# THE FORCES OF ANTAGONISM

# in

# SPENSER'S THE FAERIE QUEENE

# THE FORCES OF ANTAGONISM

# IN

# SPENSER'S THE FAERIE QUEENE

By

GEORGE EDWARD HEACOCK, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

October 1967

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. T. H. Cain, for his helpful direction and criticisms during the preparation of this thesis. I am grateful also to Dr. A. W. Brink who, while having no formal connection with the directing or reading of this essay, tendered year-long moral support and often kept me from entering the Cave of Despair with all defences down and both ears open to persuasion.

CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

From the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth, scholars working on Spenser have concentrated on explaining his allegory, as the pages of the Variorum Spenser abundantly demonstrate. One need only mention the names of Hughes, Ruskin, and Greenlaw. Recent studies of Spenser, however, are remarkable for their variety of approaches — not only historical and moral, but symbolic, mythical and archetypal. No one approach, of course, is sufficient to the Spenser canon in general, and to The Faerie Queene in particular. Critics may each emphasize their own approaches to this poem, but always find themselves having to acknowledge alternative methods. The immense range of the poem itself, its complexities of structure, theme, allusion and even of purpose, necessitate the widest possible eclecticism in the critic who attempts to deal justly with its abundance. Too much has been written on Spenser for me to give credit or mention to it all here. Some brief indication of trends in the recent flood of Spenser scholarship, however, may be useful.

Historical studies in the traditions, conventions, and standards of Renaissance decorum which underlie The Faerie Queene are various. W.L. Renwick's Edmund Spenser (1925) is typical of this kind of approach. Isabel Rathborne's The Meaning of Spenser's Faeryland (1937; reprod. 1965), dealing with the pseudo-histories, national mythologies, and various other recondite influences, is perhaps the first study to apply critical and evaluative methods to find, as the title suggests, the "meaning" of the poem.

Probably the most completely moral evaluation of Spenser's allegory is Pauline Parker's Allegory in The Faerie Queene (1960, but written earlier). More recently William Nelson has given emphasis not only to the moral allegory but to the predominance of moral theme in the poem, as well as studying background influences and historical contingencies. His The Poetry of Edmund Spenser: A Study (1963) is one of the clearest guides to the understanding of the interrelationships of the parts in Spenser's organic canon.

Since the publication of Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism (1957), the symbolic, mythical, and archetypal approaches to Spenser have become very important. (According to its "Polemical Introduction" Frye's first purpose in writing the book was to apply the literary principles derived mainly from Blake to The Faerie Queene.) While being highly influential and popular, and in many ways enlightening, the archetypal or mythopoeic approach can become very rigid and monotonous, tending toward intense emphasis on the larger symbolic structures of a poem at the expense of its significant particularities. Frye's influence, however, is enormous and cannot be ignored. Virtually every book written on Spenser in the last ten years makes reference to him, kindly or unkindly. A.C. Hamilton's The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene is, by the author's own admission, highly influenced by Frye's thought. The book, however, is a product of mixed criticism, historical, moral, and at times theological to the point of Edenic. Hamilton carefully analyzes some related image-patterns, and traces the symbolic "flow" between books, though his central concern is to demonstrate the parallel structure in the poem, mainly in Frye's terms.

Harry Berger's The Allegorical Temper (1957) is the first of Spenserian "studies in depth" produced in the last decade. So "deep" is it at times that I find parts of it incomprehensible. Berger's approach, (he deals only with Book Two) is again mixed, though he speaks with aversion of Frye's "humanistic" mode and scope. The book is really historically critical, benefiting more from the New Criticism of Brooks and Ransom and the critical methods of I.A. Richards than from the apocalyptic and archetypal school. Berger, like most critics after him, assumes the consistency of the poem as a verbal artefact. His tendency to deal fully with particular episodes, and to analyze passages minutely and exhaustively, also aligns him closely to the critical practice of Erich Auerbach, whose Mimesis is the classical model of unflagging attention to detail.

Thomas P. Roche's study of Books Three and Four, The Kindly Flame (1964), involves a similar mixture of approaches. Roche stresses allegory to a degree, but also ranges into symbol- and image-patterns. Historical and mythological influences are taken into account in analyzing particular figures, themes, and motifs. These central books are fraught with a richness and variety of meaning, though Roche manages to elucidate passages without resorting to the density of Berger.

Donald S. Cheney's Spenser's Image of Nature (1966) deals supposedly "in depth" with Books Five and Six, emphasizing what the author calls Spenser's "image of Nature" in terms of pastoral setting, relationships between "wild man" and "shepherd", along with similarities and differences between the last two heroes of the poem, Artegall and Calidore. Here again the critical emphasis is on deliberate eclecticism,

on bringing all one knows or thinks to bear on the poem. Details, revived myths, parallels, and reappearing motifs are scrutinized in order to demonstrate the internal consistency of the fiction.

The above books are only a sample of more recent work on Spenser, but they indicate the growing trend toward more and more depth and complexity of critical thought in dealing with The Faerie Queene.

In preparing this thesis I have been influenced in various ways by all that I have read. But because my own view of the poem seems to be darker than most, I had better explain my initial assumptions.

First, I consider The Faerie Queene to be a complete poem as we have it. The Mutabilitie Cantos I also think to be complete in themselves. They stand as a crystallized statement of the meaning which logically moves into them from the end of Book Six. In a wider sense, the Mutabilitie Cantos themselves may be profitably considered as a distillation of the poet's most important concerns developed in the epic poem itself.

Second, The Faerie Queene exhibits an inward consistency of meaning: parallels, symbols, and recurrent motifs imply a thematic and aesthetic unity. The overriding unit of the poem is established by the controlling voice of the poet-persona. What that voice says about the poem defines our own approach to it. Consequently, I place a good deal of importance on the rhetoric of The Faerie Queene as the ever-present mode of telling us how to read the poem.

Third, in asserting the poem's consistency I also stress its consistent pessimism, which arises mainly from the poet's inability to

solve satisfactorily the problems of evil, fortune, and time. His final submission to those forces implies the disintegration of his own poem.

Therefore I examine those three forces of disintegration in terms of their own consistency and interpenetration throughout the poem, along with the explicit and implicit comment on those forces by the poet from book to book. In the final two books of the poem these antagonistic counter-elements emerge more strongly, shadowing forth a changing Faery-land. Related aspects of change are developed in such a way as to defeat both heroes and poet. The ending of The Faerie Queene is thus an ironic reversal of its beginning. In the last book of the poem the quality of both hero and poet is so changed that each destroys the other; with that expression of mutual defeat, the poem collapses.

My method is primarily critical, involving a close reading of the poem itself. Historical facts are sometimes used as aids, though I have tried to keep as closely as possible to the work itself. I claim no startling originality for any part of the paper. It is simply an expression of the views I have held on The Faerie Queene for some time, and whether banal or not, I accept full responsibility for them.

# CHAPTER I

## EVIL

Spenser often gives the genealogies of various heroes and heroines in order to expand their meaning and function in his poem. These sometimes detailed lineages help to shape and qualify the poet's, the fictional participants', and the reader's views of the meaning of Faeryland. The genenealogies which he provides for certain figures of evil are important for the same reason.

### 1. The Genealogies of Evil

Early in Book Five Spenser chooses an interesting metaphor to describe the presence of vice and its treatment in the Golden Age:

> Though vertue then were held in highest price,
> In those old times of which I doe intreat,
> Yet then likewise the wicked seede of vice
> Began to spring which shortly grew full great,
> And with their boughes the gentle plants did beat.
> But evermore some of the vertuous race
> Rose up, inspired with heroicke heate
> That cropt the braunches of the sient base,
> And with strong hands their fruitfull ranknes did deface.
> (V.i.1)

The plant image itself is common enough. Variations on it appear at times in the course of the poem. Night, for example, refers to herself as "root of Duessaes race" (I.v.27); Até's "seedes" of discord bring forth "an infinite increase" to trouble mankind (IV.i.25); and later in Book Five, Geryoneo's "armes", severed by Prince Arthur,

are compared to "fruitlesse braunches, which the hatchets slight / Hath pruned from the native tree, and cropped quite" (XI. ii). The metaphor is important for two reasons: first, it suggests the idea of organic growth and ramification; second, it suggests a unity manifesting itself in diverse forms. Indirectly, it brings to mind the idea of a family-tree. In all three ways the image serves as an appropriate, if simple, analogy to the character and presence of evil in the poem. Whenever family-trees of the vices appear they shadow forth the idea of a primitive underlying unity manifesting itself in apparent multiplicity in the surface world of the poem. All the figures of evil in Faeryland amalgamate and contain in themselves all the qualities of all their forebears. Such a concept of ancestry reveals all the traits of the evils which particular heroes face. By indicating the wider associations of the evils faced by a certain hero, these genealogies explain why Spenser makes a particular event happen to that hero.

It is often said that the theme of The Faerie Queene is the perpetual struggle of good and evil. That is only part of its theme. Spenser seems to me far more concerned with the mystery of iniquity itself than with any notion of struggle. The organic metaphor referred to above does not denote the growth and spread of evil as natural or ordered. Yet, while figuring mainly the ramified unity of the tree of vice, it leaves no doubt as to its sinister fecundity. There is, of course, no mention of the "sient base" itself being destroyed. Evil in the Golden Age, as in Faeryland, can only be controlled, not obliterated. C.S. Lewis' remark, that Spenser's evils "are all dead or dying things"[1] is not wholly true. It applies well enough to the small number

---

[1] C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 315.

of allegorized vices he uses as examples, but they do not include "all" the evils in the poem. The perverted forces of the mind symbolized in the Blatant Beast may well be morally and spiritually "dead or dying", but the main point of the poem rests on how very alive the Beast is as far as the poet is concerned. Certainly we should not overlook the paradoxes in Spenser's forms of evil. But in stressing the paradox of Malbecco, that his "life" is really "death",[2] Lewis misses the serious emphasis on the life of mere jealousy in the rest of the poem. Most of the first book of The Faerie Queene is devoted to a study of the hero's efficiency in keeping alive the very evils which appear to us as "dead or dying things" (I. iv. 18-38). The purely emblematic sins and vices show up only half a paradox contained in a larger one dealing with the more troublesome and pervasive non-visualized evils. Part of the motive behind the entire poem is an ironic interest in the capabilities of its heroes to destroy themselves. Evil may not be "spontaneity",[3] but it goes far in qualifying the spontaneity of those who try to do Good. By giving evil figures lineage and kinship, thereby expanding their meanings within a particular context and outside it, Spenser indirectly examines the idea and effectiveness of heroic struggle against them.

(a) Red Cross and Night

The House of Morpheus is the first important underworld focus in Book One (i. 39). It symbolizes the potentiality for evil in the Red Cross Knight's own mind of which he himself, being asleep,[4] is unaware.

---

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Sleep, or the state of being asleep, is the metaphor of spiritual ignorance or unconsciousness in Book One.

When activated by Archimago, the demon in his own mind, the House of Morpheus, as its name suggests, supplies many of the succeeding "forms" of evil met by Red Cross.[5] The irony of his struggle against outer evils which are really inner ones, is the intrinsic point to the first book. As Roger Sale puts it, "the illusion evil is best at creating is the illusion that enemies are really external and visible."[6] When the "eye of reason" is "with rage yblent" (ii. 5), Red Cross begins his descent to spiritual paralysis, near-death, and despair. The irony of the hero's unknowing is demonstrated partly through his growing passivity, the sense we have that, until his purification in the House of Holiness, he recognizes nothing very perceptively inside or outside himself.

The first passage to emphasize the hero's degradation, and to contain an important genealogy, is the meeting of Duessa and Night (I. v. 20-44). Red Cross is again asleep (v. 17), and to show that this whole incident is contained in the hero's own demonically activated mind, Spenser models Sans Joy's healing by Aesculapius (v. 44) on that of Red Cross himself (v. 17). The important figure here is Night herself. Her presence in the House of Morpheus is carefully mentioned earlier (i. 39), and the extended treatment she receives in this episode is intended to emphasize the growing darkness of Red Cross's own mind. Spenser always speaks pejoratively about Night.[7] Even here there are pessimistic tones

---

[5]Houses in Book One symbolize mental qualities or states.

[6]Roger Sale, "Spenser's Undramatic Poetry" in Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Paul J. Alpers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 439.

[7]It is significant that throughout the poem Spenser makes no distinction among Night as part of the cycle of time in nature, as a mythical Figure, or as a symbol of the dark forces within the human mind.

which suggest the growing disaffection with man's ability to deal with the evils Night symbolizes. Night speaks in terms of the archetypal conflict between herself and Day (v. 25), and she has power to affect the "sonnes of Day". Admittedly, Spenser's treatment of Night involves irony and paradox, and he takes care to point out the limitations on her and on those whom she controls. But the resolution to the problem Night presents is not found in the irony alone. Spenser's treatment of evil is both ironic and unironic. Here, while emphasizing the fact that Night is damned, he puts a balancing stress on her eternal presence by referring to her age:

> O thou most aucient Grandmother of all,
> More old than Jove, whom thou at first didst breede,
> Or that great house of Gods caelestiall,
> Which wast begot in Daemogorgon's hall,
> And sawst the secrets of the world unmade . . . (I. v. 22)

The entire passage (v. 20-44) operates through a brilliant equipoise between the effectiveness and the ineffectiveness of Night and those who are under her direction. They are all subservient to Fate (v. 25), and like Aesculapius, "that cannot hope for thing" (v. 43), associated with despair. Yet the fact of their exclusion from a higher order of existence does not weaken Night's desire for revenge: "Yet shall they not escape so freely all" (v. 26). The poet himself acknowledges her power in "heaven" as well as in "hell" (v. 34). Thus Night explicitly asserts her connection with all forms of evil met in Book One. Equally important is the growing sense throughout this episode of the dark forces surrounding Faeryland. Seen almost diagrammatically, the world of Night underlies the newer creation of order and light and also appears over it as part of the progress of time and mutability. The threat to Faeryland posed by these older uncreating forces, both of the

mind and of the outer cosmos, is a constant source of tension in the poem, and it is never wholly resolved. Duessa's exhortation to Night sets up part of that tension:

> Up then, up dreary Dame, of darknesse Queene,
> Go gather up the reliques of thy race,
> Or else go them avenge, and let be seene,
> That dreaded Night in brightest day hath place,
> And can the children of faire light deface. (v. 24)

The sequence of creation itself (v. 22) may reinforce the pessimism which more and more qualifies the position of Faeryland and the nature of achievement in it.

(B) Arthur and Night

Prince Arthur's long outburst against Night (III. iv. 55-60) is strategically intended as an answer to the claims and potency of Night asserted in Book One. Arthur, we know, is the highest expression of the virtues contained in all the poem's heroes, and his speech here offers a condensed gloss on the position and mental state of each of them in time of depression and difficulty. The passage is notable for the number of deliberate echoes and responses it contains to previous episodes. In Arthur's short encomium of Day (iv. 59) he refers to Una: "Truth is his daughter; he her first did breed, / Most sacred virgin, without spot of sin". In his list of Night's proteges, he mentions "Shamefull deceipt" (iv. 58), recalling Duessa's parentage of "Deceit and Shame" given in her conversation with Night in Book One (v. 26). The "thousand fancies" which beat his "idle braine" (iv. 54) bring back an echo of the "troublous sights / And dreames" which earlier led Red Cross astray (I. ii. 4-6). Arthur's vagarious state is compared to "a ship, whose Lodestarre suddenly / Covered with cloudes, her Pilot hath

dismayed" (iv. 53). Earlier in the same canto Britomart used a similar metaphor to describe her own mental turmoil: "Love my lewd Pilot hath a restlesse mind, / And fortune Boteswaine no assurance knows, But saile withouten starres gainst tide and wind . . . ." (iv. 9). Looking ahead, we find that Arthur's situation here provides a model for Scudamour's later (IV. v. 43-45), whose trouble has causes similar to the Prince's. Arthur, in short, is subject to the same evils and unfortunate circumstances as are all the lesser heroes in the poem. His capacities for dealing with them may be greater, but he suffers in proportion.

The Prince's tirade against Night is in part a catharsis. Instead of repressing the emotions, an action which might lead to the "eye of reason" being blinded "with rage", he releases them. Yet such an outburst leads only to an admission of vulnerability. Arthur, unlike Red Cross, knows what he is facing, is aware that dangers encompass him, yet can do nothing about them. When Night comes, his awareness of evil is ironically balanced by his enforced passivity. In a wider sense, the Prince is implicitly admitting to his dependence on fortune and time. His rehearsal of Night's origins and kin (iv. 55) and the evils united under the symbol of darkness (iv. 58) reinforce what the poet says of Night earlier: "For she in hell and heaven had power equally" (I. v. 34). The important question Arthur asks is really unanswerable:

> What had th' eternall Maker need of thee,
> The world in his continuall course to keepe,
> That doest all things deface, ne lettest see
> The beautie of his worke? (iv. 51).

The knowledge that Night and the vices sprung from her are of a lower order than that symbolized by Day and Light is not a complete solution to his difficulties. Arthur, like the poet of the Mutabilitie Cantos,

can only look forward to the final victory over Night and the reward of Heaven (iv. 59). Such a victory is not possible in Faeryland. From this point on, Arthur's sense of the endlessness of his venture grows stronger. His speech emphasizes the impossibility of solving the problem of the nature and efficacy of evil as first presented in the long passage on Night in Book One. Spenser, through Arthur, crystallizes the whole heroic response to the world and to the quest, and substantially darkens it by throwing a shadow between the idea of effort and the affirmation of its end. In cursing Night the Prince, ironically, admits to its power. The first of the poem's "sonnes of Day" is not wholly convinced by his own argument against Darkness.

(C) Guyon and Evil

Between the Red Cross Knight's ignorance of evil and Prince Arthur's almost tragic awareness of it comes Guyon's developing knowledge of it. The temptations which Guyon faces make their appeal to his senses, especially to his sight. He is, correspondingly, curious to see and know the temptation which he must refuse. Guyon is aware because he is self-aware. His success throughout Book Two is largely the result of his refusal to be measured by any standards but his own. His knowledge is essential to his moral balance, to the active good contained in his own mind. It is a specific function of his curiosity, then, to find out the lineages of Phedon (II. iv. 36) and Pyrochles (iv. 41).

The incident concerning Phedon is strategically placed just before that which divulges the information about Pyrochles in order to clarify the relationship between them. Phedon, in fact, is an obvious

preliminary to Pyrochles. Guyon intervenes between them and can thus view both objectively. Phedon, his "reason blent through passion" (iv. 7) is subject to the same extreme and misdirected urges as those emblematized in Pyrochles. Furor and Occasion attack them both. The "fowle despight" (iv. 29), "sharp gealousy" (iv. 23), and "hellish fury" (iv. 30) to which Phedon has succumbed, are implicit in Pyrochles' genealogy (iv. 41). No sooner has the young squire given his ancestor's name, Coradin, than Atin races toward him and Guyon. The similarity between the two names is significant. Coradin means "heart-strife", Atin, "strife", the latter figure being an externalization of the tendency or state in both Phedon and Pyrochles. The connection between the two is further reinforced: the Palmer's admonition to Phedon to curb his passions (iv. 34-35) is repeated in essence in Guyon's exhortation to Pyrochles (v. 16). Similarly, the Palmer's admission of the immortality of Furor (iv. 10) is balanced by Atin's reference (later proved false) to the indestructibility of Pyrochles (iv. 42). The ancestry of Pyrochles and Cymochles is dutifully reeled off by Atin. These two elemental siblings are

> The sonnes of old Acrates and Despight,
> Acrates sonne of Phlegeton and Iarre;
> But Phlegeton is sonne of Herebus and Night;
> But Herebus son of Aeternitie is hight. (iv. 41)

> So from immortal race he does proceede,
> That mortall hands may not withstand his might . . .
> (iv. 42)

Against this infernal but eternal background of evil Guyon's limitations are set. But he has been prepared to accept them by virtue of the Palmer's previous warning about Furor (iv. 10). The ending of this canto is partially comic. Atin's threat (iv. 42) about the danger

of being caught by Pyrochles is neatly parried by Guyon's cool response, "His be that care, whom most it doth concerne" (iv. 43), and immediate question, "but whither with such hasty flight / Art thou now bound?" (iv. 43). Atin says that he is off to fetch Occasion, and is immediately scolded by the Palmer for his stupidity (iv. 44). As the final touch, Guyon shows Atin the figure of Occasion herself whom he has chained and padlocked (iv. 44).

There is the strong suggestion that Guyon knows everything about Pyrochles before he even comes to meet him. During their fight Guyon recalls part of his opponent's ancestry which he has learned from Atin. He sees his enemy's lineage as a symbolic and chaotic cluster of passions. In the hero's diagnostic view, Pyrochles becomes virtually transparent:

> Fly, O Pyrochles, fly the dreadfull warre,
> That in thy selfe thy lesser parts do move,
> Outrageous anger, and woe-working iarre,
> Direfull impatience, and hart murdring love;
> Those, those thy foes, those warriours far remove,
> Which thee to endlesse bale captived lead. (v. 16)

Aspects of these same elemental passions recur throughout. Pyrochles is really not a very subtle creation, and Guyon's dealings with him do not require much subtlety either. All the hero has to do is refuse to succumb to the forces which rage in Pyrochles in order to defeat him. Temperance, throughout Book Two, appears as an exclusive, even negative, virtue. But this negation itself is one of the most effective ways of showing up the irony of evil when it has nothing to defeat but itself. When Guyon is conscious of what Pyrochles represents and equally conscious of his own limitations and capabilities, Furor and Occasion have only Pyrochles to attack, and as the latter implicitly admits, his genealogy is his own punishment; it is essentially the same paradox as we find in Malbecco or Despair:

most wretched man alive,
Burning in flames, yet no flames can I see,
And dying daily, daily yet revive:
O Atin, helpe to me last death to give. (vi. 45)

Yet the problem of evil presented in Pyrochles is not so straightforward or simple as that. Guyon, true to Night's threat (her connection with Pyrochles is shown in his genealogy), does "not escape so freely". Atin too is partly right. It is not Guyon's "mortall hands" which destroy Phrochles and Cymochles, but Arthur's more than human equipment (viii. 45, 52). It is Arthur who repulses and destroys Maleger before that allegorical analogue to Guyon, the House of Alma (xi. 46-67). The "goodly Frame of Temperance" (xii. 1) cannot raise itself by its own power: Guyon does not recover from his faint outside Mammon's cave until the restored sons of Acrates have been eliminated. The hero's faint is the counterpart to Red Cross's "sleeping" ignorance. The strange battle in Canto eight, with its mixture of sword and shield, is really between Arthur and the Pyrochles-in-Guyon who must, with difficulty, be destroyed before the "goodly frame" of the hero can wake itself and begin "to rise".

The death of Cymochles is essential for another reason: his relationship to Acrasia (v. 27). There is an etymological connection between Acrates (Cymochles' father) and Acrasia.[8] Both symbolize potential threats to Guyon's own inner krasis. The description of Cymochles in the Bower of Bliss (v. 34) is partially recalled in that of Guyon's presence there later on (xii. 65, 69). Cymochles "his wandring thought in deepe desire does steepe" (v. 34), and Guyon, who "gan secret plesaunce to embrace" (xii. 65) on seeing the two nymphs, is shortly "rebuk't" by the Palmer for his

---

[8] Acrates — from Akrateia (ἀκράτεια): I. want of power, debility; II. incontinence, want of self-control.

Acrasia — from Akrasia (ἀκρᾶσία): bad mixture, ill-temperature.

"wandring eyes" (xii. 69). Guyon is potentially able to become another Cymochles, or Verdant (xii. 79-82), just as he might have become another Pyrochles (xii. 68). With both brothers dead, and the hero's reason in control, the misdirected passions symbolized in Pyrochles and Cymochles are directed by Guyon into the righteous wrath by which he destroys the Bower of Bliss (xii. 83).

By reason of his Stoic perseverance and the clean episodic finality in Book Two, Guyon's quest seems the most successful of any in the poem. Yet the final question he asks, having realized the end of his labours, cannot be answered so readily as those he has asked before. The Palmer can, of course, tell him what the beasts were before they were willingly dehumanized (xii. 85). But the implicit question which is begged by never openly asked, 'Why should they choose to remain beasts?', leaves the ending of this quest in the same kind of unresolved suspension characteristic of all the others in the poem. Guyon's own temperance cannot provide an entirely satisfactory answer. All the hero can do is to accept the discrepancy between the "excellence" of man's creation and the perverted choice which allows him "To be a beast" (xii. 87). Acrasia is only bound, not killed (xii. 82). The same darkness of mind symbolized in Pyrochles and Cymochles reappears in the "furie mad" of the beast-men who vilify and "miscall" the Palmer (xii. 86). Guyon's wish for these "figures hideous" (xii. 85) to be changed to their "former state" of men is as sincere and as ironic as was his warning to Pyrochles to become temperate (v. 16). The struggle has availed to a degree if only to point up the mysterious quality of evil against which struggle is ineffective. The absurd yet indestructible nature of the base mind which injects a faint note of disillusionment into this final part of Guyon's quest is

taken up in Arthur's speech in Book Three (iv. 56). Guyon, with his much more limited experience is concerned with the "night" in the soul, and for consolation looks to his inner good. Arthur links together the Night of nature, the night of the mind, and the mythical dark goddess of Hell. Guyon excludes aspects of experience. Arthur includes his own experience with that of others and broods over both. At the end of his emotional outburst, Arthur prays for the sun to chase Night away "from whence she came, to hell" (III. iv. 60). In the Blatant Beast, whose ancestry and symbolic relationships I shall consider next, we see a partial and ironic negation to Arthur's wish.

## (D) Calidore and The Blatant Beast

The Blatant Beast is given two genealogies. Calidore, the hero assigned to his pursuit, refers to him as the offspring of Cerberus and Chimaera (VI. i. 8). Later, the hermit tells Serena and Timias that the beast was born of Typhaon and Echidna (vi. 10-12). Both sets of parents have suggestive features in common. Chimaera and Echidna were themselves composite monsters. Cerberus, watch-dog of Hell, has some affinity to Typhaon (or Typhon), born of Tartarus, or Hades. The words "commixture" (VI. i. 8) and "commixtion" (vi. 12) used to describe his begetting serve also to convey the idea of the beast as an amalgamation of similar monsters and various aspects of other evils encountered throughout the poem. Spenser does not describe the Beast fully in particular detail, nor does he assign him a fixed meaning. Instead he presents him in such a way as to suggest his affinity with as many forms of vice as possible. Heninger points out a relationship between the

Blatant Beast and Orgoglio's seven-headed monster (I. viii. 16-18).[9] Cheney sees his connection with the Dragon in Book One (xi. 20-23).[10] Other links are possible: Eurytion's "two-headed dogge", Orthrus, is another offspring of Typhaon and Echidna (V. x. 9-11). Geryoneo's blaspheming "Monster" has the same parentage (V. xi. 20-23). There is a specific reference to Cerberus himself in Book One (v. 34). No definition of the Beast's meaning can be totally wrong. William Nelson suggests that he "stands for shame, deserved or not, public or private."[11] A. C. Hamilton broadens his definition then fixes it: "he cannot be defined further than to say that he is Antichrist: with his thousand defaming, blaspheming tongues he is that total perversion of the Word against the Word."[12] P. C. Bayley goes as far as one can in glossing the Beast as "the restless tormenting figure of Evil-at-large."[13] Calidore, as Artegall says, has indeed "much adoe to deale withall" (VI. i. 10).

In this final book the whole idea of the quest receives its most penetrating and ironic scrutiny by the poet. Within Book Six the Blatant

---

[9] S.K. Heninger, Jr., "The Orgoglio Episode in The Faerie Queene", ELH, XXVI (1959), p. 186.

[10] Donald Cheney, Spenser's Image of Nature (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 183.

[11] William Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser: A Study (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 289.

[12] A.C. Hamilton, The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 195.

[13] P.C. Bayley, "Order, Grace and Courtesy in Spenser's World" in Patters of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Memory of C.S. Lewis, ed. John Lawlor (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 200.

Beast is the frustrating and paralyzing agent both of Calidore's quest and of Spenser's poem. He is a composite of sinister mythical and human elements. His tongues are of "sundry kindes" and "sundry qualities" (xii. 27): "of dogs", "of cats", "of Beares", "of Tygres": "But most of them were tongues of mortall men, / Which spake reprochfully, not caring where nor when" (xii. 27). He may well be Antichrist or the general emblem of Evil, but he is associated with anti-social forces, with Envy and Detraction (V. xii. 37), and later with Despetto, Decetto, and Defetto (VI. v. 14), all of which have to do with defamation of reputation, and most important, of poetry (VI. xii. 41). Most troublesome for both hero and poet, each of whom may emphasize different aspects of the monster, is the fact of his indestructibility. Calidore puts initial stress only on his attempt to catch the beast, to "pursew", "chase", "overtake", and only hopefully to "subdew" him (VI. i. 7). The chase itself does not end until the last canto of the book. Both Calidore's pursuit and the Beast's fleetness of foot lead at times to almost total ambiguity. The hero, apparently, cannot be harmed by the Beast, yet cannot destroy him. But at one point when the monster catches sight of his pursuer, "away he flew, / Knowing his fatall hand by former fear" (xii. 25). The irony extends to both hero and fiend: neither is totally effective against the other. Calidore, his polish, sophistication, and "naturall" virtues aside, is himself the most blameworthy of the poem's heroes. There is, in fact, the strong suggestion when we first see the Beast in the context of his appearance, that he is the representative symbol of the vices of Gloriana's court itself which attend the recalling of Artegall (V. xii. 27). Calidore is fighting unsuccessfully

against the perverse aspect of that very society of which he himself is the sterling product. I want to examine Calidore's conduct more closely in the second chapter. For the moment I shall look briefly at the mythological significance of the Blatant Beast as it relates specifically to the functions and limitations of the hero.

The monsters noted above who had some symbolic and genealogical relationship to the Blatant Beast were dealt with finally in specific episodes in previous books. There is no such finality in the sixth book. The governing metaphor for the hero in Book Five is the myth of Hercules, the archetypal hero embodying all the virtues of the vita activa. Prince Arthur's slaying of Geryoneo repeats in the context of Faeryland Hercules' killing of the triple-bodied Geryon (V. xii). Artegall, though not consistently identified with Hercules, has some affinity with the antique hero (V. i. 2-3). Calidore is treated similarly at a few points, but with notable variations. The poet likens his muzzling of the beast to Hercules' capture of Cerberus, but the use of the myth as a mode of identification conflicts oddly with what Calidore actually does to the Beast (VI. xii. 35). Hercules, we are told, brought up Cerberus from the underworld to earth

> To see the hatefull sunne, that he might tell
> To griesly Pluto, what on earth was donne,
> And to the other damned ghosts, which dwell
> For aye in darknesse, which day light doth shonne.
> (VI. xii. 35)

Hercules returns Cerberus to hell as the completion of his twelfth and final labour. Calidore muzzles and chains the Blatant Beast, but his final labour is ironically nullified when the beast breaks his chain. Cerberus himself, is seen in the underworld in Book One (v. 34). In

Book Six, we see the offspring of Cerberus (and of other monsters) running loose in the world whom no hero can return to hell. Spenser is reversing the myth in order to present his hero in an ironic light: Calidore is an ineffectual Hercules.

There is an additional simile used to describe the Blatant Beast, even more significant for the poem than the allusion to Cerberus. He is likened to

> the hell-borne Hydra, which they faine
> That great Alcides whilome overthrew,
> After that he had labourd long in vaine
> To crop his thousand heads, the which still new
> Forth budded, and in greater number grew. (xii. 32)

The word "faine" may be tendentious. The Blatant Beast is a reincarnation of the hydra, and the suggestivity of "faine" (it has overtones of impossibility) puts the original myth itself in an ambiguous light for purposes of shadowing forth the ambiguity in Calidore's handling of the Beast. With the breaking of the chain which holds the monster in a kind of repressed suspension, the whole idea of Calidore's quest, the concept of the vita activa, is negated by irony. The image of the unslain hydra with its "thousand heads" anticipates the continued growth of the "thousand-tongued" Beast (xii. 11) and recalls the perpetual branching of the tree of vice which opens Book Five. In his extended meanings the Blatant Beast is both the "sient base" and the "braunches" of that tree, the unity and the accumulated diversity. He is the offspring of the hound of hell, but also the symbol of hell itself: his mouth appears "like the mouth of Orcus griesly grim" (xii. 26). For the poet he is that fatal invidia, for the poem a final symbol of ubiquitous evil linking the mythical past, faery present, and the poet's own world under the primordial shadow of Night.

The genealogies of evil figures themselves can only do so much in providing an essential unity among such representations. The above treatment is admittedly stiff-fingered. What concerned me more was the fact that such lineages provided a way of measuring the hero, and in a wider sense, of giving a rather sinister perspective on Faeryland itself, surrounded and penetrated by dark forces. Faeryland is actually a relatively new and rather fragile order beset by evil forces stemming from a far older creation, and in the case of Night herself, from pre-creation. The Titans were older than the Olympains, and many of the gigantic evils in the poem are representatives of this displaced but threatening race. Orgoglio, Argante and Ollyphant (III. vii. 47-49), like Mutabilitie (Vii. vi. 26), are born of "Earth, great Chaos child". Many of the poem's evils are described in terms of age: Despair, Mammon, Até, Sclaunder, aside from Night herself, "more old than Jove". Age in itself refers not only to such characters ad dead or dying things, but also to their omnipresence, their eternity. All figures of evil are interrelated either through similar ancestries or implicit association. The "fosters" slain by Timias (III. v. 22), the savages by Calepine (VI. viii. 49), and Geryoneo by Arthur (V. xi. 14), when dead, all seek entrance through their "mother earth" into the "balefull house of endlesse night". Lucifera (I. iv. 10-11) and Philotime (II. vii. 49) are both hell-born daughters of Pluto and Prosperpina. All underworld foci in each book are, of course, interconnected: The House of Morpheus, the cave of Despair, the cave of Mammon, Proteus' undersea prison, Malengine's cave, and the tunnels of the brigands, are close to, or identified with, hell. That they are so related is a sign of the parallel structure of the poem. In the next section I

want to examine some of the subtler methods Spenser employs in allying and expanding the presences of his forms of evil.

## 2. The Narrative and Rhetorical Kinship of Evil

In Book One (ix. 28-54), Despair, a fixed allegorical figure, employs a brilliant though self-contradictory argument in order to persuade the Red Cross knight to kill himself. But previous to his coming to Despair's cave, Red Cross himself, during his captivity in Orgoglio's prison (viii. 38-41), appears and speaks like the "man of hell" he meets in this episode. Despair sits in his cave and apparently does not move outside it. Yet he knows what Red Cross's situation and state of mind were when the knight was still in the giant's dungeon: "Witness the dongeon deepe, wherein of late / Thy life shut up, for death so oft did call" (ix. 54). In short, Red Cross "despairs" even before he meets the figure of Despair. The point of the episode, of course, is to show the failure of the knight's self-knowledge. Despair is inside his own mind, but because Red Cross does not know this fact, he thinks the evil to be external to himself. He is still trapped by the illusion created by Archimago in the first canto of the book. Una rescues her champion, and with no prospective victims to work on save himself, Despair attempts an unsuccessful suicide. The irony is explicit only to the reader. Red Cross does not see Despair's futile attempt to hang himself; it is the poet's own rhetoric which excludes the hero and includes only us. Later, the irony extends to the knight as well because he is unaware that Despair "despairs" of ever dying. It is precisely because of his unawareness that the hero temporarily succumbs once more to the death-wish during his fight

with the Dragon (xi). There is a deliberate echo here (it is the poet who makes it) of Despair's own situation: "Death better were, death did he oft desire, / But death will never come when needes require." (xi. 28).

The tendency to despair, apart from its vizualization in Book One, recurs throughout the poem. Again, Spenser is more concerned with the unseen evils, far more pervasive and threatening, than their emblematic representations. Una herself verges on despair just before her rescue by Arthur: "Mine eyes no more on vanitie shall feed, / But seeled up with death, shall have their deadly meed" (I. vii. 23). Amavia, a more extreme case, succeeds in killing herself out of despair for her dead husband, Mortdant (II. i. 36; 56). Timias, the perpetually stricken squire of the poem, comes close to despair over his passion for Belphoebe, and his sequence of "Dye rather, dye" echoes Despair's words to Red Cross: "Death is the end of woes: die soone, O fairies sonne". (III. v. 45-47; I. ix. 47). Despair is that unseen presence as a state of mind which is the prime obstacle to quest-fulfillment. Virtually every hero and heroine comes close to this stage of psychic imbalance at some time or another. Even the minor characters do not escape. Cymoent, for example, on hearing of Marinell's misfortune at the hands of Britomart, launches into a rehearsal of life's woes and ends with a prayer for "glad death" (Iv. iv. 38). I choose two more examples of this kind of echo- and response-pattern to illustrate it further.

In Book Two we see "Occasion" as an allegorical figure (II. iv. 12-13). Unseen "occasions", however, govern the fluctuating course of the poem. Artegall is recalled to Faery Court "through occasion" (V. vii. 27) and his situation recalls ironically, but perhaps intentionally,

the Palmer's words to Atin concerning "Occasion" herself: "She comes unsought, and shonned followes eke" (II. iv. 44). Such connections between allegorical and non-allegorical figures, locales, passions, are found throughout the poem. They are manifestations of Spenser's technique whereby he forges the essential syncretistic unity of his work. Allegorized areas comment upon and are in turn qualified by non-allegorized episodes and occurrences which take place on either side of them, both inside and outside a given book. An example follows which illustrates this technique on a wider scale.

Prince Arthur's long outburst against Night (III. iv. 55-61) has nothing overtly allegorical about it, but it provides the germinal form of the allegorical House of Care incident involving Scudamour in the next book (IV. v. 32-45). Initially, both Arthur and Scudamour are presented ironically. Arthur thinks that Florimell is his long-sought Queen of Faery, and Scudamour, more gullible, taking seriously the perversions of Até and Duessa, thinks that Britomart has stolen his Armoret. Night is an important symbolic presence in both episodes. Arthur's "bitter cares" are developed into the House of Care itself in which Scudamour spends his restless night. Arthur's "idle braine" is plagued by fancies; Scudamour's "ydle braine" by his fear of Amoret's rape by Britomart. When day comes Arthur goes on his way "With heavie looke and lumpish pace"; an almost exact echo of this phrase occurs when Scudamour rises up "like heavie lump of lead". Spenser obviously had Arthur in mind for this part of his description of Scudamour. At one point, with the momentary focus on Care pounding his anvil, there is an indirect hearkening back to the Prince:

So dreadfully he did the andvile beat,
That seem'd to dust he shortly would it drive:
So huge his hammer and so fierce his heat,
That seem'd a rocke of Diamond it could rive,
And rend asunder quite, if he therto list strive. (IV. v. 37)

That "rocke of Diamond" reminds us of Arthur's diamond shield, which in the Prince's own emotional turmoil could not protect him from his own cares or drive away the darkness. The whole point behind noting these echoes and repetitions is to examine aspects of various heroes' minds in response to similar evils presented to each of them differently, and to see the differing reactions those evils evoke. Arthur knows what he faces, Scudamour does not, so tries to find out — "but all in vaine", because a little like Red Cross, he does not know that the problem is with his own mind, a condition of unawareness more ironically manifested later in his actions in the Temple of Venus (IV. x. 29-58).

In the next section I want to look at the particularly suggestive use of words themselves in unifying and extending the presences of evil figures.

## 3. Verbal Kinesis

There is very often a wealth of meaning behind Spenser's use of single words and phrases; they release a kinetic power into the narrative which qualifies and tempers the meaning of a particular passage and our response to it. The word "seems", for example, occurs many times in the poem, and there is always the temptation to pass over it without much attention. But "seems" is a loaded word in Book One. To Una and Red Cross the wood "seemes" to be a "Faire harbour" (I. i. 7), Archimago "seemde" sober and "sagely sad" (I. i. 29), Duessa appears as a "seeming

Lady faire" (I. iv. 13). The whole tension in the legend of Holiness arises from the discrepancy between what "seems" and what "is", between the illusion and the reality and the efforts of a "clownishe" young knight to find the difference.

I have already said something about the elisions and repetitions of episodes in Book Two. The verbal echoes and responses in that book are equally numerous. One example will illustrate the point. It may not seem important at first sight that the dart which Atin hurls at Guyon is "Headed with ire and vengeable despight" (II. iv. 46). But if we recall that those two qualities are mentioned in Pyrochles' genealogy, and elsewhere throughout the book, the unitive function of the words becomes plain.

Similarly, the etymologies of words often explain the deeper meanings behind them. When we see Red Cross "Disarmd, disgract, and inwardly dismayde" (I. vii. 11), he is just that. The knight has removed his armour and, until Arthur's coming, without the "Grace" which will save him, on the point of being "unmade", slain, by Orgoglio.[14] Orgoglio is himself "dismaied" (viii. 11) by Arthur, and the word has the same double force: the giant is "dismayed" (saddened) by the loss of an arm, and "unmade" (destroyed) in addition. In a line such as "And that misformed shape he mis-shaped more" (viii. 16), Spenser is virtually explaining to the reader how he uses his words and puns for extended significance.

---

[14]The linguistic and etymological factors in Spenser's language have been well treated by Martha Craig, "The Secret Wit of Spenser's Language" in Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism ed. Paul J. Alpers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 447-472. See also W.B.C. Watkins, Shakespeare and Spenser (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 259-292.

Significant words, because used often, develop an immense suggestive power. We are told of Duessa's cup, "Death and despeyre did many thereof sup" (viii. 14). In the same stanza she pours its contents over Timias, momentarily paralyzing him. But something of this action may still have been in Spenser's mind in the third book (v. 45-47) when he presents Timias "despairing" over Belphoebe and wishing for "death". This verbal energy works in various ways. Duessa, at one point, seems to have clustered around her several allegorical qualities in embryonic form: "The proud Duessa full of wrathfull spight, / And fierce disdaine . . . / . . . Scorning the let of so unequall foe" (viii. 13). Orgoglio and Disdayne are giant siblings (VI. vii. 41-42) and by means of a verbal chiasmus that spans four books, Spenser turns each of them into the other: Orgoglio is "Inflam'd with . . . high disdaine" (I. viii. 7); Disdayne "scorned" his enemies "in his over-weening pryde" (VI. vii. 42). Both are "scornfull", and thus qualitatively related to Duessa above, who is also associated with pride, disdain, wrath, and scorn.

All this intertwining and verbal connecting may seem no more than a kind of shell-game. I do not think that it is. The unity among Spenser's figures of evil is made verbally as well as allegorically and geneaologically. The forceful insistence on key words is what links Phedon to Pyrochles in Book Two, and what allows the extreme passions in the latter to be recalled again in the brilliant metamorphosis of Malbecco: "With extreme fury he became quite mad, / And ran away, ran with himselfe away . . . "Griefe, and despight, and gealousie, and scorne / Did all the way him follow hard behind" (III. x. 54, 55). It is through exactly this process of verbal

recall that Orgoglio comes comically to life again in the pride of Paridell, who, meeting Britomart,

> forth issew'd; like as a boistrous wind,
> Which in th' earthes hollow caves hath long bin hid,
> And shut up fast within her prisons blind,
> Makes the huge element against her kind
> To move, and tremble as it were aghast,
> Until that it an issew forth may find . ... . (III. ix. 15)

The prime reason for these and many other links is succinctly given by Tillyard: "Spenser could remember what had gone before."[15]

One of the most obvious ways of linking together figures of evil is simply to have them recognize each other. Night, with some irony, remembers Duessa (I. v. 27). Atin knows Archimago "of yore" (II. vi. 48). Até is known "full well" by Duessa (IV. i. 19). Sans Loy instinctively recognizes his "syre", Archimago (I. iii. 39). Since all these evil figures are multiple aspects of the same "sient base", it is understandable that they should be aware of each other. It often seems as if the tentacular bonds joining the various figures of evil together are more permanent than those among the inhabitants of Faeryland itself. There is also the impression throughout the poem that the characters who represent the vices have a greater knowledge of what is going to happen than the questers themselves whose knowledge is deliberately restricted by the poet. Archimago knows Una and Red Cross long before they ever come to know him. Since The Faerie Queene is a poem about the ironic and dubious position of man in the world, concerned more with the limitations of man than with his capabilities, it is entirely consistent with Spenser's purpose that evil should "surround" the good in just this way.

---

[15] E.M.W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 286.

Certainly, all figures of evil have their limitations, and there are degrees of subtlety and complexity in their presentation. The figure of Sclaunder, for example, is not a very elusive form or representation of evil (IV. viii. 23-27). She is something inserted simply for the purposes of the moment, to show that the situation Arthur, Aemylia, and Amoret find themselves in can be pervertedly interpreted by slanderous minds. Spenser himself feels a certain hesitancy in developing such a simple figure, and finally has to leave her and speak in his own voice (viii. 29). There is, in short, no inner reason, one which is there in the narrative itself, to explain satisfactorily the presence of Sclaunder. Archimago himself is described in a very traditional way in Book One. But he exemplifies most clearly the paradox which exists in all forms of evil: that between their effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Since he also points to the larger concerns of the poem, the forces which augment yet overrule evil itself, he offers a good way to begin the next chapter. A brief examination of Archimago here will prove useful.

## 4. Archimago

Like many of Spenser's vizualized evils, Archimago is associated with extreme age (I. iii. 38) and implicitly allied with the familial confederacy originating with old Night. We may recognize him as Satan, but he is never referred to as Satan explicitly by the poet or by any of the other participants in the poem. Una is the only good character who, late in Book One, recognizes who he is, and she simply refers to him as the "falsest man alive" (xii. 34). The gap between what Spenser tells us about Archimago and what he lets the heroes find out for themselves

is very large. His prime function has to do with division and doubleness, with dividing "into double parts" (ii. 9) and he thereby initiates the problem of doubt (dubium: the state of being unable to choose between two things) which leads to Red Cross's spiritual collapse. His first and only significant creation is Duessa. The prefix to his name suggests the directing and ordering capacity he has over subsequent forms and appearances of evil. Pico's Oration contains a brief discussion of the magus in both his good and bad aspects; a similar idea is behind Spenser's development of his "enchaunter", who subjects "man to the enemies of God . . ., calls him away from God",[16] and finally "makes man the bound slave of wicked powers."[17] In one place Spenser refers to him as "The cunning Architect of cancred guile" (II. i. 1), and the term "Architect" precisely describes his planning and building of false structures and situations which confront the first and second heroes of the poem. He is also related to the classical shape-shifter, Proteus:

> For by his mighty science he could take
> As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
> As ever Proteus to himselfe could make:
> Sometimes a fowle, sometimes a fish in lake,
> Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,
> That of himselfe he oft for feare would quake,
> And oft would flie away. (I. ii. 10)

His Protean features allow him to escape from captivity (xii. 36) and anticipate his implicit connection with the Proteus in Book Three (iv. 37) and with the less subtle Malengin (V. ix. 5-6; 17-18).

There is a comic note in the stanza quoted above which becomes amplified later. Archimago frightens himself with his own power of

---

[16] Picodella Mirandola, "Oration on the Dignity of Man" in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man ed. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 249.

[17] Ibid., p. 248.

changing into various satanic representations (fowl, fox, dragon). The mock battle with Sans Loy (I. iii. 34-39) is no more than a comic interlude to reinforce the idea of the devil himself as fortune's fool. Like Satan in the Book of Job, Archimago is trapped into wandering up and down in the world. The most effective way of getting rid of the devil, according to tradition, is to scorn or laugh at him, and that is what Braggadocchio does to Archimago who has been completely duped by that floating parody of knighthood (II. iii. 13). Furthermore, the imitation-sword Archimago makes for Braggadocchio is never delivered (II. iii. 18). It plays a certain part in the battle between Arthur, Pyrochles and Cymochles, but never appears again. In spite of his reappearances at suggestive points, after Book One Archimago's power is on the wane. All he can do (all he could ever do) is to present his situations and creations to the eye and mind of the hero; he can in no way impose them on him. His efficacy is wholly determined by the mental state of the particular quester. He is instinctively drawn, naturally, to areas where discord is apparent (II. vi. 47), but ends up trying to keep alive his own infernal relatives (II. vi. 51). Archimago is too primitive a figure to survive the developing subtlety of the poem. By the end of Book Two he has been purposefully ridiculed, and left in the unfortunate position of being able to do nothing save to bore people. Yet he is never dealt with finally by any of the heroes. He appears only once in Book Three and then disappears completely from the poem. That one brief mention of him, however, seems to me significant.

Britomart, having refused out of decorum to join in the chase after Florimell, wounds Marinell, and proceeds on "her right course" in search of Artegall (III. iv. 44). In the following stanza Archimago appears:

> Yet did false Archimage her still pursew,
> To bring to pass his mischievous intent,
> Now that he had her singled from the crew
> Of courteous knights, the Prince, and Faery gent,
> Whom late in chace of beautie excellent
> She left, pursewing that same foster strong. (III. iv. 45)

No more is made of him. Britomart does not know Archimago is pursuing her, and she does not meet him directly in the poem. According to the "still" in the first line, it seems as if the enchanter has been pursuing the heroine long before mention is made here of his doing so. But what is "his mischievous intent"? The question may be answered in part by Archimago's capacity to appear at any time or place when a hero's state of mind is somehow disturbed. Britomart's psychology, we know, is rather strange. In a sense, besides being mentally hermaphroditic, she is also schizophrenic. Her various encounters through this book show up the irony and the humour resulting from this double state. She has, however, from the time of her first seeing Artegall in Merlin's mirror (III. ii. 24-25), an image of the end of her quest engraved on her mind. Yet her whole method of going about finding Artegall is rather troublesome. She appears and acts externally as a knight, but thinks and responds intuitively as a female lover. Spenser emphasizes both her assumed <u>persona</u>, the ethical and mental standards it entails, along with her natural constancy as a chaste lover (III. i. 19). Disturbed though she may be, we have one reference which somehow forecasts the Archimago allusion: "Ne evil thing she fear'd, ne evill thing she ment" (III. i. 19). She is not quite content in mind, a bit hurt, perhaps, by the desertion of her knight companions. Archimago, we know, works by introducing a principle of duality into the hero's field of vision. Britomart, notably is "singled" from the others (iv. 45). Archimago does not create

a false Artegall, and Britomart's "eye of reason" is never "with rage yblent". Her teleology is rather analogous to her reason; she knows what she is after and never departs from "her right course". Archimago, to put it shortly, is Merlin's fool (III. iii. 24). His presence here, however, is both relevant — a reminder of what is always a possible perversion of the quest, and irrelevant — Satan trapped in the world with no one to trouble but himself. Britomart does meet later, in the figure of Dolon, one who is described in terms similar to those used for Archimago (V. vi. 19, 32-33). The episode itself is modelled closely on that in the hermitage of Archimago in Book One. But Britomart avoids the results of Red Cross's "sleeping" by never closing an eye all night (V. vi. 34).

Britomart's problems concern fortune more directly than they do evil. She is capable of stabilizing herself and controlling her enemies. Her outburst to the "Huge sea of sorrow" (III. iv. 8-10) directs the focus of the remaining books on new areas of meaning. Evil does not, of course, disappear. But the themes of fortune and time enclose and illuminate the problems it represents. Archimago operates under "fortune" (II. vi. 47), which affronts each hero with more ambiguous difficulties than the partially effective struggle against vice.

## CHAPTER II

## FORTUNE

The theme of fortune is treated in various ways and from different perspectives throughout The Faerie Queene. Britomart's speech (III. iv. 8-10) is only one of many which refer to fortune as a determining factor in the events and achievement of each quest. The theme is much expanded in the fifth, and especially the sixth, books where man's position in the world with respect to the forces beyond his control receives its most subtle and ironic examination. In the main body of this chapter I want to consider that theme in Books Five and Six in some detail. First, some general remarks on fortune are necessary.

### 1. The Idea of Fortune

It is difficult to discuss the meaning of fortune itself apart from the meaning of the events it appears to govern: its contingency on themes of love, reputation, and fulfillment of any kind is plain in all areas of the poem. It is equally difficult to separate the idea of fortune from two of the poem's other major themes, evil and time. The most explicit congruence among the three is shown in the Mutabilitie Cantos. Arthur's tirade against Night (III. iv. 55-60) begins with a curse on "wicked fortune" and proceeds to integrate the idea of that fortune with the general evil and the adverse aspect of time symbolized

in Night herself. In its simplest sense, of course, fortune is ambivalent: it can be either good or bad. Spenser usually makes clear the difference between fortune and related concepts such as fate, predestination, and divine intervention. But all of them express, as Kristeller puts it, "in different ways and on different levels the feeling that human life is governed by divine and natural powers over which we have no control and to which we must submit more or less helplessly".[1] When Una speaks of fortune as her "avowed foe" (I. vii. 43), she is not presented in this case so much as a figure of eternal Truth as a woman admitting humanly to the caprices of chance. Even Belphoebe, to whom nothing unfortunate ever happens, attempts to console the perpetually unfortunate Timias with a platitude about fortune: "We mortall wights, whose lives and fortunes bee / To commun accidents still open layd" (III. v. 36). Both fate and fortune are interwoven themes in Merlin's prophecy concerning the future of Britomart and Artegall (III. iii. 24). Now fortune may refer to an inward condition of a person as well as to the outward forces which affect him. Reason is the power of the mind which does most to qualify the state or operations of both kinds of fortune. Yet Spenser always makes us aware of the limitations of reason in human activity. Guyon, for example, is entirely dependent on external conditions, "wether" and "wind", to get him back to Faery Court (II. xii. 87). He may be "wonderfully equipped to display the active strength of his rational soul",[2] but he is patently not equipped to affect the unforseen forces which bear directly on the life of activity. Belphoebe

---

[1]Paul Oskar Kristeller, Renaissance Thought II: Papers on Humanism and The Arts (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 59.

[2]Herschel Baker, The Image of Man (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 300.

herself, who propounds the superiority of the vita activa in its highest terms (II. iii. 40-41) admits in her words to Timias (quoted above) a necessary qualification of that kind of life. It is a qualification Guyon becomes more aware of at the end of his own quest. In his discussion of freedom and necessity in Renaissance thought Ernst Cassirer mentions one thinker (Poggio) who posited virtus and studium as the two ingredients of the rational soul "that finally defeat all the inimical forces of the heavens."[3] Spenser's view of man's intellectual and moral capacities is not so optimistic.

Discussing Renaissance optimism and man's place in the cosmos, Cassirer refers to a "different image" of Fortune emerging in Renaissance thought:

> The old image of Fortune with a wheel, seizing men and dragging them along, sometimes raising them, sometimes throwing them down into the abyss, now gives way to the depiction of Fortune with a sailboat. And this bark is not controlled by Fortune alone — man himself is steering it.[4]

The ship-metaphor occurs several times in this poem with a similar reference to the idea of fortune. But there is always some reservation as to who is really steering the boat. Britomart sees in the "Huge sea of sorrow" an external counterpart to the "stormy strife" in her own mind. Her "feeble barke" is guided and propelled by irrational agents:

> Love my lewd Pilot hath a restlesse mind
> And fortune Boteswaine no assurance knowes,
> But saile withouten starres gainst tide and wind:
> How can they other do, sith both are bold and blind? (III. iv. 9)

---

[3] Ernst Cassirer, The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy. trans. Mario Domandi (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 76.

[4] Ibid., p. 77.

Arthur's predicament is a more profound extension of Britomart's, and Spenser again uses the sea-faring motif to describe the Prince's state: "Like as a ship, whose Lodestarre suddenly / Covered with cloudes, her Pilot hath dismayd" (III. iv. 53). Calidore asks permission from Meliboeus to rest his "barcke, which hath bene beaten late / With storms of fortune and tempestuous fate". (VI. ix. 31). In none of these instances is there any indication that the hero, whether asserting his virtus to the full or not, completely controls what happens to him. One of the metaphors applied to the course and progress of the poem itself is of a ship at sea (I. xii. 1, 42). From what Spenser tells us in the Proems to Books Two and Four, the image aptly describes his own chancy attempts to complete and to justify his work. The sea itself is a rich and dominant emblem in Books Three and Four. The great love-synthesis of land and sea, symbolized in the marriage of Florimell and Marinell, begins with Florimell's captivity in the fisherman's boat (III. viii. 21), is developed through her imprisonment in Proteus' kingdom (viii. 37), and prefigured in the marriage of the Thames and Medway (IV. xi). The fluctuating, sea-like character of the tournament held in celebration of the marriage continues the use of this fundamental image into Book Five (iii). Water as a natural fertility symbol is the primary meaning of the sea and river images in the fourth book. But the sea is an ambiguous symbol. It can be both a unifier and a dissolver. Florimell and Marinell are wed, but no sooner is the wedding mentioned than Marinell finds himself engulfed and in distress among the tide-like fluctuations of the tournament. The rather tenuous pairing depicted here is repeated in the partially unstable relationships which characterize the final two books of the poem.

The sea as symbol has a different meaning and function in Book Five as it relates specifically to the theme of justice. But it also bears upon the idea of fortune in Artegall's quest. The hero, after all, is separated from Gloriana by water.

## 2. Artegall, Justice and Fortune

Fortune as a blind, malignant force governing change or adversity is not immediately relevant in Artegall's argument with the egalitarian giant (ii. 30-49), or in his later involvement with Amidas and Bracidas (IV. 6-20). In both episodes change and mutability are the basis for judgment, with the sea in both cases the agent of that change. The giant looks at the state of the world pejoratively: he sees its change as evil. His position is strangely similar to the poet's who himself complains in the Proem to Book Five of the world "runne quite out of square" (Proem 1); or later, "And so were realmes and nations run awry" (ii. 32). Artegall's view of change is totally different by virtue of his ability to see the original divine cause behind the appearance of worldly things. Artegall does not mention the word "fortune" because he is basing his judgment on the older classical concept of fate, here synonymous with the fixed will of God. He is speaking, as he says, "of thinges unseene" (ii. 39). The giant's notion of how the elements and institutions of the world "were formed aunciently" is at the opposite pole to Artegall's knowledge of "the poyse of every part of yore" (ii. 32, 34). The giant implies that decay and change signify loss. In reply, Artegall employs the argument which will be used later by Nature against the perverted giantess in the Mutabilitie Cantos (VII. vii. 48, 48):

The earth is not augmented more,
By all that dying into it do fade.
For of the earth they formed were of yore,
How ever gay their blossome or their blade
Doe flourish now, they into dust shall vade.
What wrong then is it, if that when they die,
They turne to that, whereof they first were made?
All in the powre of their great Maker lie:
All creatures must obey the voice of the most hie. (V. ii. 40)

The stanza previous to this one defines the meaning of the sea:

What though the sea with waves continuall
Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all:
Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought,
For whatsoever from one place doth fall,
Is with the tide unto an other brought:
For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought. (ii. 39).

Inasmuch as it changes but does not destroy, and hence does not violate the divinely appointed balance and distribution of matter, the sea is a natural justicer; it is therefore just that the giant be thrown into the sea and drowned as the retribution for his attempt to pervert the divinely appointed hierarchies of the world. When Artegall says, "All change is perillous and all chaunce unsound" (ii. 36), he refers not to the operations of the sea on the land, but to the absurd attempt to right a balance which, in truth, has never been disturbed: "The hills doe not the lowly dales disdaine; / The dales do not the lofty hils envy" (ii. 41). The "certaine bound" which exists among the elements of the cosmos and the creatures of the world is the efficient cause of their harmony. For Artegall, it is God, not fickle Fortune, who turns the "ever-whirling wheele" (VII. vii. 1):

He pulleth downe, he setteth up on hy;
He gives to this, from that he takes away.
For all we have is his: what he list doe, he may. (ii. 41)

Seen in terms of the "mighty will" and "soveraine power" behind it, change of this kind is good and harmonious, to the mind attuned to the

divine will. The emphasis on justice as an internal order is most important: "in the mind the doome of right must bee" (ii. 47). The "equall ballance" (i. 7) with which Astraea teaches Artegall "to weigh both right and wrong" refers to the equity of the mind. The very fact that the giant's "huge great pair of ballance" is external to his thought makes absurd his attempt to find a new equilibrium for the world (ii. 30). The giant's death by water signifies his exclusion from the divine plan. His destruction appears in terms of a shipwreck; his "timbered bones" are dashed to pieces. When Spenser describes him as "misfortunes piteous pray" (ii. 50), the irony in the use of "misfortune" is not easily missed. The word "fortune" as it is used in the poem previous to Book Five, usually implies an unknowable and intractible force, and hence furthers the sense of alienation in those who speak of it in this way. It is plain that the giant does not know the causes of things; his self-alienation then, is appropriately attributed by the poet, through his sly ironic sympathy, to "misfortune" (ii. 50).

Artegall settles the dispute between Amidas and Bracidas by re-asserting the premises of his argument against the giant (iv. 4-20). Sea-change is again vindicated by implicit reference to divine will:

> For equall right in equall things doth stand,
> For what the mighty Sea hath once possest,
> And plucked quite from all possessors hand,
> Whether by rage of waves, that never 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. (iv. 19)

What seems to be done "As thing at randon" is done by "imperiall might": the qualities of God are imaged in the sea. Artegall, by fusing God's character with the sea's, provides an answer to Bracidas' quandary:

> But whether it indeede be so or no,
> This doe I say, that what so good or ill
> Or God or Fortune unto me did throw,
> Not wronging any other by my will,
> I hold mine owne, and so will hold it still. (iv. 14)

One of the epithets of Jupiter, Alastair Fowler reminds us, was Fortuna maiora, hinted at by Bracidas in the above stanza.[5] Fowler's explanation of this episode is noteworthy:

> The father who 'did equally bequeath his lands in fee' to Bracidas and Amidas was none other than Jupiter himself; for the name Milesio is simply one of the god's many surnames. In short, the disputed possessions are not possessions at all, but divine gifts.[6]

Artegall's judiciary procedure, in addition, is explained not only by his stoic acceptance of the way in which the divine presence operates, but by his own affiliation with Jupiter. His education is of the Golden Age, given to him by the last figure of that period to inhabit the earth. Astraea herself springs from the race of gods begotten by Jupiter (i. 11). Artegall's sword, Chrysaor, was used by Jupiter himself in the war against the Titans (i. 9) and "kept in store / In Jove's eternal house" (i. 9) until Astraea procured it for her earthly champion. Artegall's debate with and destruction of the egalitarian giant recalls the war between the forces of Jupiter and the Titans. The hero's divine connections are extended to include Osiris, "the iustest man alive" (vii. 2), who, with Isis forms the allegory of Justice and Mercy shown to Britomart in Isis' Church (vii. 21-23). Osiris "signifies the Sunne" (vii. 4), and Artegall is associated with sunlight and bright golden metals (Chrysaor). This association stems from his appearance "as Phoebus face" to Britomart who

---

[5] Alastair Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 207.

[6] Ibid.

first sees him in Merlin's mirror (III. ii. 24-25). Artegall then, though not himself divine, extends the divine will into the world through his education and equipment. He sees the fallen world not as it is seen by weaker minds, but as the Mosaic world of judgment. When the hero's will is fixed in this way, fortune and Fortuna maiora are inseparable. With Artegall's capture by Radigund, however, another aspect of fortune appears.

Terpin, the knight who makes Artegall aware of Radigund and of her perversions of social justice, refers to his "misfortune" at the hands of the giant Amazon (iv. 28). Artegall, sensing the indecorum of the matter and the threat it poses to the "praise" of the knights of Maidenhead, boasts that

> by the faith that I
> To Maydenhead and noble knighthood owe,
> I will not rest, till I her might do trie,
> And venge the shame, that she to knights doth show.
> Therefore Sir Terpin from you light throw
> This squalid weede, the patterne of dispaire,
> And wend with me, that ye may see and know,
> How Fortune will your ruin'd name repaire. (iv. 34)

By "Fortune" Artegall means himself in his capacity as the agent of Fortuna maiora, the chosen rectifier of social hierarchies. His assurance in making this claim shows that he still conceives of fortune as the identity of God's will with his own. What he wills to do, then, is unquestionably right. Terpin will "see and know" what heavenly justice is. "Fortune" will deal with this Amazon as it dealt with the giant earlier. One detects a definite note of self-righteous pride in Artegall's speech, along with the impression he seems to have that the task will be simply and directly met and resolved. Simplicity is his answer, in fact,

to all previous combats and arbitrations. When the righteous man, either as combatant or as judge, knows he is right and irresistible to begin with, what is the point in being subtle? Artegall seems already to have forgotten part of what Terpin told him about Radigund, that she subdues by "guile" as well as by "force" (iv. 31). Artegall's hearty confidence apparently makes Terpin forget about "guile" as well. The bold approach of the two knights to the city of Radigund is almost comic, and their enthusiasm leads them straight into a trap:

> They pressed forward, entraunce to have made.
> But in the middle way they were ymet
> With a sharpe showre of arrowes, which them staid,
> And better bad advize, ere they assaid
> Unknowen perill of bold womens pride. (iv. 38)

Artegall, in short, has been in danger of forgetting his sine qua non, the fact that he is not Jupiter, but only his mortal representative. Radigund is certainly not the subtlest of opponents, and obviously knows or cares nothing about divine justice or the rights of men. But even in her crude way, she has, for the moment, offset Artegall, made him aware of another conception of "fortune" in addition to his own. By not allowing herself to be subjected to immediate judgment (which Artegall, in his boldness, obviously has expected) she confronts the hero with a challenge which amounts to a kind of Petrarchan love-assault. Artegall has never been faced with this kind of problem before, and in order to meet it, he has no choice but to suspend temporarily his own predilections, his "Fortune". With Talus and his own "salvagesse" put aside, Artegall observes a kind of basic diplomatic courtoisie (iv. 51). Radigund, to put it briefly, confuses Artegall by falling militantly in love with him. The concealment of her real injustice enforces the suspension of the hero's justice.

The single combat which Radigund proposes is expressly intended to "try her Fortune" (iv. 47). Her "Fortune" is, by reason of her inversion of the male-female hierarchy, unjust by Artegall's standards. Radigund is thus a parody of Astraea. Hypothetically, the idea of combat with such a figure, from Artegall's original perspective of doctrinal justice, is absurd. Her "equall field" is theoretically the reminder of the giant's pair of scales in canto two. Radigund's preoccupation with revenge on Artegall for his "blot" on her subjects (iv. 47) parodies Artegall's intention to "venge the shame" (iv. 34) of her operations on the captured Knights of Maidenhead. Similarly, Radigund anticipates her victory over Artegall beforehand (iv. 49), just as he predicted his own triumph of "Fortune" to Terpin. Both concepts of "Fortune" are curiously fused at one point in the description of the preliminaries to the battle. The rabble press around in a circle, "Wayting, how Fortune would resolve that dangerous dout" (v. 5). The ambiguity of "Fortune" here, and the pattern of events in the fight itself, justify both Radigund's and Artegall's meanings of the word. The cyclical shape of the area of actions suggests the image of fortune's wheel (v. 5). The "rout" (rota), arranged in a circle around the lists, by virtue of their affiliation with Radigund, hold the same view of "Fortune" as separate from divinity. Artegall, through acceptance of the challenge in the first place, has involved himself in an encounter not strictly governed by his rules. He expected to be able to give a stock answer at the beginning of this whole affair; he did not look for a fight. In connection with this point, the mention of "utmost triall" (v.5) is likewise ambiguous. Both kinds of "Fortune" dominate equal halves of the combat: Artegall's Fortuna maiora the first, in a visibly just rebalancing of the natural order of male priority

(v. 11), Radigund's the second, inasmuch as it is a continuation of the unjust balance wilfully left to her by Artegall (v. 12-13). When Artegall throws away his sword (v. 13) his symbolic connection with Jupiter - Fortuna is severed, and his disaffection leaves him open to the workings of Radigund's revived chance - Fortune.

The reasons for Artegall's temporary paralysis on looking into Radigund's face are two: either she reminds him of his first sight of Britomart (IV. vi. 20), or, more likely, Radigund exhibits a paradox of natural beauty combined with a misdirected mentality, a state which, according to his own strict terms of reference, is a blatant contradiction. Heretofore, Artegall looked beneath the superficial contradictions in things to the single principle which informed them. In matters of arbitration, he looked through the world, not at it. Radigund presents him with the necessity of accepting a discordia concors, a tenuous balance and coexistence of good and evil. Britomart, whose beauty is more divine, single, and harmonious (IV. vi. 21), does not elicit any queries or require any puzzled explanations, only worship as an object of religion (IV. vi. 22). Radigund, though she obviously parodies Britomart, even so far as the Isis-Moon identity (V. v. 12), presents a more complicated problem. Artegall is very good at justifying paradoxes, not at searching them out or explicating them on a surface level. In short, through Radigund, he learns of something which previously he did not believe existed or could have existed. His education in the field of justice taught him only to "weigh" both right and wrong; it did not teach him to expect an inextricable union of the two. Artegall's "straunge astonishment" (v. 12) is equivalent to his inability to discriminate and to judge. The hero's first failure of justice was his acceptance of the unjust terms of the combat. Because

this acceptance was a falling away from his own level of true justice, and an admission of the validity of injustice, Artegall is "iustly damned" (v. 17). His will and Radigund's, at the moment of his defeat, are indistinguishable (v. 20). The pattern of events in Artegall's fall is rehearsed by the poet in his legalistic appraisal of the "trial":

> So was he overcome, not overcome,
> But to her yeelded 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 service her affort.
> For though that he first victorie obtayned,
> Yet after by abandoning his sword,
> He wilfull lost, that he before attayned.
> No fayrer contest, then that with goodwill is gayned. (v. 17)

The language of court used here does not quite conceal hints of the Petrarchisms mentioned earlier. The poet is, to an extent, trying his hero in Cupid's court. Artegall's posture here is virtually that of the enthralled lover. The entire combat is a parody on the religion of love. In another way, the deliberately sophistic decision from the poet's bench perhaps shows justice to be a much more elusive and melting process than Artegall's clear but simple conception of it indicates. In a more serious way, the last line recalls the non-combative arbitration in the Amidas-Bracidas dispute, in which true justice was the expression of "goodwill".

When Artegall willingly inverts his former concept of justice, he implicitly inverts his knowledge of "Fortune" as an expression of that justice. During his imprisonment, Clarinda comes to tempt him. In her sly consolation to the captured hero, she speaks of Fortune as something incomprehensible to man's mind, as having a cause not seen or known in the event itself which fortune precipitates. As Radigund does earlier (iv. 47), Clarinda suggests that this idea of Fortune induces despair (v. 36).

Artegall does not despair, but what he says of Fortune in reply is strangely similar to the definition which Clarinda offers. Artegall does not admit to his own failure; instead, he transfers the blame to forces which he pretends not to understand, forces described almost in terms of the unpredictable, changeable, goddess Fortuna (v. 38), whose will cannot be known. His Stoic acceptance of his captivity is here not the result of his knowledge that his will and the will of God, the only true Fortune, are at one. By avoiding the true cause of his fall, he is ironically forced into positing in its stead a concept inconsistent with what he calls his "truthes assurance" (v. 38). Spenser, modifying his criticism of the hero, avoids the issue of true blame as well. Old Testament legalism with its definite right and wrong is replaced by the New Testament idea, "Judge not that ye be not judged":

> Some men, I wrote will deeme in Artegall
> Great weaknesse, and report of him much ill,
> For yeelding so himselfe a wretched thrall,
> To th' insolent commaund of womens will;
> That all his former praise doth fowly spill.
> But he the man, that say or doe so dare,
> Be well adviz'd, that he stand stedfast still:
> For never yet was wight so well aware,
> But he at first or last was trapt in womens snare. (vi. 1)

The poet has saved his hero by indirectly doing what Artegall refuses to do for himself, namely, admit to his imperfections. Up to this point in the book, Artegall has identified himself too closely with Talus. He has not been sufficiently aware that, because he is a mortal, he is prone to deviation. His "truthes assurance" may be sound enough, but it will not affect his rescue.

There is a good deal of humour when Talus describes Artegall's self-willed fall as a "hard mishap" (vi. 10) and when Britomart, coming

to rescue her betrothed, refers to his imprisonment through "misfortune" (vii. 40). These terms ironically and obliquely stress the idea that when one's internal order is disturbed, outward events are seen and interpreted in different ways. Artegall's arbitration over the giant was based on just this point: "in the mind the doome of right must be" (ii. 47). In forgetting his own maxim, he involves himself in an inconsistency with respect to the cause of his failure. Artegall knew the truth of that statement, preferred to disregard it, and thereby perverted it. He forgot, in short, what justice and Fortune truly were. Artegall must be saved from himself by a reincarnation of true justice which will re-educate him. To do this, Britomart assumes the roles of both Astraea and Artegall, rights the balance of nature by destroying Radigund and reestablishing the male-female hierarchy. Britomart, in fact, is "worshipped" for her Astraea-like "Justice":

> That all they as a Goddesse her adoring,
> Her wisedome did admire, and hearkened to her loring. (vii. 42).

Her most important duty is to recreate Artegall as agent of God, as the representative of Fortuna maiora (vii. 43).

When Artegall leaves Britomart and pursues his quest at the end of this canto (vii), two related meanings of Fortune have been impressed upon him: first, the original conception of Fortune (Providence) as God, second that of Fortune as inward grace and control. There is, at the end of Book Five, another kind of Fortune which emerges to affect the hero. This new meaning of Fortune is totally unconnected either with an expression of divinity or with the inward disposition of the quester, but is subtly related to the whole idea of justice under Gloriana.

Artegall may not be the most attractive of Spenser's heroes,

but his devotion to duty, aside from his captivity in the Radigund episode, is incomparable. Gloriana, whose "high beheast" he obeys, is for him the Faery expression of his mythical goddess-tutor Astraea. In the proem to Book Five, Spenser makes the identification between the now stellified goddess of justice and his own Faerie Queene:

> Dread soveraine Goddess, that doest highest sit
> In seate of iudgement, in th' Almightes stead,
> And with magnificke might and wondrous wit
> Doest to ehy people righteous doome aread,
> That furthest Nations filles with awfull dread,
> Pardon the boldnesse of thy basest thrall,
> That dare discourse of so divine a read,
> As thy great iustice praysed over all:
> The instrument whereof loe here thy Artegall. (Proem 11)

Artegall knows Gloriana in a predominantly masculine role as representative of the Divine Justicer Himself. The above stanza puts the major stress on plain justice, not on any of the peripheral qualities which season it: "magnificke might", "righteous doome", "awful dread". From the list one might expect to hear "righteous wrath" at any moment. The point is that such a conception of justice, in similar Old Testament terms, is exactly Artegall's. He knows no other kind of justice save the kind he sees in "that mightie Faerie Prince", the male Astraea (V. xii. 3). Britomart's hermaphroditic qualities in conjunction with her temporary Astraea role noted earlier, reinforce Artegall's sense of the dispensation of justice as a distinct function of men. It is not difficult, then, to understand why Artegall does not immediately recognize Mercilla-Astraea as the feminine Gloriana. The poet speaks of Mercilla as "that Prince (ix. 21), but Arthur and Artegall hear of her only as a "soverayne Lady Queene" (ix. 20) and see her only as such (ix. 27).

During the trial of Duessa, the tension between Mercilla and

Artegall becomes plain. It is suggested earlier in the mention of the queen's rusty sword (ix. 30) implicitly in contrast to the perpetually-in-use Chrysaor. More important is Artegall's "zeale of justice" against the accused and the contrast it forms with Mercilla's refusal to "let just vengeance" do its rightful job. Now Mercilla, inasmuch as she does display mercy in dealing out justice, has, admittedly, a wider view on the nature of justice itself than does Artegall. But that wider conception seems to me valid only in theory as the poet delivers it. Mercilla, we are told at first, deals of justice with "indifferent grace" (ix. 36). Yet her response to the facts of the case is hardly indifferent: she runs out of the courtroom in a fit of passion (ix. 50). She does pronounce doom on the accused eventually, but not until "strong constraint did her thereto enforce" (x. 4). That is rather different from dealing out justice indifferently and dispassionately. A similar contradition is present with respect to the tempering function of mercy. Mercilla's quality of mercy is not strained, but it flows out in disproportion to the situation. In short, the judge is blinded with tears, "With more than needfull natural remorse" (x. 4). Her hasty exit, with streaming eyes covered by her purple pall, is not only a parody of the idea of blind justice, but a parody of mercy as well. Mercilla is neither just nor merciful "with indifferent grace". Artegall's praise is perfunctory in accordance with her decision. This is not the Astraea he knows. It is a very different kind of Astraea, in fact, who in the final stages of the book affects the hero's fortune.

Mercilla and Artegall share one goal: both are concerned with spreading and maintaining peace. Mercilla holds the sceptre, "sacred pledge of peace" (ix. 30), and Artegall pursues the major task of bringing

peace to Irena's "ragged common-weale" (xii. 26). Gloriana-Astraea, "that mightie Faerie Prince" (xii. 3), it should be remembered, is the immediate author of Artegall's quest, and the model (Proem 11) whose judicial procedure the hero emulates. He is busy dealing out "true Justice" when the performance of his duties is interrupted:

> He through occasion called was away,
> To Faerie Court, that of necessity
> His course of Justice he was forst to stay,
> And Talus to revoke from the right way,
> In which he was that Realme for to redresse.
> But envies cloud still dimmeth vertues ray.
> So having freed Irena from distresse,
> He took his leave of her, there left in heavinesse. (xii. 27)

From the tone of the stanza we sense that the Faerie Court from which Artegall's summons was issued is a place very different from the court the hero knew before. One line in particular is suggestive: "But envies cloud still dimmeth vertues ray". Envy is one of the hags Artegall meets on his way home (xiii. 28). Both she and her companion, Detraction, and the Blatant Beast, have themselves come from Faerie Court. The various evils kept outside Mercilla's court (ix. 22), have strangely got into Gloriana's. Artegall is recalled, not by the Gloriana-Astraea praised in the proem, but by a wavering Mercilla whose justice is not dealt out indifferently but constrainedly, and in this case, unnaturally. Like the curses of the hags and monster who come from Faerie Court, the hero's summons to return is "Most shameful, most unrighteous, most untrew" (xii. 42).

The "occasion" of Artegall's summons is synonymous with blind chance, exactly opposite to the superior Fortuna maiora whose agent he is. The hero's own disposition has not affected this "occasion" in any way. Its arrival betokens no failure on his part. We recall the Palmer's

words to Atin concerning the allegorical figure Occasion, "She comes unsought, and shonned followes eke" (II. iv. 44). Artegall cannot control his own unfortunate occasion, he can only obey. Not all the virtus or studium in the world can defeat the inimical forces of Faerie Court. In short, an external force makes Artegall fortune's fool. Significantly, it is as he approaches the sea that he meets with Envy, Detraction, and the Blatant Beast. The sea now takes on another meaning apart from natural justicer: it is associated with the pitch and toss of events whose causes are beyond rational understanding. The whole process of Artegall's education is rendered meaningless in this episode. In his last fight to save Irena from Grantorto, Artegall appears as a "Mariner" (xii. 18), and the sea-ship metaphor applies again as he holds Stoically to his "right course" back to an alien Faerie Court and its changed Astraea. Artegall began his quest by imposing his will, his larger concept of Fortune, on the injustice of the world. At its end, injustice imposes itself on him. The sea- and ship-image captures perfectly the entire poem's theme of partial control and partial fulfillment, leading to frustration of heroic activity. This theme is amplified in the fortunes of Calidore in Book Six.

### 3. Calidore and Fortune

It is generally agreed that Calidore is a more aestetically satisfying hero than Artegall. In his brief homily to Crudor, he seems to have realized a finer synthesis of justice and mercy than did his judicial predecessor (VI. i. 42). In his moral rigidity, Artegall does not seem to be able to find an equitable balance between his "salvagesse" and the sense of his divine right. Calidore, without a messianic education or the sword of God, appears more natural, more willing to admit to his limitations. His views on Fortune do not include any reference to

will or to a hard-core Stoicism. Artegall, though frustrated in the performance of his duties by a kind of blind chance, nevertheless knows that there is a superior Fortune, both as an expression of divinity, and as an order of mind. Calidore, of course, is also sure of his own rightness, but because of his human limitations and the nature of his assigned quest, has an increased awareness of the forces which might hinder his success. To Artegall he speaks of Fortune as something beyond his control, almost with a note of hopelessness:

> But where ye ended have, now I begin
> To tread an endlesse trace, withouten guyde,
> Or good direction, how to enter in,
> Or how to issue forth in waies untryde,
> In perils trange, in labours long and wide,
> In which although good Fortune me befall,
> Yet shall it not by none be testifyde (i. 6).

Even Guyon, who is by temperament more akin to Artegall than to Calidore, remarks to Arthur earlier in the poem,

> Fortune, the foe of famous chevisaunce
> Seldome --- yields to vertue aide,
> But in her way throwes mischiefe and mischaunce,
> Whereby her course is stopt, and passage staid. (II. ix. 8)

It is almost a measure of his pessimism that Calidore refers to the inefficacy of even "good Fortune" in compensating for his difficult undertaking. Later in the poem Spenser ascribes the cause of Calidore's quest to "fortune" itself, perhaps to suggest that the growingly unpredictable demands of Gloriana herself are equivalent to the fickle and elusive whims of the goddess Fortuna (ix. 2). In no other book is fortune, either good or bad, mentioned so often and in so many different contexts as a factor determining human situations. At times, "misfortune" seems to be an acceptable alternative to moral failure (i. 12), and "fortune" itself a stimulus to mercy in assessing evil deeds (i. 4).

By "good fortune" Calepine has a baby with him just when Matilda desperately yearns for one (iv. 35). Many like examples are available. However, I want to confine my remarks on fortune to Calidore and his quest, with particular reference to his pastoral truancy.

Calidore is the most refined and sensitive of the poem's heroes, and with his sensitivity goes an acknowledgment of human weakness:

> All flesh is frayle, and full of ficklenesse,
> Subject to fortunes chance, still chaunging new;
> What haps to day to me, to morrow may to you. (i. 41)

The pursuit of the Blatant Beast is a particularly discouraging task, and when Calidore happens to come to Arcadia, he is intensely aware of his own endless and frustrated efforts, his weakness, and especially of fortune as the foe of his quest. He loses track of the beast, asks for directions from the shepherds, sees Pastorella, and falls in love (ix. 5-11). Fortune and love, then, cause the succeeding tension in his mind between quest and rest. The double motive behind his desire to stay awhile in this new environment leads to his conversation with Meliboeus, where the problem of fortune is the central topic.

The attractiveness of Pastorella, Arcadia itself, and the very unattractiveness of his own quest, condition Calidore's extreme view of fortune as completely beyond his comprehension or control. To an extent Calidore is simply exaggerating his difficulties, perhaps to justify his own deviation. Calidore, quite simply, is a bit two-faced: he tries to manipulate old Meliboeus' sympathies through his courtier's smoothness. Spenser makes it clear, through some highly suggestive words and phrases, that Calidore is not so simple or even so "naturall" as the first description of him suggests (i. 2-3). Calidore envies Meliboeus'

position (ix. 19). His "simple truth and stedfast honesty" (i. 3) grows overcast with faint shades of hypocrisy:

> And drawing thence his speach another way,
> Gan highly to commend the happie life,
> Which Shepheardes lead, without debate or bitter strife.
> (ix. 18)

References to the hero's "greedy eare" and "hungry eye" present his motives in terms of appetite, as if to suggest that exploitation of his new-found world is Calidore's prime intention. When he first mentions to Meliboeus the "tempests of these worldly seas" (ix. 19), his rhetorical insinuation is apparent. It is even more obvious here:

> Yet to occasion meanes, to worke his mind,
> And to insinuate his harts desire,
> He thus replyde; Now surely syre, I find,
> That all this worlds gay showes, which we admire,
> Be but vaine shadowes to this safe retyre
> Of life, which here in lowliness ye lead,
> Fearelesse of foes, or fortunes wrackfull yre,
> Which tosseth states, and underfoot doth tread
> The mightie ones, affrayd of every chaunges dread. (ix. 27)

Calidore, wishing that his "fortunes" might be transposed to the "low degree" of life in Arcadia, goes against the accepted idea of divinely established hierarchies among men. Meliboeus' answer both refutes the transposition of one's fortunes from one estate to another, and denies fortune as blind chance:

> In vaine . . . doe men
> The heavens of their fortunes fault accuse,
> Sith they know best, what is the best for them:
> For they to each such fortune doe diffuse,
> As they do know each can most aptly use.
> For not that which men covet most, is best,
> Nor that thing worst, which men do most refuse;
> But fittest is, that all contented rest
> With that they hold: each hath his fortune in his brest.
> (ix. 29)

By "fortune", then, Meliboeus means first, one's proper and foreordained place in the natural and social hierarchy, second, fortune as a manifestation of divine grace, and third, the capacity to accept adverse happenings with Stoic patience and fortitude. "It is the mynd, that maketh good or ill" (ix. 30). That Calidore patently misunderstands this conception is obvious in his reply: he confuses, or rather does not distinguish between, Meliboe's meaning of man's capacity to "fortunize" (accept and govern inwardly) and his own meaning of each man's ability "to fashion" (change) his position for the better. Ironically, the hero still does not see fortune as separate from change or malignant circumstance. Meliboeushas virtually called him a fool, yet Calidore still proceeds to "devize" his fortunes "by vowes" (ix. 30):

> Give leave awhyle, good father, in this shore
> To rest my barcke, which hath been beaten late
> With stormes of fortune and the 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. (ix. 31)

In fairness to Calidore, we should not forget that Meliboeus' doctrine of fortune is itself extreme. Certainly, by "fortune" he means external happenings. He does not deny that outer elements and forces may govern a man's life in addition to the direction which comes from within. Yet his description of Arcadia is particularly one-sided (ix. 20-21). Nothing truly unfortunate ever seems to have happened in this pastoral world. What Meliboeus says, in fact, is valid only insofar as his own circumstances do not change. For him, the probability that an unfortunate or disruptive event will take place is far outweighed by the probability that it will <u>not</u> take place. When one's environment

is almost static, one can afford to be doctrinaire in the extreme. The whole conversation on the topic of fortune between the shepherd and the knight is unresolved because neither completely understands or accepts the other's viewpoint. To an extent, Meliboeus himself is the cause of Calidore's desire to stay in Arcadia for the wrong reasons. The misfortunes which come to this shepherd's world during Calidore's sojourn there ironically point up the limitations of Meliboeus' own concept of fortune. Calidore's failure to find a totally satisfactory escape from his quest is also an ironic aspect of his pastoral truancy. The irony is sharpened and extended later in his meeting with Colin Clout, in which the theme of fortune plays an important part. But first it is necessary to examine Calidore's conduct as it appears in Arcadia before the episode with Colin.

The implications of Calidore's change from one mode of life to another are worth noticing. Having resolved tentatively to stay with Meliboeus, in spite of the inconclusiveness of the discussion on fortune, Calidore says to his host that he will be no bother at all. Calidore himself will make whatever social adjustments are necessary: "For your meane food shall be my daily feast, / And this your cabin both my bowre and hall" (ix. 32). In theory, then, he desires to embrace his new existence wholeheartedly. But a discordant note sounds when he offers to pay for his keep. With his offer of gold to Meliboeus, we immediately sense that Calidore is unable to exchange one system of values for another. He still thinks in terms of the world which he has chosen to leave. Calidore, in short, still worships Mammon, and his conduct brings a stern rebuke from the old shepherd, who, significantly, still refers to his guest as "Sir Knight" (ix. 33):

> your bounteous proffer
> Be farre fro me, to whom ye ill display
> That mucky masse, the cause of mens decay,
> That mote empaire my peace with daungers dread.

The poet says that Meliboeus is "nought tempted" with the offer of money. (ix. 33). The idea of temptation in conjunction with a refusal of that "mucky masse" is very suggestive. This sequence reverses Guyon's refusal to be tempted by Mammon in Book Two (vii. 10), Guyon's reference to money as "worldly mucke" even echoing Meliboeus' phrase, "mucky masse". Calidore then appears momentarily as an alter Mammon, a potentially disruptive member in a society of which he wishes to be a part.

Similarly, the hero applies his "courtesies" to "entertaine" Pastorella (ix. 34). He is "friendly" with Coridon only "for further intent" (x. 37), namely, to spoil the chances of any other shepherds who might decide to woo Pastorella. I find it difficult to agree with Kathleen Williams when she speaks of Calidore's "leaving ... his courtly ways".[7] Her statement is not validated by the text. The hero woos Pastorella with all the procedures of court, procedures the shepherdess does not understand and, at first, ignores:

> But she that never had acquainted beene
> With such queint usage, fit for Queenes and Kings,
> Ne ever had such knightly service seene,
> But being bred under base shepherds wings,
> Had ever learn'd to love the lowly things,
> Did little whit regard his courteous quize,
> But cared more for Colin's carolings
> Then all that he could doe, or ever devize:
> His layes, his loves, his lookes she did them all despize. (ix. 34)

Calidore, admittedly, does take off his armour and dress himself in

---

[7]Kathleen Williams, Spenser's World of Glass (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 201.

"shepheards weed" (ix. 36). However, he changes not to identify himself more closely with the pastoral world for its own sake, but to appear more acceptable to Pastorella. His false praise of Coridon after the wrestling match is not a manifestation of true courtesy, but an exercise in calculating flattery (ix. 44).

In spite of these suggestions of tension which for a while make Calidore's conduct appear dubious, he does, near the end of canto nine, begin to find a more satisfactory harmony between himself and his new environment. Before he puts on the shepherd's clothing, he seems to act as a catalyst in bringing out the flaws in the Arcadian idyll. Coridon's jealousy, for example, grows in proportion to Calidore's attention to Pastorella. Even after Calidore changes his dress, Coridon is still not quite satisfied (ix. 39-40). In the dance which takes place later, however, the closest harmony we ever see among Coridon, Calidore, and Pastorella develops (ix. 41-42). By exhibiting his courtesy to the "rusticke sort" on a level more acceptable to them, Calidore seems well on his way to becoming the kind of "natural" man he wishes to be. Nevertheless, the particular qualification given to his shepherd's disguise, introduces another tension which still keeps us aware of the imperfection of his pastoral involvement.

Anyone who had seen Calidore in his new clothing, Spenser tells us,

> would have bethought
> On Phrygian Paris by Plexippus brooke,
> When he the love of fayre Oenone sought,
> What time the golden apple was unto him brought. (ix. 36)

Paris seeking the love of Oenone in the myth, then, provides the pattern for Calidore's wooing of Pastorella in this canto. More important, the

identification of the hero with Paris and the reference to the golden apple suggest that Calidore, like his Trojam prototype, will be associated with discord or strife of some kind. The successive misfortunes in the remaining cantos of the book bear out the validity of the identification.

By the end of canto nine, Calidore has moved from a situation characterized by discord to one of near-perfect concord. The symbol of this harmony is the dance, mentioned above (ix. 41-42). Colin Clout, we notice, supplies the music for this dance. Colin himself, earlier in the canto (35) seemed almost a rival of Calidore's for Pastorella's favour (ix. 35). In the dance which solves this implied rivalry, all four participants move in harmony together. In canto ten this harmony dissolves, and reverts to discord involving the fortunes of all four members of the dance. When Calidore interrupts Colin's vision of the Graces, we have the first statement of that discord and of an old rivalry renewed.

The three "Handmaides of Venus" who dance for Colin on Mount Acidale grant "all gifts of grace" to men (x. 15). Later, Colin says that they also give "friendly offices that bynde" and "all the complements of curtesie" (x. 23). By reason of his interruption of their dance, Calidore has committed a discourteous act. The perfect harmony and "order Excellent" (13) which they represent is broken by one who in this instance is himself an implicit figure of Discord. The Graces see Calidore and vanish (18). The knight, then, is explicitly refused the gifts which it is the privilege of the Graces to bestow. Colin, by his piping, invokes a vision of harmony and grace; Calidore, by interrupting

this vision, destroys it. Wherever Phrygian Paris is, Discordia is there also. Again the theme of fortune enters, and it affects both hero and poet. Colin laments "that unhappy turne", and Calidore is sorry for "that mishap" (18). Moreover Calidore's hearty greeting (19) is a little too exuberant for Colin, who in his indirect rebuke, puns on the meaning of "happy" and "unhappy". Calidore has referred to Colin as "iolly shepheard". Colin replies,

> Not I so happy . . .
> As thou unhappy, which them thence didst chace,
> Whom by no meanes thou canst recall againe,
> For being gone, none can them bring in place,
> But whom they of themselves list so to grace. (x. 20)

Both hero and poet are, of course, unhappy in the sense of being sad. Each is equally unhappy in the sense that each is unfortunate. Colin stresses "unhappy" as a descriptive term for Calidore, who is really more unfortunate than he knows, for Colin implies Calidore's exclusion from a higher form of courtesy and grace. Both poet and knight have, to an extent, destroyed each other, affected each other's fortunes. Because the Graces are "simple and true from covert malice free" (x. 24), the fact of Calidore's having chased them away throws some irony over his own love of "simple truth and stedfast honesty". Nor is the conversation between Colin and Calidore wholly effective in reestablishing harmony between them.

In a wider sense, the incident on Mount Acidale points up a tension between the vita activa and the vita contemplativa which is felt at various times throughout the poem. More exactly, the problem concerning the two kinds of lives has not so much to do with the theoretical validity of either of them, as it does with the unsatisfactory coexistence of both. Colin and Calidore are simply incompatible.

With Calidore's rather unwilling return to Arcadia, the themes of discord and fortune are much amplified. No sooner has Calidore won over Pastorella than the whole pastoral world itself is destroyed. It is noteworthy that Spenser attributes the cause of succeeding events to "fortune fraught with malice, blind, and brute" (x. 38), because that is exactly Calidore's earlier response to it. When we are told "It fortuned" that the brigands overran Arcadia, Meliboeus' definition of Stoic fortune is shown to be limited (x. 39-40). Calidore, ironically, has been right in emphasizing the "foule adversity" of blind chance. The hero himself is the object of irony. Neither the pursuit of his quest nor his wished-for rest have satisfied him. The pejorative tones in the description of his shepherd's disguise imply not only that discord and strife plague him wherever he goes, but that Calidore himself is the cause of the misfortunes he seeks to evade. His decision to forsake his quest was wrong in the first place. Wishing for a static, unchanging environment (ix. 32), he himself is the agent of change. Calidore is to Arcadia, what blind Fortune is to him. Spenser shows Calidore to be an almost totally self-defeating hero, and at the same time stresses the fact that this hero is virtually trapped in an endless quest which, at best, can lead only to partial success. Yet even that partial accomplishment is no final compensation for the labour involved. Ultimately the Blatant Beast breaks his chain and runs free through the world. The vita activa itself is unfulfilling as a mode of existence.

With respect to this problem of activity in a world characterized by fortune and chance, Cheney remarks of Calidore's disguise: "it comments on the inevitability of strife in the advancement of mankind."[8]

[8] Cheney, op. cit., p. 227.

In part, the statement is true: strife is inevitable. But does Calidore himself advance or even improve? Suggestions in the sixth book as to the hero's "advancement" are almost wholly negative. True, Spenser does say that Calidore will receive "eternall glorie" for his "restlesse paines" (ix. 2). Faerie world itself, however, seems at this stage of the poem to offer only the "paines" and none of the "glorie". Calidore is as "advanced" at the beginning of the book as he is at the end. Strife itself advances none of the poem's heroes, Calidore in particular. In connection with the idea of struggle for perfection, I have often thought that Book Six of The Faerie Queene is in many respects a parody of Book One. In the Red Cross Knight we see a "clownishe" young man who achieves virtually nothing by struggle, but who is "advanced" by external agents until such time as he is ready for his vision of the New Jerusalem and his succeeding fight with the dragon. In Calidore we see the reverse of this pattern: the paragon of heroes, who throughout degenerates through strife, helps to destroy what he wants most to attain, is refused the vision of the Graces, and by reason of his truancy, allows his assigned enemy to grow greater and more intractable. Red Cross comes to know the benevolence of God, Calidore the malevolence of Fortune. Prince Arthur, significantly, does not meet the hero of the last book, let alone help him.

The absence of Arthur from direct participation in Calidore's quest may be explained in several ways. (The reasons which follow do not pretend to be inclusive.) First, Calidore begins his pastoral existence at a point in Book Six which is roughly comparable to the points in the first two books when Arthur intervenes to help the fallen heroes.

Red Cross and Guyon are not truants from their quests. In addition, the Prince is as ineffective as Calidore against the Blatant Beast (VI. v. 22). Both Arthur and Calidore pursue seemingly endless quests which lead to one frustration after another. Perhaps the most obvious reason is the one given in the literal narrative: Arthur simply proceeds on his own way (viii. 30) and does not happen to meet Calidore. Lastly, Spenser may simply be alienating his hero for purposes of irony, showing us how Calidore somehow perverts himself.

Arthur and Calidore, however, are very similar in some respects. Both make much of the adversity of fortune and the uncertainty of their quests. Calidore, in spite of his weaknesses, is, like the Prince, more alive to the evils and misfortunes of the world than any other hero in the poem. More important, Calidore is as much aware of the difficulty and unpredictability of Gloriana's demands as Arthur is of her elusiveness. The Queen of Faeries herself is the cause of the endlessness of both their quests. In the end, Calidore can no more fulfil her "high beheast" than Arthur can realize her as the fulfilment of his dream. The real but ever unseen Gloriana seems to become even more remote as the poem goes on. The sense of isolation, of ceaseless activity which leads nowhere, is very strong in Arthur and Calidore. In Arthur especially the <u>lacrimae rerum</u> theme of the poem receives full expression. I want to include this theme in the discussion of Time in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER III

## TIME

In this chapter I want to examine the related themes of time and change with particular reference to Books Five and Six. However, because those two themes dominate the whole poem, some general preliminary remarks on Spenser's treatment of them are necessary.

Like most other themes in The Faerie Queene, time is ambiguous and paradoxical. Depending upon its treatment in particular contexts, it can be benign or malignant, reparative or destructive. Spenser shows it under a variety of guises and employs it in a multiplicity of ways. In general, it is the poet's attitude to the nature of time itself which defines and qualifies his perspective on Faeryland as a whole. Watkins, referring to Spenser's many outbursts against the perversity and cruelty of time, says, quite rightly, that the poet is "obsessed"[1] with the idea. D.C. Allen is equally emphatic:

> "This perturbation over the degeneration of man and the growing senility of the world, this spiritual tension over the tarnish and verdigris of time, this preoccupation with the schoolboy maxim, Omnium rerum vicissitudo est, is characteristic of Spenser more than any other poet of the era. It seems to be the focal point of his philosophy, hovering with bat-like wings about the margin of his mind."[2]

---

[1] W.B.C. Watkins, Shakespeare and Spenser (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 45.

[2] D.C.Allen, "The Degeneration of Man and Renaissance Pessimism", Studies in Philology, XXXV (1938), 215.

Such statements are based primarily on the rhetorical and thematic evidence in the poem itself, especially on what the controlling authorial voice explicitly says about time.

Recent criticism, however, has detected the use of time-symbolisms as a structural device in two of Spenser's major poems. A.K. Hieatt has demonstrated the presence of diurnal and annual time-patterns in the Epithalamion.[3] Fowler, following Hieatt's lead, has discovered an incredibly complex numerological structure underlying the Faerie Queene.[4] Such findings, important though they may be, seem to me to have little direct bearing on the poet's personal response to time as a force in determining the conditions of life in the world. In spite of the complexities in the time-structure of the poem and the paradoxes in its time-theme, Spenser always makes his own voice heard as the final authority on the particular aspect of time or change under consideration. It is the subjective approach to time which overrides all other approaches to it. The rhetoric of the poem dominates the fiction. Spenser's own deep-seated suspicion about time refuses to let him remain content with the paradoxes it presents. No matter how cleverly or intricately he uses images and features of time, Spenser never fails to interject his own awareness of the pejorative aspect of time. It is that omniscient voice which must always determine our own response to time and the world in The Faerie Queene.

I want to look at a few of the images and representations of time in the poem to demonstrate just how completely the rhetorical

---

[3] A.K. Hieatt, Short Time's Endless Monument: The Symbolism of the Numbers in Edmund Spenser's Epithalamion (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

[4] Fowler, op. cit.

stress of the poet's own voice determines their particular quality and meaning.

### 1. The Image of Time

When describing the landscape and personnel of the Garden of Adonis, Spenser mentions the presence of a figure called "Time" (III. vi. 39). This figure has absolutely nothing to do with the cyclical and regenerative aspect of time which affects Adonis, "eterne in mutabilitie" (vi. 47), or with the time which operates to produce the seasonal coexistence in the Garden (vi. 42). In fact, he seems out of place in the Garden. Spenser describes him as "wicked Time":

> who with his scyth addrest,
> Does mow the flowring herbes and goodly things,
> And all their glory to the ground downe flings,
> Where they do wither, and are fowly mard:
> He flyes about, and with his flaggy wings
> Beates downe both leaves and buds without regard,
> Ne ever pittie may relent his malice hard. (III. vi. 39).

It is obvious that "Time" here has nothing to do with measuring or signifying the passage of chronological time. He is presented in a deliberately one-sided role as a figure of Death.[6] He uses his wings not so much for flying as for beating down herbs, plants, leaves, and buds. His wings are thus employed for the same purpose as is his scythe. Apparently, once he has destroyed the "goodly things" of the Garden, the life of his victims is ended. They do not become "eterne in mutabilitie", but simply die. The technique involved in presenting "Time" in this way is not difficult to understand. Spenser has simply combined two of the traditional iconological features of Father Time (wings

---

[6] See Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in The Art of The Renaissance (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 69-93, for a discussion of the various representations and attributes of the Father Time figure.

and scythe) to throw additional emphasis on the idea of time as destroyer. As we see in the next stanza, "Time"-as-Death still functions "in time" (vi. 40), both inside and outside the walls of the Garden. His presence casts a shaddow over the idea of the Garden as a perfect place, yet even so, his inclusion in the Garden is not inconsistent with that of Adonis. The Garden is not the world in microcosm, but is still subject to the forces of death in time. Venus, we are told, laments the death of her children; yet her own presence there virtually necessitates the presence of her "troubler" (vi. 41). The goddess of love herself is not easily understood apart from the spectre of death.

There are four representations of time in the Mutabilitie Cantos, each of which is suited to its respective context. The first, of course, is the "ever-whirling wheele" which not only applies to change or fortune beyond man's control but also to the cycle of birth, decay, and death in time. Since the mystery and sinister workings of time and change are obsessive to the poet at this point, they are spoken of pejoratively.

The second figure of time appears within the poet's vision of the rise of Mutabilitie from earth to heaven. He is described as "an hory old aged Sire, with bower-glasse in hand" (vi. 8). He seems relatively harmless, his only function being to hold the hour-glass. This figure symbolizes the orderly passing of sublunary, chronological time, which at this point in the action of the Cantos the aspiring Titaness threatens to overthrow. Mutabilitie herself is the threat here, not the old sire "Tyme". The poet's pessimism about time is directed away from time and focussed on Mutabilitie through rhetorical stress and a shift in iconological valence. Specific symbolic detail is carefully

used to suggest the poet's response and our own.

The special quality which characterizes the pageant of Nature on Arlo Hill is order (vii. 4), whose presence implicitly gives the lie to Mutabilitie's claims for supremacy. With a view to displaying this order in all parts of the cosmos, Spenser depicts the "Howres" (vii. 45) proceeding orderly in this allegorical procession. By reason of their origins (daughters of Jove and Night) they represent a discordia concors, a cosmic harmony resulting from what would seem to be the union of two incompatible parents. Because they represent order and harmony, they are endowed with "wondrous beauty". The order and harmony of time itself are beautiful, and within the visionary context, benign and reparative (cf. Epithalamion, ll. 98-102). A very different aspect of time is visualized at the end of the Cantos when the vision has disappeared.

There is, in spite of Nature's cryptic decision, a strange validity to Mutabilitie's argument, and the poet comes to admit the giantess' claims on earth if not on heaven. It is the ironic human situation over which Mutabilitie rules that induces, or rather, reinforces the poet's ever-present suspicion. His fears and uncertainties thus find expression through rhetorical and imagistic stress in a correspondingly sinister figure of time. Mutabilitie, he says, is supreme on earth:

> Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,
> And love of things so vaine to cast away;
> Whose flowring pride, so fading and so fickle,
> Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle. (viii. 1)

The darkening view of human life evokes Time, as in the Garden of Adonis, as an emblem of Death wielding his "consuming sickle" (viii. 1). Between the "wheele" and the "sickle" come two aspects of time abstracted from the

natural world: chronology and reparation, both representing order. It is typical of the depth and intensity of Spenser's pessimism that nothing in the natural world can assuage his fears or give a satisfactory vision of change and time.

The variety of responses to different aspects of time corresponds to the variety and ambiguity of the poet's responses to the complex world of The Faerie Queene itself. The omniscient voice implies an awareness of good and evil, the beautiful and the ugly, the natural and the unnatural. Yet there is another dialectic in Spenser even more important then this one: it is the ambiguity of his sympathetic response to the variety and rickness of the "delightful land of Faery" (VI. Proem 1) and his concomitant realization of the fallen nature of that creation. As a partial statement of this ambiguity, Tillyard's comment is worth quoting:

> "Acutely alive to the gap between the glimpsed perfection and the actual world, he is deeply concerned with fostering whatever was not unworthy of what he had glimpsed."[7]

One must recognize the good in the world, respond to it positively, yet always remain aware that worldly good itself is subject to time and decay. It is this same double view of the world which sees Guyon as an expression of the "excellence" of God's creation and at the same time as a "creature bace" (II. viii. 1; ix. 1), or which sees the House of Alma as admirable for its "goodly workemanship" and at the same time as lamentable by reason of its earthly and hence imperfect composition (II. ix. 21). It is out of this ambiguity, and especially the poet's inability to remain content with that ambiguity, that the lacrimae rerum tone of the poem arises.

---

[7]Tillyard, op. cit., p. 292.

The expression of time-consciousness varies greatly from hero to hero, yet the same melancholia over the idea of effort in a world dominated by time and change is voiced on occasion by every one of the questers. Northrop Frye speaks of the poet's "dream" as the "strenuous effort, physical, mental, and moral, of waking up to one's true humanity."[8] That precisely holds for each of the heroes as well. Yet when they do awake to their "true humanity", they find only the limitations of that humanity. Each hero tries to realize himself as fully as possible as the human expression of the divine will, yet each is made aware that he is firmly locked in the world of time, subject to the conditions of any particular moment in time. The poet's impression of the ambiguous position of man is stamped on the mind of each heroic participant. Red Cross, for example, when finally brought to a knowledge of his true being in the House of Holiness, is immediately faced with a dialectic between the fallen world (of which even Cleopolis is part) and the eternal one symbolized by the New Jerusalem (I. x. 57). The tension introduced here between wish and necessity pervades the poem, and is voiced again by the poet at the end of the Mutabilitie Cantos: on one hand is the final negation of the world as a whole, good or bad, and on the other the hoped-for "Saboths sight". Guyon is granted no vision beyond the world of time in ordinary nature; he is left only with the sense of the absurd discrepancies within the world, the necessity of continued effort, but with no hopeful assurance of its meaning or efficacy. Arthur's search for perfection, the union with Gloriana, is necessarily endless. Faeryworld does not contain an ideal expression of love.

---

[8] Northrop Frye, "The Structure of Imagery in the Faerie Queene" in Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology (New York and Burlingame: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), p. 73.

The Prince's quest, which starts before all the others begin and goes on after they end, is virtually the same as the poet's endless, and ultimately futile, search for perfection in the world. Arthur's dream (I. ix. 13-14) which never returns corresponds to Colin's vision on Mount Acidale, which, when once broken, cannot come again.

I want to look at one more incident in the poem which develops the themes of time and mutability in a more expansive and optimistic way before going on to Books Five and Six.

In the wedding of Florimell and Marinell we see a universally symbolic consummation of time resulting in the union of the beauty of the earth and the fertility of the sea. The time which effects this marriage is analogous to the seasonal cycle of progression from winter to spring, death to life. Marinell himself, when seeing his bride-to-be, is described in terms of natural revival:

> Who soone as he beheld that angels face,
> Adorn'd with all divine perfection,
> His cheared heart eftsoones away gan chace
> Sad death, revived with her sweet inspection,
> And feeble spirit inly felt refection;
> As withered weed through cruel winters tine,
> That feeles the warmth of sunny beames reflection,
> Liftes up his head, that did before decline
> And gins to spread his leafe before the fair sunshine. (IV. xii. 34)

This union in time is prefigured by the marriage of the Thames and Medway (IV. xi), a marriage which presents one of Spenser's most brilliant affirmations of the principle of natural order, beauty, and fertility. The pageant of rivers is an expression of unity emerging from multiplicity, harmony growing out of chaos. The order asserted is essentially that revealed later in the Mutabilitie Cantos. The fundamental river-symbolism, as Roche points out, is inclusive, figuring the whole operation of

the physical world of nature, "eterne in mutabilitie". Roche's explanation of this sequence is valuable: he calls it "a rich and vibrant variation" on a "basic theme":[9]

"in this case the theme of mutability and the relation of order to chaos, of time and eternity. Although it is not stated in the poem, the reader knows that this marriage must dissolve itself in the multiplicity of the sea and that this act of union will occur and dissolve again and again, and ultimately from his knowledge of the physical world that the act of union and dissolution are the same and inseparable."[10]

Florimell and Marinell, however, are married on land, not beneath the sea, and once out of this protective aqueous environment, the union becomes subject to chance and mutability. The sea is the place of Marinell's restoration to health; no harm can come to him there. His "fertility" is that of the sea, but there is the suggestion at one point that when on land Marinell's fertility is subject to the forces of sterility and death. During the tournament held in celebration of his marriage, Marinell, thus far victorious, comes into some difficulty:

> But what on earth can always happie stand?
> The greater prowesse greater perils find.
> So farre he past amongst his enemies band,
> That they have him enclosed so behind,
> As by no meanss he can himselfe outwind.
> And now perforce they have him prisoner taken;
> And now they doe with captive bands him bind;
> And now they lead him thence, of all forsaken,
> Unlesse some succour had in time him overtaken. (V. iii. 9)

His brief captivity is described almost in terms of a ritualistic exorcism, a symbolic destruction or restriction of his fertility which momentarily threatens to destroy his union with Florimell. The poet is careful to emphasize the fact that Marinell is now "on earth", the element

---

[9]Thomas P. Roche, Jr., The Kindly Flame (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 183.

[10]ibid., pp. 183-84.

most characterized by change, fortune, and time. In another sense, Marinell's captivity is an expression of injustice, an action which suggests a temporary imbalance of natural energies. It is appropriate, then, that "succour" should come from Artegall, the "natural" justicer, who restores that balance of nature in freeing Marinell from his enemies. Perhaps this whole incident is of minor importance to the pervading emphasis on time and change as restorative forces. Even so, a faint note of potential adversity has been sounded. Time indeed has benevolently come to fulness here, but this is the last great statement in the poem of this particular function of time. Ripeness and fulfillment in the last two books gradually changes into decay and dissolution, as the emphasis on the more pejorative aspects of time and mutability points up a darkening Faeryland. In Book Five we see, in Artegall's position in time and the world, the first shadows of that darkness.

## 2. Artegall and Time

Even before we see Artegall pursuing his quest in Book Five, we have, in the previous book, an allusion to his assigned task. The hero has just finished wooing Britomart, but soon recalls his first responsibility:

> Tho when they had long time there taken rest,
> Sir Artegall, who all this while was bound
> Upon an hard adventure yet in quest,
> Fit time for him thence to depart it found,
> To follow that which he did long propound. (IV. vi. 42)

No hero in the poem is so aware of or dedicated to the foreordained schedule which determines the events of his quest as Artegall. His success throughout Book Five is measured by his ability to align himself with the appointments made for him by Gloriana in advance.

Artegall, in short, must keep up with time in order to succeed. At the end of each episode the poet stresses the fact of Artegall's concern with his "first intent", his "old quest" (V. iv. 20), continually pointing out that this hero must of necessity keep to the determining time-table which arches over him and prescribes the fixed date by which he must reach Irenae's island. It is absolutely essential that the hero not become disengaged from his governing time-pattern. Yet that is exactly what happens when Artegall is captured by Radigund.

At this point, Artegall is "stopped" in time; his chronology, however, keeps on going. After his release by Britomart, we have the impression that the hero is definitely trying to make up for lost time. He even sacrifices a longer stay with his love in order to fulfil his "avowed quest" (viii. 3). Artegall even gives up his rest, and rides night and day to get back into harmony with his schedule of appointments (viii. 3). With his meeting of Sergis (xi. 39-42), we realize that Artegall has fallen behind in his race with time; indirectly, he is the cause of Irena's capture by Grantorto:

> For she presuming on th' appointed tyde,
> In which ye promist, as ye were a Knight,
> To meete her at the salvage Ilands syde,
> And then and there for triall of her right
> With her unrighteous enemy to fight,
> Did thither come, where she afrayd of nought,
> By guilefull treason and by subtill slight
> Surprized was, and to Grantorto brought,
> Who her imprisond hath, and her life often sought.(xi. 39)

That "appointed tyde" was made before Artegall even began his quest (V. i. 4), and he admits his "fault" (xi. 40). But it is ironic that, as in his dealings with "fortune", he self-righteously transfers the blame for his delinquency to external forces:

> Now sure and by my life,
> Too much am I to blame for that faire Maide,
> That have her drawn to all this troublous strife,
> Through promise to afford her timely aide,
> Which by default I have not yet defraide.
> But witnesse unto me, ye heavens, that know
> How cleare I am from blame of this upbraide:
> For ye into like thraldome me did throw,
> And kept from complishing the faith, which I did owe. (xi. 41)

Artegall overtly contradicts himself here, becomes slightly hypocritical. The "heavens" have had nothing to do with his "thraldome". It is ironically, Grantorto's ten-day leave of grace to Irena which allows Artegall to save face and to reestablish concurrence with his foreordained time-scale (xi. 42-43). The hero's attempt to do so is described with almost realistic accuracy; Artegall moves toward his completion with the sense that time moves more qickly now: "For that the terme approaching fast, required speed" (xi. 65). Time is spoken of almost as the magnetic force which draws him to his final labour (xii. 3). Artegall's coming virtually revives Irena; in a brief echo of the seasonal metaphor of time used for Marinell's recovery she is described as

> a tender Rose in open plaine,
> That with untimely drought nigh withered was,
> And hung the head, soone as few drops of raine
> Thereon distill, and deaw her daintie face,
> Gins to looke up, and with fresh wonted grace
> Dispreds the glorie of her leaves gay. (xii. 13)

The concordance of action and time effects a growing political order, and Artegall's divinely inspired justice comes to fulfillment in time. His self-realization is climaxed here (xii. 26). Thus far time has been a factor in maturing Artegall and revealing his identity: he has "grown" from a "salvage" knight into the golden-armoured hero first seem by Britomart in Merlin's mirror (III. ii. 24-25). Gloriana's "high beheast" has been carried out; time has brought Artegall's labours to fruition.

Gloriana herself, of course, defeats her own hero. The "occasion" (xii. 27) which curtails the complete fulfillment of Artegall's quest is caused by the same agent who fixed his chronology in the beginning. This "occasion" itself comes at a moment in time. Obliquely, it refers to the theme of change as well, for as we saw earlier with respect to the topic of fortune, it is the changed Gloriana-Astraea who renders ineffective Artegall's divine justice. By reason of his summons to return to Faery Court, the hero is now defeated by time, made the fool of fortune and of time. Artegall's position in time is even more ironic when we recognize his relationship both to the Golden Age and to Faery world. His training in justice is given to him by Astraea, the last figure of the Golden Age to inhabit the gradually decaying world (i. 5-6), until its "filth and foule iniquitie" force her to leave it. Artegall, though not himself of the Golden Age, is closer to it than any other hero in the poem, and tries to bring back and establish its older concept of justice in his own world. Artegall is trapped in time between two ages: the "decay of the world" theme, introduced in the Proem to Book Five, now receives implicitly fictional treatment in the book itself. Artegall is not entirely of the Golden Age, and becomes totally ineffective in his own present and decaying Faeryworld. Ultimately he can identify with neither; his alienation is complete. This widening gap between the "antique age" and the "stonie one" of the present, becomes a powerful motif in the rest of the poem.

The Blatant Beast is a product of the world's decay, and hence of time itself. Calidore says of the monster

> he was fostered long in Stygian fen,
> Till he to perfect ripenesse grew, and then
> Into this wicked world he forth was sent,
> To be the plague and scourge of wretched men, (VI, i. 8)

With the passing of Artegall and the coming of the Beast, the transition from a better to a worse age is figured. At the end of Book Five the eventual triumph of evil and adverse time, both symbolized in the Blatant Beast, is hinted. Artegall's own history (III. iii. 28), contains a mention of his final end, when he will be "cut off by practise criminall / Of secret foes, that him shall make in mischiefe fall." Perhaps there is a slight prefiguration of his final defeat here, with the hero enforcedly passive, a victim of time and a prey to evil in a darkening Faery world. The shadows of that darkness fall from Cleopolis itself. Spenser tells us that he will report later on what happened to Artegall in Faery Court (V. xii. 43). He never does. Perhaps this silence is intentionally ironic: what is interesting about Artegall, and later Calidore, is the sense of oblivion inherent in the final stages of each of their quests. The poem's two final heroes simply seem to fade away out of a world of time and effort where each "wakes up" — to use Frye's phrase[11] — not only to his own true humanity but to an awareness of his inevitable defeat.

The world which Artegall leaves becomes substantially darker for Calidore and, more important, for the poet. The themes of time and change in Book Six become more varied and subtle in pointing up the ironic movement away from a worod of "grace" to one of "nature",[12] a nature very fallen indeed.

---

[11] Frye, op. cit.

[12] A.S.P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in The Faerie Queene" ELH XVI (1949), 194-228. It is significant that Woodhouse does not include Book Six in his discussion of these two concepts in the poem. "Grace", of course, in the sense of divine help, is unknown to Calidore.

## 3. Calidore and Time

There are no fixed or definite points in time which serve to govern Calidore's quest. Time for him is conceived of as an endless, incessant demand for heroic effort. Part of his initial despair is caused by the fact that there is simply no assurance that his quest will ever end (i. 6-7). Divorced from any hope of aid, virtually trapped in a world of time where activity has no meaning beyond itself, yet frustrated by the fact that time itself nurtures and develops his enemy, Calidore is completely alienated before he even begins his adventure. With this unprofitable awareness of his own helplessness, it is not surprising that he should conceive of the cause of his quest as "fortune" and the labour itself in terms of "payne" (ii. 38). Old Aldus, lamenting over his son's injury, speaks better than he knows: he sums up Calidore's own response to a world of fortune and time:

> Such is the weaknesse of all mortall hope;
> So tickle is the state of earthly things,
> That ere they come unto their aymed scope,
> They fall to short of our fraile reckonings,
> And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings,
> In stead of comfort, which we should embrace. (iii.5)

Calidore's pastoral truancy implies an attempt to find a new environment where time, if not totally absent, at least has a different meaning from the ambiguous force which contains, if it does not helpfully define the sequence of, the world of heroic struggle. According to Meliboeus, time in Arcadia has especially benign functions (ix. 21-23). At any rate, time is a lesser concern to him because, rather like the old hermit met earlier (v. 37-39), his pastoral surroundings indicate a closer harmony with nature. He accepts and attunes himself to the natural cycle, the rhythm of birth and death, and the orderly and benign recurrence of the seasons.

Calidore tries to, and almost succeeds in, naturalizing himself in this attractive world. The irony, of course, results from the fact that the more harmonious he tries to be, the more discordant his presence becomes. In addition, the longer the hero stays away from the outer world, the worse that world grows. Calidore may think that time has slowed down for him, but time in the world he has left keeps on going, nourishing and enlarging the Blatant Beast (x. 1-2). Just as Artegall indirectly causes the capture of Irena by implicitly negating for a moment the value of his chronology, Calidore indirectly causes the growth and effectiveness of his enemy by disavowing his quest. Calidore too becomes time's fool when in the final stanzas of the poem his antique Hercules - persona dissolves with his ignominious failure to keep the Beast under control and the last vestiges of the Golden Age disappear from Faeryland.

Clearly, Calidore's meeting with Colin Clout is the most important episode in the book. The latent and overt tensions of which we are made aware in this sequence shadow forth some significant hints as to the themes of time and change and the defeat of the poem itself.

## 4. Calidore, Colin, and Time

When Calidore chases the Blatant Beast as far as Arcadia, his movement involves not only passing from one locale to another but moving back in time to the world of The Shepeardes Calender, the habitat of Spenser's first poetic persona, Colin Clout. The tension which follows, then, is not only between the incompatibility of two modes of existence but also between the difference in time, which implies a discord between

the two kinds of poetry represented by those times, the heroic and the pastoral. We recall that Spenser is careful to provide suggestive time-links between the end of one work and the beginning of another. The poet's reversion to the mask of a former time implies a return of mind to the poetry practised in his earlier days. According to the Proem to Book One of The Faerie Queene, the poet drops his symbolic pastoral guise to signify his assumption of a higher kind of poem:

> Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,
> As time her taught, in lowly Shepheards weeds,
> Am now enforst a far unfitter taske,
> For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
> And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
> Whose prayses having slept in silence long,
> Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
> To blazon broad emongst her learned throng. (I. Proem. 1)

Time is the factor which has matured Colin and enabled him to perform his new duties as epic poet. Why this regression, then, from epic back to pastoral? The change may be explained in several ways.

At the end of the "December" ecologue, Colin says good-bye to Arcadia; he has grown old with the year, his Muse is "hoarse and weary" (he is tired of pastoral poetry), and his Rosalind still refuses both his poetry and his love:

> Adieu delightes, that lulled me asleepe,
> Adieu my deare, whose love I bought so deare:
> Adieu my little Lambes and loved sheepe,
> Adieu ye Woodes that oft my witnesse were:
> Adieu good Hobbinol, that was so true,
> Tell Rosalind, her Colin bids her adieu. (151-56).

The revival of Colin at this stage in The Faerie Queene hints at the success of a once near-dead love-affair. Colin's "countrey lasse", Rosalind, the deserving fourth Grace (x. 26), has finally favored her once despairing shepherd-poet. This new development in the love relation-

ship is thus described in terms of the same world in which that relationship was first established. The Colin-persona here establishes an organic connection with the affair in The Shepeardes Calender, and parallels that similar shift in masks described in Amoretti LXXX. Colin's apology to Gloriana here (x. 28), in fact, is exactly that given in the sonnet. As a final point in this treatment of concealed autobiography, Colin's vision of his lass attended by the Graces, prefigures the realization and fulfillment in time of that love-affair as portrayed in the Epithalamion. This, then, is the first reason for Spenser's return to an older persona: he is giving himself to a private affair at the expense of the queen to whom the epic poem is dedicated.

The very fact that Gloriana is not a part of Colin's vision is important for another, and for the poet, a more serious, reason. I believe this entire incident on Mount Acidale, the resumption of the old mask, the exclusion of both hero and queen, and the incompatibility of knight and poet, signal Spenser's disaffection to his own epic poem. Time, we saw, brought about the poet's entry into the heroic world of Faeryland; the shift back to the pastoral mask now suggests his wish to leave it. To all intents, when Calidore breaks Colin's vision, The Faerie Queene ends.

That vision of Colin's represents an "infinite moment", the higheat expression of poetic enthousiasmos: the imitation and evocation by the poeta-cum-vates of the order, beauty, and harmony of the cosmos. In this consummate gesture, Colin has recreated the dance of creation itself, but in a pastoral, not a heroic context. It is entirely appropriate, then, that the "hero", Calidore, the discordant member both in

Arcadia and in Colin's poetic world, be the one to break that vision. Calidore, who cannot escape from the world of time himself, can only destroy the momentarily "timeless" world of the poet's vision. Time has developed Colin's talents to the point where he is able to reproduce the "timeless". When Calidore disrupts the magic circle of the dance, he causes the poet to fall back into the world of time, change, fortune, and impermanence. Colin's breaking of his pipe (x. 18) signifies both his inability to recapture his vision and also the epic poet's unwillingness to continue the poem itself. When Orphic control is surrendered, the poet simultaneously surrenders himself to chance and time. Ironically, he abandons control of his own poem, and this is precisely what happens in the remaining episodes of Book Six. The theme of the world's decay is much amplified from now on, extending to the decay of the poem itself.

Arcadia is destroyed, Calidore's hopes are destroyed. There is nothing for the hero to do save to return to his quest. Escape from time has proved delusive for the hero and for Colin. Calidore's inability to keep the time-fed Beast in suppression reinforces the irony of heroic effort, and with the breaking of the chain (xii. 38), the disintegration of Faeryland continues apace, until the Beast "leaps" into the poet's own world, and Calidore and Faeryland disappear. All we are left with is a vision of the ironic human situation, the poet himself a victim of the Beast's bite, in a world where the only real truth is the antagonism to the heroic of evil, fortune, and time. Change too is involved here: Faery Court has become a different place than at the outset of the poem. Gloriana's beneficence has become "a mighty Peres dis-

pleasure" (xii. 51). The whole idea of true poetry has been perverted as well. No one can miss the caustic irony in the final two lines of the poem, where the vatic Spenser, tongue-in-cheek, tells his own poem to pander to degenerate taste:

> Therefore do you my rimes keep better measure,
> And seeke to please, that now is counted wisemens
> threasure. (xii. 51)

The ending of the poem is a dark parody of its beginning. The vision of realized human nature which Spenser sets out to deliver turns into a vision of unregenerate human nature, at the farthest pole from "Grace". Time matures the poet and time destroys him. Invidia is still the victor over poetry, and rightly so, for Cleopolis is never anything more than a "towre of glas" (I. x. 58), the original home of the Blatant Beast, and it now becomes for the disillusioned poet something very like the House of Lucifera. These changes and reverses have turned the poem itself into an alternate image of mutability with the poet himself a victim of the "ever-whirling wheels" turned by the ever unseen and unpredictable Gloriana-Fortuna. The final irony of the poem is that the "trumpets sterne" which heralded the undertaking of an epic poem dedicated to Gloriana have been silenced by the "Barking" of the Blatant Beast.

I have some difficulty in agreeing with Tillyard when he speaks of the "quiet ending"[13] to Book Six, and with Kathleen Williams when she refers to "this last peaceful legend" of the poem.[14] Both critics fail to recognize the irony of this final "quietness", which is at best the quietness of enforced suppression. I find it equally difficult to accept

---

[13]Tillyard, op. cit., p. 287.

[14]Williams, op. cit., p. 222.

Isabel Rathborne's statement that the world of The Faerie Queene is a"happy world" where "virtue is always triumphant" and where "its heroes are rewarded by Gloriana".[15] If there is happiness here it is always shadowed by sadness and the poet's own pervasive melancholia. Virtue, as we see especially in the last two books, is patently not "always triumphant" and I can find no evidence whatever in the poem to substantiate the claim that any of the heroes is at any time "rewarded by Gloriana". The fact that the Queen of Faeries herself changes as the poem progresses is one of the most sinister aspects of mutability developed in the work. All the poet can do now is reflect on the alienation and sterility which time and fortune have imposed upon him. Spenser's disillusionment is directed into a last examination of those forces in the Mutabilitie Cantos.

## 5. Mutability

There is an odd tension between the tone and imagery of the poet's opening and closing complaints and those same features in the presentation of the central allegorical masque itself. We saw this tension expressed in part through the variant stress given to the figures of time in the Cantos. Here Spenser, for purposes of concentrated final analysis, crystallizes the dialectic which concerns him throughout The Faerie Queene, the ambiguity of his response to the world, the tension between accepting it and rejecting it, identifying himself with it and distinguishing himself from it. His answer is similarly paradoxical. He fearully complains about the havoc wrought by change in the world, yet presents Mutabilitie

---

[15] Isabel E. Rathborne, The Meaning of Spenser's Faeryland (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1965), p. 149.

as an abstract and rather absurd figure when vizualized in the masque. Earthly change is ugly and distorting, yet the giantess herself is "beautifull of face" (vi. 28). In the debate on Arlo Hill she implicitly stands for a perversion of natural order, yet is an integral part of that order. She is put down from heaven but still reigns on earth. In a sense, when Mutabilitie is allegorized and thrust up into the heavens, she becomes irrelevant to the problem of change on earth as the poet first conceives it. Nature herself gives a cryptic "right" answer to Mutabilitie, yet that final decision is also partly irrelevant to the point in hand. Nature, not being the final authority, cannot rest content even with her own decision; she must point to the unchanging world of eternity above her. (vii. 59). Perhaps the crucial irony of the Cantos comes in Nature's judgment. She falls back upon the old "eterne in mutabilitie" argument to show that "all things", on a deeper level, are really the rulers over their own change. The poet himself does not understand this gnomic utterance, does not, in fact, even refer to it when he comes to assess the validity of each argument. The only part of Nature's answer which consoles him is that which refers to Supernature, the eternal "Sabaoths sight". Nature's answer has nothing to do with the world of nature the poet sees around him; it is more applicable to the operation of things in the Garden of Adonis than to the effects of change in the world of the poet outside the Garden. The poet virtually contradicts Nature in awarding the important victory to Mutabilitie on earth. In the last two stanzas of the Cantos it is Nature herself who points up a new dialectic which allows the poet to resolve his paradoxical attitude to the world. The choice now is no longer between the good and bad features of the natural order, but the complete rejection of that order and

the establishing of the opposite dialectical pole in the realm of the God of Sabaoth. The brilliant tour de force of the central episodes of the Cantos is all but irrelevant to the poet's wished-for consolation. His pessimism is as strong at the end as it is at the beginning. As far as he is concerned, Mutabilitie always wins. Graham Hough's assessment of Spenser's meaning here is sane and wound:

> the scene of the poem is the world, and no achievement of virtue or beauty in the world is lasting. Everything is subject to change, and this seems at first subversive of all happiness and all good. By submitting to the judgement of nature it is just possible to see this change as life-giving and re-creative. But man can never fully see it so; the weight of mutability presses too heavily upon him.[16]

Spenser, in short, is left in the same predicament at the end of the Mutabilitie Cantos as he is at the end of Book Six of The Faerie Queene. Virtually the same expressions of fear, skepticism, and alienation are treated in the later Prothalamion, the poem I wish to examine briefly by way of conclusion.

---

[16]Graham Hough, A Preface To The Faerie Queene (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), p. 235.

## EPILOGUE

### A NOTE ON PROTHALAMION AS A POEM OF COMPLAINT

The first important fact we notice about this poem is the absence of a controlling Orpheus-persona, Spenser's usual mask, exhibited throughout his poetry as the guise of the poet as vates. In the "Aprill" ecologue of The Shepeardes Calender and in the Epithalamion, the assertion of this Orphic capacity is most explicit. Colin's vision on Mount Acidale is a product of the vatic powers of harmony and control over the natural and mythical orders, showing the poet himself as a second "creator" as well as imitator of the dance of creation. In this last mentioned episode we saw that Colin's surrender of vatic control led obliquely to the decay of the poem, and the final surrender of the poet to antagonistic elements of time and mutability. This is the position of the alienated poet in the Prothalamion.

As the tone of the piece suggests, it is more akin to some of the earlier complaints than to a celebrative betrothal song. The effect achieved by the poet's distancing himself from his subject is most noticeable. This, of course, is a result of his disengagement from the Orpheus-mask, and it almost leads one to believe that the disappointed poet is trying to work himself out of the fabric of his poem rather than into it. Instead of the Orphic poet's organization of the Epithalamion, "chance" is substituted as the factor which brings the poet into the present work.

Spenser always makes his own "voice" heard in all of his poems and the opening stanza begins, significantly, with the poet's pointing to his own situation. He thus sets up the thematic pattern to be followed throughout. Spenser may be using here a variation on the "dream vision" form to suggest his own psychology indirectly as part of the oblique control he does assert over his subject. He is speaking of an event which happened in the past, and even this shift of tense seems intended to supplement the initial complaint of the speaker as "fortune's fool". Even the "trembling ayre" of the first line, innocent thought it may be, recalls a passage in the Mutabilitie Cantos:

> O weake life! that does leane
> On thing so fickle as th' unsteady ayre;
> Which every houre is chang'd, and altred cleane
> With every blast that bloweth fowle or faire:
> The faire doth it prolong; the fowle doth it impaire.
> (vi. 22).

The poet's walking to ease his pain along the Thames echoes a similar theme in The Ruines of Time:

> It chaunced me on day beside the shore
> Of silver streaming Thamesis to bee,
> Nigh where the goodly Verlame stood of yore,
> Of which there now remaines no memorie,
> Nor anie little moniment to see,
> By which the travailer, that fares that way,
> This once was she, may warned be to say.

If the pastoral setting is innocent, the opening lines of Prothalamion give us an initial "fertility"-background into which the speaking poet does not fit because of the acknowledged "sterility" which fortune and time have imposed upon him. The river itself, in the obvious sense, is a fertility symbol, since the betrothal which the poem formally celebrates is symbolically aligned with the "marriage" of the Thames and the Lee. But to the alienated and perhaps even despairing poet (those "empty

shaddowes" in stanza one are ominous) the Thames itself could present another symbol for time and flux, the "vanity of human wishes" — an image of his own life. His "hopes, which still doe fly away" would be reinforced in the river which "flows" away throughout the poem. His "payne" is not eased when the poem ends. The ambiguity of the river-symbol thus provides the focus for the subtle tension developed between the brides and the poet.

With the appearance of the swans (the methathetical play on "byrdes" and "brydes" is obvious) there seems to be a slight shift from the meaning of the river as a fertility-symbol to that as an image of time. The brides are seen as being under its control. The one object in the poem which the poet, seemingly, does control is the Thames itself. In reality Spenser gives the first hint here of what he does in the rest o of the poem. He is actually imposing his own psychology over the participants of his poem, putting the brides into the larger context of time and mutability. His continual inserted recollections and reminders virtually surround them with images of change. He subtly conditions the image-texture of his poem in this suggestive way, while formally remaining outside the poem, only seeing and apparently not acting.

The brides, coming to London (stanza eight), are brought through another image-series utilized by the poet for the purposes of showing up the effects of time and change in his own life. Though the "gentle stream" bids "his billowes spare / To wet" the "silken feathers" of the swans (stanza three), there is still the suggestion that the river represents a counter-influence to what the brides represent. As icons, they are presented as aspects of heavenly beauty, as good Venuses, the principle of union, love and regeneration. The river "seem'd foule to

them". Tentatively, we seem to have mutability working against the inspiration of their heavenly praise, and functioning as a reminder of the eventual dissolution in time of the forthcoming union. The "Sweet Thames" seems to be a double-edged symbol.

Praise of the brides (stanzas four and five) is traditional and rather perfunctory, as if to suggest the poet's less than whole-hearted enthusiasm for the occasion. The nymph's song (stanza six) is only one stanza long, and as usual, there is no given link between her song and its "making" by the speaker-poet. Spenser seems to have lost interest in performing any but the slightest of encomiastic gestures. What does connect nymph and poet is that rather ambiguous refrain about the softly-flowing Thames. The song and its "gentle Eccho", however, are devoted to "this happy hower", suggestively involving time in its benevolent form. There may, in fact, be a corrective induced to support this meaning of time in Spenser's having the Lee make his "streame run slowe" in natural sympathy with the event.

But the querulous voice of the poet immediately returns in stanza eight, bringing with it the opposite allusions to time, significantly playing them off against the brides' "happie hower". The history of events, the pattern of decay "on themmes brode aged backe", along with a brief interjection of the poet's own unfortunate history after Leicester's death, are mirrored in the flow of the Thames itself. In this stanza, the poet has grouped himself, his past, other related aspects of change and the bridal procession in a kind of symbolic juxtaposition; he allows the theme of time to work in among them and momentarily disclose their thematic and temporal incongruity: "Olde woes" versus new "ioyes". But both are seen, or even mirrored in the river-symbol which unites them under the

overriding concept of mutability in a fragile discordia concors.

The brides in Prothalamion, as hinted earlier, are aspects of a natural regenerative principle operative within time. So too Essex, "a noble Peer", seems to symbolize a regenerative social force, and perhaps in hope of new favour to relieve his barrenness, the poet in the final two stanzas shifts his ground to brief but direct praise of Essex and Elizabeth. Yet I wonder if there is still not some hesitancy in the prophecy of praise for the new lord:

> Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
> And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name
> That promiseth the same:
> That through thy prowesse and victorious armes
> Thy country may be freed from forraine harmes:
> And great Elisaes glorious name may ring
> Through all the world, fil'd with thy wide Alarmes,
> Which some brave Muse may sing
> To ages following.

That "may" could be either optative or conditional. The poet does not associate himself with the singing of Essex's praises. The disillusioned encomiast of The Faerie Queene still has his doubts here. The ambiguity of "may" suggests perhaps that that praise, if an when it comes, could itself be ambiguous. Only poets — Orphic poets — can ensure immortality of fame. Colin-Spenser has not and presumably will not repair his pipe. He does not "blame" anyone for his unhappy state, yet keeps his whole poem in an ambiguous suspension of feeling and motive. The meeting of Essex and the brides in the final stanza may symbolize the union of new social and regenerative forces. But the poet is not a part of this new society, and yet he still keeps us darkly aware that Essex himself is under the sway of mutabilitie. The "sweet Thames", focus both of union and dissolution in time, is the final haunting image in the poem. In its oblique yet sufficiently obvious way (Spenser simply cannot keep

from talking aloud in any of his poems) the Prothalamion is a subtler examination of the themes of time, change and alienation than the Mutabilitie Cantos themselves. The final refrain is absolutely necessary: mutability is always Spenser's song, and the "song" has no end. The melancholy is obvious but more subtly and quietly interwoven into the poem, shading its expressed purpose of celebration. Spenser is not trying to "destroy" the brides or anyone else more happy than he. He may wear his heart on his sleeve, but his pessimism here is steadier, maturer, than in any previous poem.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources

Spenser, Edmund. Spenser's Faerie Queene. Edited by J.C. Smith. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909.

--------. Spenser's Minor Poems. Edited by Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910.

## Secondary Sources

### Books

Alpers, Paul J., ed. Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Baker, Herschel. The Image of Man: A Study of the Idea of Human Dignity in Classical Times, The Middle Ages, and The Renaissance. New York, Evanston, and London: Harper and Row, 1962.

Berger, Harry, Jr. The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book 2 of Spenser's "Faerie Queene". New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Cassirer, Ernst. The Individual and The Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy. trans. Mario Domandi. New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1963.

--------, Kristeller, P.O., Randall, J.H., Jr., eds. The Renaissance Philosophy of Man. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Cheney, Donald S. Spenser's Image of Nature. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966.

Fowler, Alastair. Spenser and The Numbers of Time. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

--------. Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology. New York and Burlingame: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963.

Hamilton, A.C. The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene". Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Hough, Graham. A Preface to "The Faerie Queene". New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1963.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. Renaissance Thought II: Papers on Humanism and The Arts. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

Lawlor, John, ed. Patterns of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Memory of C.S. Lewis. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966.

Lewis, C.S. The Allegory of Love. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Nelson, William. The Poetry of Edmund Spenser: A Study. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.

Panofsky, Erwin. Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in The Art of The Renaissance. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Rathborne, Isabel E. The Meaning of Spenser's Faeryland. New York: Russell and Russell, 1965.

Roche, Thomas P., J. The Kindly Flame. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Tillyard, E.M.W. The English Epic and Its Background. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Watkins, W.B.C. Shakespeare and Spenser. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Williams, Kathleen. Spenser's World of Glass: A Reading of "The Faerie Queene". Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966.

Articles

Allen, D.C. "The Degeneration of Man and Renaissance Pessimism", Studies in Philology, XXXV (1938), 202-227.

Heninger, S.K., Jr. "The Orgoglio Episode in The Faerie Queene", ELH, XXVI (1959), 171-187.