

IMAGES OF THE SELF:

CHASTITY FIGURES IN THE FAERIE QUEENE

by



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A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
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IMAGES OF THE SELF: CHASTITY FIGURES

IN THE FAERIE QUEENE

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ABSTRACT: Images of the Self: Chastity Figures in The Faerie Queene

Marjorie J. Garson

Since chastity, which as Spenser presents it seems to involve perception in an especially intense way, is one of the most complex virtues delineated in The Faerie Queene, the techniques which Spenser develops to define it are of particular interest. Partly because 'Diana' figures like Belphoebe and Britomart are surrounded by an aura of visual taboo, how they are seen and what they are able to see become aspects of the virtue which they represent. Since visually intense moments tend to 'stop the action' of the narrative, chastity becomes associated with images of static perfection; yet at the same time Spenser's heroines, embodying as they do almost masculine energy, seem to endow sheer forward momentum with moral significance. When Shakespeare deals with aspects of chastity in Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece, he too presents it in terms of paradoxes of stasis and development, insight and blindness: in the latter poem especially, the compulsion to define and project the self in the rhetoric of language and gesture issues in that thrust toward the iconic which I see as an important characteristic of Spenser's chastity figures. The 'iconic moment' is exemplified in The Faerie Queene in the first appearance of Belphoebe, whose virtue makes itself felt as a visual phenomenon and whose power is suggested by the way her image 'freezes' the narrative; as her story continues, however; the precise nature of the chastity which she represents is defined by a tension between stillness and development, isolation

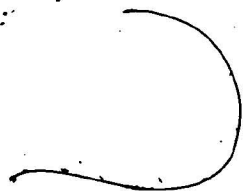
and involvement. Britomart, a more complex figure, comes to be defined in relation to the stasis associated specifically with art, the rhythm of her own story, with its headlong forward momentum, emerging in contrast to that of the narrative insets (like the myth of Venus and Adonis) which 'run down' into stillness and death. Her special strength, an intuitive ability to cut through complexities of erotic illusion which she never fully understands, is associated throughout Book III with her obliviousness to metaphorical language, which becomes linked with the erotic self-deception of other characters. Britomart's role in Book IV is discussed in relation to the major rhythms of that book, where the difficulty of social union is suggested by the way characters drift together and pull apart. In this context Britomart's power to unite becomes an important aspect of the virtue which she represents. Book V, where justice is seen to involve repression and oblivion, is the appropriate context for the climax of Britomart's love-quest, which has raised from the beginning the questions of perception and of wholeness; the dream in Isis Church is analyzed in terms of the tension between involvement and detachment, image and process, insight and blindness, which have been important in her story from the beginning. In Book VI, Tristram, whose youthful purity is defined in the context of the tale of adult sexuality into which he intrudes and who like Belpheobe is a hunter whose glamorous image freezes narrative into icon, is discussed as a chastity figure whose treatment exemplifies some of the paradoxes which have been developed; in particular, the intensity of his visual presence initiates the tension between eye and ear which is significant

throughout Book VI. Spenser's treatment of his chastity figures tends to involve the perceptions of the other characters and of the narrator and reader in a way which may well be called dramatic; the power of these characters to evoke some of the most effective narrative in The Faerie Queene derives from the nature of the virtue as Spenser conceives it.

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CHAPTER I

Images of Chastity

Before looking in detail at specific passages in The Faerie Queene, it is useful to consider the artistic problems involved in the presentation of the virtue of chastity. In his illuminating discussion of Falstaff, W. H. Auden points out that Christian virtues are often difficult to present on stage.<sup>1</sup> Marital fidelity, for example, cannot be shown in a single dramatic action, for the whole point is that it is a continuing state; humility and patience are passive conditions, hard to translate into stage action; the inner virtue of forgiveness has to be symbolized in the drama by the outer action of pardon, a problem which, Auden suggests, accounts for some of the difficulty we have with the plot of Measure for Measure. Auden explains the moral appeal of Falstaff with the theory that Falstaff's "faults" are comic analogues of the Christian virtues, his lechery, for example, a symbol of that agape which makes no distinctions between persons.

Auden's approach to the issue is suggestive and illuminates other works besides Henry IV. To present chastity as a positive, even heroic virtue is a potentially difficult feat. It is hard to imagine an action which shall be forceful and creative and yet which shall exemplify this most negative and death-oriented of virtues. Literary seducers are always ready to point out that mere preservation of virginity is essentially negative, a non-action: Marlowe's Leander makes the point succinctly in his attempt to win over the reluctant Hero. In a specious syllogism of scholastic ingenuity, he argues that virginity, having no form or essence, has no real existence, and concludes:

Things that are not at all, are never lost.  
Men foolishly do call it virtuous:

What virtue is it that is born with us?  
 Much less can honour be ascrib'd thereto,  
 Honour is purchas'd by the deeds we do.  
 Believe me, Hero, honour is not won,  
 Until some honourable deed be done.

(1.276)<sup>2</sup>

Leander's appeal need not detain the judicious virgin, but it does present a real problem to the epic poet attempting to fashion moving images of heroic virtue. Whether or not "Honour is purchas'd by the deeds we do", it is certainly true that a romance narrative cannot proceed without such deeds. Yet to adopt the story-lines which had traditionally been used to exemplify feminine chastity would have involved Spenser in the glorification of a virtue too narrowly conceived to stand beside Holiness, Temperance and Justice. Both mediaeval and Renaissance models present the poet with "deeds" too violent, too death-oriented, too destructively absolute to serve as a model for positive heroic virtue. And since many of them derive from the novella, they are often unsuitable in form for incorporation into the quest structure on which each of the books of The Faerie Queene is based.

There are two narrative models to which Spenser might have resorted: saints' legends, and what Chaucer calls "Seintes Legendes of Cupyde". Both are united by a constant theme: the lady's unquestioning fidelity to a man (to a lover, a husband, or to Christ the heavenly bridegroom), her implicit acceptance of his absolute right of possession over her, her willingness to die to maintain this right, even if the husband or lover has died or deserted her. There is an essential ambiguity about the moral position of women implied in all of these stories: although it is man the seducer whose base advances must be resisted by the beleaguered heroine virtue itself is conceived of as masculine. The lady is praised as heroic

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to the extent that she is able to exhibit the essentially masculine traits of courage, endurance and readiness to die for a principle, though indeed her resistance typically takes the traditionally "feminine" form of faithful devotion and unquestioning self-sacrifice. Chaucer's announced purpose in The Legend of Good Women is to present women capable of male heroism, for, as he says,

God forbede but a woman can  
Been as trewe and loving as a man :

(910) 3

Virtue in women--not only chastity, but all virtue--is presented as reflecting a strength of spirit which is characteristically masculine; this duality, which as Chaucer expresses it seems a somewhat crude conception of human character, receives more subtle and potentially erotic expression through the motif of male disguise which is so important in The Faerie Queene, where the rigour and absoluteness of chastity are suggested by the accoutrements of knight or hunter, its softer, more vulnerable aspects by the real identity of the woman underneath.

The virtue of chastity seems, indeed, to raise in an especially acute form the issues of identity, of suppression and disguise, of consciousness and self-consciousness. Essential to our understanding of the nature of the virtue is the question: how much does the lady know? and how much does she feel? The preservation of chastity would seem to involve a special awareness of value of the self which is threatened with violation, a certain self-consciousness and self-protectiveness. The argument of the typical seducer invites the victim to redefine herself in simplistic ways, to equate herself with her sexuality: to consider

herself, for example, a rosebud which must be enjoyed before it withers, a jewel which is created to be displayed. Her resistance, in turn, would seem to involve some kind of process of self-definition; if the seducer demands, in effect, "Who do you think you are?" the victim is obliged to formulate an answer adequate both to his and to her own convictions about her role and identity. The least problematical answer, and the one which raises the question of the individual self in the least insistent way, is "somebody else's wife": "the bride of Christ", "the wife of Ulysses", "the wife of Collatine". The issue, in many mediaeval catalogues of chaste women, is not so much chastity as fidelity: in resisting her suitors, the heroine is in effect protecting her husband's property; her own ego is exerted only as an extension of his, and her sexual feelings are ignored or denied. St. Cecilia as depicted by Chaucer in "The Second Nun's Tale", is "from hir cradel up fostred in the feith/ Of Crist" (122) and in the concomitant obsession with virginity, praying from her earliest days to God "to kepe hir maydenhede" (126)<sup>4</sup> long before any threat to it arrives upon the scene; she goes joyfully to her death, taking her husband and his brother along with her, converting her executioners along the way.

Saints' legends, of course, allow no possibility of tension within the woman herself, admit no suspicion of sexual feeling. Chaucer's handling of the story of the rape of Lucrece is more interesting because his insistence on its absence is explicit. Lucrece, the very emblem of "wyfly chastitee" (1737), arouses Tarquin's lust in the first place by the kiss of greeting she gives her beloved husband ("as of wyves is the wone", 1741).<sup>5</sup> The detail makes it clear that she is capable of sexual feeling:

how then to insist that Tarquin does not arouse it? Chaucer makes her faint: horrified, terrified by the prospects of slander and death,

She losste bothe at-ones wit and breeth,  
And in a swough she lay, and wex so deed,  
Men mighte smyten of hir arme or heed;  
She feleth nothing, neither foul ne fair.

(1815)<sup>6</sup>

His solution, though awkward, is an honest one, implicitly acknowledging the possibility of sexual arousal during rape while insisting on its absence in this particular case. Another awkward, almost comic detail is included to emphasize her complete purity: as Lucrece stabs herself and falls dying, she takes care to wrap her skirts around her ankles

Lest that her feet or swiche thing lay bare;  
So wel she loved clenness and eek trouthe.

(1859)<sup>7</sup>

This seems petty prudishness rather than heroic chastity; Chaucer is content to allow the two to overlap and reinforce one another. Lucrece herself is aware of no discrepancy; she has no idea that her wifely kiss was what aroused Tarquin's passion. She evidently has no sense of his looking at her, or of the picture she must present to his eyes. All the details of the story reinforce the impression of her obliviousness; yet obliviousness is not the same as innocence, and Lucrece's gesture conveys at the same time a certain self-consciousness. I am not suggesting that Chaucer's handling of the story raises all of these issues in an explicit way; yet they are implicit in the events of the narrative, implicit perhaps, in any consideration of chastity. How the woman conceives her own identity, how much she knows about her own feelings and the effect she is having on others, are questions which are never irrelevant, no matter how blandly the facts of a story may be handled.

When the woman is not married, when her resistance is purely self-

motivated, the special self-consciousness which seems to attend the virtue of chastity is in danger of seeming mere complacency or self-satisfied "cruelty". Chaste resistance always raises the question of the woman's self-deception and hypocrisy, of blindness about her own desires and oversimplification of her own motives, of obliviousness to her own complicity in the situation. A "cruel" heroine must be shown as oblivious to the pain she causes if our admiration for her is to remain unqualified; hence Belphoebe's repeated inability to recognize Timias and the pain she is causing him.

Chastity is, then, a virtue which seems to have much to do with perception, which seems to involve both a special self-consciousness and a certain blindness. The name of Chaucer's St. Cecilia is said to mean both "'the way to blinde'" (92) and "'Wanting of blindnesse,' for<sup>8</sup> hir grete light/ Of sapience, and for hir thewes clere" (100); while the contradiction may be merely fortuitous, since her name is also given a number of other etymologically-unsound interpretations, it does point to a real tension in the ideal of chastity itself. Self-definition, the development and perception of a sense of the self in relation to that which would threaten its integrity, self-awareness, all become problematical in a fresh and insistent way. When St. Jerome writes to the nun Eustochium he attempts to strengthen her devotion to the chaste life by encouraging her to see herself in a particularly intense way.<sup>9</sup> He tells her to think about herself and her exemplary role and to imagine herself as looked at by others: by the would-be rapist ("When you walk laden with gold you must beware of robbers", p.57), by her envious widowed

sister who must suffer the agony of "seeing in her sister daily that which she herself has lost", (p. 83 ), by her women-friends who have chosen the inferior vocation of marriage ("you must learn a holy pride; know that you are better than they", p. 85), of Christ himself ("Jesus is jealous; he does not wish others to see your face", p. 111). Indeed Jerome's appeal comes to seem very like the argument of the seducer, exhorting the lady to know her own value and to enter with joy the realm of superior pleasure for which she has reserved herself: the underlying metaphor of the Song of Songs enables him to cast his argument in explicitly sexual terms:

Let the seclusion of your own chamber ever guard you; ever let the Bridegroom sport with you within . . . . When sleep falls on you, He will come behind the wall and will put His hand through the hole in the door and will touch your flesh. And you will awake and rise up and cry: "I am sick with love".

(p. 109)

There is a highly visual element in the way he presents her in his concluding appeal: he asks her to picture to herself in detail the scene in which she will play the central role, to see herself at the climactic moment of her quest as she will be seen by others:

Come out, I pray you, awhile from your prison-house and picture before your eyes the reward of your present labours . . . . What will be the splendour of that day, when Mary, the mother of the Lord, shall come to meet you, attended by her bands of virgins . . . . Then shall your Spouse Himself come to meet you . . . . Then shall the angels gaze in wonder and cry: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun?" . . . . As often as this world's vain display delights you; as often as you see in life some empty glory, transport yourself in thought to Paradise . . . .

(p. 155)

'Holy pride' has become 'eroticism of self'.



Shakespeare's poems Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece

investigate, in a uniquely original and powerful way, some of the problems involved in the depiction of chastity. As always, Shakespeare, sensitive to the tensions and anomalies in an inherited story, develops traditional material in a way which heightens all its implicit meanings. His two exercises in the Ovidian mode may not at first sight seem highly relevant to Britomart and Belphoebe in The Faerie Queene, yet because they bring into sharp relief aspects of chastity which remain unexplored by lesser poets, they raise issues which will in the end serve to clarify Spenser's achievement. What Shakespeare seems interested in working out-- what seems in the end to stand really as the dominant concern of the two poems--is the relationship between perception and rhetoric, between one's self-image and the ways in which one can contrive to express it.

Articulateness in fact always becomes an issue in considerations of chastity. The virtue often seems to require a well-thought-out rational defence--it is peculiarly argumentative virtue, evoking definition and self-definition and formulation of abstract principles in an unusually insistent way. Yet it is equally true that innocence may be shown as inarticulate, its unsullied purity reflected in its inability to formulate a defence adequate to its instincts ("What must Cordelia do? Love and be silent"). Shakespeare's two poems are paired in a number of ways, but we may start with one parallel which is particularly relevant to the subject of this chapter: the chaste victims are a highly articulate lady and an almost inarticulate youth; both are assaulted not only with physical force but with rhetoric, and their ability to express themselves

in language and in gesture seems to become one of the main influences on the way the narratives develop. Both poems focus on the way the characters perceive and define themselves, on what kinds of things they are able to say about themselves, and to whom, on what uses they are able to make of inherited rhetorical conventions and topoi. One of the things which Shakespeare is investigating is what happens to conventions of language under the pressure of the powerful emotions of self-assertion and self-defence which are released in a seduction or a rape.

There are other ways too in which the poems are paired, which will come up again in The Faerie Queene. Chastity may be perceived as potential or as perfection; the focus may be on its static or its developmental aspects. Venus and Adonis explicitly considers the problem of development: the question of growth, maturity and death, associated from the beginning with the story in its mythic form, is here translated into specifically psychological terms, for Adonis defends himself on the grounds that he is not yet mature enough to involve himself in the adult entanglements of love. In The Rape of Lucrece, on the other hand, the interest seems to be in discovering the perfect form in which a static condition of achieved virtue may best be expressed: Lucrece chooses suicide as a way of fixing in legend and history her conception of herself as outraged innocent, and although she invokes time in its destructive capacity, she explicitly denies its power to palliate the outrage which has permanently marked her as a secular martyr. These generalizations demand amplification; a more detailed examination of the two poems will point to tensions in the ideal of chastity which are reflected, though in a very different way, in

Spenser's treatment of the same subject, and which help determine the shapes which his allegory will take.

Venus and Adonis develops the anotaly (that the beleaguered victim of sexual aggression is not a woman but a young man. Although none of the classical treatments of the myth mentions Adonis' reluctance, it was evidently a well-established Renaissance tradition, and Shakespeare explores and exploits the reversal to the full.<sup>11</sup> It enables him to emphasize something which, for example, a mediaeval treatment of chastity does not tend to emphasize: that seduction involves the violation of the integrity of the self, that it may interrupt the process of personal growth and development towards fully adult individuality. Chaucer's Lucrece sees herself primarily in terms of her relationship to her husband; Adonis, on the other hand, explicitly defends his right not to be defined by any such relationship. Shakespeare's portrait is a striking portrayal of adolescence, with its physical and sexual confusion. Adonis is still at the age when he defines himself through athletic competition with a group of male companions (he wants "to hunt the boar with certain of his friends", 588). He speaks and seems to perceive himself as a defiant boy, with a sullen, simplistic determination to resist the complications of adult emotion; physically he is presented as a luscious creature with attractions which are virtually feminine, a tender red and white beauty "thrice fairer" than Venus herself. His sexuality is not yet adult; the brooding delight Venus expresses in the feminine aspects of his undeveloped beauty suggests that it is this very immaturity which titillates her, and the urgency of her seductive appeal reflects her obsession with

gathering the rosebud not only before it withers but before it blossoms. But since Adonis is a male character and therefore potentially destined for independence, maturity and action, Shakespeare is able to reinterpret the myth in terms of this need. Adonis' most persuasive plea makes his claim explicit:

"Fair queen," quoth he, "if any love you owe me,  
Measure my strangeness with my unripe years:  
Before I know myself, seek not to know me;  
No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears;  
The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,  
Or being early pluck'd is sour to taste"

(523)

The pun on "know" equates physical virginity with the potential for self-understanding and suggests that love may be a form not only of physical but of intellectual and psychological intrusion on a self which is not yet fully developed. Adonis' death has all the pathos of immaturity, of the frustratingly arbitrary extinction of what has not yet achieved its final shape; that his only "progeny" is the flower which wilts in Venus' bosom is an additional reminder that he has failed to reach adult manhood. The question of individual integrity and identity which remains implicit in the medieval handling of the story of Lucrece finds in this poem a very explicit statement.

The story of Adonis has then less a moral than a psychological focus. I venture to advance the paradox that although Venus has most of the dialogue, we are left with the impression that the poem examines a male psyche—that it is less a portrait of Venus than of Adonis. The reason, I think, is that Venus is the product of male sexual fantasy; her almost comically aggressive seduction of Adonis tells the reader much

less about the female psyche than it does about the male, for she is in fact a projection of masculine desire, a perfect wish-fulfilment, a sex object so aggressively seductive that she is ready forcefully to overrule all guilt and resistance by means not only rhetorical but muscular. She is the dramatic enactment of the process of the imagination of a man who dreams of being wooed as energetically as he himself would woo, using as she does the very arguments which poets traditionally put into the mouths of male seducers. <sup>13</sup> She presents herself as a man would delight to imagine a woman, even invoking the male fantasy of the prostitute with a heart of gold ("To sell myself I can be well contented", 513). She says of herself the things a lover ought to murmur to her: her invitation to drink at the fountains and graze upon the bottom-lands of her park is perhaps the most provocative example. Her words are deliberately inflammatory, playfully inviting the reader to participate in the erotic experience which she offers by embellishing the images which she presents to him. There is then a continuing tension between the reader's imaginative response and Shakespeare's assertion that Adonis himself does not respond, a continuing discrepancy between what the reader would feel and what Adonis apparently feels. When, for example, Venus faints and Adonis attempts to revive her, striking, chafing and kissing the flesh she has so strenuously and wittily offered for his delectation, the contrast between his insentience and the reader's response, creates a tension which tends to be projected onto Adonis himself, in that we feel that Adonis is experiencing but repressing the masculine reactions which Venus' language and behaviour invite. The final impression is that of the great sexual tension of

immaturity, of the conflict between male desire and fear, imagination and willed ignorance. The poem seems to present a much more complete picture of the psyche of Adonis than the mere record of his words and reactions would suggest.

No generalization however is entirely adequate to this complex, puzzling work. Although it is fair to argue that Venus is less a person than a projection of masculine desire--that we are not invited to feel with her in her frustration but rather to lust after her--it is also true that she becomes a more sympathetic character, paradoxically, just at that point in the poem when she stops speaking.<sup>14</sup> After Adonis has left her and she has no audience for her seductive tirades, Venus ceases to present herself and instead is presented by the narrator, who is more able than she to communicate her desperation and anxiety. This is a very tactile poem, full of details which suggest the vulnerable tenderness of young shrinking flesh: the comparison of flesh to fruit, ripe and unripe; the emphasis on lips, tongue, breasts, on softness and wetness; on skin being scorched by the sun, shielded by a fall of hair; on hotness, steaminess, melting, blushing, sweating. From the beginning "Rose-cheek'd Adonis" is described in terms of such images, but Venus, although she presents herself as soft and melting, is described by the narrator in terms which are positively threatening in their violence and hardness-- as a bird of prey, for example:

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,  
Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,  
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,  
Till either gorge be stuff'd or prey be gone;  
Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin.

The impression of a violent assault on tender shrinking flesh is reiterated at key moments throughout the poem; the boar is described in the same terms:<sup>15</sup>

And nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine  
Sheath'd unaware the tusk in his soft groin.

(1115)

One of the most memorable similes in the poem exploits the sensitivity built up by these image-patterns: that is, the famous description of Venus' reaction to the sight of the wounded Adonis:

Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,  
Shrinks backwards in his shelly cave with pain,  
And there, all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,  
Long after fearing to creep forth again;  
So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled  
Into the deep dark cabins of her head.

(1033)

This physical analogy for an emotional reaction takes us inside the psyche of Venus in a way which her own words fail to do; it also readjusts our response to what have been fairly conventional images of luscious yielding flesh, making them cognate with emotional vulnerability, so that in the end both Venus and Adonis are equally felt to be victims of love. The imagery links the two together in their vulnerability, links her capacity for feeling with his terror of it, reveals the pain and the need which underlie her perversely maternal aggressiveness. The contradictory impressions of Venus in the poem--a comic Rabelaisian giantess, tucking her tender victim under her arm, an airy nymph dancing on the sands without leaving a mark, a sweaty aggressively fleshy seductress or a tragic heroine lamenting the fall of nature--simply cannot be fully resolved. The incongruity reflects perhaps an audacious playfulness in

the poet, who seems to be taking each creative whim as far as it will  
 16  
 go, but it also suggests the perceptual distortions attendant on sexual  
 obsession, for the figure of Venus seems to waver like a mirage before  
 us under the metamorphic impact of longing and desire.

Distortion is a key word. Shakespeare is playing with the reader  
 by deliberately turning stock images upside down.<sup>17</sup> In his treatment of  
 Adonis' horse, for example, he invites a sensuous response to an image  
 which has traditional moral significance. Everyone knew that one of the  
 commonest images for the virtuous psyche, for the reason's domination  
 of the senses and passions, was that of a horse under proper human control;  
 the emblem, inherited ultimately from Plato, was a veritable Renaissance  
 cliché.<sup>18</sup> In the middle of this exercise in eroticism, not only does  
 Shakespeare insert a detailed description of a horse copulating, not  
 only does he have Venus make the "morality" of the interlude quite explicit  
 in her suggestion that Adonis pattern his behaviour on his horse's, but  
 he manages the description so that the reader is virtually compelled to  
 identify with the horse's physical sensations. One detail is particularly  
 insistent:

He vails his tail, that like a falling plume  
 Coal shadow-to his melting buttock lent .

(314)

Venus had answered Adonis' complaint about the heat of the sun with the  
 offer to "make a shadow for thee of my hairs" (191); the image, repeated  
 here, suggests that when it comes to physical sensation there is not  
 much difference between a man's and a horse's reaction, and forces us to  
 share the stallion's frustration and pleasure. The beauty and vitality



of the animal and his free nervous energy are in fact a relief in the context of the frustrated paralysis presented by the confrontation of the two main characters; the very straightforwardness of the copulation is exhilarating. When Venus praises the horse's reactions, Adonis does not even attempt the obvious defence--that behaviour which is right for a horse is not right for a man.<sup>19</sup> Instead, he implicitly accepts her comparison, arguing only that he has not yet reached the right age for love:

The colt that's back'd and burthen'd being young  
Loseth his pride and never waxeth strong.

(419)

That we respond with relief to the straightforwardness of this animal lust involves us, with Adonis, in a flight not so much from the immorality as from the complexities of human sexuality.

Equally perverse is Venus' version of the ladder of the senses.<sup>20</sup> Platonic theory would have the devotee mount from the baser senses to hearing and finally sight, with the final goal of transcending the senses altogether. Venus on the other hand argues that in love she could dispense progressively with eyes, ears, touch, and smell, and still enjoy Adonis with the sense of taste ("Being nurse and feeder of the other four", 446). In terms of the moral commonplaces of the Renaissance, Venus is an amoral temptress and Adonis is right to reject her. But Shakespeare uses her in such a determined assault on the senses of the reader that a simple rejection is psychologically impossible.

Shakespeare, in short, illuminates and extends the range of feeling associated with the conventional topoi of erotic poetry by inverting them

or by placing them in a context which draws attention to them in a new way. The rhetorical temptations uttered by Venus are a case in point. Venus' speeches are a veritable catalogue of commonplaces, what gives them force is the way we feel her desire embroidering and endowing with significance everything she perceives.<sup>21</sup> When, for example, Adonis complains pragmatically that if she doesn't let him go soon he may trip and fall in the dark, her imagination leaps towards metaphors which embody her own longing:

"In night," quoth she, "desire see's best of all."  
 "But if thou fall, O! then imagine this,  
 The earth, in love with thee, thy footing trips,  
 And all is but to rob thee of a kiss,

(720)

It is this process we feel as Venus speaks; her words are demonstration of how desire transforms with passionate subjectivity whatever is perceived, how it stimulates the mind and senses into almost compulsive activity. Shakespeare works up behind the conventions of love-poetry, taking its conceits back to their origins by showing them rising out of rather than merely giving shape to desire, their ingeniousness and copiousness the result of its irresistible pricking.

In contrast to the relentless vitality of her language, Adonis' taciturnity suggests in this context a deliberate numbing of feeling-- the instinctive resistance of the adolescent, an emotional reflex rather than a moral stance. He protects himself by becoming deaf and dumb, by refusing to see or interpret or respond. He makes too-simple distinctions, seeing hunting and love, for example, as antitheses ("Hunting he lov'd, but love he laugh'd to scorn", 4), refusing to perceive what the reader

sees plainly enough, the analogy between the two activities (all three narrative inserts--the escape of the horse, the flight of the hare and the hunt of the boar--are, in one sense or another, hunts, and all have their application to the human situation). He draws a simple contrast between lust and love ("Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies," 804) which has the deceptive clarity and absoluteness of inexperience; we, who have just seen "lust" in action, know that it is too powerful and too deeply linked with the imaginatively vital to be dismissed so simplistically. The narrative suggests the futility of a merely moral response--of tagging and dismissing temptations; it questions the adequacy of orthodox moral definitions while yet implying that erotic experience itself acquires its distinctively human intensity only within their context (Venus, though she extols animal lust, cultivates something much more complicated). Adonis, however, resorts to almost perversely stupid formulations ("I, know not love," quoth he, "nor will not know it, / Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it", 409) as a protection against seeing or feeling anything which could undercut his resistance. The preservation of chastity becomes less a matter of self-control than a matter of perception, deliberate blindness in this case being embraced as an artificial shield against an overwhelming experience. What has to be suppressed to maintain such a pose is the subject of the poem as a whole.

Shakespeare makes clear that Adonis is in a dilemma, that to succumb to the overtures of Venus is to court death as surely as to pursue the hunt of the boar.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, death when it does come is presented as a rape. Venus' lament that the boar "thought to kiss him, and hath Kill'd him so" (1110) makes the boar the climactic detail in a catalogue of natural creatures said to be in love with Adonis; the wind, the sun, the

lion, the fish and the birds, she says, are all overcome with desire for the beautiful youth, and Venus makes the comparison between love and death explicit when she admits:

Had I been tooth'd like him, I must confess,  
With kissing him I should have kill'd him first. (1117)

Adonis is a natural creature; the assault which nature makes upon him is a continual and ultimately irresistible one which his human ego cannot indefinitely hold out against; he is overwhelmed by and absorbed into the natural process in spite of his determined but necessarily feeble defiance of it. The phallic aspect of the boar's attack is underlined:

And nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine  
Sheath'd unaware the tusk in his soft groin. (1115)

It is at this point that the sexual anomaly embodied by Adonis becomes most insistent; he is feminine in his vulnerability, still immature, and Venus herself is aligned with the brutal masculine assault which wipes him out (as indeed she had been before: the image of the tearing beak of the hawk suggested phallic violence). The boar appears to Adonis as an alternative to Venus but in the end is an embodiment of her devouring lust; from the moment she assaults him, death awaits Adonis whichever decision he makes, and even the flower, symbol of the "progeny" he was too young to father, is uprooted and withers and dies in her bosom.

Shakespeare's shaping of the inherited myth makes it a parable of the psychic disorder intrinsic to sexual passion. Venus prophesies such disorder as a result of Adonis' death; she announces that "Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend" (1136) and predicts the permanent corruptions which will accompany it. The details she cites emphasize the warping of the normal process of development: love will make the elderly immature and the young prematurely senile; the taint of death and deception will

hang over it forever. Yet in fact the disorder supposedly released by Adonis' death and Venus' curse is implicit in the relationship between them from the beginning of the poem. It is what Adonis wants to get away from. Shakespeare does not seem explicitly to invoke the metaphysical allegory of Venus as the Love which holds the universe together, but he points to such a level of meaning in Venus' complaint that with the death of her lover, "black chaos comes again" (1020): the suggestion is that the frustration of her love involves a cosmic disorder, disrupting the chain of natural harmony and fulfilment on which the universe was supposed to be based.<sup>23</sup> There is a strong feeling of perversity and of obsession in the poem, reinforced by the anomalous images of sexual identity and the element of compulsion in the reactions of both Venus and Adonis. Neither is free; both are caught in a relationship which evokes from them extreme, even frantic responses. The obsessiveness of Venus' behaviour, as a goddess descending not only to woo but to plead with a mortal for his favours, is as desperate as Adonis' resistance. Caught in the web of desire and aspiration, goddess and mortal alike lose their autonomy; they are both blinded by the exclusive claims of the instincts which consume them and by their ignorance that such instincts, destined as they seem for natural fulfilment, are doomed to bafflement and paralysis.

Shakespeare's treatment of the myth of Venus and Adonis brings into focus a number of issues, then, which will tend to be associated with chastity: the issues of independence, individuality and maturity; the question of self-awareness and self-consciousness (in this love story,

both of the characters speak almost exclusively about themselves); the relationship between perception and language, rhetoric being presented as a kind of analogue of sexual desire in its tendency to assert, to elaborate, to distort and to blind; the association between chastity, intuitive insight and wilful blindness. The Rape of Lucrece turns upon some of the same issues, although its tone is quite different.<sup>24</sup> The two poems are interestingly paired: both focus intensely on two figures; both involve a rape-victim who is subjected not only to a physical but to an extended verbal assault; both conclude with a death, and with the assertion that this death is to make a permanent change in the nature of things (Adonis' death will corrupt love, Lucrece's not only changes the proportion of the humours in the body but means the end of kings in Rome); both involve a night-world and a day-world of feeling; both employ rather lengthy "emblematic insets"--the interlude with the horse and Venus' description of the hunt of the hare, Lucrece's meditations on the painting of the fall of Troy--which function as analogues of the psychological state of the characters. Yet their tone and focus are quite different. Shakespeare seems to be playing with two complementary halves of the Latin tradition: with Ovidian eroticism on the one hand and with the stern tradition of Roman virtue on the other. In Venus and Adonis the chaste figure is a boy, a sacrificial victim, young, vulnerable, and inarticulate; in The Rape of Lucrece she is a matron, mature, articulate and single-minded. Whereas there is a strongly tactile emphasis in the first poem, inviting the reader to respond primarily, as Venus does, with the "lower" of the five senses, The Rape of Lucrece is a much more

visual poem, with a clear cool texture and emphasis on sharp outline, on sign, gesture, heraldic iconography. The rural setting contributes important images to Venus and Adonis, whereas The Rape of Lucrece has an urban accent, with more emphasis on social intercourse (Lucrece's nurse and her groom help define her to herself, and the mourning competition at the end of the poem suggests the wider social context); indeed, while the chastity investigated in the first poem is presented as a psychological imperative, in the second it is rather a social and exemplary ideal, very deliberately embraced, an aspect of Roman character which is presented as analogous to a certain kind of republican virtue.<sup>25</sup> Both traditional narratives lead to a dénouement which has a compensatory character: although Adonis dies, he is immortalized in the form of a flower; because Lucrece kills herself, there are to be no more kings in Rome. But Shakespeare makes Venus pluck the very flower which is to immortalize her beloved so that it withers at her breast, this perversely comic anticlimax adding a final touch to our impression of the devouring recklessness of her passion. In The Rape of Lucrece, on the other hand, the conclusion is treated seriously and given its due emphasis, not qualified or undercut by tone or context. Even more emphatically than Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece investigates the relationship between chastity and self-definition. It refines the interest in "body-language" which, in the first poem, received a fairly orthodox erotic development; in The Rape of Lucrece the complexity of human interaction is heightened by the reading and misreading of the rhetoric of gesture. Together the two poems subject to original and probing scrutiny the way in which the self

is formed or blasted by the destructive impact of sexual passion.<sup>26</sup>

The Rape of Lucrece is a poem about rhetoric and the limits of rhetoric, about the disjunction between unconscious motive and what can be consciously articulated; about the remaking of the unconscious self in terms of what can be ordered rhetorically. The emphasis throughout the poem is on expressiveness, on characters displaying what they are, projecting, deliberately or unconsciously, an emblem of the self which may or may not be rightly understood by the observer. Shakespeare's narrator, asserting "beauty itself does of itself persuade/ The eyes of men without an orator", develops the initial description of Lucrece's persuasive beauty in terms of images of heraldry; his interest is in a rhetoric, a persuasive vocabulary of gesture and expression. It is significant that Shakespeare omits from the poem itself the literal pictures of Lucrece's behaviour which figure in Chaucer and which Shakespeare himself outlines in his prose introduction: he omits, for example, her spinning and her wifely kiss, and records instead a more abstract, purely symbolic gesture: "Her joy with heav'd up hand she doth express . . . wordless" (111). Although verbal rhetoric is certainly not ignored, Tarquin's and Lucrece's speeches being in fact extended exercises in conventional rhetorical modes, Shakespeare emphasizes alternative "languages" which may or may not be accurately "read" by the observer. As Tarquin moves towards Lucrece's bedroom, the objects he encounters are a kind of language, emblems to be read correctly. The locks squeak, the door grates, weasels cry; smoke winds around his head; he finds Lucrece's glove with a needle stuck in the finger; but Tarquin refuses to read them



correctly ("The in the worse sense contrues their denial", 324), wilfully twisting them into another pattern of meaning. Lucrece becomes painfully aware of the inadequacy of words alone; she decides not to tell the whole story of the rape to her husband in her letter because she is 'hoarding' her "sighs, and groans, and tears" to "spend when he is by to hear her" (1318), feeling instinctively that "sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of words" (1330). There are two issues here: how sorrow may be most emphatically communicated, and what happens to the sorrow itself if diluted by verbal expression. The suggestion is that non-verbal gesture both preserves and expresses the emotion in its original intensity. On the other hand, it may be ambiguous; in a painfully comic interlude the morning after the rape, Lucrece and her groom both blush furiously, each misunderstanding the other's reason for doing so.

Indeed, the poem turns on failure to communicate, on the isolation of the individual imprisoned within a self which feels constrained to signal desperately to the outside world in order to confirm its identity. The poem is split in two, the emphasis being on Tarquin in the first half, on Lucrece in the second; it is made up of two separate investigations of two psyches which never touch, the rape not overcoming but merely confirming the isolation of each of the participants. Both Tarquin and Lucrece are presented as divided within themselves. The poem displays to the full the Renaissance interest in finding analogues and metaphors for psychological processes, especially for complex ones which involve inner conflict; in finding images which suggest the fragmenting of the mind into conflicting impulses. As Lucrece searches for the right words for her

letter to her husband, her ideas crowd and jostle one another, "Much like a press of people at a door, / [contesting] which shall go before" (1301); as he is deciding whether to rape Lucrece, Tarquin's will debates with his reason, and his act is that of a divided man; it confirms his alienation from his real self ("And for himself himself he must forsake," 157). His use of the metaphor of war to defend his crime is an attempt to bring together his base and heroic impulses and make them analogous, an attempt to give coherence to a divided psyche.<sup>27</sup> But it is a failure and Tarquin remains split against himself: his very eyes work at cross purposes, the image of Lucrece's beauty arousing his lust, the image of his involvement, shame (288-94). In the end his victim becomes, metaphorically, his own soul, the "spotted princess" whose "consecrated wall" he has battered down (721); she is symbolically the part of himself which he is constrained to destroy.<sup>28</sup> This is the real link between the rapist and his victim: she is not real to him except as an aspect of himself, as an embodiment of the honour he is perversely compelled to wipe out.

Yet Shakespeare suggests that dividedness, self-alienation, is a permanent human condition, attendant upon every fully human act, criminal or otherwise. Lucrece's appeal is intended to awaken Tarquin to a proper sense of his public self, of who is he and of what role is demanded of him as king. She emphasizes his public exemplary role ("princes are the glass", 615) and tries to persuade him to look at himself from the outside, as others would look at him, as a living emblem of self-control and kingly virtue; to look at himself, indeed, as if he were looking at someone

else: "Think but how vile a spectacle it were" she says, "To view thy present trespass in another" (631). She differentiates between his outward shape and the kingly self which has deserted it ("I sue for exil'd majesty's repeal," 640) and argues that what is permissible in a lesser man transforms the essential nature of a king (blackness stains the swan but not the crow", 1009). Self-control, she implies, requires a certain degree of analysis and alienation, of getting outside yourself to see yourself from a distance. Her suicide exemplifies such heroic alienation in a much more strenuous form. In her humiliation, Lucrece is constrained to separate her polluted body from her immaculate soul and equate her "self" with the soul. In killing herself, she says, she kills only her shame: "My shame so dead, mine honour is newborn" (1190); she abstracts a single quality and gives it an independent existence, as though the moral qualities she exemplifies are separate entities which could exist even after her bodily death. Lucrece feels that her integrity is destroyed by the rape, that she is forcibly split in two and has to repudiate the part of herself which has betrayed her husband: "My self thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe" (1196). Paradoxically the raped woman can remain whole only by dividing herself in two and rejecting the debased half; her self-destructive action is also self-affirmatory, for in destroying herself she is also creating a new self, eternal and immaculate. The poem suggests that any act of moral intensity, whether criminal or heroic, involves a high degree of abstraction and suppression. The compulsion is to isolate and to project with heroic singleness of mind the one impulse which can stand as a kind of

symbolic shorthand for the individual ego. The heightened rhetoric of both the protagonists reflects the strain of such a demand.

Shakespeare isolates in the parable of Lucrece the exemplary, expressive aspect of chastity—chastity as rhetoric—as he investigates the Elizabethan fascination with the self-defining power of the violent act. Tarquin defends the rape as a way of making himself real in a definitive way: "Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried" (353). He and his victim are united by a pride which has to confirm itself by extreme symbolic actions: both the rape and the suicide are in effect gestures, statements in the symbolic language of self-definition. Lucrece, indeed, tries words first: the very triteness of her traditional apostrophes to Night, Time and Opportunity is part of their point. It is intensity, not elaboration, which is needed; the copious commonplaces which she has inherited are, she finds, not an adequate mirror of her sense of outrage. With the morning light comes the realization that her protest is only "the helpless smoke of words" (1027), "idle words" (1016), "unprofitable sounds" (1017). The only fitting recourse is an act as violent and final as the rape itself. Lucrece describes her suicide as an action of her hands against their mistress: "Poor hand," she asks, "why quiver'st thou at this decree? . . . Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal dame" (1030). The question conveys her guilt, her feeling that she has betrayed herself by not fighting energetically enough against the rape; it does so by picking up the motif of the gesturing hand which is repeated at key moments throughout the narrative. Lucrece's "heav'd-up hands" (111) had reflected her joy at her husband's return, and begged

Tarquin for mercy (638); as he leaned over to touch her, Tarquin's hand was described as marching on "to make his stand/ On her bare breast" (438); Lucrece has just expressed the wish that Tarquin should kill himself: "Such wretched hands such wretched blood should spill" (999). Lucrece's apostrophe to her hand, then, emphasizes not only her sense of dividedness but also her sense of suicide as gesture. She has found an alternate language; her decision to kill herself is at the same time a decision to reveal the whole truth: "My tongue shall utter all; mine eyes . . . shall gush"; her whole body will express her essential fidelity and thus recreate the threatened self. Her suicide, like Philomel's, is an action which tells a story; she equates singing with dying and imagines joining Philomel in her lament in "some dark deep desert" (1144). To make such a comparison is to give herself a new identity; she intends to be metamorphosed not, indeed, into a bird, but into a literary emblem, whose name will ever after carry her story with it. In this poem so deeply concerned with truthfulness and hypocrisy, Shakespeare praises women for vulnerable openness: men are capable of deception, but "Poor women's faces are their own faults' books" (1252). Heroic chastity is transparency; Lucrece's is reflected in her determination to find the gesture adequate to express her inner self.

The relationship between sincerity, hypocrisy, and illusion is the subject of the meditation upon the painting of the fall of Troy, where the focus, again, is on rhetoric, verbal and visual. The technical mastery of the skilful artist fascinates the narrator, who is especially impressed by optical illusion, and dwells with naive fascination on questions of

visual perception and deception, on the technical details of scale and perspective (he notes with awe, "The scalps of many, almost hid behind / To jump up higher seem'd, to mock the mind," 1413); he is interested in how the eye translates disjointed visual clues into perceptual wholes, how "imagination" has to function to complete what the painter has suggested:

For much imaginary work was there:  
 Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,  
 That for Achilles' image stood his spear,  
 Grip'd in an armed hand; himself, behind  
 Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind:  
 A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,  
 Stood for the whole to be imagined.

(1422)

This concern with illusion leads to a paradox: that painting involves a deception which may not be a deception, that optical illusion may or may not involve "hypocrisy"; the painter's artifice, for example, may be deployed precisely to create an emblem of sincerity. Some of the images in the painting are successful symbols, accurately communicating the moral quality the painter intends to represent: Ajax and Ulysses, become moral emblems, for "The face of either cipher'd either's heart" (1396). Like verbal expression, however, visual symbolization has its limits: Sinon is a literary emblem for hypocrisy, but the painter has no means of communicating this truth by the way in which he depicts him since his outer appearance is by definition deceptively innocuous.

Shakespeare subjects to very literal scrutiny the dictum that a painting is a silent poem. He focusses on characters who speak or cry out but cannot be heard: on Nestor addressing the crowd, whose words, moving as they apparently are, cannot of course, affect the reader as much as does "his sober action with his hand" which "beguil'd attention, charm'd

the sight" (1403); on "despairing Hecuba", imprisoned in paint, whose lament cannot be heard. Hecuba is an icon of "Time's ruin, beauty's wrack, and grim care's reign"; there is an almost naive confidence in the assertion that a visual image can communicate accurately all these abstractions; yet what it expresses most eloquently of all is inexpressible grief. Lucrece had observed to her maid that "that deep torture may be called a hell/ When more is felt than one hath power to tell" (1287) and she identifies with Hecuba, complaining that the painter "did her wrong,/ To give her so much grief and not a tongue" (1461). The figures in the painting, frozen silently on the surface of the canvas, mirror the dilemma of Lucrece herself, her compulsion to express herself and her feeling that words are inadequate to do so. Although Hecuba is wordless, her anguished stance communicates eloquently the anguish for which she has become a literary emblem; Lucrece aspires to the same kind of expressiveness and legendary status.

Indeed, Lucrece sees the painting as a whole as a mirror of her own situation; Tarquin has destroyed her world just as Sinon's treachery destroyed Troy: "so", she muses, "my Troy did perish" (1547). The fall of Troy is a historical calamity adequate to mirror her apocalyptic sense of outrage. In fact the destruction of her private identity as Collatine's wife gives her a new public, iconic identity, so that her sense of the parallel is not mere hubris. She has become exemplary in the same way as Hecuba, Ajax and Ulysses, achieving, like them, a literary-historical immortality.

Indeed Shakespeare encourages us to respond to the protagonists

as artifacts--as beings created by the special perspective from which they are viewed. Three times he<sup>7</sup> interrupts the narrative with a direct appeal to the reader, inviting him to "look" at the tableau he has created.

As Tarquin draws the bed-curtain, the narrator exclaims:

Look, as the fair and fiery-pointed sun,  
Rushing from forth a cloud, bereaves our sight;  
Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun  
To wink, being blinded with a greater light:

(371)

As Lucrece awakens in horror, the narrator suggests that the reader:

Imagine her as one in dead of night  
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking . . . .

(449)

And again, describing Tarquin's satiated self-disgust:

Look! as the full-fed hound or gorged hawk,  
Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight,  
Make slow pursuit, or altogether balk  
The prey wherein by nature they delight;  
So surfeit-taking Tarquin fares this night

(694)

Although Shakespeare seems to be creating a scenario, the effect of these invocations is not in fact dramatic immediacy; they function, on the contrary, as "alienation devices" which force the reader to draw back and read the narrative situation emblematically. Each one draws attention not to the action but to the simile which qualifies it: what we are to "look" at is not Lucrece, but Lucrece-as-the-sun, Lucrece-as-one-in-dead-of-night, not Tarquin, but Tarquin-as-hound. The intense self-consciousness of the two protagonists has infected the narrative voice, so that we are allowed to respond to them only as they are distanced in the metaphorical fabric of the poem as a whole.

Shakespeare suspends his characters in the medium of



their own rhetoric, so that the epistemological worlds of the creator merges with that of his creatures. The narrator's comments on artistic illusion merge with Lucrece's; Tarquin's military metaphor (271-6) is picked up and extended by the narrator himself (427-441), fitting Tarquin into a larger pattern than he himself is willing to recognize and making the rape symbolic of civic tyranny for which history makes the Tarquins stand. The result of this technique is that the poem becomes an investigation of the adequacy of symbolic language and of its relationship to the perceiving mind. The narrator's more inclusive perspective suggests what aspects of their own metaphors the protagonists suppress. The narrator is as eager as Lucrece to perceive her situation as emblematic. He observes, for example, that since her suicide human blood has had a watery quality (1747). But there is a conscious artifice and excess in this strained conceit which suggests Shakespeare's awareness of the willed arbitrariness of the process of myth-making. Shakespeare creates a Lucrece who creates herself by inventing a rhetoric adequate to define her new identity; both Lucrece and the narrator strain for a high artifice adequate to the occasion and the sense of strain becomes part of the meaning of her chastity. There is something excessive, almost perversely rigorous in the formulating of her decision: with rhetorical question she invites her friends to excuse her, only to reject their excuses and defy their judgment. A concluding couplet emphasizes her reason:

"No, no," quoth she, "no dame, hereafter living,  
By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving".

(1714)

Tarquin had realized that his crime would make his name forever synonymous with treachery (204); although he used this argument to dissuade himself from the rape, permanent notoriety is perhaps part of the appeal of the

act. His victim, too, is intensely aware of herself as seen by the eyes of posterity. And Shakespeare creates a significant rhetorical pattern when he pairs the stanza quoted above with the next one, in which Lucrece attributes her death to her rapist:

She utters this, "He, he, fair lords, 'tis he,  
That guides this hand to give this wound to me".

(1721)

The structural parallelism in the two couplets ("No, no," "He, he") emphasizes Lucrece's deliberate alienation: she distinguishes herself first from her friends ("My judgement is more rigorous than yours"), then from her own act ("It is not I who kill myself"). There is a quality of hubris, of tragic excess, in this wilful act of self-differentiation; it transcends common sense, even morality.

In deciding to treat The Rape of Lucrece, Shakespeare was reinterpreting a tale which, although a veritable commonplace in the catalogues of "good women", had indeed begun to seem to some of his contemporaries a piece of questionable morality.<sup>31</sup> Lyly, for example, makes Euphuus object that Lucrece deserves to be criticized for the "rygor" of her decision "to punishe [Tarquin 's] follye in hir own fleshe, a fact (in myne opinion) more worthy the name of crueltie then chastitie, and fitter for a Monster in the desartes, than a Matrone of Rome";<sup>32</sup> although the example seems chosen primarily to fit into the antithetical rhythms of euphuistic prose, Lyly is doing no more than agree with William Tyndale, who in a sermon condemned the example of Lucrece on the grounds that "She sought her owne glory in her chastite and not gods . . . Which pryde god more abhorreth than the whordome of anye whor".<sup>33</sup> The objections presumably testify to a lively interest in this kind of exemplary tale of violent chastity; in courtesy books and rhetorics of the period the tales chosen to illustrate the virtue tend often to dwell on quixotic

fidelity and violent death. The virtuous Camma, for example, whose history is recorded by Plutarch and translated in The Diall of Princes, is celebrated for poisoning, at her wedding dinner, the suitor who had murdered her husband to win her hand; that chastity and not simple revenge is the issue is made clear when she prefaces her act with a hymn to Diana and identifies herself as one of "Lucre's secte".<sup>34</sup> Ariosto's Isabella, mourning the death of her lover Zerbino to whom she had privately vowed her chastity for all time, eludes the advances of the pagan knight Rodomont by tricking him into killing her, and Ariosto makes God himself compare her virtue to Lucrece's. <sup>35</sup> Shakespeare's Measure for Measure is the expansion of this kind of a narrative; it bears witness to his continuing interest in investigating the potential complexities of the kind of violent tale usually justified on the basis of a rather crude morality.

It was Ariosto, of course, who taught Spenser how to turn to account the vivid figures from these striking tales. For in collections like Chaucer's Legend of Good Women and Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus,<sup>36</sup> the heroines of chastity who turn to action instead of suffering with patient fidelity tend to be divided into two types: the "violently passive" women, who destroy themselves rather than submit to defilement, and the "violently aggressive" women who protect themselves against it in the first place by directing their energies against men. The first group tend to use fraud (they kill themselves unexpectedly, like Lucrece or Hippo, or trick others into doing it for them, like Isabella), the second, force; the first are conventionally feminine figures, the second Amazonian types whose exploits call forth from the narrator admiration for their athletic and military prowess as well as for their heroic purity.

It was this second type, the positive and energetic virago, which Spenser decided to modify in his portraits of Belphoebe and Britomart.

Recent critics have perhaps overreacted to what they perceive as the violence and crudity of this stereotype. Berger suggests that Spenser uses it to suggest the inadequacy of that "chastity which has nothing to do with love and everything to do with war"; that Britomart in Book III embodies "a primitive phase of psycho-cultural experience" and that as The Faerie Queene progresses Spenser works towards more complicated and refined definitions of the feminine psyche.<sup>37</sup> Now this is of course in a general way quite true; Britomart does change and grow, and it is not until her submission to Artegall in the dream at Isis Church that her education is completed. But such an interpretation may tend to play down the positive aspects of the virago type and distort the nature of Britomart as it emerges at the early stages of her story. Richard Lanham suggests that the classical virago is intrinsically paradoxical:

The ancient world found the Amazon a figure of interest because of the pleasing disparity between the graces of Venus and the accoutrements of Mars: the combination fascinated by mismatching. When the young come running and the housewives gather to see Camilla at the end of the seventh book of the Aeneid, they come to see a marvel, a freak. It is her failure to play a woman's role that interests; not her heroism, a surplus of that commodity marching in the procession already.<sup>38</sup>

This may indeed have been the reaction of Virgil's characters, but the fact that collections like Boccaccio's De Claris Mulieribus were recommended reading for young ladies in the sixteenth century<sup>39</sup> suggests

that the women they celebrated were conventionally read emblematically, as exemplary figures--that even young readers could be counted upon to recognize their moral import and admire not so much their actions as the absoluteness of their commitment to the principles they espoused. Boccaccio finds it natural to moralize the spirited Camilla as an exemplar of retiring modesty, teaching his readers "to learn from her example what is proper for them in their parents' home, in churches, and in theaters where most onlookers and harsh judges of behaviour congregate . . . learn not to listen to shameful words, to keep silent, to veil their eyes with seriousness, be well-mannered, act with modesty"<sup>40</sup> and so on. When on the other hand he wants to praise spirited independence he chooses not a woman warrior but the poetess Cornificia, who "brought honour to womankind, for she scorned womanly concerns and turned her mind to the study of the great poets . . . not wasting the talents Nature had given her . . . she rose above her sex . . . and acquired a perpetual fame . . . which few men have equalled."<sup>41</sup> We should not read the irascibility of the Amazonian type entirely naturalistically, as mere bad temper, and ignore its potential figurative meanings, its suggestions of absolute virtue, disdainful and single-minded resistance to temptation.

Such figures are associated with chastity, then, in a double-edged way which exactly suits Spenser's purposes. While their retirement from ordinary social life and the world of men can be moralized as praiseworthy modesty, the energetic and picturesque life they lead is also presented in terms of a defiant but rather splendid

individuality; a concern with independence, a resistance to "maistrie", is 'built in' to such figures, so that the presentation of Britomart's chastity in terms of the growth of the self is a drawing-out of a theme already implicit in the material which Spenser inherits. On the other hand, women like Camilla, Penthisilia, Zenobia and Antiope pursue the virtue with a rather ferocious singlemindedness which makes them in their undigested state scarcely suitable for Spenser's purposes. Ariosto, by giving such a heroine a specific historical mission, showed Spenser the way to justify and exalt her energy; by destining her for marriage, a way to qualify and humanize her chastity. Ariosto's Bradamant is not specifically identified with chastity, but the association was implicit in the virago type itself. By making it explicit and reinterpreting the vitality and independence of such a figure in terms of this virtue, Spenser created a lively and subtle character as the focus of his third book.

But although Spenser turns away from the violent or morbid aspects of chastity, the Ovidian narratives make a useful focus for his treatment of the virtue. Like Shakespeare, Spenser views the subject from a double perspective, inventing two heroines to embody it. The tension between chastity as static perfection and chastity as potential for change and development is reflected in the relationship between Venus and Adonis, which not only turns explicitly on the question of development but embodies this theme in its verbal and imagistic texture, in its emphasis on growth and withering, on "birth and copulation and death", and The Rape of Lucrece, which dramatizes passionate aspiration toward the static and the

self-conscious, towards emblem and tableau. Shakespeare's almost programmatic dichotomy is echoed in Spenser's conception of Belpheobe and Britomart. Although Belpheobe becomes involved in a somewhat peripheral way in the action of the narrative, she remains primarily a visual phenomenon, impressing not only the reader but the other characters in the poem by her iconic presence; Britomart, on the other hand, is drawn from her very first appearance into social intercourse and conflict, and her story is very explicitly a developmental one, a time-bound quest the end of which is marriage and the founding of a royal family. Hence the peculiar tension which arises when Belpheobe is involved in the process and when Britomart is confronted with a static emblem--a tension which will be one of the central subjects of the chapters which follow.

Shakespeare's interest in the psychology of his protagonists, a psychology which he investigates by projecting it outward in rhetoric, in gesture and in emblematic tableau, makes an interesting analogue to Spenser's use of some of the same techniques. The highly visual emblematic quality toward which Lucrece aspires is one of the fundamental qualities of Spenser's chaste women. For though, like Shakespeare, he turns for inspiration to myth (Belpheobe is based on the Venus in Virgil) and "history" (Bradamant's marriage to Ruggiero will found the house of Este), Spenser's two prototypes differ from Shakespeare's characters in that both are in disguise (Virgil's Venus is disguised as Diana, Ariosto's heroine, in armour). This fact immediately throws a certain emphasis on the visual presence of Britomart and Belpheobe, and endows them with an emblematic aura of significance which Shakespeare's Lucrece sought in

gesture and rhetoric. To be sure, all of the allegorical characters in The Faerie Queene have by definition an exemplary self-projecting aspect in that they reflect in their physical appearance the vice or virtue for which they stand. But the figures who represent chastity do so in a particularly rich and natural way, partly because of the way in which the virtue itself evokes visual consciousness and self-consciousness.

Spenser's allegorical method depends upon a commonplace of Renaissance psychology: that poetry works upon the mind by presenting it with images of virtue. "Image" is often used loosely enough: Sidney in his Defense, praising the poet for creating "a perfect picture," "notable images" which will move the mind toward virtue, gives as examples figures like Ajax, Ulysses and Cyrus: what he means by image seems to be a conception of the hero's character as developed in a series of actions throughout an extended narrative.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand the idea was sometimes applied fairly literally; the author of The Necessarie, Fit and Convenient Education of a Yong Gentlewoman recommends that she be given books about virtuous women "and shall read (if it may be done) in faire pictures and painted tables, which with great efficacie moue the mindes of children that are tender and delicate";<sup>43</sup> when he also suggests that the governess chosen be an individual on whom the child might model herself, the metaphor he uses is an interesting variation of this same idea:

But herein you must doe, as if you were to choose an excellent painter that should paint the Hall and chambers of your house, to whom you shall shew the patterns of Albert Dure, Raphael Vrbin, Michel Angell, or Iules Romain . . . not looking that hee should doe the like, but that seeing such notable patterns, she should strue to follow them.



Ariosto tells of the daughter of an old sage who raises her remote from society in an isolated palace in which he had the likenesses carved or painted of every chaste woman he could think of (though the poet's skepticism about such educational theory is suggested by the fact that she grew up in any case to deceive her husband).<sup>44</sup> Lodowick Bryskett, in his Discourse of Civill Life, uses the same kind of language as Sidney when he says that

if I were able to set before the eyes of your mindes a lively image of this excellent end [the virtue proper to man] you would be so delighted therewith that in regard thereof you would contemne and set light by all other pleasures in the world;<sup>45</sup>

the probable literal dimension to his meaning is conveyed in another passage, where he suggests that the example of a virtuous parent ought to be powerful indeed,

if the dumbe and senslesse images of excellent men, which the auncient Romanes held in their houses, were sufficient to stirre up in young men, when they beheld them, a desire to follow their steps, and to resemble those noble personages of their auncestors, whose resemblances they beheld.<sup>46</sup>

The theory of the image which teaches is, then, not a simple one; it seems to have both a literal and a figurative dimension of meaning.

The virtue of chastity, however, lends itself in a very literal sense to inculcation by means of exemplary images, for it tends in a quite natural way to be suggested by the virtuous lady's cool beauty, which stuns the onlooker into awe and admiration. Minerva's shield makes the link between chastity and frozen awe quite explicit. In Comus, the Elder Brother, describing the "arms of Chastity", mentions along with Diana's bow

that snaky-headed Gorgon Shield  
 That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd Virgin,  
 Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone. 47  
 (446)

Conti says that the shield symbolizes the dread which Minerva strikes  
 48  
 into her lustful enemies. Although Britomart is compared to Minerva,  
 she is given no arms which immobilize those who look at them (her magic  
 lance is equally efficacious but not in just this way--it will be dis-  
 cussed later). There are probably two reasons: first because Arthur's  
 shield has this kind of function, and Spenser might not want to dilute  
 its effect by doubling the image; secondly, because both Britomart and  
 Belphoebe are in themselves visual images which evoke--or ought to evoke  
 --the kind of sensibility which Minerva imposes with her shield. Bel-  
 phoebe is a Diana, and the myth of Diana, linked as it is (through the  
 story of Actaeon) with visual taboo, is the perfect vehicle to express  
 the idea of a beauty which evokes both admiration and fear; Britomart  
 is in disguise, and when she takes off her helmet her womanly beauty  
 galvanizes onlookers into stunned surprise. The radiant visual energy  
 naturally associated with virtuous beauty is a very convenient source for  
 those heroic images in whose didactic efficacy the Renaissance put such  
 faith. Shakespeare shows Lucrece striving to invent for herself a stance  
 and gesture which will communicate the true quality of her character and  
 her suffering. In a much less dramatic and more natural way, Spenser  
 conveys chastity by inventing characters who will communicate their nature  
 whenever they are seen.

The paralyzing effect of chaste beauty derives from the fact that  
 it evokes contradictory responses: like the rose protected by thorns,

it both enflames and subdues. Lyly expresses with characteristic elaboration the kind of sentiment which such a woman evokes. In response to Lucilla's flirtatious temporizing, Lyly says,

Euphues was brought into a greate quandarie and as it were a cold shivering, to heare this newe kinde of kindenes, such sweete meate, such sower sauce, such faire wordes, such faint promises, such hotte loue, such cold desire, such certayne hope, such sodaine change, and stooide lyke one that had looked on Medusaes heade, and so had bene tourned into a stone. 49

Lucilla is subsequently found to be anything but chaste, and Medusa's head, a kind of morbid version of Minerva's shield, suggests the taint of death and corruption in what turns out to be merely provocative coyness. But the passage is useful because it projects into a highly-wrought rhetorical pattern the masculine emotions which the woman who withholds herself must arouse. The tension has a more positive prototype, however. Both Belpheobe and Britomart represent Queene Elizabeth, whose presence very literally evoked in her subjects both love and fear. Aske, describing Elizabeth's appearance to her troops at Tilbury before the defeat of the Spanish Armada, compares her to Penthisilea and makes clear precisely why he finds the comparison useful:

Her statelines was so with loue conioyn'd,  
As all there then did ioyntly ioy and feare,  
They ioy'd in that they see their rulers loue  
But feare'd least that in ought they should offend  
Agaynst her selfe, the Goddesse of this land. 50  
Thus causing ioy and feare, she passed thence.

The genuine emotions which Elizabeth aroused in her subjects do much to qualify and add depth to metaphors which might otherwise degenerate into

mere cliché, as well as to suggest with some plausibility that the emotion so evoked (in spite of the somewhat death-loaded metaphor in which it is sometimes expressed) may be for the beholder an essentially positive and ennobling one.

Partly, then, because chastity involves self-consciousness, partly because it involves a certain doubleness of response, it is presented in Spenser through an especially intense kind of imagery. What Nohrnberg calls "epiphanies" become central in the narrative of both Britomart and Belphoebe.<sup>51</sup> Images of sight are of course important throughout The Faerie Queene, where moral and spiritual error are consistently presented in terms of a failure to see clearly, where the "concupiscence of the eyes"<sup>52</sup> and the "self-confounding, illusion-making power of the imagination"<sup>53</sup> are always felt as dangers, and where illumination is the "discovery . . . of inner soundness behind visors and veils".<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless it is arguable that Spenser's treatment of figures who embody chastity (like Belphoebe and Britomart and, in a somewhat different way, Tristram in Book VI) has an especially emphatic visual quality, that they tend to be defined very much in terms of the way they see and the way they are seen, that their physical appearance plays a more than usually important role in the shape of the narratives which unfold around them, and that describing such figures in detail seems implicitly to raise the issue of their own self-consciousness (in a way that, for example, the initial description of Arthur, vivid and detailed though it is, does not). The way the narrative is affected by this special visual intensity will be one of my subjects in the chapters which follow.

I am also interested in what happens to language when the virtue under consideration is chastity. Shakespeare's Venus and Lucrece are especially interesting for the way in which they submit conventional rhetorical topoi to the pressure of passionate feeling. Creating passions worthy of the conventional extravagances of rhetoric only to show in turn these conventions are not adequate to the feeling they are used to express, Shakespeare shows passion and personality straining against language. There is nothing precisely parallel to this process in Spenser, but inevitably since when he deals with love he is working within a highly-articulated literary tradition, the adequacy of its commonplaces will be subjected to some scrutiny. Spenser investigates the power of Petrarchan language to evaluate and exalt, to deceive and seduce and even to enflame (as it does the cannibals contemplating Serena in Book VI). In the end, a false taste for metaphor or a "literary" view of love may become as great a danger to chastity as a Malocasta or a Paridell. Busirane, indeed, has long been seen as corrupting the imagination through a literary tradition; I am interested in tracing other subtle forms of poetic illusion, as well as in looking at the poetic insensitivity which seems to be connected with Artegall's vulnerability to Radigund, where the repression of feeling which suddenly bursts out in sentimental surrender seems to be rendered at least partly in terms of repression of the associations of language.

Chastity seems by definition to be a virtue which involves repression; it seems to require a marked one-sidedness (as indeed it does in that parody of chastity, Radigund) and to lead to extremes of feeling and behaviour. Shakespeare chose to reexamine traditional story-types which

embody such extremes, his Lucrece is constrained to abstract and destroy one half of herself; nothing short of death will heal the split in her psyche. Spenser proceeds rather differently, beginning with figures who are potentially polarized and gradually redefining them to suggest, and endorse, their equilibrium. Belpheobe, like Diana, is a huntress, but she is also a healer; Britomart stands for Chastity but her goal is marriage. Spenser's characters represent not only the virtues which they attain but the virtues which they call forth in the reader who responds appropriately to the way they are presented. If the masculine clothing which they wear seems to liberate in both Britomart and Belpheobe a certain singleness of response, an energetic integrity which is their most characteristic quality, it often displaces onto the reader the tensions from which they have been freed. In the end the virtue which Spenser's chaste figures embody becomes a function of the response they evoke; this power to call forth in others a fine equilibrium of feeling is made especially explicit in Tristram, whose value is defined partly by the way Calidore is able to respond to him. To define chastity as a blooming rose guarded by thorns is potentially to focus not on the rose itself but on the state of mind of those who look at it--on the stasis induced by the balance between two contrary emotions. It is when Spenser is dealing with chastity, which has such a potential for unbalance, that such equilibrium and the self-control which it implies are felt most strongly as positive values.

CHAPTER II

Belphoebe: Chastity and Stasis

It is characteristic of the Renaissance with its intense interest in defining the relationship of the individual to his society to debate with renewed intensity the old question of the relative value of the active and the contemplative life.<sup>1</sup> The introductory section of Stephano Guazzo's Civile Conversation, a book with which we have evidence that Spenser was familiar, begins with some common arguments. Before proceeding to define "conversation" ("an honest commendable and vertuous kind of living in the world"),<sup>2</sup> the author begins by establishing the centrality of such intercourse in human life. He sets up a fictional situation: his brother, ill in bed, is visited by a friend Anniball, who urges him to fight his melancholy in every possible way. The sick man replies that he has no desire to do so by returning to society, for solitude alone is true freedom. Anniball's vigorous objections to this point of view evoke a twenty-page debate. He argues that man's religious as well as his secular obligations make him essentially a social creature, that the church itself provides for the social needs of its communicants, that both practical and academic knowledge can be acquired only by mixing with one's fellow men. Yet before going on to define more narrowly what good breeding demands of man in society, Anniball pauses to admit that solitude does have its uses, and to establish, with spurious philosophical precision, three legitimate kinds: solitude of time, solitude of place, and solitude of the mind. All he seems to mean by the first two types is that it is sometimes useful to be alone in order to contemplate the kinds of things which cannot conveniently be contemplated in company. Anniball interprets the fables of Prometheus, Endymion and Atlas in



terms of "knowledge won by contemplation";

And if we consider diligently the fable of Prometheus, Jupiters Ambassador upon the Mount Caucasus, and his heart torn by the Egle, we shall finde that by the Mount is figured unto us solitarinesse, and by the Egle contemplation, which woundeth the heart, and preyeth upon it. Neither is anything els ment by the conjunction of the Moone with Endymion, but that he spent many nights in the contemplation of heavenly things, whereby he gathered the fruite of Astrologie. 3

The allusions bring together a well-established cluster of associations: Diana, the moon, the stars, high places, initiation into knowledge of a lofty and abstruse character, melancholy and pain. They also mark a subtle alteration in sensibility, a shift in emphasis away from the religious dimension of the solitary life to the social, from the ethical to the aesthetic. It is at this point that Guazzo introduces the first woman and the first individualized portrait in his book, the figure of Marguerite Stanga, who exemplifies Guazzo's third category, "solitude of mind", and who,

for the majestic of her lookes, for the excellencie of her grace, bewtie, vertue, behaviour, and manners, is beheld of other dames of this Citie, if not with envy, at least with admiration. And although in company she sheweth her self to be present with countenance, laughing and speaking, yet by the cutward shyning of her eyes, bewraying her inward affection (as it were by shining of the cristal which sheweth forth whatsoever is contained in it) it is seene that her gallant mind separated from mortal things, remaineth inclosed in her self, to the intent to exercise her selfe in more worthy and commendable cogitations: taking from the world al occasion of conceiving any hope to win her to vanity. 4

This lady has the ability, Guazzo says, not to pay attention while someone is talking to her: a dubious achievement, one would think, but one which Guazzo admires and finds indicative of a certain aristocratic refinement of spirit, the use of which is to distance her from the evil around her.

Like Ulysses stopping his ears among the Sirens, like the sun which shines on dirt but it is not defiled, like the physician who can heal the sick without catching the disease, such an individual is able to look on turpitude and yet remain unbesmirched by it.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that it is a woman who is the focus of Guazzo's observations alters the issue being discussed. The portrait of Marguerite Stanga adds a third element to his contrast between hermit-like solitude and civic humanism. Her demeanour is in fact a certain kind of "conversation", a way of being in the world and yet somehow remote from it. By her "solitude of mind" the lady serves a social function: she is a very present exemplar of a certain moral and aesthetic refinement; her "solitude" would lose its point completely if she were actually removed from society. Her manner helps crystallize in the people who observe her a conscious awareness of the value she represents; her inviolable purity impresses her observers, but its effect would be lost if there were no observers. This kind of "solitude of mind" is in fact a social ideal, shaped by society's expectations and self-consciously aware of itself as exemplary in a public way.

Guazzo's account makes explicit certain tensions implicit in the Renaissance idea of chastity, tensions which are developed with great subtlety in Spenser's portrait of Belphoebe. Two of the metaphors applied to Belphoebe are in fact used by Guazzo, that of the inviolable healer and the incorruptible sun. Like Marguerite Stanga, Belphoebe can give without experiencing loss, inspire love without feeling it. Her function is a highly social one although she is not in any simple sense

a member of society. Harry Berger, by treating Belphoebe only as she appears in Book II, somewhat oversimplifies Spenser's treatment of her, for there is a tension not only between Belphoebe's self-sufficiency and the human problems of her counterpart Elizabeth but also between Belphoebe's invulnerability and the pressure on her to be socially responsive. Issues easily disposed of in Book II are raised again in Books III and IV, and that what Belphoebe stands for, even without reference to Elizabeth or to the "conspicuously irrelevant" comparison with Penthisilea, is somewhat more complex than Berger allows.<sup>6</sup>

Belphoebe first appears in Canto 3, Book II, a canto which has, simply as a story, a unity and vitality not always characteristic of Spenser. We take a holiday<sup>7</sup> from the problem-laden world of the titular hero Guyon, whose horse has been stolen. Canto 3 moves on to the antics of the horse-thieves, a pair of connivers who step out of the world of Mother Hubberds Tale, both allegorically (like the fox and the ape, Trompart and Braggadocchio represent Simier and Alençon) and generically: the Tale is the closest analogy within Spenser's work to the kind of social satire attempted here, in this rather broad treatment of the figure of miles gloriosus. The encounter between Braggadocchio and

Trompart is economically done: the burlesque liveliness of the dialogue and the rapid collapse of hostilities quickly set a new mood, so that even when Archimago appears, his sinister figure is absorbed into their comic world. Braggadocchio's very condescension towards the old wizard ("Dotard said he . . . Seemes that through many yeares thy wits thee faile", 2.3.16.1), mistaken though we know it is, temporarily reduces Archimago's stature. For a few stanzas at least the imaginative energy is concentrated on figures so down-to-earth that the arch-wizard can blow away like a child's witch on a broomstick. The focus shifts from his real power to their clownish terror at his fairy-tale disappearance.

Banishing Archimago seems to have banished the numinous from the canto; hence Belpheobe with her almost electric aura of power and strangeness comes as a real surprise. Nothing has prepared us for the kind of figure she turns out to be. Thematically, of course, her appearance in this context is appropriate. Braggadocchio's cowardice raises the question of honour, an issue which Belpheobe discusses with him at some length (Belpheobe has no sense of humour). One means of underlining the dishonourable pusillanimity of the bombastic braggart is to show him reduced to quivering terror by a single woman on foot. The canto also has unusual narrative energy; and works up to a comic climax in one of the funniest details in The Faerie Queene, Braggadocchio's sober assurance that Belpheobe must be divine since nothing less than a goddess could strike fear into his own enchanted heart. Yet though the figures function neatly together, Belpheobe exists on an entirely different imaginative plane than do Trompart and Braggadocchio. Their very earthi-

ness emphasizes her glamour, their realism her iconic distancing, their clownish terror her divine authority. As Berger has pointed out, Belphoebe in the context of Book II is conspicuous by her irrelevance: her isolation from the norms and rhythms of "real" life is the most important fact about her.<sup>8</sup>

One means of emphasizing her status as a figure out of time, out of the normal course of events, is the way Spenser fuses the impressions of motion and stillness. Up to the point of Belphoebe's appearance events unroll at a pace which can best be described as naturalistic: quite a bit happens, amusingly and ec<sup>o</sup>mically, in just twenty stanzas. With Belphoebe's appearance, however, although she herself seems to embody intense energy, everything stops for a full ten stanzas while the reader absorbs the full force of her image. And paradoxically, the more detailed and circumstantial the description, the less personal and the more iconic a figure Belphoebe becomes. The movement of the narrative is no longer linear; we move not forward but inward to grasp the core of an image which yet remains essentially a mystery; we strain to possess, visually at least, a figure whose essence is her unapproachability. Like Braggadocchio and Trompart, we are dazzled.

Spenser creates the impression of wonder by the way he controls the point of view from which Belphoebe is perceived. At the beginning the reader tends to share the perceptions of Braggadocchio and Trompart. Completely unnerved by the sudden magical disappearance of Archimago, the pair flee in panic into the forest and strain their ears for any evidence of his return; "Each trembling leafe, and whistling wind they

heare" (2.3.20.4) makes their hair stand on end. The reader listens with them, and what he hears is the sudden blast of Belphoebe's hunting horn "that shrilled cleare/ Throughout the wood, that ecchoed againe,/ And made the forrest ring" (2.3.20.7). The very unexpectedness of the sound signals that what is about to happen is not a kind of experience Braggadocchio and Trompart could have imagined.<sup>9</sup> The ear has involved us in the visceral terror of Braggadocchio and Trompart. We have had to listen with their ears, but we need not see with their eyes, for as soon as Belphoebe appears she is "placed" and evaluated by the voice of the narrator. She is, he says,

A goodly Ladie clad in hunters weed,  
That seemd to be a woman of great worth,  
And by her stately portance, borne of heauenly birth,  
(2.3.21.7-9)

The clarification of the visual image proceeds from the very beginning in terms of moral evaluation. Spenser has Belphoebe emerge in the last three lines of a stanza, and what these lines convey is not only a general visual impression ("A goodly Ladie clad in hunters weed") but also a moral and aesthetic impression of "great worth". Although we may not be fully conscious of the shift in point of view, our acceptance of the narrator's judgment in those introductory lines makes him our interpreter for the episode as a whole. The fact that Trompart, when he is able to speak, will come to the same conclusion does not mean that we see what he sees. With Belphoebe's entry it is as if one literary genre cuts across another: Trompart and Braggadocchio are not capable of the mode of Petrarchan eulogy in which Belphoebe is celebrated; they cannot see her as we see her because true perception involves moral and esthetic

responses of which they are incapable.

The interpretive presence of the narrator, then, instructs us that we are intended to "read" this figure ("All good and honour", he tells us, "might therein be red" 2.3.24.5), and his allusive metaphorical framework provides us with the appropriate vocabulary and assures us that our reading is correct. Like Marguerite Stanga's, her virtue is suggested by her very transparency as an emblem: her beauty reflects her nature, "as it were by shining of the cristal which sheweth forth whatsoever is contained in it". Yet although Belpheobe exists to be seen ("presented . . . to sight" 2.3.26.2), it is an impertinence to look upon her. Before this shining figure every man is a "rash beholder"; feeling the rudeness of Trompart's bold stare, we are taught to feel the rashness of our own. The possibility of seeing wrongly is never forgotten, but, guided by the narrator, the reader is never allowed to do so. Visual detail is at first subordinated to interpretative explication so that we are not able to focus closely on the figure of Belpheobe until we have been instructed in the nature of the response demanded.

The first four stanzas of the narrator's description (2.3.22-25) associate Belpheobe with the Petrarchan mistress, the Neoplatonic idea, the beloved in the Song of Songs, even with the bride in Spenser's own "Epithalamion" ("Vpon her eyelids many Graces sate", 2.3.25.1). She is a celestial figure, with a face like a bright angel's, with eyes like "two liuing lamps . . . Kindled aboue at th'heauenly makers light," (2.3.23.1); the graces hover round her enduing her with gifts. Spenser focusses first on her head (on her skin, her eyes, her forehead, her

sweet words which make heavenly music) because the head, the seat of reason, is that epitome of the beloved's nature which ought to evoke in a virtuous lover a spiritual not a physical response. Celestial though Belphoebe is, however, she is also a kind of love-goddess, with certain Venus-like qualities: <sup>10</sup> she is associated with roses and lilies, and with sweet odours; her words, if they are sweet music, are also "dropping honny" (2.3.24.7); all senses but one are satisfied. Yet the echoes of the Song of Songs suggest, of course, not only fleshly but spiritual love--the satisfaction of the senses is a type of the spiritual fulfilment, so that the very images which evoke a sensual response instruct the reader to sublimate it into a spiritual one.

Belphoebe radiates power, power which can be used beneficently (her beauty can "heale the sicke" and "reuiue the ded", 2.3.22.9), details which foreshadow her care of the wounded Timias in Book III) but which will annihilate the unworthy "with dredd Maiestie and awful ire" (2.3.23.8). Only a very narrow range of response to her will be allowed: the narrator's guidance excludes the inappropriate response as does the majestic flash from Belphoebe's eyes. The physical terror of Trompart and Braggadocchio at her presence is the comic analogue of the narrator's rational awe, his recognition that Belphoebe belongs on a plane of existence to which he cannot do justice:

How shall fraile pen descriue her heauenly face,  
For feare through want of skill her beautie to disgrace?  
(2.3.25.8-9)

It is not until the correct response has been established by these four stanzas of moralized description that the reader is allowed



to take a closer look at this "goodly ladie". Spenser's technique is repeatedly to call forth in the reader a response which then has to be censored: Belpheobe is very thinly clad "for heat of scorching aire" (2.3.26.3): the line invites us to consider warm flesh, to associate her with nature and with seasonal change. But the richness and fineness of her garments, emblematic as they seem of a kind of moral purity and refinement (she is dressed in "a silken Camus lylly whight," 2.3.26.4) at the same time remind us of the inappropriateness of a too heated response to the body beneath them. The lust of the eye is systematically frustrated by a sophisticated rhetorical technique analogous, perhaps, to the sinuous teasing linearity of a Botticelli painting. The eye is enticed into following the delicate tracery of the lines of her garments: the delicate pleats, the gold-fringed hem of the skirt, the buskins "All bard with golden bendes, which were entayled/ With curious antickes, and full faire aumayled" (2.3.27.4); but it can penetrate no further than the surface. It moves downward to Belpheobe's boots:

fastened . . . vnder her knee  
 In a rich Iewell, and therein entrayld  
 The ends of all their knots, that none might see,  
 How they within their fouldings close enwrapped bee.  
 (27.8-9)

Entwined in the serpentine twistings of the decorative clothing, the eye is stopped by "a rich Iewell". Labyrinthine movement ends in stasis, the stasis of enforced sublimation.

Spenser is deliberately inverting the Ovidian topos in which the lover, after cataloguing his lady's beauties, concludes that what is not seen is most delightful of all. The immediate source is Ariosto's description of Alcina:

Yet by presumption well it might be gest,  
That that which was concealed was the best.

Harington's gloss refers the reader to Ovid: "Si qua latent meliora putat".<sup>11</sup>

Spenser's image of the "rich Jewell" transforms the comically suggestive tone of the passage, replacing fleshly associations with emblematic ones. He gives the same convention a different twist in Amoretti 15 where, after praising the lady's features in terms of gold and precious stones, he concludes in the couplet:

But that which fairest is, but few behold,<sup>12</sup>  
Her mind adorned with vertues manifold.

Cheney refers to this substitution of the Neoplatonic conclusion for the expected Ovidian one as an example of Spenser's "anti-Petrarchanism".<sup>12a</sup>

Donne is working within this tradition in his satirical Elegy 18, "Loves Progress": if the proper goal of the lover's quest is that which is essential to a woman, he argues, "How much they stray that set out at the face"; "Rather set out below," beginning at the foot and working upwards.<sup>13</sup> Spenser's inversion of such erotic topoi, his success in using the female body as an image of virtue by forcing the reader to see its emblematic associations, is a tour de force the very energy of which rubs off on the figure he is describing.

The jewel-knot under Belpheobe's knee literalizes a familiar metaphor. Marlowe's Leander insists that Hero ought to surrender to his advances, for

this faire gem, sweet in the loss alone,  
When you fleet hence, can be bequeath'd to none.

Her reply points out the falseness of his analogy:

Jewels being lost are found again, this never,  
'Tis lost but once, and once lost, lost for ever,

and as she fends him off, the narrator picks up the metaphor originated by the characters:

We're king more sought to keep his diadem ,  
Than Hero this inestimable gem. 14

The knot has a similar denotation, for it is in one sense Minerva's knot, described, for example, in Chapman's continuation of Marlowe's poem:

The custom was that every maid did wear ,  
During her maidenhead, a silken sphere,  
About her waist above her inmost weed ,  
Knit with Minerva's knot, and that was freed ,  
By the faire bridegroom on the marriage night, 15  
With many ceremonies of delight.

Fletcher, tracing the various forms that the archetype of the temple can take, observes suggestively that it can be reduced to an emblematic shield or to the "sacred nodus or knot";<sup>16</sup> Wind in his discussion of Botticelli's Primavera refers to Horace's "knot of the graces" and observes of the central grace 'Castitas' that she "unites the opposites in her person"; he cites as an analogue the "curious knot" made by the dancers in Jonson's Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue.<sup>17</sup> All of these associations are relevant to the understanding of Spenser's use of the image, which transmutes one kind of mystery into another, compels the substitution of rational awe for sexual curiosity, forcing the reader to read the figure emblematically and to realize that his own frustration is part of Belphoebe's meaning. It is not the eye but the mind which may, if it is able, untie the hidden knot, decipher the "curious antickes"

of the image which the poet creates.

Belpheobe's hunting costume suggests both feminine fantasy and luxury and masculine control. The clothing is delicately and richly decorated, but it binds and is bound: the skirt is finished off with a fringe, the buskins "bard with golden bandes" (2.3.27.4); the clothing is "fastened" (27.6), "embayld" (27.2), "knit" (29.6), "tide" (29.8), "enwrapped" (27.9). Such binding-in is an emblem of moral control.

Lyly records the tradition that

Paratius drawing the counterfait of Helen . . . made the  
attier of hir head loose, who being demaunded why he dyd so,  
he aunswered, she was loose; 18

and in the "Entertainment at Quarrendon", he has "Liberty" present Elizabeth with an article of clothing "to be worne, after mine owne minde, loose", and "Constancy" give her something else which "may serve to binde the loosenes of that inconstant Dames token".<sup>19</sup> The binding of Belpheobe's clothing, which provides both decoration and control, perfectly reflects her double nature. The essence of Belpheobe's power is her ability to evoke a sensual response and at the same time to compel its sublimation: her mystery is brilliantly suggested by the way Spenser makes us look at her. Although she herself represents noble self-control, she invites masculine self-abandon, and the description of her clothing evokes a tremendous sexual and imaginative tension.

It is only at this point that Spenser turns again to Belpheobe's role as huntress: the next three stanzas develop her image by narrating her habitual activities. The narrator is telling us more than Trompart or Braggadocchio could know about her, and the fact that we feel no

incongruity in this suggests to what extent we have tacitly accepted a point of view superior to theirs. Again the central impression is of energy controlled. This figure who stands before us frozen into an 'iconic pattern is at the same time shown in vibrant motion. In stanza 28, Belphoebe's legs are described:

Like two faire marble pillours they were seene,  
Which doe the temple of the Gods support,  
Whom all the people decke with girlands greene,  
And honour in their festiuall resort.

(2.3.28.1)

The static simile, another allusion to the Song of Songs (where it has a masculine reference)<sup>21</sup> positively inhibits a visual response; it compels us to respond only to the symbolic resonance of her stately carriage, to her power, her divinity, her right to reverence. (Cheney in fact suggests that this kind of dislocation is the typical effect of an allusion to the Song of Songs; its visual incongruity tends to invite an evaluative rather than a sensual response.)<sup>22</sup> The narrator continues with two quite different images:

Those same with stately grace, and princely port  
She taught to tread, when she her selfe would grace,  
But with the wooddie Nymphs when she did sport,  
Or when the flying Libbard she did chace,  
She could them nimbly moue, and after fly apace.

(2.3.28.5)

Three impressions, then, are laid one over the other: marmoreal stillness, measured movement, and effortless abandoned speed. Spenser qualifies the images of Belphoebe in movement by assimilating them to the static almost monumental impression which is associated with her control and self-possession.

That the ordering of details is rhetorical rather than naturalistic

is confirmed by the fact that it is not until this stage in the description that Spenser mentions Belphoebe's weapons, visual details which would form part of a viewer's first impression:

And in her hand a sharpe bore-speare she held,  
 And at her backe a bow and quiuer gay,  
 Stuff with steele-headed darts, wherewith she queld  
 The saluage beastes in her victorious play.

(2.3.29.1-4)

"Victorious play" is a suggestive oxymoron: what is a mere game for Belphoebe is death for the creatures she hunts, a paradox which will become important later on, when Timias falls in love with her. Spenser returns to the hunting motif at this point, only after developing the reader's awareness of Belphoebe as a sensuous presence, in order to sharpen the tension between attraction and fear which is the point of the whole passage. His method is epitomized in the description of the golden baldrick holding her quiver or arrows, which

forelay  
 Athwart her snowy brest, and did diuide  
 Her daintie paps; which like young fruit in May  
 Now little gan to swell, and being tide,  
 Through her thin weed their places only signifide.

(2.3.29.5)

The comparison with ripening fruit, commonplace as it is, nevertheless has great force in this context; and nowhere is the feeling of taboo surrounding Belphoebe more deeply felt than here where the reader is invited to visualize what he is told cannot be seen. The image of the young swelling breasts bound and controlled but thereby more clearly delineated by hunting gear is a perfect "objective correlative" for the tension between art and nature which is the subject of the next stanza:

Her yellow lockes crisped, like golden wyre,  
 About her shoulders weren loosely shed,  
 And when the winde emongst them did inspyre,  
 They waued like a penon wide dispred,  
 And low behinde her backe were scattered:  
 And whether art it were, or heedlesse hap,  
 As through the flouring forrest rash she fled,  
 In her rude hairees sweet flowres themselues did lap,  
 And flourishing fresh leaues and blossomes did enwrap.  
 (2.3.30)

Even as Spenser concludes with a lyrical stanza seeming to assimilate Belphoebe to nature in a fairly uncomplicated way, seeming to make a kind of Flora figure out of her, he raises a question ("Whether art it were . . .") which makes us feel the difficulty of such an assimilation. The flower motif will recur in Book III where Belphoebe's virginity is described in terms of the rose: the flowers associated with Belphoebe always tend to emphasize paradoxically not how effortless but how difficult is her involvement in natural process.

Spenser concludes the portrait with the stanza on which Berger places so much emphasis, the one comparing Belphoebe to Diana and to Penthisilia.<sup>23</sup> Its purpose seems primarily to bring us round again to Trompart's impression of her: notice how stanzas 31 and 32 are syntactically linked: "Such as Diana . . . Or that famous Queene/ Of Amazons"-- "Such when as hartlesse Trompart did her vew,/ He was dismayed . . .". For it is only at this point that we return to the world of ordinary narrative time where Trompart has been kept waiting. It was in stanza 21 that Belphoebe stepped out of the bushes; it is not until stanza 32 that we hear her saying, as she spots Trompart,

Hayle Groome; didst not thou see a bleeding Hind,  
 Whose right haunch earst my stedfast arrow strake?  
 If thou didst, tell me, that I may her ouertake.  
 (2.3.32.7)

The sound of her voice breaks the visual spell and takes us back into the world of Trompart and Braggadocchio. Her words remind us that this is nominally a scene of action: we are in the middle of a chase. Our sudden awareness of the way motion has been arrested makes us feel Belphoebe's almost magical power and control: her presence has placed a spell on the progress of the story just as her purity will place a spell upon the man who dares to lust after her (as it does, in fact, immobilize Timias in Book III). With the re-involvement of Trompart in the social situation, however, events begin to move again at the naturalistic pace already associated with the two buffoons, and the genre shifts once again into satirical comedy. The narrator presents this part of the scene with a dramatic immediacy rather unusual for Spenser: at one point he even interrupts himself as if he were relating the story as it unfolds before his eyes ("To whom she thus; but ere her words ensewed" 2.3.34.1).

Trompart's first words to Belphoebe are of course a parody of Aeneas' to Venus, not only to associate Belphoebe with Venus as well as with Diana, but also to establish that the mode <sup>24</sup> is parody. It becomes, indeed, something close to farce, for Belphoebe has mistaken Braggadocchio for an animal, and when he emerges from the bushes he is, appropriately, on all fours. Spenser compares him to a "fearefull fowle" (2.3.36.1) emerging from her hiding-place and preening her feathers as soon as the "soaring hauke" (2.3.36.2) has safely passed, an interesting simile which implies not only a difference of social class but also a reversal of sexual roles, of Belphoebe's control and power and Braggadocchio's effeminate cowardice. Once on his feet Braggadocchio does a comic double take:



So when her goodly visage he beheld,  
 He gan himselfe to vaunt: but when he vewed  
 Those deadly tooles, which in her hand she held,  
 Soone into other fits he was transmewed.

(2.3.37.1-4)

Braggadocchio here recapitulates in a crude pragmatic level the process the reader has gone through: he gazes, he lusts and he is immediately frustrated. The parodic relationship between reader and character is further suggested by the fact that it is Belphoebe's face, the very emblem which taught the reader her purity, which enflames his lascivious nature. His conclusion, that Belphoebe must be a goddess, is a burlesque version of what the narrator and reader have been able to see directly. Yet at the same time his clownish obeisance before her is the only correct response. Before such a figure, the narrative makes us feel, all men are clowns: Trompart and Braggadocchio are only doing on the comic level what all men must do, surrender before her authority, her intimidating otherness.

The dialogue between Belphoebe and Braggadocchio establishes again that Belphoebe is out of contact with the ordinary mortals she encounters. The two are talking at cross purposes. Braggadocchio extols court life in terms which mean nothing to her; he cannot understand why she does not yearn to "swim in pleasure, which thou here doest mis" (2.3.39.7). It is not, however, only base pleasure which Belphoebe rejects; it is also the mutuality of court life which seems at odds with her nature-- "ioyous court exchange,/ Amongst thine equall peres" (2.3.39.4). There is a double irony in his words. He is implying that courtiers like himself would be fitter companions than the animals in "this wilde forest" (2.3.39.2), having just proven himself to be one of the animals.

But the inappropriateness of his proposal goes deeper than this. His advice emphasizes the fact that Belphoebe has no "equall peres", and that the kind of social involvement he envisages would seem to threaten her essential nature. His phrasing suggests a reciprocal relationship: "There," he argues, "thou maist loue, and dearly loued bee," "There maist thou best be' seene, and best maist see" (2.3.39.6,8). The reader, however, has learned that Belphoebe may "best" be seen only as she has been seen, contained in the poem and interpreted by the narrator, that Braggadocchio and his court friends cannot "see" her at all, for their concern is with showy outward appearance rather than with the nobility visible only to the initiated eye. We do not need to know that Belphoebe is Elizabeth to realize that whatever court function she may have will be much more complex and difficult than the vulgar display which is all that Braggadocchio can imagine. Yet because she is Elizabeth we may also feel that Braggadocchio has a point. His argument --"The wood is fit for beasts, the court 'is fit for thee"--is a familiar one. Stefano Guazzo, for example, expresses the same idea:

who so leaveth the civile society to place himselfe in some solitarie desert, taketh as it were the forme of a beast, and in a certaine manner putteth upon him selfe a brutishe nature . . . For that hee doeth violence to beasts, seasing and possessing himselfe of Forrests, of tops of mountaines, of their dennes, caves, and blinde abydings: Not seeing that the citie and assemblies of people are made to founde the temple of justice, and to appoint a law and forme to mans life, which before was disorderéd, and imperfect. 26

Spenser has complicated the issue by making clear that the true beasts are the courtiers, but he has allowed Braggadocchio to express an issue the difficulty of which he himself is incapable of comprehending. Belphoebe in fact must find a way "to loue, and dearly loued bee." That her way

has little in common with the kind of activity Braggadocchio has in mind does not entirely prevent the reader from sensing the underlying challenge which his words pose. The challenge will not be taken up in the Book of Temperance, but it is not one which Spenser finally ignores.

Mistaking Braggadocchio's suggestive compliments for an invitation to a rhetorical context, Belphoebe launches with stylized solemnity into her defense of the "hard primitive" life of the hunt, of effort, self-control and temperance. Her language, as elegant and controlled as her appearance, echoes and overgoes the rhetoric of Braggadocchio. Both speakers present artfully-shaped arguments which depend for their emphasis upon calculated use of parallelism, but where Braggadocchio's phrases tend to be structurally antithetical and to polarize the issues in a simplistic fashion, Belphoebe's are amplificatory and work towards single-minded intensification of a secure moral position. Her contempt for Braggadocchio's life is suggested by the emphatic double chiasmus in her opening lines:

Who so in pompe of proud estate (quote she)  
Does swim, and bathes himselfe in courtly blis,  
Does waste his dayes in dark obscuritee,  
And in obliuion euer buried is.

(2.3.40.1)

She pauses on a neatly sententious maxim ("Where ease abounde, yt's eath to doe amis"), then develops her argument in carefully constructed parallel phrases: "But who his limbs with labours, and his mind/ Behaues with cares" (2.3.40.6), "Abroad in armes, at home in studious kind" (2.3.40.8), "In woods, in waues, in warres" (2.3.41.1), "With perill and with paine" (2.3.41.2), "But easie is the way, and passage plaine" (2.3.41.7).

Belphoebe's language is the verbal equivalent of the self-control she both preaches and embodies. Her ability to beat Braggadocchio at his own rhetorical game while yet absolutely failing to get through to him suggests that they are not "speaking the same language". The impression is rapidly confirmed when the only effect of the argument which should have taught him virtue is to enflame his lust. Belphoebe's "sweet words" have dismayed his "sence" (2.3.42.3); the word is a pun, for his ear has responded to the music of her voice rather than to the "sense" of her argument--as his eye has been "ravisht" rather than instructed by her beauty. Only a mind already noble can respond correctly to Belphoebe. But though he is incorrigible she is invulnerable. Fending him off with her "Taelin bright" (2.3.42.7), Belphoebe whirls away "vntoucht" (2.3.43.9) into the woods, disappearing as quickly as she had come, and leaving her would-be rapist to save face with the wonderfully comic impromptu rationalization he manufactures in stanza 45.

Simply as a story this canto is one of the most effectively told in The Faerie Queene, and the deft ending has a punch-line neatness. The episode is simpler and more pointed than, for example, the Medina episode in the previous canto, but at the same time the aesthetic responses demanded of the reader are rather more complex and the imaginative effect more profound. The unit is self-contained: none of the three central characters reappears in Book II and none is very closely involved with the titular hero. This self-containedness (as Berger points out) reflects the essential nature of Belphoebe herself: she cannot be easily assimilated, either into the story-line or into society. She is a figure

who sets up very powerful reverberations in Spenser's imagination: it is almost as though he falls back from her in wonder. The kinds of response evoked by this Diana figure will be called forth repeatedly in The Faerie Queene.

Belphoebe does not appear again until Canto 5, Book III, and when she does it is in another self-contained episode which reproduces several of the patterns of Canto 3, Book II: Timias' encounter with Belphoebe dramatizes in sympathetic detail the psychological impasse comically parodied in the meeting with Braggadocchio. The context of the canto is important in suggesting the kinds of issues raised by her reappearance. The narrator tells us in the two introductory stanzas that his subject is to be the difference between sensual and idealizing love:

Wonder it is to see, in diuerse minds,  
 How diuersly loue doth his pageants play,  
 And shewes his powre in variable kinds:  
 The baser wit, whose idle thoughts alway  
 Are wont to cleaue vnto the lowly clay,  
 It stirreth vp to sensuall desire,  
 And in lewd slouth to wast his careless day:  
 But in brane sprite it kindles goodly fire,  
 That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.

He suffereth it vncomely idlenesse,  
 In his free thought to build her sluggish nest:  
 He suffereth it thought of vngentlenesse,  
 Euer to creepe into his noble brest,  
 But to the highest and the worthiest  
 Lifteth it vp, that else would lowly fall:  
 It lets not fall, it lets it not to rest:  
 It lets not scarce this Prince to breath at all,  
 But to his first poursuit him forward still doth call.

(3.5.1,2)

Base love enervates; idealistic love animates and inspires—this, on the simplest level, is what the narrator seems to be asserting, and he uses as his example the desolate Arthur, once again on the trail of Florimell. But the canto is not primarily about Arthur, who meets the dwarf and races out of Book III by the beginning of the twelfth stanza: its main focus is to be on Arthur's squire, Timias, and as his story unfolds it becomes clear that the narrator's opening generalizations do not so neatly apply to him. Even under the influence of base love Timias is able to act: he fights off the onslaught of the Foster and his brothers with desperate energy. But the idealizing love he feels for Belphoebe, while it does indeed lift his aspiring mind and kindle goodly fire in his soul, also immobilizes him in lovesick despair. The canto which began with Arthur's pursuit ends in stasis, with Timias frozen in frustrated adoration and the narrator endorsing his paralysis.

The fleeing figure of Florimell, one form of Unattainable Beauty, is always just far enough ahead of Arthur that she can't be caught. Belphoebe, on the other hand, although as a huntress she is seemingly the pursuer, turns out to be equally unattainable. The two women are rightly paired in the narrative, as are the reactions of the two men: Arthur in his address to Night at the end of Canto 4 is in some ways like

Timias in his equally stylized lament, "Dye rather dye", at the end of Canto 5. Belphoebe and Florimell are (among other things) two aspects of the untouchable mistress in the male imagination, and although in The Faerie Queene as a whole they have very different allegorical associations, it is appropriate that they should share certain attributes in this canto: both, for example, are bright, clear, active figures flashing through the forest, both are metaphorically associated with the sun. The frantic chase of Arthur and the emotional paralysis of Timias become two aspects of the same condition, masculine sexual frustration. The juxtaposition of the two stories in this canto achieves through narrative counterpoint a rounded picture of a particular erotic response.

While Arthur, despite his momentary despair, remains essentially disengaged, moving in and out of each book with an ease which has sometimes been felt a structural defect in Spenser's poem, his more vulnerable squire's experience tends to be characterized by entrapment. Timias has pursued the Foster into a forest where, because of his "knowledge of those woods, where he did dwell", the fugitive soon disappears. Contacting his two brothers, the Foster plans to ambush his pursuer in "a covert glade, / Foreby a narrow foord" (3.5.17.1), difficult to cross at the best of times and now particularly tricky because flooded. They lurk waiting for Timias along the banks "with thicke woods ouer growne" (3.5.17.7), springing upon him just as he has reached the middle of the stream. It is significant that although all three brothers shoot at Timias, only the Foster is able to wound him; significant too that the wound is in the thigh, and that it is given when Timias is still struggling

the middle of the stream. Being caught in a wood and in water suggests entrapment in the material, in the lusts and desires of the flesh; it is only when Timias struggles onto the bank that he is able to kill the three brothers, but he is badly wounded, and sinks into a swoon, the psychological equivalent of the immersion and paralysis he has undergone in this battle with lust. Allegorically, the attempt to rescue Beauty has touched his soul with Lust, a taint from which he can be freed only by an honourable love in the person of Belphoebe. Her entrance is heralded by the narrator as a definitive turning point in Timias' story, as the intrusion of an element entirely different in nature and effect. She is an explicitly providential figure (3.5.22.1) associated with the clarity and beneficence of the sun (3.5.27.1). Yet by the end of the canto Belphoebe will have reduced Timias to a state no less helpless than the one in which she found him.

As before, Belphoebe controls the situation from the moment she steps through the branches. Again she arrives in pursuit of a hunted animal, an animal which becomes idagistically associated with the man to whom she appears. In Book II Braggadocchio's bestiality made him the burlesque equivalent of the escaped hind: here the connection is more subtle and more disturbing. This time, what hunting actually involves is suggested in more graphic detail: following "a tract of blood, which she had freshly seene, / To have besprinckled all the grassy greens" (3.5.28.4-5), Belphoebe hastens to deal the death blow, but discovers instead that it is not the animal but Timias who is lying before her "with bloud deformed" (3.5.29.2), his locks "knotted with blood" (3.5.29.6).



Timias symbolically replaces Belphoebe's wounded victim, for although she will indeed heal the wound given by the Foster, she unwittingly inflicts another even more deadly upon him. Belphoebe plays a double role in the male imagination: she tends inevitably to be both Platonic ideal and cruel Petrarchan mistress, and the death motif which will be so important throughout this episode is established from the very beginning by this imagery of blood.

Timias is in fact a type of Adonis: he has been wounded in the left thigh if not by a bear then by a "bore-speare" (3.5.20.1) and as Belphoebe stoops to lift his limp form she recalls the figure of Venus who appeared in the tapestries at Castle Joyous (3.1.38) moaning over Adonis and wiping away the blood which "stains his snowy skin with hatefull new," (3.1.38.6). Like Adonis, Timias is associated with a dying red flower, and his emblem is, to the end of his story, a bleeding heart (4.3.6.8). The image of the rosy flower of death, first associated with the wounded Timias (whose lips "on which . . . The bud of youth to blossom faire began, / Spoild of their rosie red, were waxen pale and wan," 2.3.29.7) appears again as the rose of Belphoebe's virginity (in a passage which will be discussed later). There is a tension in this canto between the imagery of flowers and herbs, which imply development, and Belphoebe's inaccessibility--a tension implicit in the myth of Adonis itself, which can be read as emphasizing either death or rebirth. No natural unfolding of Timias' love is possible; images which are associated with growth and ripening carry with them also in this context connotations of stasis and of death. Yet as the narrative develops it teaches the reader to acquiesce in the frustration and to "read" it as a

positive symbol of self-control and of spiritual, if not sexual, fruition and integration.

There is throughout this episode a decided tension between Belphoebe's ability to give of herself and her inability to comprehend what Timias needs to be given. Her condescension and humanity when she first finds the wounded man strikes the reader with disproportionate emphasis because of her irascible inviolability in the Braggadocchio episode. Struck by the unexpected sight, she gazes at him with "melting eyes", "Full of soft passion", "her tender hart" pierced through with "the point of pitty" (her arrows figuratively turned against herself); "Meekely . . . bowed downe", she kneels to succour him (3.5.30,31). Belphoebe's isolated self-sufficiency can be overemphasized; Roche is closest to the actual impression Spenser creates when he insists that Belphoebe is "not coldly and inwardly contemplative, but filled with a charitable compassion for her partners in humanity"<sup>27</sup>. In response to the pain of a fellow creature, Belphoebe exhibits a gracious and tender courtesy.

Chastity and courtesy must inevitably be seen at times as pulling in opposite directions. To make a public display of both at once in an actual social situation can be tricky; there is something absurd in the practical advice of Castiglione, who concludes that, since a lady can neither refuse to listen to suggestive jokes, for fear of seeming prudish, nor yet compromise her reputation by being amused, she must manage somehow to listen "with a little blushing and shamefastnes".<sup>28</sup> Du Bosq in The Compleat Woman treats "Chastitie and Courtisie" together in a single chapter because he sees them as potentially antithetical virtues between which a difficult mean must be struck: "'Tis fit," he says, "to joyne these two goodly

qualities together to reduce them into a perfect temper; since there are some who become curst for being chast, and others refuse nothing for being curteous."<sup>29</sup> If the two virtues are tempered, however, "they have the better grace in company than when alone" --exactly Guazzo's implication. Spenser in his portrait of Belphoebe attempts this tempering. It seems to be his intention to insist on the compatibility of the two virtues, for he assigns to his heroine of chastity the same comment about the bonds of common nature which he will put into the mouth of his patron of courtesy in Book VI. Belphoebe attributes her natural compassion towards Timias to the fact that he is a fellow mortal. When he addresses her as a goddess, she demurs:

Ah, gentle Squire,  
Nor Goddesses I, nor Angell, but the Mayd,  
And daughter of a woody Nympe . . .  
We mortall wights whose liues and fortunes bee  
To common accidents still open layd,  
Are bound with common bond of frailtee,  
To succour wretched wights, whom we captiued see.

(3.5.36)

Calidore expresses a similar sentiment in explaining why men should deal mercifully with one another:

All flesh is frayle, and full of fickleness,  
Subject to fortunes chance, still chaunging new:  
What hapts to day to me, to morrow may to you.

Who will not mercie vnto others shew,  
How can he mercy euer hope to haue?

(6.1.41,42)

Spenser specifies courtesy as the hallmark of Belphoebe's spirit: ("she was so curteous and kind", 3.5.55.2); his account of the circumstances of her adoption by Diana is offered as an explanation of her noble character, shaped as it was "So farre from court and royall Citadell,/"

The great schoolmistresse of all curtesy" (3.6.1.5); he emphasizes that, like Calidore, Belphoebe is graced with natural perfection, for the heavens have poured "all the gifts of grace and chastitee" (3.6.1.5) upon her, "And all the Graces rockt her cradle being born" (3.6.2.9). Like the virtue of courtesy itself, Belphoebe is presented as a kind of grace whose providential presence may soften the exigencies of "fortune" (3.5.27.3)--a central motif in Book VI. Even the imagery connects the two virtues: the rose of Belphoebe's virginity and the flower of courtesy are described in the same terms--they are both flowers of heavenly origin, transplanted on earth, bearing the fruit of honour (2.3.52; 6.Proem.3,4).<sup>30</sup> Belphoebe's response to the wounded Timias reflects the sensibility of a refined soul, but it is also a deeply social impulse.

Yet as she is presented in this stanza, no true similarity exists between her and the wounded squire. The very readiness of the aristocratic spirit to acknowledge its common bonds is the mark of superiority which separates it from those lesser beings who experience their humanity as need rather than as magnanimity. Calidore and Belphoebe make similar statements about their vulnerability, but the contexts allow two rather different meanings to emerge from their speeches. As Michael Dixon has suggested, Book VI as a whole is needed to teach Calidore the truth of the sentiment which he utters with facile magnanimity in the first canto; it is only when he is truly made to feel his vulnerability that Calidore becomes a hero capable of defeating the Blatant Beast.<sup>31</sup> Here, on the other hand, Belphoebe's very ignorance of the gulf between herself and Timias is a measure of her inaccessibility. Oblivious to the passion behind Timias' gratitude, she is in fact as isolated from him as if she

were the angel he calls her.

Belphoebe's role as healer derives from her perfect control over nature. Like her skill in hunting, her knowledge of herbs and of nursing techniques has aristocratic overtones. Mulcaster, discussing girls' education, says that "the skill of herbes haue bene the studie of nobilitie, by the Persian storie, and much commended in wmen".<sup>32</sup> Spenser connects this skill mythically with Belphoebe's chastity (her knowledge of herbs is analogous to her care of the rose of her virginity) and explicitly with her nobility (the same nymph taught her this "which from her infancy/ Her nourced had in trew Nobility", 3.5.32.4-5). The stanza describing her binding of Timias' wound in itself epitomizes the tension between giving and control, contact and inaccessibility, which underlies the whole episode:

The soueraigne weede betwixt two marbles plaine  
 She powdered small, and did in peeces bruze,  
 And then atweene her lilly handes twaine,  
 Into his wound the iuyce thereof did scruze,  
 And round about, as she could well it vze,  
 The flesh therewith she suppld and did steepe,  
 T'abate all spasme, and soke the swelling bruze,  
 And after hauing searcht the intuse deepe,  
 She with her scarfe did bind the wound from cold to keepe  
(3.5.33)

The image of her "lilly handes" with their energy and practised expertise suggest at the same time both leisurely refinement and skilled mastery of a craft. Their cool insensible whiteness emphasizes by contrast the tumid inflammation of his flesh; her very act of compassion reminds us of her remoteness from its object. It is no mere accident of rhyme that Belphoebe must "bruze" the herbs in order to heal Timias' "bruze"; it is only by destroying these growing things of nature that she can heal

the "sinfull wounds" (3.5.35.9) from which he suffers. As Belphoebe binds it up, she thinks she has closed the case. The kind of wound she herself is in the act of inflicting is one of which she can know nothing.

It is only after she has succoured Timias and the first words have been exchanged between them that Belphoebe's damsels arrive to carry Timias away to their dwelling in a "pleasant glade" (3.5.39.2). This is the only time we see Belphoebe in any kind of social environment, but although her nymphs are theoretically on the premises--"they thence him led" (3.5.39.1), "Thither they brought that wounded Squire" (3.5.41.1)--their presence is scarcely felt. Though the pleasance is presented in terms of both a theatre and a royal court (the pavilion is one in which "greatest Princes liuing . . . mote delight," 3.5.40.9), its dominant impression is of privacy and seclusion. It is far away, circled by mountains, shaded by "mighty woodes" (3.5.39.4), its rich pavilion embedded in the "enclosed shadows" (3.5.40.6) so that it is "scarsely to be seene" (3.5.40.7). Timias is taken into the pavilion ("all within most richly dight," 3.5.40.8) and tended daily by Belphoebe; he seems to be hidden away, almost like Adonis in a richly artificial version of Venus' bower. These four stanzas (3.5.38-41) provide a sense of Timias' emotion as having social reverberations, yet paradoxically emphasize the lack of any real social interaction. Timias' love for Belphoebe, though it is the produce of a highly artificial "social" set of values, can have no social consequences, and those nymphs hovering somewhere vaguely in the background provide just the sense of a public essentially unconnected from Timias and also from their mistress Belphoebe which the historical as well

as the psychological allegory demands. Belpheobe remains, in spite of her magnanimity, an isolated figure, almost as inaccessible to Timias as she was to Braggadocchio, and Timias, frozen in adoration, shares her isolation. The rich pavilion enshrined in a protective wilderness becomes in the end an image not of society but of Belpheobe's own inviolable spirit. Spenser has not simply dropped the social issues which were raised in a simple-minded form by Braggadocchio; the setting here exerts a delicate but insistent pressure on the reader's response to the love story.

Nursing Timias, Belpheobe inflicts upon him an unsuspected wound:

Dayly she dressed him, and did the best  
His grieuous hurt to garish, that she might,  
That shortly she his dolour hath redrest,  
And his foule sore reduced to faire plight:  
It she reduced, but himselfe destroyed quight.

(3.5.41.5)

She cures the wound in his thigh but causes a wound in his heart. Like Castiglione's lover, Timias is on the bottom step of the ladder of Platonic love; wounded by Belpheobe's eye and the beauty of her face, he is rapt in an idealistic self-dedication quite different from the frantic restless passion he had known before. Yet the loftier love torments him even more sharply than the pangs of lust, and he expresses his dilemma in a highly rhetorical lament. As in the Braggadocchio episode, the conflict dramatized by the narrative is suddenly crystallized in a very formal set-piece exploring the ethical values involved. There is a high artifice of feeling associated with Belpheobe's nobility which finds its inevitable reflection in the rhetoric she calls forth. The absoluteness of the demands she makes is reflected in verse-argument

which in both cases is destined to come to a single unavoidable conclusion. In Belphoebe's defense of honour, parallelism and repetition work in a single direction; here, in Timias' song of woe, they express not the single-mindedness she possesses but the psychological paralysis which this single-mindedness exacts from others. The stanzas turn back upon themselves as each attempt to resolve his dilemma ends in failure. Timias reasons that it is equally ungrateful to love Belphoebe and not to love her. She has saved his life; he must not repay her by sullyng her honour; yet he cannot repay her by giving back to her anything less than the life she has saved. His words reflect the emotional impasse in which Timias finds himself:

Dye rather, dye, and dying do her serue,  
 Dying her serue, and liuing her adore;  
 Thy life she gaue, thy life she doth deserue:  
 Dye rather, dye, than euer from her seruice swerue.

(3.5.46.6-9)

"Life" and "death" become one: to die for Belphoebe is to give her the life he owes her; on the other hand, to live for her without revealing his love is in itself a kind of emotional death for Timias.

Spenser has in fact reached an impasse in his narrative as absolute as the one Timias has reached in his meditation. In the Book of Chastity no narrative outcome is possible for Timias' love; neither love nor death can proceed any farther. What Spenser does, instead of continuing the story or promising to pick it up later, is to emphasize the dilemma by freezing the narrative into emblem. Again time simply stops: Spenser drops the story and has the narrator turn directly to the reader with explicit instructions about how to read it. We feel again



the curiously static encapsulated quality of the Belphoebe figure as the canto is rounded off with the finality if not the humour of the Braggadocchio episode.

As the episode has progressed we have become increasingly involved in Timias' point of view. At the beginning, when Timias lay unconscious, we registered Belphoebe's compassion primarily through its outward signs: we saw her change colour and start backwards, ~~then~~ look again and bend over to help the wounded man. From the moment however when Timias begins to fall in love--from stanza 42 onwards--we enter his consciousness, hear his meditation, see dramatized the effects of Belphoebe's unconscious cruelty on his wasting frame. When Spenser suddenly turns and transmutes felt human pain into a positive value, the shift is felt by the reader as a rather violent one. Timias has been wasting away: Belphoebe has nursed him with all the "Cordialles" and "Restoratiues" at her disposal except the only one which will help him, that "soueraigne salue" which is the rose of her virginity (3.5.50). The change in tone is as sudden as the shift in metaphor. Readers have complained at Spenser's inconsistency in moving from the literal to the metaphorical, in having Serena's "real" wound healed by the hermit's good advice, for example. <sup>33</sup> The same kind of shift takes place here: the rose which Belphoebe tends belongs to a different level of the allegory from the herbs she pounded into a potion. But the very abruptness of the shift is in this case part of the poet's meaning. <sup>34</sup> Only by reading Timias' story emblematically can the reader understand it correctly and accept the lesson which the figure of Belphoebe embodies. He has to accept the narrator's

bland refusal to tell him what happened next just as Timias has to accept Belpheobe's inability to recognize his need. The sudden frustration of his narrative expectations compels the reader to moralize the emotions of tenderness and sexual longing which he has vicariously shared with Timias. Coming as it does in place of the conclusion that he had been led to expect, the emblem of the rose has behind it the force of his own desires: the reader is forced to "see" the complex emotion<sup>al</sup> situation of the story line suddenly compressed and distilled into a single image, a single stanza. Instead of working away from the emblem, as he does for example in his translations from Petrarch, Spenser works towards it, forcing the reader to accept it as a replacement for the narrative conclusion his "natural man" had been expecting. It is in the reader's frustration as much as in Timias' that the meaning of the episode lies.

The conclusion also compels another substitution, of the sense of sight for the sense of touch. From the very beginning Timias' suffering has been communicated in tactile terms. The metaphors which present the love-longing as an inward wound, a poisoned festering dart, a wasting disease, arouse in the reader a sensitive awareness of the vulnerability of the body. Spenser forces him to substitute for this awareness of the body as a whole a merely visual response, to move upward and out of the shrinking flesh into the cool and detached eye. The emblem of the rose compels in the reader the sublimation which is the "moral" of Belpheobe.

Yet at the same time the emblematic stanza seems imagistically to work against the very sublimation it compels: it moves from closedness

to openness, from rejection to acceptance: <sup>35</sup>

That dainty Rose, the daughter of her Morne,  
 More deare than life she tendered, whose flowre  
 The girlond of her honour did adorne:  
 Ne suffred she the Middayes scorching powre,  
 Ne the sharp Northerne wind thereon to showre,  
 But lapped vp her silken leaues most chaire,  
 When so the froward skye began to lowre:  
 But soone as calmed was the Christall aire,  
 She did it faire dispred, and let to florish faire.

(3.5.51)

The movement of the stanza asserts on a "higher" level the receptivity which Belphoebe denies on the "lower". The opening rose, vulnerable to the penetrating male principles of wind and sun, is a traditional symbol of the sexual act; if it is read symbolically, this very stanza, which inhibits the development of the narrative line on a literal level, picks it up and continues with it on the allegorical level. Belphoebe's chastity is not presented as a negative or self-enclosed virtue. Spenser had suggested this by narrative means through Belphoebe's assertion of her common humanity and her readiness to succour Timias: now he does it again in a symbol rich with traditional associations. Although it may seem to Timias that Belphoebe's inviolability is a principle of death, the narrator, who knows more than Timias can know, is teaching us that there is another way of looking at the situation.

Spenser concludes the passage by moving from emblem to moral and confirming explicitly the truth already implied in the preceding story. Belphoebe's chastity is a creation not of nature but of grace:

Eternall God in his almighty powre,  
 To make ensample of his heauenly grace,  
 In Paradize whilome did plant this flowre;  
 Whence he it fetcht out of her native place,

And did in stocke of earthly flesh enrace,  
 That mortall men her glory should admire:  
 In gentle Ladies brest, and bounteous race  
 Of woman kind it fairest flowre doth spire,  
 And beareth fruit of honour and all chast desire

(3.5.52)

This stanza expresses in theological terms what Timias felt as an aspect of his erotic response: Belphoebe is indeed a being of a different and superior kind--a kind of goddess. The narrator's commentary expands upon the metaphor of the rose and confirms the value of the virtue adumbrated by the image. Chastity is, in the end, a developmental virtue, a virtue concerned with growth and process. Although the development of the plot must be arrested by the narrator's intervention, chastity, he asserts, is not a static condition. The kind of desire Timias feels for Belphoebe, although it can have no sexual outcome in the story, does in fact bear fruit, "fruit of honour and all chast desire". It is through the very frustration of the kind of erotic response felt by Timias that the proper growth can take place; it takes place, however, not within Timias but within the mind of the reader. Timias' story is suspended; it is true that when we see him again he is just as much in love as he had been in canto 5, but in the meantime his plight has become emblematic for the reader in a way that it cannot be for Timias himself.

The narrator's direct didactic shift into the imperative, his advice to the reader in the last three stanzas, is more than mere convention. It startles us by demanding that we respond against the grain of the narrative itself, by insisting that those very feelings of sympathetic identification with Timias which the narrative had called forth in us must be transcended by a rational assent to the value of

what has caused his suffering. Spenser has evoked in us the same compassion he has praised in Belphoebe, the natural compassion for a fellow creature, only to make us recognize that in this context a still higher response is demanded. It is his female reader to whom the narrator turns, and in this particular context the transition is peculiarly effective. The reader qua reader has no gender; the story, however, has made him identify strongly with a male figure. The passage makes demands on a reader of either sex. A woman is asked to check one kind of feminine response, "nurturing warmth and sympathy which is essentially outgoing, by means of a cooler, sterner and much more self-conscious sense of herself as a potentially exemplary object. Yet the inadequacy of an attitude which is merely cool and self-protective has been made clear by the whole drift of the story: her precise moral and emotional footing is rather difficult to find in this pattern of conflicting demands. A man, on the other hand, is compelled to acquiesce in the rightness of the very advice which, if taken, promises his natural self nothing but frustration. By suddenly invoking the idea of a listening audience, Spenser makes the reader not only self-conscious but aware of his own involvement in social life and ritual, sexual give-and-take, and by singling out only the female half of his audience, he makes the reader feel his own sexual identity and needs even as he is insisting on their sublimation. Belphoebe is made to stand for the reconciliation of two qualities which in the reader must be mutually exclusive, charitable responsiveness and obliviousness to the needs of others. In the final stanza the narrator presents as fusion what is necessarily felt by the reader as tension:

In so great prayse of stedfast chastity,  
 Nathlesse she was so curteous and kind,  
 Tempred with grace, and goodly modesty,  
 That seemed those two vertues stroue to find  
 The higher place in her Heroick mind:  
 So striving each did other more augment;  
 And both encreast the prayse of woman kind,  
 And both encreast her beautie excellent;  
 So all did make in her a perfect complement.

(3.5.55)

But it is impossible for the reader to recreate in his own psyche the perfect harmony which she represents, especially when he has been reminded sharply of his own needs, emotional, social and aesthetic. Belphoebe is an ideal of psychic balance as unattainable for him as she is for Timias.

It is characteristic of the tensions evoked by Belphoebe that it is she who serves as the starting point for Spenser's modulation into the Garden of Adonis, the image of sexuality and process. Structurally the transition works in terms of an antithesis: having related the tale of Timias and Belphoebe, Spenser begins Canto 6 by going back to establish how Belphoebe was born, thus providing himself with an opportunity to move on to Belphoebe's twin Amoret, and to underline (by the encounter between Venus and Diana) the contrasting roles that the two sisters will play in the allegory. But the narrative link, the story of Chrysogone,

also modulates the polarities by assimilating the emblem of the rose at the end of Canto 5 to the Garden with its flowers at the end of Canto 6: it points both forward, and also backward, qualifying our response to the Timias episode and our reading of the rose stanza.

Chrysogone's conception of the twins Belphoebe and Amoret is paradoxical: it is a process at once superhuman--it is the sun himself who is her lover--and subhuman--Chrysogone is ignorant and helpless, and when Spenser tells us that she bore without pain the children she had conceived without pleasure he is making her an exception to postlapsarian human nature. Chrysogone is not human but a personification of human fertility. Her innocent receptivity makes her victim of a process which is otherwise presented as creative. The canto, which is a celebration of the fecundity of the natural cycle, is also a celebration of the male principle--here, the sun itself. Belphoebe had been associated with the sun in Canto 5: it is as if she has inherited her father's power and energy while her twin Amoret has inherited Chrysogone's sexual vulnerability. For however lyrically the antique tale is told--and the narrator emphasizes its antiquity perhaps to soften this fact--it is an account of what is really a kind of gentle rape. The creative process is here stripped to its archetypal essentials: maleness is presented as penetrating fertilizing potency, femaleness as passive receptivity.<sup>36</sup> The very simplification of the process makes the reader feel once more the complications inherent in the figure of the chaste and therefore invulnerable female figure. Belphoebe's rose is shut up against the "middayes scorching powre" (3.5.51.4) which exhausts and then impregnates her mother: to the extent that we feel Chrysogone's "shame

and foule disgrace" (3.6.10.1), we approve such self-protectiveness; to the extent that we rejoice in the power of the "Great father . . . of generation . . . th'author of life and light" (3.6.9.1)—and the poetic energy of the passage does on the whole endorse this response—we register the exclusivity of what Belphoebe represents. The story of Chrysogone sharpens the reader's sense of the precise meaning of both Belphoebe's rose and Venus' garden.

The impact of the story is qualified still further by the narrator's introduction. What he says he is setting out to explain is how Belphoebe managed to acquire all the virtues of civilization "so farre from court and royall Citadell/ The great schoolmistress of all curtesy" (3.6.1.5), and his emphasis in the first three stanzas is entirely on the outgoing virtues of generosity, grace and liberality:

But to this faire Belphoebe in her berth  
 The heuens so fauourable were and free,  
 Looking with myld aspect ypon the earth,  
 In th'Horoscope of her natiuetee,  
 That all the gifts of grace and chastitee  
 On her they poured forth of plenteous horne;  
Ioue laughed on Venus from his soueraigne see,  
 And Phoebus with faire beames did her adorne,  
 And all the Graces rockt her cradle being borne.

Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew,  
 And her conception of the ioyous Prime,  
 And all her whole creation did her shew  
 Pure and vnspotted from all loathly crime,  
 That is ingenerate in fleshly slime.  
 So was this virgin borne, so was she bred,  
 So was she trayned vp from time to time,  
 In all chast vertue, and true bounti-hed  
 Till to her dew perfection she was ripened.

Her mother was the faire Chrysogonee,  
 The daughter of Amphisa, who by race  
 A Faerie was, yborne of high degree,  
 She bore Belphoebe, she bore in like cace



Faire Amoretta in the second place:  
 These two were twinnes, and twixt them two did share  
 The heritage of all celestiall grace.  
 That all the rest it seem'd they robbed bare  
 Of bountie, and of beautie, and all vertues rare.

(3.6.2-4)

The stanzas describe a heavenly grace which overflows and radiates, an energy which expresses itself not, like Belphoebe's, in denial and self-control, but in free and joyous giving. The very lines, then, which establish the reason for Belphoebe's immaculateness and innate superiority make the reader feel the value of a kind of openness which she herself does not exemplify. I am not of course suggesting that Belphoebe's chastity is being ironically undercut at the beginning of Canto 6, only that Spenser makes the reader feel the full complexity and difficulty of the kind of honour she represents and the difficulty of its coexistence with other virtues.

It is significant, too, that Venus and Diana appear only at this particular point in the story, after we already know Belphoebe. By <sup>37</sup> creating the twins and associating one with Venus and one with Diana, it is clear that Spenser wants to suggest love and chastity as two alternative responses. On the other hand the allegory is much the richer for the fact that Amoret is no mere Venus and Belphoebe no mere Diana. Recent criticism has tended to deal rather schematically with the 'chastity' figures in The Faerie Queene. Britomart is "unfolded" into Belphoebe and Amoret, or into Belphoebe and Amoret and Florimell; these three are identified with the three Venuses of Ficinian Neoplatonism, or with the <sup>38</sup> three graces, and so on. Such analyses, indispensable though they are in suggesting Spenser's conceptual frame of reference, sometimes tend

to blur the actual imaginative character of the various figures by taking them out of their narrative context. Belphoebe and Amoret, since they are twins associated with Venus and Diana, must of course be seen antithetically; Spenser himself clearly points to a schematic reading. But at the same time one should not ignore the texture of the verse in which they are introduced. Despite their twinship, Belphoebe and Amoret are very different as "characters", so different in fact that it is often difficult to keep their allegorical equivalence in mind. Belphoebe appears in The Faerie Queene 'full grown and fully armed', a complete and emphatic figure; Amoret on the other hand emerges only gradually and hazily, our first impression of her nature deduced indirectly from our reading of the Garden of Adonis where she is brought up. Belphoebe is an emphatically visual phenomenon, whereas Amoret is not (we do catch a glimpse of her wounded by Busirane and then at the end of Book III melting into a hermaphrodite with Scudamore; this very image suggests the intrinsic haziness of her outline). It makes a difference in our impression of their natures that we know Belphoebe quite well before her twinship and her affiliation with Diana are established but that we know Amoret only after and in terms of these relationships. Belphoebe, it seems to me, is a more interesting figure and a more adequate model of human nature than the version of her which emerges from critical theory which pairs her in a simple way with Amoret.

Berger's treatment of the twins' affiliation with Venus and Diana is representative. He argues that Amoret and Belphoebe are not intended to be complete "characters" but rather to embody single aspects of human

sexuality, and that both must be transcended by the sexuality represented by Britomart. Dealing with their adoption by Venus and Diana, he argues:

The traditional view of the feminine psyche based on the Venus-Diana model is simplistic and inadequate, a one-sided masculine caricature. A psyche composed--or rather divided by--two such exclusive and antipathetical dispositions is not open to the kind of relationship Spenser envisages as married love. His solution is to revise and complicate the traditional male view of woman . . . Each twin contains . . . a differently inflected mixture of Venerean and Artemisian . . . elements. 39

This is a valid generalization about the twins' roles. But to pair them this way does at the same time distort slightly our view of both of them. Berger's Belpheobe is cooler and more self-sufficient than Spenser's, who in fact is invariably presented in encounters which are essentially social and which challenge the lofty disengagement she seems to a certain extent to embody. There is after all an important difference between the twins: Belpheobe is also a type of Queen Elizabeth. In emphasizing only her mythic status, her natural invulnerability, Berger tends to ignore the subtlety and honesty of this parallel, which is developed not only in "conspicuously irrelevant" similes but in the very drift of the narrative itself. Belpheobe's final appearance in The Faerie Queene presents in still more insistent form the tensions between love and chastity developed in the earlier episodes.

In the Book of Temperance, Belphoebe's encounter with Braggadocchio leaves her wholly untouched: simple repudiation of his baseness is all that is required of Belphoebe as an exemplar of that form of temperance which is nobility. In the Book of Chastity, her relationship with Timias raises more difficult issues, and although Belphoebe is unconscious of her adorer's painful passion, she feels at least compassion for him, a compassion which she herself rationalizes as deriving from their common humanity. The Book of Friendship requires still another emphasis: it requires some kind of genuine involvement, some recognition that the relationship is one from which she benefits and to which she must contribute.

The episode opens when Belphoebe and her hunting party happen across the fleeing Amoret, who has just escaped from the cave of Lust (4.7.23). Belphoebe and Timias have become separated, so that they enter the crisis at different points and have different situations to deal with. Timias is the first to be drawn in. He breaks up the pursuit by attacking the monster, and has succeeded in wounding him and making him drop Amoret by the time that Belphoebe, hearing from a distance the noise of the fracas, arrives on the scene to pursue Lust and finish him off. Thus the two characters have different roles to play, roles which emphasize again Belphoebe's superhuman invulnerability and Timias' all-too-human tendency to get messily entangled in events. Since Timias arrives on the scene as it is unfolding, he is plunged into the conflict without any time to catch his breath. He does the best he can under the circumstances, but since Lust grabs up Amoret and uses her "as a buckler" (4.7.26.4), Timias cannot attack him without fear of harming her. When

he does succeed in wounding Lust, the monster's "coleblacke bloud" stains "all her silken garments" (4.7.27.8,9). Whatever stain is left on Amoret, whatever contamination she suffers, is, then, due at least partly to Timias' intervention: though his motivation seems wholly chivalric, his entry into the situation already involves him somehow in her disgrace. Timias cannot do things cleanly: his most honourable impulses tend always to implicate him in ambiguous ways.

Belphoebe, on the other hand, arrives only after Timias has wounded the monster. "Raunging in the forrest wide", she hears the noise of the fray, and heads towards it, "making her eare her guide" (4.7.29.1,4): the wording suggests awareness, deliberation, and freedom of choice. She races up "With bow in hand, and arrowes ready bent", swift, prepared, and ruthless (4.7.29.6). "Ready" becomes the key word: she is aiming at Lust before she even sights him ("And euer in her bow she ready shewed/ The arrow, to his deadly marke desynde", 4.7.30.4), and she finishes him off with a single well-aimed shot. Spenser compares her to Diana--

As when Latonaes daughter cruell kynde,  
In vengement of her mothers great disgrace,  
With fell despight her cruell arrowes tynde  
Gainst wofull Niobes unhappy race,  
That all the gods did morne her miserable case.

(4.7.30.5-9)

This simile really is conspicuously irrelevant, for unlike Lust, who is a repulsive monster, Niobe is a very human figure, and Diana's ruthless revenge upon her for her reckless hubris does tend to elicit sympathy on her behalf, as Spenser himself observes when he notes that "all the gods did mone her miserable case" (4.7.30.9). Although the simile emphasizes the narrator's awareness of Belphoebe's cruelty, it

implies no such awareness in Belphoebe herself, who acts with the single-mindedness of an impersonal principle. As she stands over her dead victim, Belphoebe gazes at him with amazement but no other emotion: to her he is nothing but a freakish monster of an alien species:

Yet ouer him she there long gazing stood,  
And oft admir'd his monstrous shape, and eft  
His mighty limbs.

(4.7.32.6)

By implying that perfect chastity treats monsters and human beings with the same impassive ruthlessness, the simile leads into the historical allegory which follows. It is generally agreed that Spenser is alluding in this episode to Raleigh's involvement with Lady Elizabeth Throckmorton which so angered Queen Elizabeth that she recalled him from a naval expedition and sent him to the Tower. The comparison with Diana allows Spenser both to flatter Elizabeth as the episode opens by presenting her fury about the Throckmorton affair as perfectly reasonable (it is Lust who is her real enemy) and at the same time delicately to suggest that even the gods may weep when a fallible human being is ruthlessly destroyed.

In presenting the tableau which offends Belphoebe, Spenser handles the evidence with considerable tact. When Belphoebe returns to the couple, we see only what she sees:

There she him found by that new louely mate,  
Who lay the whiles in swoune, full sadly set,  
From her faire eyes wiping the deawy wet,  
Which softly stild, and kissing them atweene,  
And handling soft the hurts, which she did get.  
For of that Carle she sorely bruz'd had beene,  
Als of his owne rash hand one wound was to be seene.

(4.7.35.3-9)

The scene is just close enough to Belphoebe's own response to the wounded Timias (3.5.29-31) to make us feel that compassion need not involve

betrayal; but since this time we are not told what emotions Timias himself feels, it is not possible to know just how far the disloyalty to Belphoebe has gone. The visual objectivity of the stanza protects Raleigh by blandly refusing to impute emotion to him; at the same time it contains enough hard fact to justify Belphoebe's anger. Her reaction is characterized, as before, by its absoluteness. One glance is enough to fill her with such "deepe disdain, and great indignity" (4.7.36.3) that she could have killed them both with the same arrow she had used to kill Lust. But whereas her rage at him was presented as exemplary, her readiness to deal with Timias and Amoret in the same way makes us feel the difference between the two situations, for these are creatures like herself. Belphoebe's emotion no longer seems perfectly pure and impersonal. Her truncated ejaculation--"Is this the faith" (4.7.36.8)--is a dramatic expression of personal passion, expressing pain and incredulity as well as rage. With characteristic decisiveness, she turns and vanishes from the scene as swiftly as she had departed from Braggadocchio--but for the first time her departure does not reflect her complete control.

Spenser at this juncture uses a couple of curiously absolute temporal expressions which, in view of what follows, are not literally true: he says that she "fled away for euermore" (4.6.36.9) and that "no ioy/ In all [Timias'] life, which afterwards he had,/ He euer tasted" (4.8.2.3-5); yet in almost the same breath, he tells us at the beginning of Canto 8, that time heals all wounds, that even "the displeasure of the mighty" (4.8.1.3) will eventually soften as time passes. This discrepancy signals a transition from the world of absolute principle to one of human compro-

mise, for when Belpheobe appears again in Canto 8 the role she plays has undergone a subtle change. Although she is to the end a queenly figure who holds the ultimate power over the fate of those who adore her, she too has become implicated in the ambiguities of a relationship which has both sexual and political implications. Spenser achieves this subtle shift by means of an allegorical use of a familiar romance motif, that of the bird which leads a character through the woods to an unknown goal.<sup>41</sup>

Cast off by Belpheobe, and so transformed that Arthur himself fails to recognize him, Timias lopes about the woods bemoaning his unkind fate when he is joined by a turtle-dove. The bird, because she too had "lost her dearest loue" (4.8.3.4) sympathizes with the youth and tries to comfort him by singing to him, so that at last he feels he recognizes his own name in her notes. Spenser emphasizes the gradualness and tentativeness of the process by which at last the two become close companions:

Thus long this gentle bird to him did vse,  
 Withouten dread of perill to repaire  
 Vnto his wonne, and with her mournfull muse  
 Him to recomfort in his greatest care,  
 That much did ease his mourning and misfare:  
 And every day for guerdon of her song,  
 He part of his small feast to her would share:  
 That at the last of all his woe and wrong  
 Companion she became, and so continued long.

(4.8.5)

The fact that the bird is a female--that it is "she" who in a sense approaches and woos Timias; that she is a dove, the bird of Venus; that what motivates her is not only compassion but a kind of empathy; that Timias supplies her with food, the traditional means by which a man would tame a wild creature, only after she has initiated the relationship--all these elements of the story tend to qualify the reader's impression



of Belphoebe's unrelenting coldness. The bird is not Belphoebe, not even strictly speaking the "Venus" aspect of her psyche, but she is a kind of "objective correlative" of the tentative emotional rapprochement which Belphoebe may subsequently go through in regard to Timias but which is never actually dramatized in the narrative. Spenser's rendering of Belphoebe's reconciliation is so subtle and convincing because the motif he has hit upon functions as an analogy for a psychological process (the softening of Belphoebe's heart) the explicit presentation of which would be both audacious and unconvincing. He manages both to suggest that Belphoebe bends to Timias and woos him and to retain the impression of her complete control over the situation. The motif of the wild animal tamed is of course a familiar one in the sonnet tradition: one of the central sonnets in Spenser's Amoretti (67) turns on the metaphor of the deer who comes willingly into the hunter's hand once he has ceased to pursue her; Amoretti 65 and 73 compare the loving spirit to the wild bird which gladly accepts its cage. The image always tends to raise the issue of submission, control and "maisterie" as elements in the erotic response. Here, in the Timias-Belphoebe episode, the relationship between the two terms of the metaphor are implied but never stated; both the narrative situation and the historical allegory give the motif a complexity which the sonnets cannot possess.

The taming of the turtle dove is of course only the half of the story, for one day as Timias is idly turning over a cache of trinkets Belphoebe had given him, he comes across a jewel which seems emblematic of his situation:

a Ruby of right perfect hew,  
 Shap'd like a heart, yet bleeding of the wound,  
 And with a litle golden chaine about it bound.

(4.8.6:7-9)

Substituting for the chain "A riband new,/ In which his Ladies colours were" (4.8.7.1) he ties it about the bird's neck. The jewel is a delicate emblem of their union: the heart is hers (her property originally) and yet his (it is his heart which is wounded); the new ribbon he supplies is his, yet in her colours. Timias and Belphoebe are united as the jewel and its ribbon: it is a heraldic rather than an organic union, and the image suggests its static, courtly nature. And when Timias ties around the bird's neck the pendant which had hung originally around Belphoebe's, the suggested analogy between the dove and Belphoebe herself is once again subtly underlined.

The dove flies off, and when she finds Belphoebe, it is in an unfamiliar posture indeed. Up to this point Belphoebe has always burst upon the scene as the active huntress, but here for the first time she is in repose and is not seeking but being sought. Whereas her overflowing energy had always carried with it the suggestion of potential irascibility, her repose "in covert shade of arbors sweet" (4.8.9.2) suggests receptivity, a capacity for non-aggressive emotional response. Not that there is anything lax or luxurious about it; her alertness is reflected in her reaction when she sees the bird:

She her beholding with attentive eye,  
 At length did marke about her purple brest  
 That precious iuell, which she formerly  
 Had knowne right well with colourd ribbands drest:  
 Therewith she rose in hast, and her adrest  
 With ready hand it to haue reft away.  
 But the swift bird obeyd not her behest,

But swar'd aside, and there againe did stay;  
 She follow'd her, and thought againe it to assay. (4.8.10)

Belphoebe's "attentive eye" and "ready hand" are prepared to take over the situation with the usual decisiveness. Again the objectivity of the description raises questions about Belphoebe's motivation. Possibly that she wants the jewel back simply because it is valuable and because she recognizes it as her property; yet the phrasing ("That precious iuell which she formerly/ Had known right well") could also suggest that she values it because she remembers having given it as a love-token to Timias. On the other hand, if she connects the jewel with Timias, it is surprising that she fails to recognize him at the end of her chase. We cannot know what its value is to her, and this ambiguity is part of Spenser's meaning. What is Timias to Belphoebe--a courtly lover or a creature she owns and controls? What was Raleigh to Elizabeth? In such a relationship between queen and subject, to what extent do erotic and possessive responses reinforce one another?

What is clear is that Belphoebe wants the jewel back and cannot get it. For the first time her will is thwarted; "the swift bird obeyd not her behest" (4.8.10.7); she is a huntress who cannot catch up with her prey and who is constrained to follow it at its own pace:

And euer when she nigh approcht,  
 Would flit a litle forward, and then stay,  
 Til she drew neare, and then againe remoue;  
 So tempting her still to pursue the pray,  
 And still from her escaping soft away:  
 Till that at length into that forrest wide,  
 She drew her far, and led with slow delay.

(4.8.11.1-7)

The gradualness of the process is emphasized, and the fact that Belphoebe is no longer so much mistress of the landscape as drawn into and submerged in its unfamiliar thickets. The implications of the adjective "wide" change in this context. Before she had attacked Lust, Belphoebe had been described as "raunging in the forrest wide": "raunging" suggested her knowledge of and perfect confidence in the forest, and its vastness thus implied her power. Here on the other hand Spenser suggests that Belphoebe becomes lost and confused in her absorption with the bird's movements, so that the "forrest wide" becomes an unknown and potentially threatening place. It assumes its more usual connotations of submergence and confusion; the wording here recalls in fact the Wandering Wood in Book I, where

all within were pathes and alleies wide,  
With footing worne, and leading inward farre.

(1.1.7.7)

Belphoebe's exemplary perfection was suggested at her first appearance by her iconic stillness; here the quality of her movement suggests her human vulnerability, her involvement in time and process.<sup>43</sup> If the bird has come to be associated with an element in Belphoebe's own spirit, its flight and her pursuit suggest an impulse which is not entirely under her control. For the first time Belphoebe is hunting a creature which it would be pointless to kill. Whatever Timias may suffer, it is Belphoebe's need, not his, which leads to their reconciliation. The process subtly renders the interplay of emotions which bound Elizabeth to her courtiers in a kind of mutual interdependence.

Yet it is right that when Belphoebe finally comes upon Timias,

she does not know him, and is motivated, as she was at the beginning of their relationship, by impersonal compassion. Timias is deformed by a merely human need which Belpheobe cannot recognize because she does not experience it. She offers him some sententious advice to the lover: if it is ironical that her words condemn the "cruel wight" (4.8.14.8) who has brought him to this pass, it is not an irony which in the end tells very strongly against Belpheobe; there is no hint whatsoever in her behaviour or in the narrator's words that any blame can be attached to her for the grief she has caused him. Belpheobe at the end of this episode is the same queenly creature with the same absolute control over the fate of her courtiers that she has always been. On the surface, indeed; she has never been anything else. It is only allegorically that Spenser has been able to suggest that if her courtiers are bound to her, Elizabeth is equally bound to them, in a curiously mutual relationship at once romantic and pragmatic.

The actual reconciliation, the reversal when Belpheobe takes Timias again into her favour, is given a cursory treatment. There are clearly very practical reasons for this: Spenser cannot be too circumstantial about reconciliation which has not yet taken place. But the reticence is also artistically right. In the narrative of the turtle dove Spenser has said all he needs to say about the process of attraction and forgiveness, and it is the process as much as the outcome which for poetic purposes he is really interested in. His analysis of Elizabeth's distance from and yet involvement with the men who depend upon her favour has its value for us not primarily as an elucidation of the historical

situation but as an allegory of a certain kind of erotic response, a response in which pride and control are modulated by need and surrender. The episode is the final instalment of the story of Belphoebe and a wonderfully subtle contribution to the Book of Friendship.

CHAPTER III

Britomart in Book III:

Magic and Metaphor.

In his analysis of Britomart's contribution to Book V, T. K. Dunseath attempts to establish that all of her failures are failures of vision. He argues, to begin with, that "the test presented to Britomart in the Castle Joyous is a test of true vision. It certainly is not a test of her chastity, except perhaps indirectly, since the very nature of the two encounters eliminates it as a major factor."<sup>1</sup> While I agree with Dunseath that "vision" is of primary importance in understanding Britomart's nature, I cannot agree that a quality which is so central to her story as it unfolds has nothing to do with the virtue which she represents. "Chastity" must be understood as that quality which emerges from the episodes which Spenser creates for her; to accept a definition of the virtue which excludes important aspects of Britomart's actual career is to blind oneself to the intelligence and complexity of Spenser's allegorical method. Since perception is in fact of central importance in Britomart's story, the chastity which she embodies must have something to do with the quality of her perception. Starting from the premise that Spenser's allegory is both subtle and coherent, I propose, by examining the relationship between them, to suggest a definition of the virtue which enables Britomart to defeat Busirane at the climax of the third book.

The structure of Book III is intrinsic to its meaning. Giamatti has commented on the looser Ariostan structure of the third and fourth books by suggesting that their episodic variety reflects the variety in the relationships with which they deal.<sup>2</sup> Certainly their interwoven patterns of encounter and retreat are suggestive analogues of erotic experience and thus a useful means for considering the virtues of chastity



and friendship. Such patterns suggest that the meaning of the third and fourth books may depend less on the scheme of the argument than on the rhythm of the narrative. Book III in particular draws much of its meaning from the alternation of movement and stasis, not only in the main story lines but in the "narrative inserts" like the tales of Venus and Adonis in Canto 1 and of Narcissus in Canto 2.

The rhythm arises from our sense of the canto as a unit of meaning, and from our impression of its completion or open-endedness-- from the reader's "sense of an ending". The paradigm for the kind of effect to which I am referring--a paradigm useful because of its very exaggeration--is the treatment of Belphoebe in Book II, the way Spenser emphasizes the exemplary status of her virginity by "freezing" her visually, the tension between the ongoing process of the narrative and the sense of exemplary stillness associated with her.

This kind of tension is found throughout Spenser, for it is a manifestation of the conflict between time and eternity, mutability and permanence, which is one of his central concerns. In the Epithalamion the contrast between the overall "processional" pace of the poem and the stopping of the action at significant points underlines his vision of Christian marriage as the penetration of time by eternity (I shall return to this pattern in more detail later in this chapter). The envoi epitomizes these themes but also turns back against the generous rhythms of the poem's development with its sudden meditation on the brevity of that timebound happiness which has just been celebrated. Spenser often uses this kind of ending: the poet's envoi at the end of

The Shepheardes Calender records his triumph over the time whose ravages the calendar has lamented. The Mutabilitie Cantos form an analogous conclusion to The Faerie Queene, and in fact the two final "sabbath" stanzas of canto 8 have a similar relationship to the drama of Mutabilitie's trial in canto 7. An examination of Spenser's work as a whole confirms the centrality of the theme and illustrates its pressure on formal structure, especially of his shorter poems.

In The Faerie Queene, the tension is reflected formally in the contrast between the ongoing 'labyrinthine' impetus of rhyme and enjambement and the static 'templar' Spenserian stanza with its final Alexandrine. Angus Fletcher has used this aspect of Spenser's poem as a fruitful analogy of its meaning; Bartlett Giamatti, in a more modest analysis, has pointed out that the stanza has a special effect on the imagery.<sup>3</sup> He points out the Spenserian feeling in one of the most striking images from Hawes' Pastime of Pleasure, the vision of Lady Fame and her greyhounds:

I sawe come rydyng/ in a valaye ferre  
 A goodly lady/ enuyronned aboute  
 With tongues of fyre/ as bryght as ony sterre  
 That fyry flambles/ ensensed alwaye out  
 Which I behelde/ and was in grete doubt  
 Her palfraye swyfte/ rennyng as the wynde  
 With two whyte grehoundes that were not behynde.

Giamatti comments: "That is quite good: a luminous picture of a lady who is at once very close yet far away, a static, self-contained image of great movement". He goes on to compare this "frozen, formal vision of horse, lady and dogs" to the opening stanza of Book I where we are given the dual impression of a static emblem and an action in progress.

The comparison is a fine one and the observation an accurate generalization about the special quality of the Spenserian stanza. There is another image in The Faerie Queene, however, which comes more readily to mind in relation to Hawes' image, and that is the first appearance of Florimell in Book III:

All suddenly out of the thickest brush,  
 Vpon a milk-white Palfrey all alone,  
 A goodly Ladie did foreby them rush,  
 Whose face did seeme as cleare as Christall stone,  
 And eke through feare as white as whales bone:  
 Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold,  
 And all her steed with tinsell trappings shone,  
 Which fled so fast, that nothing mote him hold,  
 And scarce them leasure gaue, her passing to behold.

(3.1.15)

Here we have a sharpening of the antitheses, an impression at the same time of stasis and of violent movement, of fiery brilliance and of Botticellian linearity, which is also characteristic of Hawes' Fame and of Spenser's Belphoebe. The very fact that the figure is a woman seems to affect the poet's treatment of her, to intensify its polarities so that image becomes revelation, so that the reader becomes subliminally aware not only of the figure seen but of the special illuminating power of the process of seeing, the power to fuse opposites into luminous unity.<sup>4</sup>

It is this sense of the power of the eye which gives a unique quality to the tension between stasis and movement in relation to the "chastity" figures in The Faerie Queene. It is probably the association of Belphoebe with Diana which creates the special sensibility associated with her, the feeling that to look at her incorrectly is to desecrate her purity. The "Actaeon effect", as it might be called, is activated

by other figures as well, figures like Britomart, who stands explicitly for chastity, or even Tristram, who as a young hunter exhibits a certain Belphebean refinement and nobility. The effect I am interested in is not, I think, the mere result of crossing allegory with romance. There are indeed many places in The Faerie Queene where the narrative is halted so that we may contemplate an allegorical figure. At the first appearance of Arthur, the image of Despair, the unveiling of Duessa, for example, Spenser takes several stanzas to record physical appearance in iconographic detail. What interests me about the "chastity" figures, however, is that they have an emblematic aura without much iconographic content; that the woman herself becomes an icon before our very eyes; her "natural" appearance raised to a "supernatural" meaningfulness in a very direct way, without the intervention of conceptual decoding which many allegorical figures require of the reader. At such moments the narrative often places a special emphasis on the act of seeing itself: the image may be described, for example, in terms of the way it looks to other characters within the poem, so that we register its visual intensity. The rhythms of Book III are established in part by such "unveilings" which stop the action and turn back against it in a kind of emblematic commentary. The virtue of chastity comes to be defined by polarities of sight and blindness, motion and stasis, constraint and release in a uniquely complex way, so that Britomart emerges as one of the most problematical and yet satisfying figures in The Faerie Queene. She will form the focus of the following analysis, for the patterning of the cantos which record her story illustrates the point I wish to make about the relationship of rhythm to meaning in the book as a whole.

Recognition is central in Britomart's story, recognition of the identity of other people as well as of her own needs and impulses. Although other characters in The Faerie Queene have to deal with warnings and prophecies, Britomart's education proceeds through a series of "showings" which is unexampled in the poem: her vision of Artegall in Merlin's globe and the climactic ordeal in Isis Church are the focal points of her quest; in addition, both the opening and the closing episodes of Book III, Britomart's testing in the House of Malecasta and her triumph in the House of Busirane, are introduced by visual emblems which Britomart is apparently expected to "read". What she sees and how she is seen are always important. The significance of perception and of recognition in her development towards maturity is signalled from the beginning by the fact that Britomart is in disguise.

The motif of a woman disguised as a man serves several purposes for the writer of romance. Disguise allows the woman a certain freedom which would conventionally be denied her, the freedom to travel, to fight, to mingle with men in their world and on their terms, while depriving her of the privileges and protections customarily extended to her sex. The poet can take advantage of the potential for comic or

tragic irony implicit in such a situation. Tasso, for example, has Tancred actually kill his beloved Clorinda in battle; the frisson of sexual excitement generated by this somewhat melodramatic handling of the idea is more violent than, for example, the tender heroism of the Parthenia incident in Sidney's Arcadia, but both exploit the possibility of pathos in having the woman destroyed by her own audacious gallantry of spirit. The heroine's femininity is emphasized, not repressed, by disguise, for while she gains a man's freedom to act, she retains a woman's capacity to feel; the result is a painful situation in which her suffering is exacerbated by its secrecy and her fidelity tested by her isolation. Ariosto and Sidney externalize the suffering in action; in Shakespeare's comedies its implications are explored as well in witty dialogue. Disguise intensifies the feminine burden of self-conscious awareness; if it is the man's role to act and the woman's to meditate upon the implications of action, the fact that her identity is unknown involves the heroine even more fully in her sexual role. Since she is the only one who understands the whole situation, she is immersed more deeply in its complications but gains at the same time a unique power to orchestrate emotions and events. The disguise motif always involves erotic frustration, a heightened sense of the isolation of the self and of the impossibility of ever being fully known by the beloved; even when the costume is doffed at the end of the story, we are left feeling how separate are the two people who are to be united in love, left, therefore, with deeper awareness of the goal of sexual love, which is to unite opposites. Disguise evokes a sensibility which is the very

opposite of homosexual; it is the difference between the lovers which the act of love attempts to bridge, and it is the sense of the difficulty of this bridging with which we are left, a sense which deepens the poignancy of the perennial attempt.

Spenser in his portrait of Britomart works both in and against these conventions. Britomart, unlike, for example, Shakespeare's Rosalind, is strikingly unselfconscious, seemingly unaware of the complexities into which her disguise may precipitate her. It is as if, having adopted the armour of a man as a means of simplifying her life in one direction, she is not prepared to think about the ways it may complicate things in other directions. There is something opportunistic in her stubborn refusal to commit herself to the burden of wholeness; she takes advantage of a device which enables her to move from one sexual identity to another, whichever is easier at the moment. Her assumption of a male role expresses her forthrightness, directness and single-mindedness, and she seems to project these qualities onto everyone she meets, refusing to see in them a deviousness which is foreign to her own nature. The disguise is a means of making her in her own mind not more but less complex, as though she could shove aside paralyzing complexities of feeling as easily as she abandons feminine clothing. While Shakespeare's Rosalind delights in the ironic double perspective which her disguise makes possible for her, Britomart insists on remaining single-minded while leading a double life. The result is an impression of integrity borne of repression--repression, however, not of desire but of perception. Chastity is usually represented as control of one's instincts, but Britomart, far from suppressing hers, tends to act rather

violently in accordance with them. Her chastity thus becomes associated with vital energy but also with a kind of blind innocence, a will not to see or respond to certain kinds of things but also the impulse to act decisively in response to what she does perceive. Her reactions first to Guyon and then to Florimell form an emphatic introduction to patterns of behaviour which will be echoed in one form or another throughout her career.

Britomart involves herself violently with Guyon and refuses to involve herself with Florimell; the two responses introduce us to her irascibility and to her blindness--both, in different ways, forms of the instinct to reject which characterizes Britomart early in her story and which she must eventually overcome. The attack on Guyon, makes allegorical sense (Chastity, with its magic lance of grace, is mightier than mere Temperance),<sup>5</sup> but at the same time its gratuitousness on the literal level creates an emphatic first impression of Britomart's nature. A recurrent pattern is adumbrated here, a pattern of violent resistance to men, which will acquire meaning as its instances recur, in the Marinell episode, for example, and eventually with Artegall himself.<sup>6</sup> Britomart's reaction to Florimell is equally interesting, however, and Spenser's handling of it is what I want to emphasize at this time, particularly his use of the narrator's commentary to blur the issue and call attention to the difficulty of perception and self-knowledge.

Spenser makes Florimell a paradigm of the Damsel in Distress as she flees from the would-be rapist, face white with fear and hair streaming behind her like an ominous comet. I have mentioned the especially intense visual quality of this stanza. It is possibly significant



that Florimell is presented with this kind of sharpness and brilliance in an episode which will center on Britomart and her perceptions. Florimell's appeal seems to be a visual stimulus which evokes from the men who see her an almost reflex reaction; she is in fact the creation of the male imagination, a stylized icon of vulnerable beauty, which galvanizes Britomart's male companions into instant action, but has no effect on Britomart. The narrator takes a separate stanza to explain why:

The whiles faire Britomart, whose constant mind,  
 Would not so lightly follow beauties chace,  
 Ne reekt of Ladies Loue, did stay behind,  
 And them awayted there a certaine space,  
 To weet if they would turne backe to that place:  
 But when she saw them gone, she forward went,  
 As lay her iourney, through that perlous Place,  
 With stedfast courage and stout hardiment;  
 Ne euill thing she fear'd, ne euill thing she ment.

(3.1.19)

By evidently praising Britomart for her "constant mind" which "would not so lightly follow beauties chace", the narrator himself seems to be deceived by Britomart's disguise, for his assumption that her withdrawal indicates self-control makes no sense at all unless she is in fact the man she seems to be. Although it is in the narrator's words, the stanza suggests that possibly Britomart herself feels a smug satisfaction in the steadfastness of her "constant mind", a certain girlish condescension for male histrionics. Cheney, attributing Britomart's refusal to follow Florimell to the "homely fact that she is a woman and hence unmoved by female beauty",<sup>7</sup> observes that "Criteria of psychological realism become dominant at this point in The Faerie Queene". But the narrator's comment, implying as it does a touch of self-satisfaction in Britomart

herself, complicates the situation, so that this commonsense perception does not seem quite adequate to explain her abstention from the chase.

The lack of logic in the narrator's praise suggests that Britomart's response involves them both in a kind of failure of perception, an egocentricity which prevents her from assessing the situation in any terms except those which are immediately relevant to her. She is praised for not feeling masculine lust when common sense suggests she should be condemned for not feeling feminine sympathy. She fails to identify with Florimell because her disguise seems to make her forget her own potential vulnerability. Her response, then, is neither masculine nor feminine but less than either; enclosed within herself, she can reach out to others neither with masculine chivalry nor with feminine empathy. Since the stanza marks the transition to the Malecasta episode, its final line ("Ne euill thing she feared, ne euill thing she ment") seems to point both backwards and forwards. The relationship between the two clauses is implicitly causal: Britomart fails to understand evil because she means none; she projects her own simplicity and singleness on those around her. The statement leads to the episode in the Castle Joyous, where it is precisely because she is unable to understand "Ladies Loue" that she is wounded by Gardante. The phrase "Ladies Loue", with its double reference to Florimell and to Malecasta, is in retrospect ambiguous; seeming at first to mean "the love which ladies inspire", it comes to mean also "the love which ladies feel", and Britomart's failure to understand the emotions which Florimell evokes in men is echoed in her failure to understand the emotions which she herself will evoke in Malecasta.

And yet we register the narrator's approving tone and do not entirely discount it. Britomart does have a "constant mind" and it is in the end the source of her strength, though the exact nature of her constancy will not be understood except in the context of Book III as a whole. By the end of the book she is able to offer to a damsel in distress something like the kind of help she here fails to offer Florimell, and there is a sense in which her very refusal to be involved at this point illustrates qualities which Britomart will need against Busirane. The "stedfast courage and stout hardiment" which are linked with her refusal to chase after Florimell have much to do with her ability to cut through Busirane's magic web later on. There are verbal echoes which link the two episodes: "But when she saw them gone, she forward went", "Ne euill thing she fear'd, ne euill thing she ment" from canto 1 are recalled in a key line from canto 2, "But forward with bold steps into the next roome went" (3.11.50.9). The narrator's ingenuous commentary blurs the distinction between laudable self-control and cool disengagement; absurdly we attribute to her naive single-mindedness the gallant constancy which he praises and associate this constancy with the very blindness which lets her experience her <sup>un</sup> involvement as a virtue. Britomart's refusal to "see" the tableau to which the men instinctively respond is analogous to her refusal to "see" the figures in the Masque of Cupid as substantial realities; her point of view both blinds her and makes her invulnerable.

The question of identification is important. Britomart seems to have little sympathy with Florimell's plight because she fails to see in Florimell any reflection of what could happen to her. On the other hand,

when she sees Redcrosse attempting to fight off six of Malecasta's knights, she rushes immediately to his aid, ready to sympathize with a figure whom she can identify as the Questing Lover. Britomart's readiness to expound upon the claims of true love in sententious Chaucerian language suggests that she sees in Redcrosse a reflection of her own quest. She of course knows far less than we about the identity of the man she helps; in her eyes he is not the knight of holiness at all, but a lover pursuing his "Errant Damzell". The phrase, with its connotations of coyness and flight, seems scarcely applicable to the Una we know and suggests a tendency towards sentimentality which will get Britomart into trouble in the incident which follows.

The episode with Malecasta is a parable about the failure of perception. All the characters are presented repeatedly with images which must be interpreted correctly, and the comedy of errors which results from their failure implies something about the nature and force of erotic delusion. It is significant that Britomart enters the castle without knowing anyone's name. Malecasta has been identified by her henchman simply as "a Ladie faire" (3.1.26.2); we are told that one of them "cleeped was the Lady of delight" (3.1.31.9); but it is not until two stanzas before Malecasta starts to move towards Britomart's bedchamber

that the reader first hears her ominous name (3.1.57.4). Nor are the six knights identified until well on in the episode; they take off their armour and stand revealed as Gardante, Parlante, Iocante, Basciante, Noctante, and Bacchante only at stanza 45, when Britomart and Redcrosse are already deeply involved in Malecasta's hospitality, and they remain "but shadowes" to Britomart because they correspond to no impulse within herself which she is able to recognize. It is impossible for her at this time to use the outside world as anything but a mirror of her own psyche; thus she is doomed to ignore the warning of their names and to misread Malecasta.

It is clear from the start that the castle is a place of misrule; Britomart should know that from the very "law" to which she has so spiritedly objected (3.1.26.6). Yet she seems to perceive nothing, taking the "sumptuous aray", the "royal riches and exceeding cost" (3.1.32.1,4) as impressive examples of conspicuous consumption rather than as moral emblems.<sup>8</sup> The narrator comments rather explicitly about the response of Britomart and her companion to the "inner rowme" which is decorated in a manner befitting a prince's palace:

Which stately manner when as they did see,  
The image of superfluous riotize,  
Exceeding much the state of meane degree,  
They greatly wondred, whence so sumptous guise  
Might be maintaynd, and each gan diuersely deuize.

(3.1.33.5)

The word "image" tells us that we are to "read" the luxury as an emblem of excess and incontinence, but of course Britomart and Redcrosse do not hear, as we do, the moralizing commentary of the narrator. Britomart's failure to react to these clues, a failure which is emphasized by the

narrator's phrasing, is followed by her apparent obliviousness to the message of the tapestry depicting the myth of Venus and Adonis.

The tapestry seems significant yet its message remains ambiguous. We have already been told that Britomart is on a quest presided over by Venus, for it is in "Venus looking glas" that she had glimpsed the man whom it is her destiny to follow (3.1.8.9). But her allegiance to Venus has its limits, and in the Castle Joyous Britomart will be exposed to an aspect of venerean influence with which she is not to become involved but which she must be forced to recognize. The story of Venus and Adonis has an obvious bearing on what goes on in Malecasta's castle, but the relationship is not a simple one and its message seems to be more than crudely admonitory.

The tale told in the tapestry could be interpreted as emphasizing the death-oriented power of female sexual aggression, as suggesting in a few stanzas the kinds of tension which Shakespeare develops in much more detail. Venus is an anomalous figure: herself a victim, she is at the same time a dangerous seductress who, driven by the fury of her own compulsion, weaves a net of sensual enchantment over the "heedlesse hearte" (3.1.37.1) of the boy who is her victim. Like Malecasta, who

did faire Britomart entreat,  
Her to disarm, and with delightfull sport  
To loose her warlike limbs and strong effort,

(3.1.52.3)

Venus tries to woo her beloved away from the hard life of the hunt with the offer of sweet sensual delights and to seduce him into sleep. Spenser associates Malecasta with Venus by his emphasis on the lust of the eye. Venus is enchanted simply by watching Adonis:

And whilest he bath'd, with her two crafty spyes,  
She secretly would search each daintie lim.

(3.1.36.4)

Five stanzas later, Malecasta is described as

a woman of great bountihed,  
And of rare beautie, sauing that askaunce  
Her wanton eyes, ill signes of womanhed,  
Did roll too lightly, and too often glauce,  
Without regard of grace, or comely amenaunce.

(3.1.41.5)

Later it is "her false eyes" (3.1.50.7) which send out the message which Britomart fails to receive.

Yet the parallel between Venus and Malecasta is not a simple equation. What goes on in the Castle Joyous is a vulgar parody of the tragic passion of the story of Venus. It is not Venus but her son Cupid who reigns in Malecasta's house; its inhabitants, "Dauncing and reueling both day and night/ And swimming deepe in sensuall desires" (3.1.39.7), lack Venus' mythic dignity and intensity.<sup>9</sup> Venus allures her beloved with "girlonds of each flowre that grew" (3.1.35.4), sweetens his bath water with "Sweet Rosemaryes,/ And fragrant violets, and Pances trim" (3.1.36.7) and spreads over his sleeping form "Her mantle, colour'd like the starry skyes" (3.1.36.2): the imagery has a beauty and cosmic scope quite lacking in the machinations of Malecasta, who seduces with food and wine and "spicerie", not flowers, and who moves towards her victim with "scarlot mantle couered" and "vnder the blacke vele of guilty Night" (3.1.59.8). Alpers emphasizes the "lovely and attractive context" of the picture in his assimilation of this Venus to the pastoral mode.<sup>10</sup> Venus' story has a country setting, Malecasta's an oppressively opulent court one; the words "curteous" (3.1.42.3) and "courtly" (3.1.56.9)

emphasize the vulnerability of Britomart who is unduly impressed by the social atmosphere and does not want to seem to behave "in discourteise wise" (3.1.55.1). The activity in Malecasta's house is in fact a social parody of the process delineated in the tapestries. The myth itself has a wider range of meaning: its subject, indeed, is the "death in the heart of love," but the emphasis can be placed either on death or on perpetual rebirth (as in the Garden of Adonis later in the book). The tapestry presents the essential archetype, an archetype which can be vulgarized, as it is by Malecasta, or exalted by its assimilation to metaphysical speculation. Britomart's immediate peril encourages the reader to search the tapestry for a local warning, but the myth of Venus and Adonis has meanings which will not fully emerge except in the context of Britomart's story as a whole--wider questions of surrender and submission in love, of the risk of the death of the self, of the relationship of sexual love to time and mutability. Britomart is oblivious not only to the immediate threat from Malecasta but to all the complexities of adult love which will unfold as the story progresses. In fact, it seems to be her unwillingness to perceive these complexities which makes her unaware of Malecasta's designs upon her.

Yet although the reader himself may not be able to grasp the full meaning of the tapestries at this point in the book, he is likely to register Britomart's obliviousness to them as culpable ignorance. Allegory, by exerting a constant interpretive pressure on the reader, encourages him to condemn the character's failure to "read" evidence as he himself must do. The conventions of allegory suggest, of course, that life itself is an allegory which the righteous person must contin-



ually read correctly. Yet the reader inevitably has a fuller text than the characters, for his includes not only the evidence available to them but the actions which they take in response to it. Britomart's mistake will be part of the meaning of the canto as a whole; we direct our interpretive attention to the whole which is "going to have been understood", and our whole is more complete than Britomart's. Allegory, then, enables the poet to depict characters who seem to be constantly guilty in their innocence, guilty because of their innocence. Spenser can simply describe the tapestries and the allegorical courtiers in the confidence that we will both catch their sinister aura and condemn Britomart for failing to have done so; he can allow his narrator to praise Britomart without qualification for her innocence, knowing that the reader will censure her as he perceives its dangers. This strategy is particularly powerful in dealing with a virtue like chastity where repression is both potency and vulnerability.

Britomart's problem again seems to be one of identification, a question of whom she could have seen as mirroring her own situation. If Malecasta is Venus, it is Britomart who is the sacrificed Adonis; and in the end, the independent boy in her must indeed be slain and transformed by the mother-goddess before she is ready for union with Artegall (in the Isis Church episode). To understand her danger, Britomart would have to have seen this, and to have identified with the male victim in the story. But she is not ready for this kind of perception. Instead, forgetting her disguise and with it her male "identity", she identifies too readily with Malecasta's feminine lovesickness. Britomart blunders through innocence and generosity. She cannot recognize deceit because

she herself is not deceitful; she cannot recognize lust because she has never felt it; she is too ready to perceive lovesickness in others because she herself is lovesick. But her reaction also shows a kind of hubris: she naively identifies with a sophisticated courtesan, with the powerful Venus type rather than with the vulnerable Adonis, and then attributes to Malecasta the sincerity and integrity she assumes in herself. There is a certain degree of innocent conceit in the fact that, although the reader sees them as opposites, Britomart sees Malecasta as a mirror-image of herself.

Colours are important in making the distinction for the reader. Malecasta is first described in stanza 41 where the colour associated with her is gold; she is sitting "on a sumptuous bed,/ That glistered all with gold and glorious shew,/ As the proud Persian Queenes accustomed" (3.1.41.2). Two stanzas later, Britomart, raising her vizor, reveals a face shining with silver light, "As when faire Cynthia, ~~in~~ darkest night . . . Breakes forth her siluer beames" to comfort the lost traveller (3.1.43.1,4). Britomart's beauty shines with a cool silver fire that guides, Malecasta burns with a tormenting flame which deceives (3.1.47.6, 3.1.50.2). When all are asleep, Malecasta moves towards Britomart wearing a scarlet cloak; Britomart as she leaps out of bed is discovered in her "snow-white smocke" (3.1.63.7) which, however, is spotted in the ensuing skirmish with "staines of vermeil" (3.1.65.9). Like other motifs in the Malecasta episode, the colours of gold and silver, red and white come up again in Book V at Isis Church. In the present context they designate Malecasta as inimical to whatever Britomart represents, and turn both the women into emblematic figures.

Chastity, it seems, involves seeing objectively. Whereas the reader is instructed to read Malecasta as an emblem, Britomart insists on perceiving her as a "character" and in projecting onto her the impulses which originate within her own breast. Britomart, an emblem to us, is not one to herself; since she cannot see herself, she cannot see the pattern of meaning of which she, as a visual phenomenon, plays a part. Chastity involves self-consciousness, a heightened sense of one's own identity and of the otherness of others; a sense, too, of how one looks to others. There is some explicit suggestion that Britomart's innocence is wilful and culpable blindness. With her lustful glances Malecasta sends Britomart as plain a sexual message as she can, but Britomart "dissembled it with ignorance" (3.1.50.9), "would not such a guilfull message know" (3.1.51.9); the italicized words are ambiguous and suggest deliberate self-deceit.

Her ignorance of her own attractiveness can be read as modesty; yet she is also judged by the episode which implies that Malecasta's lust and Britomart's sentimentality are two sides of the same coin.<sup>12</sup> The two women make the same error; each is able to see in the other only the characteristics which she herself has projected. Lust is blindness: Malecasta can so easily mistake Britomart for a man because her passion is self-generated, its object arbitrary, the projection of her own "flit fancy" (3.1.56.1) which fastens on any object which can serve as its focus. Her lust is a demonic parody of Britomart's sentimental misreading. Britomart, like a child, innocently assumes that the outside world reflects her inner world; one of the things she learns from her encounter with Malecasta is the danger of blurring the line of demarcation.

The function of the Malecasta episode is not only to test but to define; it is a rite de passage from which Britomart emerges with a ritual wound, the spot of blood which stains her white smock as the awareness of adult sexuality has marked her spirit. For refusing to recognize lust in a woman, Britomart is stained with Malecasta's colours and thus, evidently, with her guilt; for naively assuming that as women they share only innocent emotions, Britomart is marked with the sign of the taint that they have in common, the sexuality which lies at the heart of self-indulgent romanticizing. The staining is richly suggestive. It marks some kind of passage from innocence to experience; it is an initiation into the way of the world and into certain aspects of the female psyche which Britomart would prefer to ignore. The shock of the onset of menstruation comes to mind, with its sudden awakening to the pain and complexities of adulthood and to the bond which links all women whether they like it or not; some kind of reluctant communal involvement and loss of individuality seems to be signified, some kind of shared vulnerability. It is an initiation also into communal conventions of sentiment, socially-tested ways of rationalizing and disguising the passions. Britomart is in fact wounded by one of those courtly-love abstractions which she had refused to recognize as anything but "shadows" during the preceding evening. What happens to her in the opening episode is directly connected with her success in the closing canto. She has learned that reflections are unreliable and that shadows can draw blood, essential information for a knight on an erotic quest. Later, sensing their power and at the same time their unreality, she will be able to disperse the phantasms of Cupid's Masque and free Amoret from an

enchantment of the mind, the psychic spell in which she is caught.

The way in which the Malecasta episode moves towards its dramatic conclusion echoes the rhythm of the story of Venus and Adonis. Both narratives gather speed and then culminate in a static visual image which seems to bring their meaning into sudden focus. Spenser outlines the myth of Venus and Adonis with a strong sense of its ending--an ending foreseen from the beginning, for the narrator introduces the subject of the tapestry as the story of "faire Adonis, turned to a flowre" (3.1.34.5). His account begins as a description of a picture, with simple past tenses suggesting the images over which the viewer's eye moves in sequence. ("First did it shew", 3.1.34.7, "Then . . . she/ Entyst the Boy . . . And wooed him," 3.1.35.1.) By the second stanza, however, the verb tenses have changed to suggest not a series of individual static images but a continuous process ("him to sleepe she gently would perswade", 3.1.35.8, "she ouer him would spred/ Her mantle," 3.1.36.1); the description recreates the experience not of looking at a picture but of remembering a well-known story. The last stanza, however, imitates the finality of Adonis' death with its sudden transition to the present tense, which brings the tapestry-image back into focus again:

Lo, where beyond he lyeth languishing,  
 Deadly engored of a great wild Bore,  
 And by his side the Goddesse groueling  
 Makes for him endless mone, and euermore  
 With her soft garment wipes away the gore,  
 Which staines his snowy skin with hatefull hew.

(3.1.38.1)

Because she is frozen into art, the goddess' moan is "endless" and she will remain wiping her lover's blood away for "euermore": the process

has stopped and we experience Adonis' death as a transmutation into art.

But when she saw no helpe might him restore,  
Him to a daintie flowre she did transmew,  
Which in the cloth was wrought, as if it liuely grew.  
(3.1.38.7)

The finality of the Alexandrine emphasizes the finality of the metamorphoses--of Adonis into a flower, and of the living flower into a static image in a tapestry (for the phrase "as if it liuely grew" emphasizes the fact that the flower is not alive, that the experience which the myth records is ages old and has been told countless times in various media). Spenser's supple variation in verb tense imitates the very process of myth-making and points to the moment when narrative freezes into emblem, experience into meaning.

The account of Malecasta's attempted seduction of Britomart repeats on a large scale this transition from rapid movement to sudden stillness. Especially at the end, as Malecasta moves towards Britomart's room, the narrative quickens and acquires a certain dramatic immediacy. The reader becomes involved first with the emotions and sensations of the would-be seducer as she listens for the sound of Britomart's breathing, touches her gently to see "if any member mooued" (3.1.60.7), slips under the covers, "Of euery finest fingers touch affrayd", (3.1.61.5); then with the reaction of Britomart who, shifting in her sleep and "feeling one close couched by her side" (3.1.62.1), leaps out of bed to defend herself. For at least nine stanzas we are contained within the consciousness of the two women, but as Malecasta shrieks and the rest of her household converge upon the room, the viewpoint suddenly shifts, and we see the pair through their eyes, frozen in an enigmatic but

significant tableau:

Where they confusedly they came, they found  
 Their Lady lying on the senseless ground;  
 On th'other side, they saw the warlike Mayd  
 All in her snow-white smocke, with locks vnbownd,  
 Threatning the point of her auenging blade.

(3.1.63.5)

For a moment the action is suspended as the group pause astounded to take in what to them is an inexplicable sight. The stanza's final Alexandrine emphasizes their response: "That with so troublous terrour they were all dismayde" (3.1.43.9). As in the story of Venus and Adonis, narrative freezes into image: both episodes conclude with one figure lying unconscious on the ground, the other galvanized with violent emotion. But while Adonis has been reduced to preconscious insensibility, Britomart has been awakened to a new awareness, and stands, all energy and potential, at the beginning of her story. Here, marked though she is about to be with Adonis' colours (Spenser had described "the gore, / Which staines his snowy skin with hatefull hew," 3.1.38.5), she has comically avoided his fate. Like her prototype, she has been compared to a flower--to the rose whose thorns, however, protect it by discouraging the amorous wooer (3.1.46.6). The ending of the canto, by translating that conventional simile into an image vitalized by the preceding narrative, brings the paradox to life: the image of Britomart, at once a young virgin "in her snow-white smocke, with lockes vnbownd" and an angry warrior brandishing "her auenging blade", makes explicit and endorses the doubleness of her nature.

The way Spenser frames the visual experience gives it emblematic weight, encourages us to attribute an iconic intensity of meaning to

the static tableau. In my treatment of Belphoebe I discussed in some detail the process by which the reader was forcibly detached from Timias' point of view and converted into perceiving the chaste woman as an emblem. The process here is somewhat similar: in both cases the point of view shifts from that of the love-victim to that of the objective reader, who must move beyond mere empathy to a moral reading of the figures in the narrative. In both cases, too, there is a shift from the tactile to the visual: because we become absorbed by the sensations of the two women as Malecasta gropes in the dark, we have the illusion of a sudden burst of light as we are forced to draw back and observe the scene more objectively, from the visual viewpoint of the dumbfounded observers. Because we see Britomart so clearly as an emblem, she becomes associated with clarity and high definition; because she cannot see herself as we see her, she retains, even in her new awareness, a certain blind innocence. The discrepancy between what the character knows and what the reader knows about the character's allegorical identity is exploited in Book III to create a visual image through which Spenser defines the virtue of chastity. Britomart's very ignorance becomes an aspect of her virtue; it suggests the instinctive almost visceral nature of her resistance to whatever threatens her integrity.



In my discussion of the Malecasta episode, I have referred to Britomart's assumption that Malecasta "mirrors" her own emotions: the metaphor is mine, not Spenser's. But the image has already occurred before we meet Malecasta, in the brief and enigmatic reference to "Venus looking glas," (3.1.8.9) and it will become a controlling image in the second canto where the central question is the correspondence between Britomart's vision and the real world. The issue finds its most explicit expression near the end of the canto, where Britomart discusses with her nurse her chances of ultimate happiness in love. Glauce has attempted to cheer her charge with the thought that her love is not bestial or incestuous; Britomart has retorted that at least such base desires are capable of fulfilment. She continues:

But wicked fortune mine, though mind be good,  
 Can haue no end, nor hope of my desire,  
 But feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food,  
 And like a shadow wexe, whiles with entire  
 Affection, I doe languish and expire.

(3.2.44.1)

The metaphor of the shadow has occurred in the Malecasta episode; it will receive further discussion in a moment. Britomart goes on to compare herself with Narcissus:

I fonder, then Cephisus foolish child,  
 Who hauing vewed in a fountaine shere  
 His face, was with the loue therof beguild;  
 I fonder loue a shade, the bodie farre exild.

(3.2.44.1)

Glauce, however, objects to the comparison:

Nought like (quoth she) for that same wretched boy  
 Was of himselfe the idle Paramoure;  
 Both loue and louer, without hope of ioy,  
 For which he faded to watry flowre.

(3.2.45.1)

Glauce's reference to the metamorphosis of Narcissus recalls Adonis from Canto 1, also "turned to a flowre" (3.1.34.5); Britomart too is repeatedly referred to as a flower or tree, but one which is destined to grow and flourish (3.2.31.6-9, 3.3.22). Glauce emphasizes the contrast between Britomart and Narcissus:

But better fortune thine, and better howre,  
Which lou'st the shadow of a warlike knight;  
No shadow, but a bodie hath in powre:  
That bodie, wheresoeuer that it light,  
May learned be by cyphers, or by Magicke might.

(3.2.45.5)

Her words point forward to the third canto, where she and her charge consult the "Magicke might" of Merlin to learn more about the man whom Britomart has seen.

The temptation towards narcissism is central in the third book. In depicting Britomart, since her end is marriage although her condition is celibacy, Spenser has the opportunity of suggesting the tension between the dynamic and the destructive aspects of the developing sense of self, an opportunity of emphasizing the importance both of self-containment and of openness to others. Britomart's resistance throughout Book III to the temptation of inward-looking surrender, especially to phantoms of the erotic imagination, is a process which is capable of subtle and various development and which can serve therefore as the dynamic principle of the book as a whole. As she goes out into the world to seek her beloved and at the same time her

public historical role as mother to a line of kings, Britomart has to overcome the private self-indulgence of surrender to self-generated perceptions and emotions. Beginning her story with a flashback enables Spenser both to illustrate the kind of error of perception which might be particularly dangerous to Britomart and yet to imply--illogically but nonetheless persuasively--that she has left it behind her. In Cantos 2 and 3, chronologically prior to the Malecasta episode yet following it in order of narration, Britomart resists the temptation which made her vulnerable to Malecasta, the temptation to respond to another as a projection of herself. Narcissus is the appropriate image to represent the danger inherent in romantic infatuation, in the moment when, apparently turning towards another, the individual may in fact become self-enclosed.<sup>15</sup>

Narcissus' fate suggests a retreat from adolescent development and from the threat of adult sexuality and relationship to others. In love with his own reflection, he exemplifies an infantile stage of emotional growth: his retreat from the advances of Echo is a suicidal regression which leads to a watery death.<sup>16</sup> The Narcissus myth is suggestive in relation to Book III and to Britomart's story as a whole. His death by water stands behind our reaction to Marinell and his protected mother-dominated undersea world. The union of Narcissus and his own watery reflection is an antitype of the creative union of Scudamore and Amoret who melt together into the hermaphroditic image with which the third book concludes. And when in Book IV Britomart challenges Artegall and stands before him as a man, the detail of the episode emphasizes the 'mirroring' of the lovers' movements. The myth as a visual paradigm contributes to the complexity of several important moments in Britomart's

story; it is central to the meaning of Canto 2.

Spenser is explicitly discriminating between Britomart and Narcissus. Britomart is incorrect when in a fit of self-pity she identifies herself with the doomed boy, for her identification is based on the assumption that she, like Narcissus, has fallen in love with a mere shadow. Glauce, whose role in this canto is to supply the earthy commonsense lacking in her lovestruck charge, suggests that the practical course is to find the body that goes with the image. When Britomart looks into Merlin's globe, she is not seeing a mere "shadow" or reflection of herself, but a vision which corresponds to some objective outer reality. Because Merlin's globe is not a mirror but a window, Britomart is not condemned like Narcissus to be "Both loue and louer" (3.2.45.3).<sup>17</sup>

Spenser carefully distinguishes between the globe as mirror and the globe as window. The initial reference to Merlin's globe is a passing and enigmatic one. In Canto 1 the narrator identifies Britomart as a maiden knight on a quest

To seeke her louer (loue farre sought alas,)
 Whose image she had seene in Venus looking glas.

(3.1.8.9)

"Venus looking glas" is ambiguous because it sounds purely metaphorical, a poetic euphemism for "through the eyes of love".<sup>18</sup> It suggests that what she sees is a reflection of herself, a projection of her own yearning. And in fact even in the context of her story as a whole Britomart's vision of Artegall is a kind of allegorical equivalent of an adolescent girl's romantic daydreams. We are reminded of the mirror imagery at the beginning of The Romance of the Rose, where the idealized beloved is presented as the projection of the idealizing impulse of the lover. But

Spenser goes on to make clear that this is not all that the vision represents.

By the time Spenser works back to the subject of Merlin's globe, he has expanded in a number of ways on the idea of true and false reflections, so that we are ready to pick up the careful discrimination between Britomart's first and second glances into the world of glass.<sup>19</sup> The Malecasta episode has made clear the dangers of seeing self-indulgently. And Canto 2 frames the episode of Merlin's mirror by beginning not with Britomart's visit to her father's study (which is presented as a flashback) but with the conversation between Britomart and Redcrosse as they ride away from Malecasta's castle, the dialogue in which Britomart declares Artegall her deadly enemy and receives Redcrosse's reassurance that he is in fact a heroic knight.

Britomart tells her companion that she was trained up from infancy "to tossen speare and shield" and to despise "the fine needle and nyce thread" (3.2.6.4,8), that in fact she positively prefers death at the hands of the foe to the more civilized pleasures of a lady's existence. The sexual ambiguity in the image of dying empaled "With point of foemans speare" (3.2.6.9) reinforces her subsequent declaration that Artegall is her bitter enemy and that she is determined to avenge the "hainous tort" (3.2.12.8) which he has done her. The real conflict in Britomart's mind is the battle of the sexes, her most dangerous foe the lover with whom destiny seems to have united her. Her words suggest a real if unconscious resentment of Artegall, of the depth and suddenness of his power over her. In winning her heart he has also wounded it and

drawn her forth to a life of pain and effort. The intensity with which Britomart presents her contempt for a woman's life suggests perhaps a certain nostalgia for it. Her assertion that she had been brought up a virtual Camilla, trained from infancy to the life of knightly combat, hints at the strain of her assumed vocation (she feels perhaps that she would have had to be brought up this way in order to function as the knight she is pretending to be). Pride in her self-sufficiency seems mingled with a suppressed desire to lapse back into gentle passivity. The hostility she expresses against Artegall is a measure of the very strength of her passion, her sense of the frightening otherness and alienness of its object, and her determination not to be quite overwhelmed by the destiny which has overtaken her. The element of resistance and resentment in sexual submission is important in her eventual union with her lover. Britomart, when stripped of one disguise, instantly adopts another one; like the armour, her pose of furious resentment both masks and expresses her inner feelings. A false reflection of the bare facts of her case, it is nevertheless complementary information about her emotions, and makes a subtle prelude to the account of her first view of him in Merlin's globe.

By using Redcrosse's description of Artegall as a transition into the magic-globe episode, Spenser emphasizes the identity of the image in the globe and the individual known to Redcrosse. In response to her request for "some markes" by which she may recognize her enemy, Redcrosse provides Britomart with a circumstantial description of Artegall. The sixteenth stanza concludes with a statement of this fact: "And him in euery part before her fashioned". The seventeenth begins with an echo: "Yet him in euery part before she knew . . ." and goes on to explain that

she has already seen her lover in "a mirrhour plaine" (3.2.17.4). The verbal correspondence between the last line of the sixteenth stanza and the first line of the seventeenth guarantees the correspondence between the world in which Britomart rides with Redcrosse and the world of glass in which she has glimpsed Artegall. The verbal echo involves a subtle grammatical shift. In the first sentence, "before" is a preposition, meaning "in front of": Redcrosse's description places the image of Artegall "before her"; the phrase conveys the immediacy of this purely mental apparition. In the second sentence, "before" is an adverb meaning "in the past": Britomart knew Artegall before, because she had seen him in her father's globe. The use of the word as two different parts of speech fuses its two senses of "presentness" and "pastness"; the grammatical shift is a rhetorical way of underlining the identity of the visionary and the "real" Artegall, and thus the objectivity of Britomart's vision.

Spenser emphasizes this objectivity again when he explains how Britomart comes to glance into the globe. At first glance she evidently forgets the globe's magic powers, and uses it, absent-mindedly and casually, as a mirror in which she sees her own reflection:

One day it fortun'd, faire Britomart  
 Into her fathers closet to repayre;  
 For nothing he from her reseru'd apart,  
 Being his onely daughter and his hayre:  
 Where when she had espyde that mirrhour fayre,  
 Her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine.

(3.2.22.1)

Suddenly she remembers what the globe can do:

Tho her auizing of the vertues rare,  
Which thereof spoken werè, she gan againe  
Her to bethinke of, that mote to her selfe pertaine.

(3.2.22.7)

To discover what pertains "to her self" she must not look at herself, but look past the mirror surface into the centre of the globe. What she sees there is in a sense a reflection of herself: it is she who has to decide what kind of image she is interested in, and it is only when she wonders "Whom fortune for her husband would allot" (3.2.23.6) that the image forms in the crystal ball. But unlike Narcissus, Britomart is not doomed to see herself. Her calm acceptance of the necessity of growing up is behind her decision to seek a glimpse of the man she will marry. Though she had no one in particular in mind, the narrator explains, she "wist her life at last must lincke in that same knot" (3.2.23.9); it is her obedience to this providential imperative which enables her to look again and see not herself but the man whom Redcrosse had described. Acceptance of a power external to her own will is the first step towards accepting the otherness, the separateness, of the beloved himself.

The two stanzas which describe her vision are interestingly paired: the first is general, the second quite specific, especially in its armorial detail:

Eftsoones there was presented to her eye  
A comely knight, all arm'd in complet wize,  
Through whose bright ventayle lifted vp on hye  
His manly face, that did his foes agrize,  
And friends to termes of gentle truce entize,  
Lookt forth, as Phoebus face out of the east,  
Betwixt two shadie mountaines doth arize;  
Portly his person was, and much increast  
Through his Heroicke grace, and honourable gest.



His crest was couered with a couchant Hound,  
 And all his armour seem'd of antique mould,  
 But wondrous massie and assured sound,  
 And round about yfretted all with gold,  
 In which there written was with cyphers old,  
Achilles armes, which Arthegall did win.  
 And on his shield enuelped seuenfold  
 He bore a crowned litle Ermilin  
 That deckt the azure field with her faire pouldred skin.  
 (3.2.24-25)

The first stanza presents a generalized vision of a perfect knight, perhaps as seen through a haze of romantic adoration; the adjectives are affective, not visual ("comely", "manly", "heroic"), the associations vaguely mythic: Artegall is as glorious as the sun. The second stanza describes Artegall's arms in terms so circumstantial that they have been identified with Leicester's.<sup>20</sup> The transition imitates the very process of perception whereby one takes in first the overall impression and then the details; it also suggests an image gradually coming into focus, as it would in a crystal ball. But in terms of the emphasis on the dangers of narcissism, what is significant is that the harder and longer Britomart looks, the more "other" Artegall becomes--the more fully he evolves into a specific unique individual. The image which finally takes shape is not a mere idealized daydream but apparently the very person Redcrosse described when he outlined to Britomart "[His] shape, [his] shield, [his] armes, [his] steed, [his] sted" (3.2.16.6). Accordingly, we know what Britomart herself at this point dares not believe: that the vision she sees is not a mere projection of her adolescent need but a separate individual with a specific historical destiny.

The question of uniqueness is important. Spenser's narrator suggests that the mark of Britomart's chastity is that she has had no

particular person in mind:

Not that she lusted after any one;  
 For she was pure from blame of sinfull blot,  
 Yet wist her life at last must lincke in that same knot.

(3.2.23.7)

For a young girl to choose her own husband is presented in The Faerie Queene as a dangerous assertion of the will which leaves her vulnerable to lust and danger (as, for example, in the story of Aemylia and Amyas in the fourth book). In a period when arranged marriages were the norm--a norm, however, which troubled those who could not fail to perceive the grief which often ensued<sup>21</sup>--it is natural for a romance-writer to suggest the positiveness of his heroine's obedient submission to her marital destiny. The premise, however, upon which the whole motif of the magical marriage-prediction is based is that there is one and only one individual who is able to fulfil the providential design. Hence the paradox--Christian in form if not in detail--that the surrender of the individual will is the only way to true individuality. The way in which the image forms before Britomart's eyes, assuming specific details which her own imagination would not have supplied, suggests the true nature of virtuous love, its openness to what is not-self, to the otherness of the beloved and of that providence which supplies him.

Spenser describes the confirmation of Britomart's vision in terms of the metaphor of childbirth. Hearing Redcrosse extol Artegall's nobility, Britomart rejoices that she has set her heart on one so virtuous:

The louing mother, that nine monethes did beare,  
 In the deare closet of her painefull side,  
 Her tender babe, it seeing safe appeare,  
 Doth not so much reioyce, as she reioyced there.

(3.2.11.6)

It is interesting that this public confirmation of her private adoration is compared to the process by which the infant emerges from the mother to become a separate individual. The child develops into himself--and can fulfil his mother's hopes--only by separating himself from her.<sup>22</sup> The metaphor of the constraining closet of the womb is one which will reappear more or less explicitly throughout Britomart's story. It suggests the danger of various kinds of self-enclosure and retreat from growth and development and emphasizes the importance of separateness and individuation as a condition for union. In the conversations with Glauce and Merlin, Artegall figures as an adjunct to Britomart, but Redcrosse depicts him as a public individual with his own duties and role, "Defending Ladies cause, and Orphans right" (3.2.14.4). The role which Britomart creates for herself in her misleading autobiography is similarly public and impersonal: she says she has dedicated herself to "deedes of armes . . . Onely for honour and for high regard" (3.2.7.1,4), and in fact her quest for Artegall will involve her in the realization of this role, fictional though it is when she articulates it. Britomart and Artegall will not be ready for union until each has emerged as an individual, a process which will take place as they go out into the world and express private virtues in public action. The fact that Artegall is not enclosed in the (womblike) "world of glas" (3.2.19.9) but on the contrary "restlesse walketh all the world around" (3.2.14.4) at the same time guarantees his real existence and establishes his public reputation. It is only because Artegall is not an aspect of herself that Britomart will be able to become one with him.

The childbirth simile is in keeping with the tone of Book III, which is full of images of new life, of mothering and giving birth, of the founding of families and the growth of plants and flowers. Some of these images have dual associations: wombs may give life or they may stifle and enclose; water, in the third book, often seems associated not with life but with death, Marinell's mother-dominated undersea cave being the obvious example. Another "underworld" seethes beneath Merlin's cave, imprisoning the assistants who have been doomed by his spell to labour there forever. The underground world is potentially a source of life--Merlin tells Britomart that "all things excellent" begin like her love, in darkness, and that her family is destined to grow from the roots of her sorrow like a great tree (3.3.22)--but it is more often associated with death. I wish to look in detail at a chain of "underworld" associations which is developed in the first three cantos, primarily by play on the two words "shade" and "shadow". Spenser's manipulation of these words and their shifting meanings associates the illusory reflections of the solipsistic imagination with self-enclosure and with death; the poetry locates the source of Britomart's special virtue in her invulnerability to "shadows", and prepares right from the beginning for her eventual triumph over Busirane.

The words "shade" and "shadow" conveniently associate mirror-images with death, for they mean not only "reflection" but also "ghost". It is interesting that the vision of Artegall in the globe is not originally described as a "shade" or a "shadow" at all, but--more neutrally--as an "image", the "image she had seene in Venus looking glas"

(3.1.8.9). Britomart's wording, then, is unduly pessimistic when she insists to Glauce

Nor man it is, nor other living wight . . .  
But th'only shade and semblant of a knight,  
Whose shape or person yet I neuer saw.

(3.2.38.1)

All that Britomart evidently means when she complains that the form she has seen is not a "living wight" is that the vision is entirely illusory; "shade" here apparently means (to her) simply "reflection", since she pairs it as a synonym with "semblant". Yet her words are more death-loaded than she perhaps consciously intends, and her despair expresses itself more explicitly six stanzas later, in the allusion to Narcissus, when the word "shadow" is directly linked with death. She laments that because "I . . . loue a shade", she is doomed to

feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food,  
And like a shadow wexe, whiles with entire  
Affection, I doe languish and expire.

(3.2.44.3)

At the end of the canto, the narrator describes her lovesickness in the same terms:

She shortly like a pyned ghost became,  
Which long hath waited by the Stygian strond.

(3.2.52.5)

For the first time the implicit allusion to the underworld becomes explicit and emerges in a fully-developed simile. The death-imagery has of course its mock-heroic aspect: when Britomart wakes from restless sleep "As one with vew of ghastly, feends affright" (3.2.29.7) and when Glauce describes her charge's seething emotions in terms of a volcano ("Like a huge Aetn' of deepe engulfed grieffe,/ Sorrow is heaped in thy hollow chest",

3.2.32.6), the underworld metaphor is not perhaps to be taken wholly seriously. Yet the emphasis which the language of the canto as a whole places on the words "shade" and "shadow" cannot fail to register with the reader; when Glauce insists that Artegall is "no shadow, but a bodie" (3.2.45.7), we recognize the vital common-sense of her counsel.

Set against the emphasis on shadows and pining away is a very vigorous even crude emphasis on the validity of bodily needs and functions. Glauce's relief that at least Britomart is not, like Pasiphaë, in love with a bull seems at first merely comic in the way it cuts across Britomart's heartfelt Petrarchan rhetoric; we are the more startled when Britomart answers her with passionate seriousness, saying in effect that at least the bull was real.<sup>23</sup>

For they; how euer shamefull and vnkind,  
 Yet did possesse their horrible intent;  
 Short end of sorrowes they thereby did find;  
 So was their fortune good, though wicked were their mind.

(3.2.43.6)

Britomart's earthy retort deepens the comedy and establishes her as energetically in touch with her own feelings. Her analogy between sexual desire and hunger is another startlingly frank and emphatic avowal of physical yearning ("and feed on shadowes whiles I die for food", 3.2.44.3). Such a declaration deepens and vitalizes the tone of the conventional metaphor of "dying" for love and establishes the depth of Britomart's feelings, expressed though they had been in conventional imagery of blood and wounds. It makes us take the "shades/shadows" imagery more seriously and realize that something vital is at stake here in spite of the comic tone of the canto. Neoplatonic theory holds that the Petrarchan lover who devotes himself to an inaccessible mistress may be weaning himself

away from earthly grossness and moving towards direct contemplation of heavenly beauty; the lover's idealization of his mistress (which might otherwise seem self-projection) is thus rationalized as having an external referent. No such consolation awaits the person doomed to love a mirror image. If Artégall's "shadow" is only a reflection, then it is truly a "shade", a ghost which means psychic death for the woman who is under the spell of the self-generated illusion.

The emphasis on these words in the second canto highlights in retrospect a detail of the first: the statement that Britomart had taken no notice of Malecasta's courtiers because for her "they all but shadowes beene" (3.1.45.9). The word seems in its original context merely an emphatic synonym for "unreal", but by the time we have read to the end of the second canto it means something more. The courtiers are emanations--"reflections" or "shadows"--of the nature of Malecasta herself, which Britomart will not "see". Because her demeanour keeps men at a distance, Britomart has never been the object of the amorous "ciuilitee" (3.1.44.6) which these figures exemplify and does not recognize them (3.1.46). She tends always to be blind to second-hand experience, to anything not proved upon her own pulses. The reader, however, supplies their literary context: their names identify them as modern Italianate parodies of the group guarding the lady's chastity in La Roman de la Rose (we observe the irony that for Malecasta they are providing precisely the opposite service). Our awareness of their emphatically literary character suggests another way in which they are merely "shadowes". They are the creatures of an erotic social code which depends heavily for its

form and conventions on a specifically literary tradition. Britomart does use the language of courtly love, as we have seen in the third canto, but "grounds" it by expressing through it her most vital needs and impulses. She is blind to artificial social poses adopted by players in the elaborate game of love. These characters are "shadows" in their literariness: they are phantoms of a specialized kind of erotic imagination. Britomart's great strength is her stubborn literalness, her literary naïveté. She tends either to take figures of speech literally (as she does when Glauce talks about Pasiphaë) or not to "see" them at all. In coping with disorders of the erotic imagination, this narrowness can prove to be a strength--as it is in the house of Busirane. "Shadows"--reflections, projections, imaginative creations--mean death in the context of the Book of Chastity. Chastity, then, becomes a kind of reality principle, associated with common sense, forthrightness, clearsightedness, and intuitive insight, especially into the nature of one's own needs and emotions. Sentimental blurring of emotional reality militates against it, and the chief vehicle for such blurring is literary illusion.

Literary illusion in turn becomes associated with various forms of magic. The association of chastity and magic is a well-established one, expressed in medieval literature, for example, in the unicorn legend, or in Milton's Comus where the lady's virtue resists the temptations of a vile magician. Britomart's story has much to do with magic: her magic lance, Glauce's abortive charm, her father's globe, Merlin's prophecies and the spell cast by enchanter Busirane are all important in Book III. One notices immediately however that most of the magic is not Britomart's.



Chaste magic works, in fact, in two ways, either aggressively, by immobilizing the would-be seducer, or defensively, by resisting the net of sensual enchantment which he casts. Both chastity and sensuality, in other words, are often perceived as magical, sensuality in its power to seduce, chastity in its power to resist. Britomart's chastity involves both defensive and aggressive "magic". Her magic lance is a dramatic embodiment of the aggressive aspect of chastity: instead of freezing men in their tracks like Minerva, Britomart knocks them out of the saddle. The "spell" she casts is, medically speaking, a form of concussion, and is notably effective in preventing any further advance. The lance can be wielded only by someone on horseback and it keeps one's opponent at a distance: the associations of horseback-riding with self-control make it the obvious weapon for Chastity. When Britomart loses her lance in Book IV, Canto 6 and is forced to fight on foot, she soon finds that she has met her match.

It is the other aspect of her chastity which I wish to discuss at the moment, however, not Britomart's ability to cast spells but her power to resist them. Since the seducer's most effective means of attack is usually rhetoric, the "magic" which he possesses is the magic of poetry itself. There are two ways of resisting poetry: probing beneath its surface charm to analyze the premises it conceals, or simply not responding to the surface charm in the first place. Many literary heroines define themselves by the first approach: the resulting debate becomes a showpiece of high wit in which metaphors are identified, analyzed and turned inside out. A certain type of personality emerges--Shakespeare's Rosalind, Sidney's Pamela, Chapman's Hero come to mind--women characterized by a

lively wit and subtle logic. Britomart, however, is not of this company. She works not by analysis but by intuition, and though what she cannot see sometimes gets her into trouble it is in the end the source of her power. Literature itself is presented as a dangerous kind of magic, a spell-casting enchantment to which Britomart, however, is not especially vulnerable. Britomart is a restless heroine--her instinct is to keep moving; literature, however, is associated with stasis and permanence, for it freezes life into permanent patterns of meaning which can enlighten but can also entrap. The rhythm of movement and stasis, freedom and entrapment is an important source of meaning in Book III; both magic and poetry become linked with stasis, and hence chastity, which resists their power, emerges paradoxically not as death-oriented repression, but as a dynamic, even volatile kind of energy.

The wonderfully funny episode in which Glauce attempts to cure Britomart's melancholy with a magic spell is full of significance in the total context of Britomart's story. I have suggested that the meaning of the third book emerges partly from its narrative rhythms. The distinct difference between the rhythms of Cantos 1 and 2 places Glauce's failure in a certain perspective. To oversimplify, Canto 1 ends with a bang, Canto 2 with a whimper. The dramatic suspense involved in the working-out of Malecasta's intrigue culminates in an emphatic climax at the very end of the first canto; the second, however, concludes with a comic anticlimax, not, as might have been expected, with Glauce's decision to consult Merlin, but instead with her abortive assay into amateur magic. The first canto is rounded off and completed, the second is open-ended (Glauce's failure leaves Britomart still pining away for love, so that in the third

canto the two women move on to Merlin's cave). The resistant repressive aspect of chastity is sometimes conveyed in Spenser by "the sense of an ending", by narrative action which freezes into tableau at the very end of a canto. Such endings imply a crystallization of meaning but also have a feeling of death about them, the kind of feeling evoked, also, in the two myths which form symbolic centres for Cantos 1 and 2, the myths of Adonis and of Narcissus, both of whom dwindle suddenly into flowers. As I have suggested, Britomart herself becomes the agent and focus of the frozen moment at the end of the first canto. But her destiny involves her in moving forward, in continuous development. She is repeatedly described as a flower or a plant: though the image of the rose whose thorns daunt even as its beauty attracts (3.1.46.6) emphasizes the paralyzing power of her chastity, the metaphor also implies growth and can be used in a more positive way (Glauce criticizes Britomart for refusing to "spred/ Abroad thy fresh youthes fairest flowre" as a princess should, 3.2.31.7, and Merlin describes the mighty family tree which Britomart will find, "Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin,/ Till they to heauens hight forth stretched bee", 3.3.22.3). The nature of Britomart's chastity is conveyed, then, by a continuous tension between stasis and movement, attraction and repulsion, growth and paralysis. Thus the very pace at which the narrative unfolds becomes an analogue for the virtue which is being presented. When Glauce's attempt to "stop the action" fails, we register the thematic pressure of the anticlimax.

Glauce's vision of love has a strongly literary cast. Spenser, who identifies the nurse as Britomart's "owl", goes to enough trouble to suggest how she sees that he manages to create in a very few lines a

vivid impression of her vigorous nature. Like Juliet's nurse, Glauce is at once bawdy and sentimental, commonsensical and fascinated by the literary pose. Hamilton analyzes the comic bathos of her Mount Aetna simile (3.2.32):<sup>25</sup> a similar comment might be made on her absurdly portentous greeting to Merlin in canto 3 (stanza 16). Her startling idea that Britomart's desire might have involved incest or bestiality suggests that she has been reading Ovid as a tabloid;<sup>26</sup> on the other hand, the sententious sermon on the powers of love which she delivers to Britomart and Artegall in Book IV implies her acquaintance with the commonplaces of courtly theory. Glauce is equally willing to support Britomart in her quest for Artegall and to experiment with putting an end to the whole affair. She sees love incoherently through a series of literary lenses; her comic attempt to cure it by magic is infected with the triviality of her second-hand perceptions. The bathetic fusion of ritual solemnity with the concrete details of folk magic ("Spit thrise vpon me, thrise vpon me spit," 3.2.50.8) makes her attempt to liberate Britomart exquisitely comic. The source of the humour is at least partly rhetorical, deriving from the assimilation of such details to the measured rhythms of the Spenserian stanza (the line quoted is so funny partly because it is a chiasmus, the figure Spenser usually reserves for a refined balance of feeling). Because Glauce is so spectacularly unsuccessful, her interest in magic becomes analogous to her interest in literary stereotype; both are equally fanciful, equally removed from reality. Glauce does everything in threes; Spenser undercuts her pose with literary parody, taking just three stanzas to record her inevitable failure. Glauce's magic

is placed in opposition both to true religion (she turns to spells when prayer fails) and to true love (her "idle charmes" have no power over "loue, that is in gentle brest begonne", 3.2.51.7). There is the suggestion that the wrong kind of literary imagination insulates one from reality: Glauce gains no power from her second-hand erotic experience and is absurdly wrong in the hypotheses which are literary in origin (though usually correct when in touch with her own vigorous sympathy and commonsense). The fact that the formal function of Glauce's experiment is not so much to round off the second canto as to serve as a transition to the third emphasizes the resistless energy of true love which will impel Britomart forward to the end of her quest; it is a process which no mere spell-casting can halt.

Magic--the prophecy of Merlin--is the central subject of the next canto, and it is worth investigating how his magic is related to Glauce's. Like Glauce, Merlin makes use of verbal charms, but his powers do not always depend on them. The function of canto 3 is to place Britomart's personal history in the larger public frame of British history. National history is personal history on a larger scale, a seemingly imperfect process leading in the long run to a providential conclusion. The power Merlin possesses is defined in relation to time: he is able both to

foretell the future and also to "freeze" time (as he does when he places on his spirits the magic spell which forces them to labour forever underground). His magic tells the reader more about Britomart than the destiny of her race and has a bearing on the meaning of her climactic triumph over Busirane's magic in Book III.

Once again, the meaning of the canto derives partly from its narrative rhythms, especially as they are related to their total context, to the patterns set up in the two preceding cantos. If Canto 1 concludes with a decisive ending and Canto 2 fizzles out in an abortive non-ending which is also a beginning, Canto 3 reaches a fusion of the two: a decisive ending (Britomart leaves her father's house) which is also a beginning (it is the end of the flashback which began in Canto 2). Each of the first three cantos begins with a prefatory narrative which has a complementary relationship to the main one (the tale of Adonis, Redcrosse's conversation with Britomart, and here the legend of the spirits labouring under Caermarden). In the third canto, as in the first, the relationship between this preface and the central narrative is that of stasis to movement. I have already suggested the ways in which the death of Adonis emphasizes the meaning of Britomart's escape. The anecdote about Merlin and his spirits and his captivity by the Lady of the Lake has an equally significant relationship to the canto which it introduces. The main narrative of the third canto, the chronicle of Britomart's descendants, represents the course of history under God (a process which is incomplete but which will eventually be completed), whereas the prefatory inset, the account of the fate of Merlin's labouring sprights, seems to be a demonic parody of history, a description of meaningless activity in a god-

less universe (a process which is incomplete and which will never be completed). Whereas the historical process finds its motive power in virtuous love (Britomart's descendants will shape English history, 3.3.1-3), the imprisonment of the labouring spirits has originated in destructive passion (Merlin's deception by the Lady of the Lake). The underworld imagery which was metaphorical in the second canto is actualized in the third; not only do the spirits remain rumbling underground, but Merlin himself is "buried vnder beare" (3.3.11.2); the imagery suggests that we are to see some kind of analogy between what happened to Merlin and what happened to his servants as a result of it.

In this canto dealing with British history, Spenser emphasizes the continuity between past and present, introducing Merlin by locating his cave on a contemporary map. Britomart and Glauce, he says, visit the magician in his cave at "Maridunum, that now by chaunge/ Of name Cayr-Merdin cald" (3.3.7.3). It is a spot, says the narrator, still worth visiting by the English tourist, although he himself has evidently not been there, for he can report only that "they say" that "It is an hideous hollow caue" (3.3.8.3). The device of turning directly to the reader and suggesting that he investigate the area suggests the link between past and present, for whether or not the spirits still labour under the earth, the cave, with its mysterious roaring sound, still remains, and so does the story which imbeds it in history. The narrator qualifies his report three times in four stanzas, with the phrases "they say" and "some say"; the qualifications, however, apply not only to the overtly legendary aspects of the reports ("they say" Merlin used to live here, 3.3.7.3, "some say"

that the noise is made by the spirits, 3.3.10.1) but also to merely a second-hand contemporary report ("they say" there is a cave under a rock near the Barry river, 3.3.8.3). The phrasing, even as it quietly calls attention to the discrepancy between the two kinds of evidence, invites the reader to suspend his awareness of this discrepancy, to read the legend as if it were as verifiable as the fact of the cave's existence; to trust the "telling" which gives events their meaning and allows us to possess past and present in their creative connection. The roaring sound and the legend assume a metaphoric relationship to one another; we are encouraged to respond to Merlin's marvels with the same wonder as we might listen to the water's roar, for there is a power in the very ground beneath our feet, and the power of the roaring water becomes a metaphor for the power of the folk imagination which assigns that sound an "historical" meaning. The visitor taps local legend as the historian taps chronicle and the poet taps earlier literature--for intimations of continuity which help him to possess his past and trust his future. Spenser's fusion of landscape and legend brings the reader's mind into contact with its own power of making sense of the past. By making us feel the imaginative richness of this kind of continuity, Spenser prepares us to react to the "narrative inset" he is about to present.

For if the preservation of the legend suggests continuity, its content deals with discontinuity and paralysis. Merlin's servants are still there because of a spell which their master did not come back to undo. Merlin's purpose was benevolent: he had set his "sprights" to the task of building a wall around the city of Caernarden, a symbolic



act of enclosure which suggests both completion and a new beginning of civic and social life. When he is outmanoeuvred by the Lady of the Lake, however, his downfall makes Merlin, who in initiating the process had played a providential role, into a kind of pagan First Mover whose creatures are doomed to labour forever in a hellish underworld with no end, no success, and no reward. They are bound "till his returne"

(3.3.10.9): but unlike the God of this upper world, Merlin never will return, and their time will never have a stop. Their motive is fear, not love: they dare not cease their labour, "So greatly his commaundement they feare, . . . . For Merlin had in Magicke more insight,/ Then euer him before or after liuing wight" (3.3.11.5).

This unprogressive activity is set against the development of English history as it is recounted in Merlin's chronicle, an untidy often discouraging series of beginning and endings, none of which is final, of partial successes undercut by subsequent failures, of progress and regression, consolidation and fragmentation.<sup>27</sup> The idea of bringing an act to its perfect completion is reiterated throughout this (significantly open-ended) canto: the words "end" and "term" occur repeatedly. Merlin commands his spirits "to bring to perfect end" the labour he has projected (3.3.10.5); binding his fiends by magic, he is described as "Deepe busied bout worke of wondrous end" (3.3.14.7); he tells Glauce that man should work in accordance with God's plan in order to "guide the heavenly causes to their constant terme" (3.3.25.9); lamenting the defeat of the Britons by the Saxons, he adds that it is not destined to last indefinitely: "Nay but the terme (said he) is limited" (3.3.44.1). Even the incidental

imagery confirms this sense of an ending: Artegall's feats of arms are said to be known "From where the day out of the sea doth spring,/ Vntill the closure of the Euening" (3.3.27.4); the metaphor equates temporal and spatial completeness to suggest a perfect cycle. This straining towards an ending only emphasizes the frustrating incompleteness of each fragment of the historical process as it is perceived by those who are caught up in it; as Merlin says when he brings the chronicle up to date and pauses at his vision of Elizabeth's reign, "But yet the end is not" (3.3.50.1). But though in contrast to the idealized form of the perfect process human history looks untidy and discouraging, in contrast to the frenetic paralysis of Merlin's underworld its very reversals seem full of hope and promise. The underworld microcosm is run not by a God of love but by a god in love: the duping of Merlin has paralyzed not only the magician himself but the little universe he has brought into being. His vulnerability suggests the limits of a certain type of magic, impressive though it looks to his awed visitors.

Glauce's abortive spell-casting makes Merlin look like a professional. Glauce and Britomart arrive just at the moment when the magician is in the act of "writing strange characters in the ground,/ With which the stubborn feends he to his seruice bound" (3.3.14.8), an act which must seem to the women a dramatic confirmation of his wonderful powers. It might have seemed so to the reader as well, had he not just finished reading the account of Merlin's own imprisonment; as it is, however, the context reminds us that magic of this sort is so far unrelated to personal character that it may be turned against its originator in a fairly mechanical way.

The fact that the spell is cast by means of "strange characters" is significant, for in Canto 4 letters and words are the channels for Merlin's magic in two very different ways. As the narrator has told us, Merlin, the greatest magician in the history of the world, could command sun and moon, change land to water and day to night and control armies, all "by words" (3.3.12.1). We see him drawing the magical characters and have already been assured of their immediate efficacy. The way he uses words in his prophetic account of British history is, however, quite different. The power which Merlin possesses to foresee the future does not reside in speech--is not activated by words; it is given by God. Words are used only after the fact, to transmit the knowledge of what was seen to those who have not seen it. As he predicts the future of Britomart's race Merlin is acting less as a magician than as a prophet, communicating a divine vision to the uninitiated.

In Ariosto the way the vision is communicated is itself magical: Merlin's handmaid Melissa has to make elaborate preparations to control the spirits whom she calls up--"from hell or from some other place"--to enact the roles of historical characters: she draws a circle around Bradamanté to protect her and then the disembodied voice of the dead Merlin comments on the identity and history of the demons who pass before their eyes. Nothing of the sort happens in Spenser. Although it is clear that Merlin himself, when he reaches Elizabeth's reign, is able to "see" the events he is recounting, his prophecy to Britomart is evidently a simple narrative, its units linked not (as in Ariosto) with commands to "Look" and "See" but by temporal connectives: "till", "yet", "but at the

last", "but after him" and so on. Spenser's use of his source is interesting; the historical personages are in no sense "shades" in Merlin's narrative: the underworld aspect of Ariosto's passage seems to have been displaced onto the labouring spirits, who, like the demons called up by Melissa, are controlled by a kind of magical encirclement.

Merlin's magic is presented as important and powerful when his words are used not repetitively to cast a spell but discursively to trace an untidy reality. To use words magically is to use them manipulatively. To recount a chronicle on the other hand is to use them imitatively, to recreate and communicate a vision vouchsafed by a power outside oneself. Merlin's magic is potent to the extent that he acts as an agent of providence.<sup>28</sup> When he foretells Britomart's destiny and the history of the British people, he is accurate and circumstantial. When, on the other hand, he casts the only spell he is actually shown casting in The Faerie Queene, the narrative associates this achievement with another of his spells being turned against him. It is ironical that in his private life Merlin lacks the very power which his own globe had given to Britomart's father: he is unable to foresee danger from personal enemies. That even a magician may be impotent in the face of sexual enchantment had been suggested earlier by the comparison in the second canto between Merlin's globe and Phao's glass tower, "Ybuilded all of glasse, by Magicke powre" of her lover Ptolemy but then destroyed by him "when his loue was false" (3.2.20.7,9).

Glauce's magic has proved powerless against the virtuous love of Britomart for Artegall; Merlin's magic is potent insofar as it confirms

the predestined unfolding of this love. Glauce sets herself against the course of nature, whereas Merlin acts as a mouthpiece for the providential plan. The parallel between Glauce's magic and Merlin's is established with a light, even comic touch. When the nurse launches into her fictional account of Britomart's "illness", her overblown rhetoric emphasizes the silliness and literariness of her imagination. She thinks in threes:

Now haue three Moones with borrow'd brothers light,  
Thrice shined faire, and thrice seem'd dim and wan.  
(3.3.16.2)

Merlin is amused by the transparency and foolishness of her "smooth speeches". It is possibly significant that in his own chronicle the number three occurs three times but that the third case is always some kind of exception. Merlin says of Britomart's son as he moves against the "warlike Mertians":

Thrise shall he fight with them, and twise shall win,  
But the third time shall faire accordaunce make.  
(3.3.30.6)

Etheldred, he reports,

Shall back repulse the valiaunt Brockwell twise . . .  
But the third time shall rew his foolhardise.  
(3.3.35.5)

In recounting the defeat of the Britons by the Saxons, the Saxons by the Danes, and finally the Danes by the Normans, Merlin introduces William of Normandy, the "Lyon . . . of Neustria", with the statement "Yet shall a third both these, and thine subdew" (3.3.47); this third conqueror is not, however, the climactic one he seems to be, for the next stanza announces the deliverance of the Britons "when the terme is full accomplished" and Henry Tudor will reestablish "the Briton bloud" upon the throne of

England (3.3.48). This establishment of a perfect literary pattern which is immediately undercut by the stubbornly resistant historical facts suggests the difference between the magical and the imitative use of language.

Yet as well as establishing the difference, the third canto also suggests the affinities between literary pattern and historical reality-- between chronicle and romance. The second canto is full of references to luck. Britomart's story opens with a stanza evoking both the wonder and the security of the fairy-tale universe:

One day it fortun'd, faire Britomart  
 Into her fathers closet to repayre;  
 For nothing he from her reseru'd apart,  
 Being his onely daughter and his hayre.

(3.2.22.1)

But the interweaving of detail makes clear that what seems even, apparently, to the narrator to be mere coincidence was in fact an inevitable outcome of an ongoing set of circumstances. Britomart is bound some day to question the magic globe because she is in her father's study often. She is there often because she has evidently always had a special relationship of trust and intimacy with him; she is "his onely daughter and his hayre". This relationship is significant: Britomart has in a sense been playing the role of a son (as her father's heir) and seems to have no mother; she must acquire a symbolic mother (Isis) and with it the feminine side of her identity before she will be ready to fulfil her destiny. Thus the details assembled with seeming casualness and recounted in the measured rhythms of romance in fact interlock in a firm causal pattern which even the narrator himself seems not to see. Britomart herself cannot see it, and speaks always in terms of "fortune": she

wonders "Whom fortune for her husband would allot" (3.2.23.6), complains to Glauce that it is "my hard fortune" to die of grief (3.2.39.7) and, commenting on the lusts of Pasiphaë and Biblis, distinguishes sharply between "fortune" and character ("So was their fortune good, though wicked were their mind", 3.2.43.9, "But wicked fortune mine, though mind be good", 3.2.44.1). Now although fairy-tale characters, locked within their own limited perspective, experience their destiny as arbitrary and capricious, the reader knows better: the genre teaches him that luck is the correlative of virtue. The fairy-tale hero always seems innocent, if only because the reader is always ahead of him in reading the unfolding pattern of his destiny. The third canto, by placing Britomart's viewpoint in a wider perspective, not only helps deepen this impression of her nature but also validates the genre of romance in which her story has been told by assimilating it to the providential pattern of history--by pointing out that what might have seemed merely luck or "fortune" is in fact "heavenly destiny". Merlin's prophetic power is validated as much by his insight into the purpose in the events as by his foreknowledge of the events themselves. He explains:

It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye,  
Glauncing vnwares in charmed looking glas,  
But the streight course of heavenly destiny,  
Led with eternall prouidence, that has  
Guided thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas.

(3.3.24.1)

The capriciousness of the human will is exemplified by the "wandring eye", the apparently random "glaunce", than which nothing can seem more free and undirected. The dangers of "seeing" wilfully and solipsistically have already been dramatized. Britomart is being told to abandon her private

sense of her own behaviour and recognize the external order in which she as an individual is caught up. To suggest God as it were looking through her eyes is a very intense way of shifting the heroine's narrow focus on her private "fortune" to a more generous concern for the national destiny.

In the short run, history and romance seem at odds, for history fails to provide the happy endings towards which romance tends. Hence the tension in the third canto between the modes of chronicle and fairy-tale. But in the long run, Spenser suggests, the pattern of romance imitates the providential pattern of history. Romance does not deceive if the external reality to which it points is understood. By establishing this objective referent, Merlin is doing something like what Redcrosse did when he told Britomart about Artegall's reputation, helping her to break out of a self-enclosed world of private emotion and to become aware of her public identity. Both romance and history are based on development, on movement towards a goal, however deferred its realization may be. Both the tension between the two modes and yet their congruence--the way they pull Britomart in the same direction--can be illustrated by a concluding example from the third canto.

The canto ends with the decision of Britomart and Glauce to assume the disguise of warrior knights. The suggestion is Glauce's; Britomart, she says, could emulate women like "bold Bunduca," "stout Guendolen," "Renowned Martia," and "redoubted Emmilen" (3.3.54.8) or, indeed, like the mighty Saxon queen Angela, who has recently "feld/ Great Vlfin thrise" (3.3.55.6); and whose armour, coincidentally, has just been seized and hung upon the wall of King Ryence's church. The movement of Glauce's



catalogue echoes that of Merlin's chronicle in that it sweeps through past centuries to come to a standstill in the present. The rhythm recapitulates once again that pattern of narrative movement ending in stasis which characterizes the stories of Adonis, Malecasta and Merlin himself. But whereas the previous narratives concluded with death or paralysis, this catalogue concludes with a renewal of life, as Britomart actually puts on the armour to go forth in pursuit of her own destiny. The fusion of historical process and personal "fortune" is suggested by the narrator's wording: "It fortuned (so time their turne did fit) . . ." (3.3.58.3, italics mine). Spenser skilfully turns a fact of history into a coincidence of romance: the victory over Angela places the events in historical time and also provides Britomart with the armour she needs just at the providential moment, so that she may don, as an adolescent girl must, the disguise of a queen who is her father's enemy and leave his house and her childhood behind.<sup>29</sup>

It is appropriate that the canto should conclude with her departure, that it should briefly recapitulate the meeting with Redcrosse and send her on her way alone, and that it should end as it does with the words "but forth rode Britomart". To enter history and to grow into sexual maturity is to commit oneself to imperfection, change and pain, to a process which has no facile "happy ending".<sup>30</sup> This is the path of virtuous love; destructive passion, on the other hand, is associated with the spell-binding power of magical enchantment and is doomed to stasis and to death. Chastity's resistance to such enchantment is suggested by the whole structure of the third canto.

Stasis and death are investigated in more detail in the fourth canto, which forms a striking contrast with the feeling of confidence and fresh beginnings with which Britomart began her quest. Its mood is that of lament, despair and depression in the face of the formless and the unknown. As Marinell's name suggests, this is a sea-canto, dominated by images of wind, water, darkness, storm and sleep. On the literal level, Britomart's lapse into momentary despair is a natural overreaction to her first discouragement as she realizes the magnitude of her quest. But the fact that Arthur, too, succumbs temporarily lends a special emphasis to the subject of this canto; Spenser seems to be reserving this emphatic treatment for a vice or weakness which is, in some important and peculiar way, antithetical to the virtue she represents. Britomart's experience with Malecasta was presented as generated outside her own psyche, but the temptation in the fourth canto comes from within: Marinell seems to symbolize some impulse within Britomart herself, a kind of death-wish or readiness to drown in watery despair. Hence to understand the kind of chastity which Britomart embodies it is necessary to understand Marinell and his history and see why Britomart has to reject him so energetically.

The introductory quatrain suggests a parallel between Britomart's experience and Arthur's:

Bold Marinell of Britomart,  
 Is throwne on the Rich strand:  
 Faire Florimell of Arthur is  
 Long followed, but not fond.

Parallelism links the names of the two destined lovers, Marinell and Florimell, and also the names of Britomart and Arthur, whose almost simultaneous lapse into discouragement is as unexpected as it is uncharacteristic. The canto actually has four distinct episodes: Britomart's lament (stanzas 4-11); her encounter with Marinell (stanzas 12-18); Cymoent's reactions to her son's fate (stanzas 19-44) and Arthur's reaction to the disappearance of Florimell (stanzas 45-61). Since in her maternal grief Cymoent also gives voice to a formal lamentation (stanzas 36-39) we have a canto which is punctuated by three highly rhetorical protests against fate and nature.<sup>31</sup> Embedding Marinell's story between Britomart's and Arthur's emphasizes the contrast between them, for while Britomart and Arthur, despite their discouragement, pick themselves up and go forward, Marinell collapses and goes under, leaving his mother hopelessly to bewail his fate. These patterns of resistance and surrender are central to the meaning of Book III as a whole, and the interweaving of the three stories at this point is an effective way of defining the nature of Britomart's determination and independence.

Britomart slips into depression by daydreaming about Artegall. It is in fact Redcrosse's circumstantial description of her beloved which stirs her fantasy and triggers her melancholy; she

Grew pensieve through that amorous discourse,  
By which the Redcrosse knight did earst display  
Her louers shape, and cheualrous aray;

(3.4.5.3)

(The wording confirms the two-stanza pattern discussed earlier: first his general shape, then his "cheualrous aray" had appeared in the magic globe.) Spenser suggests that the reverie into which Britomart falls

is somewhat self-indulgent. Though the circumstances are very different, the narrator's actual language recalls his description of Malecasta, who "fed" her "flit fancy" with erotic images (3.1.56.1); Britomart's "feigning fancie" creates "A thousand thoughts" of her absent lover, portraying him "such, as fittest she for loue could find,/ Wise, warlike, personable, curteous and kind." (3.4.5), and when the narrator observes that "With such self-pleasing thoughts her wound she fed" (3.4.6.1), his wording does seem to imply criticism of such a pastime. It is dangerous, Spenser suggests, for Britomart to convert the factual information which Redcrosse has given her into a vague wishful image spun out of her own desires. Britomart is blinded by lovesickness, "Following the guidaunce of her blinded guest", Cupid (3.4.6.8); the metaphor is suggestive, implying that she is a willing host to the emotions which she entertains and that the visual images she calls up are in fact a form of blindness.

Britomart has succumbed again to the temptation which Spenser seems to be emphasizing as the central threat to virtuous love: reacting with natural frustration to the prospect of a discouraging quest, she turns inward and invents a dream-lover who is the personification of her desires, so that she becomes at the same time tossed about and imprisoned within the circle of her own mind. She in fact obscurely realizes this when, sitting down to rest and observe the stormy sea, she reads it as an emblem of her own situation. The waves breaking against the immovable cliffs remind her both of the "sea of sorrow . . . Which in these troubled bowels raignes" (3.4.8.1,9) and of the sea of fortune to which she seems to have abandoned herself. She externalizes her internal psychic

state so that both the sea she observes and the quest she is on become manifestations of her own inner turmoil. Yet her apostrophe is not merely self-indulgent, for Britomart attempts to use the analogy analytically, to develop the aspects of the metaphor which point to a way out of her paralysis. In the first two stanzas she describes herself as fortune's plaything, tossed helplessly on a starless sea guided only by the blind pilot Love, but in the third she addresses Neptune as the god, not only of sea-winds but of winds which blow on land and prays that he may propel her safely to her goal. Her apostrophe in fact modulates her own initial view of "fortune" into the faith in providential care which had been evoked by Merlin's prophecy.

This rational attempt to cheer herself up is not entirely successful, however, for when Marinell appears Britomart's violent reaction to him apparently derives from an urge to convert her depression into anger and take it out on someone else. Britomart is naturally furious at Marinell because he personifies the forces which are keeping her from Artegall (he attempts to block her way); her inordinate resentment is perhaps explained by this motive alone. But Britomart has already been looking for a fight. At stanza 12, even before Marinell actually attempts to stop her, she seizes the opportunity to convert "Her former sorrow into sudden wrath". The striking simile which compares her tantrum to the eruption of a rainstorm also occurs before Marinell's challenge. It seems, then, that frustration at being kept from Artegall is not the only motive for her rage. Since depression at not possessing her lover can be expressed as anger at the first man she sees, it is arguable that

part of Britomart's motive for attacking him is resentment against the male sex in general. Since her story as a whole does suggest an undercurrent of such resentment in Britomart's feelings for Artegall (later events seem to make clear that the reason for it is fear of "maisterie", either by her lover or by love itself), I conclude that Marinell personifies for Britomart not only her impatience at being kept from her lover but also her fear of love's "maisterie" over her--her anxiety at being drawn after Artegall in the first place. What we subsequently learn about Marinell's nature would tend to confirm that he represents an aspect of Britomart herself against which she feels she has to struggle--her own desire to draw back from love and the pain and effort it involves. If Marinell is read in this way, Britomart's rather frantic bad temper not only makes sense but comes to seem a positive impulse at this point in the story; and the more we find out about him the more plausible such an interpretation becomes. Britomart is allowed to react to Marinell before the reader is able to; it is only after she has wounded him that Spenser goes back and acquaints us with his background. What we discover makes us feel that Britomart understood intuitively what we as readers have only been able to comprehend discursively: again a flashback is used to guarantee in retrospect the correctness of Britomart's perception.

Marinell can be <sup>paired</sup> with Britomart. She lacks a mother, he a father; if she is her father's daughter, he is his mother's son. Both have perceived their role and destiny in terms of their position in the family line, and both consult fortune-tellers to learn their fate (Cymoent, at least, consults one on her son's behalf). But whereas Britomart's destiny

seems oriented towards life, love and the future, Marinell's is dominated by death, fear, and the past. Britomart shakes off the protection of her family to go and seek her individual destiny; although she is her father's "only daughter and his hayre", she can fulfil the providential design only by going outside the family to unite with another and become the mother of a line of kings. Marinell, on the contrary, though he is potentially a fertility figure,<sup>15</sup> preeminently a son rather than a father: instead of going forth on his own, he stays put and defends the territory which his doting mother has handed down to him. Britomart's father provides her with a means to leave him--it is his confidence in her that allows her access to his magic globe in the first place--whereas Marinell's mother not only encourages him to stay with her but inhibits his development still further by a paralyzing prohibition against any association with other women. There is a strong suggestion here of narcissistic overprotectiveness: it is interesting that although Cymoent names her son after his father, she does all she can to ignore his human heritage, and treats him as if he had descended from her line alone ("dear image of my self", she calls him<sup>32</sup>).

This antithetical pattern suggests that Marinell represents (in the context of Britomart's story) the aspect of herself which she must repress in her quest for Artegall--her desire for parental protection and infantile dependence, her longing not to make her way across a dangerous sea but (metaphorically) to fall asleep under it, her preference for a prophecy which would have allowed her to avoid the complications and the threat of adult love. In resisting Marinell, Britomart is resisting an

impulse inside herself which she projects outward. By presenting Britomart's anger as apparently gratuitous--by having her displace onto another individual her rage at her own inner helplessness--Spenser is able to suggest the limitations of her self-understanding at this point. The episode conveys, then, both blameable irascibility and at the same time a healthy instinct to go forward towards adulthood. Marinell comes along at this point in the narrative as a result of Britomart's emotional surrender; he personifies an aspect of it. His presence images her weakness, but her determined resistance to him conveys her strength. He appears on the scene just at the point when Britomart's depression has begun to lift, when Glauce has cheered her up by reminding her of her providential mission; only at such a point can he take shape before her in a form which she can fight against. He blocks her way; she has to knock him down in order to go forward. When she contemptuously implies that his threats are empty ones ("Words fearen babes", she says, 3.4.15.3) her very bravado suggests that perhaps she is a little afraid and that a part of her wishes to be the baby which Marinell remains.

The detail of the loot from the sea with which Nereus enriches his spoiled grandson is a richly suggestive one. Britomart "wondred much" (3.4.18.7) at the treasure under her feet, but she rejects it with contempt before we know where it came from (just as she rejects Marinell before we know where he came from). Again the flashback, which fills in the details about the Rich Strond, tends to prove her intuition correct. Marinell's possession of the treasure is essentially unjust. Cymoent, while she wants to keep her son imprisoned within her family and her world.



and play down the human aspect of his heritage, wants him at the same time to have all the privileges of his earthly nature. Nereus' possession of these spoils is a kind of theft, for he has enriched himself by the destruction of merchant ships—

through the ouerthrow  
 And wreckes of many wretches, which did weepe,  
 And often walle their wealth, which he from them did keepe.  
 (3.4.22.7)

The power which Marinell possesses is unearned: it is only at his grandfather's command that "The sea vnto him voluntary brings" the death-tainted loot, so that "shortly he a great Lord did appeare" (3.4.23.7,8)

through no exertion of his own. The sea-people in this canto have a somewhat parasitic relationship to the land-world: Cymoent is impregnated and her father enriched by land-dwellers whose energy they exploit and whose creations they hoard.

Britomart's contempt for the treasure is on the literal level a refusal to be slowed down by riches which would delay her in her quest.

The stanza which describes her reaction assigns a moral value to the sheer physical momentum of her forward motion:

The martiall Mayd stayd not him to lament,  
 But forward rode, and kept her readie way  
 Along the strond, which as she ouer-went,  
 She saw bestowed all with rich aray  
 Of pearles and pretious stones of great assay,  
 And all the grauell mixt with golden owre;  
 Whereat she wondred much, but would not stay  
 For gold, or perles, or pretious stones an howre,  
 But them despised all; for all was in her powre.  
 (3.4.18)

Britomart's lofty indifference recalls heroes from myth and romance who win the woman they are after by steadfastly ignoring the materialistic distractions which tempt them to abandon the chase--Atalanta's suitor,

for example, who will not stop to pick up the gold apple; the archetype suggests a masculine kind of singlemindedness. Britomart's obliviousness to the products of sophisticated culture, to all forms of high artifice, is always a strength; her awe at the cost of Malecasta's interior decoration was a dangerous distraction, but her reserve in the face of the sterile luxury in the House of Busirane will give her great power. The treasure here is later described as "The spoyle of all the world" (3.4.23.3) and is said to surpass "The wealth of th'East, and pompe of Persian kings" (3.4.23.4, Malecasta had resembled a Persian queen); it is not merely goods but a culture which has been pillaged, and her ability to ignore the strange glamour of the glittering shore suggests the power of puritanical integrity. Here, as in the house of Busirane, she is curious about but not corrupted by the incongruous juxtaposition of wealth and emptiness ("Straunge thing it seem'd, that none was to possesse/ So rich purueyance, ne them keepe with carefulnesse", 3.11.53.8). The treasure is "in her powre" because she despises it, because she is oblivious to certain kinds of sinister artifice which it represents.

The treasure has other associations as well: it suggests in a paradoxical way the potential richness of the underwater world. There is a stream of imagery connected with Britomart that suggests that her strength is rooted in the dark underground layers of her being: Merlin tells her for example that her great family tree will spring up from deep roots (3.3.22.2) and though the dark beginning to which he refers is specifically her love-melancholy, the metaphor connects with other underworld and undersea images to suggest more than its local meaning. The treasure

which Britomart disdains has been cast up out of the bottom of the sea; since the sea had originally devoured it, the implied metaphor is one of vomiting:

Eftsoones his heaped waues [Nereus] did commaund,  
 Out of their hollow bosome forth to throw  
 All the huge threasure, which the sea below  
 Had in his greedie gulfe deuoured deepe.

(3.4.22.4)

The treasure thus has ambiguous associations both with high culture and with the lower depths; it is richly beautiful, but both Nereus' seizure of it and its subsequent disgorging are unpleasant acts. There is the suggestion that it ought to be left alone, that even to touch it would for Britomart represent a dangerous kind of descent. Her readiness not to tamper with or look too closely at what should have remained underwater is another aspect of her charismatic purity. Later on in Book V, before she will be ready to marry, she will have to deal--though never consciously--with the "underworld" level of her psyche. But in the Book of Chastity it is appropriate that she refuse to glance at the disgorged treasure. Her "powre" over it depends on her lack of curiosity about it.

Readers who simply condemn Britomart for her irascibility forget that it is only because Britomart invades Marinell's territory, fulfils Proteus' prophecy and thus clarifies its meaning for his mother that Marinell is liberated from the undersea world of his mother's family into full humanity and eventual union with Florimell.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Proteus' prophecy has been fulfilled by Britomart's attack before we as readers even hear about it emphasizes her liberating energy. Britomart's determination to free herself also leads to the freeing of Marinell,

for it awakens Cymoent to the enormity of her error. Cymoent's misinterpretation of Proteus' prophecies is based on turning his words, which are meant literally, into a metaphor. Proteus, whose very name tells us that his prophecies are doomed to be misunderstood, in fact gives Cymoent a straightforward piece of advice: he

Bad her from womankind to keepe him well;  
For of a woman he should haue much ill,  
A virgin strange and stout him should dismay, or kill.  
(3.4.25.7)

Cymoent's possessive adoration predisposes her to misinterpret this advice and to take "kill" in the Petrarchan sense (she uses language in the same way as those mournful ladies, her rivals, who complain that they are "dying" for love of him, 3.4.26.8-9). Her interpretation derives partly from her conception of the feminine nature; like Shaw's Womanly Woman, she is unable to imagine a feminine threat as anything but sexual:

His mother bad him womens loue to hate,  
For she of womans force did feare no harme.  
(3.4.27.7)

Again Spenser associates figurative language with erotic self-deception. Marinell cannot be liberated from Cymoent's overprotection except by means of Britomart's attack. Seeing her son lying wounded, she at last realizes that there may be one thing worse than losing him to another woman:

I feared loue: but they that loue do liue,  
But they that die, doe neither loue nor hate.  
(3.4.37.5)

There is still some doubt about her conviction about this point. In the same speech, she goes on to reflect that it might have been better for him never to have been born

So life is losse, and death felicitie.  
Sad life worse then glad death.

(3.4.38.7)

The rhetoric of Cymoent's lament suggests a kind of blurring of categories which characterizes her maternal emotion: life and love and death are made equivalent. Her use of language not only suggests her fatalism but also implicates her in her son's erotic impasse. But Britomart's attack does set in motion a chain of events which induces Cymoent in Book IV to seek alternate advice (from Neptune this time) and which concludes, in Book V, with his marriage to Florimell.

The sea itself, Cymoent's element, symbolizes a state of being which Britomart instinctively has to avoid. It is a place where nothing has a sharp outline, a protean place of blurring and emotional ambiguity. The sea, which rages before Britomart as an image of her conflict with herself, gives way before Cymoent, smoothing itself in sensuous surrender. Spenser's cloying alliteration emphasizes the self-indulgent ease of the sea-life led by Cymoent and her women:

A teme of Dolphins raunged in aray,  
Drew the smooth charet of sad Cymoent;  
They were all taught by Triton, to obey  
To the long raynes, at her commaundement;  
As swift as swallowes, on the waues they went.

(3.4.33.1)

The comparison of the dolphins to swallows suggests an analogy of the undersea with the "real" world above, an analogy which is extended in the description of the "bowre" where Marinell is laid:

Deepe in the bottome of the sea, her bowre  
Is built of hollow billowes heaped hye,  
Like to thicke clouds, that threat a stormy showre,  
And vaulted all within, like to the sky,  
In which the Gods do dwell eternally

(3.4.43.1)

This secure shelter is a parody of the world in which Britomart must seek her destiny; the waves above his head look like clouds which could explode into rain (as Britomart's rage did), but in fact they are not; there is no violence, no release here; though the ceiling resembles "the sky/ In which the Gods do dwell", it is not in fact the sky, and the wind-God to whom Britomart prayed cannot deliver Marinell, whose shelter, which is a prison as well as a retreat, is a kind of preconscious world which cannot be disturbed by his inspiring breath. Britomart, who in certain ways is Cymoent's antitype (both, for example, are defined by their role as mothers) is right to avoid the underwater world and all that it represents; that she is able instinctively to do this without even seeing it suggests the rightness of her intuition.

The episode with which the canto concludes shows Arthur struggling against a similar kind of submergence. The darkness which envelops him and hides Florimell from him is like the watery world of Cymoent, the triumph of chaos and emotional disorder over clarity and light. Arthur's role in Canto 4 is interesting because for

once instead of helping the titular hero he himself falls prey to the same kind of problem. To have Arthur too succumb to melancholy emphasizes the danger of the emotion from which Britomart has extricated herself. Because his goal is higher, Arthur's lapse is even more serious than Britomart's: whereas she has fallen merely into discouragement, he has fallen into temptation.

Oft did he wish, that Lady faire mote bee  
His Faery Queene, for whom he did complaine:  
Or that his Faery Queene were such, as shee.

(3.4.54.6)

The alternatives are ambiguously phrased: he seems not to know whether he wishes that he could find an excuse for his attraction to Florimell (if she were his Faery Queen the intensity of his disappointment would be justified), or, alternatively, that his sworn lady were herself more like the one he is pursuing. Spenser describes his thought processes in language similar to that used to describe Britomart's:

And thousand fancies bet his idle braine  
With their light wings, the sights of semblants vaine.  
(3.4.54.4)

Like Britomart, too, Arthur responds to an outer world which is an externalization of his inner state, though he is less conscious than she that this is what he is doing. The darkness that hides Florimell from him is like the darkness of depression and wavering loyalty which has overtaken his spirit. The very fact that Arthur can project what is really his own failing onto "Night" suggests that the way he chooses to express his predicament is itself a symptom of it. Again erotic self-deception is associated with the unconscious use of figurative language-- an allegoria of which he fails to recognize one term.

The metaphors he uses associate night, darkness, water, depth and primal chaos. Night, he says, was

begot in heauen, but for thy bad  
And brutish shape thrust downe to hell below,  
Where by the grim floud of Cocytus slew  
Thy dwelling is, in Herebus blacke hous.

(3.4.55.5)

The association of a watery underworld with darkness and chaos inevitably works backward as a commentary on Cymoent's world, however idyllic it might have seemed on its own terms. The very conventionality of Arthur's

complaint invokes the orthodox Christian meaning of these images, so that the pretty pagan romanticism of Cymoent and her retinue is placed in a new context. Britomart and Arthur must fulfil their destiny through pain and effort; the undersea retreat represents an option not open to the human hero.

Britomart's speech and Arthur's are similar in structure. Whereas Cymoent's blurs life and death together, Britomart and Arthur tend to think in creative polarities. A tempestuous sea which can submerge a ship implies a wind which can drive it to its goal; night which favours concealment and violent death will give way to day which stands for truth and life. Britomart concludes with a prayer to the providential wind, Arthur with a prayer to the returning sun:

For day discouers all dishonest wayes,  
And sheweth each thing, as it is indeed:  
The prayes of high God he faire displayes,  
And his large bountie rightly doth areed.  
Dayes dearest children be the blessed seed,  
Which darknesse shall subdew, and heauen win:  
Truth is his daughter; he her first did breed,  
Most sacred virgin, without spot of sin.  
Our life is day, but death with darkness doth begin.

(3.4.59)

Daylight is clarity, truth, sharpness of outline--seeing "each thing, as it is indeed". Britomart is often described in terms of light (in Book III, the light of the sun). In this stanza, Truth is personified as a "sacred virgin . . . without spot of sin". The canto as a whole associates chastity with light in a special sense. Britomart is the heroine of chastity partly because of the energy she invests in seeing things as they are. Her rage at Marinell, though it involves self-deception, is at the same time a rebellion against self-deception. The fact that she consis-



tently draws inadequate conclusions and that her actions remain more instinctive than rational make her one of the most human "characters" in The Faerie Queene. Whereas other heroes tend simply to embody the virtue for which they stand, in Britomart's case there seems to be a tension between her rhetoric and her behaviour which gives her personality an edgy reality. This kind of contradiction makes Britomart especially satisfying to the twentieth-century reader; it emerges, however, not because Spenser is using a different means of "characterization" for Britomart, but because the virtue of chastity as he conceives it involves a precarious equilibrium of conflicting impulses, a tension of opposites which seems analogous to the modern view of character as a conflict of half-conscious drives.

Having said this, it is necessary to add that there are passages involving Britomart which seem to require a response to her "character" in the novelistic sense; her next appearance in Book III, her involvement in the episode at the house of Malbecco, is one of these. The tale of Paridell and Hellenore, told with Ariostan gusto and detail, occupies two cantos; it immediately precedes the two-canto account of Britomart's

triumph over Busirane. It is hard to explain why, if Britomart is chastity incarnate, she is so spectacularly unsuccessful in inhibiting the boldest and most dramatic episode of infidelity in the book. Britomart's obliviousness to the sexual byplay at Malbecco's dinner-table is in keeping with her "character"--there is something schoolgirlish in her innocence of what Paridell is up to and in her naive enthusiasm for the overt topic of his conversation--but it is an awkward drawback if her allegorical role is to root out unchastity wherever it occurs, for this she utterly fails to do. It is always possible to account somehow for the actions of allegorical characters--possible here to argue, for example, that Britomart personifies the kind of chastity which works against self-deception and which has little power against the deliberate, self-satisfied lasciviousness of Paridell and Hellenore. Such an argument would in fact tie in neatly with my overall thesis which involves Britomart's chastity with perception. It remains difficult to see, however, why Spenser would place an episode which has many echoes of the Malecasta canto near the end of the book, right before Britomart's final triumph. Britomart is deceived by the flirtatious "eyeplay" at Malbecco's table just as she was unaware of the burning glances of her hostess in the first canto and, as before, seems unable to decode the social game which is being played (though of course in this case it is not directed towards her). If her spiritual history is intended to be in any sense progressive--if we are to perceive her developing strengths which she can use against Busirane--it seems awkward to show her very much as she was when we first met her, just before she defeats him. Britomart clearly does "grow" and "change"

if we consider the scope of her story as a whole; the stages she passes through in Book V, for example, have a clearly progressive chronology. To observe this fact is not however to insist that such development must be observed at every point in her story; if, as has been assumed, Books III and IV were written first, it is possible that Spenser is using her in a more simply exemplary way in her own book of chastity, displaying aspects of her virtue rather than showing it develop and grow stronger as time goes on. This is in any case the only assumption which can make sense of her contribution to Canto 9, and it is on this assumption that I shall discuss briefly a few possible aspects of the Malbecco episode.

The virtue which Britomart exemplifies in these cantos serves as a foil to the vice illustrated by the episode as a whole. This vice is not merely marital jealousy but all the social ramifications of a certain kind of self-interested wariness, the lust to assert one's own ego at the expense of society as a whole. The episode begins with the knights squabbling for a place in a pigsty; Malbecco can think of nothing but keeping his wife and his money to himself; Hellenore is out to deceive her husband, Paridell to seduce Hellenore, and Trompart and Braggadocchio to fleece Malbecco. The issues raised are not merely sexual; rather, the sexual intrigue serves as a symbolic epitome of the wider tension between privacy and communality. Spenser makes quite clear that Malbecco's marriage was a mistake, not only because a young wife is bound to deceive an older husband but also because an older husband is bound to suspect that he may be deceived. Malbecco is introduced to begin with not as a cuckold but as an offender against hospitality, a "cancred

crabbed Carle . . . That has no skill of Court nor courtesie" (3.9.3.5); his obsessive financial greed is analogous to his jealous possessiveness (3.9.4), for he reserves for his own private delectation goods which, in one way or another, ought to be offered to the wider community. His marriage is an unjust economy, for he is guilty of having made a bargain which he cannot fulfil (for "he is old, and withered like hay, / Unfit faire Ladies service to supply", 3.9.5.1--the word "service" has not only a sexual but an economic connotation<sup>34</sup>). Because he knows that he has been unfair, he suspects Hellenore's virtue and keeps her closed up, deprived "of kindly ioy and naturall delight" (3.9.5.9), not only of sex but of normal social intercourse. This kind of possessiveness is unjust not only to Hellenore but to the people with whom she would normally come in contact; in fact when his belligerent guests demand the sight and company of their hostess "to do them more delight" (3.9.25.9), there is no suggestion that their expectations are unreasonable. The episode is a parable about the art of possession; both Paridell and Malbecco aim to "possess" Hellenore in inappropriate ways. A mercantile metaphor runs through the narrative: because Hellenore undervalues herself, having "wholly sold" her heart to Paridell "without regard of gaine, or scath, / Or care of credite" (3.10.11.3), she meets her deserved fate when she is passed "as commune good" (3.10.36.9) among the band of satyrs, a kind of sexual communism as dehumanizing as Malbecco's possessiveness. The shame of being paid for doing an honourable act is a theme cynically exploited by Braggadocchio (3.10.29) whose only aim is to get hold of Malbecco's money. Malbecco becomes a genuinely pathetic figure at the point when he finally realizes that the financial model is an inappropriate one and

offers his wife a free pardon (3.10.51), but the loss of his money is the last straw that drives him to insanity. Hoarding money is metaphorically associated with death: Trompart refers to "your treasures graue" (3.10.42.8) and the narrator speaks of the place "where late his treasure he entombed had" (3.10.54.2). Malbecco himself ends up in a kind of grave, leading a living death, in a small dark cave quite cut off from his fellow man. Courteous exchange, generous openness with hospitality, with money and with love is dealt indirectly by the narrative, which presents us with parodic exaggerations of both its excess (Hellenore's promiscuity) and its defect (Malbecco's greed). Malbecco's real sin is that he is unsociable, in the widest sense, and so are Paridell and Hellenore, who are recklessly willing to destroy the bonds which hold society together. The fact that a sexual intrigue serves as the focus of these ideas should not blind the reader to the episode's wider meaning, but it does allow Britomart's "chastity" to be set against the vice in a fresh and meaningful way.

In comparison with these wary, self-interested manipulators, Britomart is open, frank and even naive. Unveilings are always significant moments in Britomart's story; it is important that she doffs her helmet readily before the assembled company, so that she is revealed to them but not they to her. Although they marvel at her beauty ("euery one her likte, and euery one her lov'd", 3.9.24.9) her presence in no way inhibits the progress of the sexual intrigue; the only real result is that Paridell can adapt the tone of his conversation to her as a lady (notice for example the flatteringly obsequious rhythms of his speech in

stanza 47). His artful chatter is carefully directed at both women at once; it happens that the topic he has hit upon to arouse the interest of his hostess evokes an enthusiastic response from Britomart, and this smooth Italianate courtier is quite able to follow her along the conversational lines she prefers while communicating to Hellenore a very different intention.

Spenser repeatedly emphasizes Paridell's skillful manipulative use of the rhetorical arts. Paridell "speaks" to Hellenore both with his eyes and with his tongue, sending "close messages of loue to her at will" (3.9.27.9). His "speaking lookes" communicate his feelings with ease, "For all that art he learned had of yore" (3.9.28.2,4). Hellenore is apt at decoding his messages, for she was practised in "that lewd lore", and "in his eye his meaning wisely red" (3.9.28.5,6). The analogy between looks and words, between verbal and visual messages, is reiterated: Paridell is just as slick with his tongue as with his eyes; he boasted "a kindly pryde/ Of gracious speach, and skill his words to frame" (3.9.32.6). He is in fact a "learned lover" (3.10.6.1), well versed in Petrarchan commonplaces--

He wept, and wayld, and false laments belyde,  
Saying, but if she Mercie would him giue  
That he note algates eye, yet did his death forgie--  
(3.10.7.7)

and practised in the arts outlined by Castiglione:

And otherwhiles with amorous delights,  
And pleasing toyes he would her entertaine,  
Now singing sweetly, to surprise her sprights,  
Now making layes of loue and louers paine,  
Bransles, Ballads, virelayes and verses vaine;  
Oft purposes, oft riddles he deuysd,  
And thousands like, which flowed in his braine.  
(3.10.8.1)

Just as Paridell's cynical opportunism about sex is the polar opposite of romantic delusion, so his manipulative virtuosity with language (in its widest sense--with all forms of social codes and signals) places him at the opposite end of the spectrum from those figures whose erotic confusion is reflected in their obliviousness to metaphor. When Paridell signals his sexual intentions to his hostess by spilling the wine and forming letters with it--a ploy learned from Ovid<sup>35</sup>--the narrator suggests the depth of his perfidy with a shocking and much-admired comparison, "A sacrament prophane in mistery of wine" (3.9.30.9).<sup>36</sup> The metaphor suggests that Paridell's deepest sin is his recklessly exploitive use of the means of human communication and communion. Like his host\*he cuts the bonds of trust and courtesy which allow society to function, but\*his way of doing it is by corrupting language. Both Paridell and Hellenore, whose alacrity, in reading his signals is repeatedly emphasized, are detestable in their open-eyed cynicism. Malbecco, who despite his selfish possessiveness does have some real affection for his wife, is blind in one eye, but, as the narrator ironically suggests, the kind of love which Paridell and Hellenore exemplify is not blind at all; their cynical opportunism does not involve self-deception and is all the more dehumanizing on that account.

Britomart's spontaneity and openness and her inability to "read" their private language become positive values in the contest of this guarded and exploitive company. Because she does not see what is going on, Britomart responds to what she hears on the "literal level" only. Paridell uses a conventional lament for the glory that was Troy (stanza 33) simply to call attention to himself and to signal his interest to Hellenore

with an implicit comparison between herself and Helen (stanza 25). Evidently he is cynically talking over her head, however, for she does not take due warning from the fact that he is descended from the great deceiver and the woman he deceived. Paridell's descent is a descent indeed; even the names of his forebearers (Parius, Paridas, Paridell) become increasingly effete and diminutive, so that the very genealogy he uses to call attention to himself suggests what a cheap, small-scale seducer he is in comparison to his notorious ancestor. Britomart, however, takes in nothing of this; all she seems to have registered is the pathos of "Priams Citie sackt" (3.9.38.2). The topos which was a mere rhetorical convention for Paridell has engaged her imagination, for when she joins the conversation it is with a meditation on mutability, on that "lamentable fall of famous towne" which "makes unsample of mans wretched state, / That floures so fresh at morne, and fades at euening late" (3.9.39.2,8), with an expression of sympathy for a fellow-Trojan (3.9.40.1-4) and with a request for a continuation of the story of Aeneas. Britomart stands for life and growth and human contact; her generosity towards the knight who had previously attacked her and her ardent feeling for the fallen city and its descendants reflect an open receptivity which is the direct antithesis of everything else that is going on at Malbecco's dinner-table. The story she wants told is one which points to the future; in contrast to the diminution of Paris' family tree and, in the next canto, the degenerative metamorphosis of Malbecco, the chronicle of Aeneas and of the founding of Rome and of Troynouant is one which opens out towards higher and fuller human development.



The rhythms of regeneration and degeneration, growth and decay contribute to the total meaning of the episode. The city of London is presented both as the perfect flowering of the Trojan plant and yet as a smaller-scale version of the great legendary societies of the past. Both Britomart and Paridell insist that London is the ultimate culmination of a historical process; how then does Spenser suggest at the same time that the present is a diminished thing? Partly through the portrait of Paridell, whose fashions in wooing make him a very contemporary man whom Elizabethan readers would recognize as the mean and frivolous Italianate descendant of the mighty Romans of old; partly through Paridell's description of the British giants whom Brutus had to overcome, creatures on a much larger though more primitive scale than the men who ousted them. Spenserian ironies derive from the fact that what is future for Britomart and the company around the dinner-table is present for the Elizabethan reader. In fact, when Britomart visualizes Troynouant, she slips into the present tense: ("It Troynouant is hight, that with the waues/ Of wealthy Thamis washed is along," 3.9.45.1) and so does Paridell, when he picks up the chronicle of Brutus ("His worke great Troynouant, his worke is eke/ Faire Lincolne", 3.9.51.1). Both of them speak in the prophetic vein of an idealized future, but the illogical verb tenses make the reader aware that their future is his present, that the perfect realm of which they speak is the one in which he lives; their very assertion of its perfection might evoke not only nationalistic pride but also an uneasy awareness of the distance between myth and history. Fashioned as she seems to be on a scale too generous to observe the subtle minutiae

of Paridell's byplay, Britomart in her simplicity is the only one of the company who retains the primitive purity of a figure out of the chronicles he relates. She seems in confrontation with Paridell to personify a more heroic and more innocent past, so that her chastity acquires a political dimension. Once again the quality which Britomart impersonates is defined by the rhythms of the narrative units which make up the episode, by the counterpoint of descent and ascent, degeneration and development (Paris declining to Paridell, Brutus wiping out the giants, Troynouant rising to replace Troy and Rome, Malbecco dwindling into Jealousy incarnate). In a historical context the fictional Britomart is at the same time a primitive archetype and a final flowering.

As a literary critic Britomart is naive. Her sympathy for Paridell's pathetic history implies, indeed, that she has forgotten how the Trojan war got started; she quite fails to connect Paridell with Paris' treachery. But, unlike the conniving couple, Britomart has an instinctively appropriate response to symbol. The detail to which she responds most deeply is the image of the city destroyed, and when she picks up the narrative it is to visualize the rise of the second and finally the third Troy:

It Troynouant is hight, that with the waues  
 Of wealthy Thamis washed is along,  
 Vpon whose stubborne neck, whereat he raues  
 With roring rage, and sore him selfe does throng,  
 That all men feare to tempt his billoves strong,  
 She fastned hath her foot, which standes so hy,  
 That it a wonder of the world is song  
 In forreine landes, and, all which passen by,  
 Beholding it from far, do thinke it threates the skye.

The Troian Brute did first that Citie found,  
 And Hygate made the meare thereof by West,  
 And Quert gate by North: that is the bound  
 Toward the land; two riuers bound the rest.

So huge a scope at first him seemed best,  
 To be the compass of his kingdoms seat:  
 So huge a mind could not in lesser rest,  
 Ne in small meares containe his glory great,  
 That Albion had conquered first by warlike feat.

(3.9.45,46)

The building of a city involves possession and control, and Britomart's language emphasizes this. Her image of the city of London personified as a woman with her foot fastened firmly on the "stubborne neck" of the unruly Thames is an emphatic one; it is echoed throughout The Faerie Queene in the visions of other women in a similar posture (Venus with the snake twined around her legs and feet, Isis controlling the crocodile, Mercilla with the lion at her feet, for example). Hellenore's degradation in the society of satyrs is a demonic reversal of the civic order which such an image conveys: the goddess-like power to bind in and civilize is reversed, so that the only fully human creature in their midst encourages the satyrs' bestial instincts. Britomart's vision of the founding of Troynouant has in fact an important relationship to the theme of the Malbecco episode as a whole. Founding a city is ownership in its best sense, seizing it from the primitive giants was an appropriate kind of rivalry, walling it in is a fruitful kind of possessiveness. Unlike the characters in the Malbecco story whose personal greed destroys the bonds of civility, the hero who walls in a city opens up the possibilities of human life. The fact that it is Britomart who expresses this entirely positive vision of power and ownership suggests not only her antithetical relationship to the company she addresses but also her instinctive openness to the great positive symbols of The Faerie Queene.<sup>37</sup>

Britomart, like Paridell, does have a personal interest in the chronicle

he introduces, but it is subsumed in a wider enthusiasm for the future of England as a whole. Paridell uses words in a narrow pragmatic way, exploits language to gain an immediate end. Britomart, however, wants not to manipulate events but to comprehend them, not so much to gain her end as to understand her destiny. Again she is shown as oblivious to the surface but in touch with the centre of events, and again, her chastity is associated with an image--the founding of the city--which involves both binding in and opening out. Innocence and insight, control and spontaneity, critical/naïveté and poetic intuition--these are the paradoxes of the virtue as it emerges just before its climactic victory in the eleventh and twelfth cantos.

Britomart's liberation of Amoret from the enchantment of Busirane can only fully be understood in terms of the nature of her unique virtue as it has been developed in Book III as a whole. Her special power is defined by failure as well as by success. Her uninvolvedness in the Paridell scandal is followed by a more local failure, the one which in fact serves as an introduction to the Busirane episode. It is in chasing that embodiment of Lust, Ollyphant, that Britomart chancing upon Scudamore in the first place and becomes involved in Amoret's rescue. Ollyphant is terrified

of Britomart, who, as the embodiment of chastity, has the power to destroy him, but "swift as any Roe" (3.11.5.8) he outruns her and disappears, leading her into the wood in which Britomart eventually finds Scudamore mourning by a fountain. It is Britomart's failure, then, to encounter and deal with Lust in its crudest form which leads to her climactic ordeal. Spenser is perhaps saying something about the precise quality of Britomart's chastity in having her failure in the simple chase introduce her success in a quite different endeavour. Belpheobe who hunts down and kills Lust in Book IV, Canto 7, performs just the kind of feat which Britomart fails to perform here, perhaps because her absolute unattainability is a more powerful discouragement to lust in its grosser forms than is the chastity that Britomart exemplifies. Britomart cannot be defined by so straightforward an antithesis because her virtue is less a matter of simple repression than a complex balance of insight and blindness which needs for its full definition to be set against a more complex and culturally-defined kind of corruption than anything the monster Ollyphant can represent.

In Book III the relationship between Canto 1, the initiatory ordeal with Malecasta, and Cantos 11 and 12, the final triumph, is an important one. Like Malecasta, the inhabitants of Busirane's castle have decorated their walls with tapestries which glorify their own erotic activity by depicting the gods' involvement in it. The basic two-part structure of the Malecasta episode (the narrative of Venus and Adonis followed by the narrative of Malecasta's assault upon Britomart) is reiterated twice in Britomart's experiences in the house of Busirane. She

spends two days and two nights in the castle. During the first day she observes the tapestries and carvings; as night falls she is presented with the Masque of Cupid. On the second day she looks over the interior decoration again and on the second night she confronts and defeats Busirane in his inner room. The nocturnal events--Cupid's masque and the confrontation with the magician himself--are darkened versions of the daylight images and have a kind of "antimasque" relationship to the pageant of the loves of the gods and of the "mighty conquerors and captains strong" which Britomart observes on the walls. The first parallel, between the tapestries and Cupid's masque, is particularly clear. Both begin with a catalogue or crowd of figures (the gods and their women in Canto 11, the masquers in Canto 12), reach a climax with the appearance of Cupid (the golden statue in Canto 11, "the winged God himself" in Canto 12) and dwindle away into a somewhat anticlimactic catalogue suggesting the darker side of sexual involvement (the gold carvings and broken weapons in Canto 11, the mob of evil consequences--"Strife, Anger, Care, Sorrow, Poverty, Death"--in Canto 12). Both the Busirane and the Malecasta episodes proceed downwards in a descending spiral: in Canto 1, the love of Venus and Adonis is imitated on the social level in the evening partying and finally reduced to its essentials when Malecasta moves towards Britomart's bedchamber; in Cantos 11 and 12 the passion which drives even the gods to their destiny is reduced to an elaborately ritualized game of sensibility in the Masque of Cupid which in turn evaporates into a torturer's enchantment in the chamber where Amoret is held prisoner. In overcoming both Malecasta and Busirane,

Britomart has her white clothing sprinkled with drops of blood, an emblematic detail the repetition of which suggests that the initiatory ordeal has prepared Britomart for her final victory.<sup>38</sup> There is a connection between Britomart's innocence about Malecasta and her ability to rescue Amoret; she has become more wary and courageous but no more responsive to erotic artifice than she was at the beginning of her quest. The fact that both the Malecasta and the Busirane episodes are introduced by premonitory story-telling tapestries suggests that Spenser is concerned with the relationship between art and life. It is not Britomart's wisdom but on the contrary her very inability to "read" literatures that have no meaning to her which is the source of her success.

Erotic delusion is the subject of the episode, for images which have been built up in the mind evaporate before a mind which perceives them differently. Britomart is realistically daunted by the flames which surround Busirane's castle and yet when she makes up her mind to go through them they divide before her outstretched sword. Spenser uses at this point a metaphor like the one which had described Britomart's rage at Marinell, the image of the sudden rainshower. Her outstretched sword, he says, divided the flames

as a thunder bolt  
Perceth the yielding ayre, and doth displace  
The soring clouds into sad showres ymolt.

(3.11.25.6)

Britomart's depression had turned into anger as clouds turn into rain; here the transformation is an even more positive one, for what in Canto 3 could have seemed like a juvenile temper-tantrum is evidently in the present context aggression rightly channeled, directed against something

outside of herself and on behalf of someone else. Alpers suggests that the purpose of this detail is simply to indicate Britomart's role as "magical heroine", and continues: "in the setting of Busyrane's palace, the immunity of innocence is magical. We have no way of understanding why Britomart is unharmed by the palace--and we simply accept the fact that she is not."<sup>39</sup> Her victory over the flames, however, does help to suggest the reason for her success: it is a premonitory emblem suggesting that the way to counter Busirane's magic is to act as if it had no power to harm. To convey the nature and power of a warped erotic fixation, Spenser uses the metaphor of magical enchantment--an apt one, for it suggests both the power and the fragility of such a delusion. Magic is also an apt metaphor for the spell words cast, for the power of books over the imagination: like poetry, magic is the right words in the right order. It is now generally agreed that in the Busirane episode Spenser is investigating perversions of sexuality which derive from the conventionalized literature of courtly love.<sup>40</sup> Glauce's magic was as ineffectual as her versifying was second-rate; Busirane's, however, has a powerful imaginative tradition behind it--a tradition to the charm of which Spenser himself is scarcely immune. Britomart, however, responds very much less than the poet to such charm, and her success against Busirane depends partly on her obliviousness to its attractions.

Robert Durling, in his treatment of the role of the narrator in Renaissance romance, distinguishes between the Narrator and the Poet,<sup>41</sup> and the distinction is a useful one in looking at Spenser's treatment of the house of Busirane. I suggest that there are at least three per-



spectives here: that of the Narrator, who keeps the reader's responses in line by moralizing about the content of the tapestries and the masque; that of the Poet, who takes aesthetic delight in what the Narrator as moralist must condemn; and that of Britomart, whose repeated failure to "read" or "riddle" the pageant which passes before her or to delight in its beauty protects her from its enchantment and finally allows her to liberate Amoret.

The Narrator surrounds the spectacle of the tapestries with a moral framework. His judicious accent is heard most clearly at the beginning of the passage and at the end, in emotive metaphor as well as in direct commentary. It is he who, in describing the gold thread in the cloth, alerts us to a sinister undercurrent:

the rich metall lurked priuilly,  
As faining to be hid from enuious eye;  
Yet here, and there, and euery where vnwares  
It shewd it selfe, and shone vnwillingly;  
Like a discoloured Snake, whose hidden snares  
Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht backe declares.  
(3.11.28.4)

The simile of the snake suggests that there is an element of furtive shame in all this luxury, a moral evil in the golden world of pagan sensuality which it is the Christian reader's duty to ferret out and to condemn. The imagery of flickering changeable colours, of the variegated tapestry and the pied back of the "discoloured Snake", perhaps prefigure the rainbow wings of Cupid in stanza 47 (piedness being usually emblematic of evil); the "envious eye" surreptitiously spying out what ought to be concealed suggests furtive lasciviousness. The narrator goes on to announce that the tapestries tell a tale of cruelty, of "Cupids warres

... And cruel battels" against the gods, and "huge massacres" of captains and kings (3.11.29.5-8). Yet once he has begun to describe the actual pictures in the tapestries, Spenser seems to forget his own moral warnings and to allow himself a wider range of response; the Poet's voice takes over and places a rather different value on the loves of the gods.

The Poet, evincing something like Keats' 'negative capability', becomes much more involved in the stories which unfold before his eyes. As he observes the fate of Europa, he interjects:

Ah, how the fearefull Ladies tender hart  
Did liuely seem to tremble, where she saw  
The huge seas vnder her t'obay her seruants law.

(3.11.30.7)

This seems partly a sympathetic response to the emotions of Europa, partly the artist's enthusiasm for the sheer verisimilitude of the representation. He scoffs (rather in the tone of Satyrane in Canto 9) at the "foolish garde" who had hoped to keep Danaë inviolate, seeming almost to rejoice with Jove in the futility of their endeavour (3.11.31). He describes the artist's treatment of Leda and the swan in a wonderful stanza of lyrical enthusiasm:

Then was he turned into a snowy Swan,  
To win faire Leda to his louely trade:  
O wondrous skill, and sweet wit of the man,  
That her in daffadillies sleeping made.  
From scorching heate her daintie limbes to shade. (3.11.32.1)

In his study of the figure of Proteus, Bartlett Giamatti has discussed Spenser's fascination with and distrust of the shaping power of the poetic imagination;<sup>42</sup> no better example could be chosen to illustrate his perception than this passage. There is a metamorphic power in the artist's

fingers which echoes the metamorphic energy in the god himself:

Whiles the proud Bird ruffing his fethers wyde,  
And brushing his faire brest, did her inuade:  
She slept; yet twixt her eyelids closely spyde,  
How towards her he rusht, and smiled at his pryde.  
( 3.11.32.6)

Both are masters of appearances, artists who ply their "lovely trade" with a "wondrous skill and sweet wit" which charms their willing victims. And it is clear that Leda is a willing victim: she is only pretending to be asleep, but is actually thrilled with the magnificent bird whose assault she "closely spyde" through half-closed eyelids. The image of the spying eye retains its overtone of lasciviousness, yet the detail does not so much ask us to judge Leda as call attention to the temporary suspension of moral condemnation in this celebratory stanza. It is worth insisting that the tapestries record not merely violence, suffering and indignity, but also pleasure and beauty. Although some of the metamorphoses are degrading--Phoebus becomes a "cowheard vile" (3.11.39.3), Bacchus a bunch of grapes--others are not; Neptune, magnificent in his own form, is impressive also as a "Dolphin fayre" (3.11.42.6) and a winged horse, both of which shapes retain his power and beauty and swift movement. And although some of the gods' victims suffer, even to death--Hyacinth and Coronis live on only as flowers--others not only survive but clearly enjoy their involvement with their Olympian ravishers--Leda and Alcmena, for example, for whose sake Jove "Three nights in one . . . did put, her pleasures lenger to partake" (3.11.33.8). The tapestries acknowledge feminine as well as masculine sexual pleasure; indeed, they offer a fairly complete pageant of passion, its glory as well as its ugliness.

The very rapidity of the metamorphoses suggests the zestful if somewhat frantic energy which the gods expend in the pursuit of love. And throughout his description the Poet retains his almost involuntary delight in the artistic accuracy and artistry of the designs: "Wondrous delight it was", he says, to observe the expressions of apprehension on the faces of the shepherds who watched Jupiter fly off with Ganymede (3.11.34.6); Phoebus' metamorphoses are "most liuely writ" (3.11.39.9), Neptune appears "In his diuine resemblance wondrous lyke" (3.11.40.2). Spenser as Poet registers not only the range of beauty and passion in the old myths themselves but also the answering energy and skill which they evoke in the artist who attempts to reanimate them. Love itself becomes an art form, liberating creative energy and joyful ingenuity both in lovers and in artists who record their exploits.

But as the pageant draws to a close the voice of the Narrator reestablishes itself. The catalogue concludes with its most perverse and degraded examples of passion, that of "The mighty Mars" who is reduced to "womanish teares, and . . . vnwarlike smarts, / Priuilly moystening his horrid cheek" (3.11.44.6) and of Cupid himself, who perversely wounds himself with his own arrows "That he might tast the sweet consuming woe, / Which he had wrought to many others moe" (3.11.45.4). The censorious tone reappears just at the point when the Narrator becomes aware again of his function, when he begins to feel weary of the long account he has to give: "Long were to tell . . ." he complains in stanza 44; and in the next:

But to declare the mournfull Tragedyes,  
 And spoiles, wherewith he all the ground did strow,  
 More eath to number, with how many eyes  
 High heauen beholds sad louers nightly theeuer eyes.

(3.11.45.6)

It is his voice we hear at this point, interpreting the allegory: the mob of lords and commoners mingling together "without respect of person or of port" is intended "To shew Dan Cupids powere and great effort" (3.11.46.4-5); the metamorphoses of love in the gold carvings are intended to indicate that "loue in thousand monstrous formes doth oft appeare" (3.11.51.9), the broken weapons of mighty conquerors are gathered together "To shew the victors might and mercillesse intent" (3.11.52.9).

It is the Narrator who warns the reader directly, in the middle of his description of the statue of Cupid with its golden and leaden arrows, "Ah man beware, how thou those darts behold" (3.11.48.5), and who condemns the allegiance of those who worship Cupid as "fowle Idolatree" (3.11.49.5). It is as if, recalled to himself by the recollection of his duty, he censors the aesthetic response and reasserts the moral one.

Which of these perspectives is Britomart's? Spenser makes quite clear, I think, that she shares neither that aesthetic enthusiasm of the Poet nor the interpretive insight of the Narrator. As she gazes at the emblematic statue of Cupid,

That wondrous sight faire Britomart amazed,  
 Ne seeing could her wonder satisfie,  
 But euermore and more vpon it gazed,  
 The whiles the passing brightness her fraile senses dazed.

(3.11.49.6)

Britomart is simply dazzled with the sheer richness of the spectacle; she responds only with blank amazement. In the second room, the walls of

which are overlaid with gold, she is amazed chiefly that all this wealth is apparently not being guarded:

The warlike Mayde beholding earnestly  
 The goodly ordinance of this rich place,  
 Did greatly wonder, ne could satisfie  
 Her greedy eyes with gazing a long space,  
 But more she meruaild that no footings trace,  
 Nor wight appear'd, but wastefull emptinesse,  
 And solemne silence ouer all that place:  
 Straunge thing it seem'd, that none was to possesse  
 So rich purueyance, ne them keepe with carefulnesse.

(3.11.53)

Her response is at least superficially like that in the palace of Malecasta, where, unaware of the Narrator's interpretive signals about "superfluous riotize", she had contented herself with simply wondering "whence so sumptous guize/ Might be maintayned" (3.1.33.6-7). Yet the parallel is after all only superficial, because the "wastefull emptinesse", the solemn silence in the house of Busirane is in fact the core of its meaning: <sup>43</sup> although she is able to formulate her reason only in inadequate terms, Britomart instinctively responds correctly to its numinous strangeness.

She also responds correctly to the mysterious inscription over the door.<sup>44</sup> To be sure, the warning "Be bold, be bold, be not too bold" is as inscrutable to the reader as to Britomart; so are many other passages in The Faerie Queene, but it is rare for Spenser to insist so explicitly on his character's bemusement. Britomart is eager "To search each secret" of the place; it is in casting "her busy eye" around the room for just this purpose that she first notices the inscription: although

she oft and oft it ouer-red,  
 Yet could not find what sence it figured.

(3.11.50.4)

As she passes into the second room she finds the same warning:

And as she lookt about, she did behold,  
 How ouer that same dore was likewise writ,  
Be bold, be bold, and euery where Be bold,  
 That much she muz'd, yet could not construe it  
 By any ridling skill, or commune wit.  
 At last she spyde at that roomes vpper end,  
 Another yron dore, on which was writ,  
Be not too bold; whereto though she did bend  
 Her earnest mind, yet wist not what it might intend.

(3.11.54)

"Earnest" is a key word: Britomart has an "earnest mind", and is shown "beholding earnestly" the richness of the room. She seriously tries to comprehend but she cannot. Important also are the terms in which Spenser describes her failure: she could not "construe" the message "by any ridling skill, or commune wit". Spenser has repeatedly spoken of the pictures in the tapestries as if they were actual stories-- "Therein was writ", he says, the account of Jove's loves (3.11.30.1); the metamorphoses of Phoebus "in that faire arras was most liuely writ" (3.11.39.9)--appropriately enough, since they are emblems which must be read rather than just viewed by the attentive reader. But Britomart cannot "construe" them: the grammatical metaphor suggests her lack of explicit, formal analytic ability. She has no "ridling skill" (it was Paridell who, during his seduction of Hellenore, had been shown as the expert in riddles) nor "commune wit" (the artist who depicted Leda did it with "sweet wit"). Perhaps it is ingenious to align these words with the contexts in which they had been most recently used, yet both with their connotations of deliberate artistry and analytic insight suggest qualities which are missing in Britomart. Yet though she cannot "construe" the meaning of the warning, she instinctively is able to

follow it: she is in fact "bold yet not too bold"—the determination and decisiveness which have always characterized her approach to experience are tempered here by a new caution:

Yet would she d'off her weary armes, for feare  
Of secret daunger, ne let sleepe oppresse  
Her heavy eyes with natures burdein deare,  
But drew her selfe aside in sicknesse,  
And her welpointed weapons did about her dresse.

(3.11.55.5)

Surrendering to sleep, an important motif throughout The Faerie Queene, is especially significant in Britomart's adventures; here again there is an instructive parallel to the Malecasta episode, where Britomart, oblivious of danger, had allowed herself to fall into an easy slumber. Here she is neither intimidated nor reduced into false security, but waits with confidence to see what will happen next. The Narrator repeatedly praises Britomart for her calm persistence (3.11.50.7, 3.12.1.7, 3.12.2.8). There is a new maturity suggested in her ability to wait upon the event, to let the mystifying pageant unfold at its own speed, to face it with equanimity and without an "irritable reaching after certainties", a new receptivity to the rhythm of experience. If the spectacles within the House of Busirane present, as they seem to do, various levels of response within the mind of Amoret, Britomart's patience in allowing these levels to reveal themselves is an essential prerequisite to Amoret's liberation.

The mysterious inscription "Be bold, be not too bold" remains ambiguous. As a generalized warning to anyone who might enter the castle, it may mean something like "Do not be afraid to challenge the erotic delusions fostered by the literature of courtly love, for they are insubstantial, yet at the same time do not underestimate their power over



the imagination". Yet perhaps the warning yields a richer meaning if it is seen in the context of Britomart's personal history. Her task, too, is to be bold but not too bold, to temper her aggressive self-assertion with patience and receptivity, neither to accept uncritically the passive feminine role in the ritualized game of love nor to reject too belligerently the truth about human nature which this role embodies. The tapestries and the masque are usually read as if Spenser intended them to illuminate just the psyche of Amoret, yet it is Britomart who observes them: her failure to respond to them suggests that the negative and fearful attitude to love which they embody has no meaning to her. Yet Spenser, by the poise with which he has treated the loves of the gods, has allowed us to see that the material can be interpreted in different ways, that the vision of Cupid as a vengeful deity is in fact a perverse and simplistic interpretation even of consuming erotic passion. Britomart's task, too, is to come to terms with the element of "maisterie" in love (as indeed her first words in Book III have suggested, 3.1.25.7). Unlike Amoret, Britomart does not see herself as a victim nor is she susceptible to elaborate literary constructions which have no relevance to her own feelings; thus she cannot understand what is going on, is genuinely horrified by the spells she hears Busirane repeat, and is able to break the enchantment. But the issues of power and control in love are central to Britomart's story, and must be raised again in a different context before she is free to go forward to union with Artegall. The mysterious inscription is so rich with meaning because it can apply to both Amoret and Britomart; it stands somehow at the centre of the problem of

equilibrium in love, so that no matter how often the passage is read the words remain mysterious, their inscrutable simplicity assuming a gnomic authority beside the lucid but shallow interpretive commentary with which the Narrator has surrounded his account of the tapestries. Their very opaqueness helps to define the special quality of Britomart, whose chastity involves a certain blankness and blindness along with a kind of intuitive insight.

Sword in hand, Britomart patiently passes a weary night, until she hears "a shrilling Trompet sound aloud, / Signe of nigh battell, or got victory" (3.12.1.5) and has to submit "From the fourth houre of night vntill the sixt" to a hideous windstorm accompanied by "Direful stench of smoke and sulphure mixt" (3.12.2.5). The ordeal places Britomart in the company of all the heroes of romance who must endure a midnight vigil before the climactic revelation will be vouchsafed to them.<sup>45</sup> What Britomart sees is a demonic parody of revelation, the presentation of the mystery in the form of a symbolic procession of iconic images. Spenser's choice of a masque is significant, for a number of reasons. The sinister emptiness of Busirane's hall is emphasized by the fact that a masque always implies an audience--an audience who, in fact, are more involved than the theatrical audience in the development of the entertainment, finally joining the masquers in their revelry and dance. This masque is presented as if to an audience: the presenter Ease, for example, is described going to the middle of the floor

As if in mind he somewhat had to say,  
 And to the vulgar beckning with his hand  
 In signe of silence, as to heare a play,  
 By lively actions he gan bewray  
 Some argument of manner passioned.

(3.12.4.2)

But in fact the syntax is ambiguous (how many clauses are governed by the conditional implication of "as if"? is he beckoning to the vulgar or as if to the vulgar?) and we hear nothing more of "the vulgar" and their responses. The hall is deserted; Busirane's spell has imprisoned Amoret in some kind of sinister isolation. The real audience of the masque is the reader, whose impression of the spectacle is mediated by the interpretive presence of the narrator.

Although this narrator is apparently in the hall, his perspective is not identical with Britomart's. After the masque has started Britomart is mentioned only twice, in the fifth and twenty-seventh stanzas. It is clear that she does not "see" all that the narrator does. He is an impressionable and alert observer who not only appreciates the artistic effectiveness of the presentation but interprets its images with a good deal of precision; his role is to supply us, in effect, with programme notes, commenting appreciatively on the performance as it would be received by a properly attentive and susceptible audience. That he responds to far more than does Britomart is made clear from the beginning. Britomart is described, as usual, in terms of blank amazement. She doesn't know what to make of "Ease":

The noble Mayd, still standing all this vewd,  
And merueild at his strange intendiment.

(3.12.5.1)

In the next stanza, the narrator describes the music which accompanies the spectacle:

The whiles a most delitious harmony,  
In full strange notes was sweetly heard to sound,  
That the rare sweetness of the melody  
The feeble senses wholly did confound,  
And the fraile soule in deepe delight nigh dround.

(3.12.6.1)

Presenting this heightened description of audience reaction in juxtaposition with Britomart's lack of response implicitly establishes that the viewpoint is not hers. The reader sees the images in the masque as he had seen the images in the tapestries, presented by an observer who combines appreciative interest with critical detachment. (The distinction between Narrator and Poet is not as crucial here, but the two attitudes can still be detected: it is the Poet who responds with moral neutrality to the beauty of the music and of the "lovely boy" Hylas, for example, the Narrator who interprets the iconographical detail of the masquers' appearance.) This viewer's physical perspective is suggested in a detailed and naturalistic way, particularly at the end of the masque just as the focus is about to shift back to Britomart. When the masque concludes with the "rude confused rout/ Of persons," he admits that their "names is hard to read" (3.12.25.2); he is able to list thirteen of them, but apologizes to the reader in the next stanza that "There were full many moe like maladies,/ Whose names and natures I note readen well" (3.12.26.1). The perspective is clearly that of a squinting observer in a dimly-lit hall, watching figures who move too quickly; the care which Spenser takes to establish his point of view gives the speaker a certain degree of independent psychological reality just at the moment when he is about to utter a key piece of information--information inaccessible to Britomart--the crucial hint that all of these images are merely the product of "wauering wemens wit" (3.12.26.4).

There is general agreement that the Masque of Busirane represents the distortions which the literature of courtly love has induced in the

erotic imagination. . . Some readers--Kathleen Williams, for example--<sup>46</sup> assume that the narrator's comment indicates that the masque is entirely a product of Amoret's imagination, that whatever is wrong with her is "all in her mind". Berger has questioned this interpretation by pointing out that the clue on which it is based is not given until after the masque is over; he places the emphasis instead on Busirane as the "Busy-reign" of the male imagination in its obsession with sexual conquest, implying that it is a power which Amoret has good reason to fear.<sup>47</sup> Nohrnberg has discovered a specific literary source for her terrors: he records a tradition of sexual violence in contemporary epithalamia, the conceits of which include "a bedroom combat in which it is anticipated that the bride will be roughly used"; Amoret's fantasies, he says, suggest to her that the rupturing of the hymen will involve virtual disembowelment.<sup>48</sup> The precise relationship between the male and the female contribution to the illusory terror which imprisons Amoret remains ambiguous; both Busirane as the creator of the images and Amoret as their receiver seem to be involved. Busirane has created a spectacle in which Amoret stars as Chief Victim; Amoret, in turn, seems trapped and paralyzed by the way in which she imagines she is perceived by men.

The climax of the spectacle is the moment when Cupid takes off his blindfold to look at Amoret. The masque as a genre emphasizes the activity of the curious eye; the narrator's busily interpretive presence detailing the appearance of each masquer has deepened our visual attention, so that considerable emphasis falls on the image of Amoret, which expands into three stanzas. The tension between stasis and movement is particularly strong just at this point. Spenser emphasizes her painful involve-

ment in the processional pace of the masque, repeats that although she is almost dead with pain and fear Amoret is not allowed to stop, and that this is part of her torture. She is "marcht" between Despite and Cruelty "like a dreary Spright,/ Cald by strong charmes out of eternall night" (3.12.19): the simile presents the horror of Busirane's spell in terms of its power to compel a kind of hypnotized movement. In spite of her visible weakness, Amoret is forced to keep going; the first stanza of the description concludes with the assertion that she "with her feeble feet did moue a comely pace," (3.12.19.9). The next two stanzas focus on Amoret's wounded breast and her trembling heart laid in the silver basin: the camera moves in, as it were, for a close-up of the central emblem and we forget we are watching a moving figure. But when it draws back again to encompass Amoret as a whole, her movement is again the subject:

And those two villeins, which her steps vpstayd,  
 When her weake feete could scarcely her sustaine,  
 And fading vitall powers gan to fade,  
 Her forward still with torture did constraine,  
 And euermore encreased her consuming paine.

(3.12.21.5)

The image of Cupid is presented in terms of the same tension. The god of love is riding on a lion, and the first four lines of stanza 22 makes his control of the moving beast an expression of his compelling power:

Next after her the winged God himselfe  
 Came riding on a Lion rauenous,  
 Taught to obey the menage of that Elfe,  
 That man and beast with powre imperious  
 Subdeweth to his kingdome tyrannous.

(3.12.22.1)

But he pauses "a while" (3.12.22.6) to undo his blindfold and to gaze at his victim and "survey his goodly company" (3.12.23.3); then brandishes his arrows, shakes his wings, marshalls his attendants and moves on. The impression of an extended pause is deepened by the apparent speeding-up of the procession in the next two stanzas, which conclude with a rapid catalogue of the "rude confused rout/ Of persons" who crowd in at the end (3.12.25.1).

It is appropriate in the context of the imagery of Book III as a whole that when Spenser presents Busirane as a threat to chastity the climax of the episode should be a pause in which Cupid looks at his victim. If in fact the masque is taking place in Amoret's mind, the detail suggests a dangerous interest in being looked at. Amoret seems to be prey to a kind of morbid self-consciousness. She is led in as the particular prisoner of Despite and Cruelty, as the prisoner, in other words, of her own role as Disdainful Mistress. Her terror derives perhaps from the fact that she imagines herself inspiring in men the same kind of hostility which this stylized role has taught her to exhibit in her behaviour towards them; she sees herself as she imagines herself seen by them. The masque, which evokes an intense kind of visual attention, is just the right form to convey the quality of the torment which she suffers. Angus Fletcher, expanding on a hint from C. S. Lewis, suggests that the masque is a fusion of his 'temple' and 'labyrinth', of static icon and puzzling process.<sup>49</sup> His observation has a particularly fruitful local application in this instance, for Amoret seems to fear being absorbed into a rigid role which is also an inexorable process (the masque is chronological, spelling out a

Lover's Progress from Fancy and Desire through Grief and Fury to Infirmity, Poverty and Death); of being both forced to keep moving and fixed by Cupid's piercing gaze. (Although Cupid pauses, Amoret doesn't seem to; the self-contained nature of the Spenserian stanza is uniquely capable of such paradoxical effects, isolating the two figures so that their relationship to one another can be presented in terms of its emotional rather than its logical truth.) The fact that there is no audience for the masque intensifies the effect of Cupid's scrutiny, which has to do 'double duty' in satisfying Amoret's horrified anticipation. The imagery of looking and being looked at links Amoret's vulnerability with the strength of Britomart, whose unselfconsciousness about how she looks to others has become a hallmark of her chastity.

It is only after the masquers have disappeared that our attention is turned again to the heroine of chastity and we find out where she has been all this time:

Then the braue Maid, which all this while was' plast  
In secret shade, and saw both first and last,  
Issewed forth, and went vnto the dore.

(3.12.27.4)

Unlike Calidore secretly watching the Dance of the Graces, Britomart remains hidden and neither challenges nor attempts to join the masquers; she does not really seem curious "what it was/ To know" (6.10.17.8). Unable to force the brazen door, she decides to remain in the room in the hope of getting through if the masque emerges the following night, and she spends the intervening day "gazing on that Chambers ornament" (3.12 29.2); the repetition of the verb "gazing", which originally conveyed her dumb amazement, suggests, once again, awe rather than interpretive ability.



The result is that when on the second night the brazen door flies open and Britomart is described passing through it, "Neither of idle shewes, nor of false charmes aghast" (3.12.29.9), we are not really sure whether or not Britomart herself realizes that these were "false shewes and idle charmes". The wording seems to be not hers but the narrator's, and his comment is followed immediately by lines which suggest that she had believed the masquers to be real:

So soone as she was entred, round about  
She cast her eies, to see what was become  
Of all those persons, which she saw without.

(3.12.30.1)

In view of the fact that she is astonished and horrified when she listens to Busirane reciting his spells in reverse and is "much dismayd" (3.12.42.4) when she finds the tapestries and gilt carving have disappeared, it seems that she has not understood the nature of the experience which they represent. Britomart is able to free Amoret because, unlike the narrator, she is not able to interpret the figures in the masque; her power depends upon her very innocence of its meaning. This time she triumphs by enduring as well as by mastering events. Her task is not to get involved: only by submitting to the experience without sympathy, comprehension or emotional engagement will she be able to free Amoret from it. Britomart is ready to kill Busirane on the spot; it is Amoret who must explain that if the enchanter is killed he can never undo his spell. (We remember Merlin, whose spirits are doomed to labour forever underground; Britomart knew nothing about that, either.) It is Britomart's unawareness of love's sinister enchantments which enables her to break the chain which binds Amoret and restore her to her lover heart-whole once

again.

Yet Britomart does learn something from the episode: it brings her to a rare moment of self-consciousness as she observes Amoret and Scudamore melting together in a passionate embrace and is forced for a moment to recognize how deeply she herself desires such a consummation:

Britomart halfe enuying their blesse,  
Was much empassioned in her gentle sprite,  
And to her selfe oft wisht like happinesse,  
In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse.  
(3.12.46.6)

The disengagement which has enabled her to perform her climactic mission as a knight of chastity derives from an isolation and independence which at times must be felt as painful. The image of the hermaphrodite conveys the perfect surrender of the lovers to one another, the casting-aside of their individuality.<sup>50</sup> Since Britomart is much more of an individual than either of them, the kind of surrender of which she will finally be capable will be a much more violent and problematical affair. Amoret and Scudamore have been destined for love from birth; he is Cupid's knight,<sup>50</sup> she has been fostered by Venus for union with him. Yet Britomart too is a protégé of Venus and she too has been created to find fulfilment only in sexual union. The magical quality of chastity which enables her to free others is not so much physical virginity or suppression of sexual feeling as it is a kind of personal integrity and individuality, a sense of oneself as a separate individual, the ability to act and endure alone. Britomart is the only figure in The Faerie Queene whose task seems to involve psychological as well as moral growth, the attainment of some kind of equilibrium between independence and love. The self-conscious

wistfulness with which Britomart as an outsider is able to look at Amoret and Scudamore gives her a dimension of personality which they lack. Britomart has changed since her deluge of self-pity in Canto 4; here there is no surrender to emotion, only a silent inner pang, a moment of deepened awareness of her own isolation. This brief focus on Britomart's feelings is a perfect tactful conclusion to Book III, suggesting by her self-awareness and restraint both how far she has come and the precise quality of the strength she represents.

CHAPTER IV

Britomart in Book IV:

Division and Unity

The structure of Book IV of The Faerie Queene seems in some respects problematical.<sup>1</sup> The titular heroes of the book (Cambel and the misnamed Telamond)<sup>2</sup> play a quite different role than does any other hero, figuring prominently in only two cantos out of the twelve--and those two cantos are retrospective. Lacking a single hero, the book seems to lack focus, the centre of attention passing from one figure to another without any particular sense of direction. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the book has too many focal passages. The story of Canacee and Cambina seems intended to have a unique resonance, since it is the one in which the titular heroes appear most prominently. Satyrane's tournament and beauty contest are set up by the characters to function as a climactic resolution of the antagonisms generated in the first three cantos, but their spectacular failure leaves everything much as it was to begin with. There follow not one but four episodes which seem to have special thematic weight. The recognition scene between Britomart and Artegall brings to an effective and dramatic climax a narrative thread which began at the beginning of Book III. The account of Amyas and Placidas receives a certain emphasis since it is the locus of Arthur's intervention in Book IV. The tenth canto, Scudamore's description of the Temple of Venus, is evidently the book's "allegorical core"; yet it is followed by the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, a pageant whose elaboration and formality tend to give it a disproportionate place in the image-pattern of the book as a whole. Which of these "cores" is the truly central one, why they occur in this particular order, how their allegories interconnect--these are questions which must

be considered in order to understand both Spenser's conception of friendship and the role Britomart plays in its allegory. What follows is, however, by no means a comprehensive consideration of Book IV as a whole, but rather an attempt to suggest elements of its theme and structure which will provide a useful context for Britomart's contribution.

The Book of Friendship begins in discord. Spenser's five-stanza Proem defends his decision to write "praising loue, as I haue done of late" against the criticisms of the "rugged forehead"—presumably Burleigh—who objects that such "vaine poemes" mislead and corrupt youthful readers. Spenser argues that, rightly understood, true love is the origin of all heroic action and appeals to Elizabeth ("that loueth best,/ And best is lou'd of all aliue", Proem 4.6) as uniquely fitted to understand and appreciate his "lesson" of love and friendship. Setting Burleigh and Elizabeth against one another as examples of frigid insensitivity and "naturall affection" is to commence with a pattern of polarity and division which will be important throughout the fourth book. While the Proem suggests that the fullest and most complete manifestation of friendship is the establishment of civic order (the "friendship" which Elizabeth exemplifies is that which knits monarch and subject together in fruitful harmony), it also suggests that such equilibrium is precarious, that sniping ill will and jealous rivalry are the more usual conditions of life at court. In spite of the pious hope with which the Proem concludes--that Elizabeth, inspired by Cupid, will "hearke to loue, and reade this lesson often" (Proem 5.9)--it is these divisive influences which are dramatized in the pages that follow, especially in the first

half of the fourth book where order is established only to disintegrate again and again into division and chaos.

Book IV is perhaps best understood by responding to its rhythm, to its uneasy alternation between unity and division as the characters drift together and separate. There is a great deal of linear movement in the fourth book, a sense of characters moving restlessly on, encountering one another, pairing off or failing to do so, forming alliances and reforming in different combinations with a careless and perverse fluidity which often suggests the arbitrariness of their moral stance.<sup>3</sup> Alignment and realignment are recurrent themes; grouping is important, as individuals support or betray one another, pass ladies back and forth, switch their allegiances as the tide of fortune or personal temper moves them. The first two cantos establish from the beginning an uneasy sense of free-floating rivalry and hostility which will find its arbitrary focus on whoever happens to come round the next bend. The almost farcical series of alliances and realignments among the eight characters who drift together in Canto 1 (Amoret and Britomart, Ate and Duessa, Blandamour and Paridell, and Ferraugh and the false Florimell) creates an atmosphere of a compulsive irascibility against which the story of Canacee and Cambina, with its fairy-tale tone and structure, comes as a relief. The stability and friendship which they exemplify is conveyed simply by the way Spenser describes their pairing-off:

Two knights, that lincked rode in louely wise,  
As if they secret counsels did partake;  
And each not farre behinde him had his make,  
To weete, two Ladies of most goodly hew,  
That twixt themselues did gentle purpose make.

(4.2.30.3)

Glauce is sent to reconnoitre and returns with the information that  
the newcomers are

Two of the prowest Knights in Faery lond;  
And those two Ladies their two louers deare,  
Couragious Cambell, and stout Triamond,  
With Canacee and Cambine linckt in louely bond.

(4.2.31.6)

The rhetorical structure conveys the stability of their relationship; the parallel phrasing ("Two Knights . . . two Ladies", "those two Ladies their two louers") and the chiasmus of the last two lines (for Cambina is Cambell's mate and Canacee's is Triamond's) seem to knit the couples together. Because these four, permanently paired and interrelated, form a stable unit, they appear even before their story is told as a kind of rhetorical emblem for the social accord which has hitherto seemed hopelessly elusive.

But their stability is not something that they can carry with them, for as soon as they move out of Spenser's Chaucerian "antique tale" into the action of Book IV, they too become involved, however honourably, in social conflict, in the tournament and the farcically ineffective beauty contest. The description of their arrival at the site of the tournament, prosaic in its insistent detail, is characteristic of Book IV in its emphasis on physical grouping:

There this faire crewe arriuing, did diuide  
Them selues asunder: Blandamour with those  
Of his, on th'one: the rest on th'other side.  
But boastful Braggadocchio rather chose,  
For glorie vaine their fellowship to lose,  
That men on him the more might gaze alone.  
The rest them selues in troupes did else dispose  
Like as it seemed best to euery one;  
The knights in couples marcht, with ladies linckt attone.

(4.4.14)



When the tournament begins and its futility becomes increasingly evident, Spenser manages simply by listing the names of those joining the *mêlée* to suggest that things are falling apart in a kind of uncontrollable chain reaction:

Which when the noble Ferramont espide,  
He pricked forth in ayd of Satyran;  
And him against Sir Blandamore did ride  
With all the strength and stifnesse that he can . . .

Vnto whose rescue forth rode Paridell;

Which Braggadocchio seeing . . .

Which to auenge, Sir Deuon him did dight . . .

And after him Sir Douglas him addrest,  
And after him Sir Paliumord forth prest . . .

(4.4.19-21)

Britomart's intervention brings some order to the conclusion of the tournament, but the beauty contest ends in a fiasco, with the false Florimell being passed as it were from hand to hand. The rhythm of the process speeds up, its farcical effect intensified by the feminine rhymes:

But after that the Iudges did arret her  
Vnto the second best, that lou'd her better;  
That was the Saluage Knight: but he was gone  
In great displeasure, that he could not get her.  
When was she iudged Triamond his one;  
But Triamond lou'd Canacee, and other none.

Tho vnto Satyrane she was adiudged,  
Who was right glad to gaine so goodly need;  
But Blandamour thereat full greatly grudged,  
And little prays'd his labours euil speed,  
That for to winne the saddle, lost the steed.  
Ne lesse thereat did Paridell complaine . . .

(4.5.21.4)

Within moments their rivalry dissolves again into uncontrollable violence:

Thereat exceeding wroth was Satyran;  
 And wroth with Satyran was Blandamour;  
 And wroth with Blandamour was Eriuan;  
 And at them both Sir Paridell did loure.

(4.5.24.1)

With mechanized alacrity, the knights project themselves mindlessly into the fray: the speeding-up of the process suggests its automatic nature.

Spenser seems very conscious in the Book of Friendship of the problematical aspect of joining individuals and groups together; he often puts considerable emphasis on the numbers involved, on the problem of achieving stability in the face of the human tendency to gang up on a smaller group. The disgraceful mêlée into which Arthur intervenes in Canto 9 is presented almost entirely in terms of a quasi-automatic numerical rivalry. Arthur and Amoret approach the group:

At length they came, whereas a troupe of Knights  
 They saw together skirmishing, as seemed:  
 Sixe they were all, all full of fell despight,  
 But foure of them the battell best beseemed.

(4.9.20.1)

Spenser names and identifies the four (Druon, Claribell, Blandamour and Paridell) and identifies the amazed onlookers:

But those two other which beside them stode,  
 Were Britomart, and gentle Scudamore.

(4.9.22)

The four violent knights are, significantly, described in terms of the four winds of heaven whose contention would

all the world confound with wide vprore,  
 As if in stead thereof they Chaos would restore.

(4.9.23.8)

There is something about their very number which exacerbates their mindless fury; they seem attempting to join and rejoin in every possible

combination:

For sometimes Paridell and Blandamour  
The better had, and bet the others backe,  
Eftsoones the others did in the field recoure,  
And on their foes did worke full cruell wracke.

(4.9.25.1)

When exhaustion forces them to pause, they take advantage of the break

to realign themselves:

Then gan they change their sides, and new parts take;  
For Paridell did take to Druons side,  
For old despight, which now forth newly brake  
Gainst Blandamour, whom alwaies he enuide:  
And Blandamour to Claribell relide.  
So all afresh gan former fight renew.

(4.9.26.1)

Spotting Britomart, however, whom they remember and resent for her intervention in the tournament, the four suddenly unite against her and

Scudamore:

The warlike Dame was on her part assaid,  
Of Claribell and Blandamour attone;  
And Paridell and Druon fiercely laid  
At Scudamore, both his professed fone.  
Foure charged two, and two surcharged one .

(4.9.30.1)

It is at this point that Arthur, indignant at "ods of so unequall match" (4.9.32.2), intervenes to help the beleaguered pair and is instantly attacked by all six. Britomart and Scudamore quickly come to their senses, but Spenser, by allowing his heroes this shocking and mindless moment of irrational rage, suggests the intoxicating effect of mob action. The hostile encounter between errant knights is of course a staple of romance, but by his unusual insistence on the precise numbers of individuals and on their dissolving and reforming allegiances Spenser emphasizes the extreme difficulty of achieving social equilibrium in

the face of the human tendency to bully and to choose sides.

Four is a key number in the Book of Friendship: when two couples are knit together in solid amity, as are Cambell and Triamond and their wives and Amidas and Placidas and theirs, they form a unit of unusual solidity; when, however, each pair is already separated by preexistent distrust, four knights are uniquely vulnerable to constant squabbling (as are the parade of couples in the first two cantos: Blandamour and Paridell with Duessa and Ate, joined in turn by the other two pairs who come along). Nowhere else in The Faerie Queene do we get a more vivid sense of the egotism which isolates and diminishes the individual, and paradoxically it is these characters' very alliances which highlight their isolation. Each participates in group action for essentially selfish motives and so remains untouched by any spirit of comradeship which might make him more fully himself. They remain to the end a mere list of names, interchangeable counters in a monotonous game, each unable to contribute to any whole which would be greater than the sum of its parts.

Against this tendency of individuals to split apart, Spenser devotes considerable attention to circumstances under which they can come together, to ceremonies which are designed to defuse or deflect private passions into social ritual and transform them from divisive to uniting agents. There are two rituals of this kind in Book IV, the tournament and the wedding. In a fallen world, one implies the other: sexuality begets rivalry, aggression is knit into the very fabric of social intercourse. Even in the Temple of Venus, Concord has continually to mediate

between her two sons Hate and Love, for the erotic imperatives which create life itself tend at the same time to generate anger and hostility. The tournament, by ritualizing the erotic/aggressive instincts, softens their divisive effects while channelling their energies for a socially-cohesive end. This is, at any rate, its ideal function. In his treatment of Satyrane's tournament, Spenser suggests, however, that in fact the ritual may be none too effective.

The story of Cambell and Triamond is thematically central in Book IV because it combines a tournament with a wedding; it is a paradigm of the transmutation of hatred into love, rivalry into friendship, death into life. It is intended to be felt as myth, as taking place in a fairy-tale world somewhat removed from the locus of the actual action of Book IV. The lovers' story is surrounded by an aura of the mythical past: their adventures are related "as antique stories tellen vs"; the episode is the completion of a tale that Chaucer didn't write (does Spenser expect his readers to know, as he himself surely knew, that Chaucer's Canacee was quite a different character?). The rhythm and accent of the narrator suggest a marvellous tale told to a wondering child:

Stout Priamond, but not so strong to strike  
 Strong Diamond, but not so stout a knight,  
 But Triamond was stout and strong alike:  
 On horsebacke vsed Triamond to fight,  
 And Priamond on foote had more delight,  
 But horse and foote knew Diamond to wield:  
 With curtaxe vsed Diamond to smite,  
 And Triamond to handle speare and shield,  
 But speare and curtaxe both vsed Priamond in field.

(4.2.42)

Hostilities in Book IV tend on the whole to be generated and resolved in a fairly naturalistic way (for example, although Ate is dissension incarnate, the actual means she uses to cause trouble are entirely realistic), but the story of Cambell and Triamond is full of magic: a magic ring, a miraculous fusion of the three brothers' lives into one, a magic potion which resolves the discord. It has been suggested that the story is an allegory of heavenly love, that Triamond is the human soul, so loved by God that it has acquired a third and immortal soul which will never die, that the <sup>4</sup>potion Cambina uses to end the fighting is the sacrament itself. Four is the number associated with nature, three the number associated with the supernatural.<sup>5</sup> The story of Cambel and Triamond has a double resolution: the salvation of the tripartite human soul, miraculously redeemed by divine love, and the foursquare establishment of a microcosmic human society founded on a double marriage.<sup>6</sup>

Yet although the episode is a spiritual paradigm, its resolution is not successfully imitated in the episode which parallels it. Satyrane's tournament and beauty contest have been set up as means of absorbing merely personal passion and spite but they are a spectacular failure and generate in the end more hostility than they resolve. It is because the false Florimell is at the centre of these activities that their failure is preordained;<sup>7</sup> Spenser thus suggests that much sexual rivalry is based on a failure of moral perception, that lust and pride of possession deceived men into worshipping false beauty instead of true. Cambell and Triamond, indeed, behave well; their generous willingness to fight on one another's behalf exemplifies the noblest

side-effect that combat, ritualized or otherwise, can be expected to produce. An important motif in the fourth book is that of the fusion of two souls into one: to risk one's life for one's friend, to fight disguised in another's armour, is to manifest through outward and visible signs the inward and spiritual grace of true friendship, the mystical establishment of "one soul in bodies twain".<sup>8</sup> Self-sacrificial friendship between two men is one strong focus of the fourth book; both warfare and the ritualized warfare of the tournament tend to evoke this kind of quasi-erotic commitment, and there is no doubt that the behaviour of Cambell and Triamond is intended to be exemplary of its kind. But their mutual loyalty can have no effect on the wider social tensions which in the end tear the gathering apart and send various individuals fuming off into the countryside. The conception of friendship as an exclusive relationship between two persons creates a special problem for Spenser in Book IV: since his heroes exemplify their virtue only in relationship to one another, it is equally difficult to show them influencing the wider society of which they are a part and to imagine for them a series of adventures which will continue to demonstrate their mutual commitment without becoming monotonous. Spenser's decision, apparently, was to show them in exemplary action once and then to leave them behind, counting on their story to remain in the memory as a norm, as he goes on to illustrate other forms that the virtue of friendship can take.

The tournament is followed by a beauty contest, which turns all to confusion once again by exciting those impulses of masculine rivalry

which athletic competition had seemed, partially at least, to contain. For it is sexual rivalry not chastity that the tournament is all about; its driving force is male pride, which values feminine chastity not as moral excellence but as a status symbol, a token of exclusive possession. The exhibition is in effect a reification of the claims of the sonneteers: each knight in turn produces and exhibits his lady as more beautiful than all the others, a claim which is understood (in a sonnet) to say less about the qualities of the lady than it does about the feelings of her lover, but which, when it is subject to public verification, reveals the element of egotism and self-indulgence underlying an exclusive love relationship. Hyperbole, the natural and appropriate vehicle for expressing the lover's private passion, is shown to be dangerously egotistical and self-delusory in a social context; it is not thus that the lover's solipsistic universe can be absorbed and integrated into the larger society. One of the issues of the fourth book is the relationship of masculine friendship to sexual love; Spenser the moralist is prepared to assert the sixteenth-century orthodoxy that friendship is superior, although Spenser the poet knows that the hierarchy cannot be as simple as that. The tournament, however, expresses the issue in its simplest possible terms, showing the incompatibility between real masculine friendship and that sexual love which is contaminated by pride of ownership. That self-deception is built into such a contest is suggested by the vulnerability of all the participants to the glamour of the false Florimell; it is ironical that the winner's prize should be what Frye calls a "virgin-detecting gadget", the magic belt which,



while it startles the bemuddled participants, cannot make them clarify their perceptions or bring any meaning into what has been from the beginning a false and self-defeating activity.

The fourth focal scene of Book IV, the quarrel in which Arthur intervenes, raises very explicitly the question of the relationship between friendship and love. In fact the episode makes a weak climax to the fourth book.<sup>9</sup> It seems to have little imaginative energy behind it; there is something dry and schematic about the way the story works out. The double marriage, which in the story of Canacee was an inevitable paradigm of cosmic order, seems here a lame and rather mechanical conclusion, following neither from the nature of the protagonists nor from any mythic necessity but merely from the moralist's somewhat dubious premises. Yet however ineffective we may feel the episode to be, Spenser evidently intended it as a thematic centre of the book, and an examination of its themes and motifs should throw light on other episodes which are more imaginatively convincing.

We meet the first protagonist, the lady Aemylia, in the cave of Lust, captured in the act of defying her father by sneaking out to meet her lover, the Squire of Low Degree (we later find out that his name is Amyas). In the eighth canto we hear his side of the story: Amyas, eloping with Aemylia against the advice of his friends, had been caught and imprisoned by the Giant Corflambo. The allegory is plain: when men and women defy friends and family to cross class boundaries, there is likely to be an element of physical lust in their attraction for one another. The moral issues become blurred rather than clarified in the

story which follows, however; Spenser gets into trouble by crossing moral allēgory with Ariostan narrative. Amyas catches the eye of Corflambo's daughter Poëana, and flirts with her--"Her graunted loue, but with affection cold"--in hopes of gaining his liberty. Meanwhile Placidus who (we now learn) looks exactly like his friend, lurks in the vicinity in hopes of being imprisoned along with Amyas. When Corflambo's dwarf, thinking that he is Amyas, brings him in, Placidus impersonates his friend in hopes of helping him escape. Instead, able to respond with an unhampered conscience to the overtures of Poëana, he gains the freedom of movement which was denied to Amyas and succeeds in escaping himself. Exactly where this gets him is not clear, since it was by his own stratagem that he had become imprisoned in the first place; Amyas is no better off than he was before, and allegory and narrative have become somewhat muddled. (Placidus is now pursued by Corflambo--passion--presumably as the result of his involvement with Poëana, but it is certainly awkward that the giant's pursuit does not begin until after Placidus has attempted to escape from the lady's attractions). In any event, Placidus is gratefully welcomed by Aemylia and the two of them dump the problem in Arthur's lap.

Spenser begins the ninth canto by making quite explicit the moral issues he is presenting in this episode: the rival claims of "deare affection vnto kindred", "loue to woman kind" and "zeale of friends".

His hierarchy is orthodox:

For naturall affection soone doth cesse,  
 And quenched is with Cupids greater flame:  
 But faithfull friendship doth them both suppress,  
 And them with maystring discipline doth tame,  
 Through thoughts aspyring to eternall fame.

(4.9.2.1)

He points out that, in Placidus' case, friendship for Amyas was stronger than love for Poena, and, in Poena's, love for Amyas was stronger than respect for her father. But since Poena has seemed motivated more by lust than true love, and since Aemylia and Amydas got into trouble in the first place by their failure to heed their parents' commands, Spenser's moralizing seems dubious. He asserts that friendship ought to be stronger than sexual passion (4.9.1.9); is he implying also that sexual passion ought to be stronger than filial affection? Poena, indeed, seems partly redeemed by her defiance of her father; are we to assume that Amyas and Aemylia are equally to be congratulated for their disobedience? There seems to be some confusion here about the nature of the hierarchy: is the displacement of sexual passion by the claims of friendship the same as the displacement of filial affection by sexual passion? It would seem not: the former is an ethical response which implies maturity and self-control, the latter a "natural" development which may involve self-indulgent wilfulness. There is something hasty and careless about Spenser's handling of the whole episode; the narrative is as unconvincing as the moral theory is unconvincing.

Arthur gains entry into Corflambo's castle by a stratagem; he opens the dungeon, restores Amydas to his Aemylia, reforms Poena (4.9.14) and persuades Placidus to marry her (4.9.15), all within the space of seven stanzas. The happy ending seems wilfully imposed rather than inevitable:

From that day forth in peace and ioyous blis,  
 They liu'd together long without debate,  
 Ne private iarre, ne spite of enemis  
 Could shake the safe assurance of their state.

(4.9.16.1)

It might be argued that the negative wording of this conclusion is deliberate, that the whole episode has a kind of parodic quality, emphasizing the discrepancy between the real and the ideal. Considering, however, that it represents Arthur's contribution to the fourth book, the story of Amydas and Placidus is probably intended to be taken at face value; its motifs should be examined for their intentions if not for their achievement.

The miraculous similarity between the two friends receives great  
10  
emphasis. Poena, seeing them together for the first time, cannot tell them apart, "Deceiued through great likenesse of their face" (4.9.10.7); and Arthur has the same problem—

mazd how nature had so well disguised  
Her worke, and counterfet her selfe so nere,  
As if that by one patterne seene somewhere,  
She had them made a paragone to be.

(4.9.11.3)

The wording establishes the friends' physical similarity as the 'objective correlative' of their spiritual unity. The false Florimell can deceive only when the true one is not present, whereas it is precisely when these two are together that their resemblance is the most confusing: their proximity brings out what is essential about them, that is, their oneness with each other. This is a recognition scene with a difference: what the onlookers recognize is not the uniqueness of the individuals but their identity. Triamond contains within himself the souls of his three brothers; here it is as if a single soul has been split between two bodies, nature having designed the two individuals from "one patterne". As in the story of Triamond, the characters prove their self-sacrificial loyalty by impersonation, and the conflict is resolved by a double marriage. Both episodes involve a reformation, a movement from discord

to harmony: Cambina uses nepenthe to make the men forget their quarrel, Arthur wins Poena away from her immoral ways "with good thewes and speaches well applyde" (4.9.14.6). The story of Amyas and Placidas echoes on a less mythical level the patterns of reconciliation and unification established in Cantos 3 and 4. Spenser's conviction that human harmony is in fact a fragile and difficult achievement is suggested by the fact that in both cases it takes an outsider with some kind of supernatural<sup>10</sup> power or charisma--Cambina with her potion, Arthur with his heavenly grace--to bring about the reconciliation.

Sexuality makes human accord very tricky. Although the ideal role of the woman, the role fulfilled by Cambina, is that of peacemaker, in fact the presence of a woman often sparks rivalry and discord among men: Cambell defending his sister is forced into an unnatural duel with Triamond; the sexual aggressiveness of both Aemylia and Poena involves their men in complicated difficulties. In the story of Amyas and Placidas Spenser tries to show the triumph of masculine friendship over sexual temptation: Placidas' single-minded dedication to the welfare of his friend makes him indifferent to the wiles of Poena, though it also causes narrative difficulties when at the end of the story Spenser has to show Arthur urging the prospective bridegroom "not to despise" his newly-reformed bride. The story is self-contradictory, almost unpleasant, possibly because Spenser's "moral" was an oversimplification of his own deepest instincts, his literary model (tales like the oft-repeated account of Titus and Gisippus)<sup>11</sup> an inadequate account of human motivation. The episode generates no genuine feeling of reconciliation

and is characterized by a schematic thinness quite inadequate to the virtue Spenser is attempting to portray.

It seems to be with a sense of relief that he turns from the complexities of harmony at the social level to the great pattern of cosmic harmony exemplified by the Temple of Venus and the evocation of natural harmony orchestrated in the marriage of the Thames and the Medway. These two allegorical cores bring into symbolic focus some of the issues and problems with which the Book of Friendship has been dealing.

It is significant that the description of the Temple of Venus, like the story of Canacee, is retrospective--something which can be said of none of the other "allegorical cores" in the six books of The Faerie Queene. Scudamore's reunion with Amoret, postponed by Spenser's revision of the final stanzas of Book III, has still not occurred--never does occur in fact within The Faerie Queene as we have it. Canto 10 is Scudamore's explanation of how he gained Amoret in the first place. His success is a thing of the past; he no longer possesses the lady he won. It would not do to push this point too far, for the story as it is told in Canto 10 ends on a note of triumph; the tone of the episode in itself is thoroughly positive and provides a fitting prelude to the second affirmative "major chord" in the book, the marriage of the Thames and the Medway. Yet what Scudamore accomplishes in the Temple of Venus is not, strictly speaking, part of the action of Book IV, and we already know that Amoret's "descent" from her protected bower was not accomplished without difficulty. In Book IV the problem of

establishing social concord is conveyed less through dramatic encounters between characters than through uneasy qualifications of this kind, so that no triumph seems permanent, no relationship thoroughly stable.

Canto 10 gathers up and transforms a number of the motifs which have assumed pressing importance throughout the fourth book. There is a feeling of completeness about it, as if in creating this self-contained world "wall'd by nature gainst inuaders wrong" (4.10.6.3), Spenser felt he was creating a self-explanatory model, at once cosmic and psychological, an overview of the concerns of the book as a whole. The geography of the island is detailed and significant, so that Scudamore's progress over the tournament field, across the bridge, through the park and into the temple suggests not only the chronological progression of a love affair but also the advance of the neophyte towards the centre of the mystery, from superficial to essential truths. As he goes forward, Scudamore passes through experiences which have appeared with a different emphasis and outcome earlier in the Book of Friendship. <sup>12</sup> Before he can set foot on the bridge he must prove his right to Amoret by winning the shield hanging on the pillar in the "open plaine". This action evidently represents the process of selection by which the lover originally wins out over his rivals in catching his mistress' eye, but the process by which Scudamore accomplishes it is like a schematized tournament in which he alone encounters "twenty valiant Knights" (4.10.7.6) and defeats them one after the other. It is as if the personal essence of the tournament, the individual's compulsion to prove his own virility by combat with his peers, were isolated from all its social consequences: the twenty knights exist only to provide competition for Scudamore, and his defeat of them has no social ramifications at all, so that its positive ends are gained without any negative side-effects. Then again,

as Scudamore goes forward he encounters and overcomes several figures right out of the Masque of Cupid: he, however, experiences Doubt, Delay and Daunger very differently than did Amoret, and with an attitude of healthy optimism sets out efficiently to circumvent each of them in turn (Doubt and Daunger fade away at the sight of the enchanted shield, and all Delay accomplishes is to force him to dismount and proceed on foot). The personifications which so troubled Amoret that they began to loom as paralyzing spectres in her imagination are put back into perspective by Scudamore's manly self-confidence, are rightly seen neither as a teasing come-on nor as an insuperable mental block, but merely as stages in the progress of an acquaintance which tend to fade away by themselves as they are passed.

When Scudamore finally reaches the island, Spenser turns again to themes which he has raised before: to the relationship between sexual passion and masculine friendship, for example. Although he has explicitly asserted the superiority of friendship over love and indeed seems to imply it again here (stanzas 26 and 27), Venus presides over love which is essentially sexual, and the great friends of history and legend--Hercules and Hylas, David and Jonathan, Titus and Gisippus, and so on--are found in the outer park but not within the temple itself. Again Spenser seems to be putting into more comprehensive perspective an issue on which he has earlier taken a narrower line, discovering here that relationships which exclude sexuality are inadequate emblems of universal concord. Scudamore's quest is for his complementary love-partner, so that the truth revealed within the temple and symbolized by



the hermaphrodite Venus reflects not suppression but transcendence of sexuality. In the porch Scudamore meets Concord, with her two sons Love and Hate: "Hate was the elder, Loue the younger brother" (4.10.32.7, since chaos preceded order in the universe), and neither one is merely evil: both are "borne of heauenly seed" (4.10.34.3), and it is the tension between them, maintained by their peacemaker mother Concord, from which proceeds the creative energy of the universe. Concord and Venus, then, perform analogous functions; Concord is a schematic version of the truth which Spenser's Venus shadows more mysteriously in the emblem of the hermaphrodite goddess within the temple who, in herself contains "both kinds in one,/ Both male and female, both vnder one name" (4.10.41.6). Both a principle of cosmic stability and the source of "pleasure and delight", Venus is hymned as the patronness of sexual pleasure among birds, beasts and men (stanzas 44-47). The "saluage beasts" howling and cavorting in the stanza 46 recall the combatants in Satyrane's tournament, whom the narrator had compared to bulls (4.4.18.3), boars (4.4.29.8) and lions (4.4.32.5); in the Temple of Venus, however, the vitality and aggressiveness which had been misused in human society are seen as positive impulse, within the scheme of the universe as a whole, perverse and destructive only when indulged in by men who rationalize their animal instincts by erecting around their release elaborate superstructures of social ritual.

When Scudamore at last approaches his beloved, he finds her in the midst of a different group of allegorical personifications: Shamefastness, Cheerfulness, Modesty, Courtesy, Silence and Obedience

derive not from the courtly-love tradition but from the Christian view of marriage with its emphasis on cheerful feminine submission, both sexual and emotional. Amoret's girlish reluctance to depart with her lover seems at first a natural manifestation of this kind of femininity and is understandable in view of the description of Venus' park and temple as a kind of natural paradise. But knowing as we do that Amoret did not manage the transition very successfully, we are not sure whether to give her moral credit for her passive resistance or to see it as contaminated by a coyness and fearfulness which will help make her vulnerable to Busirane. Although Scudamore seems to be liberating Amoret from a kind of imprisonment and perceives himself as a type of Orpheus delivering his beloved from the underworld, the liberation Amoret herself envisages is not freedom to follow her lover but freedom to be left alone--"her wished freedom fro me", as Scudamore says (4.10.57.5). Scudamore's gentle insistence seems perfectly proper; although Womanhood, with her own claims and preoccupations, blames him for being "ouer bold", Venus seems "To laugh at me, and fauour my pretence" (4.10.56.4), and Scudamore appears in fact "bold but not too bold", tender and understanding yet quite properly determined to achieve his end.<sup>13</sup> Our awareness of her imprisonment by Busirane raises questions about the significance of Amoret's resistance at this point. The issue of "maisterie", first raised by Britomart in 3.1, echoes quietly throughout the fourth book; it is a subject to which I shall return in considering Britomart's relationship with Artégall. Britomart's nature, we remember, was defined to begin with by her ability to leave home on her own.

From the Temple of Venus Spenser passes<sup>to</sup> the great pageant of the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, the tenth and eleventh cantos forming together a double chord of harmony and affirmation near the close of the fourth book. The marriage of the rivers is particularly moving because in its resonances are resolved a number of the pressures and tensions which have been felt throughout the book as a whole. The act of physical encounter has been problematical throughout, so that a peculiar tension develops from merely noting the numbers in the groups which come together. But what causes man so much pain and conflict, nature achieves with effortless grace and power; the flowing-together of the rivers is a particularly powerful symbol in Book IV with its monotonously repetitive pattern of hostile encounters. The junction of waters is repeatedly described in terms of the metaphor of a family, which suggests not only union but fertility and natural harmony. The metaphor is never more effective than in the account of the "three faire sons" of Blomius and Rheusa, the rivers Shure, Newre and Barow, which cut through the Irish countryside and which

long sundred, doe at last accord  
To ioyne in one, ere to the sea they come,  
So flowing all from one, all one at last become.

(4.11.43.7)

We remember the three brothers Diamond, Triamond and Priamond who, like the rivers, split into three only to join again into one;<sup>14</sup> yet the very naturalness of the description, the very fact that the parallel does not draw attention to itself, is emblematic of the way Canto 11 works, with such power and ease that its rhythms seem inevitable. The fact, too, that the marriage is a masque associates it with the competitive pageant

of the beauty contest: the contrast between the vulgarity, pragmatism and aggressiveness of that abortive ritual and the beauty and dignity of this ceremony emphasizes its measured expansiveness, its generous delight in energy and beauty for their own sake.<sup>15</sup>

Canto 11 evokes the conflicts and triumphs of human history while at the same time transcending them. The oceans and rivers are brought into the catalogue with their cultural and historical associations: some represent "most famous founders . . . Of puissant Nations" (4.11.15.1); others recall historical confrontations ("Diuine Scamander, purpled yet with blood/ Of Greeks and Troians, which therein did die", 4.11.20.6). Spenser uses the catalogue to express the beauty and fruitfulness of England and Ireland, the cultural achievement of its universities and cities; he even glances at a contemporary political quarrel, in his complaint about neglect of English rights along the Amazon. The imprint of man is on the nature which Spenser evokes; there is always a sense of the way in which man has used, beautified, exploited or perceived the places that he mentions (Mulla, for example, gets into the catalogue as the subject of Spenser's own earlier poetry--"Mulla mine, whose waues I whilom taught to weep", 4.11.41.9--the wording expresses the relationship between man and landscape which is implied throughout the pageant). Yet although the waters of the world are emblematic of man's aspirations, his failures and successes, they have a being and a dignity of their own which transcends their human associations. For almost the first time in the fourth book we feel the presence of an irresistible power and harmony in relation to which human impulses become insignificant; the

irascible energy and frustration which have tended to characterize the human relationships in the fourth book are put into a larger perspective, assimilated to the deeper vitality on which the universe is based. The marriage of the Thames and the Medway does not solve the problems of human interaction, but it offers a giant paradigm of their solution on the level of physical nature; it allows us for a moment to forget the troublesome human activity in the foreground and perceive with a lifting of the heart the expansive background against which such activity takes place. The rivers seem giant figures, out of human scale, legendary in their fertility and power, too multitudinous ever to be encompassed by the human imagination (Spenser complains that he would need "an hundred tongues . . . And hundred mouthes, and voice of brasse . . . And endlesse memorie" in order even to list them accurately, 4.11.9.6). It is absolutely appropriate that this climactic affirmation of harmony and fertility precedes the reunion of Florimell and Marinell which is the subject of the twelfth canto. Their reconciliation seems, after the "marriage" passage, anticlimactic, the machinations which bring it about somewhat laborious and inefficient; it is right that we should end the fourth book feeling that what nature accomplishes with ease and power, man can emulate only with difficulty and in awkward stages.<sup>16</sup>

Commentators on the Masque of Busirane have considered its meaning in light of the flashback at the beginning of Book IV, for it is not until the first canto of this book that the reader learns precisely how Amoret was taken prisoner by Busirane in the first place, spirited away during the wedding feast "before the bride was bedded" and held captive for seven months "to liuing wight vnknowen" (4.1.3). Some critics have devoted ingenious attention to the ambiguities of phrasing in this account;<sup>17</sup> others have sensibly pointed out that since the first three books of Spenser's epic were published as a unit, it is hard to believe that he would withhold from his reader until Book IV details which were centrally important to the understanding of Book III.<sup>18</sup> Since my interest is in Britomart's contribution to Book IV, I shall focus not on how the passage points back to what went before, but how it points forward to the introductory episode of the first canto. What is most striking is the rather rapid change of tone. Spenser begins by telling us that he is about to talk of "louers sad calamities of old", of which "many piteous tales,"

none more piteous euer was ytold,  
Then that of Amorets hart-binding chaine.

(4.1.1)

In fact, the narrator declares ingenuously he almost wishes that the tale "neuer had bene writ" so that he would not be constrained to repeat it. There follows the brief account of Cupid's masque, the most obvious purpose of which seems to be simply to remind the reader of why Britomart and Amoret are travelling together. But by the beginning of the fifth stanza, the narrator, far from lamenting that he has such gloomy material to

work with, tells us that the account of their journey "should . . . be a pleasant tale" (4.1.5.1). The mode has shifted from tragedy to comedy, comedy based on the irony of Amoret's misconception: although in fact she is as safe as it is possible to be, Amoret, who believes that her travelling companion is a man, grows increasingly uneasy. Her anxiety heightened by the fact that Britomart speaks to Amoret "Of loue, and otherwhiles of lustfulness" (4.1.7.8), so that the poor girl, so lately rescued from one captor, fears that she has fallen prey to another. The parallel is suggested by the narrator's wording: Amoret's anxiety is caused by her "fine abusion of that Briton mayd" (4.1.7.2); the word abusion, with its faint but clear echo of the name of Busirane, confirms that one of the sources of Busirane's power is Amoret's self-deception. Her error about Britomart's sex seems a small one in comparison with the twisted terror which made her prey to Busirane, yet both derive from a common root: fear of masculine sexual aggression. In the first canto of Book IV Spenser presents a comic, realistic reenactment of an event which had been presented theatrically and symbolically: that is, Britomart's freeing of Amoret from obsessions within her own mind. In this introductory episode, Britomart completes the process she had begun in her attack on the castle of Busirane and restores to Amoret something of her own identity and confidence. In comparison with his source, Orlando Furioso,<sup>19</sup> Spenser's version lacks detail and bite--Britomart's language is not as witty as Bradamant's, the reversal not as well prepared for--but this is partly because his purposes are different and the narrative unit is intended to serve a thematic end.

The nature of Spenser's interest in the episode is suggested by the symmetrical structure of his version. The sixteen stanzas which comprise the episode fall neatly into fours. <sup>20</sup> The first four stanzas look backward to the Masque of Cupid; the second four present, in some detail, the growing anxiety of Amoret as she travels with Britomart; the next four (stanzas 9-12) narrate Britomart's solution; the final four (stanzas 13-16) focus on the reactions to it—the amazement of the onlookers, the gratitude of the young knight, the relief of Amoret and the psychic gain for Britomart herself. The relative weight given to the various aspects of his account suggest that Spenser's interest was not so much in the ingenuity and narrative interest of the solution as in its psychological reverberations and in its meaning as an introduction to the Book of Friendship. It is in relation to the major themes and motifs of this book as a whole that it is most promising to examine this opening episode.

I have discussed the centrality in Book Four of the various forms of social ritual, Spenser's critical interest in them and his apparent pessimism about their efficacy. It is appropriate that his opening episode should be based on a particularly sterile and arbitrary ritual:

The custome of that place . . . that hee  
Which had no loue or lemman there in store,  
Should either winne him one, or lye without the dore.  
(4.1.9.7)

This pointless custom, which Ariosto seems to accept uncritically as a means of displaying Bradamant's shrewd readiness in debate, is held up to implicit criticism by the total context into which Spenser places it. Cutting down on the circumstantial detail of his source (Ariosto's account includes, for example, descriptions of the cold and rainy weather,



the moonlight illuminating the knights as they joust, the fire and the food inside, the account of the origins of the custom), Spenser clarifies its principal outlines, fusing the two separate challenges which Bradamant has to face into a single unified action. In Ariosto, Bradamant wins entry into Tristan's castle on her own account (unlike Britomart, she is travelling alone); she doffs her helmet immediately and is recognized as a woman before the issue of the other woman is raised. Her host outlines for Bradamant the origins of the tradition, but it is not until the company are actually sitting down to supper that it suddenly occurs to him that he ought to get rid of the only other lady at the table, the beauty from Iceland. It is only at this point that Bradamant demonstrates her wit in securing a place for her rival, arguing that since she herself would have no intention of losing as a woman what she had gained as a warrior, the Icelandic lady's chances are doomed from the outset and that therefore the context between them is not fair. Bradamant emphasizes, as well, that she herself may not in fact be a woman: she defies the assembled company to prove that merely because she has long hair, she is less masculine than some of her long-haired companions.

Spenser's condensation and stylization of Ariosto's plot suggests the aspects of it which interested him. In Spenser, Britomart solves the problem by pairing off first with one guest, then with the other. In Ariosto there is no question of pairing; Bradamant wins her way into the castle by military prowess alone and secures hospitality for her rival by making a legalistic point in debate. The two victories are

quite separate; though the second issue arises because Bradamant's sexual identity has been revealed, its solution does not proceed from any pairing which can take place because of this revelation. Spenser's rhetoric, on the other hand, suggests from the very beginning his desire to link the two episodes so that they will seem two sides of a single coin. His style is characterized in this passage by antithetical parallelism, the verbal emphasis is on exclusion, on an either-or relationship between possibilities. The custom is that a knight without a partner "Should either winne him one, or lye without the dore" (4.1.9.9); Britomart, annoyed at the young knight who claims Amoret for his own, tells him "either he should neither of them haue, or both" (4.1.10.9); she perceives, however, that her rival "seemed valiant, though vnknowne" (4.1.11.5). But as Britomart reaches toward the solution, the parallel phrases become not exclusive but inclusive, expressing not an either-or relationship but a both-and relationship. The problem can be solved because of the double identity of Britomart, "She that no lesse was courteous then stout" (4.1.11.6): because she is stout (like a man) she has defeated the young knight; because she is courteous (sympathetic, kind, like a woman) she is motivated to look after Amoret's interest. She has a double aim, and casts about to decide how to arrange things so "that both the custome showne/ Were kept, and yet that Knight not locked out" (4.1.11.8); while her masculine allegiance to the chivalric code makes her reluctant to overturn the custom, her feminine softness of heart inclines her to take pity on her rival. The structure of the twelfth stanza emphasizes by its symmetry the balanced doubleness of her achievement:

The Seneschall was cal'd to deeme the right,  
 Whom she requir'd, that first fayre Amoret  
 Might be to her allow'd, as to a Knight,  
 That did her win and free from challenge set:  
 Which straight to her was yeelded without let.  
 Then since that strange Knights loue from him was quitted,  
 She claim'd that to her selfe, as Ladies det,  
 He as a Knight might iustly be admitted;  
 So none should be out shut, sith all of loues were fitted.  
 (4.1.12)

The two solutions hang together: it is because Britomart (as a man) has won Amoret that the young knight is now without a partner, and can be paired off with Britomart (as a woman); that the double pairing is accomplished in two halves of a single stanza emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the two transactions, and the final line suggests the stability and finality of the new grouping ("sith all of loues were fitted").

I have suggested the function of the numbers three and four in the fourth book, three tending to suggest miraculous spiritual union, four associated with the social stability achieved through a double pairing. Britomart's dual identity manages both kinds of union at once. Britomart, Amoret and the young knight enter the castle as a group made up of three individuals. Yet because Britomart is acting first as a woman, then as a man, the unit also consists of two couples: Britomart and Amoret, Britomart and the young knight. Britomart accomplishes in a neat comic way the kind of reconciliation which woman is intended to bring about. Like Cambina, she is a peacemaker, but the mode here is not Chaucerian romance but Ariostan wit. Britomart's gesture is a social one: without abrogating the established custom, she manages to transform it from a negative to a positive mechanism. The problem of joining people together, a central one in the fourth book, is here solved in a unique

way, the solution suggesting the supranatural power which Britomart draws from her chastity and from the "doubleness" of her nature. The first canto of Book IV invites comparison with the Malecasta episode in the first canto of Book III, for Britomart's success here derives from a fuller awareness of the feelings and perceptions of another woman. More sensitive to the impressions which her masculine identity can evoke, she is able to discover a unique social use to which it can be put. Because she is two people in one, Britomart is able to practice a good-humoured and down-to-earth kind of magic and transform discord into harmony.<sup>21</sup> Spenser's handling of the incident in Ariosto is a neat and ingenious way of adapting the virtue of chastity to the thematic demands of the Book of Friendship.

To prove that she is indeed the woman she claims to be, Britomart takes off her helmet and allows her golden hair to fall down to her heels. This moment, the unveiling of the disguised heroine, is a staple of romance, a recurrent motif of Britomart's story (she had lifted her vizor before Malecasta, 3.1.42-3, and taken off her helmet at Malbecco's, 3.9.20-24) and, of course, a feature of the episode in Ariosto on which this passage is based.<sup>22</sup> It might seem, then, that to place undue emphasis on the moment of unveiling would be to misunderstand Spenser's relation to his sources. Yet such moments are always given a special emphasis in The Faerie Queene; the revelation of truth which they imply is central in Spenser's imagination. In Canto 1, Britomart's unveiling has quite a different impact than does the parallel moment in Ariosto. Bradamant's disarming, dramatic though it is, has a rather more casual relationship

to her solution of the Icelandic lady's dilemma. She surprises everyone by revealing her feminine identity; her host recognizes her, not merely as a woman, but as an individual, and welcomes her with genial hospitality; it is not until several stanzas later that the matter of her hair comes up again, at which point Bradamant suggests that it actually proves nothing at all about her. In Spenser, on the other hand, the unveiling is the climactic moment of the whole episode, the decisive proof which seals the contract. The reaction of the assembled company to her unveiling becomes one with their reaction to her solution: the awe of the knights and ladies, the gratitude of the young knight and the relief of Amoret are thus involved much more directly and dramatically with the actual visual surprise as her golden hair falls to her heels. She is, Spenser says, like the glowing rays which surround the sun as it sets after a particularly hot summer day--"prodigious . . . in common peoples sight" (4.1.13.9); it is this sense of prodigy or miracle which most impresses itself upon the reader. The miracle of her ingenuity and generosity, the wonder of her beauty and the surprise of her dual identity all fuse in this revelatory moment.

I have argued that a Diana figure in romance is likely to evoke this kind of visual response, an awed falling-back in the face of beauty frozen for a moment into an iconic posture. Spenser transforms a standard romance topos by investing the moment not only with narrative surprise but with symbolic overtones of meaning. Consciousness, recognition, seeing and being seen clearly, all have something to do with the quality of chastity as Spenser conceives it. Britomart is pre-eminently a bringer of

clarity: although she herself is sometimes deceived, she tends to help others see things as they are, get back in touch with their own feelings and identity. In this episode, by transforming anxiety, doubt and hostility to wonder, gratitude and relief she is performing a role which serves as a very appropriate introduction to the Book of Friendship. All of these transformations are focussed in the moment when she reveals herself as she is indeed, a beautiful and generous woman. Stanza 13 is a kind of foreshadowing of the climactic recognition scene of the fourth book, the one in which Britomart finally stands revealed before her beloved.

Britomart's revelation of her identity calms Amoret's growing anxiety by revealing that she has nothing to fear from the lascivious knight of her imagination. The sense of relief is emphatic:

And eke fayre Amoret now freed from feare,  
More franke affection did to her afford,  
And to her bed, which she was wont forebeare,  
Now freely drew, and found right safe assurance there.

"Frankness" has positive connotations in Spenser and it is usually associated with loving and natural sexuality ("Franckly each paramour his leman knowes" in the Garden of Adonis, 8.6.41.7). The sense of joyous relief in being able to take shelter in Britomart's bed is linked with Amoret's acceptance of her own sexual identity.<sup>23</sup> Amoret, paradoxically, can regain her feminine role of being protected and cared for because the knight who accompanies her is not a man and hence no sexual threat; she becomes thus more secure in her own femininity. We remember the bed in Malecasta's house into which Britomart sank with a security born

of her confidence that she was in a woman's dwelling; the security was misplaced, but the sense of comfort and confidence remains throughout her story as a kind of touchstone of identity. Britomart, too, gains something through the revelation. Although her motives have apparently been entirely altruistic, she finds that the surrender of her disguise is almost as much of a relief to her as it is to Amoret. For the first time she is able to talk to another woman who is her equal. For her, too, the experience is a confirmation of her womanhood:

Where all that night they of their loues did treat,  
And hard aduentures twixt themselues alone,  
That each the other gan with passion great,  
And grieffull pittie priuately bemone.

(4.1.16.1)

This kind of letting down of her guard is a luxury only rarely accessible to Britomart, an unexpected reward for her generous behaviour. It is interesting that Book IV, which seems to centre in such an emphatic and orthodox way on equal friendship between pairs of men, opens with the account of the beginning of friendship between two women. It is difficult to think of another figure in The Faerie Queene capable of feminine friendship; Britomart's directness, frankness and generosity suggest the kind of noncompetitive honesty on which such a relationship must be based. Spenser uses his source in an economical and original way to glance back at the third book and to epitomize some of the themes and motifs of the fourth. The revelation of Britomart's identity, which leads in this innocent and witty episode to her union with Amoret in friendship, will lead in Canto 6 to her union with Artegall in love.

Canto 6, the recognition scene between Artegall and Britomart, stands as a shining and emphatic centre to the fourth book of The Faerie Queene. The encounter is emphasized partly by the fact that it has a whole canto to itself; though it involves Scudamore's story as well as that of the two lovers, beginning as it does with Scudamore and Artegall united in mutual hostility to the Knight of the Ebon Spear and ending with Britomart's account of how she unfortunately managed to lose Amoret along the road, the canto is a narrative unit with its focus firmly on the climactic encounter between Britomart and Artegall; it is a self-contained, final and within its limits wholly positive episode, one of the few in Book IV which is not developed, undercut or qualified by anything else that happens later.<sup>24</sup> Its placement is important: occurring as it does after a series of events which have dissolved into social or psychic chaos (Satyrane's tournament, the beauty contest, Scudamore's sojourn in the House of Care), the joyous reconciliation of the third book invites the whole-hearted sympathy and assent of the reader. The episode is followed by the parallel but rather different reconciliation scene between Belphoebe and Timias, less open, less dramatic and less final than the one which precedes it. The reunion of Britomart and Artegall occurs in the sixth canto, at the centre of the

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fourth book; it is as if the overriding issue of the Book of Friendship,



the relationship between love and aggression, has in this episode found its emblematic focus, its thematic as well as physical fulcrum.

This is not of course their first meeting. Britomart had first encountered her lover during Satyrane's tournament, when her defeat of the mysterious "Salvage Knight" had restored "The prize, to knights of Maidenhead" (4.4.48.2). This significant meeting is less emphatic than it might have been. Spenser is at his weakest and most conventional in his pedestrian descriptions of jousting, and there is little in his actual handling of the scene to illuminate the significance of Artegall's disguise, in spite of the hint about its "secret wit". The duel between them becomes merely the final event in a series of somewhat mechanical hostilities, the climactic one, indeed, in terms of the outcome of the tournament (Britomart wins the day and it is on this account that she is awarded the false Florimell at the end of the beauty contest) but not as interesting as one might have expected; even the irony of their mutual disguise is underemphasized. Again one feels that part of Book IV has been given an almost perfunctory treatment. Perhaps absorbing the two lovers so unemphatically into the pattern of the tournament is, however, as effective a means as any of suggesting the allegorical link between their aggressiveness and that hostility which tends so consistently in Book IV to break down social union; and perhaps the fact that the recognition scene is given so much more ample a treatment reflects Spenser's pessimistic conviction that it is only on the personal, sexual level that such hostility can in fact be wholly transformed into its opposite.

As a narrative unit, the account of the union of Britomart and

Artegall offers a pattern for the transmutation of aggressive into sexual energy more sudden, more stylized and yet more convincing than perhaps any other such transformation in Book IV. It is a comic scene, the effect of which depends upon the reader's anticipation of the outcome of the fight. Scudamore is allowed to attack Britomart first so that he can be disposed of and the way prepared for what we know will be the climactic encounter between the two lovers. The symmetries of the narrative heighten our sense of its preordained pattern: first Scudamore attacks Britomart, then Artégall; first Britomart seems to be winning, then Artégall (when she is unhorsed and forced to cast aside her magic lance, signalling that her moment of defeat has come); first Artégall, astonished that Britomart is a beautiful woman, lets his sword fall helpless before her, then Britomart, astonished that Artégall is the figure in her father's globe, lets her sword fall helpless before him. The reversal--from frenzied action to dumb paralysis--is so complete as to make the two figures mechanical; at the very moment when they realize in a new way their own unique destiny and identity, Britomart and Artégall, who for the first time have become wholly real to themselves, become puppets to us; we see them acting their preordained roles in a comic pantomime. Britomart's story often tends paradoxically to fuse the two impressions of fate and free will; her actions, decisive and successful as they usually are, and the swift uncompromising position she takes at each confrontation suggest a freedom and force of personality shared by no other figure in The Faerie Queene; yet since from the beginning her quest has been defined in terms of a single very concrete goal and surrounded by the aura of magic prophecy, she seems at the same time

impelled forward to a predestined consummation. The recognition scene, by following violent action with frozen stillness, combines and heightens these two impressions. For the first time both Britomart and her destined lover, seeing one another clearly, are liberated to proceed consciously towards their final union. But what they recognize as their vizors are lifted is not only one another but their own destiny. The patterning of the narrative suggests the literary inevitability of their meeting. In their mutual recognition they mirror one another's gestures; their unity is suggested by their comic helplessness before a fate which guarantees their eventual happiness.

I have discussed the importance in Britomart's story of the "iconic moment", as it might be called, when, her disguise abandoned, she stands revealed as a woman. This topos is used at times with more emphasis than at others; it is very emphatic here, for it is as if all the other unveilings have prefigured this central revelation, so that we accept its very repetitiveness as token of its significance. The vision is touched with humour: the narrator notes that, angelic as Britomart is, her face, after her long exertion, is "somewhat redder, then beseem'd aright/ Through toylesome heate and labour of her weary fight" (4.6.19.8). This seems to be the narrator's observation, not Artegall's, for her lover responds to her as "some heavenly goddess" (4.6.22.4), falling before her in dumbfounded worship. Spenser presents the scene from a double perspective: the discrepancy between Artegall's idealized vision and the narrator's rather graphic description suggests the aura which his love throws around Britomart. The lovers are

surrounded by a private circle of intense emotion which is heightened rather than undercut by the amusement with which the narrator regards them.

Glauce's presence serves a similar purpose. The old nurse has always aspired to the role of peacemaker; here for the first time she succeeds. It is she who urges Britomart to a truce, with the result that the two knights raise their vizors and their identity is revealed. Once again, a narrative motif which had appeared before (at 4.2.3) is brought to a successful consummation, emphasizing the fairy-tale rightness and finality of the scene. Having brought them together, Glauce cannot resist a garrulous commentary on her achievement and on the ethical implications of their love (stanzas 30-32). First, she points out, the two men can relax, for Britomart, now revealed as a woman, cannot be a sexual threat to Amoret, "Sith meanes ye see she wants thereto". The comically concrete suggestion of the word "means" is an anticlimactically earthy context for the high romance of the lovers' meeting, and perhaps emphasizes by contrast the slightly sentimental tone of the lines which follow, in which she urges their full commitment to their new roles:

And you Sir Artegall, the saluage knight,  
 Henceforth may not disdaine, that womans hand  
 Hath conquered you anew in second fight:  
 For whylome they haue conquered sea and land,  
 And heauen it selfe, that nought may them withstand.  
 Ne henceforth be rebellious vnto loue,  
 That is the crowne of knighthood, and the band  
 Of noble minds deriued from aboue,  
 Which being knit with vertue, neuer will remoue.

And you faire Ladie knight, my dearest Dame,  
 Relent the rigour of your wrathfull will,  
 Whose fire were better turn'd to other flame:  
 And wiping out remembrance of all ill,

Graunt him your grace, but so that he fulfill  
 The penance, which ye shall to him empart;  
 For louers heauen must passe by sorrowes hell.  
 Thereat full inly blushed Britomart;  
 But Artegall close smyling ioy'd in secret hart.

(4.6.31-32)

Spenser makes the nurse's commentary work both ways: first, he uses her as mouthpiece to make certain themes of Britomart's story explicit-- the link between aggressive and erotic energy, (their present involvement is a "second fight", an "other flame"), the ennobling power of true love (the observations that love is the "crowne of knighthood" and the "band/ Of noble minds" are very Spenserian indeed); yet at the same time he manages rather subtly to suggest that, true as these generalizations are, they are not quite adequate as a reflection of the lover's inner feelings. Perhaps he manages it by having her conclude with some slightly sentimental clichés from the language of courtly love (Artegall is to perform "The penance, which ye shall to him empart", for "louers heauen must passe by sorrowes hell"); the fact that Britomart blushes "full inly" and Artgall "close smyling ioy'd in secret hart" at her remarks suggests both that her words strike a responsive chord in them and yet that she cannot fully perceive the intensity of their feelings, in tune though they are with what she herself has said. The garrulous busyness of Glauce's commonplace mind and tongue sets the lovers apart and emphasizes their dazed stillness, and the inwardness of their emotions. By presenting them as quintessential Young Lovers, Glauce's commentary both invests them with the glamour of that stereotype and at the same time suggests that their unique feelings transcend such categorization. Their private joy is protected from our knowingness, from Glauce's and from the narrator's.

The presence of the two enthusiastic observers, Scudamore and Glauce, also serves to heighten the intensely visual character of the recognition scene. The motif of disguise or of visual confusion is central in the fourth book, as indeed it is throughout The Faerie Queene. Visual deception often tends in Spenser to suggest moral falsity; however, the false Florimell is the only character in Book IV whose appearance works in precisely this way. More commonly, identity of appearance is used here as an emblem of spiritual identity, as in the cases (during the tournament, 3.4.27) of Cambell and Triamond and Amyas and Placidas, where the point is that two people of the same sex look alike and deceive onlookers but not each other. Mutual disguise tends in Book IV to be associated with secret affinity, and the effect of the unveiling in Canto 6 is subtly influenced by this context. In this scene it is the mirroring gesture of the two which suggests their identity; the fact that what the confrontation reveals is not sameness but difference of sex, that the two become in one another's eyes complementary and so capable of real union, marks the difference between them and the pairs of male friends and gives a tension and depth of the meaning to the revelation not shared by the conclusion of the Amyas-Placidas story, for example. As a result, the role of the reader as spectator is much more important here than in Cantos 8 and 9. The episode is a dramatization of the Renaissance cliché of love as eye-enchantment, doubly effective because its narrative pattern is played against other recognition scenes which have a much less visual emphasis.

One such episode is the reconciliation of Belpheobe and Timias,

another reversal which involves seeing through a disguise. Since Spenser's account of their quarrel and its termination comes in Cantos 7 and 8, his very different handling of similar narrative material throws light back on Canto 6, emphasizing the difference between Britomart and Belphoebe and the kind of "seeing" of which each is capable. Timias, out of favour with Belphoebe, falls into such abject despair that his physical appearance becomes deformed. Spenser makes Belphoebe's failure to recognize her worshipper somewhat plausible by showing Arthur similarly deceived (4.7.43). Yet when the recognition finally does come--when Timias, responding to Belphoebe's gentle moralizing, identifies her as the cause of his suffering--the moment has virtually no visual aspect at all: Spenser merely tells us that Timias' words do deeply

her mightie hart did mate  
 With mild regard, to see his ruefull plight,  
 That her inburning wrath she gan abate,  
 And him receiu'd againe to former fauours state.

(4.8.17.6)

Belphoebe "knows" Timias in a much more abstract way than Britomart and Artegall know each other; what she sees is not Timias but his "ruefull plight", and her response is an almost purely ethical one, her forgiveness granted through pity, not passion. The perception is strongly one-sided: the despairing Timias knows all, his mistress (at first) knows nothing. What interests Spenser in this case is, as I have suggested, not the moment of recognition itself, but the subtle psychological process, half-unconscious, by which it is gradually brought about. The very fact that the natural climax of Britomart's story is a moment of mutual perception, a moment of seeing and being seen, helps suggest the quality of character

for which she stands: self-awareness, clarity of feeling. Britomart's awareness has an added dimension; whereas Artegall knows her simply as a beautiful woman, she recognizes him as the very figure she had seen in Merlin's globe. She is, as she has been from the beginning, more fully and directly in touch with her own feelings, so that her actual meeting with her lover is the confirmation of emotions already deeply felt. What had seemed before a somewhat violent and quixotic fidelity to a destiny only dimly perceived has now become a fully conscious commitment. Whereas Belphoebe never can really "see" the effect she is having on the men who adore her, Britomart is stopped in her tracks by the simultaneous and paralyzing perception both of her lover's feelings and her own. The very conventionality of the scene works for it: a comic and stylized imaging of erotic enchantment; it defines the nature of Britomart's love by placing it in the context of much less final, more qualified unions.

The stasis which has been the visual symbol of chastity and which I have been emphasizing as the central effect of this canto expresses, however, not serenity but a rather violent conflict of emotions. This time we are taken inside the minds of the frozen figures, so that the tension formerly embodied in the image itself (for example, of Britomart in her bride-like smock brandishing a sword) is also elaborated in explicitly psychological terms. The physical paralysis of Artegall and Britomart is an index of their emotional turmoil, and this fact in itself helps to clarify the virtue which Britomart exemplifies. The effect of the episode may best be felt by a comparison. The moment when Britomart and Artegall drop their swords is an echo, a fulfilment, or a translation into another key of an earlier moment in Book IV.



When her tears, her prayers and her reasoning failed to separate  
Cambell and Triamond, Cambina was forced to strike them with her magic  
rod, so that

Their wrathfull blades downe fell out of their hand,  
And they like men astonisht still did stand.

(4.3.48.4)

Britomart and Cambina invite comparison, since both women are shown bringing a tournament to a conclusion. Cambina works by suppression: her wand imposes forgetfulness and unconsciousness upon the combatants, so that the tournament fizzles out in an allegorically satisfying but dramatically anticlimactic reconciliation.<sup>28</sup> Britomart, on the other hand, though she herself remains disguised in Satyrane's tournament, clarifies and brings out into the open its central issues: her restoration of the girdle to the Knights of Maidenhead figuratively shifts the emphasis of the contest back where it belongs, from male egotism onto feminine chastity, and the fact that her sexual identity guarantees the failure of the beauty contest (for, as a woman, Britomart has no interest in its prize) reveals, by allowing the event to degenerate into chaos, the moral confusion upon which it had been based. Although her identity remains disguised, Britomart always works against repression and delusion. Cambina, by making the fighters forget the cause of their quarrel, transforms them in a single instant from deadly foes to steadfast friends. Britomart and Artegall are similarly transformed, but by awareness not forgetfulness. Cambina is a wholly undefensive figure with a relentless charismatic power which those under her spell are unable to resist. Since from one angle she seems a fully realized counterpart of Britomart, a Britomart whose lance, shrunk to a wand, can subdue discord with a mere

gesture; since the accord which she imposes painlessly and with ease costs Britomart much persistent effort; since her goddess-like equanimity seems to transcend the vital but sometimes almost erratic energy of her counterpart--Cambina seems in relation to Britomart a creature out of myth, removed from the sweat and blood of life in this world. Chastity is a certain kind of invulnerability but it is not the kind exemplified by Cambina; it is, rather, a tense steadfastness born of constant pressure. Whereas Cambina's victory is dream-like and de-personalized, the participants divested of whatever individual motive and character they had had, the sixth canto is dramatic and personal, and involves waking up rather than falling asleep. Dropping the lance is associated with a descent into the real world of personal feeling, the trading of magic invulnerability for a less exalted, more human commitment.

Cambina's magic completely wipes out the animosity of the gathering, so that all the company, united in "glee and gladsome chere" (4.3.51.3), feast together "In perfect loue, deuoid of hatefull strife" (4.3.52.2). In the sixth canto, on the other hand, the accord of the two lovers does not dispel but rather sharpens the tensions--between the curiosity of the onlookers and the world of private feeling, between love and duty, between release and control. The feelings of Britomart and Artegall are described in terms of conflict, restraint and concealment. Hearing Artegall's name, Britomart is seized at once with "sudden ioy, and secret feare" (4.6.29.3), and the blood rushes to her face so that her emotions are visible although she continues to feign anger, "Thinking to hide the depth by troubling of the flood" (4.6.29.9). Britomart's responses pre-

viously have been presented in terms of the metaphor of a sudden rain-storm; the new water metaphor suggests a new "depth" in her emotions. Artegall, in turn, overcome by passion but chastened by the reserve of "her modest countenance",

his ranging fancie did refraine,  
And looser thoughts to lawfull bounds withdraw;  
Whereby the passion grew more fierce and faine,  
Like to a stubborne steede whom strong hand would restraine.  
(4.6.33.6)

It is as if the phallic thrust of lance and sword has been internalized in "the swift recourse of flushing blood" (4.6.29.6), "passion . . . more fierce and faine" (4.6.33.8) which must be bridled in; frustration and self-restraint are built in to the very moment of recognition, and the struggle must begin again. Chastity is in this sense an exceedingly strenuous virtue. The recognition scene economically suggests both the expansion and the control of psychic energy and thus forms an effective focus for a book in which their erratic and undisciplined release causes so much discord.

That Britomart and Artegall are equally matched is central to the scene's significance: their comic mirroring of one another's stance has not only a narrative but a thematic importance. From the beginning Britomart has been associated with Chaucer's comment on the futility of "maisterie" in love.<sup>29</sup> Britomart's romantic self-assurance at the very outset of her pilgrimage--her naive confidence that she could deal with the values and rituals of the Castle Joyous with commonsense and innocent rectitude--is illustrated by her prim sententious commentary on the plight of Redcrosse, beleaguered by the six courtiers who are attempting

to enforce his allegiance to their mistress Malecasta. Britomart seems to feel sure she can handle the situation with a brief lesson in the theory of faithful love:

Certes (said she) then bene ye sixe to blame,  
 To weene your wrong by force to iustifie:  
 For knight to leaue his Ladie were great shame,  
 That faithfull is, and better were to die.  
 All losse is lesse, and lesse the infamie,  
 Then losse of loue to him, that loues but one;  
 Ne may loue be compeld by maisterie;  
 For soone as maisterie comes, sweet loue anone  
 Taketh his nimble wings, and soone away is gone.

(3.1.25)

Her little sermon has the authority of Chaucer's wisdom behind it, yet Britomart's failure to appreciate the complexities of the social situation to which she applies it is soon made clear. A moral generalization like Chaucer's proverb, though correct as far as it goes, may obscure rather than clarify what is actually going on; Britomart's assumption that Malecasta's courtiers are accessible to Chaucerian wisdom is a complete misreading of their nature, what she says an expression of her overriding concerns at the moment rather than serious attempt to decipher theirs.

It is Spenser's practice to use sententious moral tags with a blandness which eventually alerts the reader to the possibility of their naiveté: the narrator often concludes with a pious platitude so inadequate to the facts of the narrative that eventually we begin to register the discrepancy and to realize that the moral attitude invoked often serves less to confirm the direction of the narrative than to hold it up to scrutiny. The "maisterie" observation, because its substance is repeated in at least two other contexts, particularly draws attention to itself, and since its first use was associated with a certain dangerous

innocence on the part of Britomart we are aware of the possibility of malice, blindness or oversimplification in its application. Ate and Duessa, attempting to cause whatever trouble they can among the edgy knights in the first canto, focus maliciously on Britomart's supposed absconding with Amoret; while Ate goads Scudamore by putting the case crudely (your love, she tells him, "loues another, with whom now she goth/ In louely wise, and sleepes, and sports, and playes", 4.1.47.5), the more subtle Duessa raises with ingenuous malice the issue of freedom in love:

Ne be ye wroth Sir Scudamore therefore,  
That she your loue list loue another knight,  
Ne do your selfe dislike a whit the more;  
For loue is free, and led with selfe delight,  
Ne will enforced be with maisterdome or might.

(4.1.46.5)

The cruel irrelevance to this comment to the supposed facts of the situation nevertheless draws attention to its message: the devil can quote scripture to his purpose, but his quoting ought to awaken us to the proper context and significance of the scripture he uses. While no one can exact love from another, freedom does not mean careless promiscuity: virtuous love involves both freedom to choose and fidelity to the choice, once made. The proverb comes up yet again in the fourth book, at the end of Satyrane's beauty contest: when the controversy over who should be awarded the false Florimell has degenerated into farcical hostility, Satyrane frees the lady to follow her own fancy, and when she picks Braggadocchio the narrator gives her choice an astoundingly complacent benediction: "Sweete is the loue that comes alone with willingnesse" (4.5.25.9). These careless, facile or malicious misapplications of

Chaucer's idea make it, nevertheless, a theme of the fourth book: the tags tend to echo in the back of the reader's mind, for example, when he attempts to assess the significance of Amoret's coy reluctance to leave the Temple of Venus; and in the story of the reconciliation of Timias and Belpheobe they raise if only implicitly the questions of freedom, of a discrepancy of rank and power, of the bonds which hold such lovers together. "Maisterie" is indeed a central problem in love, an issue which cannot be oversimplified; its full complexity cannot be reduced to an aphorism, but can be dealt with only by the expansion into narrative counterpoint.

In this complex pattern, the encounter of Britomart and Artegall has an important place. Britomart's energetic resistance to the slightest possibility of male dominance has been dramatized repeatedly, and it does lie behind our satisfaction at Artegall's final victory over her. His victory, however, does not mean his "maisterie". When the possibility of self-deception is removed, when Britomart at last comes face to face with the image to whom she has been faithful for so long, "maisterie" is redefined not as the imposition of one's partner's will over the other's, but as the mutual enchantment which secures their willing surrender.<sup>30</sup> The visual symmetry of their stance suggests their equal submission to this overwhelming power. Britomart's original assertion that "maisterie" has no place in love is shown to be a right-minded but naive oversimplification of a girl whose experience had not yet been sufficient to teach her the way in which defeat can mean victory. Her meeting with her lover both confirms and enriches the truism which

she had stated with such untested and theoretical confidence. The very fact that it was she who originally focussed on a theme which makes itself felt throughout Book IV tends again to associate Britomart with intuitive awareness of the central issues in love.

CHAPTER V

Britomart and Radigund in Book V:

Abstraction and Wholeness



A number of critics have been disconcerted by the tone of the Proem to Book V. The central image of the Proem, the scientific proof on which the pessimism of the narrator is based, is the dislocation of the heavenly bodies, the vision of the zodiac animals butting and shouldering each other out of place. Their uneasy shifting and nudging is a kind of inflated and slow-motion version of what will happen in Book V itself, where men who are insistently compared to animals jostle for property and land. But it is difficult to know exactly how to read the passage; its tone has puzzled some readers, for there seems to be a discrepancy between the seriousness of the underlying conception which the imagery is intended to illustrate and the almost playful nature of the imagery itself, between the apocalyptic terror in the decay of the "great glorious lampe of light" (Proem 7.1) and the actual triviality of the sun's dislocation ("Nigh thirtie minutes to the Southerne lake", Proem 7.8). The anticlimax has suggested that the passage as a whole is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. Cheney says that "there are overtones of slapstick in the random motions of Jupiter's menagerie" and that Spenser seems to be running out of evidence for the thesis of the world's decay; Aptekar agrees that the zodiacal figures are presented in a "less than magnificent way".<sup>1</sup> Yet we know from Heatt's work on the Epithalamion that Spenser took astronomy seriously as a model for the harmony of human life, and Fowler, who uses numerological evidence to support the association of the period of degeneration described in the Proem with Plato's second cycle of discord and strife, convincingly demonstrates the centrality of the astrological material

to the concerns of Book V as a whole. Yet there is something odd about the treatment of the zodiac animals, and I think the oddity has something to do with the imaginative impression of Book V as a whole.

In this context, the attribution of animal shapes to the unordered expanse of stars awakens us to the conceptual dislocation of figurative language. To imagine the animals jostling one another in the heavens makes us aware of the arbitrariness of seeing the constellations as animals in the first place, for certainly what the narrator observes as he looks anxiously up at the night sky cannot be anything like the animated scenario which Spenser recreates. In Book VI a constellation is humanized by its comparison with the crown of Ariadne; human life is thus assimilated to the order of the cosmos and made meaningful in terms of this order. To perceive the constellation Corona as the crown of Ariadne is to illuminate rather than to cancel out the actual visual impression of the stellar configuration; the comparison is a pattern which, imposed by the human imagination, suggests the power of that imagination to control and order the phenomena which we perceive. But to turn the constellations of the zodiac into animals is to release their energies in a comic but also genuinely sinister way. The images, invented to 'humanize' the heavens, are suddenly found to reflect, instead a power which is not subject to human control. The animals become giant shapes out of a comic nightmare: their comic overtones merely confirm the limitations of the zodiac imagery, for to see the stars as animals is not only visually arbitrary but also emotionally inaccurate, since the imported images tend to work against the genuine feeling of terror which

the shifting stars arouse. The Proem suggests the inadequacy of the human imagination to transform and domesticate the harsh realities of a fallen world. Imagination becomes, in fact, expendable: its irrelevance to the world of Book V is suggested by the withdrawal of Astraea, who starts out as a goddess and ends up as a constellation, reversing the imaginative process of the Proem. In the cantos that follow, imagination will be presented as an aspect of the human personality which must be repressed in the interests of justice. Like the anxious narrator, focussing on the minute signs which confirm his condemnation to an age of iron, justice operates through weighing and measuring; whatever such methods cannot encompass must be omitted from its purview. In order to respond justly to Artegall the knight of justice, the reader will be called upon again and again to suppress his own imaginative response to the allegorical images with which the poetry presents him.<sup>2</sup>

It is this suppression which I believe accounts for the general unpopularity of the fifth book of The Faerie Queene. The objections raised against it are often made on explicitly moral grounds. C. S. Lewis attributes what he considers its failure to the failure of Spenser's moral sense,<sup>3</sup> and many other critics, although they do not state the case so bluntly, seem to agree with him. Many recent theories about the real structural principle of Book V are to some extent an attempt to rationalize the seeming ruthlessness of Artegall and his henchman Talus.<sup>4</sup> One could hypothesize that the unpopularity of the book derives from the very nature of the subject under discussion. The question of justice

tends to suspend the suspension of disbelief. Critical questions about Hilton's God, for example, or Shakespeare's vision of justice in Measure for Measure are often in the last analysis treated as moral rather than aesthetic issues. And of course the fact that in Book V Spenser is dealing with the still-unanswered Irish question tends to evoke perennially impassioned responses. I think, however, that the sense of dislocation which readers feel in Book V goes beyond these moral considerations and derives as well from the insistent frustration of the reader's imagination. The allegory of justice demands that the reader suppress the very skills which he has cultivated in reading the earlier books. We are forced to read the images of the fifth book as signs rather than as symbols--to make them stand only for what the moral of the book tells us they ought to stand for. There is a great emphasis especially in the early cantos on "markes" and "signes" by which people are to be known; such signs are all that Artegall can allow himself to respond to. The tension between justice and full humanity, moral decoding and imaginative response, oppresses not only Artegall but also the reader; his resentment may take the form of repudiation of the book as a whole.

Consider for example the account of Artegall's education at the hands of Astraea.<sup>5</sup> In order to read it as a positive episode--a reading which the Legend of Justice quite clearly demands--the reader is called upon to ignore legitimate aspects of his own response to the narrative. This is how Spenser renders Astraea's initial encounter with her protégé:

Whiles through the world she walked in this sort,  
 Vpon a day she found this gentle childe,  
 Amongst his peres playing his childish sport:  
 Whom seeing fit, and with no crime defilde,  
 She did allure with gifts and speaches milde,  
 To wend with her. So thence him farre she brought  
 Into a caue from companie exilde,  
 In which she noursled him, till yeares he raught,  
 And all the discipline of iustice there him taught.

(5.1.6)

It is impossible to be properly awake to the connotations of language and to read the account of this abduction without an impulse to distaste. Behind Spenser's account lies the archetype of the seduction of the innocent child by the experienced adult. The phrase "this gentle childe" suggests not only youth and innocence but also perhaps aristocratic mien and nobility of birth ("childe" in the chivalric sense); the phrase "Amongst his peres" reinforces the suggestion of aristocracy (his young friends have been selected because they are his social equals), and the repetition of "child" in the phrase "childish sport" suggests again how very young he is. But all that Astraea notices is that he is "fit" for her purpose, being "with no crime defilde", a negative, even exploitive response to the child's evident charm. One feels that he has no chance against the "gifts and speaches milde" which she uses to "allure" him away from his companions, and when she takes him "farre" away "Into a caue from companie exilde" it is hard to accept her stratagem as anything but a kidnapping. The word "noursled" calls attention to itself, for its associations of nurturing motherhood seem somewhat inappropriate to the kind of training Astraea provides in the "discipline of iustice" (the little boy must move from being "noursled" to being "disciplined" in just one line). His abduction by

Astraea is so clearly a loss for Artegall himself that to accept it as a positive development calls for a suppression of our response to the actual language in favour of the imposition of an abstract moral reading. The fact that Artegall is taught to practise upon animals is merely an extension of the impoverishment already implicit in the whole situation. His training is thematically appropriate, since the first person Artegall meets is indeed an animal in human form, a wild boar who has to be reduced by force to a fawning spaniel before he will accept just punishment; but the way it is presented, as a concession to the circumstances (Astraea uses animals "for want there of mankind", 5.1.7.6), suggests poetically that Artegall's education has involved deprivation. Yet our correct response to Artegall and to the goddess depends upon our willingness to repress this awareness. We are repeatedly called upon, in fact, to use the same self-control which Artegall himself must exercise in ruthlessly substituting a narrow moral vision for a full imaginative response. What we resent in Book V is not so much Artegall's diminishment but our own.<sup>6</sup>

Spenser links Artegall with Hercules and with Achilles.<sup>7</sup> Both of these heroes also had a wilderness education and practised their skills upon animals. Their tutor, however, was not a woman but the centaur Chiron, who could fit so easily in to the imagery of Book V that his replacement by Astraea turns him into a kind of shadow archetype suggesting her limitations. Chiron, "the most just of the centaurs", was himself the pupil of Apollo and Artemis, the sun and the moon, who are of course associated with Britomart and Artegall. Book V also links

Artegall with Jupiter, who is a patron of Chiron (in that the constellation Sagittarius is the solar house of the planet Jupiter, his guardian deity).<sup>8</sup> The centaur's relationship with Achilles had a prehistory many of the details of which are paralleled or parodied in the account of Astraea's relationship with Artégall. Chiron had originally been the rescuer of Achilles' father Peleus, who, abandoned and deprived of his sword by Acastus, was attacked by savage centaurs; Chiron drove them off and gave Peleus another sword to replace the one which had been taken from him. The motif of infant rescue continues into the second generation: Achilles in turn was rescued by his father from the attack of his mother Thetis, and it was only when as a result of this intervention she left her husband that Peleus entrusted the child to Chiron, who thus became a kind of male stepmother. As a wedding present, the centaur had given Peleus a mighty lance: Achilles eventually inherited this weapon from his father and used it at Troy. Artégall's and Achilles' educations are alike in some ways, but the difference in the sex of their tutor makes a difference in the tone of the narrative. Chiron is a grandfatherly figure, rescuing abandoned children from the violence of others; Astraea is a seductress luring them away. In a general way, Artégall's relationship to Astraea is analogous to Britomart's relationship to Isis, but again the difference in sex makes a difference in the nature of the bond; his capture by Astraea might be linked with Artégall's submission to Radigund, who also lures him with words, and the priests' submission to Isis, an essentially positive relationship which nevertheless makes them less than complete human beings. Chiron

is an ideal combination of man and animal,<sup>9</sup> who saves Achilles from the other centaurs; Astraea, instead of teaching her pupil to balance the human and animal sides of his nature, replaces one with the other. As Achilles inherits the lance from his father, so Artegall inherits Chrysaor from the father-god Jove. Both stories, however, also involve the provision of a substitute weapon. When Astraea, loathing the sinfulness of men, withdraws to heaven, she leaves behind her not the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, but Talus the iron man, who will figure much more prominently in Artegall's adventures than will his golden sword. Chiron succours Peleus and replaces a sword by a sword; Astraea abandons Artegall (because she is a substitute mother, the reader does register her withdrawal as a kind of abandonment) and leaves him instead a creature whose nature confirms the Knight's involvement in the iron  
<sup>10</sup> age. I am not suggesting that Spenser intended a detailed reconstruction of such parallels, only that a reader responding to the benevolence of Astraea's ministrations in the context of familiar classical prototypes might at the same time feel their rigour. The shadow of the gentle Chiron suggests what has been left out of Artegall's education. Critics frequently wonder why Spenser does not identify Elizabeth specifically with Astraea; as Kathleen Williams says, "the compliment is one that asks to be made".<sup>11</sup> Perhaps his withholding of the identification proceeds not from his awareness of deficiencies in Elizabeth as from his intention to suggest them in Astraea.

Astraea is herself a sign; we can only respond to her correctly if we read her as one. She "equals" justice, and this perception is the



only way of making her an attractive figure. The fact that she teaches Artegall to "weigh" right and wrong "In equally balance" and to "measure out" equity "According to the line of conscience" emphasizes again the abstract nature of the judgments which he will be called upon to make. In his use of these metaphors, Spenser seems orthodox enough, beginning as he does with the conventional scale of justice and merely extending the idea to include the tape-measure of equity as well. The episode of the Democratic Giant, however, will make us think again about scales, and we will learn later that Equity is a kind of exception to the rule of Justice, so that to use an analogous metaphor to suggest its operations is perhaps not as neutral a gesture as it seems in Canto 1. The details of his education as a whole suggest the deliberate extinction of Artegall's humanity, his balance, his play instinct and his ability to relate to other people. To accept this extinction as an enhancement is to accept Astraea as the heavenly redeemer of which she is presented as a type. In her ascension to heaven, Astraea is a kind of Christ-figure; for modern man, however, she is reduced to the shining but schematized constellation he can see in the sky, and her dehumanizing apotheosis is a fitting emblem for the abstraction which she necessitates.

Artegall's first adventure, his encounter with the murderous Sanglier, emphasizes the reading of signs in what at first seems a casual way; their centrality to the meaning of the episode is made clearer, however, as the narrative develops. Artegall encounters a squire lamenting over the body of a beheaded lady; the young man

explains that she was killed by her own fickle knight who, rejecting her for the squire's lady, cut off her head when she complained. Artegall asks his informant, who does not know the knight's name, how he may be identified:

Aread(sayd he) which way then did he make?  
And by what markes may he be knowne againe?

(5.1.19.1;  
italics mine)

The squire replies that the criminal may easily be recognized:

. . . as I marked, bore vpon his shield,  
By which it's easie him to know againe,  
A broken sword within a bloodie field;  
Expressing well his nature, which the same did wield.

(5.1.19.6)

The knight, the narrator tells us, is Sir Sanglier, and Artegall recognizes him "by his looke,/ And by the other markes, which of his shield he tooke" (5.1.20.8). When Artegall questions the knight and hears his vehement denial, he nevertheless perceives "by signes" (5.1.24.6) that the man is guilty. Artegall is trained to spot and react to only those "markes" which denote guilt or innocence; with the human situation in its totality he is not concerned. The behaviour of Sanglier is similar to that of the knight Tristram kills in Book VI: both seize another's lady and then turn, in contempt or frustration, on their own. But Artegall's solution is decidedly more abstract. Calidore hears the story of Aladine and Priscilla from Tristram himself, confirms it by questioning the lady, and then has to go on to deal with the human consequences of the offence, help carry Aladine home and patch up Priscilla's reputation. Artegall simply ignores the lady as a human presence, so that when with Solomonic ingenuity he discusses chopping her in half, it is

necessary for the reader to suppress the fictional reality of the situation in order to make the allegory palatable.<sup>12</sup> There is a considerable narrative difference between Solozon proposing to dismember an infant and Artegall proposing to chop in half a grown woman who is right there listening to his suggestion, but although we are not allowed to ignore the difference--Artegall's emphatic repetition of the words "dead" and "living" ("Let both the dead and living equally/ Devided be . . .", 5.1.26.3) dramatizes it--we have to suppress our awareness of it in order to regard Artegall's behaviour as judicious rather than grotesque. We too must respond only to "signs" which teach us to recognize Artegall's judgment as a type of Solomon's and suspend our imaginative response to the characters as anything but ciphers in this abstract pattern.

That such insensitivity has a human cost is suggested by a comically grisly detail in Sanglier's story. The lady is partly responsible for her own death: she is incautious enough to speak metaphorically to a pig-headedly literal knight. When she says she would rather die than be deserted, Sanglier obligingly takes her at her word. His callous brutality is associated with a willed insensitivity to metaphor, a determination to exclude any kind of meaning which cannot be exploited to gain his own end. The virtue of the squire is proven, on the other hand, by his indifference to mere signs; he "chose with shame to beare that Ladies head" in order to preserve his lady's life. It is Artegall's limitation that he cannot, as Justice incarnate, allow himself the very humanity which he is trained to recognize as a sign of

virtue in others. It is clear why Artegall must refuse to take the squire along with him, for in his generosity and full humanity he is not an appropriate replacement for Talus.

Artegall punishes Sanglier by forcing him to carry his dead lady's head for a year, another detail the allegorical reading of which involves the suppression of some very lively concrete associations. What is probably indicated here is an heraldic demotion; the blazon on his shield ("a broken sword within a bloodie field") probably indicates that he is already a dishonoured knight, and in fact the emphasis throughout on marks and signs suggests that the episode probably concerns the besmirching of a family name (Sanglier's name suggests an heraldic animal, but he uses it, as he uses metaphor, as an excuse to liberate his brutal passions).<sup>13</sup> When Sanglier refuses to pick up the lady's head, Talus forces him to do so:

He tooke it vp, and thence with him did beare,  
As rated Spaniell takes his burden vp for feare.

(5.1.29.8)

This is a very vivid physical picture, the visual details of which however the reader is called upon to repress; it establishes the rightness of his cowering animal subservience, but is grotesque to the extent that it evokes the image of the way in which the spaniel "takes up" his prey.

Acting justly is analogous to using language in a certain way; it requires the rigorous exclusion of all irrelevant associations, the power to abstract, to respond with only a part of oneself; it means dealing with people, too, as abstractions, only insofar as they embody legal guilt or innocence.<sup>14</sup> Artegall's manipulative use of language,

this ability to "set up" the characters he intends to implicate, is the natural concomitant of the point of view he must take towards them; it gives him the power of an impersonal principle. A number of the episodes in Book V are tolerable only if read purely as metaphor (which tends not to be dead enough for readers who refuse to comply with the demands of the allegory). Spenser reorients the reader to the mode of the Book of Justice by grouping at the beginning several episodes which are disturbing if not distanced by the reading which they require.

Artegall's second encounter is one of these, his defeat of Pollente, the power which taxes the rich, his bare-skulled groom ("bondage") who pillages the poor and his daughter Munera (bribery) whose "wicked charms" (5.2.5.5) support her father in his machinations. Pollente guards the long narrow bridge of fiscal life which is pitted with many trapdoors: the image suggests that those who fall through them into debt will probably drown in it. Artégall is able to defeat the oppressor because he is good at swimming--at adroitly manoeuvring in such a financial milieu so that he keeps from "going under" and is able to evade and finally turn the tables on his exploiter. Spenser's allegory is particularly interesting here, the rapid action of the battle the shifty with Pollente suggesting with an almost visceral realism what it feels like to be fighting for your life against so tricky and ruthless an adversary. Here the poetry works towards the concrete; Spenser captures very directly the nervous violence of the emotions involved in such a contest, the desperation and dovishness of its transactions. He calls upon the reader to respond with full imaginative power to the imagery

which suggests the nature of the crime so that when Pollente's head is cut off and displayed "that all might see" we are ready to accept the gory spectacle as the mere sign it is intended to be, "a mirrour to all mighty men" who might be tempted to use their power unjustly. (5.2.19). Our emotions are excited against the criminal so that they may be dulled when he is duly punished, so that he becomes dehumanized and his dismemberment merely an acceptable means of social communication. To a generation which had seen the heads on Tower Bridge, Pollente's head "pitcht vpon a pole" would seem a very relevant kind of mirror for magistrates. Accepting such a punishment as the right and inevitable manifestation of godlike justice requires a suspension of sensibility for which Spenser's previous allegory has prepared the reader.

The case of the ~~headless~~ lady has established a central motif of Book VI: that of the dismembered body. Some of the victims of justice seem to have something in common with justice herself, who is often represented iconographically in terms of dismemberment. Nohrnberg sees Minerva with her hands chopped off as a parody of Isis, who is represented in Plutarch as being without hands, "to indicate that justice is not influenced by gifts or by intercession"; he adds, "Given the beheading of Pollente, the headless justice of Diodorus Siculus, I.xcvi.9, may be relevant here also". Aptekar notes that justice has three eyes and no ears, since she "sees all and is deaf to pleas".<sup>15</sup> Such images graphically suggest the suppression of natural impulses which would tend to interfere with the perfect impartiality of justice. In the course of Book V, the Democratic Giant is shattered

like a ship with broken ribs; Britomart cuts off Radigund's head, while Talus "threshes" the bodies of her followers so that there is "no worke at all left for the leach" (5.7.55.8); the Souldan is torn to pieces by the hooks on his own chariot; Malengin, turning into a snake, is beaten to pieces; Malfont the bad poet has his tongue nailed to a post. While it is probably easy for a modern reader to overestimate the shock value of such images for an Elizabethan audience, there is a real difference in tone between Book V and the other books, and it is focused in moments such as these. Such incidents depend for their acceptance on translating people into things, on the suppression of all human sympathy for the victims of impartial justice. The most interesting dismemberment is that of Pollente's daughter Munera, a Lady-Heed figure which Spenser handles in an economical and unusually intense way.

The operative detail is the odd one of the golden hands and silver feet. When they are first mentioned, in Doxy's account, they make her a non-human, merely allegorical abstraction, a kind of Old Testament idol whom "many Lords" have courted (5.1.10.5); her name adequately encompasses her significance ("Her name is Munera, agreeing with her deedes", 5.2.9.9). But when Artegall and Talus take the castle and Talus flushes her out from under her pile of gold, she becomes suddenly more human. The transition begins in stanza 25, partly because of the way Talus is described as "a linchound" sniffing her out--the metaphor suggests her warm flesh and her cringing terror--partly because "Artegall him selfe her seemlesse plight did rew" (5.2.25.9).

Stanza 26, in which Talus takes just vengeance on the lady, involves

the reader in a violent reversal of feeling:

Yet for no pitty would he change the course  
 Of Iustice, which in Talus hand did lye;  
 Who rudely hayld her forth without remorse,  
 Still holding vp her suppliant hands on hye,  
 And kneeling at his feete submissiuely.  
 But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold,  
 And eke her feete, those feete of siluer trye,  
 Which sought vnrighteousnesse, and iustice sold,  
 Chopt off, and hayld on high, that all might them behold.  
 (5.2.26)

The last line is a genuine shock because Spenser has in spite of his clear moral judgment, allowed her beauty to plead with us for her. It happens rhetorically in the caressing repetition of "her suppliant hands . . . his feete . . . her suppliant hands, those hands of gold . . . her feete, those feete of siluer". There is a subtle but distinct rhetorical difference between "golden hands", which are simply metallic, and "hands of gold", which belong to the Song of Songs and the sonneteers; we remember Stephen Daedalus' erotic enchantment with the poetry of "tower of ivory", "house of gold"). The last four lines of the stanza record a sequence of events which is shocking in its rapidity: the plea for mercy (lines 6 and 7) is followed so swiftly by the inexorable judgment (line 8) and the execution of the sentence (line 9) that we recoil instinctively from the Alexandrine with its aggressively violent opening ("Chopt off . . ."). But we are wrong to recoil, for the punishment is thoroughly justified; we have been rhetorically tricked into forgetting for a moment, as Artegall himself has almost forgotten, that Munera is a personification, not a person, that the pliant femininity of the "sc slender wast" (5.2.27.1) by which Artegall grasps her to throw her over the wall is linguistic artifice, not fleshly reality. Artegall must read Munera



as a personification in order to treat her justly, and so must we, in order to respond justly to him as he wipes her out.

The problem of language comes up even more insistently in the next episode, Artegall's encounter with the Democratic Giant, where when his long and earnest argument fails, Artegall has to resort to force. The Renaissance emphasis on rhetoric as a means of controlling an unruly mob makes the substitution of violence for persuasion seem an anticlimactic failure.<sup>16</sup> It is as if Artegall is diminished, whittled away, from both ends: unwilling to lower himself to the police-work of Talus, neither can he quite rise to the role of Solomon or even Menenius Agrippa. His failure emphasizes the inefficacy of his argument and calls attention to the rhetorical technique he has attempted to use.

The debate is conducted in terms of the analogy between cosmic and social "justice". The threat which the Giant poses is political in nature, but his argument is not expressed in explicitly political terms until stanza 38. Instead, we hear him boasting that he would weigh the world if he had something to put in the balance against it (stanza 30), that he would weigh the elements and "ballaunce heauen and hell together" (stanza 31), that the elements have encroached upon one another (stanza 32), that the sea eats away at the land and that the earth augments itself with the dead bodies which it absorbs (stanza 37). Artegall replies in the same terms, that the universe as originally created was perfectly balanced (stanza 35), so that it is dangerous to weigh its constituent parts. There are hints, of course, that the implications are political: Talus and Artegall find that the crowd they observe

consists of "many nations" (5.2.29.9), the Giant complains that because the elements are imbalanced "so were realmes and nations run awry" (5.2.32.6) and the narrator observes that "the vulgar" (5.2.33.1), the "simple people" (5.2.33.8) who flock around the Giant do so hoping "vncontrolled freedome to obtaine" (5.2.33.5). But the actual argument is conducted in cosmic not in political terms; it is not until stanza 38 that the egalitarian implications of the Giant's proposals become clear, and when they do he assumes rather than defends the analogy:

Therefore I will throw downe these mountaines hie,  
 And make them leuell with the lowly plaine:  
 These towring rocks, which reach vnto the skie,  
 I will thrust downe into the deepest maine,  
 And as they were, them equalize againe.  
 Tyrants that make men subiect to their law,  
 I will suppressse, that they no more may raine;  
 And Lordings curbe, that commons ouer-aw;  
 And all the wealth of rich men to the poore will draw.

Even when the Giant's real motive emerges, however, Artegall chooses not to address himself to the political issue directly, but to conduct the argument through the cosmic analogy. He argues that the sea does not destroy the land, merely moves it around; that the men whose bodies enrich the earth were formed from it in the first place; that commoners should envy kings no more than the "lowly dales" envy the high hills. His argument ought to carry more weight than it does; there is after all in the Renaissance a deeply felt analogy between "great" things and "small" (5.2.43.9); it is the basis of the Proem, where the irregularity of the stars in their courses signals the degeneration of modern man, and it ought to strengthen Artegall's position, by emphasizing the enormity of what the Giant is proposing. Why then does

Artegall turn out to be so ineffective when he advances it? Principally because in accepting the analogy he has entered the contest on his enemy's terms, a mistake he is later to repeat with Radigund, and these terms paradoxically have no reality for the Giant himself, who uses the cosmic analogy merely as a cover for his real political purposes, so that the argument drawn from them generates conclusions in which he has no interest (when he is presented with "right" he promptly thrusts it away, "For it was not the right, which he did seeke", 5.2.49.2).

His inaccessibility to Artégall's standards and values gives a curiously abstract quality to the confrontation, a quality which is suggested by the way the Giant's scales are used. When he tries to weigh "winged words" (5.2.44.9) they fly off, and when he sets right against wrong, "all the wrongs could not a little right downe way" (5.2.46.9). He does succeed, however, when he follows Artégall's advice and weighs two wrongs against one another. The scales are, of course, the scales of justice, which the Giant misuses to judge realities not accessible to quantitative analysis. They can measure the relative and the limited, but cannot approach goodness itself, which because it is absolute cannot be compared, because it is "one" (5.2.48.6) cannot be analyzed, because it is infinite cannot be measured. The scales in fact cannot operate in the world of Augustinian metaphysics, where evil is nothingness; they work only in the political world, where evil--negation though the theologian may consider it--is as positive in its consequences as a wild animal (5.9.1.1) and has to be "weighed" and dealt with. As the echo from Job suggests the two worlds are incommensurable, cannot

be brought together by any rhetorical procedure; the very attempt to make an analogy between them is an attempt to weigh the wind, and by entering the debate on the Giant's terms this is what Artegall no less than his adversary is doing.

Spenser intensifies this suggestion by the way he dramatizes the contest between the two debaters. When Artegall insists that the Giant weigh words or balance right against wrong, the combination of the concrete image (scales) with abstractions (words, right, wrong) makes the scene possible to visualize, though its message is theologically orthodox; the impossibility of responding to anything but the allegorical level of the passage makes us feel the abstractness of the argument and thus the political inefficacy, of propositions which, stated as abstractions (as at 5.2.47.6) are not difficult to accept. Using the scales of justice in a kind of Baconian experiment to confirm the postulates of theology is like mixing a metaphor; it leaves the Knight of Justice helplessly suspended between two epistemologies. The gap between image and meaning is analogous to the gap between political reality and theological theory; Artegall cannot bridge it. All he can do is abandon the attempt to communicate with the Giant and have Talus wipe him out instead. The difficulty of bringing theory and practice together is rendered by suggesting the frustrating abstractness of language itself.

As the Giant with his scales is a parodic version of the Knight of Justice himself, so in the next canto this function is performed by Braggadocchio, whose exposure and expulsion are its central structural principle. Braggadocchio's loan of his shield to Artegall leads to his

public humiliation as a lying braggart, his display of the snowy Florimell leads to the revelation of her falsity, and the horse which he had stolen from Guyon is reclaimed because Braggadocchio has made the mistake of bringing it to the wedding. The real climax of the wedding-scene is the scourging and banishing of Braggadocchio; it is this event which is the source of the merriment with which the canto closes. There are thus two episodes in succession which revolve around the rejection of a parodic double of Artegall. The role of justice, Spenser points out several times, is to "diuide" (5.4.1.2); by the third canto justice has come to be felt as a process of separation and expulsion--of sorting the wheat from the tares and casting the tares into the fire.<sup>17</sup> It is impossible not to register the bleakness of this wedding celebration, for what is usually an occasion for inclusion becomes in Canto 3 an occasion of emphatic exclusion.

The narrator's introduction is an epitome of Spenser's method, throughout the canto. He announces in the first stanza that this is to be a sunny interlude "After long stormes and tempests ouerblowne" (5.3.1.1); that Florimell's time of trial has ended, that her sorrow has changed to joy, that the news of her wedding has been "blazed farre and wide" (5.3.2.5), and "soleme feasts and giusts ordain'd therefore", that "Lords and Ladies infinite great store" have come together "from euery side" for the celebration (5.3.2). The impression of pleasure, expansiveness and inclusiveness is strongly established; we seem to be promised a celebration of festal plenty. The third stanza continues:

To tell the glorie of the feast that day,  
The goodly seruice, the deuicefull sights,  
The bridegromes state, the brides most rich aray,

The gride of Ladies, and the worth of knights,  
 The royall banquets, and the rare delights  
 Were worke fit for an Herauld, not for me.

(4.2.3)

The negative conclusion of this emphatically periodic sentence chops off our expectations as ruthlessly as Artegall chops off Munera's hands.

The piling-up of phrases in the first four lines has evoked a multitudinous catalogue of pleasures; the double "B" rhyme in the fourth and fifth lines is especially effective here, suggesting the overwhelming richness of delightful alternatives. But Spenser engages the reader's imagination only to block it with the sudden reversal in the fifth line. The implication that the narrator is above such cataloguing ("worke fit for an Herauld") is analogous to the oft-repeated assertion that Artegall leaves to Talus operations which he will not lower himself to perform. He goes on to conclude:

But for so much as to my lot here lights,  
 That with this present treatise doth agree,  
 True vertue to aduance, shall here recounted bee.

(5.3.3.7)

The narrator must restrict himself to those details of the wedding which advance the moral of the Book of Justice, and unpleasant enough they turn out to be. There is a constant sense of truncation in Book V, a relentless pressure to subdue and repress playful impulses which are not strictly relevant to its theme. The deliberate rhetorical patterning of this introductory stanza signals to the reader the kind of exclusion and repression which will be the subject of the episode.

In Book IV, doubles facilitate unity and inclusion: the identical appearance of Amyas and Placidus, for example, is a reliable sign of

their friendship; the mirroring gestures of Britomart and Artegall lead to their union. In Book V, however, doubles exclude: the demonic or parodic prototype exists to be exposed and repudiated. The "double-sun" motif in Canto 3 expresses this relationship: there are two "sunny knights", of whom one (Braggadocchio) is expelled; there are two "sunny ladies" (Florimell and the false Florimell) of whom one melts away. The canto dramatizes the establishment of identity by a process of polarization. The genuine honour of Artegall is established by the spurious claims of Braggadocchio, the virtue and integrity of Florimell by the falsity of her double; even the horse Brigadoie is called upon to prove who he is. Justice in this canto involves perception, seeing clearly: as soon as you put two apparently identical things side by side, it becomes clear which one is real. Modern anthropologists and linguists have advanced the theory that discrimination between opposites is the fundamental intellectual operation; that the mind conceptualizes by means of polarizing, so that social discrimination may develop along with intellectual discrimination, since the impulse to identify the alien and retain the purity of the group by casting him out may have a cerebral as well as an emotional function. Something like this seems to be happening in Canto 3, where justice is presented as a process of clarification, and the satisfaction which punishment affords to the group seems linked with their relief and pleasure in seeing clearly. Again there seems to be a parallel between acting justly and using language in a certain way; the narrator's willingness to stamp out a whole range of literary possibilities in favour of the

exclusive polarities which make up the canto is analogous to the justicer's rigorous exclusion of the unworthy so that the worthy may be known. The sun of justice is the light of conceptual clarity.

Why does Spenser use a wedding for this kind of excluding operation? The unpleasantness of the episode as a social occasion suggests a parodic intention: when the merriment promised in the opening stanza turns out in the concluding ones to be the laughter of the assembled company at the discomfiture of Braggadocchio, the narrator's conclusion ("There leaue we them in pleasure and repast", 5.3.40.1) can scarcely seem anything but ironic. Perhaps, however, using a wedding for such a purpose has a thematic point. There are two "marriages" in the fifth book, the marriage of Florimell and Marinell in this canto and the "marriage-dream" of Britomart in Isis Church. The first establishes justice in an exterior and social sense; the second, justice in the sense of balance and equilibrium within the individual psyche. There is one factor which the two weddings have in common, however: both establish the integrity of the bride. Before the two women can be married, Florimell's identity must be properly established by the unveiling of her spurious counterpart, and Britomart must learn to overcome her own fear of loss of identity in sexual union. Frye's perceptive comment on the romance meaning of loss of virginity--a fate which really is worse than death, the loss of identity--seems to be helpful here. <sup>18</sup> A wedding in fact is the right occasion for a preliminary establishment of personal integrity. While there does seem to be a parodic edge to the canto as a whole--a case of horse-theft does not seem to be an issue notably hymenaeal--its strong



focus on finding out who one is makes allegorical sense of the occasion.

The very publicity of the wedding serves Spenser's purpose. When the opening stanzas emphasize how many guests are to be gathered together, we assume that the result will be generous genial merrymaking; the expansiveness of the marriage of the Thames and the Medway might be expected at the union of these two figures themselves associated with natural fertility. The sense of a large group is indeed exploited in the episode which follows, but in an unexpected way: it exists to establish the public nature of Braggadocchio's disgrace. There is a strong heraldic emphasis at various points in Book V; I have suggested that Sanglier's punishment seems to have heraldic overtones. Here Braggadocchio's punishment is presented explicitly in heraldic terms: Talus drags him out from the back of the hall and subjects him to a series of ritual humiliations before the assembled crowd:

First he his beard did shaue, and fowly shent:  
Then from him reft his shield, and it rennerst,  
And blotted out his armes with falshood blent,  
And himselfe baffuld, and his armes vnherst,  
And broke his sword in twaine, and all his armour sperst.  
(5.3.37)

There is an emphasis throughout this episode on the signs by which individuals may be known: Artegall challenges Braggadocchio to produce evidence that he has fought in the tournament:

. . . shew forth thy sword, and let it tell,  
What strokes, what dreadfull stoure it stird this day:  
Or shew the wounds, which vnto thee befell;  
Or shew the sweat, with which thou diddest sway  
So sharpe a battell . . .  
(5.3.21.5)

He proves that he was in fact the sunny knight by the same kind of evidence:

But this the sword, which wrought those cruell stounds,  
 And this the arme, the which that shield did beare,  
 And these the signes (so shewed forth his wounds) . . .  
 (5.3:22.1)

The genuine Florimell proves her identity by means of another sign, the golden girdle which only she can wear. (Gold as an emblem of real or false worth is important in the canto: Braggadocchio's heraldic sun is in a golden field, and Brigadore has a golden bit and saddle). The emphasis throughout on the "signes" of an individual's identity illustrates an important aspect of the role of the knight of justice. The heraldic blazon is a publicly-understood sign; social intercourse is efficient when such shorthand is reliable. One of the roles of the justicer is to validate the system of signs so that the general public is secure.<sup>19</sup> Hence the publicity of the occasion (as opposed to, say, the unveiling of Duessa or Archimago, which involved only the immediate participants). Again justice is seen to involve abstraction. The only aspect of a person's nature which the knight of justice needs to apprehend is that part which expresses itself in such publicly-accessible shorthand signs; it is with "identity" on this level only that the marriage canto deals. By Book V the characters themselves have been reduced to signs, less fully-realized and less interesting figures than they had seemed in the earlier books.

The tone of Book V derives partly from its simultaneous inclusiveness and reductiveness; Spenser seems to be gathering up motifs and characters used previously in The Faerie Queene, but dealing with the human qualities they embody in an exclusively legalistic way. Sometimes the echoes are verbal: when Artegall asserts that in the physical universe, despite its

mutability, "there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought" (5.2. 39.9), the line is a dry and negative echo of what the narrator said about Arthur's armour in Book I; <sup>20</sup> the reader subliminally registers the "fall" involved in the transition from the mode of high romance to a defensive assertion of scientific fact. Artegall's account of the conservation of the elements recalls in fact the message of the Garden of Adonis, for he too asserts that things are "eterne in mutability", but the rhetoric in Book V is thin and defensive, in comparison with the expansive symbols of the garden canto. <sup>21</sup> Problems generated in earlier books are recapitulated and disposed of in Book V; hence the retrospective tone of the third canto, where all the central issues and characters are picked up from earlier books. The very economical and powerful parable with which the fourth canto opens--the story of Amidas and Placidas, the island and the coffer--derives its power, too, from such echoes, echoes which Artegall's legalistic formulations are not able to encompass. Though he succeeds in settling the quarrel between the twin brothers, Artegall's very success seems to set him up for the surrender to Radigund which immediately follows, and the reason is our feeling that his formula excludes so much more than he himself realizes.

The parable seems to mean more than it says because of the reader's sense of all the potential meanings which have to be suppressed. The solution which justice imposes is a satisfactory one only if looked at as an act of quantitative balancing. Bracidas, the elder brother, is "owed" more than his father has given him (since both brothers originally had equal portions of land). And he ends up with more, for although he

still has the smaller island, he possesses the sincere love of a generous wife and also the money she brings along with her. Amidas ends up with a larger portion of land but with less cash and with a greedy wife. It is fair enough to say, as the narrator does, that when Artegall is finished with them, "each one had his right" (5.4.20.6); each has lost something, each has gained something, and the sympathetic elder brother, who began a bit behind, has pulled a little ahead. Artegall's rhetoric expresses his nature; he is a sort of incarnate pair of scales, weighing one claim against the other, and the parallelism of his wording expresses this intellectual function (notice the structural correspondence between stanzas 17 and 18, for example, and the repetition and parallelism in a line like "For equall right in equall things doth stand", 5.4.19.1, or in paired lines like "So Amidas, the land was yours first hight,/ And so the threasure yours is Bracidas by right", 5.4.19.8-9, where Artegall uses the chiasmus to suggest the quantitative precision of his solution). The narrator's language echoes Artegall's vision of the situation; when he concludes with evident satisfaction that

Both Amidas and Philtra were displeas'd;  
But Bracidas and Lucy were right glad,

(5.4.20.2)

he implies that from the point of view of justice this is a happy ending. The reader is constrained, however, to respond other than quantitatively to the poetic motifs which Spenser uses, and cannot help registering that one-half of this family foursome remains disgruntled: amity has not been restored.

Why should this matter? This is after all the Book of Justice,

not the Book of Friendship, and Artegall does seem to have settled the situation as fairly as could be expected; why should we expect the couple which loses to be entirely reconciled to his legal decision? Perhaps because the very names of the two men inevitably recall Amyas and Placidus from Book IV, who looked like twins and whose physical identity reflected their perfect friendship; these brothers, "whom one wombe together bore" <sup>(5.4.4.3)</sup> , end up alienated from one another, and though, as in Book IV, the misunderstanding ends with a double marriage, it is not one which reestablishes concord. It was Arthur who acted as matchmaker in Book IV; Artegall ("Arthur's equal") cannot equal him in this. There is always a sense of what we have to leave out in order to read Artegall positively, and it is particularly strong in this episode where the characters and images seem to have meanings more complex than can be comprehended by the simple pattern Artegall wants imposed, meanings derived from associations that they have acquired from the earlier cantos of this book and the earlier books of The Faerie Queene.

The most troublesome image in this respect is that of the sea itself. Structural parallels between books can be ingenious and misleading, but it may be significant that Artegall comes to the sea in Canto 4, as Britomart did in the corresponding canto of her book--not merely because of what may be the numerical coincidence, but because both in the fourth canto declare themselves invulnerable to what the sea symbolizes. In Book III, the sea-world of Marinell and his mother was associated with fatalistic surrender to the whims of destiny, through Cymoent and her superstitious belief in Proetus' prophecy. In Book V, <sup>22</sup> the sea seems to become the very symbol of fate and mutability.

Bracidas himself associates it with "luck" and "fortune": he demands to keep whatever "Or God or Fortune vnto me did throw" (5.4.14.3), and emphasizes by alliteration the fact that in seizing the coffer his brother is not merely taking his money but his luck:

And though my land he first did winne away,  
And then my loue (though now it little skill,)  
Yet my good lucke he shall not likewise pray.

(5.4.14.6)

Artegal, even as he defends its authority (and is probably, on the political level of the allegory, defending Elizabeth's right to the spoil of shipwreck),<sup>23</sup> cannot help making its power sound whimsical, violent and arbitrary rather than judicious or beneficent:

For what the mighty Sea hath once possesst,  
And plucked quite from all possessors hand,  
Whether by rage of waues, that neuer rest,  
Or else by wracke, that wretches hath distrest,  
He may dispose by his imperiall might,  
As thing at randon left, to whom he list.

(5.4.19.2)

(The phrase "by wracke that wretches hath distrest" recalls the wording of the Marinell canto, where Nereus was said to be enriched by the "wreckes of many wretches, which did weepe,/ And often walle their wealth, which he from them did keepe", 3.4.22.8.) The image of physical mutability as an index of things going badly wrong with the universe has been established in the Proem, and the argument of the Democratic Giant, "crude travesty"<sup>24</sup> though it is of the narrator's complaint, has deepened the poetic associations of "this deuoring Sea" so that it has become a genuinely awesome power. Bracidas' testimony suggests that the Giant is right; the sea has worn away the earth and created injustice and social inequality.

Yet it has also righted the wrong; if it has taken Bracidas' land, it has brought him a fortune and a faithful wife. The sea is also linked with fortune in a more generous sense. Kathleen Williams associates the image in the fifth book with its providential workings in the fourth and reads it as representing "the great rhythms God has ordained," as "the giver of life and death, arbitrary yet ultimately just, imaging the mysterious purposes of God".<sup>25</sup> Fowler gives astrological support to such an impression: as he observes, Jupiter, who is invoked throughout the fifth book, was not only the celestial law-giver but was also "associated with the physical laws of nature, in that as governor of the universe he embodied the necessitas naturae". When the sea restores Bracidas' fortune, its operation is "a vindication of the strange compensatory justice of Providence", for the name "Milesio" is one of the many surnames of Jupiter.<sup>26</sup> The episode can be read as confirming the justice of God who works in a mysterious way through the mutability of the material world.

Artegall, however, seems oblivious to the positive associations of his own argument; in fact he is so sure of his own self-sufficiency and so impatient with the very notion of fortune that in the episode which follows he ends up condemning Terpine to the very death from which he had originally rescued him. The point is made rather insistently. Having saved Rädigund's victim from the gallows, Artégall scolds the wretched man for surrendering to the power of women. When Terpine tries to excuse himself by asking "who can scape, what his owne fate hath wrought?" (5.4.27.8), Artégall objects to this as a

rationalization:

Right true; but faulty men vse oftentimes  
 To attribute their folly vnto fate,  
 And lay on heauen the guilt of their owne crimes.  
 (5.4.28.1)

He invites Terpine to go back with him, as he says, so "that ye may see and know,/ How Fortune will your ruin'd name repaire" (5.4.34.8); his sarcasm seems the more culpable when Artegall himself surrenders to Radigund even more ignominiously than Terpine had done.<sup>27</sup> It is ingenuous to observe, as the narrator does when Terpine is finally executed, that the victim was one upon whom "the lucklesse stars did lowre" (5.5.18.5); the fault, we feel, was not in Terpine's stars but in Artegall's confidence that the stars had no power over him.

Such developments inevitably reflect back on his handling of the quarrel between Amidas and Bracidas, on the rather slick and opportunistic way he exploits the workings of the sea of fortune in his judgment of their case. Artegall seems not to respond to the very overtones of the sea-symbol which suggest to the reader that his judgment is correct. The way he gets Amidas to admit the provenance of a principle which will work against him is like a courtroom trick; there is a certain hubris in thus assuming that one can harness such a power, rhetorically and legalistically, for one's own local purposes. Artegall's style of operation suggests the arbitrariness of the law itself, the law which may happen to coincide with justice but which on the other hand may not.<sup>28</sup> The rigorous exclusiveness of the legalistic mind is expressed as a kind of literary insensitivity; Artegall's obliviousness to the sea's poetic associations is analogous to his scornful contempt of fate in the next



episode. The neat antithetical rhythms of his language are not adequate to the forces which he believes he can contain by means of them.

By his condemnation of Terpine, Artegall leaves himself open to the same criticism when he in turn falls prey to the Amazon queen, and the narrator pursues the theme with a relentless emphasis which is unusual in The Faerie Queene. The step which he condemns is specifically Artegall's agreement to be bound by Radigund's laws if he should lose the duel:

So was he ouercome, not ouercome,  
But to her yeilded of his owne accord;  
Yet was he iustly damned by the doome  
Of his owne mouth, that spake so warelesse word,  
To be her thrall, and seruice her afford.  
For though that he first victorie obtayned,  
Yet after by abandoning his sword,  
He wilfull lost, that he before attayned.  
No fayrer conquest, then that with goodwill is gayned.

(5.5.17)

Artegall's surrender to Radigund has two distinct stages: his decision to abide by her terms, and his compassion and hesitation when he sees her beautiful face (5.5.12). It is for the first defection, not the second, that Artegall receives the narrator's firmest condemnation; it is because he is bound by "his own accord", by "the doome of his own mouth" that he is "left to her will by his owne wilfull blame" (5.5.20.2). Artegall's willingness to be bound to accept Radigund's conditions suggests his blind overconfidence in his own powers, as does his willingness to sleep soundly while Talus keeps watch on his behalf. The assumption that he can maintain both the pleasant forms of chivalric courtesy and the just rule of law turns out to be misguided. In spite of his criticisms of Terpine for yielding to "womens powre" (5.4.26.5)

Artegall seems to insist on seeing Radigund as a man. His readiness to accept her conditions proceeds from his desire to suppress the awareness of what her law involves, as if the only question at issue were two competing masculine power-structures--as if she were a chivalric male peer. The result is that he is unprepared for and overwhelmed by "his senses, strange astonishment" (5.5.12.2) when he sees her face. Having surrendered to her terms as though she were wholly a man, he surrenders to her beauty as though she were wholly a woman. Artgall's obliviousness to his own doubleness of response prevents him from ordering and controlling it. Torn between a number of chivalric imperatives, he is unable to formulate a single principle broad enough to cover all contingencies; each of those which he apparently invokes ("Never refuse a challenge", "Always keep your word", "Never hit a lady") is inadequate to all but a single aspect of a complex situation. Artgall as justice functions only by repression; in the face of a sexual temptation, repression must be relentless and unwavering. In agreeing to fight on Radigund's conditions, he underestimates how much strength it will take. When his singleness of purpose is undermined, the result is complete collapse. Because he impersonates repression, Artgall is by definition unable to establish an equilibrium among competing impulses. Radigund in a sense personifies the inner incoherence which results.<sup>29</sup>

The narrator condemns Artgall for a failure of will; Radigund on the other hand is his polar opposite, a monstrous incarnation of will which has become obsessive and perverse.<sup>30</sup> Frustrated in her love, she has forcibly converted sexuality into aggression and made it her way of life. Her original disappointment is presented as a frustration of the

will: she had loved Bellodant,

And wooed him by all the waies she could;  
 But when she saw at last, that he ne would  
 For ought or nought be wonne vnto her will,  
 She turn'd her loue to hatred manifold,  
 And for his sake vow'd to doe all the ill  
 Which she could doe to Knights, which now she doth fulfil.  
 (5.4.30)

The wording suggests motives of which Radigund herself would apparently be unaware; the love-duel was in fact a battle of wills, and a life-long vow of willed animosity is its logical but perverse outcome, a rigid and self-defeating attempt to defy fate by imposing on it a pattern reflecting her own passion and disappointment. Radigund's means are military but her ends are sexual; the result is inevitable frustration, for she is working against herself.

Spenser makes clear the dismay which Radigund feels when she realizes that she has fallen in love with Artegall. To admit her love would be to give him power over her,

And of her seruant make her souerayne Lord;  
 So great her pride, that she such basenesse much abhord.  
 (5.5.27.8)

But that she perhaps secretly desires such submission is suggested by her own proposal. The narrator rightly makes much of Artegall's mistake in agreeing to be bound by Radigund's laws, but never comments on Radigund's motive in formulating the proposal. Her wording when she outlines the terms to Clarinda perhaps suggests some ambiguity in her feelings:

But these conditions doe to him propound  
 That if I vanquishe him, he shall obey  
 My law, and euer to my lore be bound,

And so will I, if me he vanquish may;  
 What euer he shall like to doe or say.

(5.4.49.1)

Though Radigund is dishonourable and would not feel bound to keep her side of the bargain, her wording might suggest that with the suppressed feminine side of her nature she half hopes for the enslavement which she rather emphatically describes ("What euer he shall like to doe or say").

Radigund's language has attracted the attention of C. S. Lewis, who, commenting on the frequently underestimated range in the tone of Spenser's verse, cites as an example the grim command Radigund gives Clarinda:<sup>31</sup>

And beare with you both wine and iuncates fit,  
 And bid him eate, henceforth he oft shall hungry sit.

(5.4.49.8)

There is a kind of metaphorical transference going on here: Radigund's emphasis on food is linked with her compulsion to frustrate the appetites of her victims as thoroughly as her own appetites are frustrated. The motif occurs again in her manipulation of Artegall's diet in order to bring him to her feet:

Some of his diet doe from him withdraw;  
 For him I find to be too proudly fed.  
 Giue him more labour, and with streighter law,  
 That he with worke may be forwearied.  
 Let him lodge hard, and lie in strawen bed,  
 That may pull downe the courage of his pride;  
 And lay vpon him, for his greater dread,  
 Cold yron chaines, with which let him be tide;  
 And let, what euer he desires, be him denide.

(5.5.50)

Radigund wills upon her victims the physical conditions which are the figurative equivalent of the frustration she herself suffers, for she too is denied the food which her appetite craves, she too is bedded

Uncomfortably and bound by the iron chains of her own frigid will; whatever she desires is to her denied. The images of binding and tying up, which in the portrait of Belphoebe served to suggest noble self-control, are used compulsively by Radigund to express the sexual control she desires over Artegall. Rationalizing her lenience to Clarinda, she tells her that since it is not really fair for Artegall to be imprisoned for accepting her conditions,

Therefore I cast, how I may him vbind,  
And by his freedome get his free goodwill;  
Yet so, as bound to me he may continue still.

Bound vnto me, but not with such hard bands  
Of strong compulsion, and streight violence,  
As now in miserable state he stands;  
But with sweet loue and sure beneuolence.

(5.5.32.7)

Radigund purports to distinguish between the two kinds of binding, but in fact she has translated one into the other. The familiar metaphors of love-poetry--of master and slave, victor and victim--are literalized by Radigund's whole way of life and made grimly physical. The lover may compare himself to a military leader laying siege to the stronghold of his lady's affections, but when Radigund announces to Clarinda that "I resolute this siege not to give ouer,/ Till I the conquest of my will recover" (5.5.51.4) the metaphor has regained its literal dimension. Since Radigund's means are those of a military victor--imprisonment, humiliation, physical discomfort, short rations--the end at which she aims, which is sexual in nature, will never be achieved. Spenser uses Radigund's handling of the metaphor to suggest the essential incoherence of her nature. Manipulating events in a symbolic way cannot give her the real satisfaction which she seeks.

What is really disturbing is not, therefore, the toughness of Radigund's language in itself but the uneasy blend of her thuggish idiom with the sentimentalities of courtly love. Explaining her plight to the go-between, Clarinda, Radigund expresses herself in sentimental clichés and blushes girlishly. Clarinda, the antithesis of Radigund yet the one whom she had "fostred first" (5.5.29.4), a "foolish Mayd" (5.5.43.1) who falls quickly in love with Artegall on her own account, is soon wooing him for herself instead of for her mistress.<sup>32</sup> It is as though in employing Clarinda for such an errand Radigund has split herself into two parts, and they are working at cross purposes. The silly sentimentality of Clarinda impersonates the side of Radigund's own character to which she is unwilling to admit because it would threaten her control. (The name "Clarinda" could suggest that the maid brings to light an aspect of Radigund which the Amazon would prefer to keep in the dark). Clarinda is the embodiment of the frustrated feminine side of Radigund, manipulative rather than violent in her coercion, undermining her male victim with "Armes of louely lookes" (5.5.34.8) instead of bands of armed women, and with "The art of mightie words, that men can charme" (5.5.49.5). The comic suddenness with which both women fall hopelessly in love with the captive knight suggests the affinity between them, as does the fact that Clarinda is equally willing to control Artegall by altering his diet (although under her secret ministrations, "his scarce diet somewhat was amended, / And his worke lessened, that his loue note grow", 5.5.57.2).

Radigund is an incarnate antithesis. In her, fear and love, the

two impulses evoked by the image of chastity, are polarized in their extreme form. The commonest metaphor for chastity is that of the rose whose scent and colour attract while its thorns repel. The only proper response to such an image is a kind of balanced stasis, a tension of opposites. In Radigund however this balance is undermined, for Spenser equates her masculine aggressiveness not with chaste invulnerability but with sexual rapaciousness. Although Radigund is divided against herself, an incomplete woman (the word "half" echoes insistently throughout the narrative) she is the more obsessive as a result; instead of evoking a balanced response, she represents energy channelled fiercely in a single direction, her brutality and her sentimentality being both manifestations of the same compulsion, to possess and control the man she wants. The doubleness of her nature, which in Belpheobe suggested invulnerable poise, in Radigund suggests the terrible perversion of frustrated emotion, for her masculine energy is only feminine desire thwarted.

Artegall's descent into her power is presented in terms of his gradual entry into the city which is named after her. First he spies "a rout of many people farre away" (5.4.21.3), and only when he gets closer does he discover that they are a troop of women. Having rescued Terpine and heard his story, Artégall requests his guidance

Vnto the dwelling of that Amazone.  
Which was from thence not past a mile or tway:  
A goodly citty and a mighty one,  
The which of her owne name she called Radegone.

(5.4.35.6)

As they approach its walls, Radigund appears, and her people scurry for their weapons, looking "like a sort of Bees in clusters" (5.4.36.7): the classical echo emphasizes the perversion of Radigund's misrule. Artegall beats upon the gates, and Radigund orders them opened, so that when he and Talus attempt an entry they are bombarded on all sides. The skirmish lasts till sundown, when Radigund supervises an orderly retreat:

Bold Radigund with sound of trumpe on hight,  
 Causd all her people to surcease from fight,  
 And gathering them vnto her citties gate,  
 Made them all enter in before her sight,  
 And all the wounded, and the weake in state,  
 To be conuayed in, ere she would once retrate.

(5.4.45.4)

Artegall sets up his pavilion "Before the city gate, in open sight" (5.4.46.5); the next morning they fight in a field outside the city walls. Only when he has been thoroughly defeated, disarmed and humiliated does he finally penetrate to the heart of the city itself, caught in the Amazon's inexorable trap. The final revelation of Radigund's nature occurs when he is taken

Into a long large chamber, which was sield  
 With monuments of many knights decay,  
 By her subdued in victorious fray:

(5.5.21.3)

where she hangs Artegall's own arms in mockery and where her male serfs toil in servile subjection. Radigund is so emphatically associated with her city because on the political level of the allegory she illustrates illegitimate female rule, and Spenser is pointing out that her efficiency and discipline do not undercut the enormity of this perversion. But the direction of Artegall's progress from the periphery of Radigund's territory to the chamber in the centre of the city has as well a sexual



suggestion. The relentless singlemindedness of Radigund's campaign is conveyed by the suggestion that she herself is identical with Radegone (the altered syllable, "-one", <sup>might</sup> suggest "dragon", and indeed the city devours him as Radigund herself desires to do). Artegall ought never to separate Radigund's civic function from her feminine beauty; to keep in mind her role as ruler of an unjust nation would be to arm himself adamantly against her. But by forgetting that Radigund and Radegone stand for the same thing, he becomes trapped and unmanned. <sup>33</sup>

In Jung both the town and the labyrinth represent the anima, "an entangling and confusing representation of the world of matriarchal consciousness"; liberating the maiden from the labyrinth is the liberation of the anima from the devouring aspect of the mother image, and not until this is accomplished can man achieve his first true capacity for relatedness to women. <sup>34</sup> Here, the topos is comically reversed, for the "maiden" who has to be rescued is Artegall himself, and his rescuer is Britomart.

Artegall forgets that he must respond impersonally to Radigund. Before he sees her face, he fights with the mechanical alacrity of Talus himself; Spenser uses the same imagery of iron to describe his activity:

So did Sir Artegall vpon her lay,  
As if she had an yron anduile beene.

(5.5.8.1)

While the parallel with the iron groom suggests the excess and violence of Artegall's reaction, the double-entendre in "lay" communicates its repressed sexual nature. His reaction is equally violent when, removing

her helmet, he falls back in stupefied awe at her beauty. The description of Radigund's rosy face recalls the unveiling of Britomart, but on the earlier occasion Artegall's dumbfounded paralysis was legitimate; he had not realized that she was a woman. Here he has no such excuse; it has been clear from the beginning not only that Radigund is a woman but what kind of woman she is. To collapse so readily before her beauty is a facile sentimentality which he should have resisted and cheapens in retrospect his surrender to Britomart's; his response is thus a betrayal of her, however resolutely Artegall may then go on to resist Radigund's sexual overtures. Radigund is so much more irresistible than, for example, Munera because (as the imagery suggests) she is the potential dark side of Britomart herself, the implications of her irascible resistance isolated and explored, her wariness of male domination perverted into the determination to dominate men. The capitulation to Radigund represents a possible manifestation of the relationship of Britomart and Artegall; this is why only Britomart is able to free her lover, and why before she is able to do so she must learn to surrender to him.

This may be one reason why Radigund, in spite of her repellent ruthlessness and the framework of explicit moral condemnation which is erected around her, is allowed a certain visual appeal. By the time she emerges from the gates of the city to fight Artegall, it has been made quite obvious what she stands for and what kind of trouble Artegall has become involved in. Yet the two stanzas which describe her in full regalia are neutral and unjudgmental in tone:

All in a Casis light of purple silke  
 Wouen vpon with siluer, subtly wrought,  
 And quilted vpon sattin white as milke,

Trayled with ribbands diuersly distraught.  
 Like as the workeman had their courses taught;  
 Which was short tucked for light motion  
 Vp to her ham, but when she list, it raught  
 Downe to her lowest heele, and thereuppon  
 She wore for her defence a mayled habergeon.

And on her legs she painted buskins wore,  
 Basted with bends of gold on euery side,  
 And mailles betweene, and laced close afore:  
 Vppon her thigh her Cemitare was tide,  
 With an embrodered belt of mickell pride;  
 And on her shoulder hung her shield, bedeckt  
 Vppon the bosse with stones, that shined wide,  
 As the faire Moone in her most full aspect,  
 That to the Moone it mote be like in each respect.

(5.5.2-3)

This image of Radigund has been discussed in terms of the subtle differences which distinguish it from the description of Belpheobe. Kathleen Williams refers to the "sombre Asiatic richness and weight" of the picture as a whole, the purple camis, the Eastern scimitar and embroidered belt and the shield "as heavy with clustered consonants as with jewels," and suggests that Radigund is presented as "an exotic power whose beauty shines sullenly".<sup>35</sup> Dunseath has an eye to the emblematic detail: Radigund's "belt of micell pride," he says, is the cestus of Hippolyte which Hercules had to win, and which represents libidinous desire; Aptekar cites Alciati who equates it with woman's guile and lasciviousness. (Edcaccio transfers the belt to Antiope and records a more neutral meaning--in his account the belt suggests the Amazon's martial prowess<sup>36</sup> --but the sexual suggestion is implicit and the point is well taken.) It seems to me however that such subtle distinctions tend to undercut the broad clear effect of the two stanzas. The details of Radigund's appearance recall both Belpheobe and Britomart (in her association with the moon); there is nothing here which would necessarily

suggest her sinister nature. The description is visually and aurally attractive, and evokes the energy, refinement and glamour associated with her two prototypes. Although of course there are variations in the descriptive detail (there had to be some, after all--this is a different character and Spenser cannot simply reproduce the Belphoebe passage verbatim) they are not as important as the similarities. In both cases the rhythm and the phrasing distance the figure and cast around it the aura of romance. Belphoebe is "All in a silken Camis lylly whight/  
Purfled vpon with many a folded plight", (2.3.26.4), Radigund "All in a Camis light of purple silke,/ Wouen vpon with siluer, subtly wrought" (5.5.2.1): the slightly archaic wording ("All in a . . .") and the dominant impression of silken fabric handled in a rich and complicated way ("many a folded plight", "Wouen vpon with siluer, subtly wrought") establishes a similarity of impression which far outweighs the contrast in colour (a contrast which itself is undercut by an aural echo: Belphoebe's gown is white, but the word "purpled" in the next line sounds like "purple" in the description of Radigund, and gives a rich thick verbal texture to the line.) Both women wear elaborate buskins; Belphoebe's are "All hard with golden bendes," Radigund's "Basted with golden bendes on euery side"; again even the alliteration is identical, the explosive "b" suggesting the firmness of outline and of their binding-in function. If anything, Radigund's image is slightly "looser" and more feminine than Belphoebe's: her camis is "Trayled with ribbands diuersely distraught", whereas the bindings of Belphoebe are caught up ("entrayled/ The ends of all their knots"--again the verbal echo in "Trayled" and "entrayled"). The description of Belphoebe concludes, as

we have noticed, with the image of the rich jewel in which the bindings are knotted; the description of Radigund concludes by focussing on her shield. Both images stop the curious eye by bringing it to rest on a detail which suggests the resistant enclosed aspect of the woman's nature. It is true that the shield is a more aggressive detail than the jewel-knot, yet as it is presented--if we knew nothing more about Radigund than what is contained in these two stanzas--it suggests a kind of glamorous chastity. The Amazons actually were said to have worn shields shaped like the crescent moon; Spenser's substitution of the full moon, a detail which he emphasizes, identifies Radigund with the completeness of the perfect circle:

And on her shoulder hung her shield, bedeckt  
 Vppon the bosse with stones, that shined wide,  
 As the faire Moone in her most full aspect,  
 That to the Moone it mote be like in each respect.

(5.5.3.6)

The fullness of the circle is anomalous in terms of the divided nature of Radigund evoked in the narrative as a whole; its suggestions (again, out of context) are positive rather than negative. Fletcher, enumerating the various forms which the 'templar' archetype may take, refers both to the knot and the shield.<sup>37</sup> The way the eye stops at these two details does give a similar impression of the two women: both images have a kind of decorative finality and epitomize in an emblematic way the nature of the figure as a whole. To overemphasize the differences between the two descriptions is to undercut the real similarity of imaginative effect; it seems to me that such attempts are dictated by our pre-established awareness of Radigund's sinister nature rather than

by the actual impression created by the words on the page.

Rosemond Tuve long ago suggested that Spenser's inspiration for a number of figures in The Faerie Queene--among them the Amazonian type reflected in both Radigund and Belpheobe--might well have been not literary but pictorial, that he might have been remembering manuscript illustrations in which the woman warrior is conventionally depicted in terms of the characteristics Spenser tends to note.<sup>37a</sup> The suggestion is not only plausible but also important in suggesting the way Spenser's imagination works and the way he is using such images. The description of Radigund is in its entirety a conventional sign, a gesture towards a paradigm the values of which have already been established; it is not intended to make the reader aware of small differences in detail but rather to reactivate in him a response which had been more carefully and thoroughly worked out in the earlier book. Radigund is a parody of chaste virginity, but the archetype of which she is the perversion is not vitiated by her behaviour. As a visual symbol she preserves the value of the archetype even while as a "character" she perverts it. In these two stanzas the two aspects of Radigund's nature are held in suspension together, the bland and ingenuous tone of the narrator creating a detailed surface which conceals meaning. The image functions not only thematically to connect Radigund with Belpheobe and Britomart but poetically to remind the reader of the kind of balanced sensibility which the Knight of Justice cannot exemplify.

It is generally assumed that Radigund is "in" Britomart, that in defeating her rival, Britomart is defeating an impulse in herself which

must be extinguished before she can contract a virtuous marriage. Such a reading is justified, for Britomart's irascibility to men seems to express a resentment towards Artegall which must be overcome, and her ability to defeat Radigund is apparently related to her symbolic submission to him in Isis Church. However, the pattern of Book V as a whole might also suggest that Radigund is "in" Artegall, that she represents an imbalance in his attitude to women which is analogous to the necessary inhumanity of the justicer; that she is the Britomart in Artegall's imagination, a single facet of Britomart's nature abstracted and blown up out of proportion into a threatening figure who will engulf him in sensuality and sentiment. Perhaps the pronounced similarity between Artegall's surrender to Britomart and his surrender to Radigund suggests that the second is Artegall's reconstruction of the first, that he himself perceives submission to love as submission to woman's rule. If Radigund is the Britomart in Artegall's mind, it makes sense that he projects onto her the willpower which he is terrified of admitting that he himself might lack, and that he perceives as antithetical and splits into two figures (Radigund and Clarinda) the impulses which Britomart will finally succeed in bringing together. Artegall reacts violently first to one aspect of this divided figure, then to the other; but their potential integration is imaged for the reader in these stanzas which link Radigund with the less morally-polarized books of The Faerie Queene.

In the next canto Britomart too is shown in a state of vacillation, torn between girlish hysteria and masculine self-control, an uncharacteristic condition which evidently leads to her entrapment by the treacherous Dolon. Who is Dolon and what does he represent?<sup>38</sup> Why must he be overcome before Britomart can proceed to the revelation in Isis Church? He seems to be related to the emotional state into which Britomart has plunged as a result of Artegall's absence. Both Artegall and Britomart are tempted into an act of injustice against the beloved: Artegall, in succumbing to Radigund's beauty, has been guilty of infidelity to Britomart, Britomart in doubting his constancy is guilty of infidelity to Artegall. Artegall fails by allowing his "feminine" softness to overcome his "masculine" righteous anger; Britomart succeeds by disciplining her "feminine" emotional turmoil by means of "masculine" self-control. Artegall's surrender consisted of vacillation from justified rage to sentimental pity; Britomart's weakness at the beginning of the canto is also presented as vacillation (especially in stanza 14, where she is compared to a fretful baby, "then crawing sucke, and then the sucke refusing", 5.6.14.8), but she conquers herself and triumphs by sheer willpower. The nature of ~~the~~ temptation in each case concerns "maistrie". In succumbing to a woman's power over him, Artegall is guilty of reversing the natural order of things; Britomart's temptation, on the other hand, is to fight against Artegall's "maistrie" over her. Whereas Artegall



must be taught to rule, Britomart must learn to submit. Dolon impersonates the anxiety and rage which Artegall's power over her evokes in Britomart; like Marinell in Book III, he assumes a specific shape just at the point when Britomart is able to confront and conquer him, not when she is plunged into melancholy but when she has taken the first steps towards mastering it. Such feelings must be overcome before Britomart is ready for a more profound confrontation with them in Isis Church and before she can free her beloved from the power of Radigund.

Dolon's name suggests his nature. Evidently he impersonates guile; he is "A man of subtile wit and wicked minde", unable to win fame as a knight because of his cowardice; instead he

with slie shifte and wiles did vnderminde  
All noble Knights, which were aduenturous,  
And many brought to shame by treason treacherous. (5.6.32.7)

His three sons are like him, "Treacherous, full of fraud and guile" (5.6.33.2) the eldest in fact is called Guizor, suggested both "guile" and "disguise". Dolon's own name, however, has more than one association.

Dolon in the Iliad is a Trojan spy who betrays the secrets of his allies and suffers an ignominious death at the hands of his captor Ulysses.<sup>39</sup>

In the context of the sixth canto, however, the name also suggests "doulour", for whatever threatens Britomart is related to her grief at Artegall's defection. Her wakefulness seems to be a way of resisting her own treacherous emotions, an insidious trap-door which threatens to open up beneath her.

Britomart's feelings are ambiguous, and she herself does not fully understand them. Before she hears from Talus, Artegall's long

absence puts her into a turmoil of fear, jealousy, rage and guilt (stanzas 4 and 5). Britomart's behaviour at this stage is "feminine" in the endearing but weak sense; her game-playing, her deliberate self-deception (she counts in months rather than in weeks to make the time seem shorter) and especially her emotional vacillation reduce her to a state which is typical of the stereotyped lovesick maiden but not in keeping with her usual steadfastness and integrity. One of her subjects praised Elizabeth's chastity as a triumph over the feminine tendency to vacillate:<sup>41</sup> Britomart's emotional confusion does seem to undercut her special integrity and power. When she hears that her beloved has been captured by a "Tyrannesse" Britomart jumps to the conclusion that the tyranny is one of love; like Cymoent in Book III, she interprets the literal statement as Petrarchan metaphor. She becomes almost hysterical, thrashing about like a fretful infant (stanza 14). Her anger at Artegall is also rage at herself, "for yeelding to a straungers loue so light,/ Whose life and manners straunge she neuer knew" (5.6.12.6). Finding, however, that such behaviour does not relieve her feelings, Britomart returns to question Talus further and discovers that the "captivity" is a literal one. At this point, she seems to do an about-face, directing her rage at Radigund. The narrator says she was overcome "With sodaine stounds of wrath and grieffe attone" (5.6.17.6), and the implication is that the wrath is directed at Radigund, the grief on behalf of Artegall. But of course Britomart's figurative interpretation of Talus' message contains more truth than he comprehends, Radigund's tyranny over Artegall involving in fact control over his emotions as

well as over his person; Britomart was not entirely wrong the first time, and there is more ambivalence in her continuing attitude to Artegall than the narrator is willing to indicate. There is no way of making sense of her apostrophe to her eyes except by assuming that she still feels anger and resentment at Artegall himself; when she addresses them as "Ye guilty eyes . . . the which with guyle/ My heart at first betrayd" (5.6.25.1), the initial betrayal to which she refers can only be her surrender to love at the first glimpse of Artegall in Merlin's globe. (The use of the word "guyle" in this statement equates Dolon, "full of fraud and guile", 5.6.33.2, with Britomart's own emotions.) The speech as a whole makes clear that she resents the suffering which love has caused her and her weakness in giving in to it; she expresses her anger at Artegall by berating herself for her susceptibility, and she punishes herself by abstracting and punishing the eyes which have betrayed her.

On the literal level there is no prudential or, for that matter, moral motive for Britomart's determination to stay awake all night.<sup>42</sup> In the Dolon episode Spenser is reworking the familiar romance motif of the extreme vow by putting it into a context which illuminates its implicit meanings. The motive Britomart expresses to Dolon seems to be mainly psychological in origin: she tells him that she has vowed not to take her armour off until she has taken revenge "vppon a mortall foe" (5.6.23.8). She seems to mean Radigund, but since she seems torn by anger at Artegall and since her first words about him in Book III had characterized him as her deadly enemy, the ambiguity of the phrasing is suggestive. The determination to disarm seems not only an index of

her fidelity but also a function of her anger. It is a kind of refusal to allow herself to become incapacitated by ambiguous feelings, a determination to discipline herself by symbolically "getting on with the job"--even when darkness makes this literally impossible--and transmuting her internal distress into an external gesture. As in the Marinell episode, Britomart escapes "doulour" by expressing it as anger (here, anger at herself and self-punishment). The fact that she does escape validates the method she instinctively chooses for getting herself under control: though her determined wakefulness is apparently not evoked by conscious suspicion of Dolon, it is endorsed by his subsequent treachery. Again Britomart's conceptual blindness is linked with intuitive rightness of response, though in this case the response involves not spontaneous release of feeling but uncharacteristically rigorous self-control. Her solution is right as far as it goes, but this method of control must be transcended before she is ready for full union with Artegall. Though she says she will not sleep until she defeats Radigund, we will discover that this is exactly what she must do (in Isis Church) before she will be ready to defeat her.

It is her determination to stay awake which associates her most clearly with her lover. Before the walls of Radigone Artegall slept while Talus kept watch (5.4.46), but in the house of Dolon, Talus and Britomart watch together (5.6.26). Talus of course is not allowed to accompany Britomart into the Temple of Isis, where she represents equity (5.7.3.9). The parallels suggest that in the House of Dolon Britomart is accomplishing an act of justice. The facts that the canto is intro-

duced with a glance backward at Artegall's failure and that Britomart has unknowingly acted as a stand-in for her lover (this, significantly, because she is accompanied by Talus, 5.6.34.1-4) suggest that Britomart is doing on Artegall's behalf something that he is not able to do for himself.

It has been suggested that justice involves a high degree of abstraction. Artegall's responses are divided in his encounter with Radigund; he vacillates between perceiving her as a tyrant and perceiving her as a lady. He can neither hold the two responses together in equilibrium, nor can he stick with the reasonable judgment, but instead plunges lopsidedly into sentimentality and makes himself her thrall. Britomart's responses are divided, too, in the Dolon canto, and her inner conflict destroys her characteristic equilibrium. But instead of responding as Artegall does to outer phenomena, Britomart somehow masters her anger by internalizing it. Artegall, lacking some core of inner stability, is unmanned by a glimpse of Radigund's beauty; he allows his eyes to rule him. Britomart on the other hand gets control of the emotion which Artegall's behaviour has aroused in her by projecting it inward, by abstracting the guilty (because vulnerable) part of her own psyche, cutting it off from the rest of herself, and forcing it to yield to her will. It is significant that it is her eyes which Britomart selects to symbolize the desires which have made her vulnerable to lovesick distress. Her determination to discipline her emotions is expressed in a determination to keep her eyes open, a decision which suggests both a will towards self-control (she will not allow herself to sleep) and a will to see (her eyes strain against the darkness, but in fact it is so dark that she can see nothing; only the noises she

hears warn her of the coming attack). Paradoxically, Britomart finds that splitting herself apart--abstracting and punishing her eyes--is a way of "pulling herself together"; the babyish hysteria of the first part of the canto is replaced by masculine self-control, so that she succeeds in avoiding Dolon's trap and in defeating his sons' direct attack. (Even here she overgoes her lover, for she disdains the preferred aid of Talus, 5.6.38.<sup>4</sup>, though this is just the kind of mop-up operation for which he is usually employed.)

The stanza which describes the falling of the trap-door contains an image which focusses the meaning of Britomart's ordeal. The elaborate four-line periphrasis with which the stanza opens is the core of its meaning:

What time the native Belman of the night,  
The bird, that warned Peter of his fall,  
First rings his silver Bell t'each sleepy wight,  
That should their mindes vp to deuotion call,  
She heard a wondrous noise below the hall.  
All sodainely the bed, where she should lie,  
By a false trap was let adowne to fall  
Into a lower roome, and by and by  
The loft was raysd againe, that no man could it spie.  
(5.6.27)

The allusion to Peter's betrayal suggests the general nature of the virtues being tested in Dolon's house--endurance and fidelity. The simile also emphasizes Britomart's steadfastness by reminding the reader of Peter's betrayal.<sup>43</sup> The two situations are different as well as parallel: it is not in fact the crowing of the cock which Britomart hears, but rather the "wondrous noise below the hall" which occurs at the time that the cock would crow; it alerts Britomart to the fate which she has escaped through her self-discipline, whereas the crow of the

cock brought home to Peter the fate he had fallen prey to because of his hubris. The cock's crow ought to remind Christians of their morning obligation to worship, "should their mindes up to deuotion call"; by evoking their self-indulgent sleepiness and thus by suggesting the moral value of sheer self-discipline, the simile endorses Britomart's wakefulness. The comparison to Peter suggests, too, the limitedness of Britomart's self-knowledge. For Peter, the crowing of the cock confirmed the accuracy of Jesus' prophecy: 'you will deny me thrice'; it crystallized the tragic moment of self-revelation. Britomart on the other hand has been waiting without having any idea of what she has been waiting for. There is a great emphasis throughout the Dolon episode on straining against the darkness, on conquering what is not understood by a sheer act of the will. Britomart always gives the impression of acting intuitively, but usually her intuition has been quickly validated and her actions have demanded little self-discipline. In the house of Dolon Britomart must combine the spontaneous distrust which led her to repudiate Marinell with the patience and stoic control required in the Busirane episode. The narrator emphasizes the strain of waiting, of endurance. His observation on Britomart's reaction to the trap-door, for example, could have been taken from the Busirane incident: although Britomart was "dismayd right sore", he says, she

stirred not at all for doubt of more,  
But kept her place with courage confident,  
Waiting what would ensue of that euent.

(5.6.28.3)

This time, however, it is not Amoret but herself she has to liberate; the darkness is the darkness of her own psyche. To stand against that

darkness and to withstand an ambivalent emotion without fully comprehending it is a triumph of the will which Artegall could not achieve. Because she is able to hold out, Britomart is acting as a justicer. Talus is able to help her defeat the "raskall rout" (of disorderly emotions?) which charge at her door. Her solution is Artegall's because it is a masculine victory--self-control by sheer exertion of the will. In the house of Isis she will master the same kind of fears in a "feminine" way, not through will but through understanding. This is why the allusion to Peter, which combines the associations of darkness and daylight, blindness and insight, and self-understanding through the fulfilment of a prophecy, is also suggestive in emphasizing those aspects of the ordeal which lead on to the revelation in Isis Church.

The motifs of darkness and light, dream and nightmare tie the two episodes together. Britomart's sleep before Isis acquires dimension of sensuous release because of the impression of physical strain built up by her sleeplessness in the house of Dolon. In both cantos, night is the time of revelation, when the energy lying in wait in the suppressed lower layers of human experience erupts and makes itself known. It is significant that Britomart never does understand what happened in the house of Dolon, that even the next morning when Guizor berates her, Britomart remains unaware that she has been mistaken for Artegall. When the narrator observes "Strange were the words in Britomartis eare" (5.6.38.1) he is pointing once again to that conceptual blankness which is so characteristic of Britomart's virtue and so often expressed in her inability to "read" words and symbols. In Isis Church, however, the



priest interprets Britomart's dream for her the next morning; the relationship between the dream and its explication is parallel to the relationship between the vision in Merlin's globe and Merlin's prophecy, so that this complementary episode of conceptual clarification signals the climax of the quest which began with those auguries. Britomart remains enveloped in thick darkness throughout the ordeal with Dolon, but in Isis Church, night and sleep bring light--for the dream is a revelation, and even on the visual level it is full of brightness, with its colours and gems and its terrifying fire-storm. By these parallels between the two episodes, Spenser is suggesting that there are two ways to self-mastery. The will may win partial victories, but only through insight can a deep and lasting equilibrium be established. As Equity, Britomart is not merely Artegall's complement; in fact she contains and transcends the virtue which he represents, becoming a model of inner psychological balance.

A significant detail links the two episodes: Britomart's distress after she has heard and misinterpreted Talus' report is described like the tantrum of a child who has been awakened by a "bad dream" (stanza 14). Her hysterical behaviour results from the "nightmare" delusion that Artegall has fallen in love with another woman, but it takes the form, significantly, of alternating between rage at Artegall and rage at herself for having made herself so vulnerable (stanzas 12 and 13). What Britomart really resents is not only the specific act of infidelity but the general vulnerability of being in love; that Spenser means us to see this is suggested by the similarity between her conflict of emotions

before and after Talus' arrival (stanzas 4, 5, 12-14). When we consider this scene in relation to the Isis Church episode, it appears that Britomart's thrashing about is a kind of preliminary working-through of her resentment of his power over her, a resentment which she must confront again at a more profound level and finally overcome. It is as if she goes through the superficial rebellion in advance, as if this initial rush of surface anger has a disintegrating function, pulling her apart, so that the Isis dream can reintegrate, put her back together again. Only when she has overcome her initial rebellion at his dominance will Britomart be ready to understand the more profound submission which is required of her, ready to go back to sleep and re-enter the "bad dream" and come to terms with the emotions which it expresses.

The Isis episode represents a new technique for Spenser, one which he will use again in Book VI--a vision followed by the over-simplified exegesis of one of the characters in the poem. The inadequacy of the priest's explanation to Britomart turns us back to the dream, and although he takes no note of its sexual significance and ignores some of its details entirely, what he says can help clarify its meaning. The narrator has established in the three introductory stanzas that Osiris is the god of justice and that his wife Isis stands for "that part of Justice, which is Equity" (5.7.3.2). He has associated Isis with the

moon and Osiris with the sun (stanza 4), and has interpreted Isis' stance (one foot on the ground, one foot on the crocodile) as her suppression of "both forged guile,/ And open force" (5.7.7.3); evidently--though the syntax is ambiguous--the crocodile represents "guile", an association which he had certainly acquired in Renaissance bestiaries and emblem books.<sup>44</sup> (It is significant that he is thus associated with the guileful Dolon and his son Guizor, for, I shall argue, he represents, as they do, a hidden response in Britomart herself which arises from below and which she had not known she possessed). In any case, the crocodile, as he is explained by the narrator in stanza 7, is evidently a potentially destructive principle, and Isis' control over him the essence of her iconographical meaning. With her wand Isis benevolently acknowledges Britomart's worship in a gesture of blessing which Britomart takes as "a token of good fortune" (5.7.8.6). The image of Isis' statue as it first appears suggests, in short, her firm but gracious control over the forces which threaten justice. The priest's explanation, then, surprises the reader with its identification of the crocodile with Artegall and with Osiris.<sup>45</sup>

This identification is a distortion of the received iconography, for in Plutarch the crocodile is not Osiris at all, but his murderous brother Typhon. Recalling the myth will emphasize the unorthodoxy of this Spenser's identification. According to Plutarch, Typhon killed his brother and cut him into many pieces; to bring him back to life, Isis reassembled the fragments, but could not find the phallus; she completed the body with a wooden phallus, and after his regeneration bore him a son, Horus, the last of the great gods.<sup>46</sup> Osiris, then, represents

creative, not destructive, energy: Plutarch allegorizes him as the fertilizing Nile, Isis as the earth which receives its waters, and Typhon as the sterile wind or the drought which reigns during the hot months when the Nile almost dries up. In fusing the two figures of Typhon and Osiris, Spenser is identifying two kinds of energy, the phallic and the demonic, which are clearly differentiated in the myth. Such a fusion suggests the interdependence of the creative and the destructive aspects of male sexuality and the kind of historical rebelliousness attendant on it. The priests cannot bring the two perceptions together; in the ascetic discipline of their lives, they respond only to the negative aspect of such energy, yet in his explanation to Britomart the chief priest apparently sees nothing but the positive aspect and feels no incongruity in identifying the crocodile with Osiris. What the dream does is force Britomart to move from one response to the other, to accept what at first frightens her as a potentially creative principle to which she herself must submit.

The priest's omissions call attention to the details of the dream which he does not account for. He says nothing about Britomart's transformation from priest to queen, nor about the crocodile's attempt to eat her and Isis' resulting intervention. The details of the dream which he passes over without comment are the ones which have an unavoidably sexual meaning. The priests seem to represent a stage which Britomart must pass through and leave behind: they embody "stedfast chastity" in its most negative aspect (5.7.9.7). Their reaction to phallic energy is entirely repressive, their mortification of the flesh a kind of refusal to grow into adult sexuality. Their sleeping habits are

are significant in this connection. As darkness falls, with the mystic suddenness which characterizes all the developments in this episode, Britomart sinks down before the statue of Isis and unlaces her helmet. Her strained wakefulness in the Dolon episode emphasizes her relief in being finally able to let down her guard and surrender to sleep in a place where she knows she will be safe. The eighth stanza concludes:

her helmet she vnlaste,  
And by the altars side her selfe to slumber plaste.

The ninth begins:

For other beds the Priests there vsed none,  
But on their mother Earths deare lap did lie,  
And bake their sides vpon the cold hard stone.

These lines are odd in their juxtaposition of two contradictory kinds of sense impression: relief, safety, warmth, softness and motherly care on the one side, ascetic self-mortification, "baking" heat, stony coldness and hardness on the other. <sup>47</sup> There is such relief in Britomart's submission that we do not think of the hardness of the ground until it is specifically mentioned; yet before it is mentioned, the earth has been described as the lap of a dear mother. The result is to suggest, with the logic of poetic association, that Isis is Britomart's mother (in fact Renaissance iconography connects her with the earth); that in sinking down before her altar Britomart is sinking into her mother's lap; that Isis is, therefore, "mother" of her priests as well, and that the self-discipline which evidently causes them some suffering is rationalized by its association with her protective care, so that they identify Spartan self-discipline with motherly love (this is potentially masochistic). The priests symbolically remain children,

avoiding the responsibility of adult self-direction and sexuality. In Plutarch, the priests of Isis have shaven heads: it has been assumed that Spenser's reference to their long locks (a detail which is mentioned twice, 5.7.4.5, 5.7.20.7) is an error on his part,<sup>48</sup> but in fact it helps deepen the impression that they are sexually neuter. Britomart's removal of her helmet has always been associated with a declaration of her sexual identity as her hair falls down around her shoulders. Her hair is not mentioned here, but when in her dream she finds herself acting as one of the priests and dressed like them "with Mitre on her hed" (5.7.13.2), the fact that she actually would look very like them emphasizes that what is suppression of sexuality for them is liberation of it for her. The way Britomart falls asleep, then, acquires a sexual dimension even before the dream has begun, not only because of its meaning within the context of her own story (in the episode with Malecasta, who can be read as a demonic parody of Isis, and in the houses of Busirane and Dolon) but also because of the sexless asceticism of the priests. The gesture involves accepting her womanhood and joyfully surrendering to the protection of a woman's motherly care. The stanza describing her slumber is already almost sexual in its evocation of sensuous surrender:

There did the warlike Maide her selfe repose,  
 Vnder the wings of Isis all that night,  
 And with sweete rest her heavy eyes did close,  
 After that long daies toile and weary plight.  
 Wherewhilest her earthly parts with soft delight  
 Of senceless sleepe did deeply drowned lie,  
 There did appeare vnto her heauenly spright  
 A wondrous vision, which did close implie  
 The course of all her fortune and posteritie.

(5.7.12)

Although for the priests Isis' superintendence involves a repudiation

of their masculine maturity, for Britomart, because she is a woman, it is a condition of sexual development. (They of course live in Isis' temple--in their mother's house--whereas Britomart is only passing through. Britomart had to leave her father's house to follow her individual destiny. For the first time in the poem, when the priest mentions "thy sire, lamenting sore for thee", 5.7.21.8, there is a suggestion of the sorrow this must have caused him. The rebellious Giants in stanzas 10 and 11 are supported by their mother in their rebellion against a father-god. The pain and the necessity of such rebellions are suggested by the allegory.)

There remains to be considered the meaning of the priests' refusal of meat, blood and wine. They believe that wine is the blood of the Giants who rebelled against Jove (the story suggests Typhon's rebellion against Osiris). The Giants were sons of the Earth--their "mother Earth" was a literal one--and in revenge for their death at Jove's hands she began to "swell" with rage; ejecting their blood which she had absorbed in the form of the grape-vine, she gave to man a means of intoxication which ever since has incited him to arise in rebellion against the gods.<sup>49</sup> The two stanzas which record this belief have a concentrated suggestiveness deriving from their association with other important images in the episode. The earth, absorbing the spilled blood of her sons, is said to become "pregnant" with it, and brings forth the grape-vine as she might give birth to a child; indeed the rebellious instinct which the grape-vine preserves and passes on is in fact the spirit of her sons, made perpetual. (There is something incestuous about

this cycle, for in effect she is impregnated by the absorption of their blood.) In Britomart's dream the crocodile eats up the flames which threaten to burn down the temple and as a result becomes "swolne with pride of his owne peerelesse powre" (5.7.15.7); the phallic suggestions are obvious. Finally, Britomart, having accepted the crocodile's advances, grows "enwombed" with and gives birth to a lion (5.7.16.5). These images of eating, drinking, swelling and giving birth suggest both the creative and destructive aspects of male and female sexuality. Earth's behaviour is a demonic version of feminine fertility, the urge to assert phallic power vicariously and vengefully through her sons by liberating the lower side of man's nature; she is the earth-mother in her most threatening aspect, in rebellion against the high power of the celestial gods. (It is significant that Britomart's sleep, in the stanza which immediately follows this narrative, is described as the drowning of her "earthly parts" and the elevation of her "heavenly spright" (5.7.12.5, 7); though in fact her dream seems to involve a descent into sleep and a threat from the lower forces which she has suppressed, the narrator identifies it as a revelation from above.) Britomart, too, learns that the power she will have will be exercised through her son (this, in fact, is an element of her submission to which I will return in a moment) but her pregnancy and childbirth have an entirely positive association. It is worth noting that while he does not undercut the significance of the parable of the Giants in itself, the narrator does not endorse the association that follows from it, of wine with blood; his wording, in fact, suggests a possible reservation ("wine they say is blood").<sup>50</sup> The priests' belief--their vision of female sexuality as



demonic and threatening, their refusal, "sons of earth" as they feel themselves to be, to drink sacramentally of the "blood" of Earth's Giant sons, their assumption that all energy associated with earth and with the lower levels of human nature must be entirely destructive— is presented not as an absolute truth but as a comment upon their own nature. Before the dream begins, their beliefs and practices seem to coincide with what Isis herself represents,<sup>51</sup> but as it progresses the goddess sanctions a process which the priests cannot share or understand. Britomart must pass beyond what the priests stand for in the first stage of her dream-initiation.<sup>52</sup>

With this background in mind, we may look at the dream itself and what it teaches Britomart.

Britomart first finds herself, in stanza 13, among Isis' priests, "doing sacrifice" in the goddess' honour. She is reenacting and carrying to its fulfilment the gesture she had made before the statue, where she prostrated herself and prayed, receiving in acknowledgement Isis' blessing with her white wand. Britomart is garbed just like the other priests, that is, still dressed as a man, but no longer in disguise; and since the priests themselves are somewhat feminine in appearance, she has already become less masculine than in the armour she had partially doffed before falling asleep. That armour was originally Angela's; paradoxically, then, it is when she abandons the disguise borrowed from a woman and puts on clothing borrowed from a man that Britomart becomes one degree more feminine. Suddenly she sees her linen stole turn "scarlet red" and her "Moon-like Mitre" become a crown of gold. Isis'

gown is linen, like her priests' stoles (5.7.6.4), and evidently white, so although in assuming a "crowne of gold" (5.7.6.6., 5.7.13.6) she becomes like Isis, Britomart also undergoes a transformation of colour which differentiates her from the goddess. The colours red and white<sup>53</sup> figured significantly in the first episode in Britomart's story, when in the house of Malecasta her white smock was stained with blood. The red robe and golden crown, which on the level of the political allegory suggest the attainment of regal status, seems to stand in the private sphere for adult sexuality.<sup>54</sup> The occasion seems to be a ceremonial one; Britomart is not only newly robed but "adorn'd with gems and iewels manifold". On the political level the occasion seems to be a coronation; on the personal level, perhaps, a wedding ceremony. The emphasis is visual: Britomart sees her robe turn scarlet, her mitre become a golden crown (line 4); she "ioy'd to behold/ Herselfe" in such splendid finery; the language suggests that she is observing herself as if from the outside, as one sometimes does in dreams. For the first time Britomart stands outside herself and sees herself as the kind of emblematic figures she has always been to the reader.<sup>55</sup> The disengagement implies a new awareness of self, a self-consciousness which the wedding ceremony encourages in the bride but which the reality of marriage may seem immediately to threaten. Britomart will not be able to maintain the balanced disengagement of this initial vision during the events which follow.

Britomart's priestly status corresponds evidently to the stage of virginal chastity, perhaps to young adolescence when, while not in rebellion against her sexual identity, the girl has not yet fully assumed it--her sexuality is not yet defined. In sacrificing to the goddess, she

pays homage to that ideal of complete womanhood for which she is not yet ready; her allegiance prepares her for a more profound initiation, one of which she alone among the priests is capable. Gaining Isis' crown suggests her achievement of a grown woman's power and prestige (it shows that Isis "had powre in things diuine", 5.7.6.7); in a sense Britomart becomes Isis, and in taking on her "mother's" nature at the same time assumes her own womanhood. She does not have to steal the crown as she did Angela's armour, for this transition is a natural one which requires not a positive assertion of the will to independence but on the contrary a more passive acceptance of her destiny as a woman. The red robe suggests sexuality in the fallen world; in her full humanity Britomart differs from Isis, who remains gowned in white. The fact that Britomart can watch all this happening to her suggests the natural self-consciousness of the bride (or the queen at her coronation) responding not so much to her own feelings as to the symbolic appearance she presents as the focal point of a public ceremony. She seems to have been suddenly granted a new kind of power and social prestige, and is naively delighted with her new role and clothing.

Right "in the midst of her felicity" (5.7.14.1) a sudden wind rises through the temple, scattering the embers from the sacred altar about the whole building, which is evidently about to catch fire. The temple is probably the body of the bride, unexpectedly aroused on the wedding night by sexual feeling; the figure of the body as the temple of the soul is a familiar one, and it would be natural for Britomart in such a situation to make a distinction between the body, which seems to be

threatening to catch fire, and her "selfe" living somewhere inside it, "in great perplexity" at this startling development (5.7.14.9). Britomart's initial disengagement has become alienation (rather as in the House of Dolon): the "temple" and the "selfe" inside it are two separate entities, almost unconnected with each other, so that the "selfe" is dismayed by a reaction which it cannot control. The discovery of this side of her nature seems to threaten Britomart with personal disintegration; she no longer knows herself, and her confident integrity and equilibrium is destroyed. The diction suggests the sexual nature of the development: the tempest arises "from below" and the floor of the temple "kindled priuily" (5.7.14.2, 6). During her initial discouragement Britomart had prayed for a wind which would blow her to Artegall; the wind which is granted her does it in a way she could not have expected.

The outburst of fire awakens the crocodile, who had been sleeping beneath the idol's feet (stanza 15). One part of the statue which Britomart had seen when she entered the temple has come to life; the part which must have fascinated Britomart's waking mind declares by its actions the nature of her curiosity about it. (Her dreaming mind has not yet needed to bring Isis to life as well--the word "Idol" in the second line emphasizes that she still seems to be merely a statue.)<sup>56</sup> The crocodile is "guile" again--not only male sexuality but also, as in the Dolon episode, a treacherous part of her own nature of whose wakeful vitality Britomart had been unaware. Responding to the fire, the crocodile "Seem'd to awake in horrible dismay". The syntax is humorously ambiguous--was it the awakening or the dismay which "seem'd"? Perhaps

dismay is not in fact what this phallic creature is feeling, though a virgin bride might interpret the evidence that way. It is the fire, in any case, which arouses him, and he swallows it up, so that he swells to frightening dimensions and seems about to "eat" Britomart also.<sup>57</sup> The phallic imagery has a fine comic edge; the inexperienced bride's obvious surprise at this novel turn of events is suggested by the sheer unexpectedness of the narrative developments. Why does the crocodile eat the flames and then turn against Britomart? Her arousal "enflames" him and this frightens her, so that her fear, which had been focussed inward on her own reactions, is directed outward at his. The two kinds of control which Britomart resists are really one and the same: her own sexuality dismays her in its own right and then dismays her again insofar as it seems to put her into her lover's power. The fire enveloping her and the fire inside him symbolize two successive stages of the same fear, the fear of some loss of the "self" in the sexual act. (This is why her arousal is described first: it is only that which makes her vulnerable to his.)

Just when Britomart is about to be overwhelmed by what seems like sheer animal appetite, Isis, animated in turn by Britomart's need of her, interferes and beats him back. The negativeness of the gesture is qualified by the context. Isis' "wand" is now called a "rod";<sup>58</sup> it is the power the woman calls in to counter the phallic imperative. On the other hand since Isis is repeating on a larger scale the benevolent gesture she had made to Britomart, her action, even while it turns aside the crocodile's attack, has at the same time the associations of a blessing, as indeed it is in relation to the act in its totality. (Isis

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"the Venus of the Egyptian pantheon", is iconographically identified with nature and with procreation, and is thus an appropriate 'patron saint' of the development symbolized in the dream.)

Isis' restraint quells the crocodile, transforms his "pride" into "humblesse meeke", and turns him in effect from Rapist into Courtly Lover, suing to Britomart for "grace" and throwing himself beneath her feet (5.7.16.1,3). Isis here is not simply identified with Britomart, though she embodies the immediate demand of Britomart's beleaguered psyche; rather she is a female principle who transcends the lovers as individuals, the moderating power of civilization which tames animal passion and converts it into creative energy; specifically, the cultural code which idealizes woman and which demands that the raw sexual urge be sublimated, its aggressiveness converted into gracious courtship. (If as Equity Isis must always represent the exception to the rule, here perhaps she can be seen as the exception which human behaviour represents to the "rule" of sexuality in animals.) Britomart was wrong to abstract the crocodile from the total emblem and interpret him as sexuality; what she discovers is that human sexuality is represented by the statue as a whole, Isis with her foot on the crocodile, the chastening of animal passion by human self-control. When Britomart sees that in fact she is not going to be eaten up--when she understands that masculine passion can be tempered and is not necessarily destructive--she accepts the crocodile's advances, swells, herself, with pregnancy, and gives birth to a lion, who reigns as king of beasts (an image which recalls Artegall himself, trained by Astraea in mastery over animals; like father like son).

Britomart's dream prepares her for marriage, for it shows her what kinds of submission are not required and reconciles her to the kinds that are. The political allegorization, although it is not a great deal of help in clarifying the sexual meaning of the dream, does run parallel to it on one important point: the destiny of Britomart involves submission not so much to Artegall, to the male himself, but to what might be called the racial imperative. On the sexual level, Britomart is called upon to recognize and give in to the demands of her own sexuality; on the political level, to the demands of national destiny. In both cases her power is exerted vicariously, through her descendants--specifically through her son. Like Earth in the myth of the Giants' rebellion against Jove, Britomart's power depends on her fertility and can be exercised only in the fullness of time,<sup>60</sup> through the males which she can produce. The dream teaches Britomart to understand and accept both the strength and the weakness of her feminine nature.

I shall not consider in detail the political allegory advanced by the priest, since its meaning is not problematical, except to take note of what seems to be a flaw in the analogy between the two readings. The priest explains the outbreak of fire--the first actual detail in the dream with which he deals--as the outbreak of military rebellion, which the Artegall-crocodile must put down before he can marry Britomart and share her kingdom. The "temple"--presumably, the realm itself--bursts into flame, but there is no connection like the one I have suggested between the burning temple and the woman inside it; the "many foes" which threaten her on the political level are in no sense projec-

tions of Britomart herself. Artegall presumably swells and grows great in pride as a result of the prestige he acquires in helping the queen. (The priest, naturally enough, omits the fact that he then seems to threaten her, and suppresses the actual chain of events by which she is induced to accept his suit.) Both the dream and Book V as a whole deal with the problem of coping with the animal side of human nature. In politics, as the priest suggests here and as the Book of Justice as a whole seems to confirm, you maintain justice by simply repressing the animals, or--to use the immediate metaphor--putting out the fire. In the human psyche, the solution is not so simple; the animal must be tamed but not destroyed, the fire transformed but not extinguished. Simple repression, however, is all that the priests know about, so it is natural that there is this inconsistency between the political and the sexual interpretation of the symbolism, and that they fail to see the connection between the flaming temple and the self inside it.

The dream in Isis Church is a passionate and at the same time humorous dramatization of the imagery of Galfridian prophecy,<sup>61</sup> liberating its poetic associations by developing its implications of vital but disruptive animal energy. When she awakens, however, Britomart is shocked by the imagery, by the grotesquerie of "that so vncouth sight" (5.7.16.9). The word "sight" again suggests that her waking mind draws back from the sensuous arousal which has evidently taken place, so that she experiences the whole thing in her memory with the same visual detachment she had maintained during the "marriage-ceremony" stanza; by the time she recounts the dream, it has become merely a "vision, which to her



appear". Such language allows Spenser to have it both ways--to render the overwhelming experience of a sexual dream while maintaining at the same time that Britomart has merely seen a "wondrous vision" from above, to suggest at the same time her involvement and her disengagement. Once again, Britomart's chastity is characterized by her inability to "read" metaphor, for what shocks her is the idea of copulation with an animal. Britomart is capable of the revelation in Isis Church because of that instinct for life which found expression in her observation that a real animal is a more satisfactory lover than an unreal reflection, but her literal waking mind comically draws back from the implications of her own figure of speech. The political interpretation offered by the priest, instead of helping her to "read" the metaphor, offers her a simplistic alternative tenor for its vehicle and allows her to remain unconscious of what she has learned.<sup>62</sup> This suppression confirms again the creative power of her innocence. Britomart always triumphs by means of what she doesn't know she knows. Although in one sense the Isis episode can be understood as the culmination of a chronological process, the point of transition from chastity to married love, it may also be read as an emblematic epitome of that innocence-in-experience which has always seemed to define her nature. It enacts the very process by which Britomart acquires wisdom and her simultaneous suppression of the revelation so that it becomes a creative instinct, the roots of which, however, are buried "underground". A reconciliation has taken place within Britomart whether she "knows" it or not, and she will retain the power of that newly-achieved equilibrium, but she cannot remain in the dream-state of unanalyzed integration. The sublimation offered to

Britomart is in a sense a linguistic one: awakening from her dream involves reading its symbols as a particularly thin kind of allegory. The sacrifice of symbolic for interpretive language is always a surrender to abstraction; here it seems to involve also a real deflection of meaning. Britomart's ready acceptance of the alternative explanation is on the literal level an amusing portrait of girlish innocence, but at the same time the translation of personal into national destiny is an example of that renunciation which the dream itself has prepared her to make. Britomart has to descend from the dream of personal union to the practical world of political action, and the prosaic inadequacy of the priest's interpretation dramatizes the suddenness of the descent. The victory over Radigund, though an appropriate climax to the Book of Justice, is an anticlimax to Britomart's love-story, as Spenser no doubt intended it to be in a book destined itself to conclude so anticlimactically. But it is Britomart's exposure to the integrating effect of symbolic revelation, unable though she is to interpret it consciously, which gives her the will to defeat the Radigund within herself.

I do not intend to deal in detail with the actual duel between Britomart and Radigund, for its meaning seems to remain on the moral and political levels; the model of psychological integration which finds its culmination in the Isis dream is not given any fresh dimension by the externalization of Britomart's inner conflict. The schematic contrast between Artegall's handling of Radigund and Britomart's is clear; Britomart's refusal to be bound by Radigund's terms and her decisive killing of Radigund before her stunned rival "came to her selfe againe"

(5.7.34.2) show her reacting correctly to the two situations which had defeated Artegall. Her re-establishment of male rule is a translation into political terms of self-mastery which had been achieved on the psychological level. But while the bare events of the episode reenact on the political level the just subordination of women which has just been established on the psychological, the tone associated with Britomart tends to cut the other way. The simile comparing the two women to a tiger and a lioness is in keeping not only with the animal imagery in the Isis dream but with its use throughout the fifth book, and the identification of Britomart with the lioness recalls her lion-son in the preceding episode, but the suggestion that Artegall is the hunted "beast" who is due to her because she was the first to track him down gives a slightly comic predatory cast to the whole quarrel (5.7.30.8).<sup>63</sup> The brisk masterfulness with which Britomart rescues her lover, scolds him, gets him a change of clothes and sets him up as a civic authority certainly does not extend to her social demeanour the feminine submissiveness evidently learned on the sexual level. As always, Britomart's actions are characterized by a spontaneous irresistible mastery over events, but there is something about the fresh colloquialism even of her language in this episode ("What May-game hath misfortune made of you?", 5.7.40.2) which, while attractive in itself, works against any impression of submissiveness which we might have been built up in Isis Chmrch.

The problem is perhaps that Britomart has too much personality to be properly subdued at the fictional level. Despite their theoretical parallel, there is an essential incongruity between Spenser's virtues

of chastity and justice which in the end remains impossible to bridge. Britomart poses a special narrative problem: her chastity as Spenser conceives it makes her so much more interesting a character than her mate that it is impossible to stop her from stealing the scene unless the two figures are held at the same level of stylization (as they are, for example, in the unveiling scene). Artegall, although he is an effective allegorical figure through which to analyze the subject of justice, is not in narrative terms a fit mate for Britomart, for the two of them (unlike, for example, Florimell and Marinell) are not equally developed. Furthermore, the Artegall we meet in Book V is a much less romantic, more legalistic figure than the one we thought we knew from the other books, characterized more by the "finesse" of his cool legal mind than by the "salvagesse" which his wild-man disguise seems to promise. Although allegorically this is perhaps part of Spenser's point, in narrative terms it makes the culmination of Britomart's quest a disappointing anticlimax. It is impossible to tone Britomart down enough to dramatize her submissiveness realistically as well as symbolically. The episodes which deal with Britomart's inner life transcend the rest of Book V in subtlety and artfulness, and this of course is appropriate, for, as Equity, transcendence is exactly her function. In the battle with Radigund she is drawn down and absorbed once again into the Book of Justice.

Perhaps, however, the dissatisfaction we may feel with this episode is part of its meaning. Perhaps it reflects Spenser's awareness that possibly for all men but certainly for all women, public responsibility

and private fulfilment are in fact mutually exclusive. Spenser has made us feel how much of his own psychic balance Artegall has had to sacrifice in order to be an instrument of justice. Certainly this poet who is so profoundly sensitive to the image of harmony which marriage represents, who reacted so intensely to the Alençon proposal, must have been aware that the game of sexual politics which Elizabeth played so adroitly was in personal terms a warping of the ideal of virginity. A woman chosen by destiny might dream of taking off her helmet and submitting, but her survival depended on controlling men and skilfully exploiting them--especially their marital advances--for her own ends. The image of the two Marys whose slavish or capricious submission to men led to devastating social upheaval may lurk behind the picture of Britomart's brisk masterfulness. The anticlimactic transition from Isis Church to the freeing of Artegall perhaps reflects Spenser's assessment of the personal cost to Elizabeth of her public role.

CHAPTER VI

Tristram and the Glamour of the Eye

Contradictions in Calidore's behaviour cause some problems of interpretation in Book VI. The hero is described as possessed of a natural grace of manner, as a man "Whose every act and word, that he did say, / Was like enchantment" (6.2.3.2). Yet too often he seems to be a tactless blunderer, repeatedly stumbling upon sights he should not see, and making matters still worse by effusively apologizing for his error. His willingness to lie to save Priscilla's reputation has been censured; his treatment of his rival Coridon, which the narrator praises as a model of tact, has seemed to some readers offensively condescending; his offer of money to Meliboe has appeared as awkward as his insistent questioning of the disappointed Colin Clout.<sup>1</sup> His pastoral holiday must perhaps be seen as a truancy, a neglect of his quest. The stanzas in which the narrator comments on his defection are relentlessly ambiguous: he refuses to make an unequivocal statement about whether Calidore should be excused or condemned for the indulgence.<sup>2</sup> It is his love for Pastorella, evidently, which enables Calidore to see the Dance, yet this same love beckons him away from Colin Clout and back to his real-life responsibilities.<sup>3</sup> Calidore's involvement in the Dance of the Graces is the book's central crux. The very fact that he is granted a sight of the vision suggests that he is a privileged being, accessible to lofty insights; yet his entry onto the scene is hard to read as anything but an insensitive intrusion.

Because sight as intrusion and defilement is an important motif in Calidore's narrative, I propose to examine the structure of Book VI from the angle which first attracted me to the present argument, by considering

the similarity, both visually and in narrative effect, between the first appearance of Belpheobe in Book II and the appearance of Tristram in the second canto of Book VI.<sup>4</sup> The "iconic moment", the apparition of a virginal figure with numinous aura of miraculous perfection, is increasingly significant as Book VI moves towards its climax: the Dance of the Graces is prefigured by the vision of Pastorella surrounded by the admiring shepherds and (in demonic parody) by the image of Serena surrounded by the hungry cannibals. I would argue that it is prefigured in a different way by a third episode, that is, Calidore's vision of the young Tristram in Canto 2. Before considering this episode in detail, however, it will be necessary to look briefly at the first canto and its function as a transition between the Book of Justice and the Book of Grace.

The relationship between the two books is suggested by Calidore's remark to Artégall at the beginning of Canto 1: "But where ye ended haue, now I begin" (6.1.6.1). The line implies that courtesy takes up where justice leaves off and completes and perfects a process which justice can merely initiate. The first episode in Book VI, Calidore's conversion of Briana and Crudor, reorients the reader to the book of courtesy by dealing in a new way with motifs which were important in the fifth book. In contrast with the dismembered bodies littering the path of the knight of justice, the integrity and wholeness of the human body is established in Canto 1 as a positive emblem.<sup>5</sup> In order to win the love of Crudor, Briana is making him a mantle of hair and beards which she strips from passers-by unfortunate enough to come within reach of her seneschall Maleffort.<sup>6</sup> Calidore's first action in the book is to



rescue a maiden whom Maleffort is dragging along by the hair: by evoking the reader's natural outrage at this "hainous sight" (6.1.18.1), Spenser reactivates the full natural response which had to be suppressed when, for example, Talus chopped up Hunera, or Britomart cut off Radigund's head--the normal horror at the brutalization of a woman. The task which Crudor has imposed seems to involve the kind of focus on heraldry which was important in the fifth book, the hair and beards of victims serving as arbitrary and publicly-meaningful signs of power. Spenser is investigating the corruption that can proceed from a warping of the chivalric ideal, from a wrong-headed emphasis on the quixotic love-test. The romantic trappings of their relationship--the golden ring, for example, which Briana sends by <sup>a</sup> dwarf to her lover--do not conceal the egotism and ruthless love of power which really motivates the pair. On the other hand, the episode also sets against these empty forms the true chivalry of Calidore, who, while ready to defend the elimination of a real criminal ("Bloud is no blemish", 6.1.26.4), refuses to attack Crudor while he is stunned (which is what Britomart was right in doing, and Artegall ought to have done, to Radigund). The episode as a whole puts back into a fresh perspective the impulses presented in the Book of Justice and re-orientes the reader to a new world of courtesy, which has an explicitly Christian foundation, suggested by Calidore's invocation of the Golden Rule, and which is characterized not by ruthless repression but by conversion and forgiveness.<sup>7</sup> Whereas Artegall had to suppress his wider human responses, courtesy must see things whole, take in the whole situation and respond to the whole person; it must be ready to make exceptions and to

give people a second chance. The Crudor episode is an economical way of raising these issues and making the transition into the Book of Courtesy.

The Tristram episode in the second canto dramatizes the process of seeing things whole in a very literal way, for the visual charm of Tristram is its starting-point, and the virtue which seems to be guaranteed by his beauty is confirmed when Calidore questions the witnesses to get the whole story.<sup>8</sup> The idea of getting things right by observing them in all possible ways is suggested by the image of eye and ear which recurs throughout the canto. In the introduction, the narrator describes the courteous person as having an immediate appeal to "the eyes of men" (6.2.2.4). It is characteristic of Spenser both to respond to and yet to want to qualify the value of this innate charm: he knows that, although in fact those who have a natural ease of manner do win men's hearts, those who substitute moral effort for it "likewise deserve good thewes, enforst with paine" (6.2.2.9). There is a slight implication that qualities which appeal to the eye may have a deceptive advantage over the less glamorous but equally solid qualities which do not. In the next stanza Calidore, however, is certified as qualifying on both counts, as attracting admiration both "in act and word", "Through both the cares/ And both the eyes" (6.2.3.3). But throughout the canto which follows there is the suggestion that while eye and ear may function as complementary ways of arriving at truth, their evidence may at times prove contradictory--that the ear (which here seems associated with the critical reason) may have to be called in to censor or judge what the eye perceives.

Calidore is at first impressed by what he sees. His vision of Tristram constitutes one of those moments when the action freezes and incident becomes emblem:<sup>9</sup>

Him stedfastly he markt, and saw to bee  
 A goodly youth of amiable grace,  
 Yet but a slender slip, that scarce did see  
 Yet seenteene yeares, but tall and faire of face  
 That sure he deem'd him borne of noble race.  
 All in a woodmans iacket he was clad  
 Of lincolne greene, belayd with siluer lace;  
 And on his head an hood with aglets sprad,  
 And by his side his hunters horne he hanging had.

Buskins he wore of costliest cordwayne,  
 Pinckt vpon gold, and paled part per part,  
 As then the guize was for each gentle swayne;  
 In his right hand he held a trembling dart,  
 Whose fellow he before had sent apart;  
 And in his left he held a sharpe borespeare,  
 With which he wont to launch the saluage hart  
 Of many a Lyon, and of many a Beare  
 That first vnto his hand in chase did happen neare.

(6.2.5-6)

The image of Tristram, like the initial image of Belpheobe, suggests motion interrupted and fuses the impressions of energy and of stillness.

Calidore's gaze itself has a still concentrated quality ("Him stedfastly he markt . . .") and he reads the image like an emblem, so that observation and interpretation are simultaneous (Tristram's stature and fair face suggest that he is "borne of noble race"; the trimming of his buskins are in the current fashion, "As then the guize was for each gentle swayne").

The young hunter's accoutrements are catalogued in a somewhat static way-- in a way which sounds almost like a description in Ripa's Iconologia.

10

Iconographical figures usually hold something in each hand: Tristram holds a dart "In his right hand", a boar-spear "in his left", and seems to be standing still; yet the dart is still trembling from his recent

encounter, and the narrator explains the spear in terms of Tristram's customary activity ("With which he went to launch the salvage hart/ Of many a Lyon . . ."). His appearance suggests both the aristocratic and the pastoral: although the boy is dressed in a woodsman's jacket of Lincoln green, his costume is trimmed with gold and silver and he is clearly no rustic. Indeed, the very fact that he is a hunter suggests both primitive energy and upper-class status. (I shall return to the associations of hunting in a moment.) Spenser has fused the forthright woodsmanship of Chaucer's Yeoman with the refined energy of his Squire.<sup>11</sup> The stillness of the moment when Calidore gazes at the boy is suggested not only by the narrator's description ("Whom Calidore a while well having viewed,/ At length bespake," 6.2.7.1), but also by this balanced equilibrium of opposites embodied in the image itself.<sup>12</sup>

The picture charms the reader as much as it charms Calidore. But it is an emblem which must be interpreted, questioned, possibly even undercut by the development of the narrative. Tristram, however worthy he may seem to be, has committed a shocking breach of the laws of arms: he has apparently attacked and killed a member of a superior caste. It does not take Calidore long to remember this: his immediate response is to demand a verbal explanation and, when he is given it, to shape it into a general principle which provides a legalistic justification for Tristram's behaviour: "Perdie great blame . . . For armed knight a wight warn'd to wrong" (6.2.8.6). Calidore is demanding reasonable proof of what his eyes and his instinct have already told him: that what Tristram has done is less important than what he is, that he has an innate nobility of

spirit which will ensure chivalric behaviour (notice how Calidore instinctively addresses him as "gentle swain", 6.2.7.2., "gentle chyld", 6.2.8.8, even before he has heard the boy's story)<sup>13</sup>. He is truly relieved to be able to give rational assent to his intuitive admiration. Spenser's wording continues to suggest that two sides of Calidore's mind are busy corroborating one another:

Much did Sir Calidore admyre his speach  
Tempred so well, but more admyr'd the stroke  
That through the mayles had made so strong a breach.  
(6.2.13.1)

It is not, however, until the lady has confirmed Tristram's account that Calidore, satisfied both emotionally and rationally,

Seeing his face so louely sterne and coy,  
And hearing th'answers of his pregnant wit,  
(6.2.24.2)

allows himself to "burst into these words, as to him seemed good" (6.2.24.9). The explosive verb suggests the tensions released (like the simile of the millstream breaking forth in 6.1.21), the concluding clause, the constant pressure of the censoring reason.

If in the encounter with Despair Recrosse can be duped because he becomes in effect "all ear" and no judgment, vulnerable to the seductive cadences of the tempter, in this episode Calidore feels the danger of being hypnotized by the eye alone, by his instinctive attraction to the compelling image of Tristram. He has to hold on with some effort to his "ear", which here functions as the corroborating rational faculty. In this case there turns out to be no real problem: the judgment can approve what the eye admires. The tension between the intuitive and the critical faculties is, however, a central one in the book of courtesy: the problem

recurs, for example, in the vision on Mount Acidale. The right balance between love and judgment, imaginative receptivity and critical analysis-- these issues, which are to be raised more insistently as Book VI progresses, are already felt in the Tristram episode.

The literary prototype of Spenser's Tristram is clearly Malory's;<sup>14</sup> in Morte D'Arthur the character is associated early in his story both with hunting and with aristocratic status:

And aftir, as he growed in myght and strength, he laboured in huntynge and in hawkyng--never jantylman more that ever we herde rede of. And as the booke seyth, he began good mesures of blowynge of beestes of venery and beestes of chaace and all maner of vermaynes, and all the tearmys we have yet of hawkyng and huntynge. And therefore the booke of [venery, or hawkyng and huntynge is called the booke of] sir Trystrams.

Wherefore, as me semyth, all jantyllmen that beryth olde armys ought of ryght to honoure sir Tristrams for the goodly tearmys that jantylmen have and use and shall do unto the Day of Dome, that thereby in a maner all men of worshyp may discever a jantylman frome a yoman and a yoman frome a vylayne. For he that jantyll is woll drawe hym to jantyll tacchis and to folow the noble customys of jantylmen.<sup>15</sup>

A standard fifteenth-century hunting manual, The Boke of St. Albans, was commonly known as "the Book of Tristram", and the fact that this same volume contained a section on heraldry--"How gentilmen shall be knowyn from vngentill men" --reflects again "the class association the sport had acquired in the middle ages. The name Tristram had become virtually synonymous with "hunter"; Turberville, like Malory, refers to hunting practices as "Trystrams precepts" and defines hunting terminology as "our old Tristram calleth it".<sup>16</sup>

Hunting had become by the sixteenth century "a Gentlemans occupation, in England, France and Germany".<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth's love of the hunt

strengthened its status as "a Princes sport in deede";<sup>19</sup> Sidney in The Lady of May refers to the "noble vocation of huntsman".<sup>20</sup> The practice of hunting had become formalized and very hierarchical in its ritual: each rank and station of society, for example, was allotted its own particular breed of hawk, so that, Warton observes, "there were hawks appropriated to all degrees of people, from an emperor down to the holy-water clerk".<sup>21</sup> The status of hunting as a rich man's pastime obviously generated some resentment: moralists tended to condemn its extravagance, complaining specifically that the youth of wealthy families spent their time hunting instead of studying and wasted their substance on hawks and hounds. The author of the Institucion of a Gentleman complains that although

There is a saying amonge hunters that he cannot be a gentleman which loveth not hawkynge and hunting . . . to muche hawkynge and hunting is cause of neglectyng the thynges wherunto all gentelmen are instituted. 22

Harington's attitude is typical: having allegorized the various beasts on which the sins are riding in the Alcina episode of Orlando Furioso, he adds:

I needed not so curiously to have sought for such hidden meaning in them when as the verie things themselves are so intemperatly used by manie that they keepe them from vertues and more honourable actions: How many men give themselves so extremely to these hunters, haukes, hounds, and horses, that they cannot scarce afford an houre to the studie of wisedome and temperance. 23

The sport was seen as distracting the youth of the ruling classes from the very responsibilities for which they ought to have been preparing: as<sup>24</sup> Skelton complains:

But noble men borne,  
 To lerne they haue scorne,  
 But hunt and blowe an horne,  
 Lepe ouer lakes and dykes,  
 Set nothyng by polytykes.<sup>25</sup>

Yet hunting remained an essential component of a young gentleman's education.<sup>26</sup> Mastery of the sport was in fact a kind of education in itself, an initiation into its specialized language (one author contemptuously draws a parallel between the youths' ignorance of "the ynckehorn termes that are lately crept into our language" and of their owne haukyng and huntynge termes", but he is eager to show that he himself has mastered the jargon he derides).<sup>27</sup> The sport was defended as apprenticeship in the martial skills: Plutarch's influential treatise on education, translated by both Elyot and Lyly, recommended that the youth

bee expert in marciall affayres, in shooting, in darting,  
 that he hawke and hunt, for his honest pastime and  
 recreation.<sup>28</sup>

Diodorus Siculus' description of the education of Sesostris recalls the training of Spenser's Artegall: along with all the boys in the kingdom born on the same day, the prince was

sent by his father with an army into Arabia, where he was subjected to the laborious training of hunting wild animals, and after hardening himself to the privations of thirst and hunger conquered the entire nation of the Arabs.<sup>29</sup>

Sir Thomas Cockaine, in his Short Treatise of Hunting, bears witness to the currency of the theory in almost identical form in the sixteenth century:

Hunters by their continuall travaile, painfull labour, often watching, and enduring of hunger, of heat and of cold, are much enabled above others to the service of their Prince and Country in the warres, having their bodies for the most part by reason of their continuall exercise in much better health,



than other men have, and their minds also by this honest recreation the more fit and the better disposed to all other good exercises. <sup>30</sup>

In his History of the World, Raleigh, commenting on Moses' pastoral preparation for later leadership, develops an analogy (from Philo) based on the comparison between hunter and shepherd--a significant pairing in the context of Book VI, and one which suggests the symbolic associations which the two activities had acquired:

The art of keeping sheep is, as it were, an introductory exercise unto a kingdom, namely, the rule over men, the most gentle flock; even as warlike natures do beforehand exercise themselves in hunting, practising on wild beasts those things which after they will accomplish in warfare; those brute beasts affording matter wherein to train themselves, both in time of war and peace. But the government of gentle cattle hath a kind of resemblance unto kingly rule over subjects. <sup>31</sup>

His training as a hunter connects Tristram both with Artegall, whose training under Astraea was intended to harden him for a career of dealing with "warlike natures", and also with Calidore, who, though he will play at being a shepherd, is also a hunter in a very literal sense, the only titular hero in The Faerie Queene whose quest is an animal. In the immediate context of Canto 2, the status of hunting as an essentially educational and preparative activity is important, for it suggests that Tristram's adult destiny lies outside the poem, in the future.

On the other hand, hunting was often associated not with maturity and civic responsibility but with their avoidance. When Proteus in Two Gentlemen of Verona announces that "He after honour hunts, I after love," <sup>32</sup> he is drawing the familiar contrast between the "hard hunt" of life and the "soft hunt" of love. <sup>33</sup> The metaphor of the hunt is a favourite

with the sonneteers: Amoretti 67 ("Lyke as a huntsman after weary chace"), a significant turning-point in Spenser's own sonnet sequence, illustrates the usefulness to the English poet of the inevitable pun on "deer". In Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, on the other hand, the protagonist's status as a hunter is an indication of his unreadiness for the burdens of adult sexuality. Hunting and chastity were associated, of course, through the goddess Diana; Conti says that her hunting is itself a symbol of her virtue.<sup>34</sup> The pastime is often recommended, therefore, as a cure for lovesickness: Euphues, depressed at having been jilted, is advised to "use hunting or haukeing, either fowse the Deere, or vnperch the Phesaunt, so shalt thou roote out the remembrance of thy former loue, and repent thee of thy foolish lust."<sup>35</sup> Gascoigne in his introductory lines to Turberville's book points out in the same vein "how earely huntsmen ryse,/ And leaue the sluggish sleepe for such as leachers lust deuysse."<sup>36</sup> Spenser Tristram is potentially a kind of Adonis figure, defined like Shakespeare's hunter in terms of his young beauty and his potential for heroic development. A comparison to Adonis is implied, too, in Spenser's Astrophel, where Sidney, on whom Calidore is supposed to be based, is described in terms of both a shepherd and a hunter, killed while pursuing with a boar-spear the dangerous game which turned on him and "Launched his thigh" with a fatal wound.<sup>37</sup> The sport in short was associated both with self-indulgence and with preparation for public service, with wealthy decadence and with Spartan discipline, with love and with war. In creating his young hunter Spenser was evidently in sympathy with his teacher Mulcaster, who, commenting on its range of literary associations, observed that

"Hunting is a copious argument, for a poetical humour, to discourse of".<sup>38</sup>

Although Adonis, with his associations of vulnerability and potential, is relevant here, the classical hunter with whom Spenser explicitly identifies his young hero is Apollo. Calidore, complimenting the boy, compares him to "Latonaes sonne" wooed by the adoring nymphs "After his chace on woodie Cynthus donne" (6.2.25.4). There does not seem to be any classical authority for the story of Apollo wooed by nymphs. Osgood suggests tentatively that the passage may possibly be an allusion to Homer's "Hymn to Apollo" but, as he admits, the parallel is not a very close one;<sup>39</sup> Spenser seems to be making up his own myth, creating a scene from the youth of Apollo while he still lives near his birthplace and before he has grown up into the Apollo of tradition. The god is traditionally pictured as youthful yet mature, in the full perfection of his young manhood; he is a graceful yet virile figure. Spenser creates a younger, more irresponsible, more Endymion-like image, a boy resting from the hunt and associated with women--his mother Latona and the nymphs who surround him for his "sweet looks". Calidore to be sure announces his faith that Tristram too is "Surely borne of some Heroicke seed" (6.2.25.6) and suggests that, in him as in Apollo, youth will yield to maturity, the pastoral to the heroic, the hunt to deeds of valour (and of love). Yet to picture the god in his immaturity is to emphasize the corresponding immaturity of Tristram himself. It is interesting that Spenser does not give him the bow which is iconographically one of Apollo's commonest attributes: perhaps he is deliberately avoiding the old-fashioned yeoman associations which such a weapon might

have for his readers, for although Tristram has been sent away and thus artificially shielded from court intrigue and corruption, he has nothing about him of the rustic. The weapons he is assigned also help create the impression of vulnerability: Tristram is "but a slender slip" (6.2.5.3) of a boy (the transplanting metaphor is significant: there seems some doubt about whether he will be able to take root and grow), and the "trembling dart" (6.2.6.4) he holds in his right hand suggests slighthness, agility and audacity rather than fully-developed adult masculine strength.<sup>40</sup>

For Spenser's Tristram is almost a pre-adolescent figure: although "past a boy" (6.2.32.8), he has no glimmering of adult sexual awareness, but rather a boy's enthusiasm for and mastery of the technical details of the hunt ("And all her pray, and all her diet know", 6.2.32.4), a boy's allegiance to and identification with his own age-group (Tristram has "trayned bene with many noble feres", his pleasure is "To hunt the salvage chace amongst my peres", 6.2.31.4,7--the rhyme words are emphasized). His only ambition is a boy's ambition: to grow up and be able to wield arms like a man. Tristram has referred to his own youth in terms of the flower metaphor which is perhaps the central image of Book VI, to "the blossome of my tender yeares" (6.2.31.2). When Calidore makes him a squire, Tristram blossoms with joy:

Full glad and ioyous then young Tristram grew,  
 Like as a flowre, whose silken leaues small,  
 Long shut vp in the bud from heauens vew,  
 At length breakes forth, and brode displayes his smyling hew.  
 (6.2.35.6)

The image of the unfolding flower, associated as it is with youth and virginity (and its loss) not only emphasizes Tristram as all innocence, all potential, but also imitates the movement of the canto itself. Spenser provides us with an emblematic image and then lets its significance unfold as the characters and the reader respond to it. The narrative structure presents various frames and focusses for Tristram: first we are given a beautiful physical impression, then the boy's deferential yet confident self-defence, then the lady's version of the story, with its antithetical image of the brutal knight; finally the story swings back to Tristram for Calidore's tribute and Tristram's romantic story. The narrative structure ensures that the reader, like Calidore, is unable to keep his eyes off Tristram. It is only when the implications of the opening pastoral emblem have been explored that Spenser provides a complementary heroic emblem: the image of the young knight arming with which the episode ends.

The emphasis on seeing, which is so strongly felt in this stanza, derives much of its significance from what has preceded it:

But Tristram then despoyling that dead knight  
 Of all those goodly implements of prayse,  
 Long fed his greedie eyes with the faire sight  
 Of the bright mettall, shyning like Sunne rayes:  
 Handling and turning them a thousand wayes.

(6.2.39.1)

It is now Tristram's greedy eyes which are hypnotized by a "faire sight" (6.2.39.3) of future promise: he is as enchanted with the sight of the shining armour as Calidore was with the sight of him. It is right, too, that the sun should seem to burst forth at the end of a passage the underlying metaphor of which has been that of the opening blossom: Tristram

himself was described as having until this point been "shut up in the bud from heavens view" (6.2.35.8), and now the sunlight seems to break on an achieved flowering. Yet the sunlight is only metaphorical: the source of the brilliance is the shining metal itself, which seems to Tristran to contain within itself the promise of assured achievement. The very naïveté of his delight ("Handling and turning them a thousand wayes", 6.2.39.5) suggests an ardent idealism which by the very nature of things is bound to be qualified by future events.

The stanza is still further qualified by the fact that it is an allusion to the Aeneid, to Aeneas' receiving from Venus the armour forged by Vulcan.<sup>41</sup> The chief impression in both Virgil and Spenser is the idea of hope and potential, but their emphases are rather different. Spenser's focus is not so much on the armour itself as on the emotions which it evokes in Tristran. In the whole stanza only a single line, the fourth, describes the armour itself as opposed to Tristran's reaction to it (even this line, it could be argued, concerns Tristran's response, for it is only in his eyes that the implements shine like the sun). Spenser's three lines condense nine lines in Virgil, and in the Latin epic the force is not as much on Aeneas' reaction as on the miraculous quality of the armour itself. Virgil's first three lines describe Aeneas handling and feasting his eyes on the armour: the last six describe, one by one, the helmet, the sword, the corslet, the greaves and finally the famous shield. What is stressed is the terrible larger-than-life power of the armour; the suggestion is that it will be irresistible in battle because it carries with it a guarantee of divine blessing and ultimate imperial

triumph. The purpose of the passage indeed is to introduce Virgil's description of the pictures on the shield, itself an allusion to Homer's description of the shield of Achilles. With these associations in mind, we cannot help being aware again of the great vulnerability of Tristram, of the fact that the glory in his armour lies in himself alone, that he receives it in reward for present achievement but without divine guarantee of future success.

The Aeneid recounts the establishment of a social order; Tristram, on the other hand, steps out of a book which describes the disintegration of a social order. Aeneas is a hero of war: the literary Tristan, in spite of his many chivalric encounters, is essentially a hero of love. Although in Malory the story of Tristan is long and disparate and lacks a clear focus on the love story itself, there is evidence that the character in the sixteenth century was usually linked with Isolde and was conceived as a type of the Lover. There are few references to the couple in Chaucer, but all suggest the same thing. In the Parlement of Fowles he is included in a catalogue of lovers who died for love ("Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles"); in the address "To Rosenounde," the lover declares "That I am trewe Tristram the secounde"; in the Hous of Fame, the undeserving who seek fame are said to be fatuous as the man who would expect to win the love of the "bele Isaude" and in The Legend of Good Women "Isoude and Eleyne" are told to "Hyde ye your beautes" in the face of the woman when the poet is praising.<sup>42</sup> In Dante's Inferno Tristan is one of the lovers who is damned for having sacrificed all for love;<sup>43</sup> he figures in Petrarch's Triumph of Love, along with Procris and Artemisia

(virtuous love), Semiramis, Byblis and Myrrha (vicious love), and Lancelot  
 "and the other knights/ Whose wand'rings lead the common folk astray,  
 Guinever and Isoult, among the rest".<sup>44</sup> Skelton describes his own reading  
 as including tales

Of Trystram, and kynge Marke,  
 And al the hole warke  
 Of Bele Isold his wyfe,<sup>45</sup>  
 From whom was moch stryfe.

Thus although Tristan was sometimes pictured simply as a chivalric hero--  
 Ariosto links together as performers of "most valiant acts", the "Famous  
Tristram, Lancelot, and Sir Arthur"<sup>46</sup> --it is clear that his identification  
 with tragic love was established as a literary commonplace. Love for  
 women can be seen as inspiring love of honour, and in this content  
 Tristan sometimes appears as both Lover and Hero: Ronsard, for example,  
 arguing that women are the "academies" who shape men's character and in-  
 spire them to great deeds, observes: "Tels out vescu ces superbes  
 Rolands,/ Renauds, Tristans, plains d'une ame amoureuse"<sup>47</sup> and Burton  
 in a more sardonic vein observes that Plato "would have women follow the  
 camp, to be spectators and encouragers of noble actions: vpon such an  
 occasion; the Squire of Dames herselfe, S<sup>r</sup> Lancelot, or S<sup>r</sup> Tristram,  
Caesar, or Alexander, shall not be more resolute, or goe beyond them".<sup>48</sup>  
 And there is one poem at least which identifies Tristan specifically if  
 casually with courtesy; it is "The Fall of Princes", where he is included  
 in an ubi sunt catalogue with the other Arthurian figures:

Where is King Arthur the venturer, with his Knights bold?  
 or Sir Tristram, that treasure of curtesye?  
 or Sir Gawain the good, with his helmet made of gold?<sup>49</sup>  
 or Sir Lancelott dulake, a Knight of Chivalrye?



But it seems likely that the two associations of hunting and of tragic love would be foremost in the minds of an Elizabethan reader. The motif of avuncular jealousy, introduced by Spenser's Tristram in his explanation of his sojourn in Faerieland, while it does not correspond in detail with the youth of Malory's Tristan, would inevitably remind the reader of how the story was to be continued.

The sense of miraculous suspension of the ordinary laws of cause and effect, of a vulnerable adolescent idealism and purity which seems to promise a virtuous flowering but might also be subject to degeneration and decay, is deepened by the story which frames this bright picture. The narrative of Aladine and Priscilla encloses the interlude with Tristram, so that the young hero is touched by their adult sexuality, if only because their affair has been the occasion of the intervention which wins him his armour. (The armour itself suggests his contact with their world; its blazon--"A Ladie on rough waues, row'd on in a sommer barge"--points not only backward to the character of the brutal knight who had owned it but also forward to Tristram's own potential involvement in tragic love.)

Although the fact that Tristram lives in the woods suggests his youthful innocence, the "couert glade" (6.2.16.3) is also the locus of adult experience: it is the "secret shade" (6.3.8.5) where the knight and his lady stumbled over Priscilla and Aladine, "in ioyous iolliment/ Of their franke loues, free from all gealous spyes" (6.2.16.5). Like the love of Tristram and Isolde, that of Priscilla and Aladine circumvents the engagement of the woman to an older man, the "great pere" (6.3.7.3)

who appeals to Priscilla less than "this fresh young Knight" (6.3.7.5); their illicit involvement causes pain to the older generation and involves the lovers themselves in shame and remorse. The lovers, victims though they seem at first to be, are not especially appealing characters; Priscilla's reluctance to demean herself by helping to carry her lover on her back suggests adult self-importance and concern for outer appearances, a desire to "follow the rules"<sup>50</sup>, which contrasts her with Tristram, who in his ardent youthful idealism is ready to sacrifice his reputation by breaking them for a good cause. The efforts which Calidore makes to patch up this shady affair involve him in the moral ambiguities of the real world: the "counter-cast of slight" which he "dèuizes" (6.3.16.8) to salvage the girl's reputation is not only gruesome in itself but associated with the world of Book V from which we thought we had emerged. Like Talus who forced Sanglier to carry his lady's head, Calidore chops off the dead knight's head, "the signe of shame" (6.3.17.6), and takes it home with her as evidence that she was abducted; the possible visual pun involved in this provision of a substitute maiden-"head" suggests how cumbersome the mechanism of forgiveness may be in the ordinary world of social intercourse. For forgiveness is what is in question: restoring Priscilla's name means giving her a second chance and is the social equivalent of heavenly grace. Calidore's end is magnanimous, but his means are, inevitably, dishonest. To forgive Priscilla is much more compromising than to forgive Tristram, because Tristram exists--like Belshoebe--in a world of mythic archetypes from which he has not yet descended into the complexities of social and sexual involvement.

The vision of Tristram holds in equilibrium the contradictory impulses which will pull apart more insistently as the book progresses. In this case, the exception confirms the rule instead of undercutting it. Calidore can take a "holiday" in a natural setting (as he later does on a larger scale in the pastoral interlude), indulge himself in forgiveness and generosity rather than punishment and repression, in love and admiration instead of judgment and coercion, and still emerge on the right side of the moral law. Forgiveness--grace--is easy and also correct. He is allowed a unified response to the situation as a whole: what he hears confirms what he sees; his aesthetic sense and his moral sense both point to the same end. The "sign" which Tristram presents is a reliable one; there is no inconsistency, as there was in Book V, between the marks by which a person is known and the character he hides underneath. In a sense Tristram's whole appearance, formalized as it is in a static image, constitutes an heraldic blazon which is as reliable as it is brilliant. The image is static yet implies development; it presents a virginal purity which seems to promise a full and perfect flowering. Furthermore it doesn't seem doomed to vanish when questioned: this is the only time in Book VI when looking curiously and carefully does not entail intrusion or desecration, when Calidore can seek "what it was, to know" (6.19.17.8) without embarrassing the people he interrogates or causing the vision to vanish. The vulnerability of what Tristram represents is implied by the story of adult intrigue which frames it, but the picture itself remains bright and stable.

The equilibrium in Tristram of appearance and reality, nature and

grace, the pastoral and the civilized tends to dissolve in the episodes which follow. Especially interesting in this context is the other wood-dweller, the Salvage Man, especially considered in juxtaposition with Arthur, presumably the most highly "finished" and civilized exemplar of courtesy in Book VI. I have discussed the integrity of the image of Tristram as an emblem, the identity in his very person of the sign and the virtue signified. This easy correspondence between virtue and its visual appearance is inverted in the case of the Salvage Man, who looks ferocious but in fact has a good heart. Spenser makes much of the fact that he has no language but is able to communicate insigms which are understood because they mirror basic human emotions. Serena is initially terrified by the appearance of her "protector" but is soon won over by the overtures he makes to her:

But the wyld man, contrarie to her feare,  
 Came to her creeping like a fawning hound,  
 And by rude tokens made to her appeare  
 His deepe compassion of her dolefull stound,  
 Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground;  
 For other language had he none nor speach,  
 But a soft murmur, and confused sound  
 Of senselesse words, which nature did him teach,  
 T'express his passions, which his reason did empeach.

(6.4.11)

He fetches herbs and binds Calopine's wound, makes "signes unto them" (6.4.13.2) to lead them to his cave, and indicates his hospitable intentions "By signes, by lookes" (6.4.14.3). When Calopine disappears into the forest in pursuit of the bear, the Salvage Man returns to communicate the sad news to Serena

By speaking signes, as he then best could frame;  
 Now wringing both his wretched hands in one,  
 Now beating his hard head vpon a stone.

(6.5.4.3)

Serena gets the message, and replies in kind: "Can teare her hayre, and all her garments rent,/ And beat her breast, and piteously her selfe torment" (6.5.4.8); in her sympathetic response, in fact, she nearly gets out of control. Having established the primacy of mute inarticulate communication, the narrator sounds in the introduction to Canto 5 one of his favourite notes:

O what an easie thing is to descry  
 The gentle bloud, how euer it be wrapt  
 In sad misfortunes foule deformity,  
 And wretched sorrowes, which haue often hapt?  
 For howsoeuer it may grow mis-shapt,  
 Like this wyle man, being vndisciplynd,  
 That to all vertue it may seeme vnapt,  
 Yet will it shew some sparkes of gentle mynd,  
 And at the last breake forth in his owne proper kynd.

That plainly may in this wyld man be red,  
 Who though he were still in this desert wood,  
 Amongst saluage beasts, both rudely borne and bred,  
 He euer saw faire guize, ne learned good,  
 Yet shewd some token of his gentle bloud,  
 By gentle vsage of that wretched Dame.  
 For certes he was borne of noble blood;  
 How euer by hard hap he hether came;  
 As ye may know, when time shall be to tell the same.

(6.5.1,2;  
*italics mine*)

He never does get around to establishing the Saluage Man's lineage--this is one of the loose ends which is not picked up in The Faerie Queene as we have it--but the point is clear. There is a great difference between the "tokens" which indicate the nature of the Saluage Man and the heraldic signs which Artegall had to respond to; the "sign" which reflects his nature is not a visual one at all, but the whole sum of his behaviour, his "gentle vsage" of Serena. Courtesy, Spenser implies, is of the heart, and otherwise needs no definition; it is not what the social world par-

ceives, but the emotional reality beneath such appearances. As the two depart together the narrator comments on their visual incongruity:

So forth they traueid an vneuen payre,  
That mote to all men seeme an vncouth sight;  
A saluage man matcht with a Ladie fayre.

(6.5.9.1)

But the emblem is misleading, for the Saluage Man's behaviour to Serena is unflinchingly courteous; there is no point of contact between the reality of the situation and the image it presents to the world at large.

It is interesting, however, that within the Arthurian context the Saluage Man is demoted from Noble Savage to Natural Man with all his defects.<sup>51</sup> When Timias and Arthur arrive on the scene, they judge him as the world would do, and misinterpret what they see (the Saluage Man clumsily trying to repair the horse's harness). Serena is able to convince them that he is friendly, but never, in the texture of the poem's language, does he regain the stature he had before the Prince's arrival. In the attack on Terpine's castle, he resembles Talus himself, and has to be restrained by Arthur from wreaking total havoc. The narrator's tone has changed and seems to embody Arthur's point of view:

Whom when the Prince so felly saw to rage,  
Approching to him neare, his hand he stayd,  
And sought, by making signes, him to asswage.  
Who then perceiuing, streight to him obeyd,  
As to his Lord, and downe his weapons layd,  
As if he long had to his heasts bene trayned.

(6.6.39.1)

The Saluage Man has lost his native dignity and is presented as an animal, "trayned" to obey by gestures which associate him with the subhuman rather than with universal humanity. Yet it is only a few stanzas later that Arthur is deceived by Blandina, whose artful "words and lookes but

false and fayed" (6.6.41.1) take him in completely and make him vulnerable, in the next canto, to the ambush of her husband. Oblivious to the signs of natural virtue, Arthur is also mysteriously dense in his reaction to overcivilization. The signs he deals with are public codes which involve no subtlety or intuition. When he finally defeats Turpine, Arthur punishes him, as Talus did Braggadocchio, by heraldic debasement:

His foot he set on his vile necke, in signe  
 Of servile yoke, that nobler harts repine.  
 Then letting him arise like abiect thrall,  
 He gan to him obiect his haynous crime,  
 And to revile, and rate, and recreant call,  
 And lastly to despoyle of knightly bannerall.

And after all, for greater infanie,  
 He by the heeles him hung vpon a tree,  
 And baffuld so, that all which passed by,  
 The picture of his punishment might see,  
 And by the like example warned bee.

(6.7.26,27)

Though in a sense Arthur has achieved the most decisive victory up to this point, its nature suggests, oddly, that his courtesy is, compared to Calidore's, of a limited kind. Arthur is associated in Book VI with signs, Calidore with symbols; Arthur is able to prosecute and punish, but only Calidore is able to convert and to forgive. Arthur gets involved first with the unregenerate Turpine, who must be punished because he is inaccessible to moral suasion, and secondly with the flirt Mirabella, who, though she has undergone a change of heart, cannot be liberated from the punishment which must purge her of her sin. Seeing clearly in Book VI is connected with grace, in both senses of the word; though he often seems clumsy and tactless enough, Calidore is the locus of forgiveness in the book (not only in his forgiveness of others but in his requesting forgive-

ness from them), and he is also the figure to whom visions are granted. Arthur, superior though he ought to be in theory, cannot "see" people as clearly as Calidore can. His arrival polarizes the impulses which were held in equilibrium throughout the Tristram episode, splits apart wildness and civilization, sign and reality signified, innocence and capacity for development (it isn't until Arthur is on the scene that we are forced to realize that lack of development is not identical with potential for development, that in intellectual terms the Salvage Man is permanently limited). It is as if from court perspective which Arthur impersonates, pastoral simplicity looks like rude primitivism. Though he is on the right side and his actions are just as far as they go, Arthur is debarred from the pastoral vision.

The role of Calepine in the sixth book has often been felt as puzzling; he has been nominated Calidore's less talented double, one of whose functions seems to be to keep Calidore off-stage until the time is ripe for the pastoral interlude in which he will star. <sup>52</sup> The three main episodes in which he is involved present inferior parallels to Calidore's achievements. His inability to protect Serena from the boorish Turpine contrasts unfavourably with Calidore's conversion of Briana (a detail coming late in the narrative establishes the parallel between the two episodes: while Briana cuts off hair and beards, Turpine divests his victims of their outer garment, 6.6.34.7; both acts are symbolic outrages designed to humiliate the victim and to confirm the superior power of the bully). Calepine's rescuing of the bear baby is comparable to Calidore's involvement in the Tristram episode, in that both deal with



furthering the growth of a young person who has been removed from his home to the wilderness and whose potential for future development seems to be the main point of his story. Finally, Calepine's rescue of Serena from the cannibals points forward to Calidore's rescue of Pastorella from the brigands; the vision of Serena ringed by cannibals is parallel to Calidore's first view of Pastorella surrounded by the adoring shepherds, which in turn anticipates the circular dance of the graces and the hundred naked maidens around Colin Clout's Rosalind. What is the point of this doubling and what, if anything, Calepine's three trials have in common, are problematical questions and the solution I propose is a tentative one.

It seems that whereas Calidore's triumphs and temptations all involve the curious eye, Calepine tends to be drawn in at least partly by means of the ear. As a couple, Turpine and Blandina personify (among other things) excesses of speech: she is a smooth-talking sophisticate, he a provocative boor. Turpine's original assault on Calepine is verbal-- he replies to Calepine's courteous request for assistance with a gratuitous string of insults, "With which rude speach his Lady [Blandina] much displeas'd/ Did him reprove, yet could him not restrayne" (6.3.32.6). The encounter at Turpine's castle continues in terms of humble requests, of "threatfull words" (6.3.36.2), and of offers and counter-offers which Turpine's groom carries back and forth. When the next morning Turpine follows Calepine and attacks him, his physical brutality seems a kind of equivalent of his compulsion to pursue and harry his victims with insults.<sup>53</sup>

In his second adventure, Calepine is able to follow the path of the retreating bear by listening to the terrified cry of the baby:

The litle babe did loudly scrike and squall,  
 And all the woods with piteous plaints did fill,  
 As if his cry did meane for helpe to call  
 To Calepine, whose eares those shrieches shrill  
 Piercing his hart with pitie point did thrill;  
 That after him he ran with zealous haste,  
 To rescue th'infant, ere he did him kill:  
 Whom though he saw now somewhat ouerpast,  
 Yet by the cry he follow'd, and pursewed fast.

(6.4.18)

Again we have a wordless language which appeals directly to the heart (like the Salvage Man's inarticulate gestures); Calepine's reaction to the cry is dramatized almost as a physical reflex. The subsequent description of his sympathetic irritation is an accurate rendering of the effect of a baby's wailing on the nerves of a well-meaning parent: when he picks the infant up, he is still "pitying to heare [him] so sore complaine" (6.4.23.3), but by the end of the day, lost and "encombred" by his exasperating burden, Calepine is decidedly jumpy ("And euermore his lovely litle spoile/ Crying for food, did greatly him offend," 6.4.25.1,8). Just as the sun is setting he emerges into an open plain and looks around to orient himself, but sees nothing; again he is drawn forward not by the eye but by the ear.<sup>54</sup>

At length he heard vnder the forrests syde  
 A voice, that seemed of some woman kynd,  
 Who to herselfe lamenting loudly cryde.

(6.4.26.6)

When he is finally able to persuade Matilda to substitute articulate speech for woeful wailing, he luckily finds that she is just the person with whom to leave the baby. Calepine is "Right glad . . . to be so rid/ Of his young charge, whereof he skilled nought" (6.4.38.1), though his optimism about the child's future is based on an inscrutable prophecy

(6.4.32.6) never explained in The Faerie Queene as we have it. Calepine seems to be drawn down by means of the ear into an increasingly primitive level of human experience, where mysterious voices bewail the past and ambiguously foretell the future.

His final adventure is of the same type. Having wandered far and near seeking the lost Serena, he has lain down in the dark woods and

slept full fast,  
Till being waked with these loud alarmes,  
He lightly started vp like one aghast,  
And catching vp his armes streight to the noise forth past.  
(6.8.47.7)

It is the barbaric roar of the cannibals as the priest raises his arm to plunge the knife into Serena's breast--perhaps the noisiest cacaphony in The Faerie Queene:

Whereat they shouted all, and made a loud alarme.

Then gan the bagpipes and the hornes to shrill,  
And shrieke aloud, that with the peoples voyce  
Confused, did the ayre with terror fill,  
And made the wood to tremble at the noyce:  
The whyles she wayld, the more they did reioyce.  
(6.8.45.9,46)

Plunging into the woods in the direction of the uproar,

There by sh'vncertaine glims of starry night,  
And by the twinkling of their sacred fire,  
He note perceine a litle dawning sight.  
(6.8.48.1)

Calepine saves Serena from the cannibals, only to have her vanish humiliated into the woods, until the coming of morning "made her knownen to him at last" (6.8.51.8)--and this is all we hear of them.

It is possibly misleading to make too much of Calepine's aural involvement. The same evidence is susceptible to arrangement in other

patterns. Obviously Serena ringed with the cannibals is a highly visual apparition, though it is one which Calepine himself sees only dimly before it dissolves into a free-for-all. Clearly, too, there are other parallels equally significant: Calepine's battle with the cannibals by the light of the flickering fire in the dark wood prefigures Calidore's fight with the brigands in their underground cave, the darkness of which is repeatedly emphasized. Yet there does seem to be a sense in which Calepine is involved with the disorderly, the unshaped, the inchoate, in a way that Calidore is not; he seems to get entangled in events which he does not so much control as ride along with. Calepine is more deeply involved in the realm of mutability and chance. Like the bear-baby (a much less developed potentiality than Triatram, who is probably associated with the bear because of the tradition that bears licked their cubs into shape)<sup>55</sup>, Calepine represents human achievement as we usually perceive it, hopeful, qualified, conditional, somewhat incoherent. He reminds the reader of the dark layer of alternative potentiality which lies beneath positive achievement: his behaviour suggests the chanciness of human action, the way things could have turned out for someone whose status is less protected than that of the titular hero. (In the end of course the titular hero himself loses his protected status and the many tongues of the Blatant Beast take over; voice drowns out vision). The voices which summon Calepine seem associated with the basic instincts of rage, pity and nightmare terror. The two most important episodes in which he is involved, the rescue of the bear-baby and the attack upon the cannibals, are perhaps the least explicable in the sixth book but

they have the mysterious power of myth. Furthermore, Calepine is never able to bring anything to a satisfactory conclusion. His last move with Turpine is to hide ignominiously behind Serena's back; though the narrator tells us that the bear-baby turns out well, we never see this; nor do we ever know what happens when Calepine finally discovers the shrinking Serena. Calepine is carried along on the stream of on-going events; for him there is no definitive moment when their meaning comes sharply into focus.

The tension between the still point and the turning world becomes increasingly strong as Book VI progresses. The image of Tristram was a "still point" encircled by the turning world represented by Priscilla's love affair, a moment of perfect equilibrium between movement and stasis, innocence and experience, childhood and maturity, ear and eye. The vision of Serena among the cannibals is the demonic antithesis of the iconic moment: the beauty of the beleaguered virgin, instead of holding the animal appetites at bay, enflames them in a measured, cumulative process which is the more disturbing for its apparent order. The vision gives way to the image of Pastorella among the shepherds which is in turn transcended by the vision of the Grages. In all of these episodes the coordination of ear and eye becomes a matter of emphasis. I have suggested that the wholeness of the body is an important positive motif throughout Book VI; one aspect of this wholeness is the coordination and subordination of the senses, especially the senses of sight and hearing.

There are two distinct stages in Serena's captivity. The first

is their discovery of her lying asleep: the cannibals surround her and contemplate her hungrily but silently decide not to wake her. When Serena awakens by herself, however, her captors erupt into an instant clamour:

The Danzell wakes, than all attonce vpstart,  
And round about her flocke, like banie flies,  
Whooping, and hallowing on euery part,  
As if they would haue rent the brasen skies.

(6.8.40.1)

The noise signals the transition from gustatory to sexual appetite; it is at this point, seeing her naked, that their eyes defile her:

Now being naked, to their sordid eyes  
The goodly threasoures of nature appeare:  
Which as they view with lustfull fantasyes,  
Each wisheth to him selfe, and to the rest enuyes.

(6.8.41.6)

Tearing off Serena's clothes is an assault on her psyche; she is invaded and her integrity destroyed through both eye and ear, galvanized into answering hysteria by their outcry, penetrated by their lecherous gaze. The tension between physical release and ritual control is part of the horror of the episode, which is focused especially in the moment when the priest, after attending to his "diuelish ceremonies" (6.8.45.7), raises his knife to stab Serena and release the cacophony of horns, bagpipes and human shrieking. The uproar destroys Serena's last vestige of self-control, and she wails in answering terror, her self-control broken down by the dual assault.

The Petrarchan catalogue destroys Serena's integrity in an equally powerful way, by chopping her into "daintie parts"<sup>56</sup>. The usual effect of such a device is, paradoxically, to suggest the integrity of the woman

eulogized, by evoking the whole which transcends the parts. In Amoretti 15, for example, Spenser concludes a list of his beloved's beauties by pointing to the choicest of all: "Her mind, adorned with vertues manifold", in Amoretti 17, he concludes a catalogue of the beauties of her face with the reflection that the only artist capable of painting her would be one whose hand could "expresse the life of things indeed". Here, however, Serena is never put back together again, primarily because the catalogue is inserted into a context which has already defined her as meat; the cannibals have been itemizing the choicest cuts and licking their lips:

Some with their eyes the daintiest morsels chuse;  
Some praise her paps, some praise her lips and nose.  
(6.8.59.4)

The list concludes by moving downward to "Those daintie parts, the dearlings of delight" (6.8.59.1) which arouse some of the viewers to take their "beastly pleasure"; the dissolution of the body into a list of parts which is less than the whole images the dissolution of the psyche reduced from subject to object. Because each detail in the list is tainted by both lecherous and gustatory anticipation, the description of Serena dramatizes the actual mechanism by which innocent details become pornographic. The compulsive systematic conversion of a person into a thing suggests the arbitrary, willed nature of sexual perversion, as a kind of fetishistic metonymy of the imagination.

In his treatment of Serena, Spenser seems to be considering the mediating power of language, the power it gives us to detach our-

selves from our emotions and thus to define and refine them. When Calepine disappeared, the Salvage Man's pantomime was not deficient in power to communicate this fact; indeed, it was almost too successful, directly transmitting to Serena the feelings he enacted before her.

Serena "catches" the cannibals' emotion in somewhat the same way: when they shout, she howls back. Emotion unmediated by language destroys self-control; it is our ability to 'put it into words' which gives us some power to detach ourselves from our emotions and thus to attain a uniquely human dignity (death-bed epigrams are the most poignant examples of such control). On the other hand, although the cannibals evoke in Serena an understandably primitive reaction, they are presented to us in terms of a certain type of refinement, and it is this very refinement which deepens their horror (for us, not for her). It is not in spite of but because of their capacity for religion that the cannibals' attention to Serena is so nightmarish. Their power to sublimate by means of conceptualizing accounts both for the religion of sacrifice and the "religion" of love from which are drawn the metaphors in the forty-second stanza. The ornate cerebral quality of the language here complicates and thus corrupts the simple appetites which would have consumed Serena in a straightforward animal way. It is not to be supposed that the cannibals themselves generate the metaphors by which they mentally dismember Serena; Spenser, by attributing to them language which they could not themselves originate--language which even in the context of the vocabulary of courtly love is notably 'far-fetched' and conceited<sup>57</sup>---



taints their instinctive appetites with 'our' capacity for symbolic titillation. The horror generated by cannibalism and rape derives precisely from their symbolic power: it is the capacity for symbolic thought which creates and defines these crimes.<sup>58</sup> In that courtly love itself borrows religious metaphors, there is a religious dimension not only to the sacrifice but to the lust as well, and it is this dimension which renders the cannibals' attentive interest in Serena both comic and horrifying. The scene is a demonic parody not only of the events on Mount Acidale but of the meaning of those events: whereas Colin Clout's music suggests the power of the imagination to exalt, the cannibal episode suggests its power to debase and destroy, in a way that simple animal appetite could not do. The demonic power of the voice is thus suggested in two different ways in this episode. The cannibals' bestial uproar is what finishes off Serena, but it is the Petrarchan catalogue which alerts the reader to a dimension of their evil which Serena would have no motive for discriminating.

The vision of Pastorella, with its suggestions of happiness and wholeness, reverses all these associations. Like Serena, Pastorella is the centre of a circle of gazers; she is described in Petrarchan terms (she is a "miracle of heavenly bow," 6.9.8.8, and is compared to a lighted lamp dimming the other women around her; she is crowned with flowers

and surrounded by a "girland" of "lously lasses" (6.9.8.3), as the altar on which Serena was to be sacrificed was decked with flowers; she is decorously dressed "in home-made greene that her owne hands had dyde" (6.9.7.9; her own involvement in the clothes she wears suggests the integrity of the simple pastoral life; her dress is part of her in the way that Serena's rich clothes and jewellery, which invite theft and rape, are not); and, finally, the people around her signal their attitude towards her by means of sound--"pype and sing her prayes dew,/ And oft reioyce, and oft for wonder shout" (6.9.8.6), "And caroling her name both day and night,/ The fayrest Pastorella her by name did hight" (6.9.9.8). . (The fact that it is her name they carol is significant in confirming her uniqueness and her identity.) The vision seems to involve a perfect equilibrium, to symbolize a complete microcosmic social order, a Platonic vision translated into pastoral terms; both ear and eye are satisfied by its harmony and simplicity.

— But the clarity of the reader's uncomplicated response to the vision is rather quickly undercut by the way Calidore becomes involved with what he sees. The vision seems actually to hypnotize him, draining him of the willpower to make a moral choice. Calidore's curiosity is first aroused by Pastorella's superiority to the people around her, but while he is in the midst of making a rational guess about her identity, he suddenly finds himself captivated by her beauty:

Her whyles Sir Calidore there vewed well,  
 And markt her rare demeanure, which him seemed  
 So farre the meane of shepheards to excell,  
 As that he in his mind her worthy deemed,  
 To be a Princes Paragone esteemed,  
 He was vnwares surprisd in subtile bands

Of the blynd boy, he thence could be redeemed  
 By any skil out of his cruell hands,  
 Caught like the bird, which gazing still on others stands.  
 (6.9.11)

The first five lines suggest judicious weighing of the evidence, the last four, impotent fascination. That the narrator's observation is not merely poetic cliché but is intended to be felt as moral commentary is suggested by its reiteration in the next stanza:

So stood he still long gazing thereupon,  
 Ne any will had thence to moue away,  
 Although his quest were farre afore him gon.  
 (6.9.12.2)

Calidore's "will" has been destroyed by "gazing" and the Blatant Beast had escaped him: however blandly absorbed in the texture of the Spenserian stanza, the statement is decidedly critical of Calidore.

At this point commences the doubleness of Calidore's behaviour which characterizes his courtship of Pastorella: he addresses his remarks to the shepherds but shapes them to attract Pastorella's attention:

And euermore his speach he did apply  
 To th'heards, but meant them to the danzels fantasy.  
 (6.9.12.8)

The motif of conversation with a double purpose recurs again fourteen stanzas later. Calidore has apparently been listening thoughtfully to Meliboe's serene eulogy of the pastoral life, but his attention is in fact somewhat hypocritical:

Whylest thus he talkt, the knight with greedy eare  
 Hong still vpon his melting mouth attent;  
 Whose sensefull words empierst his hart so neare,  
 That he was rapt with double ravishment,  
 Both of his speach that wrought him great content,  
 And also of the obiect of his vew,  
 On which his hungry eye was alwayes bent;  
 That twixt his pleasing tongue, and her faire hew,  
 He lost himselfe, and like one halfe entranced grew.  
 (6.9.26)

The narrator's concluding comment--"He lost himself"--is in Spenserian terms pretty strong criticism; it reflects back on the "double ravishment" of eye and ear which is the object of the insistently parallel phrasing of the stanza ("Both of his speach . . . And also of the obiect of his vew", "with greedy eare . . . hungry eye", "his pleasing tongue . . . her faire hew")<sup>59</sup>. Calidore is won over by the rhetoric (and thinks he has been won over by the argument) because while he is listening to her father he is looking at Pastorella: he is seduced both by beauty of language and by beauty of person. The bland poise with which Spenser records the process resists simplistic moral interpretation. Though the pastoral vision which Meliboe presents is charming, it is not in the total context of the book an unquestioned ideal (the brigands' invasion will shortly prove that even Meliboe is not able to live to himself in snug pastoral security). But even if he were entirely right, his choice is not necessarily a model for Calidore's.<sup>60</sup> There is an element of self-delusion in Calidore's decision; and although he evidently begins by deliberately manipulating the conversation (in order "to occasion meanes, to worke his mind,/ And to insinuate his harts desire", 6.9.27.1, he echoes Meliboe's disdain for worldly ambition), he ends up by talking himself into the moral necessity of taking a holiday. Rewording Meliboe's "It is the mynd, that maketh good or ill", Calidore chooses language which disguises passive surrender as active control of his own destiny:

Since then in each mans self (said Calidore)  
 It is, to fashion his own lyfes estate,  
 Give leave awhyle, good father, in this shore  
 To rest my barcke, which hath bene beaten late  
 With stormes of fortune and tempestuous fate,  
 In seas of troubles and of toylesome paine,  
 That whether quite from them for to retrate

I shall resolve, or backe to turne againe,  
 I may here with your selfe some small repose obtaine.  
 (6.9.31)

Calidore speaks of "fashioning" his life and "resolving" on his future in order to moralize his desire for a rest; a note of self-justifying self-pity creeps in here. This is not to say that Calidore is wrong in the decision itself, which evidently prepares him for the higher revelation on Mount Acidale, but that he is wrong in the way he makes it--he is rationalizing. The blurring of the line between reason (which is what Calidore thinks he is using in responding to Meliboe's words) and emotion (which is aroused by the vision of Pastorella) is suggested by the reaction to the double assault of eye and ear. Instead of listening critically, as he does to Tristram, and comparing what he hears to what he sees, Calidore listens uncritically, so that he becomes doubly dazed by the two senses at once. The image of Pastorella and the poetry of Meliboe retain their integrity, but Calidore's reaction is tainted with self-interest; inevitably perhaps, for the process suggests the necessary qualification of absolute visions of beatitude by the circumstances of real life. The machinations of the courtship which follows, to which some critics have rather vehemently objected, are merely extensions in detail of the kind of compromise already suggested by Calidore's sensory ensnarement. The perfect static images of the worship of Pastorella and the life of Meliboe are distorted or destroyed when they are touched by time and process (Calidore's courtship and the brigand's invasion).

Book VI reflects theories about the relationship of eye to ear which were current in the sixteenth century. In the conventional hierarchy of the senses, the eye was considered superior to the ear; it

was conceived as the most creative of the five senses, actually emitting the rays by means of which it perceived and thus contributing actively to the process of perception.<sup>61</sup> The light of the eye was seen as analogous to reason itself, capable of apprehending the ultimate good.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, since the eye might deceive through false appearances and ensnare by arousing the passions, it was sometimes considered safer to be guided by the ear, by verbal wisdom, doctrine, counsel.<sup>63</sup> In Book VI the ear is opposed to the eye in both ways, associated both with the rational and with the irrational. It can be equated with the critical sense, with analysis, comparison and rational authority: this is its function in the Tristram episode. On the other hand, it may suggest the primitive appeal of the subrational emotions, the irresistible horror of a savage shriek, the nerve-wracking appeal of a baby's cry, or even the deceptive cadences of rhetoric itself.<sup>64</sup> When McLuhan asserts that cool (visual) media encourage detached rational analysis and hot (aural) media evoke a primitive tribal response, it is this kind of contrast to which he seems to be alluding. Calidore's fascination with the pastoral world is presented as a seduction by both eye and ear, so that both combine to lure him in the same direction. A capacity to be seduced, however, is also a capacity to be inspired; Calidore's very vulnerability to the charms of the pastoral makes him open to the events on Mount Acidale, which appeal to both eye and ear in their evocation of perfect harmony.

What Calidore apprehends on Mount Acidale is presented primarily as vision. In his ambiguous defence of Calidore's pastoral defection, the narrator asserts that he may not "greatly blamed be" (8.10.3.1),

For what hath all that goodly glorious gaze  
 Like to one sight, which Calidore did vew?

(6.10.4.1)

Since for two stanzas the narrator has been looking back at Calidore's love for Pastorella, a reader might reasonably interpret this line, on a first reading, as alluding to her as well, the "one sight" meaning "merely one glance at Pastorella". However, by the end of the stanza it is made clear that the "one sight" is something yet to come ("The which as cometh now, by course I will declare", 6.10.4.9). The ambiguity links the two visions (of Pastorella and of the dance of the graces), suggesting that the former is a faint foreshadowing of the latter. Visually, Pastorella encircled by the piping swains is a type of Colin's mistress encircled by the dancers, who in turn is a type of Gloriana herself whose beauty is hymned by the poet. Throughout the episode, the images of light (whiteness, the gem in a ring, the stars in the heaven, the "Sunne of the world") emphasize the visual aspect of the revelation.

But though it is a vision, Calidore is initially drawn towards the dance by the ear:

Vnto this place when as the Elfin Knight  
 Approcht, him seemed that the merry sound  
 Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on hight,  
 And many feete fast thumping th'hollow ground,  
 That through the woods their Eccho did rebound.

(6.10.10.1)

The sound evokes the world of fairy-tale and of folk-lore, of wood-creatures who will fade in a moment into the leaves; it is elvish and earthy, and grounds the loftier Neoplatonic associations of the vision by suggesting their roots in the pastoral imagination. When Calidore gets to the "open Greene" (6.10.11.1) his eye clarifies what his ear has heard: the piping

noise is made by a shepherd and the thumping feet belong to "a troupe of Ladies dauncing" (6.10.10.7). In a very natural way, the proper hierarchy of the senses is confirmed: the eye clarifies and makes sense of what the ear confusedly apprehends. The wholeness of the experience is suggested;<sup>65</sup> it involves both sound (the music) and sight (the dancers, and especially the pattern which they make); the two are inextricably interwoven for, apparently, it is the piping itself which magically calls up the vision (when the narrator tells Colin Clout, "pype, jolly shepheard . . . Thy loue is present there with thee in place", 6.10.16.6, he implies that she will be present as long as he keeps on piping).

There are three points in the episode where the fictional decorum is broken to allow the narrator to express himself directly; this command to Colin Clout is the second. The third is Spenser's apology to Gloriana in stanza 28, the pragmatic motives of which are perhaps enough to explain its insertion. The first, however, is the most emphatic and the most significant. Having established what Calidore sees--"An hundred naked maidens lilly white" (6.10.11.8), "in the midst of them/ Three other Ladies" and "in the midst of those same three . . . Another Danzell" (6.10.12.3,7)--the narrator suddenly turns to the reader and commands him to "Look":

Look how the Crowne, which Ariadne wore  
 Vpon her yvory forehead, that same day,  
 That Theseus her vnto his bridale bore,  
 When the bold Centaures made that bloody fray  
 With the fierce Lapithes, which did them dismay;  
 Being now placed in the firmament,  
 Through the bright heauen doth her beams display,  
 And is vnto the starres an ornament;  
 Which round about her moue in order excellent.

(6.10.13)



The narrator is speaking over the heads of the characters in the poem and addressing the reader's inward eye: what we are asked to look at is not the actual scene which Calidore observes, but an iconographic analogy which reveals the meaning of the vision to us alone, adding a dimension of meaning which even Colin Clout's exegesis does not encompass.

In the Ariadne simile, Spenser has fused two separate myths: the accounts of the Centaurs' attack at the marriage of Hippodamia to Pirithous, and of Bacchus' gift to Ariadne of the crown which became a constellation. The myths might have become associated in Spenser's mind for several reasons. Both concern the interruption of a marriage (Pirithous' wedding feast was turned into a riot, and Theseus deserted the pregnant Ariadne on the island of Naxos before Bacchus took up with her). The two men, Theseus and Pirithous, became proverbial friends. The myths are linked as well by their associations with bulls: Ariadne, the daughter of Pasiphae, saved Theseus from the minotaur; the centaurs apparently gained their name (which means "bull-punchers" or "bull-killers") because they hunted wild bulls.

Whether his conflation of the two myths was deliberate or not, the ways in which they overlap suggest the aspects of their content which attracted Spenser's attention for use in this context. His hybrid version suggests the transcending of animal savagery by cosmic order, for the insulted bride is exalted by the stellification of the crown which symbolizes her desirability. <sup>66</sup> It is the power of eros which moves the universe; the stars in their courses circle the constellation as the dancers circle Colin's mistress. The crown suggests the monarchy, which functions

as long as the centre holds, as long as the monarch is able to inspire honour and adoration; the simile implicitly associates the constellation with Queen Elizabeth.<sup>67</sup> Ariadne's crown is itself, however, a ring of seven stars; the substitution of this ring for the single maiden at the centre of the dance suggests that the single centre is not the queen herself so much as the eros which draws men to her, the circling movement which the court makes around her.<sup>68</sup> (The constellation is empty at the centre, at the still point of the turning world.) The simile associates the court at its most idealized with the pastoral world, but also suggests the permanent connection between this vital centre and the subversive violent energies which threaten the order it creates (the battle of the Centaurs and the Lapithes, which Ovid describes with gruesome gusto, is a dramatic example of bestial violence.) The simile, although it suggests the ultimate resilience of the "order excellent" on which the universe is based, also implies the necessary connection between the courteous and the martial virtues, for the individual member of society may be called upon to maintain this order by taking action against the forces which would undermine it. Calidore will learn from painful experience the truth which we are shown as an emblem--the connection between ordered beauty and chaotic violence, the fact that what one loves and desires must be earned and defended by a readiness to fight.<sup>69</sup>

By telling the reader to "look" at something which is not literally there at all, Spenser is suggesting the power of the inward vision of which ordinary eyesight is merely a type. This is the power of the imagination, the power to make things whole, to reveal their connections, to

reshape and reorder them in terms of human needs and desires. Astraea's replacement by a constellation had suggested the substitution of schematic abstraction for a fully human imaginative response. Here, on the other hand, a constellation is humanized by the assimilation of its abstract shape to the shapes created by the human imagination. As Berger says, it "appears as the result and symbol of human experience; its meaning is referred not to its divine creator but to manmade myth".<sup>70</sup> The simile, with its analogy between human eros and cosmic harmony, suggests the power of the imagination to make men whole. But Calidore's determinedly literal curiosity cannot rise to the vision into which Spenser courteously initiates the reader.

Why this should be the case is perhaps suggested by what goes through his mind when he first happens upon the scene. Calidore realizes that he ought to observe proper caution in his contact with this faerie world:

He durst not enter into th'open greene,  
For dread of them vnwares to be descryde,  
For breaking of their daunce, if he were seene;  
But in the couert of the wood did byde,  
Beholding all, yet of them vnespyde.

(6.10.11)

It is clear that Calidore does understand something about the nature of the vision and its fragility and magical quality. But there is a very curious line in this stanza which suggests why he is unable to carry out his wisest intuition: the narrator continues with the observation that what he saw so "pleased . . . his sight/ That euen he him selfe his eyes enuyde" (6.10.11.6). This odd description of Calidore as envying his own eyes suggests the fragmented nature of his consciousness, a certain lack

of wholeness which keeps him from the truth. It is as if Calidore looks at himself looking at the dancers, somehow detaches his eyes from his "selfe", a "selfe" of which he becomes conscious only when it is aroused by joy--as if the very intensity of the delight calls attention to itself and distracts him from proper absorption with its object. It is interesting that although the dancers in fact vanish only when they see him, Calidore repeatedly speaks as though they vanished as soon as he saw them (he asks Colin Clout, "why when I them saw, fled they away from me?" 6.10.19.9, and apologizes for having "rashly sought that, which I note not see", 6.10.29.7). Although his questions blur the issue and allow Spenser to have it both ways--to evoke the polluting power of the curious eye--they also suggest Calidore's lack of self-understanding.<sup>72</sup> It was not, in fact, the seeing which caused the vision to vanish, but Calidore's compulsion to step forward and question the vision--not his eyes which did the damage, but the "selfe" behind them which perceived itself as separate from them. This kind of paralyzing self-consciousness seems to be connected with the critical faculty itself, the impulse of the mind to fragment and analyze and know "what it was". Calidore is doomed by his pleasure to observe himself feeling it. Like the critic confronted by a work of art, Calidore is compelled to find out how it works, and like a poet confronted by a critic, Colin Clout breaks his pipe in disgust. The vision vanishes and we are left with doctrine, with voices talking--rational, informatory, civil voices but not the music of the shepherd's pipe. When other voices are raised in malice and scandal, Book VI ends with the poisonous tongues of the Blatant Beast.

In Book VI, visual perception is linked with moral perception in a way which puts a particular premium on the unity of the psyche. When Calidore accosts Colin Clout, we have the sense of one function of the human mind clashing with another; and when Calidore turns away from the pastoral world and returns to rescue Pastorella and then to pursue the Blatant Beast, these actions, narrated as they must be in chronological succession, inevitably appear as alternatives. Only in the work of art can beauty and violence be reconciled; only in contemplating a work of art can the individual achieve the wholeness of which the sum of his actions must at any single point seem an imperfect approximation. It seems to me that in his response to Tristram, Calidore comes as close to achieving this wholeness as he ever does in the course of his history. His impulse of generous admiration for the youth is in some ways a more disinterested emotion than he feels for Pastorella; it is a more successful, though more prosaic, contact with truth than he has on Mount Acidale. Calidore, who is only partly capable of artistic vision, is the hero of courtesy because he is fully capable of admiration. Forgiving and knighting Tristram is a kind of non-sexual parallel to rescuing and restoring Pastorella; it grounds Calidore's virtue in a responsiveness to human beings, his charm, on which Spenser insists so much, in the capacity to be charmed by others. For true courtesy is a species of eros, the ability to delight in the beauty of other people. Calidore's patronage of courtesy is unproblematical only when real life presents him with an image which can draw from him the kind of balanced response usually evoked only by a work of art. Spenser is honest in suggesting the rarity of such moments in a world inhabited by the Blatant Beast and its victims.

CHAPTER VII

Spenser's Dramatic Poetry

My title is taken from Roger Sale's fine article on The Faerie Queene, and let me say at the outset that I do not call in question his general conclusions about the nature of the enjoyment we can expect from Spenser's poetry. The Faerie Queene is not dramatic in many of the senses that Sale invokes. There is no "plot" to speak of; the characters are not rounded --or not consistently so; on the whole (there are a few exceptions), the dialogue they are given has no particularized accent or idiom; and--perhaps most important of all--there is "no 'there' there", as Mr. Sale observes, quoting Gertrude Stein; <sup>2</sup> there is little sense of the concrete particulars of daily life in a specific social setting which has been seen as the very essence of the novel. As Mr. Sale suggests, a reader raised on Donne and Shakespeare and especially on the novel is likely to be baffled at first by Spenser's poem.

Yet The Faerie Queene does contain more narrative interest than Sale implies. Perhaps the readiest way of getting at the measure of our disagreement is to focus upon the feature which he specifies as depriving the epic of its "dramatic" quality, that is, the preconceptions of the poet himself. The problem for someone looking for a clash of viewpoints is that Spenser "inherited a view of the universe" which he accepted more or less in its totality and which gave him an assured set of values that he found it his task to "embody and make imminent". Sale quotes George Eliot as a spokesman of the "dramatic" point of view: "I protest," says her narrator, "against any absolute conclusion."<sup>3</sup> It is the absoluteness of Spenser's conclusions, Sale implies, which accounts for the undramatic quality of his writing, which is a process of recording pre-conceived values and concepts, not a process of discovering them.

The contrast Sale draws between the "undramatic" Vanity Fair and the "dramatic" Emma clarifies his definition. Vanity Fair is undramatic because the narrator is omniscient; the characters and their actions are absorbed into the book's predetermined moral pattern. In Emma, on the other hand, which is "a more dramatic work," "the narrator must change her stance at every stage in the education of her heroine." The drama of Emma arises, then, not only from the discrepancy between the point of view of the various characters, but from the gap between what the narrator knows and what the characters know. "In a dramatic work a character or narrator speaks, but what he says is not the whole truth."<sup>5</sup>

Now I would argue that this sentence defines the ambiguity of some of the passages in The Faerie Queene. Although much of the poem is certainly undramatic in exactly the way Sale suggests, parts of it--especially, I think, the parts that focus on the "chastity" figures--have something like the "dramatic" quality he defines as novelistic. In fact, the "static" figures in The Faerie Queene, the very characters whose natures seem to be defined by their tendency to become emblematic, are in fact the focal points of some of the best stories: like magnets, they seem to radiate a "field" of narrative energy which animates the events in which they are involved. We are much more interested, simply, in what happens next when Belphoebe encounters Trompart and Braggadocchio or when Britomart enters Isis Church (an episode "dramatic" in any sense of the word) than we are by Guyon at the House of Alma or Arthur defeating Turpine. I would argue that our involvement derives, as Sale says it does in novels, from the gaps between levels of perception, and that these figures, because they involve perception so intensely, are particularly powerful in



arousing it.

The dramatic quality even of novels does not depend as much as Sale suggests on the fact that the author "knows that he does not know all the answers." Jane Austen and George Eliot, to use Sale's examples, are as fully in possession of the values of their worlds as Spenser is of his. The tone which the narrator takes towards Emma may indeed change, but this is not because there is ever any doubt about the values the author is creating Emma to embody; and in Middlemarch, although the characters' motives are often hidden from each other, all of them are firmly placed in a moral hierarchy of which the narrator is fully in control. The difference is not in the convictions of the author, but to the field of experience to which these convictions are applied: the milieu of Emma and Middlemarch is social, so that when the characters clash they do so in recognizable, everyday ways; they seem to perceive each other "realistically", as we ourselves react to the people we know (though to what extent we have been taught to react this way precisely because we have been educated by the novels which Sale is describing is a question worth considering).

The characters in The Faerie Queene do not react to each other in this way. They are more closed to one another than the characters in Emma; their role as allegorical figures seems to define not only the way we look at them but the way they look at each other. To consider, for a moment, a work which is closer in time to The Faerie Queene, Shakespeare's Tempest, and a figure in that play who has something in common with Spenser's chaste heroines, Miranda: our impression of her radiant but vulnerable innocence is created not only by the fact that we know more about life than she does

but also by the fact that the other characters on the stage do too; when she exclaims "O brave new world," the irony we feel derives not only from our knowingness but also from Prospero's and Ferdinand's. Characters in The Faerie Queene do not pay attention to each other quite like this. They tend, if not to see themselves as allegorical figures, to see each other that way: Britomart can respond to a Redcrosse whom she perceives as a type of the Questing Lover, Glauce treats Britomart and Artegall as if they were characters in a tale of courtly love, and neither Timias nor Belpheobe "sees" the other at all except as <sup>an</sup> allegorical character. I would argue, however, that this special blindness can make the narrative not less but more "dramatic". When Britomart attacks Marinell, her behaviour has the mysterious but authentic quality of real human motivation. Britomart's story in fact is full of surprises--more so than Emma's, whose destiny we can predict from very early in the book. She is always acting unexpectedly in ways that turn out in retrospect to seem entirely idiosyncratic but which we could not have predicted before they occur. I have suggested that Britomart reacts to a Marinell who is a projection of herself: her reaction, deriving from this "allegorical blindness", is never fully explained, and it remains quite as problematical as the reaction of an Elizabeth Bennet or a Becky Sharp. There is in fact a peculiar realism in the sheer subjectivity of this kind of response to other people; perhaps we do at times tend to perceive one another more as personifications or projections than as characters from a novel.

But although the characters do not pay attention to each other in the way which creates the "drama" of the nineteenth century novel, there are a number of episodes in The Faerie Queene much of the interest of

which derives from precisely the gaps in perception which Sale attributes to the later form. What the characters don't know about each other can be used to create suspense (as Malecasta creeps towards Britomart's bedroom), comedy (when Glauce discusses the nature of Britomart's melancholy passion), character (when Calidore breaks in on the dance of the Graces, dismaying not only Colin but a whole group of recent critics). It is worth noting, in fact, that readers, although they do dismiss some figures as merely allegorical personifications, get extremely involved with others: Britomart in particular evokes very decided reactions from readers, who find her as a character either entirely delightful or absolutely irritating; Calidore's lack of tact and obtuse literalness incenses some readers in a way that it should not do if he were a mere personification. The problem, I think, is not that the figures in The Faerie Queene lack character, but that they exhibit it only intermittently; we do not get enough guidance from the genre itself to know when to read them as personifications and when as persons. It is disconcerting to have to try, for example, to find in Artegall the same kind of personality we cannot help responding to in his mate. If he is read as we read Britomart, he becomes quite unsympathetic; it is only as a personification that he works in the allegory.

It seems to me that it is in terms of the "chastity" figures that Spenser's narrative becomes most truly dramatic. I have attempted to suggest that when Spenser presents such a figure there is a tension between the stasis of image and the movement of narrative, and that such incidents involve wholeness of perception in a particularly acute way. Some of the most "dramatic" moments in the novel involve precisely this kind of tension. When Henry Esmond gazes upon Rachel, who "had come upon him as

a Dea certé . . . Her golden hair . . . shining in the gold of the sun", or upon Beatrix at the head of the stairs at Walcote House, "a wax candle in her hand and illuminating her . . . the light falling upon the scarlet ribbon which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world",<sup>6</sup> when young Pip gazes up the stairs at the brilliant figure of Estella with the lighted candle in her hand, the sense of life halted and made significant by a moment of vision is something rather like the "iconic" moments in The Faerie Queene.

I would not for a moment argue that the "epiphanies" in The Faerie Queene have the same kind of complexity as do these moments from the novel. In Esmond, particularly, a novel which depends for its effect so much on literary allusion, the literariness of Esmond's vision is part of its point: it is perhaps the existence of Spenser himself as mediator of Virgil's dea certe which accounts for the precise tone of the description of Rachel. But the central difference is the status of the visionary moment itself. Sale could insist, quite correctly, that the whole point of such episodes is to suggest the poignancy of the protagonist's delusion; that the visions are qualified and undercut by everything else that happens in the novel; that they are dramatic in precisely the way that Spenser isn't, because of the fact that we as readers are able to deduce the falsity of the ladies' appeal by everything else that they say and do. Such moments suggest not the ideal virtue and beauty of the woman herself but rather the yearning to idealize in the youth who gazes at her: the limitation of his vision becomes the subject of the novel as a whole, his education being presented in terms of the inevitable discrepancy between vision and reality. In The Faerie Queene on the other hand the vision does not deceive: as Bender says of Britomart at the House of Malbecco, "Spenser's treatment reveals her virtue as a visual fact--manifest, outside time,

above irony."<sup>7</sup> For us, to be sure; but not always for the other characters in the narrative, whose failure to receive the vision sometimes creates quite novelistic situations (the Malbecco episode indeed is one of them).

For while paying due attention to the very clear differences between the novel and The Faerie Queene, I would like to suggest nevertheless, that if the essence of the "dramatic" presentation is that there shall be a discrepancy between the points of view of characters, narrator and reader, it is through the figures I have been discussing that Spenser evolves an increasingly dramatic technique. When we first meet Belpheobe, much of the effect of the scene derives from the very pronounced gap between the perceptions of Trompart and Braggadocchio and the perceptions of the reader (this indeed is an episode which is "dramatic" in very plain sense--it is theatrical, stagey even). But though the narrator surrounds her with interpretive commentary, there remains to the end an ambiguity in the figure of Belpheobe which his framework does not subdue (Thackeray exploits a similar ambiguity in Esmond with his allusions to Venus and Diana; despite the difference in mode, the emotions such figures evoke remain similar).

The vision of womanly beauty held whole and perfect in the mind always raises, in Dickens and Thackeray or in Spenser, the issues of illusion and of mutability; both the allegorist and the novelist create static images whose "static-ness" is undercut and qualified by the total context in which the image occurs. And it seems to me that in creating such images Spenser moves towards an increasingly dramatic presentation, in that the question of just how they ought to be interpreted becomes more and more open. Britomart's precise role in the House of Busirane is not a simple one; it is paradoxical that although until the final confrontation

with the enchanter she is mentioned only intermittently, we never lose the sense of the power of her presence or of the mystery of what she perceives. When Britomart confronts Artegall in Book IV, a full reading of the episode involves, as I have argued, a subtle sense of the discrepancy between the points of view of the various characters; that Spenser is content not ultimately to undercut their joy does not in itself make the episode "undramatic". In Isis Church the statue--a static image indeed--is illuminated in and literally brought to life in terms of its psychological meaning. The striking inadequacy of the priest's interpretation seems exactly the kind of effect Sale calls "dramatic"; responding fully to the passage involves understanding the limitations of the points of view of the priests, the narrator and Britomart herself, and it is only from the juxtaposition of these inadequate visions that the full meaning of the passage emerges.

For Spenser's narrator, although there is no doubt that his heart is in the right place, is in fact not "omniscient" in the style of Thackeray in Vanity Fair. He is often innocent of meanings of which the reader cannot fail to be aware; in fact, he controls the meaning of the events which he relates rather less consistently than, for example, the narrator in Jane Austen, whose constant moral awareness is reflected in the very rhythms of her language, which never fails to "place" the heroine's behaviour. The richness of meaning in the Mount Acidale episode derives from the technique which has evolved around the "chastity" figures; it derives not merely from the beauty or significance of the imagery of the dance, great though these are, but from the various points of view from which the vision is beheld and from the very inadequacy of Colin Clout's iconographical inter-

pretation (subtle and significant though this is in itself). On Acidale, we see more than Calidore or Colin Clout, and it is partly the discrepancy between what we see and what they see which creates the intense visionary effect of the passage. Here, in the Ariadne simile, the narrator does add a dimension of meaning. Spenser's narrative voice does not, as in Jane Austen, create consistent ironies, but it can function to open out areas of feeling of which the characters are unaware, to refine and complicate the kinds of things which they are able to perceive. In fact it is a very flexible device--more flexible in its bardic impersonality than the personal voice of a Dickens or Austen--for the fact that the narrator is not compelled by a novelistic persona to be consistently knowing allows certain ironies to emerge by themselves, yet he is also able to provide illuminating commentary or metaphor without any sense of incongruity.

This is by no means a plea for a novelistic reading of The Faerie Queene. When Jane Aptekar observes that Dunseath's assumption "that Spenser delineates characters that develop and change for the better . . . imposes an inappropriate modern viewpoint on a Renaissance text" I am inclined to agree with her.<sup>8</sup> But at the same time I feel that some parts of The Faerie Queene are rightly read with the kind of attention that one brings to the drama of the novel--that to read the Isis episode, for example, with the same expectations which one brings to the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins would be simply to miss its meaning. The Faerie Queene contains many different kinds of poetry; some of it is, even in Sale's terms, truly "dramatic".

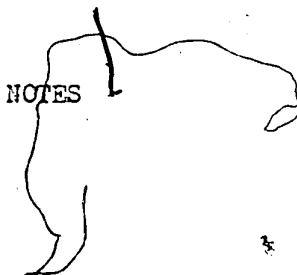
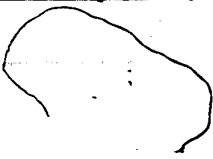
Rosemond Tuve speaks of the moment when images "stand still and

become emblems".<sup>9</sup> Her fine phrase perfectly conveys the impression of experience coming suddenly into focus which is so often evoked by the figures which I have been discussing. The static quality of such moments must not be undervalued: it is part of their point. They become memory images, known and possessed in a particularly clear and exemplary way: "For where as we know something only by understanding, . . . those we keep best in our minds, which we know by sight and have marked with our eyes".<sup>10</sup> Chaucer's tribute to "Womanly Noblesse" embodies the sensibility evoked by a Belphoebe or a Britomart:

So hath my herte caught in remembraunce  
Your beauté hool, and stedfast governaunce.<sup>11</sup>  
Your vertues alle, and your hy noblesse.

Such visions are intimations of psychic and spiritual order; their stillness implies recognition and clarification, that crystallization of meaning towards which the whole of The Faerie Queene directs us. Yet Tuve's phrase encompasses the "dramatic" tension for which I have been arguing; the figures are felt to stand (still because they have been moving; stasis implies the process which it interrupts. To read as icon the image of "breathing human passion" is to participate in the power of the imagination to endow with symbolic resonance the forms of life as they unfold before us. It is the very process of knowing which is dramatized in some of the finest passages of The Faerie Queene, passages to which we may well bring the kind of attention which we bring to an Austen or a Shakespeare.





NOTES

## CHAPTER I: IMAGES OF CHASTITY

<sup>1</sup>"The Fallen City: Some Reflections on Shakespeare's 'Henry IV'," Encounter, 13, No. 5 (1959), 21-31.

<sup>2</sup>Christopher Marlowe, The Poems, ed. Millar MacLure (London: Methuen, 1968), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1901), p. 371.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 651.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>"The Seconde Nonnes Tale," p. 651.

<sup>9</sup>Letter 22, "To Eustochium: The Virgin's Profession," Select Letters of St. Jerome, trans. F. A. Wright, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1933), 53-159.

<sup>10</sup>Venus and Adonis, Lucrece and the Minor Poems, ed. A. Feuillerat, The Yale Shakespeare (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1927; rpt. 1966), 19.

<sup>11</sup>The tradition of the reluctant Adonis is documented by Feuillerat, ibid., 72-3; by Kenneth Muir, in "Venus and Adonis: Comedy or Tragedy?" in Shakespearean Essays, ed. Alwin Thaler and Norman Saunders (Knoxville:

U. of Tennessee P., 1964), p. 3; and by Eugene B. Cantelupe, "An Iconographical Interpretation of Venus and Adonis, Shakespeare's Ovidian Comedy," SQ, 14 (1963), 141; he refers to Titian's Pardo Venus.

<sup>12</sup>Venus is usually considered the central figure; for J. W. Lever, "Venus and the Second Chance," SAS, 15 (1962), 83, Adonis is "not a very complex figure . . . the archetypal young human male in his wilfulness and conceit"; Cantelupe assumes that "The focus, of course, is upon Venus, not Adonis," who is a prig and Venus' perfect foil ("Iconographical Interpretation," 145, and Huntington Brown, in "Venus and Adonis: The Action the narrator, and the Critics," Mich A, 2, No. 2 (1969), 76, argues that "the far more interesting character and true protagonist is Venus".

<sup>13</sup>Cf. William E. Sheidley, "'Unless it be a boar': Love and Wisdom in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis," MLQ, 35 (1974), 8-9, who says that she offers the reader the woman of his dreams.

<sup>14</sup>A. C. Hamilton, "Venus and Adonis," SEL, 1 (1961), 9, notes the change in Venus and in the tone of the poem after Adonis' departure, as does Lucy Gent, "Venus and Adonis: The Triumph of Rhetoric," MLR, 69 (1974), 728.

<sup>15</sup>Why Venus should be equated in this way with the boar is an interpretive crux; Sheidley, "'Unless it be a boar'," offers a persuasive explanation.

<sup>16</sup>The poem has been read by a number of critics as essentially comic: see Rufus Putney, "Venus and Adonis: Amour with Humour," PQ, 20 (1941),

533-48, and "Venus Agonistes," UCSLL, 4 (1953), 52-66; Cantelupe, "An Iconographical Interpretation," and Gordon Ross Smith, "Mannerist Frivolity and Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis," HSL, 3 (1971), 1-11.

<sup>17</sup>Robert Miller, in "The Myth of Mars' Hot Minion in Venus and Adonis," ELH, 26 (1959), 477, argues that Venus' allusion to her affair with Mars, which omits the dénouement and the traditional moralization, "simply turns the accepted moral order upside down."

<sup>18</sup>The horses have been variously interpreted; there is general agreement as to the relevance of the charioteer in Plato's Phaedrus-- see Don Cameron Allen, "On Venus and Adonis" in Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1959), 106-8; but whereas Robert P. Miller, "Venus, Adonis, and the Horses," ELH, 19 (1952), 249-64, argues that the interlude indicates Adonis is right in refusing Venus' advances, Lever, "Venus and the Second Chance," 83, asserts that it suggests he is wrong: the horses provide a "living object-lesson" of the meaning of Venus Genetrix and of the need for a rider, "a human lover, his reason directing but not harshly curbing his desires". Sheidley agrees, finding that the relationship between the horses establishes "a standard by which the defects in the relationship [between Venus and Adonis] may be . . . measured and defined" ("Unless it be a boar'," 9, 14).

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Miller, "Venus, Adonis and the Horses," 260.

<sup>20</sup>This inversion is put in its literary context by Frank Kermode in "The Banquet of Sense," in Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne: Renaissance

Essays (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 84-115; see especially pp. 97-8. For the theory that Venus in fact moves up the ladder of the senses from lust to true love, see Heather Asals, "Venus and Adonis: The Education of a Goddess," SEL, 13 (1973), 31-51.

<sup>21</sup>Huntington Brown, who finds Venus a magnetic and fascinating character worthy of comparison with Shakespeare's dramatic heroines, notes that "she is given a soaring imagination" ("Venus and Adonis: The action, the Narrator and the Critics," 80-1). Lucy Gent ("The Triumph of Rhetoric") argues that Venus is characterized throughout by her hyperbole, the extravagance of which raises the question of the relationship between eloquence and truth, desire and reality (726-8).

<sup>22</sup>Since Shakespeare presents Venus herself in terms of the boar, and since the traditional myth implies that it is Adonis' subjection to her which makes him vulnerable to the death which overtakes him, it is difficult to see why this Adonis, who rejects Venus so emphatically, is killed in any case; see Hamilton, "Venus and Adonis," 7, 13. A number of critics have suggested that Shakespeare means his death to be the result of his refusal: see, for example, Lever, 85--"Having refused the little death, he will suffer the great one"; Muir, 8--"Beauty which refuses Love is doomed to destruction and decay"; Asals, 45--"Love is the better Death"; and Sheidley, 13--"to sublimate sexual aggressiveness entirely is to invite its resurgence in a deadly form". But Adonis has to die: the fact that Shakespeare is retelling a myth the end of which is universally known allows him to preserve to the end the ambiguity

which is the main impression of this poem. Whatever decision he makes, Adonis' "dilemma is simply that he is Adonis" (Hamilton, 13).

<sup>23</sup>Hamilton points to this reading, giving the figures their full mythological dimension: "Venus and Adonis," 13.

<sup>24</sup>Don Cameron Allen, in "Some Observations on The Rape of Lucrece," ShS, 15 (1962), 91, says that the poems are "no more in opposition with one another than are 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' . . . [they] are continuations rather than contradictions".

<sup>25</sup>For treatments of the poem which emphasize its political aspect, see Franklin M. Dickey, "Lucrece as exemplum," in Not Wisely But Too Well: Shakespeare's Love Tragedies (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library P., 1957), 53-62, and G. W. Majors, "Shakespeare's First Brutus: His Role in Lucrece," MLQ, 35 (1974), 339-51, who suggests that the sudden presence of the pragmatic and morally ambiguous Brutus at the end of the poem constitutes "a realistic epilogue to an idealistic fable" (350) and puts Lucrece's story into a political setting in which "heroic virtues appear absurd" (349).

<sup>26</sup>In his discussion of the ambiguity of Spenser's hermaphrodite at the end of Book III of The Faerie Queene, Donald Cheney suggests that Shakespeare may even have drawn inspiration from Spenser's concept of chastity, Lucrece's complaint being "rooted in the poet's concern with the mystery of selfhood as expressed in the paradox of chastity which is recognized as hovering between subjective and objective poles, being

wholly neither in the eye of the beholder nor in that of the possessor"; see "Spenser's Hermaphrodite and the 1590 Faerie Queene," PMLA, 87 (1972), 199. Although I would not argue for direct influence, I agree that "the mystery of selfhood" is both poets' subject, and that "the eye of the beholder" is what helps define it.

<sup>27</sup>See Don Cameron Allen, "Some Observations on The Rape of Lucrece," 92-3, for a discussion of the common metaphor of love as a siege.

<sup>28</sup>Sam Hynes, "The Rape of Tarquin," SQ, 10 (1959), 451-3, comments on the passage where the seige metaphor is turned against Tarquin (ll. 715-28), and suggests that "Lucrece becomes a symbol of the spiritual quality in Tarquin which his deed violates . . . The significant rape is the rape of Tarquin's soul" (453).

<sup>29</sup>Harold R. Walley, in "The Rape of Lucrece and Shakespearean Tragedy," PMLA, 76 (1961), 480-7, finds in the poem many of the germs of the later tragedies; he sees Shakespeare in the process of organizing his thinking about what constitutes a tragic character and a tragic action.

<sup>30</sup>In his treatment of Chapman's "Ovids Banquet of Sense," as a 'perspective poem', Raymond Waddington reviews the fascination with perspective in the 1590's; see The Mind's Empire: Myth and Form in George Chapman's Narrative Poems (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. P., 1974), 116-27. Kermode in "The Banquet of Sense," Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, 114, compares this description with that of the king's hand holding the sceptre in Chapman's poem, and suggests that "it amounts to a claim on the part of the poet that he is able, as well as the painter, to suggest more than

he describes." However, it seems to me not so much an assertion of the artist's power as a challenge to the powers of perception of those viewers who must construct "a whole to be imagined" from the gestures with which Lucrece presents them.

<sup>31</sup>Allen, in "Observations," 90, documents the contemporary debate over Lucrece's virtue which originated with Augustine's condemnation of her pride.

<sup>32</sup>The Complete Works of John Lyly, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1902), Vol. 1, 211.

<sup>33</sup>Tyndale, The Obedyence of a Chrysten Man, 1561, fol. 39<sup>R</sup>; cited by J. W. Lever in his introduction to Measure for Measure. The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1965), lxxx-lxxxi.

<sup>34</sup>Antonio de Guevara, The Diall of Princes (London, 1557; Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1968), Book 2, Ch. 5, fol. 85<sup>V</sup>-fol. 87<sup>R</sup>.

<sup>35</sup>Orlando Furioso 29.8-29.

<sup>36</sup>Rosemond Tuve has documented the availability of Boccaccio to the English Renaissance poet, arguing in fact that Spenser's comparison of Radigund to Iole instead of to Omphale probably derives from Boccaccio's treatment of Iole; see "Spenser's Reading: the De Claris Mulieribus," SP, 33 (1936), 147-65.

<sup>37</sup>Harry Berger Jr., "'Faerie Queene' Book III: A General Description," Criticism, 11 (1969), 240, 238.



<sup>38</sup>"The Literal Britomart," MLQ, 28 (1967), 428.

<sup>39</sup>See The Necessarie, Fit and Convenient Education of a Yong Gentlewoman (London: 1598; Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969), G4(3)<sup>R</sup>, which suggests that the young lady read her Boccaccio and her Plutarch along with her Bible.

<sup>40</sup>Concerning Famous Women, trans. Guido A. Guarino (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers U. P., 1963), 80.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 188. Heather Asals, in "Venus and Adonis: The Education of a Goddess," 42-3, documents from Ficino the attractiveness of the woman who has the vigour of a masculine nature.

<sup>42</sup>An Apology for Poetry, or The Defence of Poesy, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson, 1967), 107.

<sup>43</sup>London, 1555; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969; G4R, C4V.

<sup>44</sup>Orlando Furioso, 43.15-16.

<sup>45</sup>A Discourse of Civill Life, ed. Thomas E. Wright (Northridge, Calif.: San Fernando State College P., 1970), 153.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>47</sup>Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey P., 1957), 100.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 100n.

<sup>49</sup>Works, ed. Bond, Vol. 1, 224.

<sup>50</sup>James Aske, Elizabetha Triumphans (London, 1588; Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969), 24.

<sup>51</sup>James Nohrnberg, The Analogy of The Faerie Queene (Princeton U. P., 1976), 452.

<sup>52</sup>Harry Berger Jr., The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II Of Spenser's Faerie Queene (New Haven, Conn.: Yale U. P., 1957; rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1967), 23.

<sup>53</sup>Isabel G. MacCaffrey, Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination (Princeton U. P., 1976), 109.

<sup>54</sup>A. Bartlett Giamatti, Play of Double Senses: Spenser's Faerie Queene (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 101.

## CHAPTER II: BELPHOEBE: CHASTITY AND STASIS

<sup>1</sup> See for example Kenneth Charlton, Education in Renaissance England (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), esp. "Origins: The Renaissance Debate in Italy."

<sup>2</sup> The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo; Books 1-3, trans. George Pettie, 1581; Book 4 trans. Bartholomew Young, 1586; intro. Sir Edward Sullivan (London: Constable, New York; A. Knopf, 1925), Vol. 1, p. 56. Guazzo is mentioned by Lodowick Bryskett in A Discourse of Civill Life, ed. Thomas E. Wright (Northridge, Calif.: San Fernando State College Press, 1970), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. 1, 49.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. 1, 51.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lyly, Euphues: "it is the disposition of the thought that altereth the nature of the thing. The sun shineth upon the dunghill and is not corrupted; the diamond lieth in the fire and is not consumed; the crystal toucheth the toad and is not poisoned; the bird Trochilus liveth by the mouth of the crocodile and is not spoiled; a perfect wit is never bewitched with lewdness neither enticed by lasciviousness"-- in The Complete Works of John Lyly, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 10, 1902), Vol. 1, 193. The emphasis in these examples seems not on temptation in any real sense--it is not that such minds "see, and know, and yet abstain"--but rather on a kind of innate immunity which is simply

a natural aspect of the "perfect wit"--the exemplary demonstration of this immunity, however, requires looking on the dunghill, touching the toad; it cannot be manifested except in terms of social contact.

<sup>6</sup> The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's Faerie Queene (New Haven, Conn.: Yale U. P., 1957), 117-60.

<sup>7</sup> Berger comments on the atmosphere of holiday or comedy; see pp. 135-59.

<sup>8</sup> See also the comments of Kathleen Williams, in Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 43-57, who explains that Guyon himself never comes into contact with Belphoebe because his is a virtue which consists in avoiding the kind of heroic honour which she represents: "Belphoebe is no help to temperance, but she is a creation of those needs [to aspire, to idealize] which temperance has to take into account" (52). Williams finds something slightly sinister in Belphoebe's inhuman perfection and the worship which it evokes (102). Isabel MacCaffrey, in Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. P., 1976), identifying Belphoebe as the embodiment of "the human yearning for an ideal realm which can be experienced only in the imagination" (102), explains that her "pristine mysteriousness" (94) is something which Guyon cannot see because he lacks imagination (97).

<sup>9</sup>The incident recalls the many entertainments arranged for Elizabeth which involved pastoral allegorical figures who leaped out of the bushes before her; its mood is very like that created, for example, in the Entertainment at Bisham, where a wild man recounts the awe of the forest gods at hearing "Musicke in the Woods"--"I followed this sound, as enchanted . . . I asked, who passed that way? what he or shee? none durst answere, or would vouchsafe, but passionate Eccho, who saide Shee . . ." (Lyly, Works, ed. Bond, Vol. 1, 472). Spenser's feeling for Virgil's "o dea certe"--echoed also in the emblem to the April eclogue of The Shepheardes Calender--may owe something to such contemporary entertainments; the emphasis on startling sound is not drawn from the Aeneid, but does recall the "Musicke in the woods" which was often an aspect of such interludes.

<sup>10</sup>For an analysis of the fusion in her of the qualities of Venus and Diana, see Kathleen Williams, World of Glass, 50, as well as her article "Venus and Diana: Some Uses of Myth in The Faerie Queene," ELH, 28 (1961), 101-20. Edgar Wind discusses the association of Venus and Diana in Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 73-9. Although his main subject is the historical allegory of the Belpheobe-Timias episode, H. M. English, Jr., in "Spenser's Accommodation of Allegory to History in the Story of Timias and Belpheobe," JEGP, 59 (1960), 417-29, also deals intelligently with Belpheobe's dual nature by discussing Elizabeth's double role as Virgin Queen and Queen of Love: he emphasizes--correctly, I think--its essential positiveness. James Nohrnberg, discussing the Venus armata figure in connection with both

Belpheobe and Britomart, in The Analogy of The Faerie Queene (Princeton U. P., 1976), 453-61, notes that "Giraldus quotes Quintilian to the effect that the armed or Lacedaemonian Venus . . . provided a stock subject for the student of rhetoric to practise on. The Greek Anthology has a collection of examples" (454). This fact helps account for the sense of high artifice which is evoked by Belpheobe, the feeling that she is a kind of rhetorical topos incarnate.

<sup>11</sup>Ludovico, Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, Translated into English Heroical Verse by Sir John Harington, 1591; ed. Robert McNulty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 7. 14, p. 82. Cf. Tottel's Miscellany, no. 260: "What shall I say for that is not in sight?/ The hidden parts I iudge them by the rest".

<sup>12</sup>The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition. The Minor Poems, ed. E. Greenlaw, C. G. Osgood, F. M. Padelford and R. Heffner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), Vol. 8, p. 201.

<sup>13</sup>The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1965), ll. 40, 74, p. 17-8.

<sup>13a</sup>Spenser's Image of Nature, ll. 2.

<sup>14</sup>The Poems, ed. Millar MacLure (London: Methuen, 1968), 1.247, p. 17; 2.85, p. 30 and 2.77, p. 30.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 5.389, p. 88.

<sup>16</sup>The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1971), 17.

- <sup>17</sup> Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, 118, 120.
- <sup>18</sup> Lyly, "Epistle Dedicatory to William West," in Works, ed. Bond, Vol. 1, p. 179.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, 462. Belphoebe invites comparison with the "loose" character in Book II. Phaedria is the obvious example, with her "light behaviour, and loose dalliance" (2.6.8.1), but the figure whose nature is actually suggested by loose clothing is the much more sinister Maleger, "a thing completely loosened and discomposed, riding the wind like a ghost with unbound grave-clothes"--see James Carscallen, "The Goodly Frame of Temperance: The Metaphor of Cosmos in The Faerie Queene, Book II," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), 360. Like Belphoebe, Maleger is a hunter armed with bow and arrow, who causes wounds which cannot be healed by "salve . . . ne medicine" (2.11.21.8).
- <sup>20</sup> On the legs-as-pillars topos and its associations of virtue, see Fowler on the arithmological stanza, in Spenser and the Numbers of Time (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 265n.
- <sup>21</sup> Song of Solomon 5:15: "His legs are as pillars set upon sockets of fine gold."
- <sup>22</sup> Spenser's Image of Nature, 113-4.
- <sup>23</sup> The Allegorical Temper, 120-32.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. Merritt Y. Hughes, "Virgilian Allegory in The Faerie Queene,"

PMLA, 44 (1929), 698, and Thomas P. Roche, The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" (Princeton U. P., 1964), 100.

25 Cf. Kathleen Williams: "She is a good deal too good for Braggadocchio, but she is rather too good for anybody" (World of Glass, 51); I do not agree, however, with her emphasis on the sinister aspect of this perfection.

26 Civile Conversation, Vol. 1, p. 30.

27 The Kindly Flame, 139.

28 The Book of the Courtier; from the Italian of Count Baldassare Castiglione: Done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby, 1561, intro. Walter Raleigh (London: David Nutt, 1900), 3.5, p. 217.

29 The Compleat Woman (London, 1639; Amsterdam, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969), 58-9.

30 The similarity between Belphoebe's rose and the flower of chastity has also been noted by Isabel MacGaffrey (Anatomy of Imagination, 349) and Humphrey Tonkin, Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of "The Faerie Queene" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 21.

31 "Fairy Tale, Fortune, and Boethian Wonder: Rhetorical Structure in Book VI of The Faerie Queene," UTQ, 44 (1974-75), 141-65.

32 Positions whêreïn those primitive circumstances be examined, which are necessarie for the training vp of children (London, 1581:



Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971), 181. There might possibly be some association in the ordinary reader's mind between herb lore and Diana herself, for there is an herb called artemesia: "whether the title thereof sprang from ἀρτεμίσ, Diana hir selfe, or from the renowned Queene of Caria, which disclosed the vse thereof vnto posteritie", is not known, see John Gerard, The Herball or Generall Historie of Plants, (London, 1597; Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1974), Vol. 1, "To the ...reader," CIV.

<sup>33</sup> Commenting on the curing of Serena's wound in Book VI, J. C. Maxwell in "The Truancy of Calidore," ELH, 19 (1952), 148, says that "the hermit suddenly recommends spiritual remedies for what has up to this point been on the level of the narrative a purely physical injury."

<sup>34</sup> See Cheney: "Her concern for her rose qua rose . . . is an index of her invulnerability to the arrows of love: for her the rose is a rose, not a euphemism" (Spenser's Image of Nature, 102 ). See also Alpers, The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton U. P., 1967), 392n: "Once the flower becomes explicitly metaphoric it acquires new scope and energy as an image of value".

<sup>35</sup> Critics interpret the rose in terms of their reading of Belphoebe as a whole: to Williams it "sums up rather accurately her behaviour as the inaccessible ideal of love poetry, her bestowing and withdrawing of favour" (World of Glass, 101); Hamilton, commenting on the "untranslatable" quality of the metaphor, finds it "an emblem of human nature in its state of innocence" and points out its relevance for the next canto, "where we see all life in the image of the flower"; The Structure of Allegory

in The Faerie Queene (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1961), 215; Roche associates it both with the Roman de la Rose and with the Rosa mystica of the Virgin Mary, and sees in its opening-out a progression "from the rose symbolizing physical virginity to the rose of spiritual virginity and spiritual love" (The Kindly Flame, 140).

<sup>36</sup> Berger sees Chrysogone and the sun as "the too helpless feminine and the potent masculine principles," as constituting a too-simple polarization which must be revised and complicated in order to reflect the real human psyche; he notes that Chrysogone's mother is Amphisa, which means "undifferentiated" (The Allegorical Temper, 254-5).

<sup>37</sup> On the meaning of the encounter between the goddesses, see Lewis, 342-3; Williams, 100; Roche, 113-16.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Kathleen Williams, "Venus and Diana", 216; Nohrnberg, The Analogy of The Faerie Queene, 461-70; and Dwight J. Sims, "The Syncretic Myth of Venus in Spenser's Legend of Chastity," SP, 71 (1974), 427-50.

<sup>39</sup> "'Faerie Queene' Book III: A General Description," Criticism 11 (1969), 234-61.

<sup>40</sup> E.g., H. M. English, Jr., "Spenser's Accommodation of Allegory to History in the Story of Timias and Belphoebe," JEGP, 59 (1960), 417-29; for dissenting views, see Allan H. Gilbert, "Belphoebe's Misdemeanor of Timias," FMLA, 62 (1947), 627-34, and Charles H. Green, "Sir John Salisbury as Spenser's Timias," TSE, 31 (1952), 26-34.

<sup>41</sup> It has been compared to the twin doves which lead Aeneas to the golden bough; see Merritt Hughes, "Virgilian Allegory", 698; and to the dove in the Old French romance of Violette; see Clara Crane, "A Source for Spenser's Story of Timias and Belphoebe," PMLA, 43(1928), 635-44; probably it has no single source.

<sup>42</sup> The ruby heart may have historical significance: there is evidence that Arthur Throckmorton planned to present the Queen with a heart-shaped ruby, presumably to soften her displeasure over his sister's marriage to Raleigh; see Jeanie R. Brink, "The Masque of the Nine Muses: Sir John Davies' Unpublished 'Epithalamion' and the 'Belphoebe-Ruby' Episode in The Faerie Queene," RES, N.S., 23 (1972), 445-57.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Fletcher, who discussing the 'labyrinth' archetype observes that "Spenser associates the state of wandering with the idea of blank extension--words that typically accompany wandering are 'wide', 'deep', 'long', and 'endless' . . . To wander is to live in a state of continuous becoming" (The Prophetic Moment, 28; italics mine).

## CHAPTER III: BRITOMART IN BOOK III: MAGIC AND METAPHOR

<sup>1</sup> Spenser's Allegory of Justice in Book Five of the Faerie Queene (Princeton U. P., 1968), 163.

<sup>2</sup> Play of Double Senses: Spenser's Faerie Queene (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 68. Cf. Williams, who observes that since love has to be worked out by trial and error, "The structure is necessarily more complex, and since it depends less on narrative progression than on a pattern of relationships it is revealed gradually" (World of Glass, 85).

<sup>3</sup> See Fletcher's analysis of the stanzas as miniature memory houses, perfect sacred spaces," and of their prosody, "the enjambement [which] reveals the poet's involvement in his own literary powers" (The Prophetic Moment, 130-31). Gianatti, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John Bender's fine description in Spenser and Literary Pictorialism (Princeton U. P., 1972) of the special quality of Spenser's imagery: answering Rosemary Freeman's objection that Spenser belabours the whiteness of the swans in the Prothalamion, he observes:

For Spenser, to perceive the kind of whiteness for which he is trying to create a poetic image is simultaneously to perceive extraordinary virtue . . . The point is not just to establish that the birds are white, but that the full comprehension of their whiteness requires special perceptual and metaphysical categories. (91)

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Padelford, "The Allegory of Chastity in The Faerie Queene," SP, 21 (1924), 371: "That Britomart excells Guyon in arms

serves to point to the superiority of this Christian type of continence to its pagan counterpart."

<sup>6</sup>Lesley Brill, in "Battles That Need Not Be Fought: The Faerie Queene, III, i," ELR, 5 (1975), 198-211, also argues that the canto's meaning depends on the relationship between the Malecasta episode and the two encounters which precede it, though her conclusions about the relationship are quite different from mine.

<sup>7</sup>Spenser's Image of Nature, 87.

<sup>8</sup>The Allegory of Love (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1936), 327.

<sup>9</sup>Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1968) cites a tradition of distinguishing the more placid love of Venus from the restive frenzy inspired by Cupid; he cites Plotinus, De Amore. Hamilton's comment is apposite: "Venus appears according to man's inner condition: to the intemperate she appears as the lustfull Acrasia; to married lovers she appears as that hermaphrodite union of male and female; to the royal Britomart she appears as Isis with Osiris beneath her feet;" see The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 155:

<sup>10</sup>The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton U.P., 1967), 375.

<sup>11</sup>Jonathan Culler, quoting Merleau-Ponty--"Il ya a germination de ce qui va avoir été compris"--in Structuralist Poetics (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 92.

<sup>12</sup>Nohrnberg observes that "Romance characterizes chastity dialectically": in the story of Tristan and Iseult, the adulterous Iseult is doubled in the chaste Iseult, as Florimell is doubled in The Faerie Queene. Britomart is good chastity, Malecasta, as her name suggests, "bad chastity" (The Analogy of The Faerie Queene, 434).

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Roche: "With the wound comes a realization that love is something other than an interior passion. Her encounter at Castle Joyous forces her to an awareness of love in others and of herself as a love object"; see The Kindly Flame (Princeton U. P., 1964), 70.

<sup>14</sup>Fowler suggests that since it is Gardante who wounds Britomart, Spenser is possibly suggesting that "she was especially subject to temptations of the eyes", and observes that "Cupid chose to hit her with the arrow while she was looking at Artegall in the magic mirror". These suggestions, which Fowler does not expand upon, seem relevant to my argument that chastity is associated in a special way with perception. See "Six Knights at Castle Joyous," SP, 55 (1959), 598.

<sup>15</sup>Berger sees Book III as a whole as dealing with a stage in human development which is primitive, both historically and psychoculturally, with the "early pre-courtship phase" of human sexual development, in which "opposites are not conceived as genuine others standing over against the self, but as objects which exist to threaten or gratify the self. The elemental or primitive consciousness substitutes an image--based on need and desire--for the real object, and tries then to possess or destroy that object, or to assimilate it by negating its otherness and reducing

it to the desired image"; see his "'Faerie Queene' Book III: A General Description," Criticism, 11 (1969), 237.

<sup>16</sup>While I do not think that there is much theoretical justification for Nohrnberg's somewhat arbitrary application of Eriksonian stages of development to the six books of The Faerie Queene, the scheme leads him to some valid generalizations about Spenser's treatment of chastity-- for example, that it involves the attainment of sexual identity ("the rather confused attractions in Spenser's opening canto do suggest the theme of sorting out the sexual identity of the heroines," 448); that is "pre-eminently a virtue of self-realization" (438), that it is characterized by the development of initiative (437) and that one of the chief threats to chastity is "perverse or paralyzing attachments" (438; for example, Marinell, who may be understood as "a specious kind of chastity", 431). On the other hand, when, in interpreting chastity as the successful fulfilment of Freud's third (genital) phase, he emphasizes the necessity of overcoming the incestuous attachment to the parent of the opposite sex (446) and makes Merlin (443), Busirane (450) and the Foster (i.e. foster-parent) who chases Florimell (447) into father-figures, his argument becomes strained. The scheme does allow him to emphasize--correctly, I think--the energetic and positive nature of Britomart's irascibility.

<sup>17</sup> Isabel MacCaffrey discusses the mirror-image in some detail in the context of her general argument about the relationship between art and perception in The Faerie Queen; see "Britomart, History and Prophecy" in Spenser's Allegory; The Anatomy of Imagination (Princeton U.P.,

1976), 291-313. She equates the mirror image of Artegall primarily with "the world of the imagination" in a more general way than I do, though referring once to the "projection of self" involved in Britomart's vision (298).

18 The phrase might also evoke the typic image of Venus looking at herself in a mirror; as Fowler notes in identifying Britomart as "love", she is "first inspired to enter on her perilous enterprise by a vision of Artégall granted to her as she views herself--Venus' classic stance--in a looking-glass"; see Spenser and the Numbers of Time (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 124.

19 That lovers "mirror" one another is a Neoplatonic commonplace, for "loue is not generate in the louer, but by symetrie, which the thing beloued hath with the louer"; it arises from "a secret conformitie of Nature, which the louer hath towards the thing beloued" (Annibale Romei, The Courtiers Academie, London, 1598; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969; 27, 34). In his Hymne in Honour of Beautie Spenser suggests that

in your choice of Loues, this well aduize,  
That likest to your selues ye them select.

For Loue is a celestiall harmonie,  
Of likoly harts composed of starres concent

[in] those whom heauen did at first ordaine,  
And made out of one mould the more t'agree.

(190-207)

In the Hymnes Spenser uses the image of the mirror in an orthodox Neoplatonic way: the lovers' mental image, inspired by his passion, becomes



the "mirroure of . . . heauenly light" ("An Hymne in Honour of Loue," 186); beautiful women are "liuely images of heauens light" and ought to reflect its love. "Like as two mirrours by opposed reflexion,/ Doe both expresse the faces first impression"--an illogical comparison ("An Hymne in Honour of Beautie," 163, 181). His use of Merlin's globe as both mirror and window is, then, a more critical treatment of this familiar idea. Paradoxically, if lovers are alike the beloved is unique, for since each individual is subtly different from all others, his "other half" is different also and is destined for him alone. Since the stars infuse "into man's bodie, a peculiar and particular temperature, by which euery man is in some thing different from another," it follows that "the beauty which is apt too rauish the minde of one, scarcely toucheth another" (The Courtiers Academie, 36).

<sup>20</sup> Josephine Bennett asserts that Spenser identifies Artegall with Leicester in Books III and IV; she argues that he is named after Arthgall, the first Earl of Warwick, and that the detail of the couchant hound is taken from the historic crest of the earldom of Warwick. See The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene" (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1942), 84-5.

<sup>21</sup> See Lawrence Stone, "Marriage and the Family," in The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641 (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1965), 589-671.

<sup>22</sup> Nohrnberg discusses this simile in terms of his emphasis on chastity as the attainment of mature sexuality (which involves "replacing one's

own parent", 445): "Britomart's love follows upon her submitting to the invasion of her mind by the idea of another; and it is followed by her submitting to the acceptable pain of pregnancy and labour . . . The mother of the idea of the beloved, Britomart inevitably becomes the idea--of fore-conceit--of a loving mother" (439).

<sup>23</sup>The source of both the Malecasta episode and this speech about bestiality seems to be Ariosto's account of the infatuation of Fiordispina with Bradamant (Orlando Furioso, 25 ). Lamenting that her love can have no fulfilment, Fiordispina contrasts her unhappy fate with that of Semiramis, Myrrha and Pasiphaë (25:36-7). Fortunately her fears prove to be unfounded, for Bradamant has a twin brother, Ricciardetto who arrives to fulfil her desires. As Alpers says, "Both the fact that three women are named (two of whom occur in both passages) and the point about unattainable love make this closer to Spenser than the passage in the pseudo-Virgilian Ciris, lines 237-249, that is the source of the whole episode . . . There the nurse mentions only Myrrha, and the love in question is merely dishonorable, not sexually unnatural or impossible" (The Poetry of The Faerie Queene, 182n). In adapting the episode, then, Spenser has split Fiordispina into three characters: elements of her story turn up in Malecasta, who falls in love with a woman disguised as a man; in Glauce, who initiates the ideas of incest and bestiality; and in Britomart, who replies that such perversions at least offer fulfilment. This splitting offers some support to my contention that Malecasta is presented as Britomart's demonic double. It is clear why Spenser must put the allusions to Myrrha and Pasiphaë into the mouth of Glauce; as Mohrberg

suggests, the function in romance of this kind of nurse-confidante is to displace the salacious aspect of the virginal heroine's sexual anticipation and so preserve her innocence (The Analogy of The Faerie Queene, 431). By making a soliloquy into a dramatic dialogue, Spenser is able to do this and at the same time suggest Britomart's forthright sexuality. In Ariosto, Fiordispina is saved by the happy existence of a twin brother; Nohrnberg records a version of the story of Narcissus in which he is in love with his twin sister (432-3). While it is unlikely that Spenser's connection of Britomart with both Fiordispina and Narcissus is motivated in any way by their common association with twins, it is true that Spenser's version of the story has no such blurred lines of demarcation: Artegall, although she sees him in a mirror, is more clearly separate from Britomart than Narcissus from his twin or Bradamant from hers (though not than Fiordispina from Ricciardetto). The question of likeness and unlikeness is of course the basis of the sexual taboos in question: incest is proscribed because the pair are too closely connected, bestiality because they are too different.

<sup>24</sup> E. B. Fowler suggests that the courtiers come out of the medieval courts of love, and refers to the Roman de la Rose (Spenser and the Courts of Love, 92-3). Allan H. Gilbert, in "The Ladder of Lechery, The Faerie Queene, III, i, 45", MLN, 56 (1941), 594-97, associates them with the traditional series of acts beginning with the eye and leading to lechery; James Hutton in "Spenser and the 'Cinq Points en Amours'", MLN, 57 (1942), 657-61, argues for a medieval French tradition associating the five senses with their increasing danger to chastity; A. D. S. Fowler, in "Six

Knights at Castle Joyous", SP, 56 (1959): 583-89, notes that the six techniques of courting indicated by the knights' names are used by both Malecasta and Malbecco, and concludes (with E. B. Fowler) that Spenser is satirizing the adultery associated with courtly love. Mohnberg cites additional sources, 471.

25 The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene, 210.

26 I have noted Ariosto's *Fiordispina* as the source of her remark (see note 23). Paul Alpers emphasizes the non-dramatic nature of Spenser's poetry, but here, by assigning a single speech of Ariosto to two different characters, Spenser has succeeded in individualizing both of them in a rather dramatic way: he "deconventionalizes" the mythological allusion so that the fact that they occur to Glauce becomes a comic indication of the way her mind works. There very luridness is out of line with the nurse's own native sanity in regard to sexual matters (she is impatient, for example, with Britomart's making a "monster" of her mind, 3.2.40.2). Like her sentimentality, her Ovidian suggestion is felt as a kind of literary overlay on a sensible down-to-earth nature.

27 For a fuller analysis of the limitedness of its triumphs, see Berger, "The Structure of Merlin's Chronicle in The Faerie Queene III (iii)," SEL, 9 (1969), 39-51.

<sup>28</sup>Berger argues that Spenser treats Merlin ironically, as "a Mage of early legend" in order to associate him with the primitive; that in his entanglement with the Lady of the Lake Merlin is a victim of the 'historical' phase of Eros to which he belongs". Spenser distinguishes clearly, he says, between "his own revised versions of the myth and . . . the antique model, which stands before it in caricature form". See "'Faerie Queene' Book III: A General Description?" Criticism, 11 (1969), 246-48; also "Two Spenserian Retrospects: The Antique Temple of Venus and the Primitive Marriage of Rivers," TSLL, 10 (1968), 25, where he links Merlin with Proteus, Nereus and the Venus of the Temple as "the sophisticated poet's examples of 'early' responses", and refers to Spenser's "burlesque treatment of Merlin and Proteus--who emerge less as archetypes from the depths than as refugees from the Sunday comics". While I agree that we are intended to register the episode with the Lady of the Lake, and the two kinds of magic in which Merlin is involved, I feel that in his search for primitive types Berger very much overstates Spenser's depreciation of him, transforming a subtle equilibrium of feeling into a crude antithesis.

Fletcher in his discussion of the "Galfridian Matrix" of The Faerie Queene, puts the question into a slightly different perspective. He suggests the possibility of irony in the Arthurian material, which, he says, "was not a simple, happy image of Augustan peace. On the contrary, a profound disharmony troubled the stabilizing order of the Round Table, since to serve the kind and one's peers would be to disserve the lady". He observes that "The only area where Merlin lacks complete second sight

is in the realm of love and chivalric service, where Arthurian lore presents a notably grim story" (The Prophetic Moment, 109, 119).

29 I am emphasizing the psychological meaning of the armour; it has of course historical significance as well, "As a Briton maid dressed in the armor of a Saxon maid (especially a Saxon maid who names her people), Britomart becomes herself an image or type of the resolution that, as Merlin prophesies, must be the end of centuries of conflict"; Michael O'Connell, "History and the Poet's Golden World: The Epic Catalogues in The Faerie Queene," ELR, 4 (1974), 255. On all levels the chastity Britomart embodies involves an equilibrium of opposites: she is male/female, rose/thorn, Briton/Saxon.

30 In romance the assumption of a disguise usually implies descent into a lower world; cf. Auden on Portia, in "Brothers and Others," in The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 234. The armour Britomart dons is never to be put off in The Faerie Queene, except in the dream at Isis Church.

31 Nohrnberg notes the conventional nature of the three laments, "a certain stock-responsiveness" in them: they seem indulged and perhaps even indulged solipsistically" (The Analogy of The Faerie Queene, 589). William Blissett, in "Florimell and Marinell," SEL, 5 (1965), 87-104, notes that Britomart declains "in operatic style (the passage derives from Tasso; so does grand opera)" and that when Cymoent laments over the fallen Marinell, "the very elaborateness of the repetition . . . makes the feeling unserious" (92, 94).

32 On the destructive effect of Cymoent's affection, see Nohrnberg, 432, 628.

33 Richard Lanham emphatically objects to what he considers the repellent irascibility of "The Literal Britomart," MLQ, 28 (1967), 426-45. But see Blissett: "The most fortunate thing that could have happened to Marinell is his encounter with Britomart, in which false celibacy is overcome by true chastity," and Cheney, who argues that although Britomart is "on one level getting back at the male sex for her own metaphorical wound," she is also "fulfilling a stage in Marinell's destiny which will bring him closer to his union with Florimell"; "Spenser's Hermaphrodite and the 1590 Faerie Queene," FMLA, 87 (1972), 197.

34 Malbecco's selfishness is thus another form of false chastity; see C. S. Lewis, "Edmund Spenser," in Major British Writers, gen. ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1954), Vol. 1, 100n.

35 Upton pointed out that the device is Ovidian; cf. Amores 2.5.17, Heroides 7.75-90 (Var. 3.280). A recent treatment of the Ovidian tone of the episode as a whole is Helen C. Gilde's "Spenser's Hellenore and Some Ovidian Associations," CL, 32 (1971), 233-39. Nohrnberg notes a parallel in Shakespeare: "I pray you do not fall in love with me, / For I am falser than vows made in wine" (As You Like It 3.5.72; Analogy, 602).

36 See for example Rosamond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1947), 22.

37 For Spenser's treatment of the image of the city in The Faerie Queene, see Isabel Rathborne, The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland (New York:

Columbia U. P., 1937), Chapter 1.

<sup>38</sup> For still other parallels, see Nohrnberg, 471.

<sup>39</sup> The Poetry of The Faerie Queene, 399.

<sup>40</sup> As Lewis was the first to observe, Allegory of Love, 341; see Nelson, 230; Williams, 113; Berger, "Busirane and the War Between the Sexes: An Interpretation of The Faerie Queene III.xi-xii," ELR, 1 (1971), 99-121.

<sup>41</sup> The Figure of the Poet in the Renaissance Epic (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1965).

<sup>42</sup> In "Proteus Unbound: Some Versions of the Sea God in the Renaissance," in The Disciplines of Criticism, ed. P. Deméts, T. Greene, L. Nelson (Yale U. P., 1968), 437-75; and "Poets and Proteus" in Play of Double Senses.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Millar MacLure, "Nature and Art in The Faerie Queene," in Essential Articles, ed. A. C. Hamilton, 180: "it is a mausoleum".

<sup>44</sup> The interpretation of these words depends to some extent upon the reader's assumption about their source. Roche, for example, asserts that they are "nothing more than the ironic commands of Busyrane" (The Kindly Flame, 86); Alpers makes the same assumption (400); Kathleen Williams, on the other hand, suggesting that the command "sums up the ambiguous lore Amoret has learned and whose consequences fill her with mindless terror" (107) implies that they proceed from Amoret's education in the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus. My analysis proceeds on the assumption that the phrases are not meant to be felt as having a



specific determinate source but are a kind of magical warning about how to handle Busirane and are meant to be obeyed.

<sup>45</sup> Greenlaw in "Britomart at the House of Busirane," SP, 29 (1929), 117-30, relates the ordeal to the Grail castle adventure.

<sup>46</sup> World of Glass, 108.

<sup>47</sup> "Busirane," 74.

<sup>48</sup> The Analogy of the Faerie Queene, 475. Fowler comes to the same general conclusion, emphasizing the symbolism and wind and fire which, he argues, associate the episode with Britomart's Isis dream; see "Spenser's Triumph of Love," in Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry (Cambridge U. P., 1970), 47-58.

<sup>49</sup> He discusses the appropriateness of the masque as a vehicle for his "prophetic moment": "the prophetic moment appears to last forever . . . Spenser (and the Shakespeare of the late romances) may have decided that the best art-form for [it] is the masque or pageant . . . Lewis sought the forming principles of The Faerie Queene in the pageant, which he understood in several ways, common to all of which there was a union of epiphanic fixation and processional flow" (The Prophetic Moment, 52).

<sup>50</sup> The positiveness of the union used to be assumed (cf. Lewis, 332), although the sensuousness of the image was found shocking (Var. 3.303-4), Roche has supplied evidence that the hermaphrodite was a way of symbolizing

the Biblical injunction to be of "one flesh" in marriage (The Kindly Flame, 135-6). Some recent critics however have emphasized its ambiguity. Berger, interpreting Britomart's victory as one of Spenser's premature resolutions, calls it "too complete and easy" (114) and interprets the hermaphrodite as a deliberately facile happy ending which suggests the limitations of the kind of union which abolishes "the pain of separateness by headlong convergence, not by the slowly and painfully won knowledge of self and other" ("Busirane," 120). Nohrnberg is more moderate but notes that "The hermaphrodite symbol is often slightly ironic, as in Shakespeare's Phoenix and the Turtle. In Ovid's vein, the compounded birds were to themselves 'yet either neither,' and for them 'the self was not the same' . . . It is a union in which there is always a threat of extinction" (Analogy, 607-8). Cheney, in "Spenser's Hermaphrodite", considers it an ambiguous symbol with potentially both positive and negative meanings. His conclusions are germane to my argument, for he associates Britomart's isolation with the visual quality of the hermaphrodite emblem: "The spectacle is for Britomart a source of mixed feelings: the language suggests that as the two become one, the one outsider is divided in her own awareness . . . So conspicuous is the emphasis on 'seeing' in this episode that we are made constantly aware of the public nature of the incident. The lovers in their <sup>S</sup>ecstasy become the object of scrutiny, both as an emblem of marriage and as an index of Britomart's divided role" (196).

## CHAPTER IV: BRITMART IN BOOK IV: DIVISION AND UNITY

<sup>1</sup> Kate Warren attributes its weakness to "its utter want of form" (Var. 4.282); Josephine Bennett says that "the structure and subject matter of Book IV strongly suggests that the book was made out of leftovers from the material out of which Book III was hastily constructed" (Evolution, 155). Judith Anderson, in "Whatever Happened to Amoret? The Poet's Role in Book IV of 'The Faerie Queene'," Criticism, 13 (1971), 180-200, attributes what she sees as the relative lack of interest in the narrative surface of the poem to the fact that the poet's relationship to the poem is changing. Rosemond Tuve's exposition of the romance technique of entrelacement implies that such kinds of objections are invalid (Allegorical Imagery, 359-369); see also Roger Sale in "Spenser's Undramatic Poetry" in Elizabethan Poetry, ed. Paul Alpers, who argues, with Tuve, that the order in which the events occur, although they are not causally connected, is important in modifying their meaning and shaping our response to them. The interpretation of Book IV which I attempt is based on this assumption.

<sup>2</sup> Roche explains that Telemond means Perfect World and assumes that it is not an error (Kindly Flame, 16-17). Nohrnberg agrees that a perfect world would be a triplex one (Analogy, 617); see note 21 on the perfection of the number three.

<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Williams notes that "the stories . . . have a greater tendency to merge and the characters to meet," so that the book "is built . . . around a series of meetings or assemblies" (World of Glass, 122).

<sup>4</sup> There is a precedent in Orlando Furioso 3.50 for the brothers who share a life. Upton compares what happens to Pythagorean Metempsychosis (Var. 4.184); John Erskine in "The Virtue of Friendship in The Faerie Queene," PMLA, 30 (1915), 831-850, emphasizing the Renaissance conception of friendship as a relationship between equals, argues that by the assumption of his brothers' two souls, "Triamond was now the spiritual equal of Cambel" so that friendship is possible between them (847). Jefferson B. Fletcher, in "The Legend of Cambel and Triamond," SP, 35 (1938), 195-201, points out the inconsistencies in this argument. Seabury M. Blair, in "The Succession of Lives in Spenser's Three Sons of Agape," MLQ, 2 (1941), 109-14, argues that Spenser is suggesting that friendship outlives death. Roche suggests a theological dimension to the allegory: "the three brothers could become the three worlds of man's soul, in which the defeat of Priamond and Diamond figure the defeat of the vegetative and sensitive souls and the eventual harmony of man with the angelic mind" (Kindly Flame, 30); of Cambina's magic potion, he says, "Christian meanings begin to infiltrate this apparently pagan drug" (26). Nohrnberg essentially agrees with Roche (Analogy, 612-613), but adds as well a number of other suggestions--the brothers could be "three friends acting in concert" (one of the meanings of Geryon, 610), or the "one body" of ecclesiastical fellowship (615).

<sup>5</sup> All I mean by this is that three is associated with Christian mystery (the Trinity), with magic ("Spit thrice upon me . . ."), and with the formulaic structure of fairy-tale (three wishes, three bears, three brothers), whereas four is associated with the nature and human

life: the elements, the humorous, the winds of heaven, the points of the compass, the seasons of the year. For more recondite associations of these numbers, see Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time, 18-33; I believe, however, that their associations in Book IV are relatively accessible.

<sup>6</sup> Nohrnberg points out that the pairing which takes place here fits Jung's description of the "marriage quaternio", "a configuration of two exogamous males, each married to the others sister"; in Jung such pairing-off is interpreted as guaranteeing deliverance from the threat of incest (Analogy, 622). In Chaucer, the "Canacee" mentioned in the "Introduction to the Man of Law's Prologue" is in fact identified as incestuous: the poet will avoid all mention "Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,/ That lovede hir owne brother sinfully." Nohrnberg emphasizes the security of the relationship: "it forms a double bond; one of kin, and one of kind." (623).

<sup>7</sup> Danseath derives the failure of the beauty contest from the defects in Satyrane himself, who as "natural man" overvalues physical beauty (Spenser's Allegory of Justice, 29-30).

<sup>8</sup> For a survey of the theories about friendship from classical times to the Renaissance, with special emphasis on their relevance to drama, see Laurens J. Mills, One Soul in Bodies Twain (Bloomington, Ind.: Principia Press, 1937).

<sup>9</sup> Reader dissatisfaction with this episode has been general. Hamilton finds it rather unsatisfying (Structure, 164). There is some evidence of haste in its composition, for while the narrative itself seems to pair Amyas and Aemylia, the rubric at the beginning of the canto announces that Poena marries Amyas. "If so, Amyas must have ceded his beloved Aemylia to his friend, a not unheard-of procedure in the friendship romance"; but on the other hand "Nothing in the story itself has prepared us to believe that Aemylia will not be reunited with Amyas" (Nohrnberg, 624). Walter F. Staton, Jr., in "Raleigh and the Amyas-Aemylia Episode," SEL, 5 (1965), 105-114, suggests that the episode was intended as a rebuke to Raleigh for the relationship with Elizabeth (also allegorized in the Belphoebe-Timias affair); that Amyas was intended to marry Poena, who was his social equal, but that Spenser concluded the story hastily without bothering to work it out as he had intended.

<sup>10</sup> That friendship is based on similarity is a commonplace in the Renaissance; Euphues declares that "a friend is . . . at all times an other I, in all places ye expresse Image of mine owne person" (Bond, I, 197). See Charles G. Smith, "Sententious Theory in Spenser's Legend of Friendship," ELH, 2 (1935), 171-5, who documents this and other common beliefs about friendship reflected in Book IV. Fowler notes the significance throughout Book IV of the motifs of twinship and of physical likeness (Numbers of Time, 167).

<sup>11</sup> For the use of this tale in English literature of the period, see Louis Sorrieri, Boccaccio's Story of Tito and Gisippo in European Literature (New York, 1937), 145-196.

<sup>12</sup> Berger sees an "evolutionary" impetus in Spenser's thought and emphasizes that figures are "discarded" as they are absorbed into other characters who represent higher and more fully developed stages in the emergence of the psyche or culture; see "The Discarding of Malbecco: Conspicuous Allusion and Critical Exhaustion in The Faerie Queene, III, ix-xi," SP, 66 (1969), 135-154. However, he fails to notice that Scudamour's progress here is an example of the very recapitulation and progress he is interested in, and calls the "narrative sequence as it stands . . . a fragmented and arbitrary collection of episodes"; in "Two Spenserian Retrospects: The Antique Temple of Venus and the Primitive Marriage of Rivers," TSLI, 10 (1968), 13.

<sup>13</sup> Many readers have felt Scudamour's deliverance of Amoret showed culpable boldness; see Hamilton, 154, 167; Williams, 111, 126-7; Heatt "Scudamour's Practice of Maistrye upon Amoret," PMLA, 77 (1962), 509-510; Hough, A Preface to the Faerie Queene (New York, 1963), 175-6; Nelson, 230-231; Berger, "Busirane and the War Between the Sexes," ELR, 1 (1971), 116. Roche on the other hand argues that the whole episode is "a justification of Scudamour's innocence in Amoret's imprisonment by Busyrane and an emblematic exemplum of the theme of discordia concors in a courtship. The canto should not be read as an indictment of Scudamour's too eager masculinity" (Kindly Flame, 129). I agree. The "maistrie" is echoed in

Canto 6, when Artegall becomes the first man to defeat Britomart, a victory which is certainly presented as a positive one for both combatants.

<sup>14</sup> Charles G. Smith in "Sententious Theory in Spenser's Legend of Friendship," ELH, 2 (1935), 176, connects this joining of the rivers with the idea that friends share a soul, although he doesn't make the parallel with the three brothers explicit. In the "July" eclogue of The Shepheardes Calender, the Thames and the Medway are spoken of not as spouses but as brothers (Var. 7.68).

<sup>15</sup> The marriage passage has been recently discussed as the self-conscious example of the poetic process at work: see Berger, "Two Spenserian Retrospects," Michael O'Connell, "History and the Poet's Golden World: The Epic Catalogues in The Faerie Queene," ELR, 4 (1974), 241-267, and Gordon Braden, "riverrun: An Epic Catalogue in The Faerie Queene," ELR, 5 (1975), 25-48, who discusses Spenser's mythopoetic use of names.

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen Williams makes a similar comment about the hermaphroditic Venus: "The concord which the natural universe naturally achieves is not easy for man" (127). Gordon Braden suggests that in liberating Florinell from the sea, Spenser is putting "the various Protean spirits of water . . . very firaly . . . in their place"; he celebrates their rich multiplicity but doesn't present it as a human ideal ("riverrun," 48). Nohrnberg argues that Marinell, in falling in love with a human being, has himself become humanized—"when the match is made, the lovers do not perish; each loses that wild and impersonal nature that in part



defines the elemental spirit"; their union means "the surrender of a generic existence for a personal one" (646). This reading seems to me to account for the feeling of satisfaction and yet anticlimax that accompanies their union.

<sup>17</sup> Roche, 77; Hough, 136.

<sup>18</sup> Alpers, 109-111; Berger, "Busirane," 110; Roger Sale, "Spenser's Undramatic Poetry," in Elizabethan Poetry, 431-432.

<sup>19</sup> The incident on which this episode is based in Bradamant's sojourn in the Castle of Tristram, Orlando Furioso 32.64-100.

<sup>20</sup> Fowler suggests that "a four-stanza modulus of composition is common in Book IV generally" (Numbers of Time, 181n).

<sup>21</sup> Britomart is associated with the number three, not only because she is the heroine of the third book but also because the number was associated with both Minerva and Diana, whose attributes she shares (Fowler, Numbers of Time, 131). Watching the union of Amoret and Scudamour at the end of Book III, she seemed to feel as if she were "one too many"; as Donald Cheney observes, "it is appropriate to the view of chastity developed in Book III--perhaps even a part of its 'threeness'--that we should be left at the end with an awareness that someone is left over . . . a sense of loose ends" ("Spenser's Hermaphrodite," 197). Three is the number, however, not only of magic but of perfection: in Porphyry's Life of Pythagoras, the number denotes "forms' endowed with a beginning, a middle and an 'end'--a perfecting" (Nohrnberg, 616). Nohrnberg notes

that in Books II and III there are "Three symbols for the union of friends and lovers . . . the marriage quaternio, the comity of Triamond and his brothers, and the hermaphrodite" (604). He suggests that Britomart here is a kind of hermaphrodite in action, riddling on her nature as she did in 3.1 (Analogy, 631). He does not add, however, that by means of this riddling she not only exploits her doubleness but also perfects her "threeness", managing things so that this time no one is left over.

<sup>22</sup>Nohrnberg calls this "the epiphany of the triumphant virago" and cites a number of classical and Renaissance prototypes; its recurrence and importance in Britomart's story suggests, he says, her "emergence as a woman out of the shadows of girlhood" (451-452).

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Lyly, Euphues, Vol. 1, 197: "Can any treasure in this transitorie pilgrimage, be of more valewe then a friend? in whose bosome thou maist sleep secure?"; also, "they vsed not onely one boord, but one bedde, one booke . . .". This was a commonplace in "friendship theory": see Smith, "Sententious Theory in Spenser's Legend of Friendship," 189, who assimilates it to the maxim that "Friends goods are common goods," and cites other examples: e.g. Lodge, "neither separated, at boorde, nor seuered at bed"; Painter, "there was betwene them but one harte, one bed, one house, one table, and one purse". Spenser endows the commonplace with significance, since sleeping in security is so problematical throughout Britomart's story, being always associated with sexual threat or sexual security.

<sup>24</sup>MacCaffrey emphasizes the inconclusiveness of the endings in Book IV, the persistent "enfeeblement of structural forms" (Anatomy of Imagination, 336); this canto, however, makes itself felt as an exception to this general rule.

<sup>25</sup>Nohrnberg has pointed out that it is also "halfway between the lovers' respective legends, and also halfway between the symbols of Venus and Adonis, and Isis and Osiris" (629).

<sup>26</sup>This episode is discussed by Roger Sale in "Spenser's Undramatic Poetry", and by Dunseath, <sup>39</sup> who sees it as a fall for Artegall.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Dunseath: "As soon as her feet touch the ground, Britomart literally and metaphorically descends into nature" (178).

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Williams, who describes both the Cambina episode and the story of Amyas and Placidus as "illustrations, not enactments," (125), and points out the vitality here "which is absent in the battle of Cambell and Triamond, ended by Cambina's ritual magic" (129).

<sup>29</sup>Hamilton points to "maistrie" as one of the central themes of Books III, IV and V, but records only the straightforward and not the ironical instances of its use (181-185).

<sup>30</sup>Cf. Hamilton: "Neither triumphs over the other: but love triumphs over both when each yields to the vision of the other's face" (160); but he also says that "Since Artegall submits to woman's beauty and power of his own will, his meeting Britomart is a fall," (183), a

prelude to his fall into Radigund's power, and that Britomart, by defeating Radigund, must restore "the manhood which he had taken from him" in this episode (185). My reading of the episodes emphasizes, rather, the differences between them.

## CHAPTER V: BRIDEMART AND RADIGUND IN BOOK V: ABSTRACTION AND WHOLENESS

<sup>1</sup> Image of Nature, 153; Icons of Justice, 162. Fowler, however, uses numerological evidence to support the association of the period of degeneration described in the Proem with Plato's second cycle of discord and strife (Spenser and the Numbers of Time, 42): his explanation of Spenser's use of the precession of the equinoxes convincingly demonstrates the centrality of the astrological material to the concerns of Book V as a whole (192-3).

<sup>2</sup> Fletcher, approaching the book from a different angle, makes a similar observation: he calls it "a planlike document . . . a blueprint for the historical dimension of the mythology elsewhere in the poem" (Prophetic Moment, 136).

<sup>3</sup> The Allegory of Love, 349.

<sup>4</sup> See Douglas A. Northrop, "Spenser's Defence of Elizabeth", UTQ, 38 (1969), 277-94; James E. Phillips, "Renaissance Concepts of Justice and the Structure of Book V of The Faerie Queene," HLQ, 33 (1970), 105-20; W. Nicholas Knight, "The Narrative Unity of Book V of The Faerie Queene: 'That Part of Justice which is Equity'", RES, N.S., 21 (1970), 267-94.

<sup>5</sup> Artegall's training is comparable to Satyrane's, though the process which seems limited in Satyrane's case is apparently more successful in Artegall's (cf. Dunseath, Spenser's Allegory of Justice, 49-50).

<sup>6</sup> Frye suggests that we dislike allegory because "continuous allegory prescribes the direction of . . . commentary, and so restricts its freedom" (Anatomy of Criticism, 90). In Book V the restriction is more oppressive than in other books of The Faerie Queene.

<sup>7</sup> When Artegall appears in Merlin's magic globe in Book III, his armour is inscribed: "Achilles armes, which Arthegall did win" (3.2.25.6). Kathleen Williams suggests that Artegall's education is an adaptation of the childhood of Achilles, taught justice by Chiron (World of Glass, 158).

<sup>8</sup> Fowler develops such astronomical associations in detail, but does not discuss Chiron. I am referring to the Ptolemaic zodiacal tables which he reproduces (Numbers of Time, 65). According to the Manilian system, also set out by Fowler, the guardian deity of Sagittarius is Diana, another association which could link Chiron with Britomart and with the world of Book V.

<sup>9</sup> In Machiavelli, Chiron is an emblem of effective rule, denoting the correct combination of law and force:

You must know, then, that there are two methods of fighting, one by law, the other by force: the first method is that of men, the second of beasts; but as the first method is often insufficient, one must have recourse to the second.

It is therefore necessary for a prince to know well how to use the beast and the man. This was covertly taught to rulers by ancient writers, who relate how Achilles and many others of these ancient princes were given to Chiron the centaur to be brought up and educated under discipline. The parable of this semi-animal, semi-human teacher is meant to indicate that a prince must know how to use both natures, and that the one without the other is not durable. (The Prince, Ch. 18, trans. Luigi Ricci; cited in Aptekar, Icons of Justice, p. 120.)

In Wither, the centaur represents the balance of soul and body, reason and forcefulness (A Collection of Emblemes, 2.41, p. 103). He carries a serpent (force) in one hand, a bow (reason) in the other. The tone of Wither's language differs from Machiavelli's: his "force" seems to mean persistence and strength of character rather than violence. Homer calls Chiron "the most just of the centaurs" (Iliad 11.832). In his essay "On Venus and Adonis", in Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 100-111, Don Cameron Allen associates Chiron with the hard hunt of heroism: "To the grave end of testing and training heroes, Apollo and his sister Diana, the legend runs, taught hunting to Chiron, who, in turn, imparted the wisdom to a great register of demigods and noblemen". Artegall's mastery over animals might easily be presented in terms of hunting, but the comparison is avoided, for reasons which will become clear in Book VI (see below, pp. 349-54).

10 Talus is a substitute in another way. As Nelson observes, "When [Astrea] departed at the coming of brazen times, according to Spenser's favorite mythographer Natalis Comes, she left as her legacy the written law, written because in the decaying world men no longer obeyed the unwritten precepts of natural justice" (The Poetry of Edmund

Spenser, 263; Nelson cites Comes' Mythologiae, Frankfurt, 1581, 117 ff.). To present Talus as not merely the enforcer of but the substitute for written law seems a way of drawing attention to the harshness of the justice required in the contemporary world.

<sup>11</sup> Williams, World of Glass, 155. The definitive treatment of the association between the queen and the goddess is Frances A. Yates' "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," JWCI, 10 (1947), 27-82.

<sup>12</sup> Nohrnberg observes that "Artegall's failure to ask the lady to which of the knights she belongs would be more logical if she were the child originally disputed in the judgement of Solomon" but does not develop the incongruity (The Analogy of The Faerie Queene, 355). Not having Artegall ask creates difficulties in the narrative--Hamilton notes that Artegall's proposal is "monstrously unfair to the lady herself" (The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene, 172) but having him ask would destroy the Biblical parallel; the "sign-function" of the episode must displace fictional probability.

<sup>13</sup> Dunseath suggests that "these are the arms of a disenfranchised knight, an outlaw" (73), and links Sanglier's name with the Erymanthean boar captured by Hercules (74) and other boars in myth and the Bible, which symbolized pride and intemperance (76).

<sup>14</sup> Judith Anderson in "'Nor Man It Is': The Knight of Justice in Book V of Spenser's Faerie Queene", EMLA, 85 (1970), 65-77, attributes "tonal dislocations" and the "threat of parody" in Book V to the tension



between Artegall's two roles (as an abstract principle and as a just man), which she perceives as mutually exclusive: the more "just" Artegall becomes internally (the more balanced and human), the less just he will tend to be in his public decisions. She accounts interestingly for the pairing of Arthur and Artegall in the second half of the book: "As long as Artegall and Arthur are together, Artegall can act as a principle, an abstraction, because Arthur acts as a Knight" (75). Nohrnberg makes a similar observation about Talus; commenting on the "monumental" and "symbolic" functions of the iron man ("As a symbol of armaments, he performs a service merely by being seen, like the military hardware on display in a Moscow May Day parade"), he notes in passing that "Many of the acts of defilement and disfiguration in this legend are done symbolically, to make or unmake a sign" and that in some cases the process "consists in the eradication of a prior monument or sign" (Analogy, 415).

<sup>15</sup> Analogy, 391-2; Icons of Justice, 21. Elizabeth Bieman, in "Britomart in Book V of The Faerie Queene," UTQ, 37 (1967), 156-74, discusses the headless lady as an emblem of psychic incompleteness: "The balancing masculine function has been torn from woman" (159); she does not, however, comment on other dismemberments.

<sup>16</sup> Contemporary opinion held that "The first way to suppress Seditious, is Eloquence and excellent Persuasion . . . if Persuasion cannot prevail, then Force must compel" (The Cabinet Council, attributed to Raleigh and published with his Maxims of State, 95-6; cited by Aptekar, 46-7.) By Elizabethan standards, Artegall is undoubtedly justified in

annihilating the Giant. Dunseath convincingly establishes Artegall's theological and rhetorical orthodoxy (Spenser's Allegory of Justice, 104-107). The very force and justice of Artegall's argument, however, make us register the fact that it fails.

<sup>17</sup> Fowler notes that five was the number of justice in the Pythagorean scheme, quoting Sir Thomas Browne to the effect that "The Ancients have named it the Divisive Number, justly dividing the Entities of the world". He discusses Artegall's "divisive justice" as a process of separating and allocating goods, citing as examples "the encounter with the Giant with the scales and the arbitration between the two sons of Milesio (Numbers of Time, 34-5).

<sup>18</sup> Frye, The Secular Scripture, 86.

<sup>19</sup> Fletcher connects justice with language in a somewhat different way, emphasizing the necessity of recording legal precedent in writing and with a stable sense of custom and tradition: "In the final analysis law and justice are shown to depend upon a right attitude to truth, which in turn requires respect for fair speech. Justice assumes a prior stability of the linguistic community, on which fame may rest, and then law" (Prophetic Moment, 187).

<sup>20</sup> "But when he dyde, the Faerie Queene it brought  
To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought"  
(1.7.36.8)

<sup>21</sup> Dunseath suggests the parallel when he says that "It seems critically inconsistent to praise the beauty and order of the Garden of Adonis and then to belittle the efforts of Artegall, Spenser's chosen defender of its principles" in the encounter with the Giant (97). I suggest that the reason for the distaste for Artegall is that although the theme is the same, the tone and context are very different.

<sup>22</sup> Nohrnberg, establishing the analogy between Books II and V, identifies the sea with fortune and compares it with Occasio in the corresponding fourth canto of Book II (Analogy, 357). For Fortune as a mariner, see Nohrnberg, 309.

<sup>23</sup> Edwin Greenlaw, in Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory, 142, suggests that the contest may be founded on fact and refer to the Earl of Northumberland's claim to treasure cast ashore in 1560; Herbert B. Nelson, in "Amidas v. Bracidas," MLQ, 1 (1940), 393-9, doubts this and develops the theory that since, according to British law, Bracidas was not entitled to the chest, the case illustrates the application of the principle of equity; Roland M. Smith, in "Spenser's Tale of the Two Sons of Milesio," MLQ, 3 (1942), 547-57, answers Nelson with the argument that Spenser may be drawing on traditional Irish law which would justify Bracidas' possession of it.

<sup>24</sup> Fowler, 196.

<sup>25</sup> The World of Glass, 185, 187. See also her article, "Spenser: Some Uses of the Sea and the Storm-Tossed Ship," RORD, 13-14 (1970-71), 135-42.

<sup>26</sup>Numbers of Time, 203, 207.

<sup>27</sup>Fletcher says that Radigund is "repeatedly identified with Fortune (and the moon), and Artegall's submission to her is Fortune's victory" (Prophetic Moment, 247). Don Cameron Allen, who suggests that Spenser's Radigund is modelled on the Rhodogune known to antiquity, notes that she is described in an oration of Dio Chrysostom, "which was translated into Latin in the sixteenth century because its subject was 'Fortune'" ["Spenser's Radigund," MLN, 67 (1952), 120-22].

<sup>28</sup>In a suggestive essay on the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, "riverrun," ELR, 5 (1975), 25-48, Gordon Braden sees Artegall using "trickery and deceit, which are, after all, only applied uniformity" in his "pragmatic" handling of "water and what it represents" (48). He suggests the arbitrariness of the law applied in the case: "law is merely legitimized habit, and institutionalization (as in Artegall's disposition of the sea-wreck) of the way things happen to have fallen out" (46.7).

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Kathleen Williams, "Venus and Diana" in Essential Articles, 217, who observes that the parallel of both Artegall and Marinell with Achilles suggests "how a nature which cultivates one aspect of itself to the exclusion of its opposite may be overthrown and enthralled by that opposite."

<sup>30</sup>Aptekar establishes that one meaning of "will" was sexual desire; she cites Alan Brien, "Down With all Bowdlers", New Statesman (5 August 1966), 198-9, and his commentary on the puns in Shakespeare's Sonnet 135. Nohrnberg documents its sexual meaning in Chaucer's Parlement of Foules, where the name of Cupid's daughter "Wille derives from a pun on voluptas and voluntas; he cites Dante's Convivio, 4.6 (Analogy, 515).

<sup>31</sup> The Allegory of Love, 320.

<sup>32</sup> Dunseath uses Clarinda's infatuation to help establish the parallel between Artegall and Hercules: Omphale's handmaid Malis also fell in love with Hercules (Allegory of Justice, 139).

<sup>33</sup> Fletcher, concerned with 'templar' images of the sacred centre, comes to a similar conclusion. He argues that Spenser is conflating two accounts of Hercules' servitude to Iole and to Omphale. But since Omphale's name means the navel, "the centre of the human body . . . the root of life, the cord which binds the child to its mother" (Fletcher quotes Marie Delcourt, Hermaphrodite: Myths and Rites of the Bisexual Figure in Classical Antiquity, 24) and also "the centre of the cosmos, the archetypal place of rest, renewal and sacred temporality", to serve Radigund/Omphale is "to return to a travesty of the locus amoenus" (Prophetic Moment, 200).

<sup>34</sup> See Joseph L. Henderson, "Ancient Myths and Modern Man", in Man and His Symbols, ed. Carl Jung and M.-L. von Franz (New York: Dell, 1969), 117.

<sup>35</sup> World of Glass, 170.

<sup>36</sup> Concerning Famous Women, trans. Quarino, p. 40.

<sup>37</sup> The Prophetic Moment, 16-7.

<sup>37a</sup> "Spenser and Some Pictorial Conventions With Particular References to Illuminated Manuscripts," SP, 37 (1940), 149-76.

<sup>38</sup> Nohnberg observes that Pollente and Dolon are presented as parallel and as allies: both use trapfalls, and "as the names tell us, Pollente and Dolon represent the two traditional forms of coercion, force and fraud" (Analogy, 359). More specific interpretations of the episode

have been advanced. Fletcher suggests that Dolon is dolus malus, which in Roman law meant "subtilitas, or adherence to the strict letter of the law, in order to make it a means of unscrupulous advantage" (Fletcher quotes C. K. Allen, Law in the Making, 5th ed., 379). This is the way Radigund takes advantage of Artegall, and Fletcher suggests that the Dolon episode shows Britomart "[experiencing] the error of dolus malus in an experimental fashion so that, unlike him, she will not fall into the trap of excessive legalism" (Prophetic Moment, 233). This interesting suggestion, accepted by Aptekar (116), does not seem however to throw much light on the actual events in Dolon's house; nor has Britomart ever shown much tendency towards excessive legalism. Graziani interprets the historical allegory in terms of the L'Aubespine plot to blow Elizabeth up in her bed from the chamber below ["Elizabeth at Isis Church," EMLA, 79 (1964), 376-89]. The episode is treated at some length by Dunseath, who uses it as a way into the examination of Britomart's repeated failures of perception which, he says, undermine her character right up to the Isis episode (Ch. 3, esp. pp. 142-3, 166-71). He focusses on the parallels and ignores the contrasts between the Dolon and the Malecasta episodes.

<sup>39</sup> Iliad, 10.315 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Dunseath identifies him with tristitia, 148.

<sup>41</sup> Heywood, in Englands Elizabeth (London: Philip Waterhouse, 1631; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973), commenting on Elizabeth's refusal to marry, observes that:

though it may be said of women in generall, that they are spare in their answeres, and peremptory in their demands & purposes, that their affections are still in the extreames, either so passionate as by no counsell to be redressed, or so counterfeit, to be by no man beleevued, and again, if they are beautiful they are to be won with prayes, if coy with prayers, if proud with gifts, & if couetous with promises; yet this sweet L. tho her beauty were attractive, yet by no flattery could be removed fro her settled resolution (51).

42 The fact that Britomart's words are an allusion to Christ's reproach to the sleepy disciples at Gethsemane and that the Biblical allusion continues in the reference to Peter two stanzas later has made this become an interpretive crux. Williams says that the Biblical echoes exist to remind the reader "that perfect justice is also love" (World of Glass, 162). Aptekar says that the grounds of Britomart's impregnability is "her true religion"--"she is capable of keeping a faithful watch" (Icons of Justice, 128). But on behalf of whom? And Britomart does allow herself to sleep in Isis Church; if sleeplessness here represents her fidelity to Artegall, does sleep there represent infidelity? It seems to me that the allusions do not make Britomart a Christ-figure in any simple way. The differences between the two contexts are as significant as the similarities: Christ reproached others for being unfaithful to him; Britomart reproaches her own eyes for betraying herself. The allusions to the crucifixion do establish fidelity as the issue in a general way and also link the episode with Britomart's success in the House of Busirane: in both cases Britomart, like Christ, is suffering on behalf of someone else. However, the fidelity evoked here also involves integrity--fidelity to oneself as well as to another.

<sup>43</sup> Dunseath considers the simile to be a damning parallel:  
 "Spenser has implicated Britomart with Peter's spiritual defection"  
 (169). But Britomart doesn't defect.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Bieman, in "Britomart in Book V of The Faerie Queene,"  
UTQ, 37 (1967), 156-74, notes the ambiguity of the crocodile's position,  
 "its tail curled round her waist as Osiris-lover, its body held down by  
 her foot as Typhon-antagonist" (167).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Williams, 175--"To have to accept [the crocodile] as  
 Osiris causes a small upheaval in our imaginative response".

<sup>46</sup> Plutarch, "Isis and Osiris", Moralia, V, trans. Frank Cole  
 — Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1936), 6-191.  
 For other associations of the crocodile, see my note #60.

<sup>47</sup> Fletcher sees an explicitly sexual suggestion here: "as we  
 should expect from a moon goddess, Isis gets her power from the earth;  
 her priests lie at night on the earth mother's lap, which suggests their  
 sexual service to her" (Prophetic Moment, 251). This suggestion seems to  
 me to cut across the feeling of purity and asceticism which the verse  
 implies; even if it is accepted, however, it confirms the impression  
 that the priests' sexuality has been artificially arrested at a pre-adult  
 stage and re-directed for the service of the goddess, and strengthens the  
 contrast with Britomart, who will perform her providential role not by  
 suppressing but by fulfilling her sexuality. "What the priests achieve  
 imperfectly through their withdrawn self-discipline, Britomart achieves



apparently by nature" (Fletcher, 268).

<sup>48</sup> Lotspeich, 73, believes that Spenser has confused the long locks of the priests of Rhea with the shaven crown of Isis' priests in Plutarch. Like Graziani ["Elizabeth at Isis Church," PMLA, 79 (1964), 387], I think that such an error is unlikely and that the change is purposeful. Readers of Apuleius could be reminded of the long-haired homosexual priests in Chapter XII, although of course Isis' priests are not sinister. Fletcher cites Upton as pointing to the solution he finds convincing: "that the typology of the scene requires a mixture of 'Egyptian' and hermetic material with the biblical patterns of Old Testament prophecy", 264. See also Fowler, 218. Drayton records the tradition that Isis herself wore her hair long and loose; in Song II of the Poly-Olbion he describes a kind of brittle coral

Which th'Ancients, for the love that they to Isis bare  
(Their Goddesses most ador'd) have sacred for her haire.  
(43-44, p. 30)

He notes that "The special notice which Antiquity tooke of her haire is not only shewed by her attribute of \*Λοιχόμορος, but also in that her haire was kept as a sacred relique in Memphis" (marginal notation: "Loosehaird"). Because Isis' hair was black, says Drayton, dark-haired ladies can consider her a kind of patron of their beauty. See Drayton's Works, ed. J. William Hebel (Oxford: Shakespeare Head P., 1935), Vol. 4, Poly-Olbion, 30, 42.

<sup>49</sup> See Porphyry, On Abstinence, who warns against drinking wine and eating meat; he links the eating of flesh with the discovery of fire

(1.13), so that for him blood, wine and fire together tend to draw the soul down into involvement with the body and the material world. Wine is always associated also with sexuality, both literally, because it enflames the passions and metaphorically, as in Marlowe's Hero and Leander:

Virginity , albeit some highly prize it,  
Compar'd with marriage, had you tried them both,  
Differs as much as wine and water doth.

1.262<sup>4</sup>

The transformation from water to wine involves a colour change analogous to the one which takes place in Britomart's clothing--from white to red--and associates marriage with redness.

<sup>50</sup> Aptekar says that this belief "reverses the Christian formula" (Icons of Justice, 104). It seems to me that their version does not so much reverse the Christian formula as echo it without full comprehension. The priests tend to see through a glass darkly; they adumbrate a truth which they cannot fully grasp. Their relationship to Britomart is that of Old Testament to New: by passing through the stage they have stopped at, she fulfils the truth they figure and comes to represent the fruitfulness of true, sexual submission, of which their repression is merely a type.

<sup>51</sup> For the role of Isis as preserver of the heroine's chastity in the Greek romances, see Sharon Heyob, The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Graeco-Roman World (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 66-68. She is also associated with fertility; see note #59. Britomart and the priests, then, reflect the two aspects of her double nature.

52 Isis is particularly associated with dream-visions: "The spending of night in the temple of Isis was a common occurrence among Isiac devotees, for Isis was known to appear in dreams and to call future initiates that was" (Sharon Heyob, The Cult of Isis, 59; she refers to Lucius' dream in Apuleius' Metamorphoses 11.19). Isis was apparently a kind of patroness of sleep: Diodorus Siculus says

As for Isis, the Egyptians say that she was the discoverer of many health-giving drugs; consequently, now that she has attained immortality, she finds her greatest delight in the healing of mankind and gives aid in their sleep to those who call upon her . . . For standing above the sick in their sleep she gives them aid for their diseases and works remarkable cures (Diodorus of Sicily, trans. C. H. Oldfather, 1.25)!

53 Cf. Nohrberg, 443, who, commenting on Britomart's blush before Merlin (3.3.20), observes: "Such a change, associated with Britomart on three further occasions, comes to signal an irreversible metamorphosis into sexual consciousness. One may compare the flower in A Midsummer Night's Dream, which is changed from white to red when it is struck by Cupid's arrow." The more general cosmic associations of the two colours may also be present here; Ramei in The Courtiers Academie makes the human body a microcosmos specifically in terms of its two colours, red and white: in it, he says,

that proportion is comprehended, which representeth the whole corporeal sensible world, as also the colours that beautifie this sensible world; the one of which is white, like to heavenly light, and the other is red; like to the shining colour of material and visible fire: and therefore man was worthily called a little world, seeing the body of man is no other but a little modell of the sensible world, and his soule an Image of the world intelligible. (17)

The association of white with heavenly and red with earthly fire is espe-

is relevant for Britomart's dream where, paradoxically, 'descent' is presented as exaltation.

54 Donning a new robe as a metaphor for loss of virginity is a standard topos of seduction; Marlowe's Leander tells Hero

Rich robes themselves and others do adorn,  
Neither themselves nor others, if not worn. (1.237-8)

The metaphor is submerged in Donne's "To night put on perfection, and a womans name" ("Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne"). Isis is associated by Plutarch with the search for truth (1, p. 7); the garment which her priests wear symbolizes their initiation into this truth, so that they are called "wearers of the sacred robes"; "they cloak [the truths of the sacred writings] with secrecy, thus giving intimations, some dark and shadowy, some clear and bright, of their concepts about the gods, intimations of the same sort as are clearly evidenced in the wearing of the sacred garb. For this reason too, the fact that the deceased votaries of Isis are decked with these garments is a sign that these sacred writings accompany them, and that they pass to the other world possessed of these and of naught else." (3, p. 11): Britomart's donning of the priests' dress and the transformation of her clothing suggest two successive stages in her initiation.

55 Fletcher, interested in the pageant as a fusion of his 'temple' and 'labyrinth', observes suggestively that "She appears to herself as if she were a figure in a masque, as the words 'all sodainely' indicate, the phrase being a commonplace of masque and pageant" (Prophetic Moment, 269).

56 As Frances Yates points out, the Hermetic Asclepius tells of the magical religion of the Egyptians who knew how to make statues of the gods through which to draw down celestial and divine intelligences; see The Art of Memory (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1966), 292, 317; also Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), where she notes that in Bruno's Spaccio della bestia Trionfante there is a defense of Egyptian religion with a long quotation from the Asclepius on how they made these statues; a statue of Isis is specifically mentioned (37). For Bruno's connection with Sidney, see Giordano Bruno, 178 9, 187-8 and passim; with Gabriel Harvey, 207. In the Hermetica Asclepius discusses making gods "out of some material substance suited for the purpose. And to this invention they added a supernatural force whereby the images might have power to work good or hurt, and combined it with the material substance . . . invoked the souls of daemons, and implanted them in the statues by means of certain holy and sacred rites" (3.37, p. 359); he refers to "statues living and conscious, filled with the breath of life, and doing many mighty works; statues, which have foreknowledge, and predict future events by the drawing of lots, and by prophetic inspiration, and by dreams" (3.24, p. 339). See Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings Which Contain Religious or Philosophical Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, trans. Walter Scott (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1924-36; rpt. London: Fawsons of Pall Mall, 1968).

57 It is worth recording here the great enthusiasm of Puttenham for the emblem of the king of China, which, although by no means an exact analogue, has much in common with the imagery and the significance of Britomart's dream; see The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Willcock and Walker

Cambridge, 1936). This emblem, says Puttenham, was "worthy for the greatest king and conqueror", and he describes it thus:

two strange serpents entertangled in their amorous congresse, the lesser creeping with his head into the greater's mouth, with words purporting (ama & time) love & feare. Which posie with marvellous much reason and subtillity implieth the dutie of euery subject to his Prince, and of euery Prince to his subject, and that without either of them both, no subject could be sayd entirely to performe his liegeance, nor the Prince his part of lawfull gouernement. For without feare and loue the soueraigne authority could not be vpholden, nor without iustice and mercy the Prince be renowned and honored of his subject. All which parts are discovered in this figure: loue by the serpents amorous entertangling: obedience and feare by putting the inferiours head into the others mouth hauing puissance to destroy. On th' other side, iustice in the greater to prepare and manace death and destruction to offenders. And if he spare it, then betokeneth it mercie, and a grateful recompence of the loue and obedience which the soueraigne receaueth.

2.12, p. 106-7

This passage seems to me remarkable for the way it brings together motifs juxtaposed in the Isis Church episode: the serpent, the threat of being eaten (which is not carried out), the link between eating and sexual congress, and between love and fear, justice and mercy, monarch and subject. Puttenham highly praises both the subtlety of the conceit and the "princely policy" of its use; European princes' devices, he says, cannot compare to it "for wit, vertue, grauitie, brauerie, honour and magnificence."

58 Kermode notes that Delbene (in Civitas Veri, pp. 168 and 174, illustration) shows Equity controlling Justice with a rod ("The Faerie Queene", I and V," in Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, 51); he deduces that the rod 'stands for the power of Chancery in civil cases' (55).

59 MacCaffrey, Spenser's Allegory, 125 n. Apuleius compares her to

Venus (Metamorphoses 11.2). Macrobius compares Isis mourning for Osiris with Venus mourning for Adonis, "for it is no secret that Osiris is none other than the sun and Isis, as we have said, none other than the earth or world of nature," The Saturnalia, trans. P. V. Davies (New York: Columbia U. P., 1969), 1.21.11, p. 142; it is for this reason, he says, that the whole body of the goddess is thickly covered with a series of breasts" (1.20.18, p. 140). She is also, as Diana, protectress of women in childbirth; cf. Marlowe's translation of Ovid's "Elegia 13", 1. 19: "On labouring women thou dost pity take". See Heyob, The Cult of Isis, Ch. 2 and 3.

<sup>60</sup> Aptekar establishes the association of the crocodile with fraud, lust, greed and voracity, with Osiris himself and with the sun (Icons of Justice, Ch. 6). Nohrnberg cites Eusebius to the effect that "the Egyptians indicate the sun, who is otherwise called Osiris, by a man embarked on a ship, the ship set on a crocodile"; the image is in Cartari (Analogy, 388). The creature has a number of other iconographic associations relevant to its use in Britomart's dream. Horapollo emphasizes its tail: "To express shadows, they [the Egyptians] draw the tail of a crocodile, since the crocodile does not produce disappearance and destruction except by striking its victim and reducing it to immobility with its tail. For in this part of it lies the crocodile's strength and courage"; see The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo, 1505; trans. George Boas, 1950 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1950), 1.70, p. 86. He also associates it with a kind of violent fertility: "When they wish to represent a plunderer, a fecund man, a madman, they draw a crocodile, because it is

fecund and has many offspring and raves" (1.67, p. 85).

More significantly, however, the crocodile is associated consistently with time and with growth. Robert Cawdrey suggests the image as an apt metaphor for pride, because it is so big a creature from so small an egg: "Euen so such a one is Man, when he forgetteth his originall, and the foule matter of his beginning, waxeth insolent and proud" A Treasure or Store-House of Similes, 1600 (Menston: Scolar Press, 1969), 461. The idea is in Herodotus: "No mortal creature known to us grows from so small a beginning to such greatness; for its eggs are not much bigger than goose eggs, and the young crocodile is of a bigness answering thereto, but it grows to a length of seventeen cubits or more" (6.21). Blundeville records the same tradition in Exercises, (London, 1594; facs. rpt. Amsterdam, 1971), p. 259-60; it is evidently the source of Raleigh's statement that the crocodile signifies "impudency" (History of the World, 2.6.7). This signification, which critics seem to have overlooked, is very relevant to the political level of the allegory, associated as it is with rapid self-aggrandisement. It is also a kind of reptilian equivalent of images which have earlier been associated with Britomart and with the growth of her family tree, rooted in darkness, "Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin,/ Til they to heauens hight forth stretched bee" (3.3.22.3). The eggs of the crocodile are a frequent motif, suggesting not only its fertility but its foresight into the future. Whitney says it represents providentia, and explains that by observing where the crocodile lays her eggs, the Egyptians know how far the Nile will rise that year; the moral he draws is not to start something unless you can foresee how it will turn out; see A Choice of Emblemes and other Devices (Leyden, 1586; facs rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969), 3. The motto under Joachim Camerarius' emblem of a crocodile with its eggs reads "TEMPORE



ET LOCO" (Ex Animalibus Quadrupedibus Desumptorum Centuria Altera Collecta, Frankfurt: Ioannis Amony, 1661, #97, p. 99); under a crocodile beside the Nile, "COME TEMPORE CRESCIT" (Ex Aquatilibus et Reptilibus Desumptorum Centuria Quarta, Frankfurt: Ioannis Amony, 1665, #66, p. 67); both bound with Symbolorum et Emblematum ex Re Herbaria (Frankfurt: Ioannis Amony, 1661).

Critics agree that time is an important theme in Book V; Nohrnberg, linking Books II and V, associates both temperance and justice with control of time (402-4); Fletcher emphasizes the theme throughout The Prophetic Moment (see especially his fourth chapter, "Justice, Prophecy and History" where he discusses "Talus and Time"); Fowler points out that the son born of the union of Isis and Osiris is Horus, "not only the political generation of an 'hour' or ear of justice through the mingling of righteousness and peace, justice and mercy; but also more largely, the creation of time by the interaction of sun and moon" (Numbers of Time, 216). The associations of the crocodile with control of time seem important for the metaphysical, political and psychological levels of the allegory.

Isis herself is specifically associated with time, foreknowledge and prophecy: see The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo: "When they wish to represent the year, they draw Isis, that is, a woman . . . And among them Isis is a star . . . which appears to rule over the other stars . . . And according to the rising of this star, we know how everything in the year is going to happen" (1.3, p. 58-9). E.K., in "The generall argument of the whole booke" of The Shepeards Calendar, notes that "the Aegyptians beginne theyr yeare at September, for . . . God made the worlde in that

Moneth" (Var. 7.14). Virgo is one of the zodiacal signs governing September, and is identified with Isis (see Fowler, Numbers of Time, 65) --though it is Libra which is reproduced in the woodcut at the head of the September eclogue.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Graziani, "Elizabeth at Isis Church," PMLA (1964), 384.

<sup>62</sup> Egypt was consistently associated with deep wisdom and with secret mysteries, specifically with the invention of hieroglyphics; Raleigh is typical in grouping together Tantalus, who was supposed to have been punished for revealing the secrets of the gods, Christ speaking in parables, Pythagoras' command to his disciples not to reveal divine knowledge, and the mysteries of Egypt: "And therefore did the Egyptians communicate their mysteries among their priests in certain hieroglyphic letters, to the end that their secrets might be hidden from the vulgar; and that they might bestow the more time in the contemplation of their covered meanings" (History of the World, 2.8.3). See also Don Cameron Allen, Mysteriously Meant (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P., 1970), Ch. 5: "The Symbolic Wisdom of the Ancient Egyptians".

<sup>63</sup>Cf. Hamilton: "Such a cat-fight!", 172.

## CHAPTER VI: TRISTRAM AND THE GLAMOUR OF THE EYE

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most severe of Calidore's critics is Richard Neuse, in "Book VI as Conclusion to The Faerie Queene," ELH, 35 (1968), 329-53, who covers all of these objections.

<sup>2</sup> While most critics have been ready to agree with C. S. Lewis, 351, that the pastoral interlude is no truancy on the part of Spenser, they are not as willing to exonerate his hero; see for example Neuse; J. C. Maxwell, "The Truancy of Calidore," ELH, 19 (1952), 143-49; Maurice Evans, "Courtesy and the Fall of Man," ES, 46 (1965), 209-20; Michael West, "Spenser and the Renaissance Ideal of Christian Heroism," PMLA, 88 (1973), 1013-32, and Michael Dixon, "Fairy Tale, Fortune and Boethian Wonder: Rhetorical Structure in Book VI of The Faerie Queene," UTQ, 44 (1974-75), 141-65. J. W. Saunders seems indeed to suggest that the truancy is Spenser's: see "The Facade of Morality" in That Soueraine Light, ed. W. R. Mueller and D. C. Allen (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1952), 1-34.

<sup>3</sup> See R. F. Hill, "Colin Clout's Courtesy," MLR, 57 (1962), 500-01.

<sup>4</sup> The similarity has been noticed by Kathleen Williams, World of Glass, 197, and by Humphrey Tonkin, Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of "The Faerie Queene" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 60.

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton notes the desecration of a woman's body as the central motif in Book VI (96-7); Wohrnberg observes that the preservation of the

heroine's physical integrity is a theme of Greek romance, some of the common motifs of which are used in Book VI (665).

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Williams calls the violation "an invasion of personal integrity, for the beard is a symbol of a man's virility, the hair of a woman's modesty; it was the practice to disgrace a public woman by cutting off her hair; see Flower on a Lowly Stalk: The Sixth Book of "The Faerie Queene" (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State U. P., 1967), 43-4. Nohrnberg, 707, gives a Biblical citation, referring to "the hair that is a woman's praise and glory and is given her for a covering (I Cor. II: 15)".

<sup>7</sup> See Evans, "Courtesy and the Fall of Man," 220, for a comment on this transition from the world of justice to the world of mercy. For discussions of the specifically Christian dimension of the sixth book, see Tonkin, especially "Nature and Grace: the poetry of vision," 226-37, and "Courtesy Redefined," Ch. 9, in Spenser's Courteous Pastoral; Maurice Evans, "Courtesy and the Fall of Man"; Lila Geller, "The Acidalian Vision: Spenser's Graces in Book VI of The Faerie Queene," RES, N.S., 23 (1972), 267-77; Kathleen Williams, "Courtesy and Pastoral in The Faerie Queene, Book VI," RES, N.S., 13 (1962), 337-46.

<sup>8</sup> As Arnold Williams notes, "Spenser describes the scene as Calidore would see it, not as the omniscient author sees it" (Flower, 21).

<sup>9</sup> Tonkin too calls him "not so much a person as a kind of emblem of youthful goodness" (Spenser's Courteous Pastoral, 44).

<sup>10</sup> Aptekar, Icons of Justice, 59.

<sup>11</sup> Tonkin, 60, notes the resemblance to the Yeoman.

<sup>12</sup> William Nestruck, "The Virtuous and Gentle Discipline of Gentlemen and Poets," ELH, 29 (1962), 364, suggests that he embodies the balance between freedom and discipline, nature and nurture, which is also characteristic of both poetry and the pastoral life itself; Kathleen Williams makes a similar comment on the balance of "impulse and controlled direction", and, in his clothing, of "hunter's Lincoln green and elegant artifice" (World of Glass, 198).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Tonkin, 43.

<sup>14</sup> This identification seems to have been taken for granted by readers from Warton (Var. 6.194) to Nohrnberg, who mentions that he is "the only other 'Arthurian' character in the entire Faerie Queene" (672). Arnold Williams, however, asserts that "the enfance of Tristram [is] modelled on that of Percival", especially as depicted in the Perlesvaus, and finds it unaccountable that Spenser named him Tristram (Flower, 5, 72). Percival's wicked uncle and his yearning for knightly glory might indeed connect him with Tristram, as might the slaying of the Red Knight; but Percival in his enfance is a much more clownish figure, and unlike Spenser's hero, is ignorant of his own identity. The association with hunting is so marked in Malory, and Spenser's names are so similar, that the more obvious parallel seems to be intended. Spenser has indeed changed Meliodas to Meliograss, and Elizabeth to Emeline; the first is a natural

slip of memory, the second a sensible substitution: Spenser has reasons for avoiding "Elizabeth". Both Spenser's and Malory's heroes come from Cornwall. In his account of the circumstances of Tristram's exile Spenser has conflated two events in Malory: his education in France (8.5) and his later banishment by King Mark, an emphatic element in Malory's handling of the story (see for example 9.22, 9.38); Tristram's hunting is also a recurrent theme (e.g. 8.30).

<sup>15</sup> The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, ed. Eugene Vinaver, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), Vol. 1, p. 375.

<sup>16</sup> Juliana Berners, The boke of St. Albans (Saint Albans, 1486; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1969), A1<sup>R</sup>. For a bibliographical discussion of this book and an outline of its contents see E. F. Jacob, "The Boke of St. Albans," BJRL, 28 (1944), 99-118.

<sup>17</sup> The Noble Arte of Venerie, 1576; rpt. as Turberville's Booke of Hunting (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1908), 153, 174.

<sup>18</sup> Sir John Ferne, The Blazon of Gentry (London: T. Cooke, 1586; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973), 74.

<sup>19</sup> Turberville, 94.

<sup>20</sup> The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge U. P., 1912; rpt. 1963), Vol. 4, 214.

<sup>21</sup> Observations on The Fairy Queen of Spenser (London: Dodsley, Fletcher, 1762), 2nd. ed., Vol. 2, 171.

- 22 The Institution of a Gentleman (London, 1555; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1974), H4<sup>v</sup>-H41<sup>v</sup>.
- 23 "A Briefe and Summarie Allegorie," Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, Translated into English Heroical Verse by Sir John Harington, 1591; ed. Robert McNulty (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1972), 561.
- 24 See Joan Simon, Education and Society in Tudor England (Cambridge U. P., 1966), 366.
- 25 The Poetical Works of John Skelton, ed. Alexander Dyce (London: Thomas Rodd, 1843), Colyn Cloute, l. 621 ff., Vol. 1, 334-5.
- 26 See Kenneth Charlton, Education in Renaissance England (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 75-81.
- 27 Institution of a Gentleman, H4<sup>v</sup>.
- 28 Eurhues and his Echoebus in The Complete Works of John Lyly, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1902), Vol. 1, 277.
- 29 Diodorus of Sicily, trans. C. H. Oldfather (London: William Heineman, 1933), l. 53, p. 187.
- 30 A Short Treatise of Hunting (London, 1591); cited by Ruth Kelso, The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century, 157.
- 31 History of the World, 2.3.4. Mulcaster draws an analogous contrast when he discusses the hunting of large and small game: the ancient writers have always recommended hunting, he says, as training for war;

whether for valiauntness or for pollicy, because the resemblances of the chief warlike executions do fall out in hunting, as the qualitie or courage of the game offereth cause, either to vse force and manhoode, or to flie to deuise and sutteltie.

See Positions wherein those primitive circumstances be examined, which are necessarie for the training vp of children (London, 1581; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971), 97-98. Hunting is a training, then, in both force and fraud. For another view of this contrast, see Don Cameron Allen, "On Venus and Adonis," in Elizabethan and Jacobean Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), on the difference between the heroic hunt and the hunt of the fugaces, "those timid animals that never turn and stand", 109.

32 Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1.1.63.

33 See Don Cameron Allen, "On Venus and Adonis," 100-11.

34 See John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey P., 1957), 100n; Hughes cites Contl, 3.18.

35 Lyly, Works, ed. Bond, Vol. 1, 255.

36 Turberville's Booke of Hunting, 34<sup>r</sup>.

37 "Astrophel," 119 ff. in The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition. The Minor Poems, Vol. 1, 182.

38 Positions, 97.

39 Var. 6, 19<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>40</sup> Nohrnberg's comments about the "theme of the reserved and manifested self" and its connection with "the frequent motif of secret or concealed origins" are suggestive in regard to Tristram (Analogy, 663).

<sup>41</sup> Aeneid 8.618, based in turn on Iliad 19.15.

<sup>42</sup> The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901); Parlement of Foules, l. 290, p. 105; "To Rosemounde: A Balade," l. 20, p. 122; The Hous of Fame, 3.1796, p. 344; The Legend of Good Women, l. 254, p. 356.

<sup>43</sup> Inferno 5, 5.67, where he is listed along with Semiramis, Cleopatra, Helen, Paris and Achilles.

<sup>44</sup> Triumphs, trans. Ernest H. Wilkins (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1962), "The Third Triumph of Love," 23.

<sup>45</sup> Works, ed. Dyce, Faylles Starowe, 641 ff., Vol. 1, 70.

<sup>46</sup> Orlando Furioso, trans. Harrington, 4.40.8, 55.

<sup>47</sup> Coeuvres Complètes, ed. Gustave Cohen (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1950), "Autre Cartel: Pour l'Amour," Vol. 1, 1022.

<sup>48</sup> Anatomy of Melancholy (Oxford, 1621; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971), 3.2.3, p. 617.

<sup>49</sup> "The Fall of Princes," ll. 73-6, from Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript, ed. J. W. Hales and F. J. Furnivall (London, 1868), 3.172;

cited by Josephine Bennett, as epigraph to Chapter VI of The Evolution of The Faerie Queene, p. 61; she notes the evidence that it was written soon after the death of Henry VIII.

<sup>50</sup>Tonkin points out that Priscilla actually resembles Turpine-- "an interesting and surprising echo" (55)--in that she considers it "base" to help someone in need.

<sup>51</sup>For Spenser's unsentimental awareness of the limitations of the natural man, see Roy Harvey Pearce, "Primitivistic Ideas in the Faerie Queene," JEGP, 44 (1945), 139-51.

<sup>52</sup>"Calidore's less gifted surrogate," Cheney, 195. Dixon discusses the structure of Book VI in terms of Spenser's intention to call in question the fairy-tale self-sufficiency of his titular hero: he says Calepine is the "vulnerable hero" who exists to suggest what Calidore himself will eventually have to learn, "the element of human helplessness in the face of chance and mutability" ("Fairy-Tale, Fortune and Boethian Wonder," 150).

<sup>53</sup>Pauline Parker suggests that Calepine's name means "sweetness of speech", in The Allegory of "The Faerie Queene" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 103. Although as Arnold Williams points out (Flower, 70) there doesn't seem to be anything particularly sweet about his speech, the conjecture might be significant if he is seen as responding to the voices of others. Michael Dixon, who sees all the villains of Book VI as expansions of the synecdoche of the Blatant Beast, characterizes Turpine as "the particular human expression of that aspect of the Blatant

Beast which gives rise to such descriptive terms as calumny and slander" ("Fairy Tale, Fortune and Boethian Wonder," 154).

<sup>54</sup> MacCaffrey notes how Calepine is "encircled" at 6.4.24--he sees "nought but woods and forrests farre and nye, / That all about did close the compasse of his eye". She comments: "Spenser traces in the Alexandrine the curve of the limited horizon that bounds the vision of man in the midst; it is the tightest of the many circles in Book VI" (Anatomy of Imagination, 376). Even when he emerges into the plain two stanzas later, however, he can see nothing to guide him. Her interesting comment draws attention to the way Spenser "closes off" the eye as a means of preparing for revelation by means of the ear.

<sup>55</sup> See Robert J. Clement, Picta Poesis (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1960), 51, and Nohrnberg, Analogy, 669-70, for some Renaissance examples of this common belief.

<sup>56</sup> This episode has evoked much commentary, perhaps the most subtle being Harry Berger's in "A Secret Discipline": "The savages have nothing but a woman on which to project their primitive eros, and the Petrarchan catalogue describing Serena suggests that their eros demands new objects, different modes of expression, more refined forms" (58-9). He sees their society as "the nursery of the first nature, the starting-point of culture as a whole" (62). I agree with Berger's focus on the savages' compulsion to conceptualize, but while he sees them as a first step on the road to Acidale, I interpret them as a demonic parody of its powers, Tonkin considers

the cannibals parodies of courtiers in their "abuse of sonnet metaphors" (109) and makes the interesting suggestion "that their dance around Serena is meant to recall "the dance of apes so frequently portrayed in Renaissance art, generally to signify artistic imitation, in the 'Platonic' derogatory sense of aping nature" (213n).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Nestruck ("Virtuous and Gentle Discipline," 366): "Only the most fantastic extension of wit could conceive of the altar and the arch; the hyperbolic comparison, because they are exaggerated, prevent the formation of any healthy attitude towards the body."

<sup>58</sup> Frye points out that cannibalism is a demonic parody of the eucharist, and it includes sparagmos, the tearing apart of the sacrificial body, which is what happens to Serena metaphorically (Anatomy, 148).

<sup>59</sup> Nohrnberg points out that both Calidore and the cannibals have "hungry eyes" (Analogy, 663-3).

<sup>60</sup> As Meliboe himself probably knows: see Michael West, "Spenser and the Renaissance Ideal," 1027, and Maurice Evans, "Courtesy and the Fall of Man," 217, who argue that Meliboe is advocating accepting one's destiny and making the best of it.

<sup>61</sup> See Plato, "Timaeus," in Plato with an English Translation, by R. G. Bury, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heineman, 1929), Vol. 7, 101: "they [the gods] constructed light-bearing eyes . . . they caused the pure fire within us, which is akin to that of day, to flow through the eyes in a smooth and dense stream . . . So whenever the stream of vision is surrounded by mid-day light, it flows out like unto

like." See also Macrobius, Saturnalia, 7.14.5, where he points out that sight is the only "active sense", and 7.14.13, where he summarizes this "emission" theory of vision; for its currency up to the seventeenth century, see Walter Charleton, Physiologia Epicuro--Gassendo--Charltoniana (London, 1654; rpt. Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966), 3.1, 150-51, who summarizes the theories of the Pythagoreans, Empedocles and Plato.

<sup>62</sup> Peacham, in The Garden of Eloquence (1577; Menston: Scolar Press, 1971), C2<sup>v</sup>, explains why metaphors of sight are so often used to denote understanding (e.g. "I see what you mean"): because the sight is the most perfect sense, analogous to the mind itself in the power to seize meaning and distinguish right from wrong, "most sure and least deceived". Cf. Plato, Timaeus, p. 107: our eyes enable us to view the heavens and thus understand the universe; we are given it "to the end that we might behold the revolutions of Reason in the Heaven and use them for the revolvings of the reason that is within us, these being akin to those".

<sup>63</sup> That the eye may deceive and distract is a commonplace. Cf. Love's Labours Lost, where love is described as

Forn'd by the eye, and therefore like the eye,  
Full of strange shapes, of habits and of forms  
Varying in subjects, as the eye doth roll  
To every varied object in his glance.

5.2.770

These lines convey the eye's helpless receptivity to the variety of the phenomenal world, the sort of innate visual impressionability which seemed to be a component of Artegall's surrender to Radigund. The eye may arouse

the senses; Chapman in his Hymnus in Noctem praises darkness,

Since day, or light, in any qualitie,  
For earthly uses do but serue the eye.  
And since the eyes most quicke and dangerous vse,  
Enflames the heart, and learnes the scul<sup>l</sup> abuse. (362-5)

The theory on which the emblem book is based is that word and image complement one another; as Jan van der Noot explains in his introduction to A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings: (New York, Scholars' Facsimiles, 1939),

I haue broughte in here twentie sightes or visions, & caused them to be grauen, to the ende all men may see that with their eyes, whiche I go aboute to expresse by writing, to the delight and pleasure of eye and eares.

Doctrine is needed to explicate vision; the image is moralized, so that in the end it is the "ear" (the motto and commentary) which controls the "eye" (the way the picture is perceived). It is interesting that van der Noot speaks of appealing to the ears even in a book which is presumably intended for silent reading: the "ear" has become a metonymy for that faculty by which we receive moral instruction. Rhetorics naturally emphasize the centrality of oral teaching: Puttenham in The Arte of English Poesie, ed. G. D. Willcock and A. Walker (Cambridge U. P., 1936), 3.19, p. 197, explains that through the ear the orator is able to control the mind of his audience; that though the eye is suitable for "apprehension of exterior knowledges" the ear is most apt for "instruction or discipline". Jonson in Timber expresses a similar idea: "Poetry, and Picture, are Arts of a like nature; and both are busie about imitation. It was excellently said of Plutarch, poetry was a speaking Picture, and Picture a mute Poesie . . . Yet of the two, the Pen is more noble, then the Pencill. For that can speake to the understanding; the other, but to the sense"; see Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1965), Vol. 8, 609-10. The quarrel between Poet

and Painter in Elisabeth's Entertainment at Mitcham, attr. Lyly, ed. L. Hotson (Yale U. P., 1953), 20-21, is a light-hearted version of the debate; the poet asserts that between "our artes are as greate oddes as betweene seeing and vnderstanding," and satirizes the shifts to which the painter is driven in order to convey by means of iconography doctrine which could more easily be expressed in words ("Prudence with a Snake, which is commonly made so like an Eele, that many thinke wisdom to crye grigges in the streete.").

<sup>64</sup> Nohrnberg seems to be suggesting the centrality of such experiences in Book VI in his interesting comment on "the 'imagery' of air" in the book: "New developments in the narrative are announced by voices in the air: shrieks, grieving, music and caroling" (Analogy, 703).

<sup>65</sup> Fowler reemphasizes an important point: "Whatever particular triads of qualities Renaissance philosophers interpreted the Graces as unfolding, the root assumption was that their dance symbolized the harmony of these qualities" (Numbers of Time, 49).

<sup>66</sup> For comments on this fusion of order and violence, see Lila Geller, "The Acidalian Vision," 270; Maurice Evans, "Courtesy and the Fall of Man," 211; Richard Neuse, "Book VI as Conclusion," 351-2; and Isabel MacGaffrey, Anatomy of Imagination, 396, who suggests that: "The 'order excellent' succeeds the destructive passion of lapiths and centaurs but does not cancel it."; the simile, she says, is still another circle, "a bright border with darkness at the centre"; it thus inverts the

structure of Book VI as a whole, at the centre of which is "the brightness of Acidale, the lost garden where we are forbidden to linger."

<sup>67</sup> The constellation was in any case identified with Elizabeth: Frances Yates quotes Camden to the effect that Sir Henry Lea had drawn the parallel; see "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," *JWCI*, 10 (1947), 70.

<sup>68</sup> Fowler explains why the constellation stands for love: "The constellation Corona is assigned by Ptolemy to Venus; so that Spenser locates love at the centre of the cosmos" (Numbers of Time, 225).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Neuse, "Book VI as Conclusion," 351-2: "The scene of violent discord at the centre of an image of harmony seems to imply that all significant harmony is achieved through conflict . . . the poet or any 'culture hero' can create genuine order only by subduing the 'saluage' powers within as well as outside the self".

<sup>70</sup> "A Secret Discipline," 67.

<sup>71</sup> Kathleen Williams, World of Glass, 217: "The comparison unites the heavenly and imaginary dances, the physical and mental orders, the actual zodiac and the zodiac of the poet's wit".

<sup>72</sup> MacCaffrey calls Calidore "literal" in his response to Meliboe's speech (369); his intrusive and rather insensitive questioning here reveals the same kind of literalness.



## CHAPTER VII: SPENSER'S DRAMATIC POETRY

<sup>1</sup>"Spenser's Undramatic Poetry," in Elizabethan Poetry, ed. Paul Alpers (New York: Oxford U.P., 1967), 422-46; rpt. with some alterations as the opening chapter of Reading Spenser: An Introduction to "The Faerie Queene" (New York: Random House, 1968).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 426.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 424.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 423.

<sup>6</sup>The Oxford Thackeray, ed. George Saintsbury (London: Oxford U.P., 1908), Vol. 13, pp. 17, 216.

<sup>7</sup>Spenser and Literary Pictorialism, 54.

<sup>8</sup>Icons of Justice, 223.

<sup>9</sup>Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton (1957), 12.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas Wilson, Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique, ed. G. H. Mair (1560; Oxford: Clarendon P., 1909), 217.

<sup>11</sup>Works, ed. Skeat, 129.

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