be Natural Virtue, keeping "goodly company" with Truth, noble but necessarily (in a fallen world) unfulfilled, leads Una away from the satyrs. He fights against Sansloy on her behalf; she leaves him fighting and then encounters Natural Reason, who reveals to her all that has passed. But even Revealed Truth and Natural Reason together are not enough to release Red Cross from the dungeon into which he has been cast by Spiritual Pride. Such pride is in the Will, and can be overcome only by the practice of humility. This virtue is here paradoxically represented by Arthur;<sup>11</sup> for his shield shows things as they are. It is through true humility that such clear sight is attained.

Orgoglio and Duessa are overcome, and the only inhabitant left in the castle is Ignaro, foster father of Orgoglio, who is not only ignorant but imbecile. Red Cross is brought out of his dungeon, "A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly dreere" (I, viii, 40). Patience, Arthur tells him, is the only way to recovery: normal enough advice for a confessor to give in a like situation.

The next encounter of Red Cross is with Despair, one of Spenser's most celebrated figures:

His griesie lockes, long growen and unbound,  
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,

<sup>11</sup>This interpretation is doubtful, but as valid as any that has been advanced. See Parker, p. 90.

And hid his face, through which his hollow eyne  
 Looked deadly dull, and stared as astound:  
 His rawbone cheekes through penurie and pine  
 Were shronke into his jawes, as he did never dyne. (I, ix, 35)

This is no noble despair, no courageous Satan on the burning lake, no Faustus posturing on the edge of ruin, but mean, squalid, and utterly depressing; the despair of the typist in The Waste Land, who "smooths her hair with automatic hand/And puts a record on the gramophone". Despair's temptation is the subtlest and the hardest that Red Cross experiences, because it strikes at his special quality, his devotion to God, and in it there is the seducing element of truth:

Why then doest thou, O man of sin! desire  
 To draw thy days forth to their last degree? (I, ix, 46)

With this, Truth does not attempt to argue: Despair's rhetoric is true so far as it goes, and to deny Red Cross' sinfulness, to attempt to excuse or explain away, would be both wrong and useless:

In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part? (I, ix, 53)

Revealed Truth can go beyond the limited, human reasoning of Despair. God's mercy transcends reason. Red Cross is saved, not by any strength or merit of his own, but by his God-given faith in Una.

The Knight is now brought to the house of Coelia, where he is to be schooled until he shall have attained the vision of the Heavenly City. Humility, Zeal, and Reverence begin his education. Fidelia, with her book of mysteries, follows, together with Speranza. Charissa, Charity abundant and generous, reproducing itself freely, continues the

spiritual instruction. She appoints Mercy as a further guide, to lead the Knight to the Holy Mountain. There Mercy leaves him, and he attains the vision of Heaven. Cleopolis and Panthea are the best that this world can offer, but not the best there is.

When Red Cross descends the mountain he has learned to know himself. His preparation is ended, and he is ready to proceed to the event, the battle with the dragon. This battle does not represent temptation, as did the others. If he fell in this combat, Red Cross would be not a sinner but a martyr. Una, watching the fight, fears for his life, not for his soul.

The battle between Red Cross and the Dragon lasts three days, representing the three days of Christ's dying. Harrowing of Hell, and Resurrection. Twice the Knight is miraculously revived, by the Well and then by the Tree of Life; representatives of Baptism and Holy Communion. The Knight's armour is twice unbearably heated by the dragon-fire (I, xi, 26; I, xi, 45). It is not consumed, or even damaged; it merely becomes extremely painful to the man inside it, as the attacks of evil and sin can make life miserable for the good man in the world. The injuries inflicted by Red Cross seem at first to do no damage to his formidable adversary, but that very fact is its undoing. It dashes forward:

He thought attonce him to have swallowd quight  
And rusht upon him with outrageous pryde: (I, xi, 53)



Pride is the Dragon's downfall. Red Cross has learned how to deal with that sin; he attacks the Dragon at its weakest point, and kills it.

There is but one more episode in Book I. Evil has not been altogether destroyed, and one more attempt is made by Falsehood and Hypocrisy to separate Holiness from Truth, this time by an attack on Holiness. The danger is more apparent than real, for Una unmasks the conspiracy with consummate ease. Archimago is thrust into a dungeon. The marriage of Holiness and Truth is celebrated with all the sensuous delight of the Frothalamion.

It would be foolish to claim that this kind of allegorical analysis of the poem is totally irrelevant. It is concerned with the operation of the poem, and the allegorical concepts involved do play a part in determining the reader's response. But any allegorical reading of the poem must be received with certain strict limitations.

In the first place, allegorical interpretation is all too liable to take off in a direction determined by the preconceptions of the reader. Hamilton<sup>12</sup> has demonstrated this danger by means of a witty and thoroughly coherent Marxist interpretation of Book I, treated generally. The attempt to deal with each episode in the poem precisely in terms of any preconceived allegorical scheme leads to apparent contradictions, which are squared with the poem by a process of mental gymnastics.

<sup>12</sup>The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene", p. 9-10.

Thus, the episode in which Sansjoy is taken by Night to be healed by Aesculapius is explained in one interpretation as follows:

Sansjoy is . . . the joylessness which finds nothing in life engaging and satisfying. . . . Very properly Sansjoy is banished to Pluto's realm, for the essence of the spiritual life is joy.<sup>13</sup>

Such an interpretation of his character does not account for Sansjoy's passing the night

. . . in joy and jollity  
Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall (I, iv, 43)

When Red Cross fights against Error, it is he who attacks her, not she him. And his reason for the attack is unrelated to any moral-allegorical scheme:

. . . Shame were to revoke  
The forward footing for an hidden shade (I, i, 12)

This is a chivalric rather than a moral reason. The Christian man is usually advised to fly from Error.

In the final battle with the dragon, is any precise interpretation of the Well and the Tree possible? Parker comments:

Spenser was not an Anabaptist, and he could not have supposed the Red Cross Knight able to wear the armour of a Christian man if he had not been baptised. Moreover, the instructions of Fidelia, that bearer of the serpent-entwined chalice which is still a sacramental symbol, and the rest of his training in the House of Coelia, imply this. When he returns to Una, even before he meets Charissa his conscience is "cured" (I, x, 29). He is not now sinful but already holy. In this conflict he has not sinned and is not sinning; he is simply suffering intensely as a result of his struggle with evil. It is not forgiveness he

<sup>13</sup>E. A. Greenlaw et al., The Works of Edmund Spenser, I, 436.

needs, it is strength. Therefore this is not the water of baptism but the water of grace, "springing up to life eternal". The same reasoning applies to the tree...<sup>14</sup>

This argument is interesting: it could be carried on indefinitely. Perhaps the Well represents the long-term effects of baptism. It all depends on what point of view the critic starts from. He will make the poem fit his own conceptual scheme. This is why allegorical interpretations are so thoroughly unsatisfying; because the reader feels he has been betrayed into a response to the critic's conceptual scheme, not to a poem. Von Clausewitz condemned what he called Unitarianism in critics,<sup>15</sup> because it leads to the forcing of the phenomena criticised into a procrustean bed of theory. This is the morass in which most critics of The Faerie Queene have been lost. We have considered the difficulties of applying allegorical techniques only in the case of Book I: yet it is generally agreed that Book I is the most clearly allegorical part of the whole poem. The difficulties involved in a similar treatment of the much more complex later books may be seen in the long controversy over such episodes as the House of Busirane.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, allegorical interpretation is at once too easy and too difficult to be of more than peripheral value. The poem can be made

<sup>14</sup>The Allegory of 'The Faerie Queene', p. 102.

<sup>15</sup>On War, I, 131-132.

<sup>16</sup>See C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 339-345; Graham Hough, Preface to 'The Faerie Queene', p. 173-176; T.P. Roche, "The Challenge to Chastity", PMLA LXXVI, p. 340-344.

to fit any conceptual scheme in general terms, whereas in detail, puzzles and contradictions seem always to arise.

If The Faerie Queene provoked a response due primarily to allegory, it would surely be necessary for the reader to understand what the allegory was about. Allegory is a means by which abstractions are made clear in concrete forms, and the excellence of allegory is to a considerable degree measured by its clarity. But there are many conflicting opinions about the allegory of The Faerie Queene. It is certainly obscure; and detailed analysis usually yields a truism that is much more clear and comprehensible in rational moral terms than in the poetry. This makes The Faerie Queene a bad allegory; but it is certainly not a bad poem. Spenser's reputation has never suffered the eclipse that Donne's in the eighteenth century or Shelley's in the twentieth, underwent. The place of The Faerie Queene is only less secure than that of Shakespeare's plays. We recognize in reading Spenser that The Faerie Queene is a good poem. Surely its excellence cannot derive from an obscure and confused allegorical system that is either impossible to analyze in detail because of the contradictions inherent in it, or, where it is susceptible to analysis, yields such platitudes as "The Christian opposes Error".

I do not mean that The Faerie Queene is not an allegorical poem. Clearly, it is highly allegorical. But allegorical interpretation remains thoroughly unsatisfying, and seems all too often to point away from the

poetic experience towards the experience of a conceptual scheme. Reading a poem as ethical teaching may be of great spiritual benefit, but is certainly not the business of the literary critic. Ethical teaching is to be found rather in teachers of ethics than in poets. Milton's statement that "our sage and serious poet Spenser" was "a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas"<sup>17</sup> is really rather foolish. Poems may be instruments of moral instruction; but first they must be poems. To treat them as primarily ethical tracts is to use them as a Crucifix is used in meditation; to meditate upon a Crucifix is a virtuous act, but it is not the act of a critic of sculpture, qua critic.

<sup>17</sup>Areopagitica.

## NARRATIVE AND VERSE

If a primarily allegorical interpretation of The Faerie Queene provides, as I suggest, an inadequate explanation of our response to the poem, it is necessary to start again from the initial meeting of reader and poem, and to proceed inductively with the "mind untrammelled by convention", of the ideal Clausewitzian critic. All that is not the poem, all that is merely commentary upon it, must be put aside, initially. Even the Letter to Raleigh is irrelevant at this point, because the poem must be considered first as itself. The letter describes a poem that Spenser may have intended writing at one time. Its relationship to the poem as Spenser in fact wrote it is dubious in the extreme. Apart from the problem of the twelve Aristotelian virtues, the contradiction between the actual opening of Book II and the opening described in the letter remains unaccounted for.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, any study of what Spenser said about the poem must take into account his relationship with Gabriel Harvey's circle. Harvey described The Faerie Queene unkindly as "Hobgoblin runne away with the garland from Apollo".<sup>19</sup> It is possible that Spenser intended pacifying Harvey and his kind by

<sup>18</sup>See W. J. B. Owen, "Spenser's Letter to Raleigh--A Reply", MLN, LXXV, p. 195-197.

<sup>19</sup>Three Proper and wittie familiar letters.

attributing all kinds of moral purposes to his poem. Even if he did intend the moral function, it may still not be of primary importance in the poem he actually wrote. Everyone who has written a poem knows how like a living thing with a will of its own it becomes: how the original intention is modified, or even disappears, and the work takes on the form it requires, apparently independent of the artist's ideas. This is not to say that poetry is a kind of mysterious, holy, and untouchable communication from a Higher World, composed in a trance-state by automatic writing: only that the experience of writing poetry indicates that conscious intention has little connection with the finished work. Such experience indicates, I suppose, no more than a sophisticated form of "How can I know what I mean till I see what I say?" The modern writer of short lyrics finds his intention more or less irrelevant to the composition of poetry: how much more difficult must it have been for Spenser, in the composition of a work so vast and various as The Faerie Queene, to keep a stated intention clear in his mind. It may be objected that a long poem is logically planned in a way the short lyric cannot be; but such a plan must be very general, and in the writing of passages of great poetic intensity, the poet surely experiences the same self-annihilation as does the modern writer.

So even if Spenser's statements are admitted as valid evidence of his own intention, they cannot be allowed to usurp the literary primacy

of the poem itself. The only possible approach, certain not to be concerned with matters irrelevant to the poem, is one which in the first place considers the impact of The Faerie Queene on the reader, and secondly deals with the directions in which the poem itself points.

The primary impact of The Faerie Queene is that of a narrative in verse. This may appear to be a statement of the glaringly obvious, but it is astonishing how many critics appear to be oblivious of so simple a fact. How often do critics complain that an event, for instance, the saving of Red Cross by Duessa from Orgoglio (I, vii, 14) is dictated merely by the exigencies of the narrative. Implicit in a statement of this kind is the view that the narrative is itself unimportant, or even at times a hindrance, to a poem primarily allegorical. The story, for such critics, exists simply as a device for leading the reader from one allegory to another: the allegory is the critics' paradise, where the fascinating game of attaching labels to people, objects, and events can be played. The game is fun for critics, but its fascination leads them to ignore the primary and indisputable qualities of The Faerie Queene, which is, before it is anything else, verse narrative.

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine (I, i, 1).

Professor Lewis, one of the few critics who has come to grips with The Faerie Queene, points out how direct is this opening, almost without parallel in polite literature before Spenser's time, and with no



immediate imitators other than Shakespeare.<sup>20</sup> It is true that we have nowadays become accustomed to the immediate presentation of people in action. Stevenson's remarks about stories opening "on the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward and a scowling fellow of Herculean proportions striding along the beach"<sup>21</sup> have nothing astonishing about them for us. "Across the bridge Lord Marmion rode"; "He lay flat on the brown pine needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms": this immediacy we have come to accept as the norm. But for Spenser's original audience it must have been breathtaking. Even Homer is not quite so direct. The Canterbury Tales do not reach action until line 20, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight until line 37, and Ariosto does not start his story until the tenth stanza.

And the first line is anything but a freak, for though the action once started is not nearly so headlong as that of the Italian Epic, it progresses in a surprisingly efficient and business-like manner. There is always action. Apart from the moralizing proems, practically every line adds, tells us about somebody doing something or going somewhere, or about his reasons for action. It is impossible to enjoy Spenser without liking his story: and it may well be possible to enjoy him without being aware of anything else. This seems to be Hazlitt's view;<sup>22</sup> and,

<sup>20</sup>English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, p. 389.

<sup>21</sup>"A Gossip on Romance", in Memories and Portraits.

<sup>22</sup>"If they /readers/ do not meddle with the allegory, the allegory will not meddle with them", in "On Chaucer and Spenser" in Lectures on the English Poets, p. 38.

inadequate as it is to a full reading of the poem, it contains a germ of truth. The point is that to read The Faerie Queene simply as an intertwined group of chivalric stories could be a literary experience. Thus Moby Dick was, and still is, read and enjoyed by boys who know nothing of the profound inner meanings unearthed from it by modern criticism. Anyone who reads Moby Dick simply as a symbolic pattern, and completely ignores the story, on the other hand, has clearly lost touch with the book as it is. It is first of all a story about a white whale.

Unfortunately, perhaps because of their early conditioning, it seems to be difficult to convince people that The Faerie Queene is a narrative poem before it is anything else. All that is needed for that perception is an open mind. And how refreshing it is to read Spenser when the nagging crossword puzzle concern for allegorical detail is put aside. The Red Cross Knight is "Upon a great adventure, . . . To win him worshipp" (I, 1, 3); when he reaches the Den of Error he investigates because:

. . . shame were to revoke  
The forward footing for an hidden shade (I, 1, 12)

There can be no doubt about it. The Red Cross Knight is a character in chivalric adventures, and although the struggle of the Christian with Error does present an allegorical conceptual meaning, any attempt to explain the poem in terms primarily other than narrative denies the very warp of The Faerie Queene, its chivalric romance quality. Error's

Den is no isolated example. In Book I alone there are at least seven specific references to winning "worship" or "honour", in Book II, twelve. Mere word counting is not, I think, of crucial importance: more significant is the quality, authentically Spenserian, of such passages as:

To hunt for glory and renowned prayse  
 Full many countreyes did they overonne  
 From the uprising to the setting sunne  
 And many hard adventures did atchieve  
 Of all the which they honour ever wonne (III, 1, 3)

Or, again:

O! goodly usage of those antique tymes  
 In which the sword was servaunt unto right  
 When not for malice and contentious crymes  
 But all for prayse and proof of manly might  
 The martial brood accustomed to fight;  
 Then honour was the meed of victory,  
 And yet the vanquished had no despight (III, 1, 13)

Spenser's knights fought for "glory", for "prayse", and proof of "manly might". Their motives are specifically chivalric. Notice how the second quotation begins with the idea of virtuous warfare, the sword being "servaunt unto right", suggestive of the Just War, as defined by Pope Benedict XV. But as the stanza develops, it becomes clear that the virtue praised is inherent in fighting for honour. The world evoked is that of the tournament rather than that of Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings.<sup>23</sup> In the fight of Red Cross against Sansjoy, the motives of the contestants are repeatedly differentiated: Red Cross is good because

<sup>23</sup>The War of the Ring is clearly a war between good and evil powers.

he fights for honour: his opponent seeks 'blood and vengeance' and is therefore condemned (I, v, 1-9). To try and twist this out of its purely chivalric romance mode of thought is plainly ridiculous. It is to be enjoyed in the way we enjoy knightly stories, accepting the assumption that fighting is an honourable game, and the good knight something like the ideal English amateur sportsman. The story is an exciting one, taking place in an imagined world.

The primacy of the narrative may be seen not only in its relationship to the chivalric framework. To read Guyon's argument with Arthegall at the tournament in Book V (iii, 29-37) as anything other than delightful narrative, a squabble between two rather priggish young men, is to make The Faerie Queene as dull and pedantic as Guyon himself.

So many critics have denied or failed to perceive the primacy of verse narrative in The Faerie Queene that it is as well to examine their reasons for doing so; surely they have some justification for their views. The argument against Spenser's narrative excellence seems to me to hinge on certain qualities of his verse. The slow-paced, halting Spenserian stanza is said to be a poor medium for portraying action, and to be profoundly undramatic. This is an imperceptive view. A comparison of Spenser's narrative technique with that of Malory, whose skill in this field is allowed on all hands, reveals differences which are not so much of degree, between effective and ineffective storytelling,

as of kind.

And than they put there sperys in their restys and come togedyrs with hir horsis as faste as they myght ren; and aythir smote other in myddys of their shyldis, that both their horsys backys braste undir them, and the knyghtes were bothe astoned. And as sone as they myght they avoyded their horsys and toke their shyldys before them and drew oute their swerdys and com togydir egirly; and eyther gaff other many stronge strokys, for there myght nothir shyldis nother harnyse holde their strokes.

And so within a whyle they had bothe many grymme woundys and bledde passing grevously. Thus they fared two owres and more, traysing and rasyng eyther othir where they myght hitte ony bare place. Than at the laste they were brethles bothe... (Works ed. Vinaver, p. 190)

\* \* \* \* \*

So both attonce him charge on either syde  
With hideous strokes and importable powre  
That forced him from his ground to traverse wyde,  
And wisely watch to ward that deadly stowre;  
For in his shielde, as thicke as stormie showre  
Their strokes did raine: yet did he never quaile  
Ne backward shrinke but as a stedfast towre  
Whom foe with double battry doth assaile  
Them on her bulwarke beares, and bids them nought availe.

So stoutly he withstood their strong assay;  
Till that at last, when he advantage spyde,  
His poynant speare he thrust with puissant sway,  
At proud Cymochles, whiles his shield was wyde,  
That through his thigh the mortal steel did gryde: (II, viii, 35-6)

Both these passages describe combats, but the narrative methods used are entirely different. The Malory reads almost like a boxing commentary, describing the offensive and defensive measures of the combatants in a way which would be best appreciated by swordsmen.

What matters in Malory is the event. The people are not visualized at all; they are any two men engaged in single combat. Nothing interferes with the hurrying commentary on the action, nothing but the story matters. In reading the quotation from Spenser, the response evoked is quite different. There is a series of events, and the mind is pulled forward by the excitement of what is happening. The reader is keen to read on, to find how the battle ends. He is, of course, confident that Arthur will win; the outcome is hardly ever in question in chivalric stories. But the story exerts a fascination; the reader wants to know how the successful conclusion is to be brought about. At the same time, the Spenserian stanza, with its complex interweaving of heavily weighted rhymes, and its alexandrine giving an air of finality and separateness to each individual stanza, slows the reading, concentrates attention upon itself and upon the images within the narrative. In reading Malory, it is rarely that we notice an individual word or phrase (except of course insofar as for us it has the fascination of the archaic). The tendency is to skim through, finding out simply what happens. But the verse of The Faerie Queene makes such a reading virtually impossible. Only a reader completely insensitive to language and rhythm could fail to be slowed, to have his attention concentrated on verse and image, while at the same time being prevented from stagnation in the contemplation

of that individual image by the pull of narrative excitement. In Malory we discover what happens: in Spenser we are made to see the event taking place, through our enforced concentration on the image.

Something similar can be seen if The Faerie Queene is compared with its immediate predecessors in the form of chivalric narrative, the Romantic Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso.<sup>24</sup> Spenser is much nearer to the Italians than he is to Malory: the very form he uses was Boiardo's invention. And his imitation goes much further. The moralizing proems, and the conclusions promising more to come in the next canto, are in accordance with Italian practice. So is the technique by which stories are dropped as they reach a climactic point; this is a means of maintaining suspense to which we have grown accustomed, but in using it Spenser was imitating only the Italians. Arthur's shield is a copy of Atlant's. Britomart is derived directly from Bradamant. Even Merlin's function in the poem, which seems so completely English, has its origins in the Italian. The parallels are numerous enough to provide happy source-hunting for years to come.<sup>25</sup>

But as soon as the Italian and the English poems are placed side by side, their differences are at least as striking as their similarities.

<sup>24</sup>My comments on these writers are derived chiefly from C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 298-304, and from Graham Hough, A Preface to "The Faerie Queene", p. 20-81.

<sup>25</sup>See Graham Hough, A Preface to "The Faerie Queene", p. 20-81.

The latter are matters for literary genealogists; but upon the reader who is not concerned with the search for origins, the poems produce effects totally dissimilar. Variety and profusion, rapid and fascinating action, are the keynotes of the Orlando Furioso and of the Orlando Inammorato:

Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori  
Le cortesie, l'audaci impresi io canto. (O.F.I., 1-2)

Ariosto more than fulfils his claim. Nothing is without interest for him. Geography, gastronomy, architecture, history, laws, monsters, conversations: there is no limit. As C.S. Lewis puts it: "when you are tired of Ariosto, you must be tired of the world".<sup>26</sup> Even the combats, which in so much medieval writing become mere slogging matches, are transformed into something vital and exciting. Each is an individual and differentiated fight; the range extends from the comic struggle of Rinaldo and Sacripante (Canto II) to the chivalrous and heroic fight of Ruggiero and Bradamante in Canto XLV.

But for all Ariosto's endless fascination, the interest of his poem is always, as it were, external. Bradamante is a splendid virago, but she is seen from outside, and is chiefly important for her function in the story. The event is everything; Orlando Furioso has its real centre in the recounting of adventures, the fascinating pattern of action.

<sup>26</sup>The Allegory of Love, p. 302.



This is where the contrast with Spenserian narrative is most striking. Ariosto is all speed, action, gaiety; his marvels are like astonishing conjuring tricks, or like tall stories. Spenser's are always gravely imaginative. There is a profound truth in Harvey's remarks that Spenser 'wil needes seeme to emulate and hope to overgo'<sup>27</sup> Ariosto. For the Italian writer tells an exciting tale, and does little more; Spenser tells much the same kind of tale, but by means of his unique verse form does a great many other things as well.<sup>28</sup> The verse retards the reader eager to follow the story, forces him to concentrate his attention on the individual stanza or even line, so that he is made keenly aware of the imagery within it.

To say this is to make high claims for Spenser's verse, which has recently been a subject for attack.<sup>29</sup> In some ways, the verse is indeed weak. Spenser has his vices. He makes far too much use of words that do no work, are mere counters put in to fill up the line;

<sup>27</sup>Three Proper and wittie familiar letters.

<sup>28</sup>It may be objected that I have not discussed Tasso at all, and that his technique is much closer to that of Spenser than is either Bolardo's or Ariosto's: it may be that Spenser derives a good deal from him. But arguments about originality and imitation are out of place in the present study. I am not concerned with the Italian writers as Spenser's sources so much as with the light thrown by a comparison with them on the nature of his poetry.

<sup>29</sup>See D. J. Traversi, 'Spenser's Faerie Queene', in The Age of Chaucer, p. 213-228.

filthie, foule, direfull, and goodly, and their like, occur too often.

They represent an abdication of the poet's duty to concentrate his language, and to pare away every unnecessary word. There is too much alliteration in The Faerie Queene; perhaps Spenser's worst vice was to produce "huge heaps of words uphoarded hideously". But the best poets hit bad patches. Wordsworth is notorious for his occasional badness, and even Shakespeare is not all pure gold. Some of Spenser's poetry is unsurpassable for its delicious, mellifluous flow:

By this the Northerne wagoner had set  
 His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre  
 That was in ocean waves yet never wet,  
 But firm is fixt, and sendeth light from farre  
 To al that in the wide deepe wandring arre;  
 And chearfull Chaunticlere with his note shrill  
 Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre  
 In hast was climbing up the Easterne hill,  
 Full envious that night so long his roome did fill: (I, ii, 1)

A long poem cannot be always on the heights. The lyrical passages of Four Quartets gain from being set off against relatively flat sections of lesser intensity. In comparable sections, Spenser shows a mastery of good workaday verse, business-like and forthright:

It fortun'd, as they devised had:  
 The gentle Squyre came ryding that same way,  
 Unweeting of their wile and treason bad,  
 And through the ford to passen did assay;  
 But that fierce foster, which late fled away,  
 Stoutly foorth stepping on the further shore,  
 Him boldly bad his passage there to stay,

Till he had made amends, and full restore  
 For all the damage which he had him doen afore (III, v, 18)

Despite its occasional faults, the verse rises to great excellence. And for its purpose it is triumphantly successful. It decelerates our reading, in a way no verse more superficially suitable to narrative could do, and so permits the image to permeate the mind, creating that visual clarity for which The Faerie Queene has so often been praised. Hazlitt's name is suspect in these hypercritical days: but none can quarrel with his statement that "In reading The Faerie Queene you see a little withered old man by a wood-side opening a wicket, a giant, and a dwarf".<sup>30</sup> The old woman to whom Pope read Spenser said, "You have shown me a gallery of pictures".

This is the special quality of The Faerie Queene. The centre of gravity of chivalric narrative is shifted, so that the mind is held to the image. I must emphasize again that the narrative thread is not thereby rendered unimportant. It is the very vehemence and excitement of the story, which, pulling against the slow, pausing verse, produces a state of mental tension. The mind is held so that the image rises into prominence, and the vivid visual effect of Spenser's poetry is produced. In place of the corroborative detail, the factual background, used by earlier chivalric writers who made everything point

<sup>30</sup>"On Chaucer and Spenser" in Lectures on the English Poets, p. 35.

towards and reinforce the narrative thread, Spenser places the pictorial image which points towards itself.

T.S. Eliot once remarked that he considered the overt meaning of a poem to be like the bone thrown by the burglar to the dog of the intellect, to keep it quiet while the poetry does its work.<sup>31</sup> This is something like the function of narrative in The Faerie Queene. It keeps the mind occupied, pulls the reader forward; but to prevent his being pulled too fast, the verse slows him down so that he can accept and be worked upon by the poetic image.

<sup>31</sup>Selected Prose, p. 93.

## THE FOCUSSED IMAGE

The effect of The Faerie Queene is, then, through the tension between verse and narrative, to focus the attention of the reader upon the poetic image. Another trap lurks here for the unwary, that of allowing this sensuous and concrete image completely to dominate an interpretation of the poem. Legouis expressed the view that "The Faerie Queene is essentially a picture-gallery", and went on to describe Spenser's art as that of "a great painter who never held a brush".<sup>32</sup> Such an interpretation is as erroneous and one-sided as the allegorical approaches favoured by Greenlaw<sup>33</sup> and Berger.<sup>34</sup> It limits the response to the poem as much as they do, in that it considers only one aspect, however significant, of a work which is of such multiplicity that no critical study has yet come to terms with the whole of it.

The imagery is not everything; but it is possible to say that our response to the poem as a whole is considerably affected by sensuous, particularly visual imagery. It is the image that remains clear in the

<sup>32</sup>A History of English Literature (with L. Cazamian), p. 282.

<sup>33</sup>The Works of Edmund Spenser.

<sup>34</sup>The Allegorical Temper.

mind after reading The Faerie Queene. We retain a clear memory of Gerioneo, with his teeth "Like to a rancke of piles that pitched are awry" (V, xi, 9), or Despair, whose "raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and pine/Were shronke into his jawes, as he did never dyne" (I, ix, 35). The clarity of such images is almost that of a room seen through the wrong end of a telescope. Spenser has often been called "dream-like", but never "dreamy", because of this vividness. "Dreamy" suggests a vague condition of mind, the state of daydreaming; but Spenser's images have the almost painful clarity of real dreams, or of nightmares.

The image is itself a source of delight or horror; but if it is no more than this, we must take the view that The Faerie Queene is a splendid picture-gallery, which is obviously inadequate. To discover what the image does other than point to itself as an emotional stimulant, it is necessary to examine several key passages, and, as it were, watch the image working.

We have already examined the fight of Red Cross with Error, in allegorical terms. To consider it as a series of images will provide a useful illustration of the utter inadequacy of the former approach.<sup>35</sup> For the most striking quality of the episode is its realistic, sensuous detail, rather than its allegorical significance. The monster's tail

<sup>35</sup>The following interpretation of the fight with Error owes a good deal to A. C. Hamilton in The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene", p. 29-36.

was huge, long, knotted, and speckled. It spread all around her den.

When the Knight put forth his strength to strangle her, she:

...spewd out of her filthie maw  
 A floud of poyson horrible and blacke  
 Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw (I, i, 20)

The word "filthie" is doing no work here, but the image is vital and concrete enough to work even when flawed.

Error is described with exactness "upon the durtie ground", her brood "sucking upon her poisonous dugs". These details work immediately on all the senses. Sight is affected by precise visual details like "speckled tail", and the "little glooming light" made by the Knight's armour; taste and smell by the violent spewing and by the stink of vomit; touch by the crushing sensation of the monster's tail, and hearing by her loud bray and her offspring's "groning full deadly". Fuseli, who was inclined at times to an almost surrealistic precision of presentation, complained that Spenser here "dreamt a butcher's dream and not a poet's".<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the image is almost too literal and clear to be bearable.

Not only does the image act as something aesthetically satisfying in its own right, but it can also be clearly seen to point back to and support the narrative. The monster's brood rush into her mouth; she

<sup>36</sup>The Mind of Henry Fuseli (ed. E. C. Mason), p. 217.

starts from her den "hurling her hideous talle/About her cursed head". The whole fight is intensely dramatic and active. Una's voice rallies the Knight to knit all his force: finally to strike with superhuman strength (I, i, 24). Narrative and image support and give life to one another, so that they are almost inseparable. Action is realized in terms of image, image is vitalized by action. Any interpretation of the deeper levels of The Faerie Queene must start from this complex and living interaction; the image, the narrative, and, as indicated in the previous chapter, the verse, form a triangle of forces in equilibrium, a dynamic repose. This is the structural principle upon which the whole poem depends.

Let us look back for a moment to the allegorical interpretation of the den of Error, and see what part it plays in determining the reader's response. The Christian, assisted by Revealed Truth, must combat Error: The English nation, with the support of the Church of England, opposes and destroys false teaching. How do these rather cold, drab, and obvious statements relate to the lively passage just discussed? It is, I think, clear that their role is secondary: otherwise we must say that what takes Spenser fifteen stanzas to describe (11-26) can be expressed in a couple of sentences. This is not to say that the allegory is totally irrelevant. We are aware that Red Cross is a



Christian, opposing Error: but this is an enrichment of our response, which is primarily to the poetic structure of narrative, verse, and image.

The primacy of verse narrative and image in the aesthetic response to The Faerie Queene is further illustrated by the House of Alma episode in Book II. Guyon's and Arthur's arrival and their fight with the "vile caitive wretches" is effective because image and narrative are fused into a single poetic whole:

A thousand villeins rownd about them swarmd  
 Out of the rockes and caves adjoyning nye;  
 Vile caitive wretches, ragged, rude, deformd,  
 All threatning death, all in straunge manner armd:  
 Some with unweldy clubs, some with long speares,  
 Some with rusty knives, some staves in fier warmd  
 Sterne was their looke; like wild amazed steares  
 Staring with hollow eies, and stiffe upstanding heares (II, ix, 13)

Here is a vivid picture indeed; but it is a picture of figures in action. The image is relevant to the story, and the story requires the image.

When the knights are once inside the castle, however, the reader's interest slackens. It is all very clever, this expression of the physical structure of the human body in disguised terms; but when each item in the verse is specifically attached only to a conceptual system outside the poem, when "Twise sixteen warders . . . all armed bright/  
 In glistening steel" is merely an elaborate circumlocution for a set of

teeth, our response is acrostic, not poetic, in nature (II, ix, 21-46). At the end, the canto improves again, with the description of the powers of the mind, because the figure of Phantastes, for instance, is presented primarily in terms of images, not of point-for-point correspondencies. The defeat of the besiegers in Canto XI brings us again to the triumphant poetic fusion of narrative and image. Arthur's fight with Meleager, who was:

...of such subtle substance and unsound  
 That like a ghost he seem'd whose grave-clothes were unbound  
 (II, xi, 20)

is presented in the same forceful terms as that of Red Cross with Error. C.S. Lewis<sup>37</sup> compares Meleager to Orrilo in Orlando Innamorato: "The one story is fun, the other nightmare". This phrase suggests a quality of Spenser's imagery that has not been sufficiently emphasized. Not only does it work simply as aesthetically satisfying in itself and as supporting the narrative: but it points beyond itself to a deeper level of the human imagination. Meleager is "nightmare": he is an embodiment of a phase of experience which is most conscious in dreams. I have already used the adjective "dream-like" to describe the clarity of Spenser's imagery. But there is more than its clarity to associate it with dreams. Thus, Meleager:

<sup>37</sup>The Allegory of Love, p. 307-308.

His body leane and meagre as a rake  
 And skin all withered like a dryed rooke;  
 Therto as cold and drery as a snake,  
 That seemed to tremble evermore and quake;  
 All in a canvas thin he was bedight  
 And girded with a belt of twisted brake:  
 Upon his head he wore a Helmet light  
 Made of a dead mans skull, that seemd a ghastly sight (II, xi, 22)

The image is concrete and sensuous. Meleager is a figure in action, mounted on a tiger, and his fight with Arthur is a running fight.

Allegorically, he is the enemy of mankind, who strives "To bring the soule into captivitie".<sup>38</sup> But he is more than that. He is a manifestation of more primitive depths of fear than can be described in such terms; the fiend that Coleridge saw, the undead corpse, the mummy that pursued the heroes of Conan Doyle and M.R. James, the zombie, are all derived from the same basic human fear.

The House of Busirane is my third illustration of the potency of Spenser's imagery. It is difficult to interpret allegorically. Why was Busirane able to abduct the bride on her wedding day? Why should Chastity rescue her? I am not sure that these questions, as expecting an allegorical answer, are useful ones for the literary critic to ask, for they are concerned rather with the conceptual frame of the poem than with the experience of reading. It is enough for the responsive reader that Amoret is there imprisoned, and that her unfortunate lover

<sup>38</sup>See H.J. Berger, The Allegorical Temper, p. 56.

Scudamour is unable to pierce the wall of fire and rescue her. We are presented with a tense and dramatic situation. Britomart arrives on the scene. She pities the helpless and lamenting Scudamour, rallies his courage so that he is prepared to attempt the conquest of the gate again. They approach it together. Even the dauntless Britomart hesitates to advance through the fire, but with true chivalric motive (III, xi, 24), for "Shameful thing/Yt were t' abandon noble chevisaunce" she tries, and passes unharmed through the fire. Scudamour, following her, is beaten back. Britomart finds herself in a strange, silent, gorgeous, and in some way evil palace:

For round about the walls yclothed were  
 With goodly arras of great majesty  
 Woven with golde and silke, so close and nere  
 That the rich metall lurked privily  
 As faining to be hidd from envious eye;  
 Yet here and there and every where, unwares  
 It shewd it selfe and shone unwillingly;  
 Like a discoloured Snake, whose hidden snares  
 Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht back declares  
(III, xi, 28)

The snake image is an unmistakable warning of latent evil; the rich metal "shone unwillingly" and "lurked privily". If this stanza is read with even a little attention--and what reader could fail to attend to such richly packed words--a state of unease and mental tension is generated. This is reinforced and built up steadily throughout the long description

of the arras. Images of bestiality abound in the decorations, indicating through an intuitive rather than a rational mode of communication, the unhealthy, degraded condition of the personality enslaved by animalistic passion. Gods are presented in metamorphoses through which they have become beasts. Even when such loves as did not involve an actual transformation into an animal are described, the lines are loaded with bestial words:

He loved Ise for his dearest dame  
 And for her sake her cattel fed awhile  
 And for her sake a cowheard vile became  
 The servant of Admetus, cowheard vile. (III, xi, 39)

The association with animals, the ambiguity of "cowheard", and the repeated adjective "vile" degrade Apollo's passion, reduce it to the level of those which resulted in animal metamorphoses. It is in this corrupt and horrifying atmosphere that Britomart keeps her long vigil, baffled by the mysterious "Be bold" written up everywhere around her. Finally she sees the Masque of Cupid, and here we are taken back to the familiar world of the Roman de la Rose. Fancy, Desire, Doubt, Danger, Fear, Hope, are all figures whom we have seen before. Among them comes Amoret herself, her heart drawn forth into a silver basin. On the first occasion Britomart fails to rescue her, but waits through another long and silent day. The second night brings success: Britomart follows the Masque of Cupid after its re-enactment, and surprises the

enchanter Busirane. He is forced to retract his charms, Amoret is released, and the dark splendour of the house is overthrown.

Here we are presented with an intensely dramatic situation. The noble virgin knight is attempting to rescue a maiden from the enchanter who has imprisoned her. Slow-paced, elaborate, detailed, and highly emotive descriptions, first of the House of Busirane, and of the terrible Masque of Cupid, reinforce the drama, and generate suspense. Our attention and excitement are concentrated rather than dispersed by this careful description. The bestial pictures, the sad actors in the Masque, Amoret escorted by Cruelty and Despight, Cupid triumphant on a lion, Busirane working his evil spells with Amoret's blood; these are not irrelevant pieces of Fine Writing, indicating that Spenser has lost touch with his narrative thread and is indulging a secret desire to be a painter. They are vital to the creation of a suspense and horror necessary to the narrative itself. Image and narrative, again, are not without allegorical significance: the whole world of the Roman de la Rose is not evoked for nothing. But the life of the scene does not derive from its allegorical attachments. The images relate also to intuitive levels of awareness, which are not clearly enough comprehended to be explicable in conceptual terms. They can find expression only through the image and narrative patterns which suggest them. The story

of Amoret's rescue from an enchanter by Britomart is precisely the kind of story that, because it is obscurely satisfactory to the human imagination, arises over and over again in folk tales. I said earlier of Meleager that he is a kind of nightmare horror; Britomart is an ideal dream-figure or a folk-story hero, a Jack the Giant Killer, as also Meleager is a folk-story horror.

But there is in this episode yet another level to the imagery.

When Britomart first enters the house, she waits until:

...sad shadows gan the world to hide  
From mortall vew, and wrap in darkness dreare (III, xi, 55)

before she sees the Masque. After her long wait:

The morrowe next appeared with joyous cheare  
Calling men to their daily exercize. (III, xii, 28)

Again, the second night:

...the second evening  
Her covered with her sable vestiment  
Wherwith the world's fair beauty she hath blent (III, xii, 29)

Night and Day are distinctly correlated with sorrow and joy. This is the fundamental level of the imagery which runs, as I hope to show, right through the poem; a level concerned with the basic oppositions of sickness and health, life and death, light and darkness, nature and art.

We have so far considered The Faerie Queene as a poetic, chivalric narrative, of a special kind in that the tension between narrative

and verse leads to a concentration of the reader's attention upon the image. The image supports the narrative, draws life from it, enriches the verse. The whole complex of narrative, verse, and image points also towards a certain amount of allegory. But the vitality of the poem is not to be explained by its allegorical significance; which is often platitudinous or obscure. I hope to show, in the next two chapters, how the image draws its life from basic modes of apprehension; in the first place through its relationship to archetypal symbols, secondly through its insistence upon, and final intuitive synthesis of, the recurrent and basic oppositions to which it points.



## SHADOWS OF REALITY

I have suggested that Spenser's imagery derives its vitality from some kind of basic unconscious or subconscious awareness, some fundamental tendency of the human imagination, which is put, in The Faerie Queene, into visual terms. This awareness is expressed in part through the archetypal quality of some figures, events, and places in the poem. I have already cited the examples of Meleager and Gerioneo as expressing archetypal figures of the popular imagination. More examples are necessary if we are to see how the poem depends for its effect upon such creations.

The Red Cross Knight of Book I is a dragon slayer. The idea of man conquering some kind of evil, demonic beast is one very dear to humankind. It is expressed in legend after legend. Quite apart from the Legend of Saint George, to which Book I is explicitly linked, there are stories in classical mythology, like that of Perseus and Andromeda, or that of Theseus and Ariadne, both of which are strikingly close to The Faerie Queene in that the love of a woman is involved with the destruction of the beast. Beowulf died fighting and overcoming a dragon. The same pattern of event, man alone challenging some kind of evil bestial dreadnought, is to be seen in the Spanish bullfight. The bull-

fight, however distasteful to Anglo-Saxon sensibilities, is thoroughly satisfying to the Spanish populace. It obviously forms a kind of ritual enactment of the satisfaction of some unconscious or half-conscious wish, perhaps the desire to overcome, to transcend, the animal within the self. In Lord of the Flies, a book concerned with precisely this problem of the dark desires of mankind, the Beast addresses Simon:

Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill... You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close! I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are what they are?<sup>39</sup>

The Beast is in the self, and we know consciously that we cannot go out and kill it; but the only way in which the desire to overcome it can be expressed, is by an image of human physical puniness set against and overcoming brute force. So the matador plays upon the violence and power of his black adversary, until by its very strength it becomes exhausted and helpless; so, through its own pride of strength, is the Red Cross Knight's dragon overcome.

This may appear to be the substitution of one kind of allegorical interpretation of the poem for another. But it is not so. What I am saying about the battle between knight and dragon is that it is the kind of story that is common in folk-story and legend, because it is

<sup>39</sup>William Golding, Lord of the Flies, p. 137.

satisfactory as the fulfillment of a human longing. Such longings cannot be expressed in purely rational language: the hints I have given, about what the longing really is, are necessarily clumsy and unsatisfactory, because the only way such longings can be expressed is through some kind of ritual enactment, like a poem or a bullfight.

Mammon's cave (II, vii), is an example of a place common to the popular imagination. Mammon himself is the hoarding earthman of immemorial tradition; his underworld recalls countless visits of heroes to dark lands. The doors open magically, as did the doors of Moria<sup>40</sup> or of Ali Baba's cave. All is dark and smoky, covered with spider webs:

...Arachne high did lifte  
Her cunning web, and spred her subtille nett,  
Enwrapped in fowle smoke, and clouds more black than jett (II, vii, 28)

as in countless underworlds of legend. Like Proserpine, or Orpheus, or True Thomas, Guyon is endangered by quite arbitrary laws; normal justice does not operate in the dark lands, and something horrid is ready to rend the hero if he transgresses "the fatall Stygian lawes" (II, vii, 27). The cave of Mammon horrifies because it is just the kind of underworld that man imagines: dark, mysterious, held in sway by laws quite other than ours.

<sup>40</sup>See Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, I, 321.

Archetypal patterns do exist in the poem: that much should by now be clear. But I have not yet demonstrated that they have any great significance: the Cave of Mammon and the Red Cross Knight's fight with the dragon have been explained satisfactorily by other means. It may be that the archetypal elements in The Faerie Queene provide merely an enrichment of the poem, are not among the chief sources of its power.

In order to demonstrate the importance of these archetypal patterns, it is necessary to treat at some length a figure never satisfactorily explained, though of the first importance: Britomartis. She has always been something of a puzzle. Her intended marriage to Arthegall has been the cause of various rather gymnastic attempts to provide suitable allegorical significances. Archetypal interpretation of her personality and behaviour proves far more fruitful and relevant.

Britomart's immediate literary predecessor is of course Bradamante. Burckhardt tells us that the virago was a popular figure in the Italian Renaissance:

The highest praise which could then be given to the great Italian women was that they had the mind and the courage of men.<sup>41</sup>

Bradamante herself derives from Virgil's Camilla. This is mere

<sup>41</sup>The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy, p. 398.

literary genealogy, however; it has nothing to do with Britomart's presenting a fascinating, attractive image to people unfamiliar with either the Classical or the Italian Epic. Nor is the vitality of Britomart to be explained by her connection with Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth was very much aware that she was a prince, and was so masculine that some historians have suspected actual physical abnormality. She was popular in her own time and has remained, to some extent, an attractive figure to succeeding generations: but the modern reader rarely thinks of Elizabeth when he is reading about Britomart.

Neither specific political nor specific literary ancestry affects the non-specialist reader very strongly. Rather, he finds Britomart satisfactory because, as a member of the class which I propose to call noble bisexual figures, she is obscurely satisfying to his imagination.<sup>42</sup>

Bisexual figures are recurrent in literature. Pallas Athene, in the Orestais, is bisexual to the extent that she is a woman who has put on armour, which is linked with specifically masculine powers. Shakespearean heroines like Viola and Portia dress as men, and are

<sup>42</sup>The germ of the following discussion lay in Professor G. Wilson Knight's comments on bisexuality, particularly in his Christ and Nietzsche, p. 113-157, and in his drama lectures given at Leeds.

wonderfully attractive when they do so.<sup>43</sup> Lady Macbeth suggests a sexual ambivalence in herself:

...Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here (Macbeth, I, v, 40-1)

and this is clearly related to the explicit bisexuality of the witches:

...you should be women  
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret. (Macbeth, I, iii, 45-6)

In Restoration comedy, bisexuality appears only fugitively. The names of Millamant and Mirabel, the heroine and hero of The Way of the World, are suggestive of some kind of sexual reversal. In later literature, in, for example, the plays of Ibsen, there are strong bisexual elements. Hjordis, the Valkyrie-like woman in The Vikings at Helgeland, Furia, and Hedda Gabler (who was so fond of her father's pistols), show distinctly masculine attributes. Many of Shaw's people are bisexual, like his Caesar. In a recent film made by Ingemar Bergmann, The Face, the magician's delightful wife appeared at first disguised as a man.

This constant preoccupation with ambivalent sexuality is not

<sup>43</sup>The bisexuality of Shakespeare's heroines has been explained as a result either of his (supposed) homosexuality, or of the Elizabethan practice of using boys to play female parts. The first explanation does not account for the attractiveness of those heroines for people clearly heterosexual; the second is, on examination, meaningless. An audience would find a boy dressed as a boy more difficult to accept as a woman than it would a boy dressed as a woman.

confined to what we call highbrow literature, or even to literature at all. Britannia is a figure of the popular, even inarticulate, imagination. So is Justice. In the English Christmas Pantomime, a largely ritualistic celebration of some folk-tale, such as Jack and the Beanstalk or Dick Whittington and his Cat, the part of the hero, the Principal Boy, is invariably played by an attractive young woman dressed in pseudo-masculine clothes, and the comic Dame, the Widow Twankey, is a man dressed as a woman. Even the Drum Majorette of American popular culture would not gyrate on the football pitch if the crowd did not find her attractive dressed in masculine, even semi-military clothes. She is commercialized, of course: but the crowd pays because it likes what it sees.

Obviously, these people are not all alike. The Principal Boy is the opposite of the Dame. Pallas Athene, bringing about true justice in the Orestia is fundamentally opposed, in the imagination, to Pentheus in the Bacchae, made mad, forced by Dionysus to dress as a woman, and torn to pieces by the Bacchanals. Portia and Viola, dressed as boys, are superb: but Lady Macbeth is repellent, like Hjordis or Hedda Gabler. It is possible to distinguish two classes of bisexual figure, the noble and the grotesque. Into the first may be placed Pallas Athene, Britannia, Viola, the Principal Boy, St Joan

of Arc, and the Drum Majorettes. The grotesque will include Pentheus, Lady Macbeth and the witches, Hjordis and her followers in Ibsen and in Shaw,<sup>44</sup> Mother Reilly, and the Pantomime Dame. The grotesque class includes figures both comic and horrific. These characteristics may appear to be at least as profoundly different as those which divide my two classes. But the grotesque, which consists in the juxtaposition of strikingly unfitting elements, produces either horror or amusement in accordance with the way in which the juxtaposition is presented.<sup>45</sup>

In the class I describe as noble, on the other hand, all is fitting and right. It never appears discordant or ridiculous that Pallas Athene should wear a helmet, that Britannia, armed with trident and shield, should rule the waves, or that Eowyn, the Shieldmaiden of Rohan, should overthrow the High Nazgul.<sup>46</sup>

The reasons for such responses as we feel to these figures are

<sup>44</sup>Most of Shaw's bisexual women are, I think, grotesque. The obvious exception is Lady Cecily in Captain Brassbound's Conversion.

<sup>45</sup>For a fuller discussion of the comic and horrific potentialities of the grotesque, see G. Wilson Knight, "King Lear and the Comedy of the Grotesque" in The Wheel of Fire, p. 160-176. The Italian dramatists of the teatro grottesco, in particular Pirandello, held similar views.

<sup>46</sup>See Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, III, 117.



rather in the province of the psychologist than that of the literary critic, and probably cannot be properly expressed in the linear language of normal communication: they require the multiplex, intuitive forms of art. Some tentative attempt to suggest the areas in which these reasons may be found is, however, necessary to the present discussion.

The grotesque class seems to represent a disorder of nature, either an attempt by the female sex to take on attributes not proper to it, or a stepping down to femininity by a man; in either case it involves the abdication of attributes proper to the original sex. The noble bisexual figures transcend their femininity, put on masculine powers, while at the same time they remain wholly womanly.

The contrast of noble and grotesque bisexual figures is illustrated by the conflict of Britomart and the Amazon Radigund. Like Britomart, Radigund is beautiful--"A miracle of nature's goodly grace" (V, v, 12)-- and brave:

...in armes well tride  
And sundry battels which she hath atchieved  
With great successe that her hath glorifide. (V, iv, 33)

But unlike Britomart, she is an Amazon, degrading those whom she has overcome:

Doth them compell to work, to earne their meat,  
To spin, to card, to sew, to wash, to wring. (V, iv, 31)

Her mannishness has reached such a pitch that she reverses the normal hierarchy of the sexual relationship. Her kinship is not with Eowyn or Fortia, but with Hjordis, even with Fairy Hardcastle.<sup>47</sup>

The grotesque bisexual encounters the noble; Britomart destroys her enemy utterly. This is imaginatively satisfying because the true ideal must erase all traces of the illusory. The difference between the two is apprehended when they are set against one another, and Radigund's illusory manhood is rejected. Were Radigund to continue in existence, the reader would be disturbed by the persistence of an illusion after reality had been perceived.

The discussion of Radigund indicates what I have in mind as archetypal analysis. It would be ridiculous to take each episode involving Britomart, and attempt an exact explanation in terms of noble bisexuality. The night she spends in the Temple of Isis, for example, has only slight bisexual overtones, if it has any at all. When Talus brings Britomart the news of Arthegall's overthrow, she is simply a jealous girl. To explain episodes such as these in terms of Britomart's bisexuality would be to impose, on an essentially imaginative and probably non-rational mode of apprehension, a narrow logical system. It would be another form of error that makes the vital

<sup>47</sup>A character in C.S. Lewis' fantasy That Hideous Strength.

dynamic image a slave of static allegorical concepts. The archetypal approach is valuable only in the flexible consideration of Britomart's activity, as related to the behaviour of other figures in the same class. This does not exclude allegorical implications; for example, in the pursuit of Ollyphant, we are aware that:

...he the powre of chaste hands might not beare  
But alwayes did their dread encounter fly. (III, xi, 6)

At the same time, we apprehend Britomart's pursuit as proper to a person of her kind, as it was proper that Bellona should overthrow the giants. Britomart at times acts allegorically; the image she presents frequently draws its life from her bisexuality.

Thus, she is almost invincible in combat. Her first act in the poem is to overthrow Guyon, who:

...never yet, sith warlike armes he bore  
And shivering speare in bloody field first shooke  
He fownd himself dishonoured so sore (III, i, 7)

Nobody has much chance against her. Marinelli, who had defeated "an hundred knights of honourable name" (III, iv, 21) is unhorsed without difficulty. Scudamour (IV, vi, 10), Dolon (V, vi, 28), the brothers of Guizor (V, vi, 39), even the six knights attacking Red Cross before Castle Joyeus (III, i, 29) are all disposed of with ease. Only Faridell (III, ix, 16) and Arthegall (IV, vi, 21) give Britomart any trouble. The

former, though overthrown himself, unhorses her also. Arthegall is defeated at the tournament in IV, iv but on their second meeting only Britomart's beauty saves her. Paridell's unhorsing of her is probably significant allegorically, related to Britomart's chastity. The defeat by Arthegall is more difficult to interpret. It feels satisfactory in the reading, and of course if she had again defeated him she would not have found the subordination required of a wife easy: but the full discussion of this event must be postponed until later in this chapter. For the moment, it is enough that she is almost invincible, which is exactly what we expect of the virgin warrior.

Soon after we meet Britomart, we learn how she put on men's clothes, armour, to search for her lover (III, iii, 57). Put in cold terms like this, the mode of pursuit sounds too explicit, unsubtle, and mannish for an ideal figure like Britomart. But any such suggestion is negated by the presentation. She is maidenly and abashed before Merlin:

...seeing herself descryde  
Was all abasht, and her pure yvory  
Into a cleare Carnation suddaine dyde. (III, iii, 20)

Only after Glauce inspires her does she decide to take up arms in search of Arthegall (III, iii, 52-56). She has nothing mannish about her, any more than has Viola, who dressed as a man for similar reasons,

or Polly Oliver, who even enlisted as a soldier.

Malecasta's attempt at seduction, too, is normal. Viola had similar troubles with Olivia. The bisexual figure, embodying some kind of ideal feminine integration or transcendence of femaleness, is attractive to men. It appeals also to women, because it suggests a masculinity devoid of crude maleness.

All this is more or less plain sailing: the real test of the fruitfulness of considering Britomart as a bisexual figure lies in the analysis of such crucial episodes as the rescues of Amoret and of Arthegall.

I have already considered the House of Busirane as a narrative reinforced with, and pointing towards, images of singular power. How is the reader's response to it modified by his unconscious awareness that Britomart is an imaginative attempt to portray some kind of human ideal through bisexuality?

Where Scudamour failed, Britomart succeeds in forcing entry to the house. She is able to overcome the refined bestiality of Busirane, because she lacks the crude, perhaps sadistic maleness which prevented Scudamour. Thus Busirane is forced to retract his charms, and Amoret is released. In the original ending of Book III, she was reunited with Scudamour:

Had ye them seene, ye would have surely thought  
That they had beene that faire Hermaphrodite

Which that rich Romane of white marble wrought  
 And in his costly bath caused to bee site;  
 So seemd these two, as growne together quite,  
 That Britomart, halfe envying their blesse  
 Was much empassioud in her gentle sprite,  
 And to herself oft wisht like happinesse:  
 In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse (III, xii, 46)

Britomart embodies, in her bisexuality, a sexual detachment, (Viola passes for a eunuch in Twelfth Night, II, ii) which enables her to escape the maleness and femaleness that have separated the lovers; female prudery has kept Amoret among the illusions of Courtly Love. She has been repelled by the maleness of Scudamour, the very maleness that prevents his coming near her. The combined masculinity and femininity of Britomart makes the union of the lovers possible, but that real union, being fecund, is, once achieved, greater than the almost eunuchoid poise of Britomart. Thus, in the lines just quoted, Amoret and Scudamour become the hermaphrodite: Britomart remains, a little wistfully, outside. However well-integrated or ideal her bisexuality, it remains less than the true union of the lovers.

Again, I must emphasize that this kind of interpretation is not merely the substitution of one allegorical interpretation for another. The primacy of story and image in the Busirane episode has already been established in Chapter III; the present suggestions are an attempt to put into words those imaginative and non-verbal forms that underlie

image and narrative. Such archetypal shapes are not normally recognized by the conscious mind, as an allegory must be if it is to work; but it is just such unrecognized undertones that render poetic images obscurely but unquestionably satisfactory. Attempts to explain the House of Busirane in allegorical terms remain inadequate,<sup>48</sup> but the episode itself is deeply satisfying because of the vitality of story and image. My purpose is to trace the sources of that vitality.

Let us now consider Britomart's intended marriage in the light of her archetypal qualities. The Arthegall/Britomart relationship has caused difficulty to many commentators, and has led to statements like "Justice is the chastity of the soul"<sup>49</sup> which I find incomprehensible.

The whole of Arthegall's adventure indicates that his justice is almost mindlessly retributive. Of all Spenser's heroes, he is the only one to whom the adjective "cruel" could consistently be applied. His overthrow of the egalitarian giant (V, ii, 30-50) involves some rather specious special pleading, and is brutal. The killing of Lady Munera is both pathetic and horrible:

Still holding up her suppliant hands on hye  
 And kneeling at his feete submissively:  
 But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold

<sup>48</sup>See T.P. Roche, "The Challenge to Chastity", PMLA LXXVI, p. 340-344.

<sup>49</sup>See M.P. Parker, The Allegory of "The Faerie Queene", p. 177.

And eke her feete, those feete of silver trye,  
 Which sought unrighteousnesse, and justice sold,  
 Chopt off, and nayid on high that all them might behold. (V, ii, 26)

It is all very well to talk about Munera's 'unrighteousnesse'; the manner of her death arouses pity. The repeated adjective 'suppliant', the submissive kneeling, are in sharp contrast to the brutality of 'Chopt off'. Spenser may well have believed in this kind of Justice, as did many of his contemporaries. But there can be no doubt that the reader's response to the poem is one of pity for the unfortunate Lady Munera.

Arthegall is throughout rather unattractive. His iron page Talus is, to a modern reader, pleasingly reminiscent of the Iron Teacher or the Tin Man of Oz; but he has darker connections. He represents the rack and thumbcrews of Elizabethan justice; and among his relations must be counted Moxon's Master, the monster that Frankenstein made and the robots who, in so much science-fiction, inherit the earth.

It is impossible to account for Arthegall's repellent qualities on the basis of Elizabethan concepts of justice. The emotional sympathies of the poetry in the Lady Munera scene are clearly anti-Arthegall: furthermore, Arthegall's behaviour, like a spoilt child's, after his defeat in Satyrane's tournament (IV, vi, 4-7) was no more a matter for praise in Spenser's age than in our own (the vanquished



had no despatch (III, i, 13) ). Arthegall's motto is "Salvagesse sans finesse" (IV, iv, 39).

The Justice of Arthegall is like that of Apollo in the Orestia or that of Shylock: a mindless and savage retribution. Clytemnestra has killed Agamemnon, therefore Orestes must kill her. Antonio has promised a pound of flesh, and the pound is required of him. In the one case Pallas Athene, in the other Portia, transcends the mechanistic notion of justice. Both are noble bisexual figures. The actual means by which the transcendence is brought about, and the new order set up, seem to be, for the satisfaction of the imagination, unimportant. Pallas Athene's argument is, to say the least, dubious. It is the image that is significant; the noble bisexual figure somehow brings about the transcendence of retributive justice.

I mentioned earlier Britomart's near defeat at the hands of Arthegall. Pallas cannot, should not, defeat Apollonian justice: Shylock's demand is, in its way, just. The coming together of retributive justice and its transcendence simply does not, imaginatively, take place in that way. It may be indicated by means of a marriage.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Curiously enough, a friend of mine, who had at the time nothing to do with English studies, and who certainly knew nothing of my interest in the bisexual, delighted me by remarking, after seeing a production of The Merchant of Venice, that Portia should have married Shylock. He was unable to explain why: it "would have felt right".

This chapter is already too long; and enough has been said, I hope, to show that an analysis of the reader's imaginative response to the archetypal elements in The Faerie Queene is helpful in tracing the sources of that response. The final stage of analysis, treating of the fundamental and recurrent imagery, will now be undertaken.

## THE PRIMARY IMAGINATION

To trace the fundamental source of the life of Spenser's poetry, it is necessary to probe to a still more profound level of awareness than archetypal analysis can reach. The archetype is an expression of profound and irrational longings and fears; but these longings and fears are themselves the product of the fundamental tendencies of the human imagination as such. It is possible to find direct expressions of these fundamental tendencies in a type of imagery which, as Professor Frye has pointed out, may properly be called universal.<sup>51</sup> Such ultimate antitheses as sickness and health, light and darkness are opposites in the experience of all men. Two difficulties lie in the way of any examination of these antitheses.

Firstly, The Faerie Queene is a poem of varied intensity. What is at one point a highly charged image, may at another be no more than a cliché. For instance, when Guyon is overthrown by Britomart, he suffers "hard fortune" in being defeated (III, i, 8). Here "fortune" is a dead word; but when Arthegall commits himself to the "fortune" of his fight with Radigund (V, iv, 47) the same word becomes vivid and

<sup>51</sup>Anatomy of Criticism, p. 118.

significant. Word-counting is obviously useless; a great deal of the analysis must depend on the reader's intuitive estimate of the significance of a phrase in its context.<sup>52</sup>

Secondly, we must beware of oversimplification. The antitheses are not presented at all as directly as has sometimes been suggested.<sup>53</sup> Images must be considered as they appear, in all their subtlety, not reduced glibly to simple oppositions.

Of all the great antitheses, that of health and sickness, or, in the extreme case, life and death, is presented most simply. Idleness, for example:

...grew to grievous malady;  
For in his lustlesse limbs, through evill guise,  
A shaking fever rained continually (I, iv, 20)

Gluttony suffers from a "dry dropsie" (I, iv, 23), Lechery from venereal disease (I, iv, 26), Avarice from gout (I, iv, 29), Envy from leprosy (I, iv, 32); Lucifera's coach passes over "Dead skulls and bones of men" (I, iv, 36). The dragon that Red Cross fights:

...was deadly made  
And al that life preserved did detest. (I, xi, 49)

<sup>52</sup>Millar Maclure, "Nature and Art in The Faerie Queene", ELH XXVII, p. 3, holds that an objective touchstone of intensity is to be found in the allegorical significance at a given point in the poem. As I do not consider allegory of central importance, I cannot agree.

<sup>53</sup>By, for example, C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 313-317.

Archimago makes Guyon 'the object of his spight and deadly food' (II, i, 3). The porter of the Bower of Bliss, the evil genius, is 'the foe of life' (II, xii, 48). Malbecco is forever transfixed with 'death's eternall dart' (III, x, 59).

On the other side, virtue is all fecundity and health. Charissa suckles her babies (I, x, 30). Fighting his dragon, Red Cross is refreshed by the Well and the Tree of Life. Belphoebe crushes herbs, virtuous for the healing of Timias' wounds (III, v, 33). Cambina carries a cup of Nepenthe (IV, iii, 43). The poem is full of marriages. Health and life and fecundity as virtue are throughout the poem set against sickness, sterility and death as expressions of evil. It has been objected that this is not always true: that Acrasia, for instance, is presented 'with her brow /sic/ wet through 'languor of her late sweet toil' " (II, xii, 78).<sup>54</sup> But Acrasia is still not presented in action, as are the lovers in the Garden of Adonis. Her lack of visible activity is emphasized by the word 'languor', and by the images clustered around her. Her breast is 'bare to ready spoile/Of hungry eies' (II, xii, 78). A woman prepared to stimulate peeping Toms would hardly be described as fecundly active. The distinction remains clear, Good

<sup>54</sup>Graham Hough, A Preface to 'The Faerie Queene', p. 164.

and Evil made manifest as health and sickness, life and death, fecundity and sterility.

The second opposition of light and darkness, is not quite so simple. True, Night is hardly ever mentioned without aversion:

So soone as Night had with her pallid hew  
Defaste the beautie of the shyning skye (III, ii, 28)

...whenas chearelesse Night ycovered had  
Fayre heaven with an universal clowd  
That every wight dismayed with darkenes sad (III, xii, 1)

...when as daies faire shinie-beame yclowded  
With fearefull shadowes of deformed night  
Warn'd man and beast in quiet rest be shrowded (V, iv, 45)

Conversely, Day is always greeted with delight, almost as if every dawn were a new enactment of the original Creative Word:

...the Morne with cremosin ray  
The windowes of bright heaven opened had  
Through which into the world the dawning day  
Might looke, that maketh every creature glad (II, xi, 3)

...so soone as Phoebus Lamp  
Bewrayed had the world with early light  
And fresh Aurora had the shady damp  
Out of the goodly heven amoved quight (III, x, 1)

And in the great passages, the moments of poetic tension, where the conflict of Day and Night becomes explicit, there is no doubt that it is fundamental. The armour of Red Cross makes "a little glooming light" in Error's den (I, i, 14). Prince Arthur's sleepless night of

love-longing embodies the conflict:

Dayes dearest children be the blessed seed  
 Which darknesse shall subdue and heaven win:  
 Truth is his daughter: he her first did breed  
 Most sacred virgin without spot of sinne (III, iv, 59)

The same thing is brought out again in the most intense moment of Book I, when Night herself states "The sonnes of Day he favoureth, I see" (I, v, 25). But the imaginative linking of Light and Darkness with fundamental Good and Evil is not altogether straightforward. Night is contrasted with Duessa, "sunny bright" (I, v, 21); Lucifera "shone as Titan's ray" in "bright blazing beauty" (I, iv, 7). She emerges from her palace "As faire Aurora" (I, iv, 16): a palace which itself "dismaid" the sky with its brightness (I, iv, 4).

There are, however, differences between the brightness of good and that of evil. Duessa's light is borrowed; she is stripped of it by Arthur. The House of Pride shines because it is overlaid with gold foil. Its light is reflected light, reflected from something clearly sham. Lucifera presents more of a problem. She "too exceeding shone", which does suggest something wrong about her shining; and the vanity she manifests in Stanza 10 diminishes her attraction if not her brilliance. She remains something of a puzzle, although it will be possible to say more about her later on.

The conflict between Nature and Art is even more complex than that between Light and Darkness. The obvious consideration is that the 'natural' is good and the 'unnatural' evil. That which fulfils the law of its kind within a system of universal order, imaged in terms of generation, is good, as was seen in the case of the health/sickness dichotomy already discussed. Nature revenges herself on those who deny her; for example, on Marinell, who was 'love's enemy' (III, iv, 26). The unnatural is fully expressed in the figures of Argante and Ollyphant (III, vii, 37; xi, 4).

But Nature itself is not always good. Argante's nymphomania, Hellenore's repeated copulation with the satyr, admit another aspect of Nature. The same power of Eros, which in Britomart produces high and noble emotions, is an apparently indifferent power, a moving force of creation, which in another person issues in animality. Hellenore is made a servant and a sex-machine by the satyrs; the same satyrs, confronted by Una, worship her as a "Goddess of the Wood" (I, vi, 9) and seek to adapt her to the natural religion over which Hellenore later presides as their May-lady. Nature here appears to be a primal urge, a cthonic power beneath the visible veil, almost like the gods in Euripides. In the fertile chaos below the Garden of



Adonis, "infinite shapes of creatures" and "uncouth formes" (III, vi, 35) are produced. But the deepest imagining of Nature goes even beyond this dark primal urge. The fallen "nature" of chaos is related to the "incorrupted nature" of Eden (I, iv, 47). There is decay in the visible natural world:

Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square  
 From the first point of his appointed course;  
 And being once amisse growes daily worse and worse  
 (V, Proem 1)

Arthegall labours for the policing of a world so corrupt that his training had to be upon wild beasts:

...to make experience  
 Upon wyld beasts, which she in woods did find  
 With wrongfull powre oppressing others of their kind (V, i, 7)

Implicit here is the orthodox doctrine of the Fall. The beasts have been somehow infected by Man, so that even though they cannot do wrong in the sense of committing a sin, their acts can be described as wrong. As a result of Adam's sin their behaviour is not that for which their Creator originally designed them.

But the assertion of earthly corruption seems to go even further than the Christian vision of a world fallen from its original perfection: "loathly crime" is "ingenerate in earthly slime" (III, vi, 3). In the Garden of Adonis, "the first seminarie/Of all things that are borne to

live and die", Genius clothes the "naked babes" with "sinfull mire" (III, vi, 32). Orgoglio was born of the earth (I, vii, 9) and so was Meleager, who revived at the touch of his mother (II, ix, 45). The secrets of the earth are hid in the womb of Night, the "most aunient Grandmother of all" (I, v, 22), whom we have already identified with evil.

This sounds rather Manichean; evil seems to be implicit in visible creation. Such a position is incompatible with the Christian doctrine just mentioned, of a world fallen but originally good. Before resolving this difficulty, it is necessary to look a little further.

The treatment of Art in The Faerie Queene is now widely recognized to be ambivalent.<sup>55</sup> Art can be "good", or "evil", depending on circumstances. When Nature and Art are compared, "Nature" has the sense of a forming power (IV, x, 21); and although this power may create perfections beyond the reach of Art (IV, vi, 20) such creations are uncommon, and generally brings natural forms to perfection. Bladud, who "in arts/Exceld at Athens", brought his arts to Britain, and "with sweet science mollifide" a "salvage nation" (II, x, 7, 25). The glory and goodness of Art is most frequently expressed when Art, working

<sup>55</sup>See Millar Maclure, "Nature and Art in The Faerie Queene", ELH XXVII, p. 1-20, and Hans Guth, "Allegorical Implications of Artifice in The Faerie Queene", PMLA LXXVI, p. 474-479.

on the raw material, the "stoffe" of Nature, or bringing Nature's forms to perfection, creates a splendid order, as in the dance on Mount Acidale (VI, x, 10-17).

Spenser's description of precious Nature wrought by Art for the adornment of his Shining Ones is typical of his age, which did not, as does ours, require men always to go in drab. Prince Arthur's panoply is wrought by Art (I, vii, 25-36); so is the tower of Cleopolis, "all built of christall cleene" (I, x, 58) and the clothing of Belpheobe (II, iii, 26-7).

But just as Nature is sometimes libertine and mysterious, so is there in Art a kind of fascination and mystery. Such are the "curious slights" in the carving of Arthur's scabbard, or Florimell's "curiously emboat" and highly decorative girdle (IV, iv, 15). These works of Art belong to the world of the occult. Arthur's shield was the work of Merlin, Britomart's spear that of Bladud; but on the other hand the Protean power of Gulle (V, ix, 10-19) and the infernal arts of Archimago (I, ii, 2-11) belong to Hell. But even in the cave of the good wizard Merlin, Britomart faces the terror of elemental powers, apparently indifferent to good and evil (III, iii, 7-14).

This is all ambivalent, and it is only when Art attempts to become or to ape Nature, to deceive the observer that it is Nature, that it becomes evil. Miss Tuve has noted that the Elizabethans liked their

pictures realistic:<sup>56</sup> Spenser, more than once, praises the "life-resembling pencill". But no reader of The Faerie Queene could be unaware that the capacity of Art to imitate Nature is generally regarded as demonic. Diabolus simius dei. The counterfeit, Una, framed of liquid air, was:

So lively and so like in all mens sight,  
That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight:  
The maker selfe for all his wondrous witt,  
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight. (I, 1, 45)

The ersatz Florimell, made by the witch for her son, was "a wondrous worke":

Whose like on earth was never framed yit;  
That even Nature selfe envide the same,  
And grudg'd to see the counterfet should shame  
The thing it selfe (III, viii, 5)

The art of her manufacture is compared to that of a "guilefull goldsmith" spreading gold foil over a base metal to deceive the eye (IV, v, 15).

Activated by a fallen angel (III, viii, 6-8) the false Florimell is a robot: her "spright" is learned in love, like Paridell (IV, iii, 9: III, x, 6-7).

She knows all the arts of fashionable eroticism. For the art of words also may be perverted, by learned lovers, or by Despair, whose rhetoric so moved the Red Cross Knight. So too may music be

<sup>56</sup>Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, p. 51.

corrupted in the song of the Sirens (II, xii, 32).

It is now possible to comment on the House of Pride. The "golden foile" of the walls (I, iv, 4) links it with the demonic artificial: the palace assaults the senses, has no reserve, holds nothing back. Millar Maclure comments that it is very like Las Vegas, and that *Lucifera* is very like "a night-club singer uncovered with sequins".<sup>57</sup> This brings us rather nearer to an understanding of *Lucifera* and the House of Pride: but the brightness remains puzzling.

A good deal has already been suggested about Nature and Art. A close examination of a few crucial examples will make my conclusions clear.

*Cymochles* is presented in the Bower of Bliss in II, v; "over him, art striving to compare/With nature" twines the ivy:

A place pickt out by choyce of best alyve  
That natures worke by art can imitate:  
In which whatever in this worldly state  
Is sweet and pleasing unto living sense,  
Or that may dayntest fantasy aggrate,  
Was poured forth with plentifull dispence  
And made there to abound with lavish affluence (II, xii, 42)

The nature that Art here imitates is itself wanton, the nature which charms the passions, the power by which the porch of Excess is

<sup>57</sup>"Nature and Art in The Faerie Queene", ELH XXVII, p. 3.

decorated with branches "in wanton wreathings intricate" (II, xii, 53).

Between Art and Nature, in this context, there is a kind of competitive alliance to stimulate the senses:

One would have thought (so cunningly the rude  
 And scorned parts were mingled with the fine)  
 That nature had for wantonnesse ensude  
 Art, and that Art at Nature did repine:  
 So, striving each th' other to undermine  
 Each did the others worke more beautify;  
 So differing both in willes, agreed in fine:  
 So all agreed in sweet diversity,  
 This gardin to adorne with all variety. (II, xii, 59)

This stanza is crucial. Although the Bower is an illusion (II, xii, 43) its attractions affect the senses, and stimulate the passions, because they exist, however illusorily, in a condition of confusion between Art and Nature: a condition fully expressed in the behaviour of the girls in the fountain. C.S. Lewis named these nymphs Cissie and Flossie;<sup>58</sup> it is significant that while the names sound old-fashioned, the erotic play does not. It is as old as woman, as new as eroticism is to every-one who has a serious encounter with it. Within the Bower, "consorted in one harmonie/Birds, voyces, instruments, winds, waters" (II, xii, 70); how dangerous such an alliance of Nature and Art can be is to be judged by the number of critics who have been so enraptured with its beauty

<sup>58</sup>The Allegory of Love, p. 331.

that like Gryll, they have repined at its destruction.

The House of Busirane has already been examined at some length. Here it is enough to notice that Nature takes no part in it, except as raw material wrought by the enchanter's art into an eerie and sterile splendour. This is worse than the Bower; for that at least had some natural element, however perverted, in its beauty. Busirane denies the fecundity of Nature. Where Acrasia was beautiful, he appears as a grubby, vile creature, who carries a knife in his pocket (III, xii, 32).

This series of examples may be a little confusing, but is necessary for the demonstration that, while there is no simple opposition of Art and Nature, there are several significant conditions of each. Nature may be good, as in the Garden of Adonis; indifferent, in the chaos below the Garden; fallen and corrupt in the Bower of Bliss. Art may be good, decorating Arthur or Belphebe, in touch with indifferent powers, for the making of Britomart's spear, corrupt, in alliance with corrupt Nature, or it may be demonic and anti-Nature, in the House of Busirane.

In the "good" situation Art assists Nature; in a corrupt situation the two are in a competitive alliance; the final corruption denies Nature and sets up Art alone.

The paradoxes apparent in these complex relationships are

resolved in the Dance on Mount Acidale, and the Mutability Cantos.

"Nature" in Mutability is clearly not the same Nature as I have been discussing: she is "farr greater and more tall of stature/Than any of the gods or Powers on hie" (VII, vii, 5). She is "still mooving yet unmooved" (VII, vii, 13). Into Mutability's mouth are put words that set Nature apart:

Sith heaven and earth are both alike to thee  
And gods no more than men thou doest esteeme;  
For even the gods, to thee, as men to gods do seeme (VII, vii, 15)

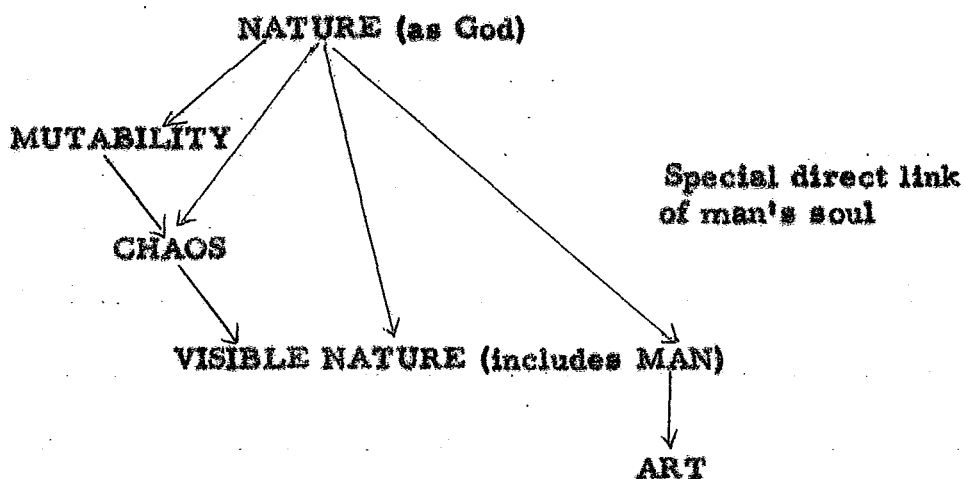
This does not imply that Spenser worshipped Nature: he was a Christian, not a pantheist. The procedure of using mythological forms to imply theological truths was well-established, and is found as late as Comus. Poems were saved by this device from becoming devotional, as apart from religious, and from the incongruity, so apparent in Paradise Lost, of bringing God into the action as a character.

Here we are at the centre of the antitheses that run through The Faerie Queene. Change and Permanence are perpetually contending. But behind their struggle lies the final vision, the Nature of the Mutability Cantos; change is the expression of a deeper permanence. Reality is "eterne in mutability" (III, vi, 47). Mutability's very success is her failure, even in the visible world; the further unfathomable level of the "pillars of Eternity" (VII, viii, 2) still lies beyond even Spenser's



power of synthesis.

Prose is thoroughly inadequate to the expression of such imaginative gropings towards the ultimate oneness of creation as these. The following diagram is another, equally inadequate, exposition of the resolution of Spenser's great dichotomies.



The original Nature is imaged in Visible Nature, which is affected by Mutability. Visible Nature (which includes Man) incorporates something of the corrupt and something of the Divine, thus presenting any of the aspects outlined above. Furthermore, Art, a product of Man, therefore of corrupt and/or incorrupt Nature, may either point back towards the original Divine Nature, or may be involved in Mutability and Chaos.

This resolution of Nature and Art is also implicit in the other

great dichotomies. Health is the standard by which sickness is judged, truth the norm for lies as well as for itself.

It is now possible to perceive the importance of the Dance of the Graces. Colin Clout's music, itself an art, relates visible Nature back to the original, re-establishes the harmony of creation in the form of the Dance. Freedom and discipline, ecstasy and law, attain their fusion in dance: "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" But we know that the dancer is the free and ecstatic human being, the dance a set of rules. In action, the two are inseparably fused; Art and Nature at one, delivering the unfallen, Golden World.

The dance of creation lies behind Spenser's imagery: in which is implied the same conclusion as that of the utterly incomprehensible answer vouchsafed to Julian of Norwich: "It behoved that there should be sin, but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well".

## CONCLUSION

The allegorical approach to Spenser, which has occupied so many critics, has, I think, been shown in this paper to be inadequate. Associating Duessea with the Catholic Church, and with Mary Queen of Scots, as in terms of historical and personal allegory we must, is in a sense valid. But our response to The Faerie Queene has very little connection with our response to tales of the "Horrors of the Inquisition" or to the life of that poor persecuted Queen, and to carry such allegorical interpretations to any length is plainly irrelevant.

Moral allegory fares rather better. In the first place, it has considerable support within the poem. No one would deny that Red Cross Knight's fight with Error, or with the great dragon, is distinctly connected with a Christian system of moral concepts. But even in such clearly allegorical episodes, it may be observed that an interpretation of the inner meaning does not reveal to us, as it were, the kernel of our response to the actual passage of poetry interpreted; the allegory remains peripheral, and the reader of criticism experiences a sense of having been tricked into approving something, which however admirable it may be in itself, is not centrally important to what he had from the poem. Furthermore, not even every important episode in the poem is subject to a clear interpretation; and such interpretations as have been

given remain thoroughly unsatisfactory. Finally, many episodes in The Faerie Queene are, it is agreed on all hands, non-allegorical: so we are faced with considering such patches as excrescences on the poetic form which cannot but destroy the poem, whose very essence must be concentration.

Obviously, if The Faerie Queene is at all a major work, criticism has somewhere missed its way, and has become concerned with inessentials. A new empirical approach must be applied, starting from what C.S. Lewis calls the "all-important conjunction (reader meets text)", the point of departure of all real criticism.<sup>59</sup>

The poem is primarily apprehended as a chivalric narrative in verse. Any criticism which ignores this fact ends by considering a series of platitudinous moral concepts, and imposing them upon the reader as his central experience of The Faerie Queene. The chivalric story comes first. Spenser's knights, like Malory's, undergo a series of vehement adventures. They fight one another in single combat; they take part in tournaments. They even fight, unknowingly, their friends, as Arthegall and Scudamour do battle with Britomart (IV, iv). Their fighting is, like that of other chivalric heroes, to win them worship and honour. It is this level of fascinating interwoven knightly stories that draws the reader on from adventure to adventure, leaves him in suspense

<sup>59</sup>An Experiment in Criticism, p. 128.

by dropping one thread of the story at a crucial point to take up another, holds his undivided attention.

This group of stories is told in a verse which seems at first highly unsuitable for narrative. The Spenserian stanza, with its final alexandrine, tends to become an isolated unit, to stop the reader at its end, rather than to push him on to the next part of the story, and support the poem's excitement and pace.

Closer examination of the verse, however, reveals two significant facts. Firstly, within the stanza, there is a direct, nervous, masculine poetry that proceeds in a singularly business-like fashion about expounding the process of the narrative. The typical Spenserian line tells us what someone did or why he did it. Secondly, the very quality of the stanza that retards its reading is its peculiar excellence. By means of this retardation, the reader is prevented from rushing through merely to find out what happens; he is instead curbed in his pace and forced to concentrate his attention on another characteristic of the poem: the imagery. If it were not for the restraints imposed by the stanza form, the enthusiasm generated by the story would lead the reader far too fast for him to notice what else Faerie Queene holds besides storytelling.

The poem exists in a condition of dynamic tension between exuberant narrative and retarding verse. It is from this tension that Spenser's imagery, so often praised for its pictorial qualities, derives

its prominence in our response. How important the image is can easily be seen if The Faerie Queene is compared with other chivalric romances. In Ariosto it is always the event that counts; we remember the Italian Epic for the breathless haste of its marvels and adventures. With Spenser it is the image that remains clear: Pyrochles beating the water, crying 'I burne, I burne', Disdain glaring and strutting, Occasion unkempt and limping.

In one sense, the image, of dream-like clarity, is satisfactory in itself: Legouis thought of The Faerie Queene as a series of beautiful pictures. But this is by no means the only function performed by the image. Proceeding from the narrative and the verse, the images strengthen and give life to the whole poem, pointing not only to the poem as a poem but to the narrative also. On this level the overt allegory of the poem operates too.

Spenser's story is told in terms of verse and of image; the poem is so constructed that the form both of narrative and of image are related to a conceptual scheme of Protestant morality. This allegorical level of the poem has been perhaps given too little emphasis in the present essay. It has certainly been over-emphasized elsewhere, almost to the exclusion of any other aspect of the poem. Avoiding the detailed working-out of Spenserian allegory, at least for a time, might well prove healthy for Spenser scholars, bringing them back from conceptual

schemes to the poem itself; a sense of proportion could thus be restored.

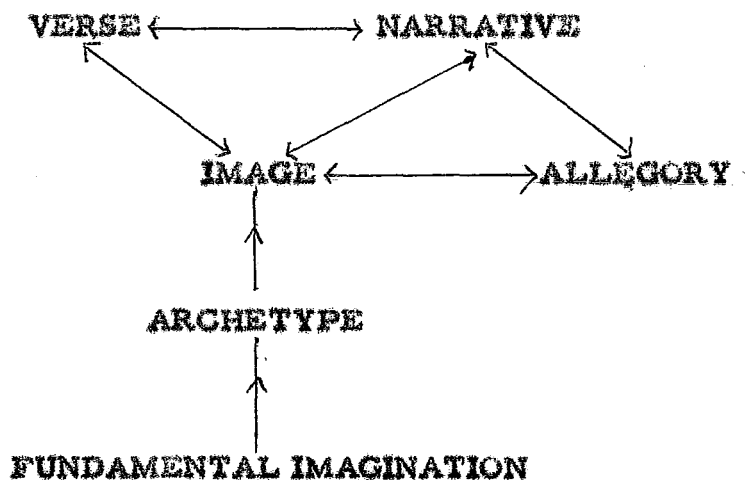
The vitality of Spenser's imagery is not to be accounted for simply by its relationship to narrative, verse, and allegory. It is at the centre of the reader's experience of the poem; it gives far more to that whole experience than could be drawn from these sources. The springs from which the image derives its energy lie on a more profound level, the level on which it is associated with the primitive or instinctive imagination. Archimago and Una are true creations of that imagination. So are Despair and Malengin, so is the House of Busirane; Britomart represents a kind of ideal woman perennially satisfying to the popular consciousness. All these are translations into the visible of feelings normally inexpressible, of the terrors and ecstasies of childhood or of dreams.

Not only does Spenser draw on this vital level of the imagination: he derives power from the fundamental tendencies of humanity that give rise to such popular imaginative creations as Britomart or the Red Cross Knight. The poem is endlessly preoccupied with great basic themes, Light and Darkness, Life and Death. Many critics have praised the exquisite pictorial quality of The Faerie Queene; few have understood the unpictorial, unpicturable depths from which it rises. Spenser is no mere word-painter: he has in general a poor view of the visual arts--"Poets witt, that passeth Painter farre" (III poem 2). He is not playing dilettante with light and shade. Few speeches in English

poetry are more serious than the sad judgment of Night:

The sonnes of Day he favoureth I see (I V 25)

Such is the structure of Faerie Queene: on the surface an exciting narrative, retarded by the slow deliberate progression of the stanza. Below this lies the brilliant pictorial image, related to narrative and verse, and linking them with the conceptual allegorical frame of the poem. The vital image itself draws its life from its close relationship with the archetypal level of the human imagination, and from the profound level on which we apprehend the struggle of mighty opposites: and even more profoundly, from our ultimate glimpse of their resolution. This structure may be further clarified by a diagram.





The above should require no explanation: it serves to illustrate forcibly how central the image is to the reader's response to the poem. Everything depends upon it: it is the lynch-pin of the whole work.

As so often happens in literary studies, the conclusions to be drawn from this analysis of The Faerie Queene are not, in essence, particularly startling. That The Faerie Queene is a poem and must therefore be approached in a receptive frame of mind in order that it might operate as a poem on the reader, is a platitude. If any illumination has been achieved, it is dispersed through the discussion, and any attempt to express it in some kind of pithy apothegm is doomed to failure. I have attempted, not to make critical "points" which can be added up into some kind of total score, but to observe the poem as an artifact, and observe and analyze its effect upon the reader. The critic's real business is to send the reader back to the poem with a greater readiness to respond, and an increased awareness of the means by which poetry operates upon him.

## APPENDIX

Allegory

Since the publication of Professor Frye's Anatomy of Criticism it has become necessary to define a term like 'Allegory', because it is now being used in senses which, until a few years ago, it did not bear. My purpose is not to enquire into the validity of Professor Frye's terminology; only to define my own.

Allegory is used in this essay to describe what Frye calls "a disguised form of discursive writing; and /it/ belongs chiefly to educational literature on an elementary level: schoolroom moralities, devotional exempla, local pageants and the like",<sup>1</sup> In other words, I consider allegory to be a picture-writing to transcribe preconceived ideas. As Johnson puts it; "Fame tells a tale, or Victory hovers over a general or perches on a standard; but Fame and Victory can do no more".

Anything other than this is not here considered to be allegory.

1

Anatomy of Criticism, p. 90.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Books

- Arthos, John. On the Poetry of Spenser and the Form of Romances. London: Allen and Unwin, 1956.
- Berger, Harry J., Jr. The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality of Spenser's "Faerie Queene". Vol. CXXXVII of Yale Studies in English. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Bradner, Leicester. Edmund Spenser and the "Faerie Queene". Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy. /Translated by S.G.C. Middlemore/, 2nd Edition. London: Allen and Unwin, 1900.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. On War. /Translated by Colonel J.J. Graham/, III vols. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956.
- Davis, Bernard Eustace Cuthbert. Edmund Spenser, a Critical Study. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933.
- Elliot, T.S. Selected Prose. Edited by John Hayward. London: Penguin Books, 1953.
- Empson, William. Seven Types of Ambiguity. London: Chatto and Windus, 1930.
- Freeman, Rosemary. Edmund Spenser. London: Longmans Green, 1957.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism; Four Essays. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Fusell, Henry. The Mind of Henry Fusell. Edited by E.C. Mason. London: Routledge, 1951.
- Golding, William. Lord of the Flies. London: Penguin Books, 1960.
- Hamilton, A.C. The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene". Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

- Hazlitt, William. Lectures on the English Poets, and the Spirit of the Age. London: J.M. Dent (Everyman Edition), n.d.
- Hough, Graham. A Preface to "The Faerie Queene", London: Duckworth, 1962.
- Knight, G. Wilson. The Burning Oracle; Studies in the Poetry of Action. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- Knight, G. Wilson. Christ and Nietzsche; an Essay in Poetic Wisdom. London: Staples Press, 1948.
- Legouis, Emile, and Louis Cazamian. A History of English Literature. /Translated by Helen Douglas Irvine, W.D. MacInnes, and L. Cazamian/. 5th Edition, revised. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1957.
- Lewis, C.S. An Experiment in Criticism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.
- Lewis, C.S. English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama. Vol. III of The Oxford History of English Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.
- Lewis, C.S. That Hideous Strength. London: Bodley Head, 1945.
- Lewis, C.S. The Allegory of Love; a Study in Medieval Tradition. 2nd Edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1938.
- Maynard, Howard. The Arthur of the English Poets. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1907.
- Parker, M. Pauline, I.B.V.M. The Allegory of "The Faerie Queene". Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.
- Renwick, W.L. Edmund Spenser; an Essay on Renaissance Poetry. London: Edward Arnold, 1925.
- Schofield, William Henry. Chivalry in English Literature; Chaucer, Malory, Spenser and Shakespeare. Vol. II of Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925.

- Spens, Janet. Spenser's 'Faerie Queene': An Interpretation. London: Edward Arnold, 1934.
- Spenser, Edmund. The Works of Edmund Spenser, A Variorum Edition. Edited by E.A. Greenlaw, Osgood, and Fadelford. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1932.
- Spenser, Edmund. The Works of Edmund Spenser. Edited by R. Morris. 12th Edition. London: MacMillan, 1902.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. The Lord of the Rings. III vols. London: Allen and Unwin, 1954-5.
- Tuve, Rosemund. Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.

#### Articles

- Bennet, Josephine Waters. 'Spenser's Garden of Adonis', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XLVII (1932), 46-80.
- Boughner, Daniel C. 'The Psychology of Memory in Spenser's Faerie Queene', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XLVII (1932), 89-96.
- Dallett, Joseph B. 'The Faerie Queene, IV. 1-v: A Synopsis of Discord', Modern Language Notes LXXV (1960), 639-643.
- Fowler, A.D.S. 'The River Guyon', Modern Language Notes LXXV (1960), 289-292.
- Greenlaw, Edwin. 'Spenser and Lucretius', Studies in Philology, XVII (1920), 439-464.
- Guth, Hans. 'Allegorical Implications of Artifice in the Faerie Queene', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXXVI (1961), 474-479.
- Levinson, Robert B. 'Spenser and Bruno', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XLIII (1928), 675-681.
- Maclure, Millar. 'Nature and Art in The Faerie Queene', English Literary History, XXVIII (1961), 1-20.

- Owen, W.J.B. "Spenser's Letter to Raleigh--A Reply", Modern Language Notes LXXV (1960), 195-197.
- Roche, Thomas P., Jr. "The Challenge to Chastity: Britomart at the House of Busyrane", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXXVI (1961), 340-344.
- Traversi, Derek. "Spenser's Faerie Queene" in Boris Ford ed. The Age of Chaucer, Vol. 1 of The Felican Guide to English Literature, 213-228.
- Williams, Kathleen. "Venus and Diana: Some Uses of Myth in The Faerie Queene", English Literary History XXVIII (1961), 101-120.
- Woodhouse, A.S.P. "Nature and Grace in The Faerie Queene", English Literary History XVI (1949), 212-213.