

Edmund Spenser and the Spatiality of Allegory

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Edmund Spenser and the Spatiality of Allegory:
ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the relationship between space and allegory in the poetry of Edmund Spenser. It argues that Spenserian allegory is an inherently spatial conceit. In *The Faerie Queene*, the figurative nature of metaphors seems to be deliberately forgotten, as spatial metaphors take on literal existence. Fairyland reifies ethical concepts, and these reifications tend to possess spatial characteristics 'other to' the 'spatial consequences' of those concepts outside the allegory. I adopt from Christopher Burlinson's instructive earlier study (2006) a Lefebvrian critique of the idea that space signifies like a text. This anticipates the second major claim of the thesis: that taking action in Fairyland is not analogous to reading *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser's figures are only similar to the poem's readers, rather than simple transpositions of them. The thesis is divided into three parts. The first is about the spatiality of persons. Surveying classical and Renaissance theories of *prosopopoeia* and contemporary theories of personification, I argue that personification should be considered as a kind of allegory, because of the 'spatial otherness' it entails. In the second part, I examine embodiments of nature, focusing on Spenser's neglected figure of Night, and his famous personification of the world's rivers. I argue that personification exchanges natural motion for human mobility, thus compounding the illegibility of the natural world. The final two chapters examine two locations, caves and houses, by which concepts in Fairyland are reified. I show the spatial distortions effected on ethical concepts by these locations, their characteristics and cultural connotations. The thesis provides extended readings of episodes and motifs in *The Faerie Queene* which have received very little critical attention. It re-assesses the relationship between reading the poem and action in Fairyland. Its account of allegory as a spatial conceit also adjusts a tendency to pose allegory and space in antithesis.

Abbreviations

Editions of Spenser:

'FQ':

Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* [1590-1596], ed. by A.C. Hamilton (1980), 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007).

'Shorter Poems':

Edmund Spenser: *The Shorter Poems*, ed. by Richard McCabe (London: Penguin, 1999).

'Variorum':

The Works of Edmund Spenser: a Variorum Edition, ed. by Edwin Greenlaw, Charles G. Osgood, Frederick M. Padelford, Alexander C. Judson, and Ray Heffner, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932-1957).

'View':

Edmund Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* [c1596], ed. by Rudolf Gottfried, in *Variorum*, vol. 9 (1949).

Other Primary Texts:

Line references, in parentheses, and footnote references in abbreviated form, are to the following:

'Metamorphoses' (subsequently, 'Met.')

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by A.D. Melville, ed. by E.J. Kenney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

'Aeneid':

Virgil, *Aeneid*, in *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. by G.P. Goold, (London: Harvard University Press, 1999-2000), vol. 1, and *Virgil: Aeneid: Books 1-7, Appendix Vergiliana*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. by G.P. Goold, (London: Harvard University Press, 1999-2000), vol. 2.

Reference Works

SEnc: The Spenser Encyclopedia, ed. by A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

'OED': *Oxford English Dictionary*. Unless otherwise stated, OED Online: www.oed.com.

A Note on Translation

Translations from Latin, Greek, French and German are mine unless otherwise stated. I have mostly placed the translation in the main text. On occasion, if the translation is made obvious by the context, I have omitted it, and if it disrupts the flow of the main body I have placed it in a footnote.

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to Paul and Fiona

Thou, Sun, art half as happy as we,
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
—John Donne, 'The Sunne Rising'

'the body is... less a thing, more a place'
—Anthony Gormley

SPIRIT OF JAZZ: Yorkshire? What is Yorkshire?
HOWARD MOON: Yorkshire is a place. Yorkshire is a state of mind.
—*The Mighty Boosh*

Introduction

In Norton Juster's children's novel *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1961), a boy called Milo arrives home one day to find a mysterious package in his bedroom. It contains materials and instructions for building a toy car and a tollbooth, and a map of 'The Lands Beyond'.¹ Milo, who is bored, builds the car and sets up the tollbooth. Driving through, he finds himself in an unfamiliar world: the road he is travelling, his map assures him, should lead from the region of Expectations to the Kingdom of Wisdom. But Milo gets distracted and ends up in the Doldrums, a grey place which he can only leave with the help of Tock, a 'watchdog' whose body includes a clock. With Tock's help, Milo escapes the Doldrums and embarks on an adventure. The 'Lands Beyond' make up an allegorical world, in which abstract concepts are imagined as spatial entities: Milo goes to Dictionopolis, kingdom of language, where words grow on trees, and Digitopolis, where numbers are mined from the ground. In this world, morning is ushered in by the synaesthetic orchestra of Chroma the Great. When Milo tries to conduct it he disrupts the normal flow of the gradual dawn. If his thinking lapses into lazy hastiness, Milo finds himself 'jumping' inadvertently onto the Island of Conclusions. His episodic encounters are connected by a quest assigned to him in Dictionopolis, to rescue the twin sisters Rhyme and Reason from their exile in a castle above the Mountains of Ignorance and return them to the Kingdom of Wisdom.

This thesis is about allegorical worlds like *The Phantom Tollbooth's* 'Lands Beyond'. It focuses generally on allegorical space in early modern English literature, and in particular on Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96). I set out to revise a way of envisaging

¹ Norton Juster, *The Phantom Tollbooth* (London: Collins, 1961).

the relationship of allegory and spatiality which informs previous critical considerations of Spenser's allegorical and spatial technique: the notion that 'allegory' and 'space' are related inversely, that 'allegory' invades or captures 'space', or that 'space' mounts resistance to this invasion. In this thesis, I argue that allegory is *itself a spatial conceit*. Spenser's Fairyland, *The Faerie Queene's* equivalent to Juster's 'Lands Beyond', is not exactly an ongoing tussle of poetic ideas with traces of materiality; it is certainly not an act of cultural resistance to the proliferation of cartographic space, and ways of thinking, in sixteenth-century European culture.

Spenser's poem imports into English an attempt initiated by poets of the Italian Renaissance, to entwine the genres of epic and romance.² It also participates in a more recent and specific attempt to think through how epic structures could fuse with the allegorical mode. The many kinds of space and place in the landscape, therefore, preserve the characteristics of other, non-allegorical literary landscapes, while also alluding to built space and landscape in the real or 'material' world. If allegory is, as I will argue, itself a spatial figure of thought, then we could describe the places of Fairyland as *impositions of one kind of space onto another* – conceptual space onto (literary representation of) material space. The result of Spenser's audacious syntheses and impositions is a poem whose allegory possesses none of the dullness or straitjacketed meaning with which the mode is associated, often by reductive caricature.³ Allegory, in Spenser's hands, is a way of complicating and nuancing meaning, rather than simplifying it. In what follows, I aim to show that space is part of this ingenuity, not its result. Considering allegory and

² See Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

³ W.B. Yeats invented a spurious racial dichotomy to express this low view of allegory, and its supposed opposition with the spatial and sensual, separating a 'positive... Anglo-Norman delight in the senses' from a 'negative, prosaically allegorical, middle-class and Anglo-Saxon allegiance to the emerging state'. See George Bernstein, 'Yeats' in *SEnc*, p. 739.

spatiality together, this study combines a traditional and sometimes derided topic of literary study with a new and fashionable one. Before entering Fairyland, I need to situate my arguments in the context of debates about the definitions of allegory and spatiality, and the history of those concepts in the rich tradition of Spenser criticism. Having done so, I will unpack my claim that allegory is a spatial conceit.

Allegory

To what does 'allegory' refer? For a term often deployed pejoratively to dismiss literary texts which insist on their intended meanings, 'allegory' is hard to define. The 'Letter of the Authors', usually called Spenser's 'Letter to Raleigh', which appeared as an afterword to the 1590 text of *The Faerie Queene*, describes the poem as 'a continued Allegory, or darke conceit'.⁴ This description, as Gordon Teskey notes, combines two major strands in the history of allegory as a topic in poetics.⁵ 'Continued' alludes to a rhetorical definition, stemming from Quintilian, of allegory as continued metaphor. Allegory 'presents one thing by its words and either (1) a different or (2) sometimes even a contrary thing by its sense'.⁶ Elsewhere, Quintilian criticises allegory's tendency to drift into enigma and riddle, and this tendency informs his second subdivision of allegory (or '*inversio*'), when 'words' substitute their surface 'sense' for a hidden, implicit meaning directly contrary to that superficial sense. Quintilian's allegory, especially in its first subdivision, will naturally produce a continuation of metaphors, related like parts to a whole, or as units in a flow: 'prius fit genus plerumque continuatis translationibus' ('the first type generally

⁴ 'A Letter of the Authors', in *FQ*, pp. 714-18, p. 714, line 4.

⁵ Gordon Teskey, 'Allegory', *SEnc*, pp. 16-22, p. 16.

⁶ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, ed. and trans. by Donald A. Russell, *The Orator's Education, Volume III: Books 6-8* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), VIII.6.44, pp. 450-451.

consists of a succession of Metaphors’).⁷ Quintilian builds on Cicero’s assertion that when metaphor is continued to a certain extent – Cicero also describes a ‘flow’ of metaphor – it takes on special characteristics which are the core properties of allegory.⁸ This emphasis on continuation informs contemporary definitions of allegory in Spenser studies. ‘Basically it is continued, or moving, metaphor’, says Judith Anderson.⁹

‘Darke conceit’, on the other hand, alludes to a tradition of exegesis, in which narrative texts are interpreted as concealing cosmological, ethical or spiritual meanings. Teskey characterises this tradition as ‘philosophical interpretations of Homer’.¹⁰ In such commentaries, often on the *Iliad*, Spenser encountered several linked ideas that usefully illuminate his practice in *The Faerie Queene*: that a narrated scene of personal interactions can conceal, through analogous correspondences, the interactions of ethical forces within a soul or the cosmos in a particular conception; that a good interpretation of an allegorical text construes its various parts as fragments of a higher general reality which, after Plotinus, is understood as One; that inspired poets like Homer can be prophetic, anticipating in their dark conceit truths and events which they were not able fully to grasp, such as the coming of Christ, and therefore that allegorical interpretation need not defer ultimately to authorial intention, or at least need not historicise intention.¹¹ Yet Spenser’s double definition should not blind us to the characterisation, in

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ ‘[C]um fluxerunt continuae plures translationes, alia plane fit oratio; itaque genus hoc Graeci appellant allegorian’ (‘when there is a continuous stream of metaphors, a wholly different style of speech is produced; consequently the Greeks call it *allegoria*’). Cicero, *Orator* 27.94, ed. and trans. by G.L. Hendrickson and H.M. Hubbell (London: William Heinemann, 1952), pp. 374-375.

⁹ Judith H. Anderson, *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 5.

¹⁰ Teskey, *SEnc*, p. 16.

¹¹ See Robert Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (London: University of California Press, 1986). On the neo-Platonism of Proclus, see pp. 163-74.

much classical and early modern rhetorical theory, of allegory as a dark or covert way of speaking. Diomedes' *Ars Grammatica*, for example, defines allegory as a master-trope divided into seven species, amongst them irony; in all seven, words communicate a meaning which is the opposite, inverse or 'other' of their normal sense.¹² Demetrius also associates allegory with otherness of meaning, classifying it among 'expressions which symbolise something else'. Unlike Quintilian and Cicero, for whom allegory is about continuation, he asserts that its enigmatic force resembles that of 'brevity in speech'.¹³

Furthermore, 'darke conceit' alludes not only to allegorical reading (or 'allegoresis') of Homer, but also to scriptural exegesis. The way in which Proclus reads Homer anticipates and informs how early Church Fathers and medieval scholiasts read the texts of the Bible. Two ideas are of particular relevance: first, the notion that Scripture communicates its ideas on different 'levels'. A dominant version of this tradition, originating with Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349), stipulates four levels – literal, 'allegorical' or figurative, moral or tropological, and anagogical – and reflects the similar scheme proposed in Book II of Dante's *Convivio*. These medieval interpretive frameworks display the influence of early Christian exegetes, prominent among them Origen, Philo Judaeus and Augustine. Such early commentators also establish the principle that the Bible's various texts signify their levels of meaning variously. Commentary on the 'Song of Songs' plays an important part in the development of this idea.¹⁴ This is the second respect in which traditional biblical exegesis informs our reading of allegory in *The Faerie Queene*, whose six books signify

¹² Diomedes, *Ars Grammatica*, in *Grammatici Latini*, ed. by Heinrich Keil (Leipzig: B.G. Teubneri, 1857), vol. 1, p. 95. Allegory comprises: irony; antiphrasis; aenigma ('obscure meaning conveyed by means of a hidden similitude of details'); charientismos; paroemia; sarcasm; astismos.

¹³ 'Demetrius', *On Style*, in Aristotle, et al. *Poetics*, ed. by Donald A. Russell (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 243.

¹⁴ See John Christopher King, *Origen on the Song of Songs as the Spirit of Scripture: The Bridegroom's Perfect Marriage-Song* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

allegorically in different ways. Spenser himself, however, probably regarded the doctrine of 'levels' with suspicion. As a protestant interested in reformed theology, he is likely to have subscribed to the corrective view associated with Luther, for whom the verses of Scripture have one intended meaning, though that meaning might be figurative.¹⁵ Diminishing the importance of levels of meaning in a single instance of Scripture, Reformed theology stresses instead the relevance of typology: the principle that parts of a text conceal within themselves each other's meanings, or foreshadow and prefigure events in the world to come. Impressive attempts have been made to examine how Spenser translates a protestant scriptural hermeneutic of typology into his epic poem.¹⁶ At this point, I wish merely to propose that we could see protestant typology as a bridge between the two kinds of allegory alluded to in Spenser's 'Letter'. With the implication of hidden meanings in a single utterance, typology relates to the principle of 'darke conceit'. Yet by locating those hidden meanings earlier or later in the text, typology also brings to mind the principle of 'continuation' in Latin rhetorical definitions of allegory. This thesis is not about the biblical foundations of Spenser's allegorical technique, or about typology, but it borrows from typological hermeneutics the notion that a meaning seemingly contained in a single place can disperse – sometimes with startling literalness – through a text.

¹⁵ Luther's doctrine of *solus sensus litteralis* attacks not the principle of figuration itself, but the application of allegory 'extrinsically' without reference to the particularities of the text. See Brian Cummings, 'Protestant Allegory', in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. by Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 177-190.

¹⁶ See Carol V. Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999), and Margaret Christian, *Spenserian Allegory and Elizabethan Biblical Exegesis: a Context for The Faerie Queene* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016). On typology generally, see Erich Auerbach, 'Figura', *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), pp. 11-76.

Spenser's engagement with Torquato Tasso, also mentioned in the 'Letter' (17), encompasses Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) but also his considerable contributions to poetics. In his *Discourses on the Heroic Poem* (1594) Tasso justifies the epic poem in a Christian society by emphasising its allegorical nature, while also attempting to preserve Aristotle's stipulations for the epic. Tasso divides epic into four qualitative parts: the first two are 'fable' and 'the moral habit of the persons introduced in the fable'.¹⁷ In his anxiety to make the epic allegorical, he widens the sphere of allegory to include ethical example. Spenser's other model in early modern epic romance, alongside Tasso's poem, is Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516-1532). Sir John Harington's translation, which appeared in 1591, defends Ariosto's work from the charges of incoherence and flippancy by appealing, like Tasso, to the 'morall sense' of the action. Ariosto's story may digress beyond decorum, but the actions of its protagonists illustrate with particular vividness a comprehensive picture of the virtues. (This capacity, to present delightful and memorable images of virtuous conduct, is the special virtue of poetry itself in the Renaissance humanist justification, represented best in English by Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* (1595)). In his 'Preface', Harington separates this 'morall' sense from the third sense, though his syntax implies a potential overlap:

Manie times also under the selfesame words they comprehend some true understanding of Naturall Philosophie or somtimes of politike governement and now and then of divinitie, and these same sences that comprehend so excellent knowledge we call the Allegorie which *Plutarch* defineth to be when one thing is told and by that another is understood.¹⁸

¹⁷ Torquato Tasso, *Discorsi del Poema Eroico* [1594], ed. and trans. by Mariella Cavalchini and Irene Samuel, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973) I, p. 16. The third and fourth parts are 'thought' and 'diction', and the epic is also divided narratively into four, with the Aristotelian middle split into 'perturbation', and 'unravelling' or reversal. Tasso, p. 17.

¹⁸ John Harington, 'A Preface, or rather, a Briefe Apologie of Poetrie', *Orlando Furioso* [trans 1591], ed. by Robert McNulty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 1-15, p. 5.

Just as his scheme distinguishes them, Harington's syntax admits that 'the selfesame words' could provide both a 'morall' reading, where a character's action is generalised to illustrate an ethical principle, and an allegorical one, where figures or movements are taken to be provisional substitutes for natural, political or spiritual concepts. Harington's simultaneous separation and combining of 'levels' points to the way allegorical epic deploys allegory in the senses both of illustration or example, and of substitution.

In the following chapters, I keep in mind these indications of what 'allegory' meant to a sixteenth-century epic poet. It is nevertheless useful to wrestle also with the question of what it means to us. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's denigration of allegory in favour of symbol continues to structure many critical debates.¹⁹ In *The Statesman's Manual* (1816), having earlier arrived at a definition of symbol as that which is part of what it represents (a kind of synecdoche, therefore), Coleridge equates symbol with transcendence, the imagination and the organic, all at the expense of allegory. Symbol is 'an actual and essential part of that, the whole of which it represents'; allegory is equated with 'metaphor', and is 'a form of fancy'.²⁰ Against the organic symbol, in Coleridge's dichotomy, could be pitched emblems of the kind that enjoyed great popularity in the sixteenth century, often traced to Alciati's *Emblematum Liber* (1531). Emblems neatly represent an abstract concept, of which they are not part, through a conventional link; thus an anchor represents hope. Elsewhere in the *Manual*, and later in *Aids to Reflection* (1825), Coleridge asserts that in allegory, a difference between 'one set of agents and images', and another, presents itself

¹⁹ For a contemporary study of Coleridge's distinction, see Nicholas Halmi, 'Coleridge on Allegory and Symbol', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 345-358.

²⁰ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual* [1816], in *Lay Sermons*, ed. by R.J. White, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), vol. 6, pp. 30-31.

‘to the eye or imagination’, while the mind perceives the sameness of meaning, and closes the gap. In symbol, the equivalent distance, between the signifying part, and the whole translucent in it, is only apparent to the mind, and is closed by the imagination.²¹

The Romantic estimation of the symbol held sway in Anglo-American literary criticism until the last quarter of the twentieth century, when several theorists, chief among them Paul de Man, turned favourable attention to allegory. Much work in this vein draws on Walter Benjamin’s *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928). The first chapter of this thesis considers this revision of allegory for its valuable treatments of personification. At this point, it is worth stressing that much of the deconstructionist elevation of allegory, as a figure devoid of symbol’s mystified claims to transcendence, accepts Coleridge’s opposition of symbol and allegory even as it critiques symbol. An alternative both to the praise of symbol to the detriment of allegory, and to the recovery of allegory at symbol’s expense, is to reject the hard opposition of the two terms, which in the eighteenth century had been synonymous in practice. It has been suggested, in this vein, that Coleridge’s distinction collapses totally under scrutiny.²² This thesis is not centrally concerned with the history of allegory in literary criticism, but my position with regard to the distinction between symbol and allegory is as follows: we *can* distinguish allegory from symbol, but only by degree and not by kind. Both symbols and allegories – or metaphors in an allegory – include as their referents something more than or ‘other to’ their normal, non-figurative significance. In allegorical metaphors, this ‘other’ significance is likely to juxtapose itself with the non-figurative sense; in symbols, the contrast is less marked. As J. Hillis Miller

²¹ On this particular distinction, and on the evolution of Coleridge’s thought and its relation to eighteenth-century aesthetics, see Steven Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime* (London: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 1-22.

²² Peter Crisp, ‘Allegory and Symbol – a Fundamental Opposition?’, *Language and Literature* 14 (2005), 323-338.

puts it, we find in allegory 'a larger degree of manifest incompatibility between the tenor and the vehicle than we tend to expect in symbol'.²³

My distinction of degree rejects two aspects of Coleridge's more radical bifurcation: first, the attribution of related positive qualities (organicism, inspiration, imagination, universality) to the symbol, and the attribution of analogously negative ones to allegory (convention, slavishness, contrivance); secondly, the definition of symbol as metonymic, part of the whole translucent in it, and allegory as metaphoric, distanced from its hidden meaning. The 'metonymic symbol' depends on the presumed universality of its link to the thing it represents. Mont Blanc is clearly part of the Alps, but we can easily imagine a culture in which Mont Blanc is not part of the wider abstract category of 'Natural Beauty'. Furthermore, though I conceive here of allegory as a movement between a signifier and its hidden, 'other' referent, I do not conceive of that movement as necessarily telic, erasing the signifying image once its hidden referent has been uncovered. In Chapter 4, I compare the caves of Error and Despaire in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, and conclude that Spenser constructs places of especial boundedness and inwardness out of mental states characterised by extreme placelessness and dislocation. Thus Miller's 'incompatibility' of tenor and vehicle is evident, but this incompatibility does not mandate the discarding of the signifier or surface; rather, the figuration of Despaire as a cave, of a state of placelessness as a place, seems part of the overall effect. Allegorical reading involves not the vertical ascent from superficial signifier to 'true' meaning, but a two-way horizontal movement between the signifier and the 'otherness' of its hidden meaning. As

²³ J. Hillis Miller, 'The Two Allegories', in *Allegory, Myth, Symbol*, ed. by Morton W. Bloomfield (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 335-370, p. 356.

Brenda Machovsky puts it, the allegorical sign entails 'the occupation of the same space by two things at once'.²⁴

Having sketched the cultural history of allegory in European literature, however, we also need to enquire into the nature of the metaphors from which it is supposedly made. Cicero, in the rhetorical definition quoted above, asserts that an extension or combination of metaphors produces 'alia plane... oratio' ('a wholly different style of oration') from the effect of metaphor in isolation. What, exactly, distinguishes the allegorical metaphor, apart from its combination with, or subordination to, other or more general metaphors? Spenser's metaphors in *The Faerie Queene* can be classified with different taxonomies: for example, the range of spatial forms with which they embody abstractions (bodies, caves, buildings); or their grammatical kind (nominal, sentential, adjectival); or even according to Aristotle's taxonomy in the *Poetics*. All metaphors are made of vehicle (or base) and tenor (or target). To an unusual extent, the various metaphors in Spenser's allegory, and other allegories, *conceal or leave implicit their tenor*. In Harington's translation of Ariosto, and Tasso's commentary on his revised *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the implicitness of what the 'surface' is meant to represent generates an anxiety that the hidden tenor will not come to light; this is allayed by the glossing of the text either in marginal annotations (Harington) or an introductory preface (Tasso). Concealment of tenors produces enigma and semantic open-endedness. This, perhaps, constitutes Cicero's description of allegory as 'alia plane... oratio'.

²⁴ Brenda Machovsky, *Structures of Appearing: Allegory and the Work of Literature* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), p. 1.

It also illustrates a divergence in Spenser criticism as to the proper place of allegory in *The Faerie Queene*. One tradition, stemming from the work of C.S. Lewis, thinks of *The Faerie Queene* as a partial synthesis of late medieval English didactic poetry, and epic romance narration in verse.²⁵ Spenser's fiction can be divided as his 'Letter' divides it, into 'intendments' (the parts in which ethical precepts are implied by allegory) and 'accidents' (narrated episodes in which they are not). This tradition accords great importance to the extensive images found at the heart of Spenser's books. These 'allegorical centres', preservations of English poetry in the style of Langland and Hawes, are where the poem's allegory lives, and 'allegory' and 'narrative' relate inversely. Another tradition, which could be traced to Rosemond Tuve, emphasises the continued nature of ethical allegory. The explicitness of *The Faerie Queene's* allegory might fluctuate, but we cannot demarcate (as Lewis does) the allegorical from the non-allegorical parts.²⁶ Furthermore, according to Tuve, Spenser is trying to narrativise allegory, seeking not only to depict abstract ethical concepts in images, but to represent a soul's 'progress' (by comprehension, acquisition and practice) from one concept to the other. Such a representation, of course, necessitates narrative. This thesis belongs firmly to the latter of these two traditions, partly because of its interest in movement as both a source and effect of allegorical signification, but partly also because of the characteristic concealment of tenors in allegories. If allegorical metaphors relate to each other, as units in a flow or parts in a body, but at the same time refuse to make explicit their tenors, then every signifier is a potential metaphor. We must therefore presume that, at least theoretically, the presence of allegory is distributed across *The Faerie Queene*.

²⁵ See C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: a Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 334.

²⁶ See Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: some Medieval Books and their Prosperity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

So far, I have outlined the history of allegory as a figure of speech, both rhetorical and literary. Yet allegory is also an impulse. Two studies of the allegorical mode in this regard, both of which concern Spenser, have particularly shaped contemporary thinking. Angus Fletcher's *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (1964) traces allegorical writing to its impulses, while not distorting or diminishing the centrality of 'other-speaking' in its definition. What Coleridge sees as lifeless convention is revived as expression of ancient intuitions: the distortion effected by allegorical agents on normal kinds of causation, for example, is uncovered as 'contagious magic'; the allegorical hero, meanwhile, in his single-minded devotion to his cause, is a Freudian obsessive who 'conforms to the type of behavior [sic] manifested by people who are thought... to be possessed by a demon'.²⁷ More recently, Gordon Teskey develops Fletcher's description of allegory as a ritualistic impulse underpinned by drives familiar from psychoanalysis. In *Allegory and Violence* (1996), Teskey argues that allegory's 'other-speaking', whereby a signifying image stands for something which it is not, mandates a violent act of semantic yoking, one instance of general coercive violence. Teskey's achievement is to connect the allegorical impulse with idealism, or idealistic attachments to ideologies. Judith Anderson's review, otherwise laudatory, wonders whether his 'real subject' is indeed 'idealism'.²⁸ Fletcher's and Teskey's thinking on allegory will resurface repeatedly here, especially in the opening section on personification.

²⁷ Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 39, p. 210.

²⁸ Judith H. Anderson, 'Allegory and Violence: Review', *Arthuriana* 7 (1997), 125-128, 126.

This brings us to a final point of consideration. For Fletcher and Teskey, as for most contemporary critics, the allegorical mode includes personification. This thesis, similarly, treats personification as an instance of allegory. It's worth remembering that the tenors conveyed in personifications, by the vehicle of a human body, are not necessarily abstract: they include disparate natural phenomena, like rivers or the night (subject of the middle chapters), and early modern discussions of personification emphasise more than modern ones this non-abstract version. Allegory, too, is not necessarily a representation of the abstract: some of *The Faerie Queene's* personages appear to be substitutes or so-called 'historical allegories' for persons in Elizabethan England (Timias, for example, for Raleigh). Some critics disagree, however, with the conflation of allegory and personification: Michael Murrin, for example, argues that Spenser's use of personifications represents 'a clear break with [allegorical] tradition' and is intended to balance the obscurity of his allegory.²⁹ In the first part of this thesis, I account for Spenser's personification, in spatial terms, as a species of allegory. At this point, I'll observe only that the most thoughtful critical definitions of personification as a kind of allegory return to the distinctions explicated above, between rhetorical extended metaphor and 'darke conceit'. Stephen Barney, in his study of late medieval English allegory, reframes the distinctions between 'continued metaphor' and 'darke conceit', and between typology and symbolism, as a spectrum running between an allegory of cross-reference ('allegories of history') and an allegory of embodiment or 'reification' ('allegories of love').³⁰

²⁹ Michael Murrin, 'Renaissance Allegory from Petrarch to Spenser', in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, pp. 162-176.

³⁰ Stephen Barney, *Allegories of History, Allegories of Love* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979), p. 30.

Spatiality

At roughly the same time as the deconstructionist revival of allegory in literary criticism, scholars in the humanities began to concentrate more on space. This 'spatial turn' reflects the re-orientation of human geography towards lived space in the late 1960s and 1970s, demonstrated by the work of Yi-Fu Tuan and Kevin Lynch, and later Edmund Soja. It generated a new spatial consciousness in historical and literary analysis; this, in turn, prompted the re-examination of theoretical considerations of space by early modern and premodern philosophers and mathematicians.³¹ Thus the 'grid-like' space of the Cartesian world-view, the empty and homogenous space of Newtonian physics and mathematics, and the 'relational space' of Leibniz – space as the distance between bodies, as time is the lapse between events – are considered not so much for their truthfulness as descriptions of space, but expressions of ways of thinking particular to certain cultural times and places.³² Marxist intervention in the spatial turn produced a text still considered foundational: Henri Lefebvre's *La Production de l'Espace* (1974), translated in 1991 as *The Production of Space*. At the base of Lefebvre's argument lies the contention that space is not the pre-existing arena within which a society acts, but a social product. Society produces space, which consequently shapes society. Lefebvre describes the produced space of a consumerist society as an overlapping triad: 'spatial practices', or space as perceived; 'representations of space', the top-down conceptions of space by urban planners and technocrats; and 'spatial representations', the texts, dreams and experiences through which space is both lived and reconfigured in the mind of the

³¹ See: Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977); Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960); Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

³² Robert Tally, *Spatiality* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 28.

subject. A broadly Lefebvrian view of practices and representations underpins my analysis of *The Faerie Queene's* lived spaces.

How was space perceived, conceived and experienced in sixteenth-century Europe?³³ Here, I will only raise some topics and trends, rather than arrange them in a hierarchy or narrative history. The 'rediscovery' of linear perspective in fifteenth-century Italy should not be read as a revolutionary event in a teleological history of Western art, or (as Lacan claimed) as the birth of modern subjectivity.³⁴ Yet the development of the perspectival grid by Brunelleschi in the 1420s, and its appearance in European painting, did have significant cultural effects, especially after Alberti's work to understand its implications on the depiction of the fantastical and ideal. As Samuel Edgerton observes in a classic study, the perspectival grid manifested on the canvas, and thus in perceptions of lived space, the pre-existing 'theoretical, infinite space of the mathematician' of medieval Europe.³⁵ With the emergence of linear perspective, the theoretical space of Euclid's geometry, homogenous and infinite, became discernible at each level of Lefebvre's triad. Euclid's *Elements* were translated by Henry Billingsley as *The Elements of Geometrie* in 1570. John Dee's Preface treats geometry as an extension of arithmetic into 'Rules for land measuring', and even 'Canon law', whose 'infinite varietie of Cases' necessitates a mathematically precise 'Iustice and equity'.³⁶

³³ For a recent consideration of Spenser's work in light both of the 'spatial turn' and of sixteenth-century geography, see Tamsin Badcoe, *Edmund Spenser and the Romance of Space* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

³⁴ Lacan argued as much in relation to his conjecture of 'l'objet petit a', in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964). See Keith Broadfoot, 'Perspective Yet Again: Lacan with Damisch', *Oxford Art Review* 25 (2002), 73-94.

³⁵ Samuel Y. Edgerton, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective* (London: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 20.

³⁶ John Dee, 'Preface', in Henry Billingsley, *The Elements of Geometrie* (London, 1570), fol. A2.

Like painting, cartography underwent great shifts in early modern Europe, in which the rediscovery of linear perspective played its part. Again, no revolution took place, as David Woodward stresses: in the sixteenth century, despite assertions of cartographic ‘rationalization’ [*sic*] in teleological histories, nowhere was depicted in maps more than the Holy Land.³⁷ Yet cartography did undergo profound changes, in its ‘syntactics, semantics and pragmatics’.³⁸ In summary, the translation of Ptolemy’s *Geography* into Latin in 1406, and its printing in 1477, expressed a conception of space in which ‘the position of one place is no more important than that of another’.³⁹ Philip Armstrong describes the influence on Shakespeare of this new map, with its ‘geometrical locus... located somewhere (or, in effect nowhere) in the mid Atlantic’.⁴⁰ The medieval *mappamundi*, in contrast, does not separate the centrality of the Holy Land in the figurative sense of its historical significance, from its literal centrality on the map.

In the sixteenth century, explorations of the new world on behalf of European governments challenged the authority of textual descriptions of the world, balancing them against experience. The rise of the art of surveying, meanwhile, outlined in cartographer John Norden’s *The Surveyor’s Dialogue* (1606), enabled a mode of cartographic production reliant on unmediated access to the land.⁴¹ Lord Burghley’s extensive commissioning and control of maps in the second half of the sixteenth century

³⁷ ‘More maps were made of it during the century than France, Spain or Portugal’. David Woodward, ‘Cartography and the Renaissance: Continuity and Change’, in *The History of Cartography*, vol. 3, *Cartography in the European Renaissance* ed. by Woodward and J.B. Harley (London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 3-24, p. 10.

³⁸ Woodward, p. 12.

³⁹ Woodward, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Philip Armstrong, ‘Spheres of Influence: Cartography and the Gaze in Shakespearean Tragedy and History’, *Shakespeare Studies* 23 (1995), 39-70, 45.

⁴¹ On the interaction of these developments with the georgic tradition, see Andrew McRae, *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

demonstrates increasing awareness of the map as a political tool; meanwhile, there are some indications of the rise of the map as an aesthetic commodity.⁴² The result of these shifts might be described as the gradual detachment of place, in the sense of ‘spaces people are attached to’ or ‘a meaningful location’, from space, the supposedly blank, homogenous, and often grid-like and infinite expanse from which new places can be made.⁴³ Bernhard Klein expresses this detachment as a shift from a dominantly ‘social’ sense of space to a dominantly ‘geometric’ one, in which ‘space is no longer represented... in terms of human corporeality’.⁴⁴ The first part of this thesis will nuance this division of geometry and the body, arguing that allegorical personifications exemplify a geometric space which includes and is organised by ‘corporeality’. Yet Klein’s study of the literary resonances of early modern cartography, in England and Ireland, shows convincingly that something like this shift took place, and was registered in literature.

We can compare this detachment with Edgerton’s account of perspective, which narrates a convergence of space as conceived by mathematicians with space as drawn. From another angle (so to speak), such a convergence also enables a detachment of Brunelleschi’s grid-like, Euclidean space from a particular context, and thus of ‘space’ from ‘place’. Once detached, however, this abstract space could easily be re-imposed onto the particular place from which it emerged, in order to re-conceive and re-organise that place’s space. For example, a recent study of how Florentines in the early quattrocento

⁴² On Burghley’s interest in and supervision of Saxton’s county maps, see Peter Barber, ‘Was Elizabeth I interested in maps – and did it matter?’, *Transactions of the RHS* 14 (2004), 185-198.

⁴³ Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (2004), 2nd ed. (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), p. 12. Cresswell quotes John Agnew’s useful tripartite division of ‘place’, in *Place and Politics* (1987), into ‘location’ (a point in space relative to others), ‘locale’ (the shape of the place), and ‘sense of place’.

⁴⁴ Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 19.

articulated their place in the city ‘in relation to places they knew firsthand’, shows convincingly that the controversial tax census known as the *Catasto*, and the zoning of the city (initially at the level of ‘representations of space’) it engendered, helped to erode this ‘prepositional consciousness’.⁴⁵ This series of detachments and re-impositions both illuminates and contextualises my opening claim that *The Faerie Queene’s* allegory imposes one kind of space onto another. To take an example from the poem’s numerous architectural allegories, subject of the final chapter, Spenser’s House of Holiness in Book I could be envisaged thus: holiness is conceived generally as a point, or place, in the expanse of imaginary space that is Fairyland, and specifically in the form of a castle; that castle is imposed onto a material castle, itself mediated by its representation in a literary text whose genre conventionally distorts it. The former space is analogous to the ‘geometric’ space of Renaissance cartography, and the grid of linear perspective, and the latter to ‘social space’. The possibility of their division reflects their gradual detachment in early modernity.

To conceive of an abstract concept as a point in imaginary space requires, of course, a familiarity with spatial metaphors in which an abstract tenor is expressed figuratively with a concrete vehicle. The quotation of Machovsky above, where allegory inserts two contrary meanings into one ‘space’, demonstrates a modern affinity with such metaphors: a word’s meaning is figured as a space in the sense of ‘slot’ or ‘compartment’.⁴⁶ Early modern European intellectual culture abounded with spatial metaphors of its own. Intensive reading of classical rhetoricians and strong emphasis on the gathering of useful

⁴⁵ Nicholas A. Eckstein, ‘Prepositional City: Spatial Practice and Micro-Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 71 (2018), 1235-1271, 1235-6, 1238.

⁴⁶ Machovsky’s use of the word ‘space’ appears to be a figurative variant on ‘the volume of dimensional extent that is, or may be, occupied by a particular thing’ (*OED*, ‘space’, 11c) and ‘a portion of a page, form, etc., available for or occupied by written or printed matter’ (11e).

sententiae in commonplace books fostered a spatialised sense of knowledge, in which particular topics were imagined as places. Mary Crane argues for Agricola's *De Inventione Dialectica* as the origin of a shift in the meaning of the rhetorical topic or commonplace as 'a space or category', to the 'textual fragment' itself, 'subject to gathering'.⁴⁷ Thus the Renaissance inherited a conceptual movement contrary to the detachments outlined above, in which topic as 'blank space' and topic as 'what fills the space' converged. Yet this convergence is perhaps itself counter-balanced in the Renaissance by the increased ease with which knowledge could be conceived as existing outside time. Walter Ong suggests that even as early modern Europe revived the classical notion that thinking and speaking are one, and that rhetoric is an art of 'speaking aloud', the invention and dissemination of printing technology nevertheless instantiated the notion of textual knowledge as impervious to variation across time and space.⁴⁸ Ong's sense of a printing-based revolution is rather dated, but he is right to allege the simultaneous rise of thinking out loud on the one hand, and spatial systems seemingly impervious to time and local variation on the other. Perhaps the shift in the commonplace tradition is their 'curious offspring'.⁴⁹ Ann Moss, meanwhile, attests to another Renaissance contribution to the theory of topical places: the linking of the commonplace tradition to the principle of literary imitation, especially expressed in Senecan metaphors of bees gathering honey, or the digestion of food.⁵⁰ Just as Moss links commonplacing to imitation, so we might link it to the overlapping activities of allegorical reading and writing: in either case, a variety of material is sorted into categories that reveal and organise its ethical content.

⁴⁷ Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 17.

⁴⁸ Walter Ong, 'System, Space and Intellect in Renaissance Humanism', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 18 (1956), 222-239, 223.

⁴⁹ Ong, 224.

⁵⁰ Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 13.

The Spatiality of Allegory

Having outlined early modern and contemporary senses of the concepts of 'allegory' and 'space', we can turn to the ways in which the two concepts relate. What is the spatiality of allegory? This thesis argues that allegory is spatial in two major ways, of which the first has subdivisions. Allegory, we have seen, is understood as a series or body of metaphors, whose tenors, often abstract, are expressed through concrete vehicles. Thus allegorical metaphors, like most metaphors, transform abstract concepts into material (in the sense of physical or concrete) shapes. Therefore they are spatial in a broad, obvious sense. Yet allegory is also a kind of 'other-speaking', whose metaphors stretch wider than usual the gap between their 'surface' signifier-vehicle and its 'hidden' signified-tenor. Consequently, a concept given spatial form in an allegory might exhibit spatial characteristics at odds with the spatial consequences of its non-allegorised, abstract form. By 'spatial consequences' I mean the spatial aspect of experiences associated with the concept. In *The Faerie Queene*, for example, Spenser turns abstract ethical concepts experienced as dislocation and dispersal (like error and despair) into caves, which are characterised by boundedness and enclosure. Additionally, his allegory can juxtapose a concept's 'spatial consequences' not only with the spatial characteristics of a certain form, but also with the spatial practices associated with those forms outside the allegory. This occurs most in his allegorical buildings, subject of the final chapter. Reified as architectural structures, the spatial characteristics and consequences of ethical concepts such as holiness and pride are juxtaposed with the properties of the buildings they have become. But they are also crossed with the experiences associated with such buildings, most notably the provision of a hospitable welcome.

The second respect in which allegory can be considered spatial arises from the particular quality of allegorical metaphors. Above, I observed that metaphors in allegories commonly withhold or conceal their tenors. The absence of an explicit tenor is one of the reasons that allegories typically seem to *literalise their metaphors*. To return to Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth*: a world in which Conclusions is a literal island to which you literally jump, and the morning is literally played by a symphony orchestra, resembles the sensory impressions of someone who does not understand the figurativeness of metaphor. Hence, perhaps, its effectiveness both for children who are in on the joke, and those who aren't. Allegorical texts appear to deliberately misunderstand metaphors as literal, and thus fill out figurative images with spatial, material form. Linking together, these literalised figures compose an allegorical world.⁵¹ Literalisation is enabled, if not solely caused by, the characteristic concealment of a tenor to signal the presence of figurative language. Intriguingly, however, it can occur in allegorical images even where a tenor is present: despondency *feels like* a low place, difficult to escape, but in *The Pilgrim's Progress* it becomes a *literal* Slough of Despond.⁵² (Personifications, named after the concepts they represent, do not conceal their tenors either, though personifications exhibit the kind of 'spatial otherness' I have just described.)

With its emphasis on spatiality, this account of Spenser's allegory is rather new. It departs not only from previous theories of early modern allegory and spatiality, but also from recent criticism on Spenser which seeks to articulate the relationship between the two

⁵¹ For a similar argument, see Barney's distinction of metaphors as 'temporary phenomena in a fiction' from personifications and other allegorical reifications. Barney, p. 28.

⁵² On John Bunyan's allegorical technique, and on literalisation of tropes in a seventeenth-century protestant aesthetic, see Thomas H. Luxon, *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Protestant Crisis in Representation* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

concepts. The pioneering work in this regard, with whose argument this thesis engages in sustained conversation, is Christopher Burlinson's *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser* (2006). Adopting a firmly Lefebvrian view of space as a cultural product, Burlinson also incorporates the turn towards material culture in Anglo-American criticism of Renaissance literature. He argues that *The Faerie Queene* is dense with material, whose thickness in particular images, and presence in the whole poem, 'fluctuates'.⁵³ Furthermore, to dismiss the material spatiality of Fairyland reflects a certain ideology: if it initially appears 'a joke, or gag', as Scott Masiano's favourable review admits – '*FQ* is about virtues not things!' – that is because we are reading too like a scholiast interpreting Homer, dismissing the 'surface' as a generative means to the end of abstract meaning, and only taking the poem's spaces seriously at their most grand (its castles and palaces).⁵⁴ In a salutary chapter on 'The Houses of the Poor', Burlinson shows that Spenser's antipathy towards such temporary dwellings, like the witch's hovel where Florimell seeks shelter in Book III, enforces their absence in much Spenser criticism: if, among the poem's buildings, only those grand enough for 'sustaining allegorical structures that lie beyond them' are considered, then the poor are necessarily excluded, silenced.⁵⁵ In this thesis, I try to uphold Burlinson's analytical commitment to marginal or overlooked spaces, such as the house of Corceca and Abessa in Book I, and the bodies of supposedly minor personifications.

⁵³ Christopher Burlinson, *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006).

⁵⁴ Scott Masiano, 'Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser: Review', *Spenser Review* 39:1, 2-4.

⁵⁵ Burlinson (2006), pp. 195-219.

I also adopt Burlinson's Lefebvrian view of the illegibility of space in Fairyland. Highlighting Lefebvre's discussion of how and whether space signifies, Burlinson quotes with approval the assertion that:

Rather than signs, what one encounters here are directions – multifarious and overlapping instructions... That space signifies is incontestable. But what it signifies is dos and don'ts.⁵⁶

Space in Fairyland piles up its 'jumbled' directions into an illegible set, to confuse and disempower. Burlinson's primary demonstration is Britomart's experience at Castle Ioyeous in Book III, which he compares to the experience of a spectator in art galleries conforming to the new style at Fontainebleau, whose paintings were presented in a similar, jumbled arrangement. In one strand of Spenser criticism, it is a commonplace that *The Faerie Queene's* questing figures are direct translations of the poem's readers. Maureen Quilligan, for example, believes that 'the reader's experience of grappling with the language of the text mirrors the characters' adventures'.⁵⁷ Just as Lefebvre argues that spatial signification is akin to textual signification, but not identical with it, I argue (with Burlinson) that the experience of *The Faerie Queene's* questing figures is at most similar to that of its readers. For Burlinson, space's illegibility results from its resistant materiality; this casts doubt on any attempt, by figures in the text and readers of it, to see

⁵⁶ Burlinson (2006), p. 40.

⁵⁷ Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre* (London: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 254. See 'The Reader', pp. 274-279. Quilligan acknowledges the rise of reader-response criticism in foregrounding the reader's experience, and argues that if the reader is now a figure for the protagonist, 'he has always been so in allegory'. Jonathan Goldberg's analysis of *The Faerie Queene* places more emphasis on deconstruction, and sees the poem as an endless deferral of meaning; nevertheless, action in the poem still maps nearly onto reading – 'reading this text is also our undoing'. Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. 22. Lauren Silberman's excellent study of erotic desire in Books III-IV similarly assumes that 'reading and acting are presented as metaphoric counterparts'. *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 121. Thus studies of Spenser with a variety of focuses and theoretical bases – reader-response theory, deconstruction, the history of ekphrasis – equate action in the poem with the reading of it.

'political significances and symbolic meanings... inscribed onto the landscape'.⁵⁸ I place greater emphasis than Burlinson on the distinction between the experiences of quester and reader. I argue that the poem's spaces should be taken seriously as such, but do also communicate, to readers, metaphorical meanings. To questers, allegorical spaces are illegible; but this illegibility, I argue, functions itself as a meta-allegory for the process by which ethical concepts are experienced.

My analysis also does not hold 'space' and 'material' as closely together as Burlinson's. Adopting Klein's notion of an emergent theoretical and 'geometric' space that in the Renaissance becomes newly detachable from 'place', I argue that it is useful to look for similarly abstract space in *The Faerie Queene*. I do not dispute that this grid-like space, and indeed its detachment from 'place' itself, performs ideological and mystifying work. The study of quattrocento Florence quoted above is a good example: the *Catasto's* zoning pretended to rationalise how the city organised its space, in order really to increase tax yields. But the concealment of ideology in a phenomenon does not mean that the phenomenon does not exist. Within Burlinson's triad of allegory, space and materiality, I position theoretical 'space' as conceived by Klein closer to the abstraction of 'allegory' than to 'materiality'. The 'space' of Fairyland is thus two things: a set of concepts imagined as (topical) places within an imagined, quasi-geometric extent; and literary representations of material spaces, onto which that theoretical space is imposed.

My principal difference with Burlinson, however, lies in my understanding of allegory's relationship with material. His passing description of the poem's grander buildings

⁵⁸ Burlinson (2006), p. 41.

‘sustaining allegorical structures that lie beyond them’ implies the sense of allegory as an attempt to wrest a material image away from its normal signification, and force it to mean something else:

What I am now suggesting is that in this model of allegory, there appears a gap between the material and that which it represents: the material sometimes becomes excessive and superfluous. Furthermore, allegory, and its substantial component, is somehow unstable. Its material quality changes partly as we read it, so that the material that the allegorist wanted to subsume in the allegorical image becomes apparent.⁵⁹

This model, in which allegory inadvertently emphasises the materiality of its vehicles by failing to subsume them in their tenors, follows Benjamin’s reading of German *Trauerspiel*. It also reflects Gordon Teskey’s sense of allegory as the capture of material space, even the space of a body, by an Idea.⁶⁰ In Teskey’s view, allegory invades material space with its ideas; in Benjamin’s, material resists this invasion by piling up over time. Benjamin’s thinking on allegory is indisputably far-reaching. Yet to apply it wholesale to *The Faerie Queene* risks eliding Spenserian allegory with the *Trauerspiel*, where obvious differences both of genre and style exist. (Benjamin’s assertion about *Trauerspiel* that ‘never has poetry been less winged’ could never apply to *The Faerie Queene*.)⁶¹ I take Spenser’s allegory to be more successful than that of *Trauerspiel*. I interpret his metaphorical structures, at least provisionally, as manifestations of concepts in imagined space, imposed upon literary representations of material spaces. Treating allegory as a spatial conceit, my argument therefore points to a gap not between abstract ideas and the material images trying to represent them, but between reifications of ideas and their non-

⁵⁹ Burlinson (2006), p. 15.

⁶⁰ Teskey’s primary example is the ‘capture’ of the body of Francesca da Rimini in the *Inferno*. Burlinson describes *Allegory and Violence* as a ‘magisterial book’. Burlinson (2006), p. 15n.

⁶¹ Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* [1928], trans. by John Osborne, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 200.

reified forms. Of the Wandering Wood in the poem's first canto, and the cave of Error at its centre, Burlinson asks:

Is Una recognizing a place that she has either seen before or knows something about, or are she and Redcrosse merely encountering a reified image of their own wandering and error?⁶²

Either the forest is a material 'place', made of trees, or it is 'merely... a reified image'. Allegory and spatiality are held in tension; one pushes against the other. But if we conceive of allegory as the imagining of concepts as spaces, then the Wandering Wood can at once reify error (as an independent concept, rather than simply a projection of *Redcrosse's* error) and be experienced as a place.

The complexity of how to interpret the space of Fairyland is demonstrated by a recent study, Chris Barrett's *Early Modern English Literature and the Poetics of Cartographic Anxiety* (2018). Barrett's book, whose opening chapter concerns *The Faerie Queene*, sets itself against the backdrop of the so-called 'cartographic revolution' in sixteenth-century England.⁶³ This overstates the pace of change, but Barrett convincingly demonstrates that the development of cartography, and increased awareness of how maps might be used to the end of colonial and 'state violence', provoked anxiety.⁶⁴ Barrett depicts several early modern texts (alongside Spenser's, Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* and *Paradise Lost*) as the expression of this anxiety in resistant, more forgiving visions of space. So, Fairyland articulates an English nation which can only be described in personal and collective narratives, and which defies the 'representational contraction' of the map.⁶⁵ Rather than

⁶² Burlinson (2006), p. 26.

⁶³ Chris Barrett, *Early Modern English Literature and the Poetics of Cartographic Anxiety* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 4.

⁶⁴ Barrett, p. 21.

⁶⁵ Barrett, p. 67.

Teskey's invasive idealism, allegory for Barrett is a humanising force, whose 'ability to turn spaces into bodies' re-populates a landscape increasingly conceived, thanks to cartographic development, as devoid of people. Yet allegory and spatiality remain in tension. Unlike Barrett, this thesis does not oppose 'bodies' and 'spaces': its first three chapters explore the spatial ramifications of manifesting abstract concepts and natural phenomena as bodies-in-space. Neither do I read the vagueness of Fairyland's space as a sign of its opposition to cartographic abstraction or 'contraction'. Fairyland's imprecision, the unrealistic elasticity of its distances, lack of co-ordinates and odd ability to affix itself to other places held apart by centuries of historical time, is a function not of its allegory, but of its romance mode.⁶⁶ In conceiving of ethical concepts as points in imagined space, Spenser's allegory partakes of the cartographic impulse, rather than resisting it. The absence of fixed distance or co-ordinates shows the extension of that impulse into the abstract.

Outline and Method

My analysis of *The Faerie Queene* depends on detailed close reading of Spenser's descriptions. I take his structures and locations seriously, and believe that their precise interaction with the concepts they represent must be observed in their details. Yet like Gordon Teskey, I recognise that allegory's 'doubleness of sense' is not 'inside the text'; moving from signifying vehicle to hidden tenor, allegory moves from the text to the world of the reader.⁶⁷ Concentrating on several allegorised concepts (night, rivers, error,

⁶⁶ For a careful distinction of Fairyland from the other places in the poem, such as Arthurian Wales and Britain, and contemporary Europe, see Wayne Erickson, *Mapping The Faerie Queene: Quest Structures and the World of the Poem* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996).

⁶⁷ Teskey, *SEnc*, p. 16.

despair, holiness, among others) I have also tried to reconstruct the various meanings of their non-reified forms. This thesis engages extensively, therefore, with Spenser's sources and with his intellectual background.

I'll return once more to *The Phantom Tollbooth*. At the outset, I sketched Juster's delightful 'Lands Beyond', and mentioned: the reification of concepts as linked spaces (the warring kingdoms of Dictionopolis and Digitopolis); the figurative distortion of natural processes and rhythms (the dawn transfigured to a symphony which needs conducting); allegorical movements (Milo's jump to Conclusions); personifications (Rhyme and Reasons). Each of these aspects of Juster's allegorical world, or of allegory in its spatiality, features in *The Faerie Queene*, and in this thesis. The first chapter examines personification, and argues that we can usefully think of bodies as a particular kind of space; it also suggests that personification exhibits a 'spatial otherness'. Chapters 2 and 3 extend this study into two test cases: the personification of Night in Book I, and of rivers throughout the poem but famously in Book IV. It argues that Spenser's spatial and mobile distortions of nature reinforce the illegibility of the landscape to his characters. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the manifestation of concepts as certain kinds of lived spaces. Chapter 4 examines the several caves of Fairyland as enclosures of vice; chapter 5 contrasts them with the poem's numerous buildings, which represent and demonstrate both virtues and vices. Analysing each of these reifications, I ask how natural and ethical phenomena are altered by the spatial forms into which they are transformed. I also pay attention to how they spread and disseminate themselves, and the spatial disparities between their concentrated and disseminated forms, both within and outside the allegory.

In general, I see Spenserian allegory as a continuation of metaphors, which in keeping with the allegorical mode disguise their tenors, and become literalised. The resulting 'reifications' impose theoretical space – a quasi-geometric and de-particularised grid composed of places, not in the sense of 'meaningful locations' but rather in the sense of points – onto represented material space. *The Faerie Queene* gives physical form to the operation of the Renaissance commonplace book, its mental division of ethical concepts into topical 'places' in which they become comprehensible. But it also has the courage to show the distortions resulting from that spatial arrangement, the 'otherness' of the reified concepts relative to their non-allegorical forms. In what follows, I examine those distortions.

PART I: PERSONIFICATION

Chapter 1

The Spatiality of Personification

Introduction: the Thing with Pincers

In ninth place between Suspect and Fury, among the allegorical personages in the masque of Cupid (III.xii) witnessed by Britomart, comes the figure of *'Griefe'*:

all in sable sorrowfully clad,
Downe hanging his dull head, with heauy chere,
Yet inly being more, then seeming sad:
A paire of Pincers in his hand he had,
With which he pinched people to the hart,
That from thenceforth a wretched life they ladd,
In wilfull languor and consuming smart,
Dying each day with inward wounds of dolours dart.
(III.xii.16.2-9)

Like Archimago, whom Redcrosse encounters at the poem's beginning 'in long blacke weedes yclad' (I.i.29.2), Griefe is 'clad' in the 'sable' clothes of the mourner. Yet unlike Archimago, whose sobriety and piety are skin-deep, merely what he seems, Griefe is for real, 'inly being more, than seeming sad'. Archimago's appearance is sorrowful, indicating pious sadness by conventional (and untrustworthy) signs, but Griefe's cladding is itself done 'sorrowfully'.¹ 'Seeming' and 'being' are possible contrasts, as the comparison with Archimago warns; in Griefe's own figure, however, they are painfully close. Griefe's 'paire of Pincers' similarly effect a transfer of pain from the outward skin of seeming to the interior being. In allegories, which typically represent the abstract or immaterial by

¹ Being 'clad sorrowfully', of course, probably carries here the idiomatic sense of 'looking sorrowful' that it does in contemporary English. But the literal grammatical sense is available, of sorrowful appearance resulting from sorrowful disposition, and reinforces the marked contrast with Archimago.

externalised outward signs, a physical wound is likely to represent inner or mental pain. Spenser's account of how Griefe disseminates himself plays cleverly with this characteristic allegorical movement between outer and inner: when Griefe pinches 'people to the hart', we might understand that the pain of an external wound, a pinch on the skin, is so intense it thrills the victim to the heart; alternatively, it might be that in the allegorical world where we and Britomart glimpse Griefe, the 'pincers' can reach through a body directly and literally, within the fiction, pinch the beating heart.

The 'people' pinched by Griefe acquire the mental state after which he is named, in this case a passion of the mind, in a manner analogous to the acquisition of a disease by infection or contagion. Yet their agency remains complex: the grief with which they are infected is both a 'consuming smart' but also a 'wilfull languor', something in which their volition plays a part. As we shall see, Spenser's descriptions of mental experience or ethical acts by fictions featuring personifications create complex interpretive puzzles pertaining to volition and agency. Depending on the extent to which the reader converts the personification into its non-allegorical abstract form – a process we can call 'dispersonification' and classify as a kind of *allegoresis* – there is a transfer of agency from the personification to the 'wilfull' agent experiencing it, or choosing to experience it. Dispersonification is made more challenging by the fact that it is often already happening in the text. In the last line of the stanza dedicated to Griefe, his victims are 'dying each day' of their 'inward' wounds. This sentence functions on a different level of metaphor from the one in the stanza's middle, where Griefe literally pinches people with pincers. By the last line, they are 'dying' but not literally, because they die each day. The metaphor of personification, which operates with a fictional physicality, is replaced by a figurative use of a verb describing non-metaphorical physical experience.

Spenser's figure of Griefe is easy to pass over, afforded only a few lines in a pageant whose most significant relation to the rest of the poem is its effect on the captured Amoret and spectating Britomart. The image of the 'heauy' man in black with his comic but violent pincers represents a combination, common in *The Faerie Queene's* allegorical pageants, of established iconography and invention on Spenser's part. As in our culture, black clothes commonly signified mourning in the medieval and early modern worlds.² Griefe's pincers, on the other hand, seem to be Spenser's innovation. If they are made of forged metal, as they were in early modern England,³ they possibly allude to the cursed necklace wrought, as Statius narrates in the *Thebaid*, by Vulcan, with grief's help:

tum vastes pestes raptumque interplicat atro
 Tisiphones de crine ducem, et quae pessima ceston
 vis probat; haec circum spumis lunaribus unguis
 callidus atque hilari perfundit cuncta veneno.
 non hoc Pasithea blandarum prima sonorum,
 non Decor Idaliusque puer, sed Luctus et Irae
 et Dolor et tota pressit Discordia dextra.⁴

Like the necklace, which Vulcan 'interplicat' ('entwines') with the seemingly magical power to spread its evil into the wearer, Griefe's pincers spread pain through the body in a poisonous manner. 'Luctus', the figure of grief, also appears in Seneca's *Hercules furens*,

² Black mourning clothes originate from magistrates' dress at funerals in the Roman Republic. See Michel Pastoureau, *Noir, histoire d'une couleur* [2008], trans. by Jody Gladding, *Black: The History of a Colour* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 35.

³ 'A metal tool consisting of a pair of blunt jaws attached to handles at a central pivot, used to grip something firmly and usually also to remove or break it; forceps, pliers, nippers', *OED*, 'pincer', 1.

⁴ 'Then he entwines various harms, a chieftain torn from Tisiphone's black hair and the most noxious of the powers that attest the Girdle. These he cunningly smears about with lunar spume, and over the whole spreads gay poison. Not Pasithea, chief of the charming sisters, nor Beauty, nor the Idalian boy shaped it, but Mourning and Anger and Grief and Strife with all the power of her hand'. Statius, *Thebaid* II.282-88, ed. and trans. by D.R. Shackleton Bailey (London: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 114-118. The 'Idaliusque puer' ('Idalian boy') is Cupid. On the startling divergence of the multiple Cupids employed by Renaissance writers, see Thomas Hyde, 'Cupid', *SEnc*, pp. 201-202.

where he is 'sable' as in Spenser's version.⁵ The allusion to Statius' image of Vulcan, if we entertain it, emphasises the forged and heavily material nature of the pincers, and the Vulcan-like roughness and rudeness of grief. Within Spenser's poem it enables a connection with Care in Book IV, a blacksmith who fashions iron wedges of anxiety that torment Scudamour's sleepless mind. The rudely material figure of Griefe expands the ironic gap between the allegorical sign and its abstract referent: at the base of grief is the pain at an absence, of someone or something, and in the pageant this sense of absence is represented by a figure 'heavy' with Vulcan-like physical presence. The gap between the appearance of a personification in *The Faerie Queene* and the abstraction it becomes via dis-personifying *allegoresis* is frequently ironic, because the figure of the personification tends to exhibit properties antithetical to the thing it represents. Furthermore, the iconographical history of each personified figure, and Spenser's adaptation of that history, inform and instruct the reader's allegorical interpretation.

I. Personification in Theory

It is worth pausing, before considering personification and its spatiality from the perspective of Renaissance and contemporary theory, and examining some case studies in greater depth, to ask precisely what the reader is confronting when she meets the figure of Griefe. Potential categorical questions present themselves. First of all, readers

⁵ 'Metus Pavorque, Fumus et frendens Dolor / aterque Luctus sequitur et Morbus tremes' ('there are Fear and Panic, Death and gnashing Resentment; behind them black Grief, trembling Disease') (693-5). Grief is 'ater', as in Spenser, and next to contagious Disease. Seneca, *Hercules furens*, in *Tragedies*, ed. and trans. by John G. Fitch (London: Harvard University Press, 2002-4), vol. 1, pp. 14-127, p. 70. In the *Theogony* Hesiod identifies 'tearful Pains' (Ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα) as the child of 'Strife'. She comes between her siblings 'Hunger' (Λιμὸν) and 'Combats' (Ὑσμίνας), suggesting the capacity of grief to inflict violence, not as Spenser's figure does with his pincers, but by its proximity to deprivation and waste. Hesiod, *Theogony*, ed. and trans. by Glenn W. Most (London: Harvard University Press, 2006-7), pp. 226-228, p. 20.

must decide whether the figure before them typifies the abstraction after which it is named, or whether it literally *is* that abstraction. Griefe might be understood as a person suffering so much grief that he inflicts it on others; alternatively, he could be interpreted as Fairyland's substitution for a passion experienced by many in the world outside the poem. By analogy, a personification might manifest effects of the abstraction after which it is named, or be their cause. If Griefe is grief *itself*, the relation of allegorical sign to referent is that of metaphor: a person is substituted for the thing the sign refers to, which is not a person. If Griefe is a person suffering from grief, the relation is more akin to that of metonymy: the person vividly illustrates a phenomenon of which it is a manifestation. It is quite possible, and in Spenser's poetry usual, for personifications to move between these metaphorical and metonymic positions, sometimes so frequently that the relations seem to be simultaneous. Yet the fundamental disparity of metaphor and metonym makes that simultaneity a potential maze of error for the dis-personifying reader.

The question of what the personification *is* leads to the related issue of how it disseminates itself. Griefe, inflicting the 'inward wounds' of grief by the physical force of his pincers, stands at one extreme among the self-spreading personifications of *The Faerie Queene*. At the other end are those personifications who disseminate themselves and thereby infect other figures in the text simply by proximity. Redcrosse interacts with none of the personified Seven Deadly Sins in the pageant at the House of Pride, but his proximity suggests that they are assaulting or tempting his soul. Between these two poles are personifications who spread themselves by guile, a combination of interaction and insinuation often accomplished with words. Despaire and Mammon, if we read him as a personification of miserliness, come to mind, disseminating their eponymous vices

through performances of perverted rhetoric.⁶ Here the distinction of metaphor and metonymy, as it pertains to allegory, grows more complex. Force, as a means of dissemination, is less metaphorical than influence by proximity. Griefe driving his pincers into a victim's body achieves the contiguity associated with metonymy; the implicit connection between Redcrosse and Idleness at the House of Pride is akin to the similarity of metaphorical relations.⁷ Yet force is more allegorical, in that the distance between the initial meaning (being pinched with physical pincers) and the meaning after dispersonification (the experience of the feelings of grief) is greater than in the case of guile or proximity. It seems less allegorical to speak of being 'haunted by grief', which implies influence by proximity, than to describe being 'pinched' by grief.

Coleridge's Quibble

In marginalia on his 'B' copy of Robert Anderson's *The Works of the British Poets* (1792-95), Coleridge complains of a flaw in Spenser's personification of Griefe:

Another common fault in St. xvi. Grief represents two incompatibles, the Grieved and the Aggriever. Indeed this Confusion of agent and patient occurs so frequently in his allegorical Personages, that Sp. seems to have deemed it within the Laws & among the legitimate privileges of Allegory.⁸

Coleridge scales back his initial allegation of a 'fault' to a more neutral observation of what Spenser deemed 'legitimate' in allegory. (As Steven Knapp suggests, this revision of

⁶ As, of course, does Malengin, the personification of Guile himself in Book V, though with fitting irony his methods are rather direct.

⁷ At the base of this association is Roman Jakobson's classic essay 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbance', in Jakobson and Morris Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* (New York: Mouton, 1956), pp. 67-96.

⁸ Coleridge, *Marginalia I*, ed. by George Whalley, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), vol. 12, p. 54.

initial judgment is particularly Coleridgean.)⁹ His complaint is that Grief spreads grief, as the aggrieving thing itself, and at the same time suffers from it as a 'patient' independent of the abstraction that is his name. There are two kinds of answer to this problem. The first would argue, as Knapp does, that the strange similarity between personifications and the fanatic (in the Kantian sense, though as we shall see Angus Fletcher's obsessive-compulsive personification is a direct modern descendant) removes the inconsistency: Grief insists so fanatically that all should grieve that he sees no reason why he should be spared. The second response to Coleridge's quibble is not to try to resolve it, but to argue that it illustrates the fluidity with which personifications in allegories move between their metaphorical and metonymic poles, between being the thing itself and a manifestation of the thing.¹⁰

Yet Coleridge's observation on Grief should also be related to the comments which precede and prompt it. In the same marginalia on Anderson's text of the Masque of Cupid, Coleridge comments of the figure of Dissemblance that 'here... that which is and may be known, but cannot *appear* from the given point of view, is confounded with the visible'.¹¹ This annotation refers specifically to Spenser's description of Dissemblance's 'borrowed hair'. That her hair is 'borrowed', Coleridge is saying, and thus consistent with her dissembling nature, can only be 'known' by a reader; it cannot 'appear' to a figure in the fiction, in this case Britomart, who is apprehending Dissemblance. This distinction between the reader's knowledge of a personification and the view of another figure in the

⁹ 'As often occurs in Coleridge, prescriptive criticism turns into descriptive insight'. Steven Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime* (London: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 84.

¹⁰ Anderson's text supplies 'many' in the sixth line, an error which seems to originate with him. Grief's heaviness seems to disorder the metrical balance of his stanza. See Anderson's *Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain. Containing Spenser, Shakespeare, Davies & Hall*, vol. 2 (1792), in *The Works of the British Poets*, ed. by Robert Anderson (Edinburgh: J. Mundell & Co, 1795-1807).

¹¹ Coleridge, ed. by Whalley, p. 54.

text informs much of my subsequent discussions of Spenser's personifications. It underlines my unease with the idea that figures in *The Faerie Queene* 'read', if by 'reading' is meant a process of textual interpretation or decoding. When a reader is informed of a personification's name – if that name has the transparency associated with personifications – she is being given superior insight equivalent to knowing that Dissemblance's hair is 'borrowed'. Yet some of Spenser's personifications have opaque names, and he often brings the experience of the reader close to that of the apprehending figure in the text with his innovative and famous delayed revelation of names.¹²

Coleridge's quibble with Griefe differs from his complaint about Dissemblance, but the prompting of the former by the latter suggests a comparison. The first distinction is between what readers know and what Britomart looks at, and the second is between 'agent' and 'patient', the roles of 'aggriever' and 'aggrieved' which seem bundled together in the figure of Griefe. To these two distinctions we can add two more: between the 'thing-itself' and a manifestation of the thing; and between dissemination by force, guile or proximity:

thing-itself (metaphor) / manifestation of the thing (metonym)
agent ('aggriever') / patient ('aggrieved')

dissemination by force / guile / proximity
as known by the reader (borrowed hair) / as seen by Britomart (hair)

It is straightforward to see how a metaphorical personification, a personage representing the thing-itself, would be likely to act as agent rather than patient. To suffer from grief implies that the grief has been imparted from elsewhere (though, as the comparison with

¹² Herbert Marks and Kenneth Gross, 'Names, naming', in *SEnc*, pp. 494-496.

the Kantian fanatic suggests, a person can inflict things on themselves). How these two dichotomies relate to the latter pair, however, seems less obvious. We can envisage a personification that stands in for the thing-itself, and acts as agent, disseminating itself by any one of force, guile or implication. If, like Furor, a figure disseminates by implication, then the text is already performing a slight dis-personification of the figure, which has turned from a daemon-like external concentration of energy into something more like a projection of another figure's internal agency. The reader is usually better placed in *The Faerie Queene* to understand that a personification is a metaphor and not an afflicted patient – we realise that Error is a concept as well as a monster, while Redcrosse treats her like a monster – but this distinction is not hard and fast: Una seems aware, from the outset, that Fairyland's monsters are conceptual.

Alongside this theoretical taxonomy of personifications, the reader of *The Faerie Queene* must also distinguish its allegorical personages according to their place and function in the poem. Though I have suggested above that a dichotomy of 'narrative' and 'allegory' implies a falsely inverse relationship, as well as unhelpfully demoting allegory, it is true that personifications in *The Faerie Queene* participate to varying extents in the poem's action. Some, like the Seven Deadly Sins or the personified months in the 'Cantos of Mutabilitie', process by in pageants without interacting directly with the poem's heroes; others are fixed in place, like Despaire, but threaten decisive influence over the fortunes of the knights who meet them; still others, such as Duessa and Archimago and the Blatant Beast, roam through the text. Such distinctions, especially that between mobile and spatially fixed figures, inform the following account of the spatial nature of personification. Furthermore, personifications differ according to which book of *The Faerie Queene* they live in. In the following chapters I treat the poem as both highly unified

and irrepressibly diverse: composed over more than fifteen years, in a vast array of modes and genres, from shifting discursive stances, *The Faerie Queene* cannot be read as a single statement; at the same time, its obsessively homogenised structure of books, cantos and stanzas, as well as the web of infinite internal echoes it weaves, means it cannot be read as six, or even two, separate texts. Its books, and the personifications in them, pose varying interpretive challenges: in a recent discussion of the figures of books I and II, for example, Katherine Eggert suggests that ‘in Book 1 [*sic*], the question is, “what/who is that”, while ‘in Book 2, the question is, “what kind of a creature is that?”’.¹³ The reader’s task is to remain sensitive to the local characteristics of each book’s figures, without isolating them from one another.

Personification in Theory: Contemporary Literary Criticism

Since the post-war imaginative expansion of literary criticism on Spenser, hundreds of studies have been published which, in discussing *The Faerie Queene*, touch on personification. Yet considerations of personification as such are rather rare. The following section reviews twentieth-century and contemporary theoretical delineations of *prosopopoeia*, dividing them into three broad groups: the post-war rehabilitations of the figure, which focus on its linguistic or grammatical characteristics and mainly quote examples from eighteenth-century poetry; the structuralist and post-structuralist poetics of Jonathan Culler and Paul de Man, as well as longer studies influenced by their methods; latterly, studies that re-conceive personification in relation to intellectual history or new

¹³ Katherine Eggert, email on the Sidney-Spenser Discussion List, 25 July 2018. By personal permission. The list is publicly accessible here: <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=SIDNEY-SPENSER>.

critical turns. Drawing on the foundations of such studies, and developing some of their parenthetical remarks or implications about space, I account for personification, and relate it to allegory, in spatial terms.

Personification sank to the lowest level of repute in Anglo-American criticism in the middle of the twentieth century. Understood superficially, it seems at odds with both modernist aesthetics and the values of New Criticism: it represents the artifice and slavish convention which the Romantic poets supposedly banished. Several post-war studies attempt to defend and rehabilitate the figure. Bertrand Bronson argues that the absence in personifications of particular details, associated in modernity with the real, did not trouble eighteenth-century readers, who prized generality over particularity.¹⁴ Personifications communicated concepts in their universality, while also making them clear by embodiment, achieving 'a clarity of statement more precise than can be achieved by undenominated symbols'.¹⁵ Bronson implies that, being metaphorical, personification is a kind of allegory. Robert Worth Frank similarly argues that personifications are 'allegoric' when their actions and motions require metaphorical interpretation.¹⁶ Bronson's description of personification as metaphor stresses further the pervasive nature of the trope:

[I]t is radically inseparable from other kinds of metaphor, and... the Romantic critics and their successors have been unwise and inconsistent in attempting to exclude it from the very heart of poetic statement... The personifying impulse, in whatever varying degrees of elaboration, is a radical tendency of the human

¹⁴ Perhaps, Bronson suggests, this is because European science of the mid-eighteenth century had not yet made enough generalisations for the general truths to become 'clogged with the mass of particulars', a process that left the particulars the place of 'immediacy and meaning'. Bertrand H. Bronson, 'Personification Reconsidered'. *English Literary History* 14 (1947), 163-177, 172.

¹⁵ Bronson, 169.

¹⁶ Robert Worth Frank, Jr, 'The Art of Reading Medieval Personification-Allegory', *English Literary History* 20 (1953), 237-250, 243.

psyche, embedded in the very roots of language, basic to every impulse toward dramatic representation.

Personification is common in eighteenth-century poetry not because that tradition was enslaved to convention, but because it is a basic tendency; associated unfairly with stasis, it actually shows an 'impulse toward dramatic representation'. 'Romantic criticism', Bronson's syntax implies, has unjustly separated personification from metaphor. If metaphor is understood to include symbolism, 'Romantic criticism' implies the tradition of posing allegory and symbolism as opposites that stems from Coleridge. Bronson dismisses this by exposing Ruskin's Coleridgean contrast of symbol and personification as 'barefaced special pleading' based on the choice of examples.¹⁷ Personification for Bronson is a species of symbol, not its opposite. Of these two associations of personification, with allegory and with symbolism, the former is less controversial: most subsequent critics agree that personification is allegorical, though exceptions exist.¹⁸ The collapsing of Coleridge's symbol/allegory dichotomy is more radical; the dichotomy continues to underline later work on personification, even for those critics who champion it (and allegory) against symbol.

Morton Bloomfield continues the defence of personification, and deepens its relation to allegory, by outlining a 'grammatical' account of how the figure works. Bloomfield argues that personifications as nouns communicate meaning with colourless transparency,

¹⁷ See Bronson, 167.

¹⁸ See Thomas Maresca, 'Saying and Meaning: Allegory and the Indefinable', *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 83 (1980), 248-261. Michael Murrin similarly argues that personifications function 'in a manner opposite to that of allegory', sources of clarity that serve to 'guide' a reader through the obscurity of the allegorical mode. Michael Murrin, 'Renaissance Allegory from Petrarch to Spenser', in *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, ed. by Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 162-176, p. 175.

sometimes achieving emphatic clarity but risking being 'mechanical and dull'.¹⁹ Yet the predicates of which they are subjects contain hidden or higher meaning, demanding imaginative construal by the reader. The sentence 'Truth always treads down error' contains personifications, which are what they are named; 'treads down' requires the potentially endless work of interpretation. In sentences containing 'symbolism' instead of personification, the metaphorical part of speech is the noun, not the verb, as in 'Jerusalem always defeats Babylon'.²⁰ 'Symbolism' here is a compressed or occasional form of 'allegory'. Bloomfield's account is useful for portraying personification and symbolic allegory as versions of one another, and for stressing that the focus of interpreting personifications should be on their metaphorical actions rather than their transparent names. His grammatical or linguistic approach is developed by Samuel Levin, in a landmark collection of essays on allegory edited by Bloomfield. Levin uses Bloomfield's initial distinction of metaphorical noun and metaphorical predicate to outline two possible kinds of dis-personification: encountering the sentence 'the rock is merry', Levin observes, the reader might choose quickly to convert 'the rock' so that it functions as a conventional subject of 'is merry'. Alternatively, the reader could interpret the predicate metaphorically, and imagine 'just what it would be a like for a rock to be merry'.²¹ Levin calls this interpretive process the 'radical type of dis-personification'.²² As the reading of the figure of Griefe above illustrates, Spenser's personifications repay interpretation of this kind. My own subsequent readings try to resist an instant conversion of embodied figures into abstract nouns, focusing interpretive attention first

¹⁹ Morton W. Bloomfield, 'A Grammatical Approach to Personification Allegory', *Modern Philology*, 60 (1963), 161-171, 165.

²⁰ Bloomfield, 165.

²¹ Samuel R. Levin, 'Allegorical Language', in *Allegory, Myth and Symbol*, ed. by Morton W. Bloomfield (London: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 23-38, p. 30.

²² Levin, p. 31.

on their actions or positions. Levin's cleverest contribution is to emphasise allegorical reading as a process, whereby metaphors are gradually resolved away, the order of their resolution yielding varying results.

Structuralists and Post-Structuralists

The rehabilitating studies of personification reviewed here accomplish more than just a defence of the figure; they provide useful insights on how personifications are to be read. Their limitation is the confinement of the discussion in purely linguistic or literary terms. Beginning with Angus Fletcher, literary critics in the twentieth century analysed personification in relation to more general cultural structures or forces. Underpinning much of this work is a revival of allegory after its denigration by Romantic and post-Romantic aesthetics. Walter Benjamin's brilliant, eccentric *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928) is the touchstone of this revival. Benjamin suggests that allegory is a 'form of expression' that reveals the materially and historically determined nature of things. Personification, common in the German *Trauerspiel* Benjamin calls 'baroque' and which inspire his theory of allegory, secretly fails to emblematised ineffable things and can only 'give the concrete a more imposing form by getting it up as a person'.²³ Benjamin rejects Coleridge's antithesis of allegory as conventional sign and symbol as incarnation. The difference is really a temporal one: Benjamin quotes with approval a letter of Joseph Görres in which he describes symbols as signs for ideas detached from historical time, unlike allegory which has 'acquired the very fluidity of time'.²⁴

²³ Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* [1928], trans. by John Osborne, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 187.

²⁴ Benjamin, p. 169.

The recasting of the symbol/allegory antithesis as a temporal distinction influences Paul de Man, whose describes allegory as the 'rhetoric of temporality'.²⁵ For de Man, the allegorical mode exposes the rift between subject and object, which in the Romantic poetry his essay considers is the concealed distance between the poet and the landscape. Allegorical signs fail to achieve the fusion of general and particular (Coleridge's 'Special in the Individual') associated with symbol; therefore, they depend for their meaning on their own sequence and are 'temporal'.²⁶ De Man's subtle and authoritative reading portrays allegory in postmodern terms, as a mode that inspires endless interpretive work and play.²⁷ Yet it could be alleged that he preserves the symbol/allegory antithesis, if only to make a straw man of the symbol. Contrasted with the impossible, symbolic 'organic world... of analogical correspondences', de Man's allegorical mode tends to regress inwards, becoming ultimately self-referential (or perhaps, as his essay on *prosopopoeia* suggests, autobiographical).²⁸ Understood as the postmodern scourge of a totalising, impossible symbol, allegory dwindles into *aporia*. De Man's analysis is persuasive as a deconstruction of Romantic efforts to re-connect with a disenchanted world by symbolism. For allegories in the Renaissance, however, in which the subject is porous to the world and its objects, his account needs modification.²⁹ I return below to de Man's

²⁵ Paul de Man, 'The Rhetoric of Temporality', in *Blindness and Insight* (1971), 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1983), pp. 187-228.

²⁶ De Man (1983), p. 207.

²⁷ The most influential study of *The Faerie Queene* along these critical lines is Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

²⁸ De Man (1983), p. 222.

²⁹ See *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

consideration of how allegory and irony relate; I'll suggest that the allegorical irony can be spatial as well as 'truly temporary'.³⁰

De Man does not make explicit links between the allegorical mode and personification, though his essay on autobiography and *prosopopoeia* was published soon after.³¹ The fundamental scepticism of his deconstructionist impulse is shared by contemporary theoretical rhetoricians. De Man's sense of allegory as a mode that tends toward self-reference, and of *prosopopoeia* as a deathly figure, resurface in J. Hillis Miller's study of person-fashioning in relation to reading, where *prosopopoeia* is any mechanism which 'ascribes a face, a name, or a voice to the absent, the inanimate, or the dead'.³² Jonathan Culler, meanwhile, describes lyric apostrophe as an 'embarrassing' but potentially exceptional event whereby the poem's speaking voice and its addressed object enter into a 'temporality of writing' outside usual temporality.³³ Culler cites de Man's suggestion that 'there is an intimate relation between apostrophes addressed to the dead... and *prosopopoeia* [*sic*] that give the dead or inanimate a voice'.³⁴ Yet his account insists on a difference between apostrophe and *prosopopoeia* which he calls 'the tension between the narrative and the apostrophic'.³⁵ *Prosopopoeia*, a figure of worldly temporality rather than the apostrophic 'temporality of writing', is associated with narrative; apostrophe freezes narrative, and freezes time. Yet perhaps the symbol/allegory antithesis also underpins Culler's distinction between apostrophe which, if animated by 'poetic power', can arrest

³⁰ De Man (1983), p. 222.

³¹ Paul de Man, 'Autobiography as De-Facement', in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 67-81.

³² J. Hillis Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion* (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 4.

³³ Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 135-154, p. 135, p. 149.

³⁴ Culler, p. 149.

³⁵ Culler, p. 149.

the flow of time, and *prosopopoeia*, which cannot. The enduring value of all these studies is to connect rhetorical moves with more general literary or cultural impulses. In their wake, James Paxson's study of personification proposes that 'personification' should be conceived, like the sign in structuralist linguistics, as a 'duplex structural division' of personifier and personified.³⁶ A similarly expansive later essay links the displacement, in metaphor, of one referent by another to an archetypal possession of female form by male matter.³⁷

Anthropomorphism, Personification, Narrative Discourse

The depth of Paxson's treatment of personification allows him to elaborate previous definitions of the figure and make useful taxonomic distinctions. One of these distinctions, however, undergoes a significant revision as his work progresses. In *The Poetics of Personification*, Paxson distinguishes 'anthropomorphism', 'the figural translation of any non-human quantity into a character that has human *form*' (where 'form' might be simply grammatical), from 'personification', where non-human quantities become persons 'capable of thought and language, possessing *voice* and *face*'.³⁸ Stephen Barney makes the same distinction in lucid terms:

[B]y "personification" I mean the labelling of a figure in a fiction with an abstract name, like "Killjoy", and not the attribution of human qualities to an object, as the dancing of the daffodils.³⁹

³⁶ James Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 42.

³⁷ James Paxson, 'Queering *Piers Plowman*: The Copula(tion)s of Figures in Medieval Allegory', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29 (1999), 21-29.

³⁸ Paxson (1994), p. 42.

³⁹ Stephen Barney, *Allegories of History, Allegories of Love* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979), p. 20.

This separation of personification from a more general ‘attribution’ of human qualities to the non-human has its practical uses. Yet in Paxson’s essay on personification and gender, the distinction fades a little. ‘Animate metaphor’, or attribution, now differs from the translation of a non-human quantity into a person only ‘in terms of an increased ontological density in the latter’.⁴⁰ Personification, says Paxson perceptively, ‘involves a kind of epistemological error – a sort of forgetting of the textual status belonging to animate metaphors’.⁴¹ The difference between anthropomorphism and personification is remodelled as a variation in how literally, or seriously, the figure is read: anthropomorphisms, attributions understood as metaphorical, are ‘secondary’; personifications, within their fictions, walk and talk and are called ‘primary’. Using the ‘narratological terms’ of Gérard Genette, Paxson shows that ‘primary personification exists on the level of narrative story, while secondary personification exists on the level of narrative discourse’.⁴² For the purposes of this study of Spenserian personification, Paxson’s revision of his initial distinction proves more illuminating. As I will show, personifications seem one thing to figures in the text, the level of story, and another to readers of the text, who experience it as discourse. Furthermore, Spenser himself blurs the line between Paxson’s original ‘anthropomorphism’ and ‘personification’. His pageant of rivers in Book IV, considered below in detail, prompts us constantly to question whether we should imagine rivers with human qualities, or rivers ‘translated’ into bodies.

⁴⁰ Paxson (1999), p. 24.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

Two Classic Accounts

In Renaissance rhetorical theory, whose treatment of *prosopopoeia* I survey below, personification is a figure of thought rather than only of speech. Two of the most influential considerations of personification in twentieth-century Anglo-American criticism take this idea as their departure point. Angus Fletcher's classic study of allegory famously observes that figures in allegorical texts behave obsessively and compulsively. 'The hero of an allegorical epic', says Fletcher, 'will be presented towards us doing things the way a compulsive does things'.⁴³ In a variant of this statement, the same allegorical 'hero' exhibits 'the type of behavior [*sic*] manifested by people who are thought... to be possessed by a demon'.⁴⁴ In an allegorical world, that is, a Freudian 'repetition compulsion' would be the result of possession by a demon who makes an agent repeat an action endlessly. Gluttony, in the pageant of sins at the House of Pride, has an insatiable appetite for 'excessiue feast' (I.iv.21.6), but is forever vomiting 'vp his gorge' (9) in order to eat again. Fletcher's analogy of daemonic possession is with the allegorical 'hero', but it also characterises personifications. Fletcher implies the similarity of all figures, personified or heroic, in an allegory.⁴⁵

Gordon Teskey's *Allegory and Violence* (1996) thinks similarly of the allegorical agent as captured, but adds to the equation what Paxson calls the 'personifier', the force that renders a figure a personification. This force, Teskey argues, is the violence of 'capture':

⁴³ Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 302.

⁴⁴ Fletcher, p. 39.

⁴⁵ In both these remarks about compulsion and possession, Fletcher mentions the allegorical 'hero'. Elsewhere, however, he notes that 'if we were to meet *an allegorical character* in real life, we would say of him that he was obsessed with only one idea, or that he had an absolutely one-track mind' (my italics). Thus the observation extends to personifications. Fletcher, p. 40.

a poet or artist imposes on a figure his intended meaning, and the action or motion of that figure in the resulting fiction might be seen as its jerking attempt to strain at this semantic binding.⁴⁶ Teskey's formidable achievement is to highlight the presence of this kind of thinking in the Renaissance: the imposition of meaning upon matter, for instance, is portrayed as a variant of the idea of the female as the material receptacle of male form propagated in Aristotle's *De Generatione Animalium*. Fletcher and Teskey's ideas enrich much contemporary scholarship on allegory, especially as Spenser writes it. Nevertheless, their arguments are underpinned by assumptions that can and should be questioned. Both critics pathologise fixity or simplicity of meaning: Fletcher associates it with a Freudian neurosis, while Teskey makes it a symptom of totalising violence. In some cases this pathology of the absolute or of the idea is very convincing. Yet as much criticism, and many examples from Renaissance allegory suggest, it does not follow as an axiom that allegory's attempted movement from material signs to abstract meanings is neurotic or violent. Allegory's reifications might be more successful than Teskey's fraught examples. On the other hand, allegory might avoid compulsion by self-consciously deconstructing itself with *allegoresis*.

Two Contemporary Studies

A recent volume of essays on personification attempts to place the figure in the context of topics more current (for better or worse) than Fletcher's Freudian connections or Teskey's neo-Platonic violence. *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion* (2016) demonstrates great progression from the work of Frank, quoted above, where the

⁴⁶ Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (London: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 35.

personification's body is neither here nor there. Whereas for Frank the personification's words and actions matter, in Jean Bocharova's essay personifications are 'useful for something' because they are 'embodied ideas'.⁴⁷ Thinking at once of bodies and ideas, the volume situates personification both in the context of the study of the body that preoccupied Anglo-American literary critics in the 1990s, and more recent work grounded in cognitive theory.⁴⁸ Spenser makes several appearances, and on occasion new perspectives on the personifications of *The Faerie Queene* can be glimpsed: analysing the Despaire episode, Bocharova discusses not only the figure's words but the environment created by the fact of his embodiment, 'the place of despair'.⁴⁹ In chapter four, I extend this line of inquiry, tracing the complex meaning and associations of this place, which is a cave. However, the essay in the volume devoted to Spenser mostly fails to answer the call Walter Melion makes in his introduction, for critics to approach personification in 'phenomenological' as well 'as semiotic' terms, 'focusing on effects of presence'.⁵⁰ Brenda Machovsky covers well-trodden ground in an essay that considers personification as a process analogous to the various kinds of self-fashioning and political representation described several decades ago by the New Historicists.⁵¹ Machovsky deftly applies the legal doctrine of the monarch's two bodies to the figures of Belphoebe and Gloriana, but struggles to distinguish her analysis from David Lee Miller's in *The Poem's Two Bodies*. Her sense that personification cannot be divided from other kinds of person-making, and

⁴⁷ Frank says that though the figure of Envy 'seems now a man, now a woman', there is 'no need for the reader to be confused'. Jean Bocharova, 'Personification Allegory and Embodied Cognition', in *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion*, ed. by Walter S. Melion and Bart Ramakers (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2016), pp. 43-69, p. 43.

⁴⁸ For a recent appraisal of several cognitively focused works of literary criticism, see Michelle Ty, 'Review: On the Cognitive Turn in Literary Studies', *Qui Parle* 19 (2010), 205-219.

⁴⁹ Bocharova, p. 62.

⁵⁰ Walter Melion, 'Personification: An Introduction', in *Personification*, pp. 1-40, p. 1.

⁵¹ Brenda Machovsky, 'The Personification of the Human Subject in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*', in Melion and Ramakers, pp. 121-138.

that this distinction is particularly blurry in *The Faerie Queene*, is accurate; yet one could argue that the focus on figures such as Duessa, who suffers a 'literal deconstruction of her personified identity', belies a default view of personification as something requiring 'deconstruction'.⁵² In the work that follows, I try to resist this tendency. Gloriana may be the poem's governing figure, but as the embodiment of a concept, and a metaphorical distribution of agency, she is no more interesting than Griefe or Gluttony.

Andrew Escobedo's recent study of personification in Renaissance literature attempts to correct what he sees as an enduring bias. Despite renewed critical interest in the figure, he argues, it remains for most of its critics a depletion of fully human personhood. Whether by neurosis, violent restraint, or flatness, personifications are 'failed persons'.⁵³ On the contrary, Escobedo asserts, personifications channel and express energy: specifically, they embody the will. For Escobedo, premodern Christian Europe represents an intermediate stage in the history of the will, in which the will has ceased to be synonymous with the intellect, as it is for both Aristotle and the Stoics, but is not yet re-incorporated into the person as the 'deep self' or, in Freudian terms, the 'ego'.⁵⁴ 'The premodern will is part of the self but also independent from the other parts of the self': this tension is aptly expressed by personifications, who are placed outside the agent in a fiction but tend to be construed as a part of that agent.⁵⁵ Escobedo's account of the will provokes inevitable questions about free will and determinism, and their compatibility

⁵² Machovsky (2016), p. 34. She quotes Paxson's reading of the transformation of Malbecco, which prompts the assertion that 'the governing poetic code for Spenserian personification is the narrativisation of the trope as it comes into or goes out of existence' (Paxson (1994), p. 139). Once more, what is true for Malbecco is less applicable to the whole poem as a 'governing... code'.

⁵³ Andrew Escobedo, *Volition's Face: Personification and the Will in Renaissance Literature* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), p. 1.

⁵⁴ Escobedo (2017), pp. 58-65.

⁵⁵ Escobedo (2017), p. 75.

(concepts which become polemical in the Reformation). If a personification displays the early modern will as it hovers between self and other, an agent's interaction with the personification could represent what modern philosophers call 'second-order volition', what we want for our will. Elsewhere, Escobedo has explored the relation of personification to the problem of free will, and has argued persuasively for its links not only to strict determinism but to its inverse radical freedom.⁵⁶

If Escobedo's portrayal of the early modern will is accurate, the startling neatness of personifications as its metaphorical expression empowers his argument. It is also certainly true that personifications possess more energy than many modern commentators claim. Yet in order to encompass the variety of personifications in *The Faerie Queene*, several parts of his thesis need expansion or adjustment. Throughout *Volition's Face* Escobedo uses the term 'landscape' to describe the external place into which, in a fiction, volitional energy is projected. Though idiosyncratic, this is not a misleading deployment of the term; yet Escobedo does not explore in detail the interaction of this conceptual 'landscape' and the physical landscape described. Subsequent chapters on the personification of natural features of landscape such as rivers, and of the environment, such as night, explore Spenser's allegory of landscape itself; the following chapter on caves traces the material and cultural residue of this particular feature of metaphorical 'landscape'. Furthermore, Escobedo's sense of exactly what has been projected into the landscape is, in some cases, too narrow. His conception of the premodern will, as something that is 'mine but does not always coincide with me', also elegantly describes the position of personifications on the boundary between self

⁵⁶ Andrew Escobedo, 'Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels', *English Literary History* 75 (2008), 787-818.

and other. Yet Escobedo assumes that personifications, after dis-personifying *allegoresis* occurs, represent (a particular fragment of) a single subject's will. His first elaborated case study is the figure of Conscience in Tudor interludes; he traces St Paul's conversion of the Greek *daemon* translated by Roman writers as *genius* into the 'strictly interior affair of conscience'.⁵⁷ As his primary example indicates, Escobedo's view of personifications is perhaps too 'strictly' interior. He gives insufficient attention to personifications who represent not only the percipient's will, in its premodern distributed form, but someone else's will, or a combination of the wills of different agents. Personifications can represent social as well as subjective volition. As I demonstrate later, by tracing the differences between the cave of Despaire (Book I) and the cave of Lust (IV), this tendency increases between the 1590 and 1596 texts of *The Faerie Queene*.

Conclusion: the Spatiality of Personification Allegory

This review of the modern critical study of personification makes two things clear. First, personification and allegory are obviously related, not only because they appear in proximity so often, or because as literary terms their meanings have overlapped, but also on a theoretical level. It is not obvious, however, to state what this relation is. Secondly, personifications can and should be read as bodies. Even if the reader arrives at an eventual interpretation in which they are dis-personified, the distance between that eventual reading and the initial metaphor of embodiment is part of the text's meaning. Escobedo's book, and the recent collection of essays edited by Melion and Ramakers, underline that if we interpret away the metaphor of embodiment too readily, we miss the

⁵⁷ Escobedo (2017), p. 98.

capacity of personification to express volition as premodern culture understood it, and its similarity to other processes of embodiment.

Keeping this second conclusion in mind helps us to formulate a possible answer to the previous question, as to the relation between personification and allegory. As established in the introduction, allegory is a mode of other-speaking, in which a sequence of metaphors point beyond their obvious surface meanings to a secondary, other set of meanings. The otherness of personifications, as Bloomfield and Levin show, is to be found not in their names (which are obsessively transparent), but in what they do. Perhaps we could extend this observation, in light of a recent critical insistence on reading them as bodies in environments, to say that personification presents a *spatial otherness*. When expressed through metaphors of embodiment, abstract or non-human ideas acquire spatial characteristics different from (or 'other to') their non-embodied equivalents. At its most basic, a personification such as Envy confers material and therefore spatial form on a concept which, being abstract, lacks it outside the allegory. Specifically, personification transforms an abstract or non-human concept into the space of a human body, capable of speech and movement. Envy shares a name with the concept which she represents; unlike that concept, she is concentrated within the bounds of a material body at a specific point in imagined space, and can talk and move. In the next chapter, I argue that Spenser's personification of natural phenomena, the night and the world's rivers, necessitates the exchange of one kind of mobility for another. In the final chapter, I argue that figuring certain concepts as buildings creates disparities specific to the early modern person's architectural experience.

In some cases, the spatial otherness conferred on concepts when they are personified is a form of irony. In the third chapter, I argue that in making despair and error into caves, Spenser makes exclusive and secreted *places* out of mental states of *placelessness*. It's possible that spatial otherness, and the resultant irony, arises in particular from allegorical reifications of vice. Aristotelian ethics understands vices more as deviations from or deformations of proportionate virtuous dispositions than forces in themselves. Vices, therefore, cannot be reified without affording them a demonic ontology they necessarily lack. As Jason Crawford asserts in his thesis on the topic, 'the Spenserian vice partakes... of a difficulty that begins to smell of the problem of evil'.⁵⁸

The implicit connection between irony and allegory has been posited and reformulated since classical poetics.⁵⁹ De Man devotes the second half of 'The Rhetoric of Temporality' to exploring this relation. His concept of irony is derived from Baudelaire's notion of *le comique absolu*, the laughter of one person at another when his relationship to the other seems 'not between man and man, two entities that are in essence similar, but between man and what he calls nature'.⁶⁰ Internalised, this sense of alienation makes for an ironic self, who feels distanced from and stranger to his empirical self. The only solution to this ironical splitting of the self, which happens quickly or even simultaneously, is allegory, which stretches out the incompatible and rival selves into temporal sequence. What allegory and irony share is 'their common discovery of a truly temporary predicament'.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Jason Crawford, 'Personification and its Discontents', unpublished PhD thesis, Harvard University (2008), p. 124.

⁵⁹ In his *Ars Grammatica*, for example, Diomedes thinks of allegory as a rhetorical trope which can be divided into seven species: irony, antiphrasis, enigma, *charientismos*, *paroemia*, sarcasm, and *astismos*. All are forms of saying one thing and meaning another; irony in particular renders 'meaning contrary to the sense of the words by harshness of its articulation'. Diomedes, *Ars Grammatica*, in *Grammatici Latini*, ed. by Heinrich Keil (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1857), vol. 1, p. 95.

⁶⁰ De Man (1983), p. 212.

⁶¹ De Man (1983), p. 222.

Irony, as I am using the term at this point and in subsequent chapters, means something more ordinary. The disparity of concepts in their embodied and non-embodied forms is ironic in the obvious sense that, on occasion, their spatial characteristics are the opposites of one another. Yet de Man also characterises irony as the expositor of a 'temporary predicament'. As I will show, irony instructs the reader to hold in mind concepts both as she encounters them in their embodied forms, and as disembodied constructions; the movement from one to the other must be continuous and bi-directional, a temporary switch between spatial configurations ironically juxtaposed with one another.

II. Prosopopoeia

Prosopopoeia in Classical and Renaissance Rhetoric

The following section explores how theories of *prosopopoeia*, articulated by classical rhetoricians and reprinted in the Renaissance, illuminate Spenser's use of the figure we now call 'personification'. In general, I will argue that the range of the term 'prosopopoeia', which overlaps imperfectly with contemporary 'personification', allows us to forge links between personification in *The Faerie Queene* and a number of other topics which, in terms of modern rhetorical theory, seem unrelated: disguise and simulation; the personhood of animals; *apostrophe* and *sermonicatio*, the tendency to think of virtues and vices in binary pairs. Some of these, such as the contested personhood of animals like the lion whose violence is 'aswaged' (I.iii.5.8) by Una's beauty in the poem's third canto, may seem tangential. Others are obviously major: classical and Renaissance definitions of *prosopopoeia* rest on the idea of a conjured or constructed

person; in a poem whose avowed intention and theme is the fashioning of a noble self through the acquisition of virtue, the particular meanings of personhood are moot.

As well as highlighting connections with other topics, I want to make a few specific claims about *prosopopoeia*. The first, underpinning the following discussion, is that rhetorical definitions of personification cast doubt, for Renaissance literature, on a Bakhtinian idea of texts as containers of many voices. Poems, the work of the rhetoricians would suggest, were understood more as the utterance of a single speaking voice which sometimes impersonated others. The second particular claim concerns *enargeia*, the effect of ‘vividness’ with which *prosopopoeia* is almost always associated. Vividness in oratory, I will argue, differs from vividness in (Spenser’s) fiction. Whereas the former assists persuasion, the latter can prove as confusing and blinding as it is clarifying. The third observation I will make is that the frequency of spatial phenomena, especially the land of a nation, in the lists of examples of things that can be made to speak, has been underappreciated; the importance of spatiality in Spenser’s personification can be set in the context of a model of *prosopopoeia* in which personified places are preeminent examples.

Reading Renaissance literature in light of contemporary rhetorical theory, and its absorption of classical models, requires several caveats. In general, a modern estimation of knowledge that presents itself as theoretical should be avoided. (An explanation deriving from Foucault would attribute this bias to the grip, since modernity, of science over other kinds of knowing.)⁶² The conceptual boundaries outlined by early modern

⁶² At the end of the eighteenth century, Foucault declares, knowledge on the cusp of modernity ‘in its positivity changes its nature and its form... [w]hat changed... was knowledge itself as an anterior and

rhetorical theory are not equal to the boundaries of what it was possible to think as a reader or writer in the sixteenth century. It is quite possible, for example, that the links between *prosopopoeia* and allegory were not only implied, but consciously felt and understood by Spenser and his readers, without being explicitly articulated in any English rhetorical treatise. It is also useful to remember that, despite the inexorable importance of rhetoric in Renaissance education, oratory is not the same as literature. Poetry could be defended and justified in terms of its proximity to oratory, but remains distinct from it. Some rhetorical theory suggests an impatience with or hostility to literature, a desire to straighten out its multiplicity and messiness. Readers of Spenser should not follow suit by reducing his personifications to a set of inflexible principles. On the other hand, it is worthwhile remembering that, despite their classification by the modern mind in a scientific realm of systematic knowledge, the rhetorical treatises of the Renaissance and their classical models are, to varying degrees, as multiple, flexible and impressionistic as the fictions from which they draw examples. They are themselves texts.

It's certain that Spenser read many of the authors that I discuss here. Quintilian and Cicero's writings on rhetoric were fundamental to his education at Merchant Taylors' and at Cambridge. He is also likely to have encountered the work of Greek rhetoricians quoted below, in quotation by European rhetoricians or in anthologies. Spenser probably read several of the early modern English surveys of figures, such as the popular treatises by Puttenham and Peacham. He shared with Dudley Fenner and Abraham Fraunce, both of

indivisible mode of being between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge'. Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les Choses* [1966], *The Order of Things: Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 274.

whom consider *prosopopoeia* in rhetorical treatises, a familiarity with the Ramist logic ascendant at Cambridge in the late sixteenth century. Yet it is also worth discussing sixteenth century European texts, such as Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Poetices* (1561), some of which Spenser is unlikely to have personally encountered. For example, I compare Spenser's practice with the theories of personification expressed in Bonciani's 'Lezione della Prosopopea' (1578), an important and under-read text from contemporary European poetics. In an increasingly connected European intellectual culture, such texts certainly influenced English literature; they also demonstrate some, if not all, of the ways it was possible to think in the sixteenth century about personification.

Prosopopoeia in Contemporary and Classical Rhetoric: a Survey

English rhetoricians in the second half of the sixteenth century tend to define *prosopopoeia* as the feigning of a person which, prior to the utterance of the orator or poet, did not exist. The attribution of characteristics associated with persons, especially speech, to that which is senseless and dumb, clearly fits into this definition. Such an attribution, which is the primary meaning of the modern term 'personification', is in Renaissance rhetoric only a sub-species of a figure that denotes the construction of any person lacking a literal existence. Fictional persons and those who had a historical existence but have since died, rub shoulders with 'personifications' of abstract, inanimate and disparate nouns. The variance between the rhetorical writers as to the precise meaning of *prosopopoeia* is rich, sometimes bewilderingly so. As we shall see, the differing classifications of the figure, the general category to which it belongs and the other figures in that category with which it is associated, often provide the most

illumination for reading Spenser. Yet it is worth first surveying the varying definitions and examples of *prosopopoeia* attempted by the rhetoricians.

Richard Sherry, whose *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550) is the first 'figurist' grammatical treatise in English, defines *prosopopoeia* in both a general and specific way.⁶³ Generally speaking, it is an umbrella term for 'the description of a personne', of which there are six varieties.⁶⁴ Specifically it is one of two sub-species of the second variety, *prosopographia*, 'the fainyng of a person'.⁶⁵ Unlike the feigning of fictional persons, such as Virgil's portrait of the Sibyl in *Aeneid* VI, the attribution of 'person, comunicacion, or affecte... to a dumme thyng, or that hath no bodye, or to a dead man' is what 'the Poetes do call *Prosopopey*'.⁶⁶ Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553) does not use the term *prosopopoeia*, but mentions the attribution of 'what we woulde say in our owne person' to another, feigned person.⁶⁷ Like Sherry, he discusses *prosopopoeia* in the context of a general 'describing of persons'. In Richard Rainolde's treatise (1563), the classification of *prosopopoeia* performs an inversion on Sherry's scheme: whereas for Sherry *prosopopoeia* was a governing term for the description of persons, of which the attribution of personhood to a 'dumme thyng' is a species, Rainolde treats it as a species of the general description of persons which he calls *ethopoeia*.⁶⁸ (For Sherry, '*Ætopoeia*', the expression of a person's 'maners or mylde affections', is the third variety of *prosopopoeia*.) *Prosopopoeia* is defined, following Priscian, as 'when to any one againste

⁶³ On Elizabethan rhetorical treatises in general, see Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 76-102.

⁶⁴ Richard Sherry, *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (London, 1550), fol. E2v.

⁶⁵ Sherry, fol. E2v.

⁶⁶ Sherry, fol. E2.

⁶⁷ Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (London, 1553), fol. 96.

⁶⁸ Richard Rainolde, *A booke called the Foundacion of rhetorike* (London, 1563), fol. 49r.

nature, speache is feigned to bee giuen'.⁶⁹ Rainolde's almost exact inversion of Sherry's organisation of *prosopopoeia* and *ethopoeia* as class and instance of one another indicates both consensus and instability. The association indicated between the feigning of an imaginary person (*prosopopoeia*) and description of character (*ethopoeia*) remains firm throughout the sixteenth century. The inversion of terms shows that it was difficult to say where *prosopopoeia* ended and *ethopoeia* began; the association was a potential confusion.

In later English rhetorical treatises of the sixteenth century, *prosopopoeia* belongs to a similar cluster of concepts. Angel Day, in the popular *The English Secretary* (1599), defines the figure as 'when to things without life wee frame an action, speech or person'.⁷⁰ Henry Peacham, in the first edition of *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577), defines it as 'the fayning of a person' for something 'sencelesse and dumme';⁷¹ in the revised edition of 1593 it is classed in fine distinction from *prosographia*, the evocation of a 'very person of a man' as well as 'of a fained'.⁷² George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589) distinguishes these two figures very similarly:

But if ye will feign any person with such features, qualities, and conditions, or if ye will attribute any human quality, as reason or speech, to dumb creatures or other insensible things, and do study (as one may say) to give them a human person, it is not *prosographia* but *prosopopoeia*, because it is by way of fiction.⁷³

⁶⁹ Rainolde, fol. 50v.

⁷⁰ Angel Day, *The English Secretary* (London, 1599), fol. 90.

⁷¹ Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1577), fol. 03.

⁷² Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1593), p. 136.

⁷³ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* [London, 1589], ed. by Gladys Willcock and Alice Walker (London: Cambridge University Press, 1936), III.19 ('Of Figures Sententious, otherwise called Rhetorical'), p. 239.

Puttenham's syntax here serves as an apt model of the classification of *prosopopoeia* in sixteenth-century English rhetoric. The figure is, first of all, the feigning of 'any person' who is fictional; it is also the attribution of human qualities, chiefly 'speech' and the related property of 'reason', to things which are 'dumb' or 'insensible'. The transition from the first sense of the figure to the second might seem rather loose, but the sentence's next clause re-incorporates it under the governing idea of the feigning of a 'human person'. Though *prosopopoeia* comprised both the feigning of persons and the attribution of characteristics associated with personhood to entities lacking them, it is the first sense, the notion of personhood, which in Puttenham and other treatises seems most fundamental. As we have seen, the most variety is to be found not in definitions of *prosopopoeia* but its place in the classification of figures.

One key evolution in the figure's definition, however, can be found in the late sixteenth-century rhetorical treatises composed by writers associated with Petrus Ramus's school of logic, influential in England from the last two decades of the century, especially at Cambridge. Dudley Fenner's treatise of 1584, which in Ramist fashion understands much of rhetoric as a sub-category of logic, defines *prosopopoeia* simply as 'a Feyning of the person whereby we doo feyne another person speaking in our speache'.⁷⁴ Yet he distinguishes 'imperfect' from 'perfect' *prosopopoeia*. This distinction corresponds roughly to the difference in modern grammar between direct and indirect speech. 'Imperfect' *prosopopoeia* portrays 'the speache of another person... lightlie and indirectlie'; the figure is 'perfect' when 'the whole feyning of the person is set downe in our speache'.⁷⁵ Abraham Fraunce's *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588) defines the figure

⁷⁴ Dudley Fenner, *The artes of logike and rhetorike* (London, 1584), fol. D4v.

⁷⁵ Fenner, fol. E1.

similarly ('the fayning of any person'), and makes an identical distinction between speech conferred imperfectly ('lightlie and slightlie') and perfectly ('fully and lively represented').⁷⁶ Both Fenner and Fraunce stipulate that a perfect *prosopopoeia* must signify its beginning and end, communicating the adoption of another person's speech and return to the speaker's, like quotation marks in modern English. Fenner calls this 'entring' and 'leaving'; Fraunce calls it 'accesse' and 'regresse'.⁷⁷ The introduction of this distinction in the Ramist rhetorical treatises demonstrates that by the late sixteenth century *prosopopoeia* connoted speech almost as much as the feigning of a person.

Just as intriguing and various as their definitions of *prosopopoeia* are the examples of the figure the rhetoricians provide. What is striking about most of the lists of examples is the primacy of concrete nouns among the inanimate things to which a *prosopon* can be given. Wilson describes making 'God, the countrie, or some one town to speake'.⁷⁸ God, of course, to a Christian mind, is anything but inanimate, and has three persons. Even here the concept of conferring speech and that which is speechless threatens to be subsumed by the general idea of portraying a person who is not present at the moment of oratory. In Sherry's list of exemplary *prosopopoeiae*, abstract nouns are similarly secondary: 'the Harpies, furies, deuils, slepe[,] hongar, enuie, fame, vertue, iustice'.⁷⁹ In 1577, Peacham's list of examples includes no abstract nouns at all; like Wilson, he emphasises places, citing 'Citties, townes, beastes, byrdes, fyshes, creeping wormes, weapons, stones' as 'thinges' which can be given speech.⁸⁰ In 1593 Peacham revises this list, subtracting fishes and worms and adding 'trees... fire[,] water' and 'lights of the firmament', but he precedes

⁷⁶ Abraham Fraunce, *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (London, 1588), fol. G2.

⁷⁷ Fenner, fol. E1; Fraunce, fol. G2v.

⁷⁸ Wilson, fol. 96.

⁷⁹ Sherry, fol. E2.

⁸⁰ Peacham (1577), fol. O3.

these with the attribution of 'a person to a commonwealth or multitude'.⁸¹ *Prosopopoeia* comprises turning many people, even those joined in something like a body corporate, into a single person. By 1593 it also explicitly includes the figure by which the orator 'raiseth againe... the dead to life'.⁸² Peacham also extends his range of examples to abstract nouns, explaining that an orator who has 'sufficiently praised truth' might 'faine it as a person, and bring it in bitterly complaining'.⁸³ Angel Day's first example of *prosopopoeia* is 'vertue' imagined as a 'living person'; an orator, he says, might also 'faine the ghostes from out their graues to prescribe good examples', of which the *Mirrhour for Magistrates* (1559) was a familiar example.⁸⁴ Yet Day's most detailed example is a hypothetical *prosopopoeia* of 'our countrey', accusing its people of 'negligent regard'. His elaboration of this example, closely modelled on Cicero, demonstrates an awareness of how the choice of one personification mandates another: if the 'countrey' is a mother, then its 'vnkind people and Citizens' can easily be imagined as its children ('ingendred in my bowels').⁸⁵ The first metaphor affects the second in a chain that brings to mind Quintilian's formulation, fundamental to most Renaissance definitions, of allegory as a flow of metaphors.

The examples of *prosopopoeia* provided by the Ramist rhetoricians, for whom speech is the *sine qua non* of the figure, are rather brief. Fenner draws both his examples from scripture: an imperfect *prosopopoeia*, whose speech is indirect, is David's representation of 'the wicked' in Psalm 10. Perfection is achieved by the personification of Wisdom in

⁸¹ Peacham (1593), p. 136.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Day, fol. 90.

⁸⁵ Day, fol. 90.

Proverbs, who speaks in her own voice.⁸⁶ Both Fraunce and John Hoskins, in his *Directions for Speech and Style* (1599) draw most of their examples of *prosopopoeia* from Philip Sidney. Hoskyns praises Sidney for the extent of his art's life-giving power: he 'gives meaning and speech to the needle, the cloth, and the silk, as learning, as a city, as death itself, is feigned to live and make a speech'.⁸⁷ He also provides a classic hypothesis of 'if your ancestors were now alive and saw you'.⁸⁸ Fraunce quotes Sidney's Musidorus, pleading to his beloved, as an example of the imperfect species; perfect examples are Homer's description of Thersites in the *Iliad* (II) and Goffredo's speech to his soldiers in *Gerusalemme Liberata* (III).⁸⁹

Fraunce illustrates the kind of *prosopopoeia* which animates the inanimate with Homer's portrait of Achilles's horse, Xanthus. (As we shall see, the question of whether animals belong to the category of persons, or to that of inanimate things, is one Spenser explores with skill and in depth.) Fraunce also quotes Sidney's personification of the land in Book V of the *Arcadia*. 'I am', says Philanax to Euarchus,

[T]he representer of all the late flourishing *Arcadia*, which now with mine eyes doth weepe, with my tongue doth complaine, with my knees doth lay it selfe at your feete... imagine, most wise & good King, that here is before your eyes the pitifull spectacle of a most dolorous ending tragedie. Wherein I doo but play the part of al this now miserable prouince, which being spoyled of her guide, doth lie like a shipp without a Pilote, tumbling vp and downe in the vncertaine waues...⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Fenner, fol. E1.

⁸⁷ John Hoskins, *Directions for Speech and Style* [London, 1599], ed. by Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), pp. 47-48.

⁸⁸ Hoskins, pp. 47.

⁸⁹ See Fraunce, fol. G3v.

⁹⁰ See Fraunce, fol. G3v. See also Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. by Jean Robertson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 'The Last Book or Act' [V], p. 360.

The first clauses of Philanax's appeal to the king indicate something less than an imagined figure metaphorically representing the country of Arcadia. It is not that Arcadia weeps, complains with a tongue and prostrates herself because she has a body. Rather, she is represented by Philanax and thus communicates through the features of *his* body. In the former case the body would be substantive in the metaphor; in the latter it is accidental. (Arcadia prostrates not *herself* but 'it selfe'.) Fraunce's quotation also highlights the connection between *prosopopoeia* and theatricality: Philanax persuades Euarchus with the resources of theatre ('I doo but play the part') and especially 'tragedie'. The simile of the 'shipp' introduces a fresh ambiguity. Arcadia 'doth lie like a shipp without a Pilote, tumbling vp and downe in the vncertaine waues'. 'Tumbling' might well refer to the 'shipp', in which case Euarchus is to substitute for the ship's fluctuation the ructions of the state. Yet it could also refer further back to Arcadia itself: in that case, the country itself is floating uncertainly on the waves. Its personification has made the land peculiarly personal in its mobility and lack of fixity. Fraunce's example alerts all readers to the fact that in all instances of *prosopopoeia*, no matter how 'perfect', there is potential contamination of tenor by vehicle. To represent a land-mass as a person is, always, to lose some aspects of the literal land-mass and simultaneously inflect it with properties of the person.

For Puttenham, 'no prettier examples can be given' of *prosopopoeia* than those in Chaucer's translation of *The Romance of the Rose*, 'describing the persons of Avarice, Envy, Old Age, and many others'.⁹¹ Puttenham distinguishes such personified abstractions from the representation of persons 'not by fiction' – that is, natural persons

⁹¹ Puttenham, p. 239.

either historical or invented. This he classifies as *prosopographia*. Chaucer, who represents ‘the Summoner, Pardoner, [and] Manciple... most naturally and pleasantly’ is again his example.⁹² *Prosopographia* and *prosopopoeia* are followed by *topographia*, the representation of places:

[I]f this description be of any true place, citie, castell, hill, valley, or sea, and such like, we call it the counterfait place *Topographia*, or if ye fayne places vntrue, as heauen, hell, paradise, the house of fame, the pallace of the sunne, the denne of sleepe, and such like which ye shall see in Poetes...⁹³

The distinction made for persons, between those which do or could plausibly exist, and those constructed by figuration, does not apply for places: a ‘true place’ like a city or valley, and a figurative one such as the ‘palace of the sun’, are classified in the same category. Though Puttenham disentangles the representation of any kind of place from *prosopopoeia*, the lack of strong distinction between ‘true’ and ‘feign[ed]’ places shows the proximity of figurative places to natural ones, and the readiness with which place could signify metaphorically.

It’s clear from this survey of *prosopopoeia* in Elizabethan rhetorical theory that the figure means much more than is suggested by the primary meaning of the modern term ‘personification’. The imagining of a non-person as a person is closely connected to the representation of any person whose voice is not that of the orator or poet; in many cases the latter is treated as a sub-species of the former. Furthermore, the animation of ‘sencelesse and dumme’ things is more commonly exemplified by spatial phenomena – cities, natural places, nations – than by abstract nouns. This emphasis on place invites us

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

to think more closely about Spenser's natural and geographical personifications, which I do later in this chapter. Before considering the many implications of the theory of *prosopopoeia* for Spenser, however, we should consider the treatment of the figure in classical and European rhetoric.

Classical Rhetoric

For his primary example of *prosopopoeia*, Richard Rainolde gestures to Cicero:

Tullie vseth for a like example this, when he maketh Roome to talke againste Cateline. "Although these thinges were not to be borne, yet I haue borne them: but now thy horrible factes are come to soche an issue, that I feare thy mischieues".⁹⁴

Cicero's reach in the Renaissance is difficult to overstate. Theoretical descriptions of *prosopopoeia* are more indebted to him, and to Quintilian, than any other Roman writers. The passage of *In Catilinam* to which Rainolde refers is the most commonly quoted example of *prosopopoeia* in European rhetoric. It is what the Ramists would call a 'perfect' *prosopopoeia*: it confers an explicitly other speaking voice on Rome ('I haue borne them'), as well as human characteristics (fear).

[Q]uodam modo tacita loquitur: 'nullum iam aliquot annis facinus exstitit nisi per te... superiora illa, quamquam ferenda non fuerunt, tamen ut potui tuli; nunc vero me totam esse in metu propter unum te, quicquid increpauerit, Catilinam timeri, nullum videri contra me consilium iniri posse quoad a tue scelere abhorreat non est ferendum'.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Rainolde, fol. 50.

⁹⁵ 'She addresses you, Catiline, and though silent somehow makes this appeal to you: "For some years now you have been behind every crime... I tolerated as well as I could those earlier crimes, insupportable as they were, but that should now be in a state of total terror on your account, that Catiline should be feared at every sound, that no scheme can be hatched against me without assuming your criminal complicity, truly this is intolerable"'. Cicero, 'In Catilinam: The First Speech Against Lucius Sergius Catilina (Delivered in the Senate)' I.18, ed. and trans. by C. Macdonald, *Orations, In Catilinam I-IV* (London: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 50-51.

With 'quodam tacita loquitur' ('silent, she somehow speaks'), Cicero simultaneously acknowledges the artifice of *prosopopoeia* and reinforces the figure. Rome, a city, is naturally silent, but through this figure of thought can speak. The repeated use of the first person in her imagined speech emphasises that Cicero is doing more than attributing human capacities to Rome; he has turned her into a person with a body who is personally afraid ('me totam esse in metu') and can be personally harmed ('contra *me*', italics mine) by a conspiracy which, without the employment of the figure, would harm only those who live within 'her' walls. The implicit transformation of Rome into a person with a body is at its most complete with her declaration that 'quicquid increpauerit, Catilinam timeri' ('whatever might have made a sound, I should fear Catiline'). Cicero's audience is asked to imagine not just Rome being afraid, but also the city having a body that can flinch and recoil at an unexpected sound.

In Cicero's own theoretical writing on rhetoric, these two aspects of *prosopopoeia* – the attribution of human qualities to an inanimate thing, and the creation of an (implied) body for that which lacks it – are not explicitly linked. Yet they are clearly related. Indeed, the precise nature of their relation is a significant and unsolved question in the theory of *prosopopoeia*. The figure's related meanings pertain to the making up of persons: the invention or resurrection of a non-existent person; the representation or impersonation of a person; even simply the vivid description of a person. It also denotes the use of a person as a metaphor (or metonym) for something else. What is the difference between the attribution of characteristics associated with personhood to an impersonal thing, and the conversion of a non-embodied thing into a body? Is the latter merely an emphatic or wholesale or marked version of the former? As I showed above, Paxson's work on

personification retreats from its initial hard distinction between the attribution of human qualities to a thing and the turning of that thing into a person. Recasting the difference as one of perspective, he more closely describes the shifting personifications of *The Faerie Queene*.

Prosopopoeia is never identified as a figure in its own right by Cicero. In *De Oratore*, Cicero treats of personification under the heading of 'traductio atque immutatio' ('substitution or metonymy').⁹⁶ Substitutions of inanimate nouns (corn, the sea) for the deities associated with them (Ceres, Neptune) and of concrete, spatially limited nouns (the polling booth, weapons) for extensive procedures (elections, war) are followed by 'virtutes et vitia pro ipsis in quibus illa sunt appellantur' ('the virtues and vices as they are called for those in whom they're to be found'). Cicero's example of such a substitution, a line of poetry of uncertain origin in which 'avaritia penetravit' ('Extravagance has infiltrated') an unnamed place, appears to suggest a kind of *prosopopoeia* similar to those found in *The Faerie Queene*; extravagance becomes a figure called Extravagance who can insinuate herself in a location by entering it. Yet Cicero's definition of such a figure implies that the personification is not so general: 'avaritia' is not the conception of an autonomous abstraction as a person, but the re-description of the extravagance possessed by specific people ('ipsis') as a person in its own right. The difference is small but important: whereas personification as metaphor imagines virtues and vices as entities (or persons) that exist independently of human beings, and infect or attack them, Cicero's metonymic personification restricts virtues and vices to particular human personalities. Cicero's coolness towards *prosopopoeia*, his sense that it must be restricted

⁹⁶ Cicero, *De Oratore*, III.42.167, ed. and trans. by H. Rackham and E.W. Sutton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), pp. 130-131.

in order to remain decorous, is more explicit in his later rhetorical treatise, *Orator*, where he cautions against it: an orator ‘non faciet rem publicam loquentem nec ab infernis mortuos excitabit’ (‘shall not represent the Republic speaking, nor raise the dead from the underworld’).⁹⁷

Paxson comments that, like the treatment of all figures in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Cicero’s discussion of personification is ‘highly paraphrastic’.⁹⁸ (The briskness of Cicero’s comments are perhaps at the root of *prosopopoeia*’s ‘demystification’ and even ‘devaluation’ in European poetics until the second half of the twentieth century.)⁹⁹ In the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Quintilian’s later, extensive *Institutes*, *prosopopoeia* is explored both more richly and more impressionistically. The *Rhetorica* calls the figure ‘conformatio’ (‘giving of form’), and defines it broadly as the conjuring of a person who, prior to the conjuring, was not there:

Conformatio est cum aliqua quae non adest persona confingitur quasi adsit, aut cum res muta aut informis fit eloquens, et forma ei et oratio adtribuitur ad dignitatem adcommodata aut actio quaedam...¹⁰⁰

The examples that follow make it clear that a ‘persona... quae non adest’ can mean both someone who is, at the moment of oratory, dead (‘if Lucius Brutus himself were to come to life again’) and the personification of something impersonal (the city of Rome, as in *In Catilinam*). Quintilian affords *prosopopoeia* similar versatility and range; his account of

⁹⁷ Cicero, *Orator*, 85, ed. and trans. by G.L. Hendrickson and H.M. Hubbell (London: William Heinemann, 1952), pp. 368-369.

⁹⁸ Paxson (1994), p. 16.

⁹⁹ Paxson (1994), p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Personification consists in representing an absent person as present, or in making a mute thing or one lacking form articulate, and attributing to it a definite form and a language or a certain behaviour appropriate to its character’. *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, ed. and trans. by Harry Caplan (London: William Heinemann, 1954) 53, pp. 298-399.

the figure has far more in common with the *Rhetorica* than with Cicero's cautious and terse treatment. 'Prosopopoeiae', in plural form, are initially defined as 'fictae alienarum personarum orationes' ('fictitious speeches of other persons'), in this case spoken by a lawyer 'pro ligatore' ('on behalf of a client').¹⁰¹ *Prosopopoeia*'s general association with rhetoric is sharpened here by a particular pertinence to the practice of legal oratory. (Personhood, of course, is fundamental in many ways to most legal processes; the connections between *prosopopoeia* and legal language and thought are likely to be deep and deserve more study.)¹⁰² In Book IX *prosopopoeia* (Quintilian supplies the Greek word) is discussed more widely as a figure. *Prosopopoeiae* are 'fictiones personarum' ('Impersonations'); they can be used to put words in the mouth of an opponent in oratory, to create fictional conversations, and to flesh out emotive statements with 'personas' ('characters').¹⁰³ They also designate the figural mechanism by which '[u]rbes etiam populique vocem accipiunt' ('cities and nations even acquire a voice'),¹⁰⁴ and 'personifications', embodied abstractions of which examples are drawn from Virgil, Prodicus (by way of Xenophon) and Ennius.¹⁰⁵ The discussion usefully shows awareness not only of *prosopopoeia*'s overlap with other figures, but the instability and mutability of where the boundaries between related figures are drawn:

Ac sunt quidam qui has demum προσωποποιίας dicant in quibus et corpora et verba fingimus: sermones hominum adsimulatos dicere διαλόγους malunt, quod Latinorum quidam dixerant sermocinationem. Ego iam recepto more

¹⁰¹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, ed. and trans. by Donald A. Russell, *The Orator's Education, Volume III: Books 6-8* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), VI.1.26-27, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰² See Miguel Tamen, 'Kinds of Persons, Kinds of Rights, Kinds of Bodies', *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 10 (1998), 1-32.

¹⁰³ Quintilian, IX.2.30-32, pp. 50-51.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ 'Sed formas quoque fingimus saepe, ut Famam Vergilius, ut Voluptatem ac Virtutem, quem ad modum a Xenophonte traditur, Prodicus, ut Mortem ac Vitam, quas contententes in satira tradit, Ennius' ('We also often invent Personifications, as Vergil invented Rumour, Prodicus [according to Xenophon's report] Pleasure and Virtue, and Ennius Death and Life, whom he represents in a Satire as debating with each other'). Quintilian, IX.2.36-37, pp. 52-53.

utrumque eodem modo appellavi: nam certe sermo fingi non potest ut non personae sermo fingatur.¹⁰⁶

As we shall see, the implicit connections between *prosopopoeia* and other figures of speech illuminate Spenser's personifications in useful ways. Paxson finds the instability of both the *Rhetorica* and Quintilian's definition of *prosopopoeia* rather frustrating. The *Rhetorica*'s ecumenical definition is compromised, he observes, by 'tangled syntax'; it 'inaugurates discursive confusion' about the figure.¹⁰⁷ Quintilian's treatment of *prosopopoeia*, similarly, 'promotes its own conceptual confusion'.¹⁰⁸ Paxson's refusal to defer blindly to the Roman rhetoricians is salutary. His description of the *Rhetorica*'s definition, which overflows with 'aut' ('or'), as syntactically 'tangled' is also just. Yet to describe the definitions discussed here as 'confused' is rather anachronistic: it implies a modern bias towards the strict separation of the representation of persons and the embodiment of abstractions. It also suggests a broader tendency in modern thought to conflate conceptual flexibility, or an impressionistic method, with confusion.

Depending on the date of the Greek treatise *On Style*, the earliest surviving mention of *prosopopoeia* may belong to its author (traditionally identified as Demetrius). Whether *On Style* precedes or follows Cicero is uncertain, but 'Demetrius' certainly defines the figure in a manner reminiscent of *De Oratore* and *Orator*:

¹⁰⁶ 'Some confine the term Prosopopoeia to cases where we invent both the person and the words; they prefer imaginary conversations between historical characters to be called Dialogues, which some Latin writers have translated *sermonicatio*. I follow the now established usage in calling them both by the same name, for we cannot of course imagine a speech except as the speech of a person'. Quintilian, IX.2.31-32, pp. 50-51.

¹⁰⁷ Paxson (1994), p. 15.

¹⁰⁸ Paxson (1994), p. 17.

Another figure of thought which may be used to produce force is the figure called *prosopopoeia*, for example “Imagine that your ancestors are rebuking you and speak such words, or imagine Greece, or your country in the form of a woman”.¹⁰⁹

Once again, we must note the primacy of what might be called ‘national *prosopopoeia*’ – the nation or country as a speaking body, often female – in the rhetoricians’ examples. In later Greek rhetorical treatises, many of which are excerpted in Spengel’s edition (1894) of *Rhetores Graeci*, the concept of fashioning a person for an abstract concept, and even for a concrete space like a city, receives less prominence.¹¹⁰ For rhetoricians such as Nicolaus, Alexander Numenius and Aphthonius, of whose *Progymnasmata* Rainolde’s treatise is an extended translation, greater consideration is given to the entanglement of *prosopopoeia* with *ethopoeia* and *eidolopoeia*, the representation of those who are dead. Nicolaus aptly illustrates the instability of *prosopopoeia* and *ethopoeia*:

For some have called it *prosopopoiia* [sic] when it contains both definite persons and definite subject matters, but *ethopoiia* [sic] when it is invented from every side – which they also call *rhēsis*, giving this name to it. But others, most excellent thinkers too, thought *ethopoiia* to consist of definite persons, but *prosopopoiia* that in which we both shape persons and confer speech on them.¹¹¹

Prosopopoeia and *ethopoeia*, that is, can be used interchangeably to denote both the creation of an exterior person (a body) and an interior person (a character, an *ethos*).

¹⁰⁹ παραλαμβάνοιτο δ’ ἂν σχῆμα διανοίας πρὸς δεινότητα <ή> προσωποποιία καλουμένη, οἷον “δόξατε ὑμῖν τοὺς προγόνους ὀνειδίξειν καὶ λέγειν τάδε τινὰ ἢ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἢ τὴν πατρίδα, λαβοῦσαν γυναικὸς σχῆμα. ‘Demetrius’, *On Style*, in Aristotle, et al. *Poetics*, ed. and trans. by Donald A. Russell (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 307-523, pp. 498-99.

¹¹⁰ *Rhetores Graeci* (Venice: Aldine Press, 1508) was published by Aldo Manuzio in 1508. Spenser is likely to have encountered its Paris (1547) or Frankfurt (1586) editions. See Valentina Leon, *Knowledge Transfer at the Early Modern University: Statecraft and Philosophy at the Akademia Zamojska* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), p. 101; Martin Sicherl, ‘Die Aldina der *Rhetores Graeci* (1509-1509) und ihre handschriftliche Vorlagen’, *Illinois Classical Studies* 17 (1992), 109-134. Sections from Patricia Matsen’s translation of Spengel’s edition are, in turn, included as a thoroughly useful appendix in Philip Rollinson’s *Classical Theories of Allegory and Christian Culture* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1981), pp. 103-169.

¹¹¹ Matsen (in Rollinson), p. 164.

Gavin Alexander shrewdly observes that, ever since Aristotle's *Rhetoric* defined the orator's *ethos* in extrinsic terms as a successful impression (of sincerity or passion or truthfulness), it has been impossible entirely to separate *prosopon* from *ethos*: 'they stand at either end of a chain whose components are linked by metonymy... That metonymic chain runs from face to person to moral character'.¹¹² As we have seen, *prosopopoeia* is often defined as the resurrection in speech of a person long absent. It is difficult to distinguish it precisely from *eidolopoeia*, a specific term for this reanimation of the dead. Indeed, for Alexander Numeniu in *On Figures of Thought and Speech*, *prosopopoeia* encompasses *eidolopoeia*, being the 'modelling of a person either never having existed to begin with, or having existed but no longer living'.¹¹³ Yet for Cocondrius in *On Tropes*, the 'invention of characters' for both 'things or for beings, rational but departed, or irrational but fabled', is *eidolopoeia*.¹¹⁴ For Cocondrius, 'Virtue holding a discussion with Vice' and the speech of Achilles to 'Patroclus in Hades' exemplify the same figure of thought. This entanglement of figures in Greek rhetoric supports a conclusion reached in much recent critical reflection on the Renaissance body: it is unwise to separate inner mind from outer body, and character from appearance.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Gavin Alexander, 'Prosopopoeia: the speaking figure', in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 97-112, p. 99.

¹¹³ Matsen (in Rollinson), p. 164.

¹¹³ Matsen (in Rollinson), p. 161.

¹¹⁴ Matsen (in Rollinson), p. 163.

¹¹⁵ See *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, ed. by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Many of the most extensive treatments of *prosopopoeia* in the sixteenth century come from Latin treatises written by European rhetoricians. This brief section considers their innovations in defining and analysing the figure, not so much as evidence for direct parallels in Spenser's poetic practice, but as indication of how it was possible for sixteenth-century readers of classical literature and rhetorical theory to understand it.

Two important considerations of *prosopopoeia* in rhetorical theory published in the middle of the sixteenth century come from German rhetoricians. In his *Epitome Troporum ac Schematum* (1541), published in England for the first time in 1562, Joannes Susenbrotus defines *prosopopoeia* briefly as 'when for a thing lacking sense, or which is dumb, we fashion a person that suits it'.¹¹⁶ This definition appears to be double, but the two halves overlap: a thing lacking speech, in most cases, lacks sense. For Susenbrotus these two kinds of lack ('carenti') are satisfied by the fashioning of a 'personam'. Personhood is closely bound up with the ability to speak. His examples of the figure rove freely across the strict boundary posited by Teskey between classical and Christian personification, featuring the personifications in Erasmus's *In Praise of Folly* (1511) and of Lady Philosophy in Boethius, as well as the virtues and vices of the *Psychomachia*, Horace's personification of Fortune, and Penury and Wealth in Aristophanes. Almost every example is an abstraction on which personhood (sense and speech) is conferred; among his examples of *prosopopoeia* 'apud Poetas' ('in the poets'), however, Susenbrotus includes 'Sphingis, Scyllae, Charybdis' ('the Sphinx, Scylla, [and] Charybdis'). Once more,

¹¹⁶ 'Prosopopoeia, est cum rei sensu carenti ac mutae personam eidem ideoneam fingimus'. Joannes Susenbrotus, *Epitome Troporum ac Schematum* [1541] (London, 1570), pp. 86-87.

geographical phenomena fall under *prosopopoeia*'s heading. The choice of Scylla and Charybdis provokes a reader of Spenser to recognise that parts of the landscape showing malevolent or monstrous intent, such as the ocean Guyon crosses to the Bower of Bliss or, more significantly, the world's rivers and the cave of Error, could be considered to have had a version of personhood imposed on them.

The discussion of *prosopopoeia* in Julius Scaliger's *Poetices* (1561) is wider with respect to definitions, and deliberately constricted in its examples, which are drawn exclusively from the *Aeneid*. Unlike Susenbrotus, Scaliger explicitly distinguishes the related concepts of 'attribution... whenever we attribute to a thing or a person[,] a thing or a person or a behaviour or a speech', and *prosopopoeia* proper, the attribution of a person or speech. His distinction roughly maps onto the modern taxonomy of personification (the attribution of a person, emphasised here as speaking) as a particular kind of anthropomorphism, the *attributio* of personal characteristics to a new place. Scaliger's scheme for ordering his selected instances of *attributio* in the *Aeneid* is borrowed directly from the discussion of metaphor in Aristotle's *Poetics*. He describes Aristotelian transfers from 'person to person', 'person to a thing, as to a place or a time', 'a thing to a person' and so on. Scaliger acknowledges clearly that personification is a kind of metaphor. For the majority of sixteenth-century theorists and their readers who thought of allegory like Quintilian, as elaborated metaphor, a link between personification and allegory was inevitable. Like his English counterparts later in the century, Scaliger also indicates that *prosopopoeia* comprises a greater variety of person-making than modern 'personification': any figure not present at the moment of oratory, or by analogy in the

present world of a fiction, is admitted, so that ‘when Aeneas says that he himself has been rebuked by his father, that is certainly *prosopopoeia*’.¹¹⁷

Erasmus’s treatment of *prosopopoeia* in *De Copia* (1517) is extensive but impressionistic. Like the Greek rhetoricians quoted above, he is unwilling or unable exactly to distinguish: the description of persons from their dramatisation; the representation (by description or dramatisation) of ‘real’ persons from feigned persons; and of persons still living from those who have died. Initially Erasmus defines *prosopopoeia* as the ‘personarum descriptio’ (‘realistic presentation of persons’), which in the Toronto translation is understood to mean the presentation of a person as if actually present.¹¹⁸ This is a species of a wider term, *prosopographia*, translated as the ‘delineation of persons’, that is, the description of a person without actual presentation, or the fashioning of a person for that which lacks it. Ovid’s figures of Famine, Envy and Sleep are quoted as the first example of *prosopographia*, of which Erasmus provides a rich list of examples.¹¹⁹ Later in the section on the representation of persons Erasmus re-articulates his definitions. ‘The term *prosopopoeia* may be most properly applied’, he says, ‘when we introduce a person far away or long dead and make him speak in a manner appropriate to his character’.¹²⁰ *Prosopopoeia* is *eidolopoeia*; the most apposite example is the representation of ‘those leaders of our city in times long past’.¹²¹ Yet if the city itself were to speak – and here Erasmus refers, of course, to Rome in *In Catilinam* – that figure, ‘less easily acceptable’, would be *prosopographia*. Erasmus’s sense of the meanings of these two figures is,

¹¹⁷ Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem* [1561], ed. by Luc Deitz (Stuttgart: Frommann Holzboog, 1994), III, pp. 420-421.

¹¹⁸ Desiderius Erasmus, *De Copia* [1517], *Collected Works of Erasmus*, trans. by Betty I. Knott, ed. by Craig R. Thompson (London: University of Toronto Press, 1978), vol. 24, pp. 295-659, p. 582.

¹¹⁹ Erasmus [1517], p. 588.

¹²⁰ Erasmus, p. 586.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

broadly speaking, the opposite of Puttenham's; for Puttenham, *prosopographia* is the depiction of existing persons, while *prosopopoeia* feigns them. Yet unlike Puttenham, Erasmus shows awareness not only of the scale of realism, from real to feigned, but of directness of representation, from description, to portrayal, to dramatisation.

Placing Prosopopoeia

I have argued in this chapter that personification is a kind of allegory, and that its otherness works with regard to space. To entangle personification with allegory, however, risks anachronism unless we confront their separation in Renaissance rhetoric. Francesco Bonciani's *Lezione della Prosopopea* (1578), to my knowledge the only sixteenth-century text to ponder the connection, thinks of *prosopopoeia* as one kind of person-feigning, and thus a species of imitation rather than figuration. Yet the 'primary capability' of personifications is 'to produce wonder', implying that the concept represented by a personification has been turned or altered from its natural form.¹²² In a gloss on an unpublished edition of this lecture, Bonciani speculates that 'la figura di prosopopea sarebbe forse divertata allegoria' ('*prosopopoeia* could be, perhaps, separated allegory').¹²³ 'Divertata' implies that for Bonciani personification differs from allegory by lacking a necessary narrative element. Yet his emphasis on wonder, and his concluding discussion of *prosopopoeia* in relation to Aristotelian metaphor, establishes the principle that personification might be a kind of other-speaking. Bonciani's lecture has been cited in English criticism mainly as a chastening caution against an over-hasty

¹²² '[P]rosopopea la quale è atta principalmente a partorire meraviglia'. Francesco Bonciani, 'Lezione della Prosopopea', fol. 97v, *Trattati di Poetica e Retorica del Cinquecento*, ed. by Bernard Weinberg (Bari: Laterza & Figli, 1972), vol. 3, pp. 237-253.

¹²³ Bonciani, 'Lezione della Prosopopea', *Bibl. Ricc.* 1539, fols 132-144, 143. I'm grateful for Michael Silk for his advice on the publication history of Bonciani's lecture.

conflation of *allegoria* and *prosopopoeia*.¹²⁴ Yet we might also see it as a point at which it became possible, if not easy, to associate the figures. Furthermore, we might consider that theoretical texts do not delineate the limits of what it was possible to think, and that literary texts carry out their own theoretical thinking. *The Faerie Queene*, I'll suggest, furthers Bonciani's tentative connection.

Despite their near-silence on the links between *prosopopoeia* and allegory, Renaissance rhetoricians are often illuminating in their classifications of the figure; its links with other figures, and the general categories of which it's a species. Gavin Alexander traces its links with 'apostrophe, the figure of address'.¹²⁵ Henry Peacham, meanwhile, follows his discussion of *prosopopoeia* with a definition of *sermonicatio*, a more dialogic and theatrical kind of feigned speaking.¹²⁶ In many quoted instances of *sermonicatio*, embodied concepts encounter or converse with their opposite, as in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*. Of most use, however, is the general heading under which *prosopopoeia* is classified. Almost all sixteenth-century rhetoricians writing in English classify *prosopopoeia* similarly as a species of *enargeia*, 'clarity' or 'vividness'.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ See Michael Silk, 'Personification and Allegory?', in *Personification and Allegory: Selves and Signs*, Arcade Colloquy curated by Vladimir Brljak (2018):

<https://arcade.stanford.edu/colloquies/personification-and-allegory-selves-and-signs>.

¹²⁵ Alexander, p. 107.

¹²⁶ Peacham (1593), p. 137. In twenty-first century rhetorical theory *sermonicatio* has been defined generally as 'speaking dramatically in the first person for someone else, assigning language that would be appropriate for that person's character (and for one's rhetorical purpose)'. 'Sermonicatio', *Silva Rhetoricae*: <http://rhetoric.byu.edu>. Accessed 18 June 2018. Yet in the Renaissance the figure seems to refer more commonly to a dialogue between feigned persons.

¹²⁷ Wilson uses the term 'descriptio', as does Peacham in the 1593 edition. Puttenham, meanwhile, uses the Greek term *hypotyposis*, by which things seem as if 'they were truly before our eyes'. Sherry uses the particular term 'enargeia' for the general category of which *prosopopoeia* is a species, while Hoskyns uses the language of amplification; *prosopopoeia* is one of several 'figures in illustration' by which the orator achieves 'life and lustre'. Fraunce and Fenner, employing a Ramist conception of rhetoric, have less to say about *enargeia*. Yet Fraunce's explanation of the figure as the portrayal of a person 'as though he were there present' echoes Quintilian's understanding of vividness.

Impressionistic in his definition of *prosopopoeia*, Erasmus is far more certain in his discussion of the general rhetorical effect which it exemplifies. *Prosopopoeia* is an example of ἐνάργεια, translated as *evidentia* “vividness”.¹²⁸ *Enargeia* is the fifth means enumerated in the second book of *De Copia* for enriching a speech, and is defined by Erasmus as the effect of ‘setting out the subject... like a picture to look at, so that we seem to have painted the scene rather than described it’. Susenbrotus similarly classifies *prosopopoeia* as a figure of amplification. Scaliger, though distancing himself from Quintilian’s emphasis on describing a person’s appearance for vivid effect, approvingly cites Cicero’s description of Marcus Caelius as instance of vivid person-feigning.¹²⁹ The classification of *prosopopoeia* under the heading of *enargeia* is the most common feature of rhetorical discussions of the figure in both classical and Renaissance rhetoric. Quintilian translates ἐνάργεια as ‘evidentia vel, ut alii dicant, repraesentio’ (‘vividness, or, as some say, representation’), emphasising that it entails not only ‘perspicuitas’ (‘perspicuity’) in description but also the effect of the thing described actually appearing, ‘ut videantur’ (‘that [it] seems to be... seen’).¹³⁰ *Prosopopoeia* is one of the ‘augendis adfectibus accommodatae figurae’ (‘figures adapted to intensifying emotions’), and Quintilian’s description of its effects demonstrates its proximity with *enargeia*.¹³¹ As we saw above, the deployment of *prosopopoeia* in a judicial context makes the judge think he is hearing the ‘feelings and voice of the afflicted’. Erasmus proposes that *enargeia* can be achieved by the description of things and the description of persons, of which *prosopopoeia* is a species. His rich discussion of how the former might achieve vividness emphasises the potency of breaking a whole into its parts, the use of circumstantial detail,

¹²⁸ Erasmus, p. 577.

¹²⁹ Scaliger, p. 426.

¹³⁰ Quintilian, VIII.3.61-62, pp. 374-75.

¹³¹ Quintilian, IX.2.26, pp. 46-47.

florid epithets, similes and contrasts. The fashioning of persons for 'Rumour, Folly, Prayers' helps Homer's reader or audience, treated as synonyms by Erasmus, see them clearly.

III. Spenserian Personification

My survey of rhetorical writing on *prosopopoeia* has shown how sixteenth-century theorists understood personification. However, considering vividness of persons in *The Faerie Queene*, we are confronted by a fact which Renaissance rhetorical theory is often keen to suppress – that (narrative) poetry, in its aims and effects, differs from oratory. Many of *The Faerie Queene's* personifications certainly do strike both onlookers and readers with visual clarity, vividly displaying the essence of the concept they represent. Yet as I'll argue in the following section, the translation of *enargeia* from rhetorical theory and practice into fictions creates not quite clarifying vividness, but an ambiguous bedazzlement.

Enargeia as Spatial Illegibility

Daunger, one of the personifications in the Masque of Cupid, provides an image of the concept after which he is named which would satisfy rhetorical stipulations for *enargeia*:

With him went *Daunger*, cloth'd in ragged weed,
Made of Beares skin, that him more dreadfull made,
Yet his owne face was dreadfull, ne did need
Straunge horror, to deforme his griesly shade...
(III.xii.11.1-4)

Daunger's appearance is amplified by the bear's skin, 'that him more dreadfull made' (2), but this is an adornment of a person who already signifies danger with his 'owne face' (3). Among the figures surrounding Daunger, however, are persons whose *prosopa* are being deformed by the concepts they embody. Fury, for example, is 'ill appareiled' (17.1); she tears the clothes from her back, '[a]nd from her head ofte rent her snarled heare' (5). She is compared, with telling incongruity, to 'a dismayed Deare in chace embost, / Forgetfull of his safety' (8-9). Such is her consumption by fury that she does not resemble herself. She looks like a victim of rage, or like Despaire. In this instance, vividness exaggerates cause until it resembles effect. Even more intriguing is a third category of personifications in *The Faerie Queene* who embody their concepts without such self-disfiguring or dismay, but with such extreme vividness and clarity that their onlookers are dazzled, unable to perceive what is front of them; this kind of vividness confounds not the figure itself but those looking at it. Most prominent among these is Shamefastnesse, one of the nine affections imagined as Alma's 'beuy of faire ladies' (II.ix.34.2). Shamefastnesse cannot meet Guyon's gaze without blushing furiously, and when Guyon questions this extreme reticence Alma intervenes:

Why wonder yee
 Faire Sir at that, which ye so much embrace?
 She is the fountaine of your modestee;
 You shamefast are, but *Shamefastnes* it selfe is shee.
 (II.ix.43.6-9)

Of the 'flashing blood' which 'with blushing did inflame' (43.3) Shamefastnesse's face, David Lee Miller comments that 'the blush... is not only an indication of embarrassment; as the immediate bodily trace of "strong passion" it also partakes of the cause or source

of embarrassment'.¹³² For Lee Miller, Shamefastnesse is like Fury: so great is the concentration in her of the concept she represents that it has, paradoxically, 'mard her modest grace' (43.4) and made her momentarily intemperate. Another way of reading Shamefastnesse is to say that Alma's question to Guyon implies the difficulty of seeing that which presents itself fully as itself. A woman who is shamefast, and blushes a little, might be more easily perceived than the embodied concept 'it selfe', who blushes so vividly she looks like somebody else, an intemperate woman. In oratory, personifications strive for *enargeia* in order to make something appear before the audience's eyes; in fictions, where they appear before the eyes of figures who, like them, are feigned, they can dazzle as much as they illustrate. Just as for Sidney ethical precepts might be too direct to be understood if expressed in philosophy, so in fictions might pure concepts dazzle those who look at them without mediation.¹³³ This is partly because figures in the text, such as Britomart, are deprived of the navigable (if often unreliable) set of linguistic signs afforded the reader. It is also, I want to suggest, because of the emphatically spatial nature of the personifications in the poem, who function not as legible concepts but as dazzling bodies in places.

The vividness of personifications – the purity with which they embody the concept after which they are named – can dazzle not only the poem's figures but also its readers, though usually less blindingly. It is unwise to describe in general terms the navigation of Fairyland and its *personae* by the poem's questing protagonists as 'reading'. (In the following chapters I will explore this illegibility of Fairyland's space, and also its

¹³² David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 173.

¹³³ Philip Sidney, 'The Defence of Poesy' [1595], ed. by Gavin Alexander, *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 3-54, p. 16.

architecture.) I noted in the introduction Lefebvre's contention that space is more analogous to a set of overlapping directions and commands than to quasi-textual language.¹³⁴ More fundamentally, the protagonists experience the events of *The Faerie Queene* only on the level of narrative story; the reader has the advantage of the secondary level of narrative discourse. Yet despite the theoretical variance of reader and quester, Spenser often seems to recreate in the reading experience his protagonists' difficulty in perceiving the figures appearing before their eyes. His continued and 'carefully delayed revelation of a name', of both personifications and other figures, 'opens a space of speculative trial for a reader'.¹³⁵ This period of indeterminacy is not exactly equivalent to the disorientation of the dazzled protagonist in the text: the reader, after all, usually has other linguistic signs besides names to guide her, and if she re-reads the passage in which the unnamed figure was introduced she may well find clues which seem 'in retrospect to determine the name'.¹³⁶ In the case of Guyon's encounter with Shamefastnesse, however, the moment at which the reader knows this person's identity for sure is no sooner than Alma's reminder to Guyon that 'she is the fontaine of your modestee' (II.ix.43.8).

The first personification – or 'beastification' – in the poem is correctly named by Una as Error.¹³⁷ Yet straight after Error's defeat Redcrosse and Una are deceived by Archimago, the embodiment of hypocrisy whose appearance is hypocritically benign.¹³⁸ Archimago is recognised by neither Una and Redcrosse, nor named by the speaker; a reader may well

¹³⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de l'Espace* [1974], trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 142.

¹³⁵ See Marks and Gross in *SEnc*, pp. 494-96.

¹³⁶ Marks and Gross, p. 495.

¹³⁷ The term 'beastification' is used by Elizabeth Fowler in 'Personification', *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1965), ed. by Roland Greene, 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 1025-2.

¹³⁸ Of course, a personification of deceit that presented itself transparently would lose some of its deceitfulness.

think him benign until his guests are asleep and he goes to his study to seek out ‘mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy minds’ (I.i.36.9). Archimago’s person functions in a manner opposite to that of Shamefastnesse. His *prosopon* disguises his *ethos*; the *ethos* of Shamefastnesse floods her *prosopon* as a blush. Yet their effects within the fiction are similar, dazzling and deceiving so that they cannot be perceived.

Here, another rift opens between *prosopopoeia* as described in rhetorical theory, and as employed in fictions. Personifications, as Escobedo proposes, can both signify and exemplify the concepts after which they are named. The rhetoricians quoted in this chapter, for whom the personification of abstract concepts is a relatively parenthetical species of *prosopopoeia*, think of the figure predominantly in terms of exemplification. Cicero’s personified Rome is a person who speaks and acts like the city; if this were not the case, the figure would not achieve the clarity and force, the effect of *enargeia*, by which it is justified. Many rhetorical writers, both classical and early modern, accordingly stress the importance of decorum in *prosopopoeia*. Anyone feigning a person must aim at what is ‘harmonious to the person’, says the Alexandrian rhetorician Aelius Theon.¹³⁹ Quintilian warns that great care is needed because that which is ‘unbelievable’ can easily ‘be taken as empty nothings’.¹⁴⁰ ‘Action, speech or person’ attributed to a man must, Angel Day stipulates, be ‘fitting’: if virtue is to be personified she must appear ‘sweet’.¹⁴¹ Peacham insists that the ‘person’ framed for ‘things sencelesse and dumbe’ must be ‘fit’; in the 1593 edition this becomes ‘fit and naturall’.¹⁴² Yet in fictions, as Escobedo shows, personifications regularly ‘transmit’ concepts as well as embodying them. Those that

¹³⁹ Matsen (in Rollinson), p. 166-167.

¹⁴⁰ [A]ut pro vanis accipiantur, quia vera non sunt’. Quintilian IX.2.35, pp. 52-53.

¹⁴¹ Day, fol. 90.

¹⁴² Peacham (1577), fol. 03; Peacham (1593), p. 134.

represent violent or vicious concepts can do this particularly effectively if they disguise themselves. Archimago would not transmit the blindness to the truth he represents into the minds of Una and Redcrosse if his *prosopon* indicated his *ethos*. In failing to recognise him, Redcrosse and Una are already confounded by the hypocrisy he represents. There are many personifications in *The Faerie Queene* who do seem to 'transmit' themselves, but without disguise: Furor, for example, exemplifies anger but also makes Guyon angry (II.iv). Yet those who insinuate themselves not by violence, like Furor, but by guile, like Archimago and, as we shall see, Despaire, do so by a disjunction of *ethos* (inner 'character') and *prosopon* (appearance, face, voice) which is discouraged in rhetoric but effective in fiction.

Armour and Bedazzlement

It's anachronistic, as I've suggested, to make strict distinctions in early modern literature between 'personifications' and 'real persons'. Similarly, the metaphorical bedazzlement of personifications in Spenser's fiction should be related to the frequent episodes in which the poem's figures have their eyes literally dazzled. *The Faerie Queene* throngs with knights, male and female, who are dressed in glittering armour. The poem's opening image of the riding Redcrosse, whose armour bears the 'dints' (I.i.1.3) of experience but does not belong to him, establishes the armed knight as both a prominent image and a key motif in the allegory. Readers encountering the 'bloodie Crosse' (2.1) painted on Redcrosse's breast and 'vpon his shield... scor'd' (5) could quickly connect the image to Paul's extended metaphor in Ephesians 6, the 'whole armour of God' (6:11) and the 'shield of faith' (6:16). At first sight, Spenser's initial image is of a man legible, as a soldier of Christ, by his armour. Yet as the reader finds out as early as the fifth line, appearances

are deceptive, because 'armes till that time did he neuer wield' (5). On the level of narrative discourse, the reader can decode the Christian iconography of the red cross but also has contextual perspective as to the armour's history. Denied such perspective, a figure in Fairyland on the level of narrative story can only read the red cross for its obvious symbolic value and assume that the armour belongs to the person wearing it.

Halfway through Book I, with Redcrosse in trouble, another knight enters the story whose armour confounds attempts not only to read, but also to apprehend it. Pierced by 'thrilling sorrow' (vii.25.2) for Redcrosse in his imprisonment, Una 'by good hap' (29.1) perceives 'a goodly knight' (2) up ahead. 'His glitterand armour shined far away, / Like glauncing light of *Phoebus* brightest ray' (4-5); this is magnificent Arthur, as we know, but from 'far away' Una is in the dark as to his identity. Yet she perceives accurately that he is a knight 'together with his Squyre' (3). However, once Arthur has come near he becomes impossible to apprehend:

His haughtie Helmet, horrid all with gold
Both glorious brightnesse, and great terrour bredd,
For all the crest a Dragon did enfold
With greedie pawes, and ouer all did spredd
His golden winges...
(31.1-5)

'Enfold', here, is a subtle metaphor. The dragon does not literally 'spredd / His golden winges' over the crest, because like the crest his wings and 'greedie pawes' are fabricated, feigned. The figurative use, briefly literalising a representation of a dragon as an actual dragon, captures the 'terroure' of a magnificent person up close, his capacity to confound the onlooker's ability to distinguish between what is real and what is represented. The context of Book I's story discloses a secondary confounding: the unnamed Arthur is

momentarily synonymous with the 'dragon' from whom Redcrosse must liberate Una's parents. The terrifying 'brightnesse' (2) of the helmet is superseded by Arthur's shield, which when uncovered 'so exceeding shone... that *Phoebus* golden face it did attain' (34.6), and so must be kept hidden. From a distance Arthur glittered not like the sun but like one of its rays, and was comprehensible but remote; from close up, he is (potentially) brighter than the sun itself, and though he is on hand he cannot be perceived in his entirety. Spenser's sensitivity to the ironies of perception from a distance puts this first exposition of Arthur in touch with the depictions of pure concepts in the Masque of Cupid and elsewhere. The capacity of Arthur to dazzle when *nearby* is analogous to the difficulty in perceiving fury when it presents *as Fury*, the thing-in-itself.

Armour, Social Personhood and Gender

In the following section, I emphasise the physicality and resultant illegibility of the poem's personifications by demonstrating their proximity to characters that are not personifications. Armour's acquisition, and its capacity to conceal or even bury the private person beneath it, indicates the way all personhood in *The Faerie Queene* is contingent, capable of being constructed and feigned.

The Faerie Queene's many and elaborate images of armour regularly seem to emphasise that personhood is processual; it can be acquired and effaced. Spenser's armour also suggests that even the more interpersonal categories into which particular persons fit, such as gender and social class, are startlingly contingent. Britomart's armour can be understood both as a necessary cover for her authentic 'inner' personhood, and as an expression of that inner person. In Book III, at the outset of her journey from ancient

(British) Wales into Fairyland, to find Artegall, 'goodly Armour' (III.iii.58.7) is required for disguise. Glauce proposes to 'make you a mayd Martiall' (53.9) as a protective ruse, but a 'mayd Martiall' is what Britomart wishes not only to seem, but also to become: like Redcrosse, she wears armour which makes her appear something which she is not, but wants to be. Judith Anderson argues that the story of Britomart from Books III to IV depicts a fusion of the inner woman with the male armour in which it is initially concealed. In Book IV, in Anderson's formulation, Britomart has incorporated her armour into her person; 'the potential of her figure is at once Mars and Venus... hard-edged form and melting passion'.¹⁴³ In Book III, before she becomes not just a *Venus armata* but a 'Venus within Mars', Britomart experiences her male armour as a containment of her inner, female soul in love. Fighting her in Book IV, Artegall is confounded both by Britomart's male 'martiall' prowess and her feminine beauty. Both dazzle him.

Armour, Britomart's experience suggests, can both disguise 'inner' personhood by simulating a fabricated external person, and also represent the external signs of an identity into which the inner person is growing. Spenser's engagement with the idea of processual personhood, and its expression through armour, reflects his reading of Ariosto. The intuition that armour represents an achievement or restoration of the full self connects many of *Orlando Furioso's* disparate characters. As Elizabeth Bellamy argues, 'the impulse behind ego formation in the *Furioso*' is not of Britomart's self-becoming, but the desire 'to be (to imitate) someone else and, thus, to possess his or her chivalric accoutrements'.¹⁴⁴ Ariosto's contests of imitative desire themselves imitate the

¹⁴³ Judith Anderson, 'Britomart's Armor in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration', *English Literary Renaissance* 39 (2009), 74-96, 81.

¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth J. Bellamy, *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 108.

competition between Ulysses and Ajax, staged as a disputation in *Metamorphoses*, as to who should wear Achilles' armour (*Met.*XIII.123-381). Spenser's allegory of self-growth as adaptation to acquired armour combines Ariostan imagery with a more optimistic suggestion that persons such as Britomart can become their true selves in the world. The literary history of the armour motif, however, involves self-becoming with person-feigning. In early modern Europe attempts were made to curb the troubling capacity of apparel to mislead. In his study of armour as a kind of fashion, Angus Patterson quotes a 1453 injunction from the Bishop of Bamberg ordering Bavarian cobblers 'to make no more peaks on shoes'.¹⁴⁵ Sumptuary laws (effective in England until 1604) reveal anxiety at the misleading potential of false appearances. If clothing and armour do not follow the body exactly, but add peaks and dragons to it, they communicate not merely as icons but in the manner of faulty signs. Therefore, as in *The Faerie Queene*, they can deceive attempts by onlookers to infer the person beneath.

Considering Hotspur's terse observation at the Battle of Shrewsbury that 'the king hath many marching in his coats', Robert Watson comments that 'the old armorial signifiers have become meaningless, even evasive'.¹⁴⁶ By 'old', Watson alludes to two parallel declines: of an imagined medieval system in which bodies reliably signified their social status, and of armour itself. By the end of the sixteenth century armour was fading from aristocratic fashion. Deployment of armour in its symbolic capacity in the sixteenth century suggests a fantasy of fixed status transmitted securely from father to son. In their study of armour as 'material memory', Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass link the frequent

¹⁴⁵ Angus Patterson, *Fashion and Armour in Renaissance Europe: Proud Looks and Brave Attire* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2009), p. 33.

¹⁴⁶ Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: the Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 52.

appearances of armed ghosts on the early modern stage with the common practice among sixteenth-century aristocrats and rich gentry of bequeathing armour to their sons. One such, which Jones and Stallybrass quote, is Wistan Browne's will from 16 January 1580: 'my armour and weapons in Weald Hall and Rookewood Hall; all which I will shall remain in such studies, galleries and other rooms as they now be to the use of my son'.¹⁴⁷ It is worth noting the discrepancy between Wistan Browne's fantasy of his son's orderly inheritance and guardianship of his father's armour, and the way armour is picked up in *The Faerie Queene*. The mutually allusive images of Britomart and Redcrosse riding in borrowed or abandoned armour suggest that inheritance has been replaced by accident.

Armour is a rich material resource with which to stage transactions of inheritance and succession. Yet its double function as both the mobile equipment of violence and the static symbol of authority hanging on a wall can itself be understood as a temporal succession. Lisa Celovsky's study of 'Early Modern Masculinities and *The Faerie Queene*' argues that Spenser's male protagonists are 'negotiating transitions from knight-errantry to householding'.¹⁴⁸ The former is associated with the stage of youth, which is characterised by restless motion and homosocial bonds; the latter comes in 'Man-Age', when a man has married and must sustain his family and household. In its original function armour is a symbol of youth; in its memorial and symbolic function, it represents Man-Age. Celovsky and Anderson's work underlines that in *The Faerie Queene* forms of exterior, social personhood, such as a gender and a specific stage associated with that gender, must be acquired over time. They have the 'temporality' de Man and Culler attribute to

¹⁴⁷ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materiality of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 245-268, p. 251.

¹⁴⁸ Lisa Celovsky, 'Early Modern Masculinities and *The Faerie Queene*', *English Literary Renaissance* 35 (2005), 210-247, 212.

prosopopoeia. As I have argued, *prosopopoeia* does not divide personifications sharply from other persons. The contingency of social personhood, and the temporal nature of its acquisition in *The Faerie Queene*, suggests the superficial character of a feigned *prosopon*, but also its capacity to mislead.

'Bedazzlement' as Sublimity

In their capacity to overwhelm the onlooker with the concentrated purity of what they represent, the personifications described here recall the principle of the sublime. Sublimity is rarely associated with early modern literature, but Patrick Cheney's recent monograph argues that *On the Sublime*, attributed to Longinus and first published in a Latin translation in 1555, was probably more widely read in sixteenth-century England than supposed.¹⁴⁹ Cheney entwines sublimity with great authorship as literary effects that achieve prominence at the end of the sixteenth century.

The presence of figures who confound and overwhelm by bedazzlement, whether personifications or unnamed knights in shining armour, resonates in particular ways with some of the many examples of sublimity provided by Longinus. In a section devoted to vividness, he distinguishes the function of φαντασῖαι (*phantasiai* or 'visualizations' [*sic*]) in poetry and oratory. *Phantasiai* (the 'phan' stem is cognate with several Greek words denoting shining or dazzling light) in oratory serve to achieve ἐνάργεια (*enargeia*), and thus persuade – though Longinus asserts his originality by arguing that even in this

¹⁴⁹ Patrick Cheney, *English Authorship and the Early Modern Sublime: Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

case the affective mechanism is the reader's wonder.¹⁵⁰ In poetry, however, *phantasiai* exist to create ἐκπληξις, literally 'consternation' or 'disturbance' and translated elegantly by the power to 'enthral'.¹⁵¹ In Euripides' *Phaethon*, for example, the eponymous doomed boy rides in his father's chariot.

πατήρ δ' ὄπισθε νῶτα σειρίου βεβῶς
ἵππευε παῖδα νουθετῶν· ἐκεῖσ' ἔλα,
τῆδε στρέφ' ἄρμα, τῆδε.

Behind, his sire, astride the Dog-star's back,
Rode, schooling thus his son. 'Now, drive on there,
Now this way wheel your car, this way'.¹⁵²

Of this passage, Longinus asks ἄρ' οὐκ ἂν εἴποις, ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ γράφοντος συνεπιβαίνει τοῦ ἄρματος καὶ συγκινδυνεύουσα τοῖς ἵπποις συνεπτέρωται; ('would you not say that the writer's soul is aboard the car, and takes wing to share the horses' peril?') This selection, and its attached rhetorical question, illuminates the skill of the author of *On the Sublime* in choosing his examples. The evocation of the danger and exhilaration of flight is what is sublime, yet the passage also carries with it a more obvious kind of brilliance or enthralling, overwhelming ἐνάργεια, which is the dazzling presence of the sun.

Yet Helios ultimately loses control of Phaethon, and Phaethon of his dazzling chariot. By analogy, the particular bedazzlement inflicted by some of the personifications in *The Faerie Queene* is the effect not of an author's presence, but his absence. Cheney's association of sublimity with authorship is certainly apt, as I have shown here, with regard to *On the*

¹⁵⁰ (Pseudo-)Longinus, *On the Sublime*, trans. by W.H. Fyfe, in *Poetics*, ed. by Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) XV, pp. 214-15.

¹⁵¹ Longinus, p. 215.

¹⁵² Longinus, pp. 218-219.

Sublime, whose examples of dazzling vividness trace the effect to the participation of the inspired poet. 'A discourse', observes Cheney in a forceful sentence,

of height, depth, magnitude, forcibleness, breached limits or going beyond, weightiness, and power dominates the fictional worlds Spenser creates.¹⁵³

To these effects can be added 'darkness, excess, feebleness, confoundment, dazzlement', all of which afflict Redcrosse as paradoxical effects of the 'passing brightnes' of the heavenly city he sees from the mountain of Contemplation.¹⁵⁴ But when figures are dazzled by personifications, either literally or in the metaphorical sense Cheney rightly identifies as part of the poem's 'discourse', it is often because no authorial figure is present. The shining New Jerusalem ultimately becomes legible because Redcrosse is assisted by his hilltop guide, Contemplation. His experience is like that of a reader of Renaissance poetry, which presents bright, sensual images 'to dazzle or bewilder the reader in such a way that enables him or her... to glimpse some otherwise hidden aspect of reality'.¹⁵⁵ When Una is deceived by Archimago, the disguised personification of Hypocrisy, and confounded by Arthur, she has no author-figure on hand to gloss the dazzling person. Before Alma curtly provides such a gloss on Shamefastnesse, Guyon is similarly undone by the intensity of her blush. For a reader, personifications might seem sublime for showing a flash of the inspired author speaking in another voice. For the questing figures who operate only at the level of narrative story, and lack any glossing discourse, they have sublime effects because, as frighteningly pure expressions of concepts in their essences, they are free of any mediating trace of the author. Spenser's personifications bedazzle not so much like the image of

¹⁵³ Cheney, p. 64.

¹⁵⁴ Cheney, p. 95.

¹⁵⁵ Adam McKeown, 'Looking at Britomart Looking at Pictures', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 45 (2005), 43-63, 49.

Phaethon from Euripides quoted by Longinus, in which a father and author hover in the chariot, as the image in Ovid's version, of an errant son being left disastrously alone.

The particular sublimity that Spenser's personifications represent to the figures perceiving them in his fictions is a kind of freedom, a total detachment from any mediating, authorial gloss. Despite reservations about his claim that sublimity is a signature of authorship, we might profitably connect these sublimely unglossed personifications to other freedoms with which Cheney associates sublimity. Appraising Angus Fletcher's reading of *The Faerie Queene's* sublimity, Cheney chastises him for a reliance on German Romantic notions, in particular those of Schiller; yet Fletcher's sense of Fairyland's plasticity is justly approved, and informs Cheney's characterisation of Spenser's imagined landscape as we saw above.¹⁵⁶ Fairyland's plasticity is for Fletcher, after Schiller, a spatial figure of our sometimes overwhelming moral freedom, the contingency of moral concepts. The radical freedom of the poem's personifications to be themselves therefore might have a spatial analogy in their freedom to move as they please. In the next chapter I will explore such freedom of movement as an intriguing consequence of personifications.

Andrew Chignell and Matthew Halteman note that since the eighteenth century most accounts of sublimity describe a two-stage process, originating perhaps in Kant's dwarfing of the senses followed by the reassertion of reason as independent of nature. They modify this, proposing a three-part structure of 'the stages of *bedazzlement*, *outstripping*, and *epiphany*'.¹⁵⁷ The striking choice of the term *bedazzlement* is justified by its connotation of

¹⁵⁶ Fletcher (1964), p. 267.

¹⁵⁷ Andrew Chignell and Matthew C. Halteman, 'Religion and the Sublime', in *The Sublime: from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by Timothy M. Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 183-202, p. 185.

a specifically sensory overload. That this bedazzlement should cause the mind's sense of itself outstripped aptly describes the trajectory of a sublime encounter in an allegorical fiction, whereby a personification that dazzles or confounds the eye must then be understood as a concept that, in its purity, outstrips the mind. The latent connections between the poetics of personification and the philosophy of the sublime have been explicitly investigated, most obviously by Steven Knapp in *Personification and the Sublime* (1985). Knapp's focus is on periods after early modernity. Observing the tendency of eighteenth-century critics (chief among them Coleridge) to call personifications sublime, he applies Burkean and Kantian conceptions of sublimity by way of explanation. 'In the brooding, obsessive fixity of Kant's fanatic', he argues, 'one recognizes [*sic*] the frozen agency of the personification'.¹⁵⁸ Devoid of empirical consciousness, the personification cannot recognise itself as a free agent, and thus is incapable of sublimity; it produces sublime effects, however, on a reader who is overwhelmed by the embodiment of that which is unlike a body. Knapp's bedazzled reader is rescued by the intervention of Kantian reason, the reassurance that the art object's sublimity is at one remove. No such meditation offers itself to Spenser's questers.

'Mother Hubberds Tale' and the Personhood of Animals

Spenser's beast fable 'Mother Hubberds Tale', published in 1591 as part of *Complaints*, is one of two works published in the 1590s that include '*prosopopoeia*' in their title, the other being Thomas Lodge's *Prosopopoeia* (1596).¹⁵⁹ As in *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser's beast fable destabilises the boundaries of personhood, suggesting in a variety of ways

¹⁵⁸ Knapp, p. 81.

¹⁵⁹ Alexander, p. 105.

that humans and animals act like one another, and that personhood can be conferred in both directions. Bradley Tuggle's recent essay on the poem suggests that this mingling of categories thought to be separate occurs even in Thomas Orwin's title page of *Complaints*, which in the 1591 text is repeated at the beginning of 'Mother Hubberds Tale'. The title page appears to represent a *scala humanae*, with the figures of David and Moses standing above snails and insects, and below angels.¹⁶⁰ Their wings look 'decidedly entomological', suggesting a disruption of animal hierarchy.¹⁶¹ The story told by Mother Hubberd may appear initially to present a similar moral scale: the 'simple husbandman' (228) who looks after his sheep is deceived and usurped by the Ape and Foxe in disguise, who pretend to look after the sheep but, like the animals they are, kill and feast on them.¹⁶² Yet this scale is soon complicated. Humans, of course, also eat meat. The controversy caused by the poem's publication suggests that the Foxe and Ape point satirically to figures of the Elizabethan state and court. Criticism has long associated the Foxe with Robert Cecil, though the poem's complexity 'makes it virtually impossible to isolate a discrete attack on an identifiable object'.¹⁶³ Real human beings are portrayed, by the equations of satire, with fictional animals: some of Elizabeth's politicians and bishops, the poem suggests, *really are* animals.

'Mother Hubberds Tale' demonstrates the plurality of *prosopopoeia*. The poem's title asks readers to contemplate it in terms of rhetorical definitions of the figure. Most obviously, the classification of *prosopopoeia* applies to the sham persons – soldier, shepherd, priest,

¹⁶⁰ Bradley Tuggle, "'Man is not like an Ape": Facing Life in *PROSOPOPOIA*. / Or / *Mother Hubberds Tale*', *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015), 317-35, 322.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² See *Shorter Poems*, pp. 233-271.

¹⁶³ Lauren Silberman, 'Aesopian *Prosopopoeia*: Making Faces and Playing Chicken in *Mother Hubberds Tale*', *Spenser Studies* 27 (2012), 221-247, 237.

courtier – which the Foxe and Ape fashion for their animal selves. Yet the Foxe initially disguises himself not as a person, but as a shepherd's 'dog' (304); enforcing human authority over a shepherd's animals the sheepdog could become, like Guyon's horse or Una's lion, part of the human's person. Furthermore, both animals have to disguise their incriminating non-human bodies, but already possess human speech. If *prosopopoeia* is a species of *enargeia*, as almost all rhetoricians agree, the figures of Foxe and Ape might be said to show Elizabeth's statesmen and courtiers vividly for what they really are.

However, the world of 'Mother Hubberds Tale' is one in which there is no fundamental difference between skin and clothes, character and appearance. Having arrived at court, the two villains find 'The Lyon sleeping... / His Crowne and Scepter lying him beside' (952-3). Unlike the Foxe and Ape, who simulate human personhood and characteristics, and who refer tacitly to real humans beyond the fiction, the lion authentically possesses some of the effects of a human monarch, a 'Crowne and Scepter', as well as symbolising monarchy. He is the benign reverse of a hybrid monster, such as Errour, who combines the recognisable features of a human with the otherness of a fantastical animal. The lion's 'skinne' (969), however, is as detachable from his body as his 'Crowne and Mace' (968), an uncanny detail that gestures, as Lauren Silberman points out, to the poem's links with a 'complex Aesopian tradition'.¹⁶⁴ Skin and clothes hide the interior of the body and its humoral disposition, as well as covering the interior mental state. Clothes do this doubly, because they also cover skin itself. Yet, as the figure of Shamefastnesse suggests, clothes and skin are also where *ethos*, the interior person, can be expressed and recognised. Here we encounter another major difference between reading and seeing a figure. A reader can

¹⁶⁴ Silberman (2012), 222.

know the *ethos* of a figure in a fiction through the indications supplied on the level of narrative discourse. Yet a character in the fiction, lacking the perception of narrative discourse, must infer a person's *ethos* in their *prosopon*.

'Clad souldierlike' (204), the Ape's disguise is effective enough for the husbandman, who makes two assumptions: that the person of a soldier stands for 'good character'; and that the figure he sees, who looks like a soldier, *really is* a soldier. The Ape claims that 'late in warres' he has 'spent [his] blood' (247). Perhaps his clothes are what convinces: the 'slits' (206) in his jacket bespeak 'wounds' (207) below, marks of his active service.¹⁶⁵ The feather on his cap is, similarly, 'all to peeces tore' (210). Even his breeches are described in terms of the body beneath them, 'loose like an emptie gut' (212). The deliberate disfiguring of the soldier's clothes suggests, paradoxically, that the *ethos* below is that of a soldier, a person who has actually battled. This irony is expressed especially neatly here, as the metaphor of character lying underneath outward appearance is literalised in the perforation of the clothes. The husbandman, denied this reader's insight, has no direct access to the *ethos* of the figure in front of him. He can only try to infer it in the feigned *prosopon*. In reading, *ethos* can be perceived with the help of mediating discourse, and without recourse to *prosopon*. In acting, *ethos* is more often detectable in the *prosopon*. This, according to Spenser, is the devastating potential destruction of duplicitous person-feigning; it also exposes the perils of bodies or embodiments which cannot be read, but only seen.

IV. Conclusion

¹⁶⁵ See Andrea Denny-Brown, 'Rips and Slits: The Torn Garment and the Medieval Self', in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. by Catherine Richardson (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 223-237.

In this account of Spenserian personification, I have argued that rhetorical *enargeia* – *prosopopoeia*'s effect – becomes in fiction a kind of bedazzlement, rendering the bodies of personifications illegible to Spenser's questing figures, in some cases sublimely so. This argument thus emphasises the spatiality of bodies, and the similarity between the encounter with a body and with other sorts of spaces. I suggested that if we consider personification as a kind of allegory, the 'otherness' it presents works with regard to space: mental states and ethical concepts experienced as internal to an agent, and tangled up with other states and concepts, are imagined as external, bounded entities, points in imaginary space, with their own personal agency and power to spread themselves by contagion.

I have steered clear, so far, of a famous personification in *The Faerie Queene*, whose story is often taken to indicate the poetics of Spenser's *prosopopoeia*, and to reflect critically on both personification and personhood. Mired in an old man's jealousy over his young wife, and driven to despair by losing her, Malbecco tries to commit suicide by jumping off a cliff, but floats to the ground. His body is so 'wasted and forpined' (III.x.57.2) with 'self-murdring thought' (1) that it lacks the substance to fall heavily. On landing, he crawls into a cave; the last line of the canto describes the completion of his metamorphosis, revealing that he 'forgot he was a man, and *Gealousie* is hight' (60.9). Malbecco's story is a 'brilliantly confusing mingle' of analogues, both generic and particular.¹⁶⁶ The flexibility with which Spenser interweaves his sources – Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the fabliau, the

¹⁶⁶ Colin Burrow, 'Original Fictions: Metamorphoses in *The Faerie Queene*', in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Art and Literature from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 99-119, p. 114.

beast fable, Homer's story of Paris and Helen – should instruct us against rigid conclusions. Yet critics tend to assume that in Malbecco's story Spenser describes a movement from the plenitude of being a person to the depleted flatness of being a personification, and from indeterminacy to fixity of meaning. Abraham Stoll, for example, argues that Malbecco's 'relatively rounded character' descends into 'flat and mechanical... personification'.¹⁶⁷

Escobedo, in his radical re-assessment of personification, takes a different view, arguing that Malbecco's insubstantial flatness derives not from his becoming a personification, but from becoming a 'personification of *jealousy*'.¹⁶⁸ I would make an analogous argument about Malbecco's body: it is certainly depleted, but depletion is not the same thing as disappearance, and bird-like 'crooked claws' (57.8) have grown where Malbecco's flesh has shrunk. He has not lost his body so much as seen it transform; an incidental part of that transformation is the wasting of substance. Malbecco's body remains, and remains spatial. Linda Gregerson argues that while he is Malbecco, Spenser's jealous figure has an ethical function both 'exemplary and catalytic'.¹⁶⁹ Her terms recall my own distinction in this chapter between personifications who insinuate themselves by force, guile and contagious proximity. I aligned this sliding scale with the distinction between personifications understood as exemplary metonyms, and as causal metaphors. Gregerson believes that having become Gealousie, Malbecco retains his exemplary

¹⁶⁷ Abraham Stoll, 'Spenser's Allegorical Conscience', *Modern Philology* 111 (2013), 181-204, 194. James Nohrnberg describes him 'consumed with his passion to the point of abstraction'. James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 639. Howard Skulsky reads in Malbecco's final form 'the perverse chastity, or absoluteness, of a fixed idea'. Skulsky, 'Malbecco', *SEnc*, p. 449.

¹⁶⁸ Escobedo (2017), p. 17.

¹⁶⁹ Linda Gregerson, 'The Faerie Queene (1590)', in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. by Richard McCabe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 198-216, p. 207.

function but 'loses his catalytic danger', his ability to insinuate jealousy in others.¹⁷⁰ I would adjust this a little: Malbecco's 'catalytic' power has not diminished, but has concentrated itself less in his social actions and more in his person and habitat, manifest in the cave to which he is tied for the rest of his life. Previously, he insinuated the jealousy that consumes him in a complex ironic pattern: his hysterical hold over Hellenore inspired envy in Paridell, which if fulfilled would itself turn to jealousy. As a personification in a cave, however, he insinuates himself by other means: by proximity, or by force and guile.

If a figure in one of *The Faerie Queene's* unwritten books were to happen on Malbecco's cave, what would she see? The personification which would confront her cannot be dismissed as merely the reduction of a person, its flattening into a barely reified figure of speech. As Renaissance rhetorical theory – and Malbecco's own gradual transformation – suggests, the figures of *prosopopoeia* share many properties with the other feigned persons of a fiction. Embodying as well as exemplifying the concepts they represent, they baffle and dazzle the questing figures who meet them. This often sublime experience translates the more literal dazzlement by the poem's mobile heroes, whose shining armour renders them illegible. In the illegibility of these persons, Spenser presents a meta-allegory for the difficulty of comprehending ethical concepts which present themselves in their essences.

¹⁷⁰ Gregerson, p. 208.

PART II: EMBODIMENTS OF NATURE

Chapter 2

Night in *The Faerie Queene* and Elizabethan England

Introduction

Following the months of the year in Mutabilitie's pageant, 'there came the *Day*, and *Night*'

(VII.vii.44.1):

Riding together both with equall pase,
Th'one on a Palfrey blacke, the other white;
But *Night* had couered her vncomely face
With a blacke veile...
(2-5)

Day and night rarely last as long as one another, and are asymmetrical in their difference: day is the presence of sunlight, but night is its absence rather than a rival presence. Yet personification, in this image, makes them 'equall', turning them into figures 'riding together'. In order to rhyme '*Night*' with 'white', Spenser reverses the order of the horses they are riding relative to the order in which he introduces the personifications. He creates the shadow of an insinuation that Day is sitting 'on a Palfrey blacke', and Night is riding a white horse. In this image, it's unclear how personification has altered the character of night: her 'vncomely face' is covered with a 'blacke veile', but this could suggest deceit and secrecy as much as modesty and beautification. Night's presence in the 'Cantos of Mutabilitie' is fleeting. She and Day keep to the stanza allotted them by the pageant's orderly sequence. Yet in Book I she is a motivated character, begrudgingly giving in to Duessa's request for aid to the wounded Sansfoy. This chapter addresses the malevolent character of Night, and asks how personification constructs and interacts with that malevolence.

In his comparative analysis of *The Faerie Queene*, James Nohrnberg conjectures that readers 'have got it the wrong way round' about personification. 'The first allegorist', says Nohrnberg, 'did not animate an abstraction, he conceptualized [*sic*] something originally felt to be animate'.¹ 'The first allegorist', of course, is a critical metaphor (a personification, perhaps) for 'early allegory'. Nohrnberg's sense that 'abstraction' might be a red herring in the study of personification is supported by the definitions of *prosopopoeia* examined in the previous chapter. In early modern rhetoric, as we saw, personification is just as readily associated with cities and countries as it is with concepts like Envy. Nohrnberg's supposition about personification also highlights the extent to which, in the culture of 'the first allegorist', the things which could be personified were 'felt to be animate'. Our own culture associates personification with abstraction; it also tends to think of persons as having a premium on being 'animate', or make sharp distinctions between the life of persons and of non-persons. Anthropomorphism of the natural world remains widespread: in parts of the English-speaking world, major storms acquire Christian names (since 1953 in the USA, and 2015 in the UK and Ireland). Naming violent natural phenomena heightens awareness of the danger they present. It strives for civic *enargeia*. Anthropomorphising a storm might be seen as an ironic move, the conferral of personal life on that which is widely agreed to lack it. Alternatively, one could argue that behind our modern sense of a rift between animate persons and the inanimate world lurks a residual intuition that natural phenomena have personalities.

¹ James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 99.

This chapter is the first of two concerning Spenser's personifications of nature. Here, I examine the figure of Night in *The Faerie Queene*, elsewhere in Spenser's poetry, and in some of his classical models and Elizabethan contemporaries. The next chapter considers Spenser's personification of rivers. In both cases, my focus will be on the spatial characteristics acquired by night and rivers when they are personified. In particular, I will argue, personification changes the way natural phenomena move: the natural motion of the night and of rivers is exchanged for the mobility of persons. This analysis is underpinned by the application of insights from 'mobility studies', an offshoot of the 'spatial turn'. Unsurprisingly, literary criticism on Spenser is yet to relate the many kinds of movement in his writing to this developing strand of theory. Perhaps more startling is the lack of any substantial attention to the figure of Night: the section I devote to her in this chapter is the first extended treatment of Night in Spenser criticism. Given the paucity of detailed criticism on Night, this chapter adopts a comparative approach, looking for patterns in other depictions from the epic tradition, and elsewhere in classical and Renaissance verse. On the other hand, Spenser's continual writing of rivers has received specific attention by critics for more than a century. The two chapters therefore put a famous topic of Spenser's poetry in touch with an obscure one. Considering the pageant of rivers at the marriage of the Thames and Medway (IV.xi), I argue that the flow of rivers in their natural state is exchanged for unpredictable personal mobility. I relate this notion to recent studies of the episode that pay attention to the episode's interactions with the recent past and the writing of history. The exchange of motion for mobility, I argue, participates in Spenser's conceptual colonising of Ireland, the separation of its land from its people.

I. Embodied Places

Ovid and the Genius Loci

Before examining Spenser's personifications of night and rivers at length, it is worth situating these figures in the context of personifications of place or natural phenomena. Two contexts seem especially relevant: Ovid, to Spenser personally; and the fashion for sculptural personifications of nature in gardens, originating in fifteenth-century Italy and itself part of the humanist estimation and imitation of early Roman imperial culture.

In her study of Ovid's influence on Spenser, Syrithe Pugh argues that Spenser's understanding of Ovidian poetics is unusually deep. In the humanist debates on poetic unity in sixteenth-century Europe, Ovid is typically associated with variety, either to his credit (as for Giraldi) or detriment (as for Minturno).² Spenser, on the other hand, sees the digressive structure of the *Metamorphoses*, always close to chaos, as a diagram of a world view 'he can accommodate to his Protestant [*sic*] theology'.³ Stories should be errant and digressive because life on earth is necessarily confusing before the intervention of divine grace. Like Fairyland, the world of the *Metamorphoses* is saturated with 'immanent' symbolic meaning, usually menacing but sometimes redemptive. Yet this meaning is rarely comprehensible to the figures within the landscape.⁴ Colin Burrow describes an 'Ovidian intimation that objects and places are charged with human history', arguing that it 'begins to play a significant part in English writing' after Spenser.⁵ This

² Syrithe Pugh, *Spenser and Ovid* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 46-50.

³ Pugh, p. 57. Spenser lacks a coherent, single 'theology', but his various theologies are undoubtedly 'Protestant'.

⁴ Pugh, p. 237.

⁵ Colin Burrow, 'Original Fictions: Metamorphoses in *The Faerie Queene*', in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Art and Literature from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 99-119.

saturation of natural space with human agency and history – the transformation of all space into place – is typically ominous, because the agency is often malevolent, but also because it is hidden.⁶ At the outset of *The Faerie Queene*, Redcrosse finds himself in a wood which he treats as if it is normal, but discovers it is ‘the Wandring Wood’, ‘charged’ with the malevolence of the monster at its centre. Later, he sits down under a tree, only for the tree to start speaking to him, warning him that Fidessa, whom he thinks is his lover and companion, conceals the malevolent figure of Duessa. Fradubio’s warning primarily continues Book I’s exposition of persons who simulate. Yet it also serves as a reminder, to both figures in the text and its readers, that Fairyland’s Ovidian landscape contains concealed personhood. The ‘poplar neuer dry’ (I.i.8.7) which Redcrosse sees in the Wandring Wood is descended from the Heliades, who wept for their brother Phaethon in the *Metamorphoses* until ‘cortex’ (bark) (*Met.*II.363) encased their bodies and silenced their words. As Burrow observes, the fountain from which Redcrosse drinks before his imprisonment by Orgoglio is not a place of innocuous ‘liquid delights’, but a version of Ovid’s tale of Salmacis, a fountain infused with idleness.⁷ Landscape contains and conceals personal agency.

Spenser’s description of landscape is certainly based on an Ovidian interest in entwining personhood with place. If natural phenomena appear to be morally neutral, that appearance is usually deceptive. Ernst Robert Curtius makes the perceptive claim that ‘in all the poetry of Antiquity nature is always inhabited Nature’.⁸ Most obviously, Curtius is

⁶ ‘[S]paces people are attached to in some way or another. This is the most straightforward and common definition of place – a meaningful location’. Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* [2004], 2nd ed. (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), p. 12.

⁷ Burrow, p. 102.

⁸ Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* [1948], trans. by Willard R. Trask, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1952), p. 186.

suggesting that people are never far from antique poetic landscapes. Yet ‘inhabited Nature’ might also mean nature that seems to be haunted or charged by personal presence. In the Ovidian landscape of Fairyland, presence might easily be lurking behind the darkness of the night: the night’s blackness thus becomes malevolent. However, even as he makes personifications from his personally haunted, Ovidian landscape, Spenser departs from Ovid. For a poem interested in personal transformation and fashioning, the *Metamorphoses* contains few personifications. As Burrow observes, the story of Malbecco is one of metamorphosis, but has ‘undergone a sea-change in the transition from Ovid to Spenser’.⁹ A man changing into a tree is Ovidian; a man changing into an abstraction is not. In personifying nature, Spenser employs an Ovidian sense of the natural world, but moves in the opposite direction to Ovid. To return to the Heliades, Ovid’s poem asks readers to imagine that what is now a fixed part of nature, the poplar tree, was once a mobile person, in a mythological age when the boundaries between human and divine, personal and natural, were blurred.

Spenser’s un-Ovidian personifications of nature, culminating in the figure of Dame Nature herself, draw in their specific instances on other classical epics. Night, as we shall see, appears in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, a foundational text in which she herself is one of the first named figures in the universe. More generally, Spenser engages with the tradition of the *genius loci*, the spirit of the place. As a concept in Roman religion, the *genius loci* is a complex adaptation, as Andrew Escobedo shows, of the Greek idea of the *daimon*.¹⁰ This adaptation in turn was appropriated by political and humanist culture in fifteenth-

⁹ Burrow, p. 108.

¹⁰ Andrew Escobedo, *Volition’s Face: Personification and the Will in Renaissance Literature* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), p. 98.

century Italy, where the gardens of the wealthy began to exhibit allegorical statues of landscape features such as mountains and rivers, in perceived imitation of the villa gardens of the early Roman empire. Sixteenth-century visitors to the Medici Castello's garden were confronted with 'allegorical sculptural representations of the River Mugnone rising in Monte Asinaio and the city of Fiesole emerging from the porous rock'.¹¹ Fynes Moryson, who visited Italy as part of his extensive travels in the 1590s, records seeing some of these sculptural representations of *genii loci*. Describing the garden at Villa di Pratolino (1569-81), Moryson recalls 'the Images of many Nimphos, all which cast out water abundantly'.¹² He seems to understand them as allegorical representations of rivers, having also recalled in Florence 'a monument of *Arno* overflowing' in the church of Santa Croce.¹³ Their source, however, is represented by the personification of the Apennine mountains above them, 'a statua of a Giant, with a curled beard, like a Monster'.¹⁴ Without clarifying whether he interpreted this 'giant' (by Giambologna) as an allegorical mountain range, Moryson's language demonstrates the uncertainty of the *genius loci* for the outsider. As appropriated in other 'Italian Renaissance forms', the notion of the *genius loci* meant the animate quality of a place, but accrued a sense of rebellious distinctiveness, until it could be invoked by the Earl of Shaftesbury as a defence against excessive regularity in garden design.¹⁵

Moryson's experience before Giambologna's 'Giant' indicates that their distinctiveness could make *genii loci* hard to detect. This outsider's uncertainty is explored

¹¹ Naomi Miller, *Heavenly Caves: Reflections on the Garden Grotto* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 32.

¹² Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary* (London, 1617), I.ii.3, p. 152.

¹³ Moryson, I.ii.3, p. 151.

¹⁴ Moryson, I.ii.3, p. 152.

¹⁵ *The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden 1620-1820*, ed. by John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis (1975), 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), pp. 8-9.

philosophically in Christian Norberg-Schulz's *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1975). Norberg-Schulz expands on the approach and terminology of Heidegger's influential 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', but corrects some of the troublingly exclusionary implications of Heidegger's thought. Place, an infusion of character into a 'figure-ground' nexus of 'settlement' and 'landscape', is always achieved after initial disorientation:

Rather than being placed safely within the house he ['Man'] has created for himself, he comes from the outside, from the 'path of life', which also represents man's attempts at 'orientating' himself in the given unknown environment.¹⁶

In this processual idea of dwelling, less exclusionary than Heidegger's, the *genius loci* – 'the "spirit of place" which the ancients recognized [*sic*] as that "opposite" man has to come to terms with' – is something to be negotiated with over time.¹⁷ Spenser's own witty exposition of the 'opposite' otherness of a *genius loci* can be found on the way to the Bower of Bliss. At the entrance, Guyon meets a gatekeeper figure of 'semblance pleasing, more then naturall' (II.xii.46.5):

They in that place him *Genius* did call:
Not that celestiall powre, to whom the care
Of life, and generation of all
That liues, perteines in charge particulare...
That is our Selfe...
(47.1-4,8)

Spenser conflates two senses of '*Genius*': the presiding demon which early Christianity reinterprets after Paul as conscience; and 'the *genius loci* or presiding spirit of any

¹⁶ Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1980), p. 12, p. 9.

¹⁷ Norberg-Schulz, pp. 10-11.

place'.¹⁸ He underlines the distinction because it is a moral one, but occupies almost a whole stanza with a statement of what Genius is not. As Roland Greene suggests, perhaps Guyon enters the Bower because he is seduced into thinking the 'semblance pleasing' is of his own 'Self', 'an alterity that makes itself legible as identity'.¹⁹ For a travelling figure disorientated or out of place, like Guyon after his testing journey to the Bower, it is tempting to convert that which is illegibly strange into something familiar. Yet this misinterpretation, paradoxically, deepens the actual disorientation. As I will show, Night's embodiment makes her appear strange to the travellers of Fairyland. Personification of nature, in this case, is a trope for a natural world in which real persons feel out of place.

Spenser's personifications, as I've established, inhabit a landscape which is Ovidian in its entwining of personal and natural agencies, but also in its ancientness. In the following two chapters, I want to emphasise the ambivalent potential of such personifications, which both enchant the natural world and make it confusing and strange to those moving in it. Such confusion is a specific form of the illegibility with which, in the previous chapter, I characterised the transposed *enargeia* of rhetorical *prosopopoeia*.

Theoretical Contexts: Ecocriticism and Mobility Studies

These chapters are concerned with two personifications of phenomena in nature; it seems appropriate, therefore, to relate the analysis to contemporary ecocriticism. In its

¹⁸ Roland Greene, 'A Primer of Spenser's Worldmaking: Alterity in the Bower of Bliss', in *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age*, ed. by Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), pp. 9-31.

¹⁹ Greene, p. 27.

short history as a branch of literary theory, ecocriticism has already experienced 'waves'.²⁰ Self-styled as a counterweight to deconstruction and the language-centred critical approaches of Derrida, original ecocriticism accepted 'culture' and 'nature' as antithetical terms, extolling the latter as *real*, though beleaguered by the former. In 2001, Laurence Buell rejected this critical antithesis, proposing that we see culture and nature co-existing in a 'myth of mutual constructionism'.²¹ There has not been as much ecocritical work on early modern literature as on texts associated with the height of the Anthropocene. Given the imperative to focus on texts defined as 'ecological', and their own activist sensibilities, critics have directed their attention to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²²

The most thorough consideration of the natural world in early modern culture and society is Todd Borlik's *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature* (2011). Borlik acknowledges his debt to the 'path-breaking' work of Robert Watson's *Back to Nature* (2006) and Gabriel Egan's *Green Shakespeare* (2006).²³ Watson's study sees the end of the sixteenth century as a time of ecological anxiety. People became aware that resources were finite; simultaneously they grew conscious both of proto-capitalism as the era in which 'markers take the place of essences', and also the protestant insistence on the immateriality of God's Word.²⁴ This prompted, Watson argues, a fervent desire to retreat

²⁰ Greg Garrard, 'Introduction', *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, ed. by Garrard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 1-29. Garrard, p. 2.

²¹ Laurence Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond* (London: Belknap, 2001), p. 6. For an overview of more recent work that tries, like Buell, to reconcile ecocritical standpoints with Derridean scepticism, see Todd A. Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 213-14, p. 30n.

²² For a useful bibliography of criticism on Renaissance literature that addresses ecological or environmental topics, see Karen Raber, 'Recent Ecocritical Studies of English Renaissance Literature', *English Literary Renaissance* 37 (2007), 151-171.

²³ Borlik, p. 10.

²⁴ Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: the Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 30.

to a state of nature felt to represent lost authenticity, 'an originary, generative moment of the past'.²⁵ Borlik similarly detects traces of modern ecological anxiety in the late sixteenth century, with its 'widespread deforestation' and, in the 1590s, 'streak of volatile weather'.²⁶ He argues, however, that the consequence was not so much an attempt to get back to nature, but an ideological wrestle. Through its reliance on Aristotle (especially, Borlik argues, his own absorption of the Pythagorean *anima mundi*), as well as common magical thinking about the environment, early modern culture continued to imagine nature as alive. Ecological anxiety at the turn of the seventeenth century provoked not the desire to retreat into a dead nature, but to appease a living Nature.

Where does personification stand in relation to this appeasement? If, as Borlik suggests, nature seemed animated to many early modern minds, personification might seem an elegant acknowledgment of this fact. Furthermore, if nature's entwining with human subjectivity needed re-articulation, personification seems vividly to portray this entwining. Indeed, Borlik's initial reading of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (1612-1622) (which, he boldly claims, fulfils all four of Buell's four tests for an 'environmental text') interprets personification in this way. 'Through prosopopoeia', he argues, Drayton 'transforms the rivers, forests, fens and meadows into a confederacy of historians', making them 'repositories of cultural memory'.²⁷ This generous analysis rightly credits the centrality and subjectivity of nature in Drayton's work. It also applies to Spenser's personification of Dame Nature herself in the 'Cantos of Mutabilitie', in whom the natural and cultural worlds seem to have become one. Yet, as I will first argue, such an entwining is not the

²⁵ Watson (2006), p. 69.

²⁶ Borlik, p. 3.

²⁷ Borlik, p. 6.

effect of Spenser's personification of night and rivers. Their embodiment, and the mobility that results from it, pushes human subjectivity away rather than enfolding it. The personage of Night stands between the (dis-personified) night and the human figure trying to exist in harmony with it; similarly, and in a more polemical context, the personages of Irish rivers separate the Irish people from their environment.

Movement, motion and mobility also deserve some theoretical consideration. They are at the centre of this reading of natural personifications. In 2006, Mimi Sheller and John Urry proposed a 'new mobilities paradigm' in a number of related disciplines, referring both to a world increasingly 'on the move' and to a shift of academic focus onto mobility.²⁸ The interdisciplinary study of space had paid insufficient attention to movement, they argued, assuming that movement was antithetical to the infusion of space with meaning; that 'place is pause', in the words of Yi-Fu Tuan.²⁹ Since then, 'mobility studies' has attempted forensic analysis of the poetics of movement. Though its confinement to the social sciences can be exaggerated, mobility studies is yet to make substantial inroads into the humanities.³⁰ Like ecocritics, most of its proponents focus on contemporary and twentieth-century culture. There is very little work centrally focused on early modern mobility, though a recent conference on 'Mobility and Space in Early Modern Europe' suggests interest is growing.³¹

²⁸ Mimi Sheller and John Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2006), 207-226, 207.

²⁹ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 6.

³⁰ Peter Merriman and Lynne Pearce, 'Mobility and the Humanities', *Mobilities* 12 (2017), 493-508.

³¹ University of Oxford, 23-24 June 2017. See also Meredith Jane Donaldson, 'Moveable Text: Mutability, Monumentality, and the Representation of Motion in British Renaissance Literature', unpublished PhD dissertation, McGill University (2010).

In Spenser studies, James Ellis's 'Movement and the City in The Faerie Queene [sic]' taxonomises the various kinds of 'allegorical routes' in Fairyland. He distinguishes streets, which express 'collective purpose', from older 'paths and ways', which represent 'unconscious and unthinking habit'.³² Ellis underlines, valuably, that place in Fairyland is not inimical or even antithetical to its allegory. As 'emotional geography', place is at the heart of allegory. Most considerations of mobility in literary criticism focus, like Ellis, more on technologies or varieties of mobility than movement itself.³³ In the reading of *Night below*, I try to delineate the exact qualities of her mobility as a personification, and the resulting contrast with normal, nocturnal motion. This analysis relies on two conspicuous attempts within mobility studies to delve into movement itself. The first of these is Bronislaw's Szerszynski's extraordinary attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the kinds of movement found on earth.³⁴ Szerszynski focuses mainly on finding a technical language for various kinds of movement. Yet his quixotic insistence on treating the 'god-like motion of the planets' alongside fluid dynamics and the movement of persons is strangely apposite for the Renaissance: neo-Platonism popularised the Pythagorean principle of the movement of the spheres, and the Thomist idea of God as the first mover still held sway.³⁵ The second is Tim Cresswell's attempt to define with precision mobility in its parts. Cresswell proposes three aspects of mobility: 'the fact of physical movement'; the 'representations' that give movement 'shared meaning'; the

³² Ellis quotes Andrew McRae's observation that, at the turn of the seventeenth century in England, many such pathways were being converted into roads. Jim Ellis, 'Movement and the City in The Faerie Queene [sic]', *Spenser Review* 47 (2017): <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/item/47.1.3>. Accessed 18 October 2018.

³³ For example, a recent volume of essays on the mobile exchange of stories and practices, in theatrical cultures of early modern Europe, focuses much more on routes of and obstacles to influence than on mobility itself. See *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. by Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

³⁴ Bronislaw Szerszynski, 'Planetary Mobilities: Movement, Memory and Emergence in the Body of the Earth', *Mobilities* 11 (2016), 614-628.

³⁵ Szerszynski, 626.

'experienced practice' of moving.³⁶ Mobility is movement in represented form; it also 'exists in the same relation to movement as place does to location'.³⁷ The shift from night to Night, to use Cresswell's definitions, is from 'physical movement' (or motion) to mobility, but also from nature to a representation of nature. Cresswell's analysis is valuable not only for his terminological precision, but for highlighting the politics latent in representations of movement. That kinds of mobility have various political associations is the core claim of Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) and the study of rhythm it seeks to inaugurate.³⁸ Night, this section will conclude, is at once a function of the earth's rhythm and, in her personified form, the sudden disruptor of rhythms.

II. Personifications of Night

'Vp dreary Dame': Spenser's Night

Having cried her 'crocodile' (l.v.18.4) tears for Sansfoy, mortally wounded by Redcrosse at the House of Pride, Duessa journeys to the 'Easterne coast of heauen' (19.9) to ask for help:

Where griesly *Night*, with visage deadly sad,
That *Phœbus* chearefull face durst neuer vew,
And in a foule blacke pitchy mantle clad,
She findes forth comming from her darksome mew,
Where she all day did hide her hated hew.
Before the dore her yron charet stood,
Already harnessed for iourney new;
And coleblacke steedes yborne of hellish brood,

³⁶ Tim Cresswell, 'Towards a Politics of Mobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010), 17-31, 19.

³⁷ Cresswell (2010), 18.

³⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Eléments de rythmanalyse* [1992], ed. and trans. by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (London: Continuum, 2004).

That on their rusty bits did champ, as they were wood.
(I.v.20)

Night is imagined as a 'griesly' (1) woman, called two stanzas later an 'auncient Grandmother' (22.2). The first of this old woman's characteristics to be described is her face, a 'visage deadly sad' (1) which has never set eyes on the 'chearefull face' (2) of the daylight, personified here as Phoebus. The gradual, orderly replacement of the day by the night is transformed, via personification, into a 'face'-off between two figures, Night and Phoebus, both of whom contain behind a 'visage' a disparate and diffuse phenomenon (sunlight, darkness). The distance of the metaphor from literal reality is greater, however, in Night's case: whereas sunlight originates from the discrete place of the sun, night is simply the absence of light and has no ordinary centre. Characterised in nature not only by disparateness but also by absence, night in Spenser's fiction receives a figure with a 'visage' and a centre of origin to match the sun, the 'darksome mew' (4) later described a few lines later as a 'caue' (21.6). Behind the 'dore' (20.6) of this dwelling place, the metaphor implies, the night is concentrated during the day before spreading over the world. To personify diffuse night as concentrated Night creates an ironic distance between vehicle and tenor. Spenser's repeated use of the word 'face' and related forms in his descriptions suggests the text's consciousness of this irony. Appealing to Night for aid before she reveals her identity, Duessa exploits her rivalry with light and its followers:

Or else goe them auenge, and let be seene,
That dreaded *Night* in brightest day hath place,
And can the children of fayre light deface.
(24.3-5)

Duessa's appeal touches Night with 'compassion' (6), which registers as 'change in that great mothers face' (7), though she is yet to acquiesce; the semi-redundant rhyme

(‘deface / face’) underlines the ironic combination of Night’s ‘face’ and its ability to ‘deface’ the children of light.³⁹ Night finally agrees to help when she perceives Duessa lurking behind the ‘fayre face’ (27.2) of her visitor; when she stands by Sansfoy the wolves ‘howle... at her abhorred face’ (30.8-9). In Book III, when night suddenly obscures Florimell as she is pursued, Arthur denounces her as a ‘foule Mother’ (III.iv.55.1) ‘that doest all thinges deface’ (56.3). In ‘The Teares of the Muses’ from *Complaints* (1591), Euterpe laments that Ignorance (in cahoots with blind boldness) ‘hath our fair Light defaced’ (266); he was begot, the poem’s Hesiodic genealogy claims, ‘by yawning Sloth on his own Mother Night’ (263).⁴⁰ Even as she is personified, given a face, Night’s work is to deface the children of light. James Nohrnberg notes Demetrius’ observation in *On Style* that ‘allegory... is not unlike darkness and night’.⁴¹ Night and Duessa, whose early appearance in the poem are for Nohrnberg indications to the reader to read them as comments on what is to follow, work like allegory under Puttenham’s ‘couert and darke termes’.⁴² They ‘parody the allegorical faculty’.⁴³ To the self-consciousness Nohrnberg perceives, of (narrative) allegory’s proximity to concealing night, we can add a similar consciousness of Night’s ironic relationship to the practice of *prosopopoeia*. Night is the figure who defaces, who removes from another figure its delineated identity, even as she is given a face.⁴⁴

³⁹ Hamilton glosses ‘deface’ as ‘destroy, defame, outface, outshine by contrast’. *FQ*, p. 76.

⁴⁰ Two stanzas earlier, ‘a stony Coldness’ (253) has dimmed human intelligence with a ‘darkness more than Cymmerians daily Night’ (256); associated by proximity, ‘monstrous Error flying in the Air / Hath marr’d the Face of all that seemed fair’ (257-8). See *Shorter Poems*, pp. 189-210.

⁴¹ Demetrius, *On Style*, ed. and trans. by Doreen C. Innes, in *Poetics*, ed. by Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), II.99. See Nohrnberg, p. 90.

⁴² George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* [London, 1589], ed. by Gladys Willcock and Alice Walker (London: Cambridge University Press, 1936), III.XVIII, p. 186. See Nohrnberg, p. 90.

⁴³ Nohrnberg, p. 90.

⁴⁴ For de Man, *prosopopoeia* has as its inverse a corresponding defacement. Autobiography defaces the self for which it substitutes a *prosopon*. See Paul de Man, ‘Autobiography as De-facement’, *Modern Language Notes* 94 (1979), 919-930, and in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 67-81.

The classical myths, and their representation in the Renaissance, to which Spenser's portrait of Night is indebted, amplify this ironic distance between embodied Night and her capacity to diffuse and deface. Spenser's figure seems influenced, as commentators have noted, to Natalis Comes's *Mythologiae*. 'Night is, very simply', remarks Comes in his consideration of the figure, 'the shadow of the earth'.⁴⁵ Comes's survey of the mythology of the night characteristically mixes this kind of demythologising with a serious consideration of the classical myths in their detail. Of the writers who, like Cicero in *De Natura Deorum*, posit a parental relationship between Night and Love,⁴⁶ Comes notes 'a very simple reason' for what he calls 'this fiction': 'very often love cannot be explained, or else its cause lies hidden, in the most part, in the silence of Night'.⁴⁷ For Comes similarities between abstract or diffuse phenomena in reality (love, night) are transformed by the 'fiction' of personification into familial relationships. As we shall see, Night's realisation that she has kinship ties to Duessa is a decisive factor in her abduction of Sansfoy. Especially pertinent among the versions of Night's genealogy surveyed by Comes is Hesiod's *Theogony*. Night for Hesiod is the child of Chaos:

ἦ τοι μὲν πρῶτιστα Χάος γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος...
 ἐκ Χάεος δ' Ἐρεβός τε μέλαινά τε Νύξ ἐγένοντο...
 (116-17, 123)

⁴⁵ Natalis Comes [Natale Conti], *Mythologiae* [1567], ed. and trans. by Mulryan and Brown (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), III.12, p. 193.

⁴⁶ In Cicero's case, Night is the parent of Love; in other cases, as Comes notes, Night is 'the daughter of Cupid'.

⁴⁷ Comes, p. 194.

'In truth at first Chaos came to be, but next wide-bosomed Earth... From Chaos came forth Erebus and black Night'.⁴⁸ Proceeding ἐκ Χάεος ('from Chaos'), Night is not only μέλαινά ('black') but also formless and shapeless. The irony of Night's being embodied is given cosmic amplification: her person represents a state prior and antithetical to the formal definition and delineation implied by the notion of persons. Hesiod's elaboration of Night's history shows her resisting full personhood, as if conscious of her chaotic nature: while some of her children (Aether and Day) are born Ἐρέβει φιλότῃτι ('by love with Erebus') (125) she gives birth to many others (such as Death, Friendship and Strife) οὐ τινι κοιμηθεῖσα ('though she lay with none') (214). Spenser's Night resembles Hesiod's similarly 'auncient Grandmother' not just in age but also in her power to 'deface', to remove form and shape from the world and reinstate the chaos from which she descends.

Means of Diffusion: Steeds and Mantles

Gathered and concentrated behind the *prosopon* of a 'face', of which her cave with its door is an extension, personified Night requires some artificial means of spreading to provide a fictional analogue for her natural diffusion across the sky. In the 'Cantos of Mutabilitie', where personified Night appears alongside Day in Mutabilitie's pageant, she holds a mace:

⁴⁸ Hesiod, *Theogony*, in *Hesiod* ed. and trans. by Glenn W. Most (London: Harvard University Press, 2006-2007), vol. 1, pp. 12-13. It's possible that Spenser read his Hesiod in one of the several editions published in Basel in the middle of the sixteenth century. Many of these editions (1542, 1544, 1564, 1574) contain, alongside a Latin prose translation, a verse translation by Bonino Mombritius (Mombrizio); the order of nymphs in the river pageant, examined in Chapter 3, follows Mombritius' translation more closely than Hesiod. If so, Spenser was used to thinking of Hesiod in the context of humanist allegoresis of classical literature. See Josephine Waters Bennett, 'Spenser's Hesiod', *The American Journal of Philology* 52 (1931), 176-181.

On top whereof the moon and stars were pight,
And sleep and darknesse round about did trace...
(VII.vii.44.6-7)

'Trace' might mean that 'sleep and darkness' are painted on the mace, like the moon and stars, but this is hard to envisage. A likelier implication is that the mace has quasi-magical contagious power to spread the night around itself. In Book I, Night uses an 'yron charet' (20.6) and the 'coleblacke steedes' (8) champing next to it provide her with mobility through the airs. The 'yron charet', referred to again as an 'yron wagon' (28.1) and a 'mournfull charet' (32.2) creates for Night a place of origin and concentration, a mobile and nocturnal equivalent of her daytime cave. It creates figurative symmetry between the Sun and the Night which does not exist on the literal level: the sun and its absence become two figures (Phoebus, Night) who both possess a chariot and a team of horses. Yet concentration necessitates a means of diffusion: afforded a discrete place, Night needs a mechanism to represent metaphorically the spread of darkness over the world. In part, this is achieved by the foaming of the horses' mouths: they champ on their 'rusty bits' (20.9) as if rabid ('wood' (9)). The implication of foam is confirmed in Spenser's description of their journey across the sky, 'foming tarre' (28.8) as they move through the 'mirkesome aire' (3). That the 'tarre' foaming from the horses' mouths is of a similarly 'mirkesome' consistency as the air, and in the same stanza, suggests a relation between the dark night air surrounding the 'charet' and the foul substance pouring from it.

As Comes notes, 'the association of this kind of movement with Night is later than Homer'.⁴⁹ Yet the image of Night in a chariot drawn by dark horses has an extensive classical history. Aeneas is visited by his father's shade in *Aeneid* V once 'nox atra polum

⁴⁹ Comes, p. 192

bigis subvecta tenebat' ('dark night had arisen and held her yoked horses') (*Aeneid* V.721). As Anchises leaves his son he notes that 'me saevus equid Oriens adflavit anhelis' ('the savage dawn touches me with his panting horses') (739): the symmetry of Night and Day permitted by personification is underlined.⁵⁰ This symmetrical *topos* appears also in the *Argonautica*, where the sun, personified as Helios, is drawn ἵπποις ('by horses'), and gives way to Night, glimpsed as she ἵπποισιν ἔβαλλεν ἔπι ζυγά ('was putting the yoke on her horses').⁵¹ Night's chariot is drawn by 'nigrantes... equos' in Silius Italicus' *Punica* as Upton noted in his commentary on *The Faerie Queene* in the eighteenth century.⁵² The 'coleblacke' (20.8) colouring of the horses and their 'rusty' (9) bits might also allude to Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses* (1567). In Book V Dis leaves his 'tenebrosa sede' ('dark realm') (V.359) and 'curruque atrorum vectus equorum' ('in a chariot drawn by dark horses') journeys in search of Persephone. Golding, as Anthony Brian Taylor notes, offers for 'atrorum' 'as blacke as any cole' (5.455); later, when Dis captures Persephone and shakes the horses' 'obscura tinctas ferrugine habenas' ('reins with a dark iron colour') (V.404), Golding calls them 'rustie' (5.505).⁵³ Ovid refers more directly to the 'equi' of Night in *Elegy XIII*, whose appeal, 'lente currite' ('run slowly'), is vividly quoted by Marlowe's Faustus as he realises his damnation.⁵⁴

Diffusion of concentrated essence is also achieved, in Spenser's and many classical and contemporary personifications of night, by the casting forth of her mantle. In Spenser's

⁵⁰ Near the beginning of Book V the funeral games for Acestes are heralded by the 'equi Phaethontis' ('the horses of Phaethon') (105), who 'auroram... vehebant' ('carry the dawn') (105).

⁵¹ Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, ed. and trans. by William Race (London: Harvard University Press, 2008), III.1193, pp. 310-11.

⁵² Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 15.284. See *Variorum*, vol. 1, p. 229.

⁵³ Anthony Brian Taylor, 'The Faerie Queene Book I and Golding's translation of *Metamorphoses*', *Notes and Queries* 34 (1987), 197-99, 197.

⁵⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* [1592], XIV.36, in *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, ed. by J.B. Stearne (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 336.

portrait this garment is bluntly described as 'foule black pitchy' (20.3). Yet in Drayton's *Endimion and Phoebe* (1595), Night and her mantle are contrastingly regal:

Now black-browd'd Night plac'd in her chaire of Iet,
Sat wrapt in clouds within her Cabinet,
And with her dusky mantle over-spred
The path the Sunny Palfreyes us'd to tred...⁵⁵
(327-30)

This queenly figure is accompanied by 'Cynthia sitting in her Christall chayre' (331). The personifications of the night and the moon are followed by a description of 'the honniéd dewe' (333), which 'descended in soft showres / Drizled in Perle upon the tender flowers' (333-334); there is the faint suggestion, by proximity, that the spreading of night's mantle causes the dew, as if both dew and darkness exude from it. This conceit is explicitly articulated in the 'First Song' of the second book of William Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals* (1616) and its depiction 'all-drowsie *Night*':

in a Carre of Iet,
By steeds of Iron-gray (which mainly swet
Moist drops on all the world) drawne through the skie...⁵⁶

Poetic personifications of night from the late sixteenth century typically conceive of the world wrapped in night's mantle: Richard Barnfield's *Cynthia* (1595) begins with 'the Welkyn all inuelloped / With duskie Mantle of the sable Night' (1-2).⁵⁷ Sands Penven's *Ambitions Scourge* (1611) contains a striking variation on this image: Night 'in her pitchie

⁵⁵ Michael Drayton, 'Endimion and Phoebe' [1595], ed. J. William Hebel, *The Works of Michael Drayton*, (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 125-56.

⁵⁶ William Browne, *Britannia's Pastorals* [1613-1616], Book II [1616], facsimile ed. (Menston: The Scholar Press, 1969), II.1, p. 21.

⁵⁷ Richard Barnfield, 'Cynthia' (1-2), *Cynthia: With Certaine Sonnets, and the Legend of Cassandra* [1595], in *Richard Barnfield: Poems 1594-1598*, ed. by Edward Arber (Birmingham: The English Scholar's Library, 1883), pp. 47-52, p. 47.

mantle sits on hie / Naild with a thousand Starres vpon the Skie'.⁵⁸ Penven's image reifies the shadow which Comes was keen to demystify. Figured as night's cloak, darkness becomes an imposition on the earth, not a consequence of it: it is nailed on.

Comes points out an exaggeration which is also a distortion. The earth's shadow in its nothingness is converted by mythology into a substance with (often personal) agency. A similar reifying distortion has taken place in the colour of Night's clothes. It is obvious, at first sight, that Night's 'foule blacke pitchy mantle' is black because the night sky is also black. Yet the meanings of adjectives describing colours, and the conceptual divisions of colours themselves, are unstable across time. In *Black* (2009), a history of the colour in its material origins and artistic and symbolic meanings, Michel Pastoureau proposes that black has only recently regained its status as a full colour. Before the advent of the Newtonian spectrum, and certainly before the black-and-white page of the printed book, black was a colour like any other. Pastoureau also demonstrates the traces, in medieval Europe, of an ancient doubleness of black, expressed in the Latin division of *ater* (matte black) and *niger* (glossy black). This second, glossy black was a rare sight in everyday life until the middle of the fourteenth century, when dyers learnt 'how to produce bright, uniform blacks' using walnut root and later 'oak apple'.⁵⁹ This innovation reflected the importance of decorous black for mourning clothes, but also helped to establish the colour as a fashionable and courtly colour. Neither of these blacks, however, matches the black of nothingness, the 'shadow of the earth' which was understood as absence despite the tendency in meteorology towards the language of 'gross matter'. Spenser's mantle

⁵⁸ Sands Penven, *Ambitions Scourge: described in the morale fiction of Ixyon* (London, 1611), sig. A7 [p. 5].

⁵⁹ Michel Pastoureau, *Noir, histoire d'une couleur* [2008], trans. by Jody Gladding, *Black: The History of a Colour* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 86-92.

therefore represents a change of colour, if not a change in hue. The mantle in which Spenser clothes his Night corresponds obviously with *ater* more than *niger*; none of Chapman's taste for glossy black is on show. On the other hand, the process of personification, by which a diffusion of hue across space is compressed into a body, resembles the creation of a 'uniform black'. Both movements, from the black nothingness of night to the substantial blackness of Night's mantle, are ironic replacements of nothingness with substance: the 'foule' substance of dirt, in the case of *ater*, and the 'uniform' substance of luminous black, or of a body, in the case of *niger*.

Spenser's portrait of the native Irish in the *View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596) includes vivid, wary descriptions of the Irish 'mantle'. It would be easy, but irresponsible, to posit an intended intertextual allusion between the mantled native Irish in the colonial pamphlet, and the figure of personified Night in *The Faerie Queene*: Spenser did not intend most of his epic's readers to consult his pamphlet, whose availability in manuscript was restricted.⁶⁰ Yet the link made in the *View* between dark appearance and suspicious movement is strikingly similar to the equation made in *The Faerie Queene*. To the Irish, the mantle is 'all in all':

Lastlie for a Thefe it is so hansome as it maye seme it was first invented for him, ffor vnder it he Cane Glenlye Convaye anye fytt pillage that Comethe handesomelye in his waie, and when he goethe abroade in the night in freebotinge it is his beste and sureste friende for lyeinge, as they often doe two or three nightes together abroade to watche for their bootye with that they Cane pretelye shroude themselues... when all is done he Cane in his mantle passe through anye Towne or Companye, beinge Close hooded ouer his heade, as he vseth from knowledge of anie to whom he is endangered.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 334-340.

⁶¹ *View*, fols 29v-30, p. 101.

Under his mantle, the Irish thief can meld with the landscape, 'lyinge' unnoticed for several days. The mantle also permits threateningly free movement, as the thief passes anonymously through 'anye Towne or Companye', like Night invading the spot of daytime in which Sansfoy is wounded. Spenser depicts the Irish as a perverse people who will lurk awake at night, even as they blend into it; such a nation produces an archetypal bard for whom 'the daie was his nighte and the nighte his daie'.⁶² English readers of the Night episode who had spent time in Ireland might well have thought of Irish mantles. If we allow for the existence of allusion without authorial intention, the mantles in the *View* and *The Faerie Queene* certainly allude to one another.

Night's steeds, one means of diffusion along with her mantle, resemble those of Ovid not only in colour but also in movement. 'Each to each vnlich'

Did softly swim away, ne euer stamp,
Vnlesse she chaunst their stubborne mouths to twitch;
Then foming tarre, their bridles they would champ,
And trampling the fine element, would fiercely ramp.
(I.v.28.6-9)

Left alone, Night's horses move as 'softly' (6) and gradually as darkness in its literal, non-personified state. Yet there is a suggestion of a different kind of movement: if Night chances (7) to twitch the reins, the horses 'champ' (8), trample and 'ramp' (9) suddenly through the air. Spenser tends, as we shall see, to describe nightfall in terms of both gradation and suddenness. In this instance, the gradual movement of soft swimming is the default rhythm of the horses; their rushed and uneven 'trampling' (9) is provoked by the personal intervention of Night. Given the echoes of Golding's *Metamorphoses*, it seems

⁶² *View*, fol. 42v, p. 126.

fruitful to compare this description of movement with Ovid's tale of Phaethon and Phoebus (*Met.* II.1-400), in which the fire-breathing horses of the sun are similarly varied in motion. Driven by Phoebus, they 'patiuntur' ('suffer') (86) to move in controlled fashion; with the light and inexperienced Phaethon at the reins, however, the chariot 'succutiturque alte similisque est currus inani' ('was shaken highly as if the chariot was empty') (167). Ovid's horses of the sun are the exact opposites of Spenser's horses of the night: they require restraining, rather than spurring on. Yet in both cases, gradual natural processes such as the spread of sunlight and darkness are transformed, via personification, into movements that threaten suddenness. Controlling the horses of the sun takes the personal skill of Phoebus; the sun's steady course is contingent on the person of its driver.

Spenser's Night initially resigns herself to the laws of nature, which she describes in terms of gradation and flow. She is moved to pity by Duessa's description of Sansfoy, but asks

who can turne the streame of destinee,
Or breake the chayne of strong necessitee,
Which fast is tyde to *Ioues* eternall seat.
(25.4-6)

Night's philosophical concession is to the law of 'destinee'; in practice, however, coming to Duessa's aid would entail a violation not just of fate but also of the procession, or 'streame' (4), of the diurnal cycle. It is only when Duessa reveals herself as 'the daughter of Deceit and Shame' (26.9), part of the race stemming from Night herself, that the 'auncient Grandmother' changes her mind, exclaiming 'O welcome child' (27.8) and, in a brisk half-line sentence that rounds off the stanza, 'Lo now I goe with thee' (9). As in the

Metamorphoses, the gradual flow of nature is (potentially) interrupted once nature is understood as the operation of persons. For Spenser, such interruptions are enabled not only by personification, but also by Duessa's appeal to personal relations. Night's kinship ties permit a marked violation of natural laws:

And all the while she stood vpon the ground,
The wakefull dogs did neuer cease to bay,
As giuing warning of th'vnwonted sound,
With which her yron wheeles did them affray,
And her darke griesly looke them much dismay.
(30.1-5)

Situated explicitly 'vpon the ground', Night in her position is as 'vnwonted' as the sounds made by her chariot. The 'affray' (4) and 'dismay' of her 'dark griesly looke' (5) is the terror of night arriving suddenly during the day (the terror of the eclipse), but of seeing the essence of night rather than just her influence. Nature is wrenched out of joint by personification, as in the fantasy of Enobarbus in *Anthony and Cleopatra* where 'but for vacancy' the air 'had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too / And made a gap in nature' (II.2.227-9).

Personification and Mobility

The shift observed here, from the cyclical movement of night to the unpredictable movement of personified Night, does not require theoretical or technical vocabulary to be intelligible. Yet mobility studies helps to highlight the 'constellation' (to use Cresswell's term), in Night's movement, of abruptness and intention. Night's movement, when personified, adds human volition to a naturally cyclical motion; it becomes 'mobility'. Night is an early instance of an equation *The Faerie Queene* makes repeatedly

between human agency and the disruption of natural rhythms. In the last fifteen years, 'rhythm' has been an important theme in mobility studies and ecological philosophy. The rhythm of nature changes in real terms across historical time – the Anthropocene has begun – and perceptions and representations of nature's rhythms are of course historically and culturally inflected. In some ways, though, nature's perceived rhythms have consistent properties. Edmunds Bunkse's poetic and suggestive essay on the experience of the seasons characterises natural rhythm as a combination of predictability and mild variation. Nature mostly moves with a 'slow, rhythmic pulse' subject to adjustments that themselves follow a pattern: the ebb and flow of the tides; the gradually moving times of sunset and sunrise.⁶³ A few natural movements seem more random, such as wind or (in Bunkse's remembered Lithuanian childhood) the autumn fogs that arrive 'occasionally'.⁶⁴ Human patterns of movement could fluctuate both more and less than natural rhythm. In *Rhythmanalysis* (2004), Lefebvre postulates that 'the cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons'.⁶⁵ Conversely, linearity comes 'from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures'.⁶⁶ For Lefebvre, capitalism reveals its 'contempt for life' by being arrhythmic.⁶⁷ It would be rash to read Spenser's *Night* as a harbinger of capitalism. Yet her emphatically arrhythmic human mobility certainly disrupts nature's cyclical rhythm. Lefebvre imagines natural rhythm disrupted by human interference; Spenser presents a fiction of nature disrupting its own rhythms by being personified.

⁶³ Edmunds Bunkse, 'Softly Heaves the Glassy Sea: Nature's Rhythms in an Era of Displacement', in *Reanimating Places: A Geography of Rhythms*, ed. by Tom Mels (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 71-85, p. 80.

⁶⁴ Bunkse, p. 78.

⁶⁵ Lefebvre (2004), p. 8.

⁶⁶ Lefebvre (2004), p. 8.

⁶⁷ Lefebvre (2004), p. 51.

Escobedo's work on personification forges useful links with the *genius loci*, but also with the idea of voluntary movement. In a recent essay on personification in Milton, he observes that 'commentators have usually treated personification as a figure of volitional limitation or stasis'.⁶⁸ Such descriptions are narrow, he argues, because the restriction of action that often deprives personifications of their agency is also what 'potentially liberates them from ordinary narrative constraint': Despaire will despair whatever his relation to other figures in the fiction. Personifications 'thus represent... an agency radically divided between causality and freedom'.⁶⁹ In Escobedo's argument Milton emerges as anti-allegorical in his rejection not just of hard determinism but also the extreme freedom of choice described in modern thought as 'libertarian'. Yet the argument has far-reaching implications for the study of personifications in 'pro-allegory' Spenser. If personification 'radically disentangles the voluntary and involuntary, placing them on either side of a threshold that cannot be crossed', we could apply this dichotomy to the figure of Night.⁷⁰ In character and function, Night behaves compulsively: her hatred of light seems, like Despaire's despair, *sui generis*. Yet in her unnaturally fast movement across the sky, to a specific place on the 'ground', and subsequently into the underworld and the cave of Aesculapius, Spenser's Night does possess a radical freedom, of a spatial kind: as 'Lo now I goe with thee' demonstrates, personifications of naturally disparate phenomena are afforded potential and radical freedom of movement.

III. Night in Context

⁶⁸ Andrew Escobedo, 'Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels', *English Literary History* 75 (2008), 787-818, 787. Major examples of this tendency are 'Angus Fletcher's obsessed persona, Paul de Man's trope-freezing anthropomorphism, J. Hillis Miller's stone-derived Galatea, Gordon Teskey's captured material, or Stephen Knapp's fanatically self-absorbed agent'.

⁶⁹ Escobedo (2008), 788.

⁷⁰ Escobedo (2008), 805-6.

Anthropomorphism in the Renaissance epithalamium

Night often features in the Renaissance epithalamium, a form in which Spenser experimented. Creating the secretive conditions for sexual intimacy, night is rarely personified explicitly. Yet, as I will show in this brief section, the invocation of night or expression of its beauty reveals an inherent linguistic tendency, in utterances about night, towards anthropomorphism and sometimes personification.

Juliet's celebrated apostrophe gives night a flattering *prosopon*:

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging: such a wagoner
As Phaethon would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night
That runaway's eyes may wink and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen...
(III.ii.1-7)⁷¹

Phaethon's erratic, rushed movement becomes desirable, hastening the sun to its setting in the 'west' (3) and ushering in night 'immediately' (4). Friar Laurence's previous description of the dawn's arrival similarly emphasises its suddenness: as the morning 'smiles on the frowning night',

Flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels...
(ii.3)

⁷¹ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* [1597], ed. by G. Blakemore Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

Once more, the personification of darkness permits sudden or erratic movement, in both arrival and departure. Elsewhere in the play the personification of nature allows at least hypothetical bending of natural laws: 'two of the fairest stars in all the heaven', says Romeo of Juliet's eyes,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
(II.ii.16-17)

As in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, personification creates 'a gap in nature', if only at the level of conceit. Juliet's appeal to 'loving, black-brow'd night' (III.ii.20) to come quickly has been compared usefully to the genre of the epithalamium in the style of Catullus that became fashionable in English literary culture in the 1590s. Gary McCown argues that the 'runaway's eyes' which Juliet anticipates winking on Romeo (6), and which have puzzled commentators, are Cupid's, thus making Juliet's speech an epithalamion.⁷² The repeated imperatives ('gallop', 'bring', and especially 'come') achieve a sense of obsessed refrain reminiscent of, for example, Catullus 61:

flammeum cape, laetus huc
huc veni
(LXI.8-9)

'Put on the marriage veil, hither hither merrily come'.⁷³ Catullus' epithalmium makes heavy use of such anaphora, returning to the refrain of 'O Hymenaeae Hymen / O Hymen Hymenaeae' (4-5). Such repetition, to which Juliet's eleven mentions of 'night' is connected, helps to construct the 'magical quality and efficacy' McCown associates with

⁷² Gary McCown, "'Runawayes Eyes" and Juliet's Epithalamium', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 27 (1976), 150-176.

⁷³ Catullus, LXI, in *Catullus*, trans. by Francis Warre Cornish, ed. by G. P. Goold (1988), 2nd ed. (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 68-69.

the epithalamium. The essence of Catullus's and Juliet's appeal to divine personifications is, he argues, the 'optative mood' with its 'imposition of the will on the natural world, the future'.⁷⁴ The imposition of personal will on nature – the appeal to night to hurry up – is enhanced by *prosopopoeia*, which represents night as a mutable person open to persuasion. Catullus's speaker invokes Hymen, god of marriage, but Juliet's appeal is to night herself, 'thou sober-suited matron, all in black' (11). Night is represented as a 'matron', the *pronuba* or maid of honour at a Roman wedding. Improvising her own epithalamium, Juliet must create the accoutrements for her wedding from nothing but the absence of light. Her appeal to night is thus pathetically ironic, and this irony is achieved, as in Spenser's figure of Night, by personification.

Spenser's own 'Epithalamion' (1595) addresses Hymen, like Catullus, but also appeals like Juliet against the slowness of the light. 'How slowly do the houres theyr numbers spend?' (280) asks the speaker, encouraging the 'fayrest Planet' (282) of the sun to 'hast thee... to thy home' (282). Two stanzas later, the speaker welcomes night,

thou night so long expected
That long daies labour doest at last defray...
Spread thy broad wing ouer my loue and me,
That no man may vs see,
And in thy sable mantle vs enwrap...
(315-16, 319-21)⁷⁵

The appeal alludes, as commentators have noted, to the opening of Catullus 62, and perhaps to the 'Epithalame' of Du Bellay.⁷⁶ Night can be hastened, within the poem's

⁷⁴ McCown, p. 153.

⁷⁵ See *Shorter Poems*, pp. 436-451.

⁷⁶ 'Vesper adest, iuvenes, consurgite: Vesper Olympo / Exspectata diu vix tandem lumina tollit' (LXII.1-2). In Du Bellay's poem 'doulce nuit amoureuse / Le ciel a pris le soing' (301-2). See *Variorum*, vol. 2, p. 483.

conceit, because she is personified, possessing the 'mantle' familiar from *The Faerie Queene* and the numerous formulaic descriptions from contemporary poetry. The poem possesses the haunting obsessive quality McCown associates with the epithalamium, returning in each stanza to a command or a prohibition to 'sing', and for to answer and the 'echo ring'. Heather Dubrow observes of the poem that its numerological patterning establishes 'parallels between poetic, human and natural rhythms'.⁷⁷ This remark refers in particular to the speaker's plea for the Nymphs of Mulla to 'bynd vp the locks the which hang scatterd light' (62). Personification, which compounds this binding up with its gathering together of a diffuse thing in a bounded place, empowers nature both to work magically with what is 'human', and demonically against it. The speaker's appeal to Night to hurry her arrival is balanced in the poem by a plea to 'Silence' to maintain his orderly course, providing 'tymely sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe' (355), and to Juno to 'send vs... timely fruit' (404). Once personified (and, in this case, equated with the classical deities, appropriated in Renaissance literature as tropes), forces of nature can be persuaded to be both irregular and timely.

Allegoresis of Night-Time

Pursuing the terrified Florimell in Book III, Arthur is surprised by nightfall:

All suddeinly dim wox the dampish ayre,
And griesly shadows couered heauen bright,
That now with thousand starres was decked fayre,
Which when the Prince beheld, a lothfull sight,
And that perforce, for want of lenger light,
He mote surcrease his suit...
(III.iv.52.1-6)

⁷⁷ Heather Dubrow, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 36.

This time night is not personified, yet Spenser's description is not morally neutral: the darkness is composed of 'griesly shadows', 'a lothfull sight'. Despite the lack of a *prosopon* for night, the abruptness of its arrival – 'all suddeinly' – is emphasised to such an extent as to suggest a supernatural irregularity. The suddenness is articulated again in the next stanza, when Arthur's disorientation is compared to

a ship, whose Lodestar suddeinly
Couered with cloudes, her Pilott hath dismayd...
(53.3-4)

The repetition in consecutive stanzas of 'suddeinly' associates the night with clouds; night's arrival and departure are as random and contingent as those of drifting clouds. The fall of this non-personified but anthropomorphised, sudden night is followed by Arthur's frustrated invective against Night, now firmly personified again:

Night thou foule Mother of annoyaunce sad,
Sister of heauie death, and nourse of woe,
Which wast begot in heauen, but for thy bad
And brutish shape thrust downe to hell below...
(55.1-4)

As is implied in Juliet's epithalamium, Night is a 'nourse' (2), but in this case of a hellish kind. As in Book I, her genealogy is traced in a manner that acknowledges Hesiod. In terms of the personifying fiction, Night is inseparable from displacement, having been cast out from 'heauen' (3) where she was meant to be confined. Both the uncanny suddenness of night's fall and Arthur's tendency to personification open the non-allegorised night to allegorical interpretation. Allegoresis of night-time must contend, as this passage demonstrates, with an essential dissonance: something cyclical and morally neutral (the literal night) is enlisted as a metaphor for something aberrant and morally negative (in

this case, 'woe' (2), 'annoyance' (1) and 'horror' (9)). Arthur's question in the next stanza exemplifies the irony created by this distance between vehicle and tenor. 'What had th'eternall Maker need of thee' (56.1), Arthur asks? Understood within the allegorical world of Fairyland and its linked personifications, this question is a theological one: why should there be evil in the world? Yet the chosen metaphor of the night-time is something whose place in the world is obvious and necessary, even within early modern cosmology: there must be night so that the sun can move around the earth. These stanzas maintain a clever balance between personification and dis-personification in their portrayal of night, in part to alert the reader to this tension. At the canto's end, Arthur asks:

O when will day then turne to me againe,
And bring with him his long expected light?
(60.1-2)

It is tempting to answer 'in the morning'. The cloud-like suddenness of the night, and Arthur's personifying complaint, point the reader towards allegoresis which literal night-time, in its cyclical reasonableness, also resists.

Arthur's willingness to interpret the night metaphorically, as an image of a confusion foisted on him by personal malice, is linked to his sense of disorientation. Human dwelling, Norberg-Schulz suggests, requires a dual process of orientation in and identification with nature. A human being 'has to know *where* he is. But he also has to *identify* himself with the environment, that is, he has to know *how* he is [in] a certain place'.⁷⁸ 'Nordic man', as a quaint example, must 'be friend with ice, fog, and cold winds'.⁷⁹ Arthur, like the majority of *The Faerie Queene's* heroes, is a foreigner in Fairyland. Its

⁷⁸ Norberg-Schulz, p. 19.

⁷⁹ Norberg-Schulz, p. 19.

spatial vagueness and fluidity make 'orientation' difficult. Furthermore, the Ovidian infusion of personal agency into its landscape makes 'identification' harder. In night's case, personification does not accomplish the entwining of nature and culture that Borlik sees in Drayton's poetry; instead, it embodies nature's resistance to attempts at 'identification'.

The conceit of a metaphorical day and night that can be superimposed on the orderly diurnal structure is widespread and various in early modern and classical literature. Juliet calls Romeo her 'day in night' (17); at the beginning of the play Romeo's father states that his son 'makes himself an artificial night' (130) in his chamber. 'Tis fresh morning with me', Ferdinand tells Miranda in *The Tempest*, 'when you are by at night' (III.1.33-34). These metaphorical days and nights, in Shakespeare's case often reflecting joy and melancholy respectively, are obviously more unpredictable and movable than their literal counterparts: to Juliet it will be day whenever Romeo turns up, regardless of the hour. In *The Shadow of Night* (1594), George Chapman subverts the common (and Spenserian) denigration of night as an aberrant imposition on day. Only in the 'Cantos of Mutabilitie', where Night has 'couered her vncomely face / With a blacke veile' (VII.vii.44.4-5), does Spenser's personification begin to achieve the attractiveness, and suggest the inspired, stylish melancholy, of Chapman's. In Chapman's neo-Platonic poem it is day, rather than night, whose dispersal in the universe was unwelcome:

And then from forth our sundrie roofes of rest,
All sortes of men, to sorted taskes address,
Spreade this inferiour element...⁸⁰
(205-8)

⁸⁰ George Chapman, *The Shadow of Night* [1595], ed. Phyllis B. Bartlett, *The Poems of George Chapman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 19-45.

Chapman's argument is that night is preferable, because it agrees with the metaphorical state in which human minds remain in a sensory and postlapsarian world. His proximity to the conceit of late sixteenth century poetry, with its days in night and *vice versa*, is demonstrated in the regularity of oxymoron in the poem:

Mens faces glitter, and their hearts are blacke,
But thou (great Mistresse of heauens gloomie racke)
Art blacke in face, and glitterst in thy heart.
(225-7)

Night is both outer and inner, literal and metaphorical. Yet its metaphorical variety has a constancy totally at odds with the steadily moving 'absence of the light'. Despite drawing such different conclusions about which state is preferable, Spenser and Chapman are equally alive to this irony.

Night in the Eclogue

Spenser's most rhythmical images of night can be found in *The Shepherds Calender* (1579). The movement of this analysis from the epic of the 1590s to the pastoral eclogues of the 1570s might seem as perverse as the mobility of Night. Yet, as in the Renaissance epithalamium, night in Spenser's Virgilian pastoral displays a tendency towards anthropomorphism, and a corresponding lack of rhythmic harmony with human culture.

Several of the 'Aeglogues' of the *Calender* end with the onset of night. In 'Januarye', Colin Clout drives his flock 'homeward' (77) as soon as 'the frosty Night / Her mantle black through heauen gan ouerhaile' (74-75). 'But let us homeward', says Hobbinol at the end

of 'Aprill', 'for night draweth on' (160); he also announces that 'now is time... homeward to goe' (117) at the end of 'June'.⁸¹ The concluding image of oncoming night alludes straightforwardly to the *Eclogues*. At the end of the first poem in Virgil's sequence, Tityrus tells Meliboeus he could have stayed the night, what with the 'mitia poma, / casteneae molles et pressi copia lactis' (80-81) he has at home.⁸²

et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant
maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.
(I.82-83)

'Even now the housetops yonder are smoking and longer shadows fall from the mountain heights'. Virgil's grammar equivocates the roofs of the country houses with the 'umbrae'; both are subject of verbs of motion. 'Fumant' and 'cadunt' also seem acoustic versions of one another: the 'u' in both words is long (echoing through the sentence in 'procul', 'culmina', 'umbrae') and swaps its place for 'a'. This image of harmony brings to mind another expression in the *Eclogues* of evening hospitality:

Hic focus et taedae pingues, hic plurimus ignis
semper et adsidua postes fuligine nigri;
hic tantum Boreae curamus frigora, quantum
aut numerum lupus aut torrentia flumina ripas.⁸³
(VII.49-52)

The cosy interior has its own darkness, the black 'taedae' and soot-stained 'doorposts'; but these are the generators and marks of 'plurimus ignis', 'blazing' light. The nights of culture and nature combine harmoniously, certainly, but the relationship is inverse

⁸¹ See *Shorter Poems*, pp. 23-157.

⁸² 'Ripe apples, mealy chestnuts and a wealth of pressed cheeses'. Virgil, *Eclogues*, in *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. by G.P. Goold (London: Harvard University Press, 1999-2000), vol. 1, pp. 30-31.

⁸³ 'With me you will find a hearth and pitchy brands; with me a good fire ever blazing and doorposts black with many a layer of soot. Here we care as much for the chill blasts of Boreas as the wolf for the number of sheep or rushing torrents for their banks'. *Eclogues*, p. 71.

rather than symmetrical. In these lines and the quotation from the first Eclogue, the houses light up when the world goes dark. Moreover, night carries the threat of danger however peacefully it comes: Thyrsis gamefully disdains the cold wind, but the strange similes for this disdain, of wolves stealing sheep and torrential rivers, betray his anxiety. The same unease haunts Spenser's eclogues. Night comes at the end of 'June' with 'stealing steppes'; 'stealing' describes her sneaking mobility, but might also echo Virgilian danger for the flock.

Virgil's *Eclogues* depict a world of cycles threatened by disruptive political change. At the beginning of the ninth poem Moeris complains to Lycidas about the possible seizure of his farm. Displacement is introduced in the first lines of the whole sequence, as Meliboeus says 'dulcia linquimus arva' ('we are leaving our sweet fields') (I.3). Political upheaval in the wake of Julius Caesar's assassination exists in tension with natural rhythms; as in the *Metamorphoses*, Roman political order is juxtaposed with the natural world rather than being dovetailed with it. Nature's rhythms are steady, but variable: Damon imagines a heifer searching so desperately for her mate that, sinking down at the green edge of a stream, 'nec serae meminit decedere nocti' ('she [does not think] to withdraw before night's late hour') (88).⁸⁴ Respect for and harmony with the rhythms of nature can be forgotten ('nec... meminit'). Similar states of emotional extremity are experienced as arrhythmia: to Thyrsis in love, the day ('haec lux') can seem longer than a year ('longior anno') (VII.43). Political change and unrequited love disrupt the natural rhythm of the pastoral landscape. Virgil's subtle probing of the ways nature and culture can seem 'out

⁸⁴ *Eclogues*, pp. 80-81.

of phase' is a direct influence, Richard McCabe argues, on the *Shepherds Calender*.⁸⁵ Yet poetry too can have this disruptive effect. The singing contests of the *Eclogues* are haunted by the myth of poetry's original miraculous efficacy, the myth of Orpheus as magician of the natural world:

Pastorum Musam Damonis et Alphisiboei,
immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuvenca
certantis, quorum stupefactor carmine lynces,
et mutata susos requierunt flumina cursus.⁸⁶
(VIII.1-4)

Again, the natural world forgets ('immemor') to move rhythmically when culture – this time as song, rather than political upheaval – intrudes on it. The *Eclogues* look back to the world in which poets possessed Orphean manipulative control over nature: 'nunc oblita mihi tot carmina' (IX.53), says Moeris.⁸⁷ Yet poetry might in more subtle ways effect a change on the landscape, halting or pushing against its rhythms. The sixth Eclogue ends, in established fashion, with the onset of night. Silenus sings

...donec ovis stabulis numerumque referre
iussit et invito processit Vesper Olympo.
(VI.85-86)

'Until Vesper gave the word to fold the flocks and tell their tale, as he set forth over an unwilling sky'.⁸⁸ The evening is personified, conventionally, as Vesper. The consequence of this personification, though, is the anthropomorphism of the sky as 'invito' ('unwilling'). Virgil does not claim to be able to hold back the night, like Orpheus arresting

⁸⁵ Richard McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity: Time and Providence in The Faerie Queene* (Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, 1989), p. 23.

⁸⁶ 'The pastoral Muse of Damon and Alphisiboeus, at whose rivalry the heifer marvelled and forgot to graze, at whose song lynxes stood spellbound, and rivers were changed and stayed their current'. *Eclogues*, p. 72-73.

⁸⁷ 'Now I have forgotten all my songs'. *Eclogues*, pp. 88-89.

⁸⁸ *Eclogues*, pp. 66-67.

the flow of rivers or mobilising forests. Yet poetic figures like personification have, at the level of representation, a similar effect: they subordinate natural rhythms to the designs of poetry.

Night in Elizabethan England and Ireland

Virgil's images of night are not always personifications, but they do show a tendency to anthropomorphise night by defining it in terms of its attributes. This drift in the meaning of night, from Comes's 'shadow of the earth' to whatever that shadow permits or enables, is an example of metalepsis; personification, whereby a passively black shadow becomes an agent of active blackness, is a specific kind of this metaleptic concretising of night. Descriptions of night in various non-literary Elizabethan texts, some of which are briefly surveyed here, share this tendency towards metalepsis.

As I argued above, the suddenness of night in *The Faerie Queene* is a sign of night's personal agency. Arthur experiences night as sudden confusion, inflicted on him with deliberate malice. In sixteenth-century popular meteorology, the suddenness of night was similarly understood as personal. Thomas Hill's *A Contemplation of Mysteries* (1574) recounts a story from the 'Dukedom of Brunswike', in which 'a certaine husbandman' saw 'a great companie of horsemen' riding towards his village. The horsemen divided into two armies, and were about to fight, when 'a marueylous darknesse hastily came in the place'.⁸⁹ The darkness, which informs the villagers that the horsemen are 'none other, than a deullish illusion', is 'marueylous' because it comes arrhythmically; descending

⁸⁹ Thomas Hill, *A Contemplation of Mysteries* (London, 1574), pp. 11-12.

only on the village, it seems personally motivated, aiding the villagers by eclipsing the horsemen. It comes not only quickly, therefore, but 'hastily'. The same irregularity of this external night could apply to inner darkness. A melancholic disposition was caused by an excess of black bile in the body; descriptions of the humour sometimes portray it as a kind of internal night. Timothy Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) describes the 'melancholick humour' (characterised as both 'iuiice' and 'excrement') as 'internall darknes'.⁹⁰ The irregularity of the movement Hill describes is analogous to the imbalance of Bright's humour.

In his social history of the night and its associations in early modern Europe, Craig Koslovsky demonstrates that night was readily blamed for the nefarious activities it permitted. Koslovsky quotes the French historian Alain Cabantous's study of murder statistics in England and France. They show that 'homicides were not more numerous at night; nor was theft'; yet such 'crimes were classified differently and punished more severely if committed at night'.⁹¹ Similarly, as Matthew Beaumont shows in his history of nightwalking in London, the phrase 'common nightwalker' carried connotations of prostitution or petty crime.⁹² In Thomas Dekker's *Lanthorne and Candle-Light* (1609), whose final chapter narrates the 'second Night-walke' of watchman who first appeared in *The Belman of London* (1608), the onset of night is told with Spenserian artifice: night has 'put on the vizard that Hell lends her (called darkenes to leap into her Coach)'.⁹³ On her cue, various disreputable figures emerge from their 'dennes': London's bankrupts,

⁹⁰ Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London, 1586), pp. 102-103.

⁹¹ Craig Koslovsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 9.

⁹² Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London: Verso, 2016), *passim*.

⁹³ Thomas Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candle-Light* [1609], in *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. by Alexander B. Grosart (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 170-303, p. 295.

out of sight of the creditors, roam freely holding forth 'in praise of Night, for bestowing vpon them so excellent a cloake'.⁹⁴ Night's 'vizard' has become the bankrupts' 'cloake', just as night's meaning is transferred onto the activity 'she' sponsors. Dekker's list of the 'bottomes of mischiefe... wound vpon the blacke Spindels of the Night' portrays Elizabethan London with gritty realism, but ventures into allegory. At the opening of a door, '*Lust with Prodigality* were heard to stand closely kissing'.⁹⁵ Night's tendency towards reification or embodiment pushes the vices she engenders in the same direction.

Even when describing night in the realist terms of its urban discontents, Elizabethan writers display this tendency towards metaleptic reification and anthropomorphism. This is obviously related to the widespread deployment of night for metaphorical and symbolic use. Koslovsky argues that the sixteenth century, with its proliferation of Christian sects and offshoots forced to operate in secrecy, saw an increase in the use of night as metaphor. He identifies 'four kinds of night – the ascetic, apophatic, mystic, and epistemological – evoked in early modern culture'.⁹⁶ In John's Gospel, the Pharisee Nicodemus comes to Christ by night. For the Anglican Edward Reynolds, Bishop of Norwich in 1632, the story signified that Christians should not 'censure... places or times', that faith at night was cowardly but legitimate; in contrast, for central European Anabaptists who began worshipping at night in the 1530s, Nicodemus was a crucial biblical endorsement.⁹⁷ Night was a positive metaphor not only for radical protestants forced into secrecy: the Carmelite reformer St John of the Cross continually articulated 'a mystic union with God likened to the night'.⁹⁸ Spenser's writing suggests markedly

⁹⁴ Dekker (1609), p. 296.

⁹⁵ Dekker (1609), p. 300.

⁹⁶ Koslovsky, p. 63.

⁹⁷ Koslovsky, p. 48.

⁹⁸ Koslovsky, p. 61.

different associations of night, with danger, malice and confusion. Koslovsky argues that at the turn of the seventeenth century 'the night was becoming the focus of one's free time' as well as an increasingly common time for artisan labour; in Spenser's Ireland, however, with its few large urban centres, this shift was less noticeable, and counteracted by the association of night with rebellious activity.⁹⁹

Night, as Koslovsky shows, could function in the Renaissance as a metaphor for various things; what is more, night's metaphorical meanings could be diametrically opposed. What this reveals, to a sensibility steeped in the realist skepticism of modern science, is that night was profoundly neutral. By being, as Comes says, nothing but the shadow of the earth, night becomes the suitable vehicle for any intended meaning. At the beginning of this chapter I sketched the question as to whether personifications of night were interpreted with night's extreme original neutrality in mind – whether, that is, they seemed ironic. The frequency with which descriptions of night tend to the concrete (sometimes by metalepsis), in poetic and realist modes, suggests that a personification like Spenser's in *The Faerie Queene* was not distinctive in its distortion of the normal, rhythmical night. If this is true, it suggests a view of the natural world which attributed agency to natural phenomena as a norm, rather than as an exception. 'According to pre-Newtonian physics', Borlik comments insightfully:

[S]moke rises because it is light and an apple falls because it is heavy. Objects, in other words, are not banded about by external forces. Instead, they possess an innate tendency for motion that amounts to a quasi-agency.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ 'For them', says Irenius of the 'outlawes... a-borderinge to the English Pale' (his list includes the Cavanaughs, Keatings and Kellys), 'the winter... is the fittest time for spoilinge and robbinge because the nightes are then... longest and darkest'. *View*, fol. 58r, pp. 154-155.

¹⁰⁰ Borlik, p. 13.

IV. Conclusion

In his close reading of Henry Vaughan's 'The Night', Geoffrey Hill notices the frequency of the poem's rhyming of 'night' with 'light'. The event the poem describes – the coming of Nicodemus the Pharisee to Jesus by night (John 3:1-3) – loads the night with so much symbolic significance that it comes to mean something other than the absence of day; light and night exist as they do in a rhyming pair, in a 'conjunction which exacerbates the sense of divorce'.¹⁰¹ In Vaughan's poem, night becomes not light's absence, but its ironic double. Spenser's personification of the night, I have argued in this chapter, achieves similar effects. Night is certainly ironic: a natural phenomenon defined by absence becomes a person of emphasised materiality, whose body is 'griesly' like that of her descendant Duessa. The night of nature moves with inevitability and moral neutrality; Spenser's personified Night, on the other hand, acts according to her own volition, and is motivated by the personal ties on kinship. In particular, this chapter has argued, the movement of personified Night is at ironic variance with the fluctuating movement of the earth's shadow. Using the conceptual framework and terminology of mobility studies, we can say personification exchanges natural *motion* for human *mobility*, a kind of movement in which physical dynamics (errancy, suddenness, abruptness, arrhythmia) and motivations (human volition based on cultural kinship) are bound up with one another. In ecocritical terms, this shift from motion to mobility reflects not a natural world in which culture has found its place, but a natural world expressing a personal agency which

¹⁰¹ Geoffrey Hill, 'A Pharisee to Pharisees: Reflections on Vaughan's "The Night"', *Journal of the English Association* 38 (1989), 97-113, 104-105. We could compare the crisp antithesis achieved by Vaughan's rhyme with the insinuation of dark night on a white horse in 'The Cantos of Mutabilitie'.

makes representatives of human culture – the heroes of *The Faerie Queene*, questing in a disorientating or foreign land – feel alienated.

The irony of Spenser's figure of Night was probably harder to perceive in the sixteenth century than from a modern perspective. Primarily, this is because the dominant Renaissance view of nature was not sharply at odds with the notion of a world 'inhabited', to return to Curtius's phrase, by personal agency. (As we shall see in the last chapter, early modern English culture betrays in various places its sense that buildings were imbued with the personhood of their inhabitants.) Yet more specifically, the irony of Spenser's figure is also made less distinctive by the tendency of night in non-literary Elizabethan descriptions to become concrete or anthropomorphised. In discourses as diverse as Christian mysticism and the urban exploration of Dekker's pamphlets, night becomes a metaphor, or the victim of metalepsis. The discourse of humoral melancholy established the presence of a material blackness that behaved, in its problematic excess, exactly like Spenser's rogue Night. The night was universally available, it seems, as a trope. Perhaps the distinctiveness of Spenser's allegorical personage is the way it literalises a trope. Readers of Dekker's pamphlet, in which bankrupts sing songs thanking Night for her custom, readily understand his language as figurative. Night is not literally a woman; crucially, this knowledge is also available to the contemporary London bankrupts represented singing in the text. Yet it is unavailable to Arthur, and to the figures who inhabit *The Faerie Queene* at the level of narrative story: for them, night is the spreading mantle of an old, malicious woman; its literal and figurative forms cannot be distinguished. Personification, as James Paxson argues, shows 'a sort of forgetting of the

textual status belonging to animate metaphors'.¹⁰² What Night shows, finally, is the resistance of an allegorical world like Fairyland to the orienteering efforts of those inside it, and thus the gulf between the figures in the text, who self-orientate, and the readers of the text, who interpret.

This is one of the first pieces of criticism to approach Spenser through the prism of mobility studies; to my knowledge, it is the first consideration of his figure of Night in detail, and of Spenserian allegory in terms of mobility. As this young but dynamic branch of interdisciplinary thinking grows, and entwines itself more with the humanities, it will surely continue to suggest instructive ways of thinking about *The Faerie Queene*, a text which throngs with myriad 'constellations of mobility'. Even before allegory is invoked, movement is an essential concept in the study of epic romance. It has become commonplace for scholars of early modern literature to associate epic with linear movement, and romance with vagrancy or errancy.¹⁰³ My own 'rhythmanalysis' of Spenser's figure of Night has drawn a distinction between gradual, rhythmic movement on the one hand, and sudden arrhythmic movement on the other. The former is associated with nature, and the latter with persons. This distinction could be usefully compared with the older one between linearity and vagrancy. Yet it is not obvious how the terms are to be associated. At first sight, Night's sudden mobility, with its defiance of the law of natural rhythm, is like the determined linearity of Aeneas' journey to Latium. Both figures intend to impose their will, in the form of forward mobility, on a resistant natural world. However, we might also associate Night's sudden and arrhythmic

¹⁰² James Paxson, 'Queering *Piers Plowman*: The Copula(tion)s of Figures in Medieval Allegory', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29 (1999), 21-29, 24.

¹⁰³ See Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 2-10.

movement with the contingent formlessness of Odysseus' erroneous journey around the ocean, the original paradigm of romance vagrancy. Aeneas and Odysseus, of course, are fully human protagonists, whereas Night is a malicious allegorical personage: comparisons in terms of mobility reveal a deeper disparity. Perhaps it is only in *Paradise Lost* that an English poet creates a figure who moves with the malice of Spenser's Night, but who, in imposing his will against God's rhythms, moves also with the heroic linearity of epic.

Chapter 3 Bodies of Water

I. Personifying Rivers

River to Body

The marriage of the Thames and Medway in the penultimate canto of Book IV represents the ‘culmination’ of rivers in *The Faerie Queene*.¹ Rivers are one of the most enduring motifs of Spenser’s writing. In the marriage canto, as elsewhere in his poetry, he personifies them. The rivers become figures, some skimmed over and endowed merely with names, but others with described bodies, like ‘th’auuncient Thame’ (IV.xi.24.5), father of the bridegroom:

With head all hoary, and his beard all gray,
Deawed with siluer drops, that trickled downe alway.
(25.8-9)

Spenser commits, here, to imagining what happens when a river turns into a body. The river’s venerable age is expressed in the ‘head all hoary’ (8), which also suggests the colour of water under an overcast sky; the trickling of ‘siluer drops’ (9) from the beard preserves the idea of flowing water, but also suggests a delta, the separation of the river into particular strands as it moves away from its ‘head’ (8). Figures like these tend not to appear in contemporary discussions of personification, but are typical of the examples of *prosopopoeia* provided by early modern rhetoricians. Like the figure of Night, they are

¹ Wyman Herendeen, *From Landscape to Literature: The River and the Myth of Geography* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1986), p. 228.

not the material embodiment of an abstract concept, but the parcelling up in a discrete place of a diffuse geographical phenomenon.

As I showed in the previous chapter, the personification of night as an embodied figure in a particular place increases both her malevolence and her freedom from the regular, flowing pattern of motion to which her dis-personified equivalent is bound. Here in Book IV, personification has in some ways the opposite effect. Alastair Fowler's examination of numerological symbolism in the sequence of rivers concludes that no part is accidental, while subsequent critics have argued in more general terms that the pageant represents 'the making of order' from the water-like flux of contingency.² The guests at the house of Proteus are divided into meaningful groups, with the demigods descended from Neptune and Amphitrite (11-16) preceding the rivers and nymphs springing from the marriage of Ocean and Tethys (18-53). Despite the organisation, the speaker admits the risk of the catalogue bursting its banks and becoming chaos:

But what doe I their names seeke to reherse,
Which all the world haue with their issue fild?
How can they all in this so narrow verse
Contayned be, and in small compasse hild?
(17.1-4)

Personification, in this canto, is one way of achieving the daunting task of keeping the world's rivers 'contayned' (4). The first and most famous child of Ocean and Tethys is the 'fertile Nile, which creatures new doth frame' (20.3). Generously creative, this figure keeps his place in the procession and occupies only a single line. In Book I, the repellent

² Alastair Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time* (London: Routledge, 1964), p. 191. Gordon Braden, 'riverrun: An Epic Catalogue in *The Faerie Queene*', *English Literary Renaissance* 5 (1975), 25-48, 48.

multiplicity of life-forms in Error's vomit was compared to the 'ten thousand kindes of creatures' (I.i.21.7) found in the 'huge heapes of mudd' (6) left by the Nile's tide.³ Personification preserves the creative fertility of the great river, while gathering its disparate extent into a comprehensibly single place. The mud is cleared up. By being personified, the rivers can be organised in 'narrow verse'. The specific difference between the two images of the Nile demonstrates the general disparity between geographical personification in Books I and IV. Whereas night's embodiment as Night made her less trustworthy and predictable, the Nile's transformation from a river to a figure allows it to be contained. Personification of rivers makes them amenable not only to 'narrow verse', but also to memory. Spenser prefaces the pageant with an appeal to Clio, Muse of history and 'the nursling of Dame *Memorie*' (10.2). The cataloguing poet does not necessarily remember 'the names of all those floods' (6) by personifying them; personification might, however, simplify the problem of narrating in entirety 'all their hid abodes' (9). The continuous extent of a geographical river, whose bounds are often difficult to specify, is reduced to the more manageable circuit of a body.

River-Gods: Sixteenth-Century Rome and Drayton

Spenser's personifications have many analogues in classical and contemporary European verse. But having emphasised so far the usefulness of taking the personifications of *The Faerie Queene* literally, or seriously, as bodies, I want first to make the comparison with material embodiments of rivers. Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw the

³ Book I's image of the Nile is not strictly free of personification: the river is 'old father *Nilus*' (1). Yet the Nile here is undoubtedly imagined as a river, with 'waues' (3) and a 'spring' (5) and a 'lowly dale' (4) through which to pass. At the pageant in Book IV, however, it has become a person.

revival of the classical 'river-god', the sculptural figure of a personified river, and in some cases its literal exhumation. Two colossal Roman statues of the Nile and Tiber in reclining human form were unearthed in Rome in 1512 and 1513 respectively, and brought by Julius II to the statue court of the Vatican Belvedere. Three other ancient *colossi* of river-gods had survived in Rome, and were subjected to interest, restoration and repointing in the sixteenth century. The 'Marforio' statue, interpreted from the twelfth century onwards as a statue of Mars until Andrea Fulvio restored its identity as the Tiber (or a tributary) in 1527, stood in the Forum until 1588; in the following decade it was moved twice and restored by Bescapé. For company, 'Marforio' had a pair of *colossi* representing the Tigris and the Nile, moved to the Palazzo dei Senatori in 1552, where they were framed by a staircase designed by Michelangelo. These giant figures share several characteristics. They all recline on their sides, in a pose that perhaps preserves traces of the Hellenistic 'loved relative' banqueting in the afterlife.⁴ They are old, bearded men, often holding a cornucopia and a rudder. Like the Marforio, the statue of the Tigris was re-interpreted in the sixteenth century: the animal on which the figure leans, perhaps a crocodile or a 'badly damaged tiger', was restored between 1565-8 as 'the Tiber's Wolf suckling Romulus and Remus'.⁵ Four decades after one of the *colossi* became a river again, another became, specifically, the Roman river. As Claudia Lazzaro observes, this nationalising tendency in the restoration of river-gods ripples through sixteenth-century Europe, where river personifications have central roles in 'festivities and triumphal entries, political propaganda'.⁶

⁴ See Ruth Michael Gais, 'Some Problems of River-God Iconography', *American Journal of Archaeology* 82 (1978), 355-370.

⁵ *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, ed. by Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 102.

⁶ Claudia Lazzaro, 'River gods: personifying nature in sixteenth-century Italy', *Renaissance Studies* 25 (2011), 70-94, 70.

Imagining or re-imagining the Roman river-gods as national symbols, sixteenth-century Rome also developed the complexities and ironies of the transformation they embody, from a river into a body. 'Marforio' and the 'Pasquino' played the roles of Rome's 'speaking statues': verses condemning public vices and promoting civil behaviour were displayed next to them. Antoine Lafréry's engraving of 'Marforio' (1550) annotates the statue with an Italian poem describing the reclining figure in enigmatic, riddling terms.⁷ The figure, who 'fu in grande, in sin ch'era piccino' ('was as big as this as he was little') and 'non mangiò mai, né bevve' ('never eats nor drinks') and yet has enjoyed 'mille... Anni' of life, is finally revealed as 'Marfuori'. The playful paradoxes suggest awareness not only of the river-god's capacity to speak both for and to a national people, or at least a city with a political identity, but also of the ironic distortions effected in the act of personifying a river. The transfiguration of rivers into bodies entails more of a distortion than the personification of a city: a river, constituted by its continuous flow, must become something that always occupies a particular point in imagined space; but a city already possesses this particularity of location. Sculptural personifications of rivers may be moved around, but remain themselves uncannily immobile. In Pieter van Aelst's *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, a tapestry after Raphael, a female personification of Florence 'seems to emerge from the reclining Arno', embodied beneath her.⁸ Personifying the river (Arno) is the first, major distortion, which permits the secondary and easier act of imagining the city (Florence) as a person. In some ways, Spenser's personification of the Thames, recalling the Roman river-gods with his venerable beard, is less uncanny

⁷ Antoine Lafréry, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* [1573-1577]. See *The Speculum Romanae Digital Collection*: speculum.lib.uchicago.edu. Accessed 13 January, 2019.

⁸ Lazzaro, 79.

than the Roman *colossi* in the distortion it effects; like the rivers in their natural form, but unlike sculptures, Spenser's Thames can move. We might see it, on the other hand, as a greater distortion than, for example, 'Marforio'. Spenser's rivers move, as I will show, like persons rather than rivers. Their movement highlights the change that has taken place.

The clearest evidence of how keenly Spenser's self-fashioning as the poet of rivers was felt is Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (1612-22). Drayton's chorographic epic is organised along the lines of the rivers of England and Wales. *Poly-Olbion's* rivers are so many and various that to do them justice would require a separate study. The recent *Poly-Olbion Project* (2013-16) has reinvigorated consideration of Drayton's poetic chorography, but this thesis will consider Drayton in detail from a more oblique angle. Several of the rivers of *Poly-Olbion* originate from caves; Chapter 4, which considers the cave as an allegorical location, shows the depth of this association between caves and the expulsion or effluence of liquid. Yet the publication of *Poly-Olbion* also represents a significant moment in the history of British river-god (or river-figure) iconography. There are very few visual personifications, sculptural or otherwise, of British rivers in the sixteenth century. In Anton van der Wyngaerde's engravings of London, such as his 'Panorama' (1543), the river is sparsely drawn, rendered in most detail where it surrounds passing traffic; in that regard, it is indistinguishable from the city's arterial streets. Old Father Thames, meanwhile, is most commonly associated with satirical cartoons from the nineteenth century, in which the river becomes a monstrously 'dirty fellow' looming up from the deep to spread filth and disease, or a 'weary' and dishevelled old man trying to clean the

river.⁹ A century earlier, however, Canaletto had helped to popularise a tradition of portraying the Thames as ‘a river of civilisation... graceful and harmonious’.¹⁰ A poetic expression of this conception of the river appears in Pope’s ‘Windsor Forest’ (1711), where ‘Old Father Thames’ (328) emerges from an ‘oozy bed’ (327). Like Spenser’s figure of the Thames, Pope’s personification has ‘tresses drop’d with dewes’ (329); his ‘shining horns’ (330) recall the cornucopiae of the Roman river-gods.

Pope’s models for this ‘graceful’ river deity are certainly poetic. But they also resemble the personifications of rivers that rear up from the flat land in William Hole’s illustrative engravings for the Songs of *Poly-Olbion*. Hole’s maps, often beautifully coloured later in the seventeenth century, personify mountains, valleys, woods, islands and, most of all, rivers. Their figures are richly endowed with human characteristics: his female personifications allude to classical iconography of nymphs, while his male figures allude clearly to the Roman river-god. Yet they do not replace the literal, flowing rivers from which they were transfigured; instead, they emerge from them as the Roman *colossi* do from their watery clothing, and as van Aelst’s Florence does from the personified Arno. The combination of personification, which by inserting classical figures into England makes it a poetic place, and literal rivers, which make England visible, perhaps exemplifies Drayton’s double commitment to poetry and history, his sense that the two could and should intertwine.¹¹ The combination also functions as a gloss on Spenser’s

⁹ Clare Horrocks, ‘The Personification of “Father Thames”’: Reconsidering the Role of the Victorian Periodical in the “Verbal and Visual Campaign” for Public Health Reform, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 36 (2003), 2-19, 4-8.

¹⁰ Peter Ackroyd, *Thames: Sacred River* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2007), p. 311.

¹¹ See Bart van Es, ‘Michael Drayton, Literary History and Historians in Verse’, *The Review of English Studies* 59 (2008), 255-269.

pageant, where, as I will argue, rivers move fluidly between being human bodies, and bodies of water.

II. Spenser's Pageant

Order and Discreteness

In the Vatican Belvedere, the Tiber and the Nile are arranged to face off against each other, as suggestive opposites. Personification allows for the creation of new order. Similarly, Spenser's rivers-made-bodies are more manageable, because as bodies they do not flow (or 'fall', as sixteenth-century writers often put it) into the merging chaos of the sea.¹² In Spenser's version, the rivers congregate at the house of Proteus, god of sea-change; they do not lose their discrete identities or their names. Spenser supplies etymological explanations for each name, especially those of the sea-nymphs; this creates the impression not of flow towards the chaos of the sea, but in the contrary direction, back to first principles. The sea-nymphs include, for example, '[w]hite hand *Eunica*, proud *Dynamene*, / Ioyous *Thalia*, goodly *Amphitrite*' (49.1-2). The density of particularising adjectives in the paratactic sequence, each alive to Greek etymologies, achieves pointed discrimination between the nymphs, all of whom live in the all-absorbing sea:

And seeming still to smile, *Glauconome*,
And she that hight of many heastes *Polynome*.
(50.8-9)

¹² William Harrison, *The Description of England* [1587], ed. by Georges Edelen, *The Description of England: the Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life* (1968), 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), I.XI, pp. 418-422.

Spenser's supplied etymology for Polynome makes her the embodiment of polysemy: she possesses many ('*Poly*') names ('*nome*'). The irony of portraying the sea – where separate categories collapse – as a set of discrete entities, is intensified here, as the name of the many-named nymph is clarified, traced to its etymological source. The succession of etymological explanations, Lauren Silberman argues, creates a contrapuntal 'intellectual move "ad fontes" against fluvial movement to the sea'.¹³ Admittedly, this elegant observation of contraflow only carries weight if the 'ad fontes' metaphor is entertained. Yet it is certainly true that Spenser's separation of the sea into discrete nymphs acts as a stay, if not a contrapuntal check, on the merging of bodies that characterises a non-personified ocean. It allows the nymphs both to embody the sea and also, by maintaining separation from it, become its antithetical governing spirit, able 'to rule his tides, and surges to vprere' (52.3). The sea-nymphs are 'daughters of old *Nereus*' (1), and therefore related to the classical, English and Irish rivers that precede them in the pageant. In their discreteness, they make the ocean seem like a set of rivers, adjacent but separated.

The ocean itself is included too, personified as Oceanus. He represents an originary force, the great river from which the world is supposed to have emerged. Personification compounds a paradox already present in the idea of Oceanus – a body of water possessing, like all bodies, boundaries, which nevertheless was in ancient time the world in its entirety. As David Quint puts it, Oceanus 'is both the source and destination of the rivers of the earth'.¹⁴ Thus Spenser adds to his combination of particularity and universality in the personifications of the pageant a similar temporal paradox: assembled

¹³ Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 131.

¹⁴ David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 157.

in the cave of Proteus the rivers seem to be located at once at their beginning and their end. If, as Quint argues, Book IV seeks to articulate a 'counterpart for the holiness' of Book I 'within a world of contingency and time', then the simultaneity of destination and origin, beginning and end, in the personified figure of Oceanus, symbolises that 'counterpart'. Quint overstates his belief that between its 1590 and 1596 texts *The Faerie Queene* becomes more 'secular' (this movement happens at least in part between Books I and II, with their contrasting main emphases on Christian and classical virtues). But he is surely right to argue that the river pageant is interested in how virtuousness might be compatible with contingency and flux. Personification, it seems, enables precisely that compatibility. *London's Tempe* (1619), Thomas Dekker's pageant celebrating James Campbell, Mayor of London, features Oceanus, who like Spenser's Thames has a 'knotted, long, carelessly spread' beard, boasting of his ability to unite the world's rivers in one place:

I could (to swell my trayne) Becon the Rhine.
(But the wilde Boare has tusked vp his vine.)
I could swift Volga Call, whose curld head lies
On seauen rich pillowes, (But, in merchandizes
The Russian, him imployes) – I could to this
Call Ganges, Nilus, long haired Euphrates...
(89-94)¹⁵

Yet, Oceanus concedes, it would be unwise, because they would 'weepe' (97) at the sight of London's architectural innovation ('new Troys high towers' (98)). Perhaps Oceanus is bluffing, and Europe's great rivers are really absent because they are busy being implicated in history as it unfolds, even commercial history in the case of the Volga and its 'merchandizes'. What Oceanus boasts of, Spenser as poet accomplishes in the river

¹⁵ Thomas Dekker, *London's Tempe* [1619], ed. by Friedson Bowers, *Thomas Dekker: Dramatic Works*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), vol. 4, pp. 101-113.

pageant. He brings together rivers separated by space, but also by time: the rivers of ancient myth and those of unfolding history are combined.

However, the setting of the wedding pageant in the house of Proteus, a cave at the bottom of the sea, might be seen to suggest that the ordered discreteness created by personification is only superficial. Jonathan Goldberg, who borrows Spenser's exclamation at the cataloguer's 'endlesse worke' (xii.1.1) for the title of his analysis of *The Faerie Queene's* deferral of closure, interprets the setting in Proteus' house, and the god's absence, as a sign of his mystified, obfuscated presence. Comparing Proteus to Elizabeth, a figure of both constant presence and absence in *The Faerie Queene*, Goldberg describes 'parallel absences, two instances that exemplify a principle of power, that what is behind the form stays hidden'.¹⁶ Goldberg's interpretation does not consider sufficiently that, unlike the queen, Proteus has already made himself present in the text, in Book III where he takes Florimell prisoner (III.viii). His absence from the wedding, then, implies not the hidden presence of ideological power, but the effacing of his influence. Silberman offers a more plausible interpretation:

The mythic project of binding Proteus carries the traditional interpretation that knowledge is the reward for somehow containing the forces of fluidity and change. Spenser both binds and unbinds Proteus. Proteus is reified as a figure *in* the text, only to be diffused as a figure *of* the text when the House of Proteus becomes the setting for the marriage of rivers.¹⁷

Unlike Goldberg's, this interpretation accounts for Proteus's previous appearance. His trajectory from being a figure 'in' the text (III.viii) to one whose essence is 'diffused'

¹⁶ Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. 144.

¹⁷ Silberman (1995), p. 126.

across an episode (IV.xi) is analogous to the movement from a chaotic and ‘numberlesse’ (xii.1.9) multitude of non-personified rivers to the order of a pageant of figures. Personification does not bind Proteus, the spirit of flux and change, totally; it harnesses him so that he is ‘contayned’, and thus creates ordered flow. Personification is a solution to the ‘endlesse’ *copia* of the world’s rivers.

It is significant, in light of the history of river-catalogues in English, that this solution is not available to the historian or antiquarian. Nestled among the list of sea-nymphs are two that seem to be of Spenser’s invention:

Fairest *Pherusa*, *Phao* lilly white,
Wondred *Agæue*, *Poris*, and *Nesæa*...
(49.5-6)

As nymphs, the figures of Phao and Poris have no precedent before these lines: ‘two Nereids that I think I never met elsewhere’, remarks Jortin.¹⁸ Spenser includes Phao and Poris in the list without highlighting their novelty. As well as rounding the number of sea-nymphs to fifty, the new names exemplify the flexibility of poetry, which can finesse and adorn the world even as it catalogues pre-existing figures. No such freedom exists in the genres of traditional narrative history, or innovative sixteenth-century chorography, where a catalogue of rivers is truly ‘an endlesse worke’, inevitably compromised both by omission and inaccuracy. The practical impossibility of a complete prose catalogue haunts Harrison’s *Description of Britaine*, the first part of Holinshed’s *Chronicles* (1587), which devotes six chapters to a survey of the country’s rivers. Harrison complains bitterly of a lack of assistance in the task:

¹⁸ See Braden, 33.

And euen so it happeneth in this my tractation of waters, of whose heads, courses, length, bredth, depth of chanell (for burden) ebs, flowings, and falles, I had thought to haue made a perfect description vnder the report also of an imagined course taken by them all. But now for want of instruction, which hath beene large lie promised, & slacklie performed... the full discourse of the whole is vtterlie cut off, and in steed of the same a mangled rehearsall of the residue set downe...¹⁹

Harrison's employment of river metaphors to describe his task (a complete description has been 'cut off'; only a 'residue' will be achieved) shows that he is alive, like Spenser, to the availability of rivers as metaphors for the writing process. Yet the incompleteness permitted to Spenser, as a poet fashioning fictions by selection and modification, leaves Harrison's chorography 'mangled'. Poris and Phao serve to remind readers that the catalogue is poetic, not antiquarian. Free to turn rivers into bodies, the poet can also omit and include at will. The rhetorical question quoted above, where the speaker wonders how 'all' (17.3) can be 'in small compasse hild' (4), is answered here; 'let them record them', reads the next line 'that are better skild, / And know the monuments of passed times' (5-6). Antiquarians like Harrison attempting to compile 'the full discourse of the whole', are working, these lines suggest, in the wrong genre.

In distinguishing itself from chorography, the pageant of Book IV also marks a divergence from Spenser's earlier writing. Spenser's correspondence with Gabriel Harvey in the late 1570s, published in 1580, mentions *Epithalamion Thamesis*, a poem either abandoned or lost, which like the eleventh canto of Book IV attempted to portray the marriage of the Thames. In the third of the *Three proper and wittie, familiar Letters* (1580) exchanged and published by Spenser and Harvey, the poet refers to the *Epithalamion* as a work in progress:

¹⁹ Harrison, *Description of Britaine*, in Raphael Holinshed, *The first and second volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1587), I.XI, p. 45.

For in setting forth the marriage of the Thames: I shewe his first beginning, and offspring, and all the Countrey, that he passeth thorough, and also describe all the Riuers throughout Englande, whyche came to this Wedding, and their right names, and right passage, etc. A worke beleue me, of much labour, wherein notwithstanding Master *Holinshed* hath muche furthered and aduantaged me, who therein hath bestowed singular paines, in searching oute their first heades, and sources: and also in tracing, and dogging oute all their Courses, til they fall into the Sea.²⁰

The language of 'labour' – Spenser is grateful to 'Master Holinshed' for his 'paines' in 'dogging oute' the survey of the country's rivers – indicates that the river-poem Spenser worked on in 1580 also seemed to him an 'endlesse worke'. Yet the similarities between *Epithalamion Thamesis* and IV.ix are superficial. One critical tradition maintained that the pageant in *The Faerie Queene* is an embedding of the previous poem with only light alteration. Yet as Charles Osgood argues, 'canto 11 [*sic*] owes but a small portion of its material to the *Epithalamion Thamesis*', whose description in the letter to Harvey makes no mention of any rivers outside England.²¹ In commending Holinshed, the Spenser of 1580 aligns his earlier poem with the antiquarian project: it is chorography in verse. By including both mythical and freshly imagined figures in his later pageant, the older poet underlines the divergence of his work from that of the antiquarians. Spenser remains indebted to Holinshed and especially Camden, whom he explicitly commends in *The Ruines of Time* (1591).²² By 1596, though, his project distinguishes itself from an exhaustive antiquarian catalogue: rather than the 'labour' of accounting for all of England's rivers, Spenser undertakes the 'endlesse worke' of selection. His task is to choose from the whole world, England included, its most significant rivers.

²⁰ *Variorum*, vol. 9, 'Letter III', pp. 15-17, p. 17.

²¹ *Variorum*, vol. 4, pp. 241-242. See also Charles G. Osgood, *Spenser's English Rivers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920), pp. 106-8.

²² 'The Ruines of Time', 169-175. See *Shorter Poems*, pp. 166-189.

Spenser's conceived project seems both freer and more ambitious than Camden's. He expresses this difference itself with a spatial metaphor. Camden's *Britannia* contains, in its account of Oxfordshire, a poem in Latin describing the marriage of the Tame and Isis. *De Connubio Tamae et Isis*, of which 'Camden is almost certainly the author', expands gradually in the later editions of the *Britannia*, but remains anonymous and fragmentary.²³ With its flourish and explicit authorial presence, Spenser's pageant seems to overgo Camden; it's appropriate, therefore, that the wedding it describes takes place further down the river, 'at a point where the river is already so wide that Camden refers to it as an estuary'.²⁴ The river who was for Camden a final union is for Spenser merely the bridegroom; chorography, similarly, becomes a distinguished means to the end of poetry. Spenser's poetic representation of rivers attempts to overgo his predecessors, in style and scale but also in the geography of its subject matter.

Alongside Camden's *De Connubio*, Spenser's pageant has two other precedents in sixteenth-century poetry from England. The first is Leland's *Cygnea Cantio*, first published in 1545. The native spring of English river-poetry, *Cygnea Cantio* has clear and explicit influence on Camden. Leland narrates a speaking swan's journey down the Thames; he surveys the structures built on or by the river, the bridges, palaces and mills designed to improve the river by turning it to cultural and economic use, even as they rely on it for their existence. Anthropomorphism, often verging on implicit personification, aligns both the river with both its adorning structures and the speaking

²³ Jack B. Oruch, 'Spenser, Camden, and the Poetic Marriages of Rivers', *Studies in Philology* 64 (1967), 606-624, 609.

²⁴ Braden, 38.

swan, in a common vocabulary of personhood. Leland's swan is tempted by a Phaedria-like offer from the bank to rest in the grove of the Muses, but resolves to continue:

Sed me Limodomus cupit uidere.
Fiet: nam cupio uidere & illam.²⁵
(270-271)

'But Limehouse summoned me onward, desiring / To see me. So be it: for I desired to see it, too'.²⁶ 'Domus', which is feminine, means that the gendering of Limehouse is not as pointed as it would be in English; nevertheless, if this excellent translation had chosen 'her' for 'illam' it would have amplified the symmetry constructed by the lines' syntax between an anthropomorphised creature, the swan, and an anthropomorphised part of London, the Limehouse. Both have similar desires; both feel curiosity. In this instance, anthropomorphism and personification do not displace or marginalise – as I will argue they can – so much as establish a fanciful equivalence between the river and the civilisation imposed on it. Converting all things into personal agencies, Leland replaces a default antithesis of nature and culture with a nature that seems willingly complicit in culture's plans for it.

Williams Vallans's *A Tale of Two Swannes* (1590) alludes obviously to Leland with its choice of protagonists, to Camden with its chorographic structure, and perhaps to Spenser in its tone. In Vallans's tale, Venus with Mercury's help procures two swans from the river Cayster, and slides them into the 'siluer streame' (18) of the river Lee in

²⁵ John Leland, *Kykneion Asma, Cygnea Cantio* (London, 1545), p. 78.

²⁶ Leland, *Cygnea Cantio*, trans. by S.V. Lemley, 271-272: www.samuellemley.com/cygnea/text.html, 271-272. Accessed February 21, 2019.

Hertfordshire. The swans breed, populating the rivers of England; towards the end of their life, they embark on a royal progress, upstream:

A quite contrarie course they doe finde out:
And though it were some labour gainst the strame,
To trace this Riuer, feeding christall *Lee*:
Yet vvorthily they holde their first resolve...
(90-3)

Mirroring a dynamic I have been observing in Spenser's river verse, Vallans links the movement of the swans against the river's flow with desire to go back to first principles, to trace knowledge to its root. Vallans, however, varies from Spenser in his poetic priorities. *A Tale of Two Swannes* uses England's rivers as a conceit to organise a set of reflections on decay and promise in English history. The swans pass 'hard by the park of *Ware / Where Fanshawe buildes for his succeeding race*' (21). '*Ware / where*' makes the verse seem to stumble over itself, and the image is of two similar but distinguished processes, both evoked by 'race'. The river runs its 'race' spatially, flowing through and demarcating England's land, but as an entity is almost eternal in time. Thomas Fanshawe's newly built house, Ware Park, on the other hand, is fixed in space but, as the Spenserian melancholic description of 'Verolane' (87) a few lines earlier reminds us, is subject to potential ruin, or being *raced* (indeed, it no longer stands).²⁷ Rivers serve as a humbling foil for both the palaces on their banks and the creatures that represent and rule them: the swans are nearing the end of their life. Spenser, however, integrates rivers and their environments much more closely. In his version, Vallans's swans are replaced by the personified rivers themselves; similarly, as I will show, Spenser seeks to integrate rather than separate English and Irish rivers from the culture on their banks.

²⁷ OED, 'race', v1, 2.

III. Effects of Mobility

Freedom of Movement: Unification and 'Ancient Plasticity'

Turning rivers into bodies allows for their harmonious organisation. In this respect they contrast with Night, whose personification in Book I increased her capacity to rebel against natural law. However, the freedom of movement which belongs to Night, and which Escobedo calls 'radical', belongs also, in subtler ways, to Spenser's personified rivers. The consequences of such freedom differ from those articulated in the previous chapter, yet once again they have to do with mobility. The strangeness of portraying geographical phenomena whose course is steady and gradual, as bodies whose movement is contingent has been neglected by critics who have focused only on the pageant's ordered character.²⁸ Though the freedom of the personified rivers is not the freedom of Night to interfere evilly with natural laws, I will argue here that, in a more morally neutral form, the same 'freedom of movement' is a central characteristic of the pageant's figures. In transforming rivers into bodies, personification creates two related 'mobility effects'. The first is the unification in a single place of rivers dispersed around the earth, or even the British Isles. Focusing on the journey of (some of) Ireland's rivers to the wedding, I will argue that the human mobility afforded to Ireland's landscape excludes the presence, and the mobility, of Ireland's inhabitants. Spenser's pageant styles itself as a great image of concord, but also participates in an Elizabethan colonial project

²⁸ 'Processions and catalogues, like the passages of chronicle they resemble, are an extreme of narrative parataxis, observing no principle but sequence and order'. Alan MacColl, 'The Temple of Venus, the Wedding of the Thames and the Medway, and the End of The Faerie Queene, Book IV', *Review of English Studies* 40 (1989), 26-47, 47.

of keeping Ireland divided from its inhabitants. The second effect is the suggestion of what might be called 'ancient plasticity': the uncanny sense that, in merging, England's rivers are cutting through its land for the first time, as pioneers. The presence of Irish rivers at the pageant has not been studied with mobility as a focus; the second effect of 'ancient plasticity' has not been articulated at any length.

Unification: Ireland's Rivers

Unlike Harrison the antiquarian, Spenser the poet can contain the world's rivers by making meaningful selections. *Prosopopoeia*, as I have demonstrated, is the poetic trope which permits famous rivers to be classifiable and intelligible, and to enter the sea without losing their discrete identities. Yet personifying rivers also enables, within an allegorical world like Fairyland, a strange alteration of the landscape. Rivers which, before personification, live on other sides of the world from one another, move as embodied persons to the same place. In the world outside the text, the Nile and the Severn are only related in that they flow into oceans that touch each other; in Spenser's Fairyland, at least on the level of narrative story, they rub shoulders in the same place. Most of the rivers attending the wedding come from the British Isles. To early modern readers, the gathering of rivers from these islands into the same place might have seemed just as strange, if not more so, as the juxtaposition of rivers which had tangible existence, (like the Severn) with those that only lived in discourse (like the Nile). Most provocatively, Spenser imagines Ireland's rivers coming to the same place as the rivers flowing from England and Wales:

Ne thence the Irishe Riuers absent were,
Sith no lesse famous then the rest they bee,

And ioyne in neighbourhood of kingdome nere,
Why should they not likewise in loue agree,
And ioy likewise this solemne day to see?
They saw it all, and present were in place;
Though I them all according their degree,
Cannot recount, nor tell their hidden race,
Nor read the saluage cuntreis, thorough which they pace.
(IV.xi.40)

Among the Irish rivers catalogued are the three known now as the Three Sisters ('the gentle Shure' (43.1), 'the stubborne Newre' (3) and 'the goodly Barow' (5)), imagined by Spenser as three sons of the Giant Blomius.²⁹ They are able to 'ioyne in one' (8) as they do in geographical reality, at Waterford Harbour. Yet personification enables all the Irish rivers listed to 'ioyne in one', with each other and with the rivers of England. Geographical relations of contiguity are replaced, via personification, with relations of similarity, a fictive kinship which prompts movement across the islands. The normal, cyclical motion of rivers is exchanged for the mobility of persons.

Modern critical treatments of Spenser's list of Irish rivers tend to read it ironically, emphasising its allusions to the violence of the recent past. Of the rhetorical question considered above, as to why Irish rivers should not pay tribute to the Thames, Richard McCabe observes that 'the pageant itself supplies a series of possible answers', and asserts that under its poetic veneer 'lurk the colonial anxieties of the planter'.³⁰ The catalogue certainly opens and closes on notes of uncertainty: after posing its rhetorical question, Spenser declares that he 'cannot recount' all the Irish rivers, 'nor read the saluage cuntreis, thorough which they pace' (40.8-9). The last of the eighteen rivers

²⁹ In modern Irish English, the 'Suir', 'Nore' and 'Barrow'. In modern Irish, *An tSiúr*, *An Fheoir* and *An Bhearú*.

³⁰ Richard McCabe, *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 200-202.

described is the 'balefull Oure', Spenser's name for the Avonbeg, 'late staine with English blood' (44.5). Its staining refers to the Irish defeat of Lord Deputy Arthur Grey's forces at the Battle of Glenmalure in 1580.

Bart van Es, who shows Spenser's debt in this passage to the new genre of chorography, reads such ominous allusions back into Spenser's refusal to describe the Irish landscape between the rivers. He makes the sharp point that Ireland's conflicted recent past is uncomfortably conspicuous in works such as Camden's *Britannia* (1586) because it fills a gap left by the absence of myths or histories known to English antiquarians or their classical authorities. Given this prominence of conflict in chorography and living memory, argues van Es, 'the more knowing Elizabethan reader' of the list of Irish rivers 'would surely pause to question why these streams had, in reality, proved so reluctant to pay tribute to the Thames'.³¹ If Book IV of *The Faerie Queene* is read as a verse chorography of Ireland and a history of the recent past, albeit a skewed and sanitised one, then van Es is surely right. Yet perhaps the river pageant is a literary fantasy of the future, a fiction of union in which the specific memory of Glenmalure is ceasing, as it might already have been in 1596, with the Nine Years War in Munster well underway, to be 'late'. I would argue that the more we imagine the rivers as embodied personifications, the less the text reads like a thinly veiled chorography of the recent past, and more like a fiction of an imagined, idealised future. The river pageant does not so much allude to recent violence, as finesse it away. As Joan Fitzpatrick puts it, 'Spenser envisages a peaceful celebration

³¹ Bart van Es, *Spenser's Forms of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 63.

which includes Ireland's waterways but from which Ireland itself... is excluded'.³² Personification enables a strange liberation of 'Ireland's waterways' from 'Ireland itself'.

Mapping and Naming

Spenser's representation of Ireland's rivers is more harmonious and sanitised, I have been arguing, than recent criticism suggests. This is not to say that the pageant exempts itself from the English projects of imperialism and colonialism. On the contrary, it is deeply implicated in imperial and colonial work. The Irish antiquarian Patrick Weston Joyce first noticed that Spenser's rivers come in geographical order: from the Boyne, for example, the catalogue progresses northwest.³³ This represents the first attempt in English verse to describe Ireland's topography with a spatial logic, albeit an impressionistic and sometimes inaccurate one; we ought therefore to consider it in the general context of early modern England's mapping of Ireland. In Elizabeth's reign mapping of Ireland was 'generally... for government purposes', carried out under the auspices of the state for military and political ends.³⁴ Many maps or 'plots' of Ireland during Elizabeth's rule show evidence of examination or possession by Lord Burghley.³⁵ Most of these depict a certain part of the island, a province or a town, often the location of recent skirmishes or sieges. Around the turn of the seventeenth-century maps of Ireland in its entirety, such as Baptista Boazio's in 1598 or John Norden's in around 1608,

³² Joan Fitzpatrick, 'Marrying Waterways: Politicizing and Gendering the Landscape in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* River-Marriage Canto', in *Archipelagic Identities: Literature and Identity in the Atlantic Archipelago, 1550-1800*, ed. by Philip Schwyzer and Simon Meador (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 85.

³³ P.W. Joyce, 'Spenser's Irish Rivers' [1866], in *The Wonders of Ireland* (London: Lond &c, 1911), pp. 85-6.

³⁴ J.H. Andrews, 'John Norden's Maps of Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 100 (2000), 159-206, 162.

³⁵ R. Dunlop, 'Sixteenth-Century Maps of Ireland', *The English Historical Review* 20 (1905), 309-337.

became more common as the zones of military crisis became co-extensive with the whole island. Spenser's catalogue of rivers seeks at the same time to parse Ireland and to conceive of it as a whole. On the one hand, only eighteen of hundreds of rivers are present; on the other, the attempt to order them geographically suggests a panoramic survey of the whole kingdom. The catalogue draws a pointed contrast with the portrayal of Ireland in contemporary cartography. Whereas government maps depict a contested place with a military focus and for a private audience, Spenser's self-avowedly laureate verse seeks to make Ireland poetic and 'famous' to a reading public. In the 1590s, these mutually exclusive ways of accounting for Ireland spatially – cartographically, or with poetic figures – showed signs of moving closer together. Around 1590 human figures begin to appear commonly on maps published in England, such as Jodocus Hondius's *Typus Angliae* (1590). However, English maps do not feature personified rivers until Hole's engravings for *Poly-Olbion*, a text that itself stays within the confines of England and Wales. Only one sixteenth-century English map of Ireland depicts human figures. In Goghe's *Hibernia* (1567) male figures stand in the sketchily drawn northwest corner (contemporary County Donegal); these, though, are 'notorious gallowglasses, who keep the terrain beyond English reach'.³⁶

Spenser's mapping of Ireland in poetic terms, rather than those of contemporary cartography, participates in contemporary antiquarianism's ongoing attempt at greater cultural acquaintance with Ireland. (At the same time, Spenser's catalogue departs from antiquarianism by conspicuously excluding Scotland and its rivers; Ireland is being

³⁶ Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 118. Surveying early Stuart maps of Ireland, drawn with more available sources and surveying technology, Klein comments that Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611) achieves for the first time 'a spatial harmony devoid of conflict'. Klein, p. 124. Spenser's pageant foreshadows, in poetry, Speed's cartographic harmony.

fashioned as a *locus* willing to be subjugated specifically by the part of the archipelago that fosters English culture.) Regarding England, the work of Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Camden's *Britannia* (1586 in its Latin edition), as well as partial chorographies such as Lambarde's *Perambulation of Kent* (1576) is both to organise the native country and to deepen collective self-consciousness. When such works turn to Ireland, however, their project changes. Ireland, an imperial subject that needs to be fully colonised, is by analogy an unknown that needs to be known. As van Es argues, ignorance of Irish local history might force antiquarian writers to highlight the violent conflict of the recent past. Another way to fill the gap of Ireland was with the testimony of classical geographers, especially Ptolemy. In the description of Ireland which concludes his *Britannia*, Camden addresses the river in Kerry known now as the Lee:

[A] litle river now namelesse (which the situation in some sort implieth to be DUR in Ptolomee) cutteth through the midst of this running by *Trayley* a small town, laid now in maner desolate.³⁷

In the absence of a known history, the river is endowed only with the best fit from Ptolemy's description. However, this re-inscription of Ireland with classical names is enabled, in reciprocal fashion, by the erasure of its own history, both Irish Gaelic and Anglo-Norman. The map of the British Isles by William Hole which was used as the frontispiece for the 1607 edition of the *Britannia* features the east coast of Ireland, bereft of all names except Dublin's, but with its rivers preserved. The English imperial fiction of Ireland as a 'namelesse' terrain permits its renaming in English. Spenser's names for the rivers he mentions often arise from spurious conjectured etymologies: the 'balefull *Oure*'

³⁷ William Camden, *Britannia* [1586], trans. by Philemon Holland [London, 1610], *Britain, or a Chorographicall description of the most flourishing kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1637), II, 'Description of Ireland', pp. 55-148, p. 75.

is really the Avonbeg at Glenmalure, the syllable 'mal-' read as the Latin stem meaning 'bad', as if the river's name anticipates the battle it witnessed in 1580. As McCabe argues, 'colonial cartography erases the Irish rivers' proper names' – their names in Irish – 'even when, as here, it purports to "translate" them'.³⁸ Spenser's depiction of Ireland is determinedly poetic and fantastical, more so than critics have implied. Yet this poeticising of place, erasing as it does the place's native history, nevertheless carries out colonial work.

How might personification itself also participate in the colonial project? There are several ways. Post-colonial theory has elaborated in detail the various strategies by which a colonial power 'others' its subject, yet there are surprisingly few investigations of colonial personifications. Richard Helgerson's classic analysis of Saxton's English county maps in terms of nationhood argues that by displacing the person of the monarch from the land, Saxton endows England with a voice of its own. One recent study of the political deployment of personification for attitude formation notes the representation 'of collectives... as monolithic actors characterized [*sic*] by malevolent intent' as a typical othering strategy.³⁹ Spenser's pageant does something more unusual: Ireland's continuous land is personified as a collective of separate individuals. His writing of Ireland both in *The Faerie Queene* and the *View* insists simultaneously on its political unity with the kingdom of England, and on the rigid separation of English from Irish culture. Perhaps personification is an expression of this simultaneous unity and difference: afforded human mobility, the rivers can be in one place, but personification ensures that

³⁸ McCabe (2002), p. 201.

³⁹ Kathleen M. McGraw and Thomas Dolan, 'Personifying the State: Consequences for Attitude Formation', *Political Psychology* 28 (2007), 299-327, 317.

they retain discrete forms even as they merge. The pageant's personified rivers are followed by a procession of Ovidian river nymphs; this overwrites Ireland's rivers with the classical tradition of the river-deity, further erasing its own history. The division of Ireland into parts also arguably obscures and degrades the whole: in Book V of *The Faerie Queene* the figure Irena, Spenser's only other personification of Ireland, is an imprisoned woman. The river personifications of Book IV, however, are gendered male, as they are in most sculptural and pictorial representations in the Italian and later European Renaissance.⁴⁰ Ireland becomes a set of energetic young lads, pages at a wedding, who in the absence of a leader seem to require rule from elsewhere.

Most pertinently, personification widens the separation of Ireland's land from Ireland. As we have seen, the re-inscription of classical names onto Ireland in antiquarian writing strips the island of its own history; similarly, personification displaces Ireland's people from its land by substituting for them its own fashioned figures. Here again the poetic portrayals of England and Ireland diverge. Surveying the Thames before its marriage with the Isis at Oxford, Spenser turns the university city into an 'auncient heauy' burden that the personified river carries on his 'bowed backe' (IV.xi.26.3,2). Personification encourages a convergence of nature and the culture it supports. Yet Oxford remains populated by its scholars, the 'many learned impes, that shoote abroad, / And with their braunches spred all Britany' (5-6). The catalogue of Irish rivers mentions several Irish towns: the Clonmell 'adornes rich Waterford' (43.2) and the Lee 'encloseth Corke' (44.4) – but their inhabitants are conspicuously absent. Spenser's fictional figures cover the rigorous exclusion, from his pageant, of Irish people. The Irish are 'cast', as Andrew

⁴⁰ See Lazzaro, 70-94.

Hadfield puts it, 'in the role of the intractable "otherness" which must be removed, of voices which must be silenced', for unity with England to be achieved.⁴¹ Spenser's pageant achieves that unity, at a cost whose signs are finessed away by the text more than they are alluded to. The process brilliantly identified by Helgerson is almost exactly reversed: fictional persons are grafted onto a foreign landscape in order to mute that landscape's people, and conceal the erasure of their movement. It is an example of Spenser's continuous attempt to keep the Irish people separated from the land they inhabit.⁴²

Spatial and Temporal Harmony

The pageant's spatial harmony, which comes at a human cost, has a temporal equivalent. On numerous occasions in *The Faerie Queene* Spenser combines reference to contemporary or ongoing events with the language of unchanging or 'timeless' myth. When Timias is wounded in Book III, for example, the 'hearbes' (III.v.32.3) for which Belpheobe searches include something strikingly contemporary:

There, whether yt diuine *Tobacco* were,
Or *Panachæa*, or *Polygony*,
Shee fownd, and brought it to her patient deare...
(III.v.32.6-8)

⁴¹ Andrew Hadfield, *Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Saluage Soyl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 108.

⁴² Throughout the *View* the figure of Irenius insists that the habits and customs of the native Irish are best explained not by Ireland's natural environment, but by their own racial character, their suspicious Scythian tendency to rove. See R.A. Butlin, 'Land and People, c.1600', in *A New History of Ireland: Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691*, ed. by T.W. Moody and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 142-168.

'Tobacco', introduced to England only a few years before the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, is combined with 'Panachaea', the herb with which Venus cures Aeneas.⁴³ Spenser's syntax implies similarity between the herbs (which come in a paratactic sequence), claiming that it is unimportant 'whether' it was tobacco or the classical herbs which cured Timias. This disguises significant differences: whereas '*Panachaea*' and '*Polygony*' belong to the world of myth, tobacco, as an import from commercial expeditions to Virginia, was part of unfolding contemporary history. Poetry, these lines argue, has the power to confer on contemporary and contingent activity (Raleigh's expedition) the timelessness and fame of myth (the *Aeneid*). David Quint argues that such enmeshments of contemporaneity with myth become thematic in the 1596 text, which performs a 'substitution of the historically specific for the eternal and sacramental as a source of allegorical meaning – a process by which history itself becomes sacramental'.⁴⁴

Indeed, the river pageant includes a similar enmeshment. The second stanza of 'famous riuers' (IV.xi.20.1) lists several 'immortall' (21.1) rivers, familiar to European minds either by sight, like the 'swift Rhene' (4), or by repute, like the 'Euphrates' (1) or 'Ooraxes'. However, the stanza then devotes a whole line to the 'rich Oronachy, though but knowen late' (7). This river, described in Raleigh's *Description of Guiana* (1596), contemporaneous with the 1596 text, is woven into the list of 'immortall' rivers. Gordon Braden describes the pageant as a 'river catalogue' in the tradition of Homer's enumeration of ships (*Iliad* II).⁴⁵ Yet Spenser's catalogue, unlike Homer's, attempts to synthesise the names of distant memory with those of the unfolding present. Once again, this poetic synthesis implies a

⁴³ *Aeneid*, XII.419.

⁴⁴ Quint (1983), p. 154.

⁴⁵ Braden, 26.

lack of actual incorporation in the real world: in order to become as famous as the Euphrates or Rhine, the Oroonoko must be fully conquered and exploited by England. The use of fictional harmony to conceal actual disunity which I have observed in the portrayal of Irish rivers, and which I have argued turns on the spatial freedom of personifications, meets in this stanza its temporal equivalent: history and myth are fused together in the stanza, to conceal the fact that such fusion has not yet happened in the world.

Ancient Plasticity

The radical freedom of movement afforded to rivers by personification has many consequences; turning away from spatial unification, I will now outline the creation of another, strange effect. In this section, I'll argue that the pageant re-presents a confluence, which without personification would be inevitable, as contingent. James Broaddus argues that the pageant's 'cycle moves with the inexorability of the moving waters of a river'.⁴⁶ Spenser's verse in this canto certainly flows, as has been established.⁴⁷ Yet to associate the marriage of the Thames and Medway with 'inexorability' is to pay insufficient attention to personification. If, as the canto asks us, we imagine the Thames and Medway as bodies, their coming together is not an inevitability of geographical physics but a willed action. (This is not to suggest that most early modern women married free of constraint or pressure.) Personification, in the river canto, colours the natural world with variable intention: the rivers merge because they want to. Confluence turns into personal marriage elsewhere in Spenser's poetry. In *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595), the

⁴⁶ James W. Broaddus, *Spenser's Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of The Faerie Queene* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), p. 50.

⁴⁷ "The suggestion of colour and form, which Spenser can give so perfectly when he pleases, is largely absent, and there is substituted the sound of the flowing of those many waters'. M. Pauline Parker, *The Allegory of The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 199.

personified river Bregog merges 'secretly' (145) – in an ancient time, when the landscape possessed Ovidian personal agency – with the river inhabited by Mulla, precisely *against* the prevailing pressures of Mulla's father, Mole, who wishes her to marry 'the neighbour flood / Which *Allo* hight' (122-3).⁴⁸ Bregog resists this seemingly inexorable match with a 'deuise' (137), the 'deceitfull traine' (118) of a secret marriage 'wrought' (119) by merging with Mulla underground. Spenser's use of the language of (artistic) intention to describe Bregog highlights the extent to which he imagines the river as a person. The Thames and the Medway do not receive this degree of detailed human characterisation, and their marriage is not clandestine, but there is no evidence to suggest that their difference from Bregog is more than one of degree.

Furthermore, the personification of the Thames and Medway reimagines what is in unaltered geography a regular, cyclical occurrence, as a singular event. Rivers are characterised both by fixity (their course is limited) and infinity (they constantly flow and renew themselves). In one sense, a meeting of two rivers happens a single time, at a certain geographical point (at Oxford, in the case of Camden's *De Connubio*); yet in another sense it happens constantly, in that water from both rivers is always constantly merging. In the river pageant, personification amplifies the former of these two senses and subdues the latter. Though marriage symbolises and institutes union, the unifying act itself is one-off. Conversely, by following its course a river gets married every time it meets the river with which it merges. As well as re-presenting an inevitability as a contingency, the river pageant portrays a cyclical recurrence as a singular event. The marriage of Florimell and Marinell in the next canto provides an additional, retrospective

⁴⁸ See *Shorter Poems*, pp. 345-372.

reason to read the earlier marriage as personal. If a reader were to perform allegoresis on the river pageant, translating it into a geographical scene devoid of personification, she might well simply imagine the point at which the Thames and Medway join, the convergence having already happened. Yet she might also interpret the allegory more closely, if more pedantically, and imagine the two rivers meeting for the first time in a singular event like a marriage. In this scenario the rivers would be carving out their channels from the west and southeast of England into the Thames estuary like pioneers.⁴⁹ Personified, Spenser's rivers acquire the contingent mobility, and the consequent ability to shape the landscape, of both the *Metamorphoses* and Roman myths, where 'the river, directly or indirectly, actually made the legend'.⁵⁰ Spenser's innovation is to link that Ovidian plasticity to discourses of cartography and nation-building.

The notion of the English landscape as plastic, forming itself into its current state, relates in an overarching way to the theme of formation, inner and outer, in *The Faerie Queene*:

[For Spenser] the inner being must be transformed along with the landscape.... his verse is the culmination of this process in which external and internal nature mirror one another...⁵¹

Read without instant dis-personification – preserved as embodied in the reader's mind – the English landscape at this point of Book IV acquires a plasticity comparable to the malleable self of the questing allegorical hero. More specifically, the possible implication of a plastic landscape, freely moulding itself into being before its eventual fixing in place,

⁴⁹ A third possible allegorical interpretation, or resolution, would be to draw on the classical idea of the *genius loci*, imagining that the rivers contain deity-like spirits which inhabit a discrete point of the geographical phenomenon they also represent.

⁵⁰ Brian Campbell, *Rivers and the Power of Ancient Rome* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), p. 145.

⁵¹ Herendeen (1986), p. 228.

intersects with the 'primitive' quality Harry Berger has identified in the river canto. Berger discusses the river pageant alongside the preceding canto's description of the Temple of Venus. He classifies either episode as a window on the 'ancient' world, illustrating the theme of concord (and *discordia concors*) that runs through Book IV. The Temple exemplifies what Berger calls the 'antique', namely 'the effort to escape from "nature" [into] an entirely autonomous world'.⁵² Thus the devotees of Venus 'isolate her visible form', the animated statue, 'from the oceanic reality behind the appearance', divorcing love from processes of time and space.⁵³ The river pageant, by contrast, is 'primitive', in that its figures are not isolated from processes but participate in the first stages of those processes. The replacement of the statue, a static image of love and concord, by the rivers in the next canto, indicates for Berger the 'submission to the characteristic expressions of pure natural behaviour... the kaleidoscopic swirl of chaos, ocean, elements, passions'.⁵⁴ Berger only tackles personification indirectly; its order acts as a stay on the anarchic 'release' of energy from the rivers.⁵⁵ As argued above, personification certainly makes the rivers containable. Yet it also confers on the landscape a primitive plasticity implied in Berger's description of unadulterated nature as a chaotic 'swirl'.

It is difficult to know how to relate this interpretation of the marriage of Thames and Medway with the geographical reality of the world outside the poem. As van Es usefully points out, 'in geographical reality the Thames and Medway never really do marry'.⁵⁶ The

⁵² Harry Berger, 'Two Spenserian Retrospects', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 10 (1968), 5-25, 22.

⁵³ Berger, p. 10.

⁵⁴ Berger, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Berger, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Van Es (2002), p. 61.

Medway's 'fall' into the Thames estuary is not as clear-cut as the confluence of the Tame and Isis at Oxford: the proximity of the sea complicates matters. One explanation of this disparity would be that in the minds of sixteenth-century chorographers and poets the two rivers *did* meet, and that what is currently designated the estuary was considered part of the river. Contemporary chorography does not present a clear picture. In Harrison's *Description* the Medway is first mentioned in the context of the Thames:

It [the Thames] taketh the Lee with it by the waie vpon the coast of Essex, and the Darnt vpon Kent side, which riseth neere to Tanrige... vnto Derntford, wherevnto the Craie falleth. And last of all the Medwaie a notable riuer (in mine opinion) which watereth all the south and southwest part of Kent...⁵⁷

Harrison's meandering syntax implies that the Medway is the 'last' of the rivers which the Thames 'taketh... with it'. Yet when his attention turns to the Medway in its own right, there is no mention of the Thames. Harrison quotes two sources to describe the 'Midwaie': in the first, the river 'meeteth with another brooke', unnamed, 'finallie at Maidstone... and then passeth by [several villages] and falleth into the maine sea betweene Shepeie and the Grene'⁵⁸; in the second, the Medway 'goeth to Chatham, Gillingham, Upchurin, and soone after branching, it imbraceth the Greene at his fall'.⁵⁹ In Lambarde's *A perambulation of Kent* (1576) the river 'laboureth from [Maidstone] in one entier Chanel to finde out the Sea'.⁶⁰ Camden, who acknowledges Lambarde as a source in the Kentish section of the *Britannia* (1586), describes how at Sheppey the Medway 'maketh his issue into the Aesturie or Frith of Tamis at two mouthes'.⁶¹ The interaction of

⁵⁷ Harrison, *The Description of Britaine* XI, in Holinshed (1587), p. 46.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ William Lambarde, *A perambulation of Kent* (London, 1576), p. 104.

⁶¹ William Camden, *Britannia* [1586], trans. by Philemon Holland [1610], ed. by Robert Mayhew (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2003), vol. 1, p. 333.

the two rivers, which in Spenser's fiction is an emphatic, triumphant marriage, was in reality a grey area of estuarine ambiguity.

The disparity between Spenser's neat fiction and ambiguous geography could be explained several other ways. Spenser might not have appreciated just how near the ocean the Medway empties into the Thames estuary, though this is unlikely given his extensive reading of Camden and his origins in the south-east. Rachel Hile argues that in Book IV the meaning of concord is far from triumphal, being 'incomplete and temporary compared with friendship'; the shadow of an ambiguous geographical merging behind the fictional union might be thought to add tension and fragility to the marriage.⁶² Alternatively, the meeting of the rivers in Proteus's hall might indicate that in the fiction, given the spatial freedom of personifications, the two rivers meet both directly with each other and indirectly in the sea. Yet this would obscure the chain linking the river pageant to Camden's *De Connubio*. Most plausibly, the relationship of Spenser's fiction to its actual geographical referent is an instance of the relations of ideal and real explored throughout *The Faerie Queene*. When, in Book V, Spenser alludes to the English intervention in the Low Countries in the 1580s, his allegory does not reproduce actual events with verisimilitude, but presents things as they would have been had English foreign policy been more decisively protestant and militarily aggressive. Similarly, the clear union in fiction of two rivers which in reality ambiguously converge achieves a perfected representation of the landscape. Given the episode's 'primitive' flavour, the sense that the world is being formed, the river pageant does not possess the same urgency as the last cantos of Book V, whose perfected fictions imply there is still time for the protestant

⁶² Rachel E. Hile, 'The Limitations of Concord in the Thames-Medway Marriage Canto of *The Faerie Queene*', *Studies in Philology* 108 (2011), 70-85, 77.

project, in England and abroad, to be completed. Yet the landscape's plasticity makes it seem as alterable and redeemable as an idealistic model of the self.

The use of the 'primitive', Berger argues, is to show that perfection can spring from imperfect chaos. As Paul Alpers puts it, 'the marriage of the Thames and the Medway holds out the promise that harmony can emerge from pain and misery, but the achievement has to be in human terms'.⁶³ Just as the projected eventual concord of Book IV's lovers (Florimell and Marinell, Britomart and Artegall) will be constituted by their initial conflicts, so human culture is both antithetical to nature and its culmination.

Spenser's reference to Oxford (IV.xi.26.4-5) is Berger's example:

[S]omething is imposed on nature which is alien to it. Human activity as *art* – education, culture, civilization [*sic*] – may be conceived as the apex of natural activity, a nursery shooting up from below. But a nursery is also planted – set down – so that it becomes a burden, and an apex is also a crown, and both may be imposed...⁶⁴

Berger's phrasing implies that personification, which subdues the primal chaos of a river and represents it in terms of human culture, is analogous to the adornment of a river. Just as the pageant's sea nymphs at once embody the ocean and are its controlling antithesis, Oxford in Spenser's description is both a 'heavy burden' (26.3) on the river and its culmination. By framing rivers with architectural types – walls, bridges, castles – human culture tries to assimilate the river into itself, transforming a natural phenomenon into an element of architecture, and thus making it more like a body. Yet the freedom of movement and 'plasticity' created by personification, which I have argued for above, is

⁶³ Paul Alpers, *The Poetry of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 122.

⁶⁴ Berger (1968), 18.

akin not so much to the adornment as the adaptation of rivers. In giving the Thames and Medway an ambiguous union, Spenser redirects their courses.

IV. Conclusion

Pierre Ronsard's 'Hynne a l'Autonne' ('Hymn to Autumn') (1555-1556) imagines Nature as a palace with a hundred doors. Inside, a hundred young boys are partnered with a hundred nymphs. 'Ils portent en la main de grans cruches profondes' (341) ('they carry in their hands large, deep pitchers'), and are pouring out streams of liquid from labelled jars standing on a table.⁶⁵ The liquid is matter in its primal state, moving not quite with the anarchic chaos of Berger's analysis but the ordered, energetic flow of a river. Ronsard's image of nature condenses several ideas in this chapter, about the dynamics and consequences of Spenser's several personifications of rivers. Turning a body of water into the body of a person entails particular spatial distortions: a phenomenon characterised by dissipation and flow is converted into a bounded entity; at the same time, flowing motion is exchanged for contingent mobility. In the second half of this chapter, I also argued that Spenser's wedding pageant of embodied rivers achieves not only a fluid, dynamic concord, but also a more dizzying sense of 'ancient plasticity': the landscape becomes the pliant, contingent arrangement of personified phenomena it was held to be by classical poets and mythographers.

At the heart of personification's poetics lies the replacement of causation by action and effect with what Escobedo calls 'transmission', where a body insinuates or spreads itself

⁶⁵ Pierre Ronsard, 'Hynne a l'Autonne' [1556], in *Pierre de Ronsard: Selected Poems*, ed. and trans. by Malcolm Quainton and Elizabeth Vinestock (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 165-175, p. 173.

in another by quasi-magical processes of force, persuasion or contagion. We might imagine, as Gordon Teskey does, this contagion as the ‘flow’ of conceptual essence.⁶⁶ The metaphor is apt: in the next chapter, I’ll examine Spenser’s allegorical caves, and highlight the frequency with which liquids effuse from them. To personify a river, in this analysis, is to turn a flowing phenomenon into a figure from whom essence flows. The literal flow of a river’s water is transformed into the metaphorical flow of influence. Spenser’s pageant of concord is an image of achieved harmony, but this obscures the violent abruptness inherent in any arrest of a river’s flow. Personification, I’ve argued, is one kind of such an arrest. In Ronsard’s poetry the riverside is the place of poetic contemplation, as the Thames becomes for Spenser in ‘Prothalamion’, and thus special to the poet.⁶⁷ ‘Elégie’, from *Le Second Livre des Sonnets Pour Hélène* (1578), associates the riverside with peaceful absorption:

J’aimois le cours suivy d’une longue riviere,
 Et voir onde sur onde allonger sa carriere,
 Et flot à l’autre flot en roulant s’attacher,
 Et pendu sur le bord me plaisoit d’y pescher,
 Estant plus resjouy d’une chasse muette
 Troubler des escaillez la demeure secrette.
 (29-34)⁶⁸

This poem’s speaker is remembering a time before distraction by love-melancholy, before Hélène invaded his thoughts. The river’s ‘cours suivy’, the merging of its waves into one another, relaxed his mind into attentive consciousness – a state of ‘flow’.⁶⁹ Yet even in this embowered mental state, he is seen ‘troubler... la demeure secette’ of the fish,

⁶⁶ Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (London: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 46.

⁶⁷ See *Shorter Poems*, pp. 491-498.

⁶⁸ ‘I loved the continuous flow of a long river, and the sight of billow after billow prolonging its course, and one wave joining another as it rolled on; and, leaning forward from the bank, I enjoyed fishing there, invading the secret domain of the scaly race’. Ronsard, pp. 59-63, p. 60.

⁶⁹ See Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990), 2nd ed. (London: Harper Perennial, 2008).

just as Hélène comes to trouble him. Ronsard's poem gestures to analogies and contrasts, beyond the scope of this chapter's argument: between the calm flow of water and the disastrous flow of blood; between the literal flow of a river and the metaphorical flow of thought. Yet his implication of mutual correspondence between person and river, in an image which also depicts arrested flow, he highlights both the clarifications and distortions inherent to the anthropomorphism and personification of rivers.

These two chapters have explored personifications of natural phenomena: the night, and rivers. What of Nature herself? Katherine Park argues that in the sixteenth century the medieval figure of nature – a clothed, wise woman who has assisted as custodian of the Creation – gives way to a youthful, many-breasted lactating woman.⁷⁰ The decisiveness of the shift she asserts has been challenged.⁷¹ Yet in highlighting different ways in which nature could be personified, Park draws a distinction that is valuable even if it is purely theoretical, and not correspondent with historical change: between nature understood as 'the shaper of natural phenomena and spokesperson... for God's creation', and someone who *is* Nature, 'identified with its corporeal stuff', in whom nature's parts are 'embodied' rather than simply known.⁷² We can map Park's distinction onto my own, in this thesis, between metonymic and metaphoric personifications, and onto Escobedo's, between enactment and transmission. Spenser's own personification of Nature appears in the 'Cantos of Mutabilitie', a 'great Grandmother of all creatures' (VII.vii.13.1) sitting on a throne:

⁷⁰ Park traces such a figure to the illustrations by Fosforo and Romano for the 1470 Naples edition of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*. Katharine Park, 'Nature in Person: Medieval and Renaissance Allegories and Emblems', in *The Moral Authority of Nature*, ed. by Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 50-73.

⁷¹ See Todd A. Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 61.

⁷² Park, p. 68, p. 73.

Still moouing, yet vnmoued from her sted;
Vnseene of any, yet of all beheld...
(3-4)

The image admits the paradoxes created by the distortions of personification. Nature is at once ubiquitous, moving in her many forms, and singular, invisible and fixed. The difference here is between personified Nature, the embodiment of creation, and nature in its non-personified, plural form; it is not a conflation of two kinds of personification. Though Spenser's figure cannot be identified with Park's lactating nurse, she does exhibit the embodiment, as opposed to knowledge, of nature which Park sees as a Renaissance development. Dame Nature gathers into the space, or 'sted', of a person, the natural world's seemingly infinite forms. These forms must include rivers, which illustrates another complexity: even without personification, the idea of 'nature' is a gathering together of diverse forms (rivers, mountains, caves); thus the personification of Nature is the embodiment of a general concept, whose particularities can themselves be personified.

In contrast, Spenser's figure of Night and his profusion of personified rivers, subjects of this and the last chapter, accomplish something different from Dame Nature. Personifying parts of nature, rather than the concept of the natural itself, they distort the picture of the natural world more than their 'great Grandmother' can, in whom it is wholly gathered. I'll return, finally, to these distortions. As I showed in the previous chapter, the embodiment of Night has ominous, thwarting effects on Redcrosse and Arthur's quests. This is not just because of the malevolent agency which Spenser's old-fashioned, Hesiodic portrait affords to the night, but also because of the way personification renders the natural world incomprehensible. The reader, who sees Night's body travelling across the universe, can

understand what is happening, but Arthur cannot. The ability of personified Night to disrupt normal rhythms achieves both a literal and figurative obfuscation. We might see it as an instance or variation of the 'bedazzlement' which, in the first chapter, I ascribed to personifications within fictions, arguing that it was a translation of rhetorical *enargeia*. The wedding pageant of Book IV presents a more optimistic picture, of the natural world in concord. Yet even here, as I have argued in this chapter, personification defamiliarises the natural world, which becomes illegible or incomprehensible. The enchantment of the landscape, full of personal agency in Ovidian fashion, of fluidity and contingent movement, produces an image of a polity at once ancient and strangely plastic. England becomes a proto-empire in which anything is possible, including the arrangement of the landscape. Yet even in this embodied landscape nature's unfamiliarity is ambivalent, because it carries the possibility of exclusion. In the river pageant as a whole, both onlookers and readers are dazzled by the distortions of personification. But in the section describing Ireland's rivers, the defamiliarisation achieved by embodying nature's parts conceals, but also enables, the erasure of the Irish.

PART III: ALLEGORICAL REIFICATIONS

Chapter 4

'This Errours den': Spenser's Caves

Introduction

Spenserian personification, as we saw in the last chapters, concentrates and isolates phenomena in particular places. Such concentrations are often ironic, as in the different cases of rivers and the night, because the phenomenon is itself diffusive. In this chapter, I focus on Spenser's use of the cave as a location in *The Faerie Queene*. I argue that the cave is a landscape analogue of the concentration and isolation inherent to personification. Just as, in theory, the bodies of personifications harbour the essence of the concept after which they are named, caves in the landscape of Fairyland are where abstract states, mostly vices, are contained. In caves, this concentration is extreme, becoming imprisonment or sequestration: the caves' inhabitants are often too excessive in their vices to live anywhere else. The capacity to diffuse, which in the previous chapters I argued was another fundamental property of many personifications, belongs also to caves: as initial readings of famous underground images from classical epic suggest, literary caves were commonly imagined and described as the sources of liquids, variously fair and foul.

The chapter's reading of Spenser begins, with Redcrosse, at the cave of Error. The cave setting, I will argue, allows Spenser to illustrate the irony of embodying mental states characterised by placelessness and ubiquity, in particular places. The reduction risked by this locational specificity might, I suggest, be the source of Redcrosse's trouble. This irony is further enriched by a complex interweaving of the topoi of cave and labyrinth: I suggest

a modified reading of the tree catalogue in the Wandering Wood to reveal a continuing juxtaposition of perceived or theoretical straight(forward)ness with actual complexity. The cave of Despaire, similarly, isolates a state characterised in part by placelessness; the means of diffusion here, however, is notably different. I turn next to the 1596 text, and the cave in which Lust imprisons Amoret. Acting as a prison, Lust's cave extends and amplifies the questions raised by personification allegory as to agency. I then situate Spenser's caves in several sixteenth-century contexts: the antiquarian and chorographic projects in which Spenser took great interest; the frequency of caves among the embowered spaces of Elizabethan and Jacobean entertainments, both at court and at great houses outside the metropolis. I argue that their cultural connotations made caves especially available for spatial allegories like *The Faerie Queene*, in which they reify vices.

My aim in this chapter is to treat Spenser's caves like his personifications; to take them literally, at least initially, as manifestations of concentrated abstractions. I will depend on close readings of each episode, trying to establish from the precise nature of each location how it operates. The irony illustrated in the first chapter, and by Spenser's portrait of Archimago – that *The Faerie Queene's* figures, like its readers, are often undone by treating the poem's personifications *too* literally – applies also here; to read some of the poem's caves literally is to descend deeper into confusion. Yet my basic contention is that in his allegorical caves Spenser is continuing to imagine and depict abstract concepts as places. The ethical questions raised by this method of depiction (if Lust is a cave, can one enter it without being lustful?) are central to the interpretive play prompted by the allegory. Preserving the spatial reality of the poem's landscape also preserves such ethical and hermeneutic questions, otherwise obscured by immediate dispersonification.

I. Cave as Topos

Foundational Caves and Underworlds

The most obviously allegorical cave in European literature is to be found in Plato's *Republic*. A metaphor for what the world is really like, the cave can only receive the light of knowledge very indirectly; very few can leave it. Spenser's debt to Plato and neo-Platonism, especially that of Ficino, is well known. In his poem, explicitly allegorical and devoted in its first Book to the acquisition of true knowledge, all caves could potentially signify, like Plato's, forms of ignorance. *The Faerie Queene's* caves allude even more strongly, however, to the underworld in the *Aeneid*, itself a reworking of a similar episode in the *Odyssey*. As the most famous cavernous space in European epic, the cave of *Aeneid* VI has enduring influence throughout *The Faerie Queene* and deserves preliminary attention. The entrance to the underworld is located, like the cave of Error, in the midst of a forest; Aeneas is directed there by the Sibyl, who herself lives in a cave from which a hundred voices pour out. Her divine prophecy is described, like Spenser's description of allegory, as speech 'obscuris vera involvens' ('that wraps true things in darkness') (VI.100).¹ Equipped with the divine knowledge that flows from the Sibyl's cave, Aeneas can locate the deeper 'telluris operta' ('hidden places of the earth') (VI.140) that lead into the underworld. Unlike the caves that will be the central focus of this chapter, the cavern is not a secluded destination but a liminal space providing entry to another world. Yet the influence of this portal-like cavern on the caves of *The Faerie Queene* is explicit:

¹ *Aeneid*, VI.100.

Mammon's cave is located within a 'larger space' (II.vii.21.1), its door adjacent to the 'gates of Pluto' (24.1) which, like Virgil's underworld, 'gaped wide' (6). Caves and caverns in early modern England, Alexandra Walsham argues, were 'regarded as entrances and gateways to an unseen spiritual realm'.² Virgil's influence ensures that this association holds as true in literature as in popular superstition.³ This association with a Virgilian world of the dead – an underworld – made it easy to associate similar spaces with the *other-world* of allegory.

To enclose personifications in caves, as Spenser does throughout *The Faerie Queene*, gestures to other foundational moments in classical literature. The many embowered figures of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* have enduring influence on Spenser and preceding Renaissance poets: the dwelling of Envy and the 'spelunca recessu' (*Met.*XI.592) ('deep cave') in which Sleep lives have obvious equivalents in *The Faerie Queene* and, in the case of Envy, in Ariosto's *Cinque Canti*. Yet Virgil's influence here is also far-reaching, if not as explicit. The *Aeneid* includes numerous figures, variously fantastical, who dwell in and issue from caves. In Book I Aeolus, master of the winds, lives in a 'vasto... antro' (I.52) ('in a vast cave'), where the winds are enclosed 'vinclis et carcere' ('in fetters and a prison'). This cave, in prominent position at the outset of the *Aeneid* and described in elaborate detail, combines the concentration of naturally diffuse force (the wind) in a particular point, with the possibility of diffusion: at Juno's request, Aeolus releases the wind and causes havoc. Spenser's allegorical caves threaten, in various ways, to exude their contents, and the often physical manifestation of this exuding shows the influence of

² Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity & Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 20.

Virgil's cave. Book IV of the *Aeneid* includes the cave most central to the narrative, where Aeneas and Dido escape from the storm and from view, to consummate their love. This cave, and their descent into it, became a common place for allegoresis in fifteenth-century Italian commentary on the *Aeneid*. Cristoforo Landino, for example, disputes a traditional reading of the cave as a celebration of marriage, and follows instead more recent humanist readings that interpret the cave as vice; for Landino, though, descent into the 'loco subterraneo' ('underground place') of the cave is an allegory not for sexual lust, but for the social vices symbolised by what is 'bodily' – 'qui honores, qui opes, qui imperiam quaerunt' ('those who seek reputation, ambition, empire').⁴ Virgil turns immediately from his description of the 'speluncam' (IV.165) to Fama (Rumour) who spreads through the cities of Libya. 'Populos sermone replebat' ('she filled the people with report') (189): spreading like a liquid, Rumour seems to have issued from the cave described next to her.

Caves and Flow

Association with flowing liquid also characterises a very different sort of cave. The man-made grottoes of Renaissance gardens almost always included water in their design. Visiting Pratolino in 1594, Fynes Moryson described 'Fountaines... wrought within little houses, which house is vulgarly called *grotta*, that is Cave (or Den)'.⁵ Fountains such as those at Pratolino, and in the garden of grottoes built by Isaac de Caus at Heidelberg in 1613, imitated a long Roman tradition of constructed fountains, many of which survived

⁴ Cristoforo Landino, *Disputationes Camaldulenses* [1474] (Augsburg: M. Schurer, 1508), IV, fol. H[xi]. See Craig Kallendorf, 'Cristoforo Landino's *Aeneid* and the Humanist Critical Tradition', *Renaissance Quarterly* 36 (1983), 519-546.

⁵ Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary* (London, 1617), I.ii.3, p. 152.

until the Renaissance.⁶ The fountains which became popular in wealthy gardens during the first century of the Roman Empire sprung either from grottoes – imitations of rustic caves – or from *nymphaea*, house-like edifices honouring nymphs. The blurring of the distinction between water-house and cave, which in architecture has Roman origins, persists in the sixteenth century. The *Grotta Grande* in the Boboli Gardens, completed in 1593, is constructed with deliberately rough-hewn (*non-finito*) rock, in order to resemble a wild and natural cave. This manufactured wildness, by which the grotto possesses the natural appearance of a cave and the artifice of a house, follows Alberti, who in his discussion of grottoes approves daubing them over with ‘bearded moss’ to make them look authentic.⁷ We should also note the tendency of the Roman garden fountain towards personification: if the *nymphaeum* is a house, it follows naturally to depict the river it contains as a figure who dwells inside. Roman fountain architecture proceeds, as Naomi Miller argues in her study of the garden grotto, from a classical sense of ‘the divinities of sources and waters’.⁸

The early modern association of caves with water, therefore, is both classical and distinctively local. The turn towards classicism in English architecture from the end of the sixteenth century entailed an increasingly expert deployment, in the designs for masques and court entertainments, of the fountain and cave. This deepening association of the built cave, either ‘wild’ or house-like, with water, also led to parodies in which water was replaced by other liquids both fairer and fouler. Central in the following

⁶ De Caus also designed grottoes and other features in the gardens of Woburn and Wilton, alongside his work in London. See Dianne Duggan, ‘Isaac de Caus: Surveyor, Grotto and Garden Designer’, *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 29 (2009), 152-168.

⁷ Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria* [1443-52], trans. by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach and Robert Tavernor, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (London: MIT Press, 1988), IX.4, p. 299.

⁸ Naomi Miller, *Heavenly Caves: Reflections on the Garden Grotto* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 13.

discussion is the notion that evil substances flowing in and out of Spenser's allegorical caves – vomit and blood from the caves of Error and Despaire and (the suggestion of) semen in Lust's cave – are perversions of the flow of water that was intuitively expected from a cave. An example of such perversion, from several decades after *The Faerie Queene*, is found in Ben Jonson's occasional poem printed in *The Underwood* (1641). A short poem in trimeter couplets, 'Underwood 48' praises the vaulted undercroft, or wine cellar, in the King's Banqueting House (1619-21), built by Isaac de Caus under Inigo Jones's supervision. The poem, which was perhaps written to hang in the undercroft, imagines the grotto-like space as the domain of Bacchus, god of wine, and prays that his spirit foster peace and jollity:

So may there never quarrel
Have issue from the barrel
But Venus and the graces
Pursue thee in all places.⁹
(31-34)

If Bacchus is the equivalent of a nymph in a Roman *nymphaeum*, perhaps the wine with which he is associated, and its 'issue' from the undercroft, is the equivalent of the intuitively expected flow of water from a cave. With light touch, Jonson's poem depicts the undercroft as the Cave of Bacchus, from which flows the River Wine.

II. Allegorical Caves in *The Faerie Queene*

Locational Specificity in the Labyrinthine Cave of Error

⁹ Ben Jonson, *The Underwood* [1641] 48, ed. by Colin Burrow, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by Martin Butler and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) vol. 7, pp. 192-194, p. 194.

The flow of wine from Jonson's cave is a skilful, passing suggestion; the cave of Error at the beginning of *The Faerie Queene*, in contrast, is the site of a memorable and disgustingly explicit flood. Error's famous spewing out of 'bookes and papers' (I.i.20.6) as she dies has ensured, along with its prominent position at the start of the poem, that the episode has never passed from critical attention. It has become generally agreed that Redcrosse's encounter with Error in the cave at the heart of the forest outlines the rest of the poem, in which virtues preceding from truth are opposed to vices that derive from falsehood.¹⁰ Dante's *Divine Comedy* also begins in a forest, the 'selva oscura' in which the speaker finds himself. Comparing Spenser's beginning to Dante's, A.C. Hamilton characterises the Wandering Wood as an 'initiation'.¹¹ Modern criticism of the Error episode has emphasised the many classical and medieval monsters to which Spenser's serpent-woman alludes, as well as highlighting the many suggestions of a labyrinth, itself rich with classical associations, in the cave. This section will also consider these analogues, but will first try to base its interpretation of the episode on some observations of the cave itself. Most criticism has treated Error's dwelling-place as incidental to the episode; while the monster and her verbose vomit is the most vivid image, my argument here is that close reading of the cave adds important nuance to the passage. Enclosing in a cave 'learned error', a concept notorious for its labyrinthine ubiquity, Spenser embodies in landscape several ironies about locational specificity and placelessness.

¹⁰ See James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 137.

¹¹ A.C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 31.

Before she rushes out to attack Redcrosse, Error is glimpsed in her cave feeding her many children, illuminated by the 'litle glooming light' (14.5) of Redcrosse's armour. The first thing the reader learns about her – the first thing, presumably, to strike Redcrosse – is her body's monstrous combination of woman and serpent. Yet the monster's position in the cave is also described:

And as she lay vpon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all ouerspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes vpwound,
Pointed with mortall sting.
(15.1-4)

The 'knots' and 'boughtes' ('a coil, fold, or knot formed by the body of a serpent') of Error's tail suggest the twists and turns of the labyrinth.¹² Spenser's syntax in this passage also features a 'bought': 'yet' (3) is unexpected, because the more intuitive word for a continuing description of the 'long taile' (2) would be 'and'. 'Yet' implies that the tail covers the whole floor of the cave not because it is so convoluted, but despite being convoluted. Error's 'taile' is so 'long' that even when folding back on itself it covers everything. As Redcrosse's light enters the cave, Error's brood rush into her mouth: the self-involved monster (temporarily) consumes her own children. Error's interiority, her body's ability to swallow and hide other bodies, is rather cave-like; she is a labyrinthine cave within a simple one, the unmoving 'darksom hole' (14.3). Noticing this compound cave-within-a-cave, William Blissett suggests that Error's den presents an 'identification of labyrinth and cave'.¹³ Blissett's openness to the cave-like nature of the body ('mouth, rib cage, belly, womb, heart, skull are all caves') is extremely useful for reading this

¹² *OED*, 'bought', 2b.

¹³ William Blissett, 'Caves, Labyrinths, *The Faerie Queene*', in *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance*, ed. by George M. Logan and Gordon Teskey (London: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 281-310, p. 284.

passage.¹⁴ However, to argue that in Error's den labyrinth and cave become one is to smooth the 'yet' of the stanza's third line into an 'and'. 'Yet' tells us that Error's tail is labyrinthine *despite* covering the cave's ground; thus it raises the possibility that Redcrosse fails to see its twists and turns. Redcrosse, Spenser's syntax implies, thinks that the monster he sees contained in the cave is all of Error. He does not see how folded Error is on herself, or how far she might unwind.

It's Error's awesome, hidden extent – her capacity to unfold herself far beyond the confines of the cave – which in the ensuing stanzas almost kills Redcrosse. Emerging from the den, Error stretches forth her 'hideous taile... at length without entraille' (16.2,4), long enough to encompass her 'cursed head' (3). Struck on the 'shoulder' (17.9), she gathers her 'wrethed sterne arownd' (18.5) and leaps at Redcrosse's shield. Her 'huge traine'

All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine:
God helpe the man so wrapt in *Errours* endlesse traine.
(7-9)

Having underestimated the extent of Error's tail, Redcrosse finds himself imprisoned in it. Patricia Parker suggests a correspondence between the mood of the stanza's last line, which pauses narration by expressing a wish, and the arrest the lines describe. 'The picture is frozen in its stanza-frame'; wrapped in Error, Redcrosse resembles a petrified victim of Medusa.¹⁵ This astute observation encourages us to consider the possible allegorical meaning not just of the cave but of motion within it. Redcrosse, as we have seen, imagines the monster contained simply in a cave; he underestimates, and is taken

¹⁴ Blissett, p. 285.

¹⁵ Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 68.

aback by, her labyrinthine ubiquity. Redcrosse believes that all he must do to defeat Error is press courageously 'forward' (12.8) with 'greedy hardiment' (14.1), but finds that Error attacks from all 'arownd' (18.5). His sense of a straight-'forward' duel is complicated by the ubiquity of error. Dismissing Una's warning (12.1-6), Redcrosse fails to see that to defeat Error he needs not just a courageous 'forward footing' (8) but a vigilant circumspection. Redcrosse's error, therefore, is to assume that Error resides in one place, the kind of misrecognition which in Spenser criticism since the late twentieth century has frequently been characterised as a misreading. Spenser's complication of the cave with the labyrinth, and of forward motion with stasis, enacts his hero's mistake: error, we learn, is more labyrinth than cave.

As we saw in previous chapters, Spenserian personification often entails irony. Concepts that are by nature very diffuse, like night, are demarcated within bodies. Error's den is a geographical instance of such an irony. Her body and cave, understood by Redcrosse as specifically located and finite, turn out to be perilously distributed. Even as he personifies error as a single monster in a single cave, Spenser's description of the cave suggests that the essence of error is that it can crop up everywhere. Not only is it diffuse, like the night or (in another sense) a river; it also is randomly distributed in its coverage. This geographical irony suggests a characteristically Spenserian portrayal of truth as not easily separable from error. Comparing Spenser and Milton, Gordon Teskey proposes that for Milton error exists apart from the (prelapsarian) world, and therefore can only be 'entered by deliberate choice'.¹⁶ Spenser, on the other hand, sees truth as always tangled up in error, and thus 'teaches by entangling the reader in a text that is digressive',

¹⁶ Gordon Teskey, 'From Allegory to Dialectic: Imagining Error in Spenser and Milton', *PMLA* 101 (1986), 9-23, 9.

so that the reader can gradually extract the truth from error in a version of the wandering experienced by the poem's figures.¹⁷ With regard to Error's cave, one of the respects in which Spenserian allegory deliberately entangles the truth with error is by separating concepts into deceptively distinct places. Locational specificity is really part of the allegorical clouding.

The monster Redcrosse encounters is herself a monstrous composite of influences, many of them drawn from classical mythology. Spenser's Error has much in common with the many instances of a monstrous half-woman in Greek myths; yet certain key *topoi* are suppressed, and such omissions are of considerable interpretive use. Error most closely resembles Echidna, 'half nymph and with glancing eyes and fair cheeks, and half again a huge snake, great and awful'.¹⁸ In Hesiod's *Theogony* Echidna lives, like Spenser's monster, 'deep down under a hollow boulder'.¹⁹ (In Book VI the mother of the Blatant Beast is named as 'Echidna' herself.)²⁰ Besides Echidna, other monstrous confluences of human and serpent appear in Greek myth and epic. In Nonnos' *Dionysiaca* Campe has 'serpents for hair' and 'viperish feet'.²¹ In the Alexandrian *Library*, Echidna is the wife or mother of Typhon, a giant who 'from the thighs downward... had huge coils of vipers'.²² Typical for these variously named hybrid monsters is an association with the earth in its most ancient age, and by locating *The Faerie Queene's* first monster in a cave Spenser makes an initial connection between the cave and the past, the cave as anachronism.

¹⁷ Teskey (1986), 16.

¹⁸ Hesiod, *Theogony*, 301-303, in *Hesiod*, ed. and trans. by Glenn W. Most (London: Harvard University Press, 2006-2007), vol. 1, pp. 26-27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *FQ*, VI.vi.10.

²¹ Nonnos, *Dionysiaca* II.141-142, ed. and trans. by W.H.D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1962), pp. 54-55.

²² Pseudo-Apollodorus, *The Library* I, ed. and trans. by Sir James George Frazer, (London: William Heinemann, 1967), pp. 48-49.

The traditional vanquishers of the hybrid monsters to whom Error alludes are Apollo and Heracles. Reviewing the proposed aetiologies for the Scythian race, Herodotus tells the story of Heracles looking for his sheep in the woodland of contemporary Scythia, and meeting a strange creature:

There he found in a cave a creature of double form that was half damsel and half serpent; above the buttocks she was a woman, below them a snake.²³

James Nohrnberg argues that Redcrosse in the Error episode is an Apollo figure, breaking up the mass of Typhon (or Python).²⁴ When the half-human monster is gendered as female and called Echidna, however, it is more often Heracles who does the vanquishing. Redcrosse, full of 'force' (his deficiency is of 'faith'), appears a Heraclean figure as he ventures into a monster's cave.

Spenser removes from Error, however, the dangerous seductiveness of her analogues in Greek Heraclean tales. In Herodotus' version Heracles has sex with the 'half damsel' in order to regain the cattle she has stolen, but Spenser's creature is wholly repulsive, 'horribly displaide' (14.7) with her 'poisnous dug's' (15.6). Provoking disgust, her body bears greater resemblance to Campe's, in the *Dionysiaca* and also in Lucian's 'The Lover of Lies', where in her 'frightfulness of appearance' she is compared to 'the Gorgon': 'instead of hair she had... snakes falling down in ringlets'.²⁵ In the *Mythologiae* (1567) of Natalis Comes, Hecate (whose characteristics often overlap with those of Echidna) is similarly

²³ Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, IV.9, in *Herodotus*, ed. and trans. by A.D. Godley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981-2), vol. 2, pp. 206-207.

²⁴ Nohrnberg, p. 143.

²⁵ Lucian, 'The Lover of Lies' (*Philopseudes*), in *Lucian*, ed. and trans. by A.M. Harmon (London: William Heinemann, 1962), pp. 320-381, p. 355.

revolting and uninviting: 'for hair', she has the 'snakes and serpents bunches together' of Lucian's Campe.²⁶ Like Spenser's monster, Comes's Hecate is 'bunched together', though unlike Error her convoluted body does not disguise its terrifying length.

Spenser's decision to remove seductiveness from Error, the kind that in Herodotus draws Hercules into the cave, makes Redcrosse both less and more culpable than he might otherwise seem. At the outset of his journey, he has not immediately given into temptation and betrayed his promise of fidelity to Una (as he later will). However, the lack of seduction leaves open the question as to why Redcrosse enters the cave at all. In comparison with some classical analogues, Spenser's hero lacks a motive: Hercules lets himself be seduced by the monster in order to regain his cattle; in the *Library*, Hermes enters the Corycian cave guarded by the 'half-bestial' Delphyne in order to retrieve the sinews of Zeus hoarded there by Typhon.²⁷ Redcrosse, in contrast, must wait until the end of the Book to reclaim something from a serpentine enemy. As Una recognises, the only reasonable argument for allowing Redcrosse into Error's cave is that it is 'nowe too late' (13.2) to turn back, which would be an unchivalrous and 'foule disgrace' (3). While there is nothing seductive about the monster herself, the promise of honour gained through adventure is a siren call of its own. The inconvenience and redundancy of this chivalric code – which nearly kills him – indicates to the reader the distance between the kind of poem *The Faerie Queene* will be (allegorical) and the genres its action will resemble (Arthurian romance; epic). An analogous distance exists in this episode, I have argued here, between the labyrinth and the cave.

²⁶ Natalis Comes [Natale Conti], *Mythologiae* [1567], ed. and trans. by Mulryan and Brown (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), III.15, p. 201.

²⁷ Apollodorus, pp. 48-49.

Una follows her admission that it is too late to turn back with a warning: 'this is the wandring wood, this *Errours den*' (13.6). By naming the place, clamping down on its anonymity, Una might comfort Redcrosse. Yet by identifying the forest as malign and allegorical, Una also pierces his complacent belief that he knows his way. Grammatically, the line is rather ambiguous. The double 'this' could easily be read as contrastive, as if Una is pointing first to the forest and then to the den. Such a contrast, though, would be more solidly expressed by 'this' and 'that'. Alternatively, the repetition of 'this' makes the 'wandring wood' and 'Errours den' briefly synonymous, both subjects of the single 'is'. Though they are geographically distinct, the line suggests some contamination of the forest by Error's den, a causal link between the cave's allegorical signification of error and the forest's signification of wandering. John Steadman argues that Spenser's monster is in particular 'a personification of *learned Error*' – the scholasticism which Calvin dismissed as perverse sophistry, describing it as a labyrinth²⁸ – and cites a tradition of interpreting serpents as symbols of learned error that includes allegoresis of Ovid.²⁹ The surrounding forest, which is also labyrinthine but less revoltingly so,³⁰ represents by analogy 'secular erudition', uninspired like Catholic sophistry, but less perverse.³¹ Error intensifies in concentration, therefore, the deeper a traveller goes into the forest; the monster's cave is its source. As Steadman shows, Spenser has yoked together 'two independent, but not altogether dissimilar, conventions – the forest-labyrinth and the

²⁸ Calvin describes philosophy as a *labyrinthum* in a Geneva gloss (fol. 46 in the 1617 text). See John M. Steadman, 'Spenser's *Error* and the Renaissance Allegorical Tradition', *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* 62 (1961), 22-38, 30.

²⁹ Steadman (1961), 23. Steadman cites, among other texts, Horologgi's annotations on Anguillara's edition of the *Metamorphoses*.

³⁰ 'That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare, / And like to lead the labyrinth about'. *FQ*, I.i.11.3-4.

³¹ Steadman (1961), p. 22.

'serpent-woman'.³² The gradation of error he describes, from mild (the forest) to perversely concentrated (the cave), could be mapped onto the distinction between cave and labyrinth. As Charlotte Higgins underlines in her recent study of the labyrinth as a *topos*, Daedalus is an artist; his creation for King Minos therefore bears the artwork's special purposiveness, its intentional design.³³ The labyrinth's purposive trickery, compounding the mere obscurity of the cave, could be compared to Steadman's 'learned error', a more perverse and deliberate variation on unthinking errancy. The distinction also supports Patricia Parker's attractive assertion that in Book I Redcrosse must learn how to distinguish wandering from error. Applying the designation 'Errours den' to a space or period of wandering has the clarifying, freezing force Augustine associates with naming.³⁴ Yet the idea 'that "wandering" cannot be anything but "error"' is also, Parker argues, 'Despair's [*sic*] contention'.³⁵ In the Error episode Una states a mild and belated version of this idea. She alerts Redcrosse to the fact that the forest is contaminated by the cave at its centre, but in doing so briefly conflates them. To Una, perhaps, all error is Learned Error.

The Wood for the Trees

If Una over-emphasises the allegorical significance of the forest, then Redcrosse is guilty of under-interpreting the trees around him. His first sight of them is narrated in a famous catalogue of twenty kinds of tree, which include

³² John M. Steadman, *Nature into Myth: Medieval and Renaissance Moral Symbols* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1979), p. 163.

³³ Charlotte Higgins, *Red Thread: on Mazes and Labyrinths* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2018).

³⁴ (Patricia) Parker, p. 66. See also, on the clarifying and freezing effect of naming, Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 174-183.

³⁵ (Patricia) Parker, p. 86.

The Eugh obedient to the benders will,
The Birch for shaftes, the Sallow for the mill...
(I.i.9.4-5)

The tree catalogue is an arresting list spread across two stanzas, the first extended detour in the poem from narration. In a recent consideration of these stanzas Peter Remien notices that 'each tree is conceptualised as a single use value', like the 'sayling Pine' (8.6) and the 'builder Oake' (8), where a metalepsis of function and attribute has occurred.³⁶ (Only the 'Maple seldom inward sound' (9.9) sounds a final doubtful note.) Remien argues that, if we assume the tree catalogue to be focalised through Redcrosse, it represents a view of nature as 'instrumental material', a stock of resources designed for human appropriation; Error's twists and turns, by contrast, represent 'chaotic matter'.³⁷

Remien's persuasive and historically sensitive argument is borne out by the catalogue's formal dynamics. Given the prominence of the list of trees, and the rarity of lists in *The Faerie Queene*, it is surprising that its rhythmic and syntactical characteristics have received less attention than its historical³⁸ and intertextual³⁹ echoes. Like all lists, the catalogue of trees suspends the normal hierarchical structure of syntax, replacing it with a paratactic sequence. Continuing across the stanza, it also suspends the usual, subtle ebb and flow of pace in Spenser's verse, rigidly placing a tree at the start of each line. If it represents the wood as seen through Redcrosse's eyes, it suggests that his impression is

³⁶ Peter Remien, 'Silvan Matters: Error and Instrumentality in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies* 28 (2013), 119-143, 125.

³⁷ Remien, p. 120.

³⁸ See Thomas Herron, "'Goodly Woods': Irish Forests, Georgic Trees in Books I and IV of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*", *Quidditas: Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* 19 (1998), 97-122.

³⁹ See Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls* for a tree-catalogue (176-182) to which Spenser's stanza obviously alludes.

of a place that is, literally and figuratively, straight-forward. As the couplet above demonstrates, curved wood can be made straight, into 'shaftes' or at the 'mill', while the straight branches of the yew can be curved usefully into the longbow. (The couplet rhyme enforces this contrast.) The trees can be easily appropriated, Redcrosse thinks, and therefore easily navigated. The catalogue implies an error of perception equivalent to the one made in the cave: just as he mistakes a complex labyrinth for a simple hole, he misreads a winding forest for a straight one. Readers might expect that Redcrosse's misrecognition and underestimation of the forest comes from seeing it complacently as a whole, and missing its difficult details. As we shall see in the next chapter, such disguising of parts in a distant whole characterises many of the monumental buildings in *The Faerie Queene*. Yet here, the list suggests the opposite: that when broken into its parts, the forest loses the deceptiveness it possesses as a whole and seems straightforward. Redcrosse, quite literally, cannot see the wood for the trees.

The geography of the Wandring Wood, therefore, suggests that at the heart of Redcrosse's error is the presumption of simplicity. Hurrying forward into Error's cave he is surprised by her labyrinthine complexity; passing through the forest, he is 'led' (10.1) into confusion by his complacent sense that the trees are straightforward. Spenser's extension of allegorical significance to the landscape sets a similar trap for the reader, who is invited to imagine that Error is isolated within the cave and the encircling forest. Redcrosse's experience underlines that the truth is, ironically, the reverse: error is in fact everywhere, constantly to be guarded against, and will recur throughout the poem. As Parker puts it, 'there is a kind of *sparagmos* of the Body of Errour through Book I and beyond'.⁴⁰ The

⁴⁰ (Patricia) Parker, p. 69.

dragon at the book's close is an obvious reiteration of its first monster, but Redcrosse and Una only gradually acquire the ability to discern Error in subtler guises: after leaving the Wandring Wood they are immediately deceived, led into error, by Archimago. Error's dying vomit, 'a floud of poyson horrible and blacke' (20.2), as well as the 'cole black blood' (24.9) gushing from her wound, represents the beginning of the dispersal Parker describes. The vomit itself includes 'bookes and papers' (20.6), themselves capable of viral dissemination through print. Redcrosse's error is to assume that Error is found only in her cave, and does not possess enwrapping 'boughtes' that could suffocate, and vomit that will make him 'weligh choked' (22.2). Any allegorical work that personifies diffuse concepts in particular places separates, as Redcrosse does, entangled abstractions into 'tidy antinomies'.⁴¹ Remembering the actual ubiquity of those abstractions is the quester's task.

In a Bad Place: the Cave of Despaire

Turning from Error's den to the cave of Despaire, I will argue that Spenser uses the allegorical location in a broadly similar way. Despaire, like error, is a state associated with both a sense of placelessness and a lethal capacity to spread contagiously. Spenser's personification gathers this nebulous abstract into a specific place markedly sequestered from the rest of the landscape, 'far vnderneath a craggy clift' (I.ix.33.3). To appreciate this irony depends, I will argue, on understanding despair not only as a set of rhetorical perversions but as a figure in a place. Critics have moved sometimes too swiftly to unpack Despaire, from what and where he is, into what he says. Preservation and consideration

⁴¹ Teskey (1986), p. 10.

of the cave allows us to see potential analogues, such as the cave-dwelling personifications in Ovid and Ariosto, that otherwise might be obscured. Greater attention could also be paid to the placelessness despair entails.

The episode is a climactic moment in the first book of *The Faerie Queene*: Despaire is the last vice Redcrosse must overcome before his reformation at the House of Holiness 'not far away' (I.x.3.1), but nearly persuades him to kill himself (ix.37-51). Despaire has rarely slipped from critical attention. In recent decades critics have focused on providing contexts, in Renaissance theological and rhetorical culture, for his persuasive speech. In various formulations critics have observed that Despaire's rhetoric is a distortion, corruption, or misappropriation of theological truth. His argument that God's wrath at man's sin is too great to be overcome was identified long ago by Ernest Sirluck as *enthymeme*, the wilful repression of one of an opposed or balanced pair.⁴² Despaire accurately quotes the theology of sin to Redcrosse but in doing so obscures the equivalent theology of salvation through grace. Redcrosse is nearly undone again because he is unable to place accurate but misleading statements within their proper context. His lack of contextual thinking should warn the reader not to isolate the episode entirely, to assign to it the same discreteness Redcrosse assigns to despair itself.

Redcrosse comes to Despaire after imprisonment in Orgoglio's castle, where he experiences a mental state strongly resembling despair:

His sad dull eies deepe sunck in hollow pits,
Could not endure th'vnwonted sunne to view;
His bare thin cheekes for want of better bits
And empty sides deceiued of their dew,

⁴² Ernest Sirluck, 'A Note on the Rhetoric of Spenser's Despair', *Modern Philology* 47 (1949-50), 8-11.

Could make a stony hart his hap to rew;
His rawbone armes...
Were clene consum'd...
(I.viii.41.1-6,8)

The description of Despaire in the next canto refracts this stanza: the figure in the cave has 'hollow eyne' (ix.35.6) and 'raw-bone cheekes' (8). Redcrosse's shrunken sides 'deceiued of their dew' – the nourishment nature owes to man, but suggesting also moisture – are echoed in Trevisan's testament that Despaire 'pluckt from vs all hope of dew reliefe' (29.5). Redcrosse's prison was in Orgoglio's castle, a building that outwardly appears civilised but is inwardly a cave in all but name: for Redcrosse, a 'Dongeon deep' (vii.9) with a 'filthie banefull smell' (viii.39.9) and no penetration by the 'sunne' (41.2); for Orgoglio and Duessa, a hoard of pleasure and riches, locked even to the porter Ignaro (30.9). Like a cave, it is deprived of human society, and preserves only the most reptilian of creatures, the 'monstrous beast' (vii.16.8) compared to the Lernean hydra (17.1-5), another python slain by Heracles. Anticipating the 'hideous monster' (V.x.29.3) Geryoneo keeps beneath the idolatrous altar-stone in his castle, Orgoglio's seven-headed snake is a foul creature of nature repressed beneath the surface of apparent architectural culture. Like Error, it is kept in a 'darksom den' (I.vii.16.9). The progression from canto vii to canto ix, therefore, is from a castle that conceals its cave-like nature to a cave that presents itself as such, and (by analogy) from implicit to explicit despair. The encounter with the personification in the cave has the freezing, clarifying force Parker observes; it isolates despair as Despaire, and retrospectively identifies him lurking in the previous canto. It is important, then, not to read Redcrosse's journey into the cave as his first encounter with despair, but as a final battle against it fought with the clarity of naming. That Redcrosse is nevertheless almost undone dramatically underlines despair's potency and capacity to nullify progress.

Seeking to avoid Redcrosse's atomizing hermeneutic, we might also consider the Despaire episode in relation to what follows it. At the House of Holiness 'not far away' (x.3.1) in the next canto, Redcrosse is offered a vision of the New Jerusalem and turns his back – at least for the while – on his sinfulness and confusion. Despaire comes between a series of mental states associated with pride and a turn towards spiritual enlightenment and victory. Susan Snyder notes in a pioneering study of the episode that the movement of Spenser's narrative formally reproduces a progression, from sinful *securitas* to assurance after despair, that came to be central in reformed theology. For Luther in particular, despair is a necessary stage on the way to salvation: in his commentary on Psalm 51 Luther argues that knowledge of God's mercy can only be reached through knowledge of the law, and to understand God's law is necessarily to despair.⁴³ As Snyder puts it, '[w]here Augustine and Bernard warn the Christian, 'You may despair', Luther thunders, 'You must!'.⁴⁴ Yet despair remains, in Lutheran and Calvinist theology, a grave sin: therefore it is, in Donald Beecher's formulation, a 'paradox... both a serious failure of faith and hence sin, yet a prerequisite to salvation'.⁴⁵ Narrative sequence, with its structure of temporally related events that might or might not also have causal relations, captures the paradoxical status of despair with uncanny accuracy. Redcrosse is on a quest to liberate Una's parents; any cave that he enters is therefore a deviation from his quest, analogous to sin. In retrospect, however, the necessity of going to the cave before the House of Holiness emerges. Andrew Escobedo has argued that this common identification

⁴³ Martin Luther, 'Psalm Fifty-One', in *Selected Commentaries on the Psalms, Volume One*, ed. by Hilton C. Oswald, *The Works of Martin Luther* (Charlottesville, VA: Fortress Press, 1974), vol. 10, pp. 235-243, p. 236.

⁴⁴ Susan Snyder, 'The Left Hand of God: Despair in the Medieval and Renaissance Tradition', *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965), 18-59, 25.

⁴⁵ Donald A. Beecher, 'The Anatomy of Melancholy in Book I of the "Faerie Queene" [sic], *Renaissance and Reformation* 12 (1988), 85-99, 86.

of a 'pride-despair-salvation-sequence' has blinded readers to the flickering recurrence of despair, or at least doubt, in *Redcrosse* later in the poem.⁴⁶ Escobedo's sense that Spenserian despair is, in words he borrows from Kierkegaard, 'always the present tense', is useful: part of the irony of confining despair to a cave, as I will show, is that despair is as ubiquitous as error.⁴⁷ However, Escobedo underestimates the flexibility of narrative sequence, its ability to combine meaningful and contingent relations, subsequence and consequence, between its temporal units. This is especially true of a romance narrative, constructed from divergent episodes; it is true also for Spenser, whose narrative is often unconcerned with unity or consistency, even while its allegorical nature tempts the reader to uncover concealed causal links between episodes. The proximity of the House of Holiness to the cave of Despaire is at once coincidental and, in Lutheran fashion, necessary.

After Una saves Redcrosse by reminding him of his election ('why shouldst thou then despaire, that chosen art?' (I.ix.53.5), Despaire is left in his cave: he picks up a 'halter' (54.4) and tries unsuccessfully to hang himself. This is an image of extreme stasis, in which Despaire can neither leave his cave or the life on earth he hates; he must abide for eternity. The stagnation and stasis partly characteristic of despair makes the cave, on one level, a suitable metaphorical manifestation. It has also alerted critics to the similarities between despair and more secular and purely humoral melancholy. Beth Quitslund observes that in *The Faerie Queene* 'despair... causes the same physical effects as melancholy', noting the similarities between Redcrosse's and Despaire's sunken faces

⁴⁶ Andrew Escobedo, 'Despair and the Proportion of the Self', *Spenser Studies* 17 (2003), 75-90, 76.

⁴⁷ Escobedo (2003), 85.

and the typical appearance of the self-consumed melancholic.⁴⁸ One such common ‘effect’ is sluggishness and even stasis, as documented extensively in the Elizabethan surveys of what had become a fascinating condition.⁴⁹ Quitslund aptly recognises that while reformed theology insisted on despair as a purely spiritual condition that could be alleviated only by God’s mysterious grace, in practice preachers softened the blow by employing metaphors of medicine and presenting despair as spiritual melancholy.⁵⁰ Yet her suggestion that Redcrosse imprisoned in Orgoglio’s dungeon represents, in the words of Timothy Bright, ‘the body overcharged with melancholy’, elides too neatly the two kinds of sadness. We should take seriously Bright’s insistence that despair and melancholy, though relatable by metaphor, are ‘neuer to be coupled in one felowship’.⁵¹

Keeping despair distinct from melancholy permits us to see that while spiritual death entails a melancholic, cave-like seclusion and sluggishness, it also manifests as restlessness and anguished frenzy. Spenser’s personification is a composite of absorbed influences from classical and medieval sources.⁵² As Moshe Barasch points out, artists in the medieval tradition to which he alludes understood despair not only as torpor but also as *desperatio*, a series of self-destructive and ‘violent, exaggerated movements’.⁵³ ‘Let one of his hands be shown in the act of tearing open his wound’, advises Leonardo in his *Treatise on Painting* for the artists portraying a desperate man.⁵⁴ Leonardo seems keen

⁴⁸ Beth Quitslund, ‘Despair and the Composition of the Self’, *Spenser Studies* 17 (2003), 91-106, 96.

⁴⁹ See Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* [1632] ed. by Nicolas K. Kiessling and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), and Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London, 1586).

⁵⁰ The preacher Richard Greenham writes, for example, that it is ‘sound Chirurgery to prick and pierce our consciences with the burning iron of the Law’. See Quitslund, 95.

⁵¹ Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London, 1586), p. 184.

⁵² Jennifer C. Vaught, ‘Spenser’s Dialogic Voice in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 41 (2001), 71-89.

⁵³ Moshe Barasch, ‘Despair in the Medieval Imagination’, *Social Research* 66 (1999), 565-576, 574.

⁵⁴ Barasch, 574.

to capture the frenzied movement of a figure inclined to suicide, but as Barasch suggests the stasis against which all figurative artists must contend made this difficult to embody; the *desperatio* in despair is therefore obscured by its static, melancholic aspect. In English medieval romance, whose allegorical potential Spenser develops with radical originality, despair is portrayed as desperation in the stories of ‘trial and faith’.⁵⁵ Stories such as *Sir Gowther* and *Isumbras* depict spiritual despair as a state of vagrancy and placelessness. *Isumbras* describes the fall of a prosperous man who becomes too complacently proud. With his house and land burnt and wasted, he is left to journey ‘thorow two kynges londes’ (157) with his wife and children, ‘as naked as they were borne’ (106) but for the cloak draped around them.⁵⁶ In *Sir Gowther*, a version of the French story of Robert the Devil, the eponymous anti-hero experiences despair as wandering: consumed with guilt for his murderous actions, he journeys ‘out of that ceté / Into anodur far cuntre’ (304-5), first to the Pope in Rome and then to a faraway castle.⁵⁷ Thomas Lodge’s elaboration of the tale, published in 1591, emphasises the restlessness of spiritual agony. ‘Sore trauided with his wounds’ after defeat by the Duke of Constance, Lodge’s Robert stalks the forest ‘searching for some place of securitie where he might hide himselfe from the enemye’.⁵⁸ As he walks he is struck by his depravity and grows ‘euery way... desperate’; he begins ‘to meditate on the nature of sinne, the causes of sinne, and the effects of sinne’.⁵⁹ As the recurrence of ‘sinne’ suggests, despair is a state of desperate restlessness,

⁵⁵ Laura A. Hibbard, *Medieval Romance in England: a Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances* [1924] (New York: Burt Franklin, 1960), pp. 3-10.

⁵⁶ ‘Isumbras’, in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Maldwyn Mills (London: Everyman, 1973), pp. 125-47. The detail of nakedness, repeated a few lines later (132) emphasises despair’s ability to obliterate social belonging and its markers, clothes being one of the most common.

⁵⁷ ‘Sir Gowther’, in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Maldwyn Mills (London: Everyman, 1973), pp. 148-69.

⁵⁸ Thomas Lodge, *The Famous, true and historical life of Robert second Duke of Normandy* [1591], *The Complete Works of Thomas Lodge*, ed. by Edmund Gosse [1883] (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), vol. 2, pp. 1-43, p. 29.

⁵⁹ Lodge, p. 30.

the spiritual equivalent of wandering paranoid in a forest. Romances such as *Emare*, in which characters are cast out at sea in rudderless boats, also portray despair as extreme vagrancy. As Helen Cooper observes in her study of this motif, 'the open seas constituted a landscape more desolate and uncharted than the most hostile and unknown of forests'.⁶⁰ The obscuring of God's grace was described as aptly by a limitless ocean in a romance as by a dark cave in an allegory. The final image of Spenser's *Despaire* combines the stasis of the melancholic with the frenzied movement of what Barasch calls 'the figure of one raving in despair', ceaselessly destroying himself by worrying about his looming destruction.⁶¹

The spatial characteristics of Spenser's cave of *Despaire* are, therefore, ironic. A mental state, characterised in part by restlessness and boundlessness, is contained in a single place; that place, moreover, is marked for its unhealthy remoteness from other places, guarded by a 'ghastly Owle / shrieking his balefull note' (33.6-7) who wards off incomers. Approaching *Despaire*, *Redcrosse* makes the same presumption of simplicity as at the outset of the poem: his grand assurance to *Trevisan* that he will 'neuer rest / Till I that treachours art haue heard and tryde' (32.1-2), and courteous request that *Trevisan* 'do me vnto his cabin guyde' (4) suggests that *Redcrosse* is still struggling to think outside the framework of chivalric romance, failing to recognise the figure in the 'cabin' as an ubiquitous force which might have stolen into his own mind. This irony, and the general structural similarity with the cave of *Error*, is too often obscured by a tendency in recent criticism to dis-personify *Despaire* without delay, treating his body and cave as unimportant preliminaries to his words. Tamara Göglein's otherwise excellent analysis

⁶⁰ Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 111.

⁶¹ Barasch, 572.

of Despaire's reliance on the syllogistic logic discredited by Renaissance humanist dialogue and, in particular, by the Ramist method prominent in Spenser's education, immediately dis-personifies Spenser's figure, framing Redcrosse's conversation with him as 'the protestant soul engaging in self-debate'.⁶² Interior mental experience is, of course, probably what the text ultimately describes. Yet it does so by embodying interior experience in an exterior landscape which must be included in an account of how it makes meaning. Thomas Roche observes that Spenser links the Despaire episode with Arthur's vision of Gloriana not just by placing them in the same canto but by repeating triads of rhyme words; in doing so Spenser shows that despair haunts even a vision of love as exalted as Arthur's, who risks the fate of Terwin and 'love as despair'.⁶³ Like error, despair exists in the world tangled up with its opposites and apposites. Yet Roche obscures the important irony of this entangled, diffuse state being contained in a cave, when he comments that it is 'as if the dialogue between Redcrosse and Despair [*sic*] were taking place only in Redcross's [*sic*] mind'.⁶⁴ The dialogue happens, as the text tells us, in a cave.

Yet the Despaire episode also presents an ironic juxtaposition that sets it apart from the cave of Error. Though Despaire's rooted body and secluded cave contrast with the roving and raving restlessness associated with what he stands for – the part of despair that is medieval *desperatio* – his appearance and habitat do not present themselves as something more wholesome. The cave as it appears to Redcrosse and the reader, 'darke, dolefull, dreary' (33.4) and 'surrounded by 'wandering ghosts' (9) is easily comprehended as the desolate place it is: 'stockes and stubs of trees' (34.1) and 'carcases' (5) cover the

⁶² Tamara Göglein, 'Utterances of the Protestant Soul in "The Faerie Queene": The Allegory of Holiness and the Humanist Discourse of Reason', *Criticism* 36 (1994), 1-19, 1.

⁶³ Thomas P. Roche, Jr., 'The Menace of Despair and Arthur's Vision, *Faerie Queene* I.9', *Spenser Studies* 4 (1984), 71-92, 74.

⁶⁴ Roche, 72.

surrounding ground. Yet Despaire's rhetoric, unlike his body and dwelling place, brilliantly conceals its perverse character. Despaire's rehearsed speech extends over three stanzas before Redcrosse can speak; when he does he tries, in Katherine Koller's words, 'to beat despair with classical argument'.⁶⁵ To Despaire's question as to why Redcrosse should fault Terwin for his suicide ('why wilt not let him passe' (39.8)), and his description of death as 'sleepe after toyle, porte after stormie seas' (40.8), Redcrosse can only offer the stoical maxim that 'the souldier may not moue from watchfull sted' (41.4). Lacking faith, he cannot counter the distortions of theological truth in Despaire's ensuing speech with scripture. Yet it is important to read Despaire's speech in relation to his appearance and dismal habitat: though perverted and imbalanced, his speech is eloquent and sophisticated, in great contrast to his cave. Thus he catches Redcrosse and possibly many readers off guard. Like Error, Despaire appears monstrous; unlike her he does his evil work by disguising himself as somebody reasonable, a reformed preacher urging his congregation to think on their sins.⁶⁶ This is a layer of irony not present in the cave of Error: of a figure whose appearance and environment looks very obviously like the desolation he represents, but who spreads and insinuates himself with a craftiness and subtlety entirely at variance with that obviousness. Error spreads by force; Despaire, by guile.

The contrast between the habitats of Error and Despaire is reinforced by the different ways in which their caves – like Drayton's gushing Wookey Hole, or the Roman *nymphaeum* – exude liquid. Error's cavernous body spews forth a flood of vomit,

⁶⁵ Katherine Koller, 'Art, Rhetoric and Holy Dying in the "Faerie Queene" with Special Reference to the Despair Canto', *Studies in Philology* 61 (1964), 128-139, 139.

⁶⁶ Richard Mallette, 'The Protestant Art of Preaching in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies* 7 (1987), 3-25.

suggesting even in death the surprising ubiquity and diffuseness of the state she embodies. (Error, like vomit, goes everywhere.) Despaire's cave, however, features no such violent effusion. In fact, it is notably dry: no 'fruite, nor leaf was euer seene' (34.2) on the trees. There is flowing liquid, but it comes not from Despaire's 'shronke' (35.9) body or his stunted cave, but from Terwin's 'drery corse' (36.5):

All wallowd in his own yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh alas,
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood.
(6-9)

This image of a corpse emptying itself of blood is a brilliant parody of the effusive cave; as early modern wounds often could, it 'stirs' strong feeling in Redcrosse, rather than quasi-textual interpretation. He burns with 'firie zeale' (37.4).⁶⁷ Yet this literal flood, whose effect on Redcrosse is quickening, is not how Despaire spreads himself. In this cave the gushing flow of liquid is merely a vivid detail, not accorded the importance it has in the cave of Error. Despaire's speech replaces it, insinuating its conclusions in Redcrosse's brain in a manner characterised as the flow of poisonous liquid. 'His subtile tong', Trevisan reports, 'like dropping honny, mealt' th / Into the heart, and searcheth euery vaine' (31.5-6). At the cave of Error, Redcrosse seems unprepared for a monster which attacks by spreading everywhere, in labyrinthine 'boughtes' and revolting vomit. In this deadlier cave, he is taken aback ('ere one be aware' (7)) by a monster whose spread is interior and intangible. Despaire's cleverest trick is to tell Redcrosse that 'none els to death this man despaying driue / But his own guiltie mind' (38.5-6). Distinguished from

⁶⁷ For the entwining of the writing of secular wounds with the dominant discourse of Christ's 'wounds of love', understood as outpourings of love that provoked similarly ecstatic reactions, see Frederick C. Bauerschmidt, 'The Wounds of Christ', *Journal of Literature and Theology* 5 (1991), 83-100, 87.

Error by the element of concealment and the lack of physical flow, he is more akin to Archimago and therefore, as the narrative of the 1590 text would suggest, more dangerous.

The complexities of Despaire's character with which Redcrosse must contend – and which the reader can enjoy and contemplate – are best appreciated, I have argued, if criticism does not immediately dis-personify him, and considers him as an embodied figure in a place. Such a preservation of Despaire's body and cave also allows for some fresh comparisons to be drawn. The *Metamorphoses*, for example, also explores the irony of externalising a (disastrously) interior state in a body that resides in a particular place.

In Book II, Athena goes to seek the help of Invidia, or Envy:

Protinus Invidiae nigro squalentia tabo
tecta petit. Domus est imis in vallibus huius
abdita, sole carens, non ulli pervia vento,
tristis et ignavi plenissima frigoris, et quae
igne vacet semper, caligine semper abundet.⁶⁸
(II.760-4)

Envy's 'tecta' ('shack') has a door, but is so 'nigro squalentia tabo' ('covered in black filth') that it has been translated as a cave.⁶⁹ Her abode shares the remoteness from the world that characterises Despaire's dwelling place, 'non ulli pervia vento' ('inaccessible by any wind'). Envy's cave-like house is also 'non... pervia' by Athena; she needs Envy to poison Aglauros as punishment for her disdainful treatment of Mercury, who is in love with her

⁶⁸ 'Straightway she sought the filthy slimy shack
Where Envy dwelt deep in a dreary dale,
A gruseome sunless hovel, filled with frost,
Heart-numbing frost, its stagnant air unstirred
By any breeze, for ever lacking warmth
Of cheerful fire, forever wrapped in gloom'. *Metamorphoses*, p. 47.
⁶⁹ Ibid.

sister Herse. Athena can command Envy but 'neque... succedere tectis / fas habet' (766-7) ('cannot by divine law enter under her roof'), as it would pollute her. The impenetrability of Envy's dwelling and its magical capacity to contaminate suggests that, like Despaire's cave, it extends the properties of its inhabitant's body. On Athena's orders Envy diffuses her poisonous self quite literally into the body of Aglauros, invading her bedroom where she 'medio spargit pulmone venenum' (801) ('spreads her juice into the midst of her lungs'). Ovid's portrayal of Envy, itself based on Virgil's description of Fama in the *Aeneid*, had clear influence on Spenser.⁷⁰ Envy appears in the pageant of deadly sins at the Castle of Pride, this time gendered as male; like his sister in the *Metamorphoses*, who is chewing a viper's flesh, he is chewing 'betweene his teeth a venemous tode' (*Met.*I.iv.30.3). Ovid's image of the diffusion of envy is more physical, and therefore more allegorical, than Spenser's more literal portrayal of Despaire infecting Redcrosse in words. Yet like the cave of Despaire, Ovid's personification participates in the irony of embodying and externalising a state that is profoundly insidious and interior. Encountering Mercury at the threshold of her own dwelling place, and shutting him out, Aglauros is already envious, possessed by a grievance at odds with Mercury's frank greeting. Before Ovid embodies it as a figure in an infected place, envy is all in Aglauros' head.

In Ariosto's adaptation of this scene *invidia* grows from a baseless enmity in personal relations to a madness capable of destroying social and even political relations. Ariosto's *Cinque Canti*, the incomplete sequel to *Orlando Furioso*, begins in the aftermath of

⁷⁰ Colin Burrow makes a similar argument about Ovid's cave of Morpheus and its diffusion of sleep. See Colin Burrow, "'Full of the Maker's Guile": Ovid on Imitating and on the Imitation of Ovid', in *Ovid's Metamorphoses and its Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 271-287.

Charlemagne's victory over Moorish forces. At a congress of fairies in India, Alcina decides to take revenge and enlists the help of Envy who lives in the Himalayas at one of the seven doorways to Hell, in a 'spelunca spaventosa' (I.40.1) ('terrifying cave').⁷¹ Like Ovid's personification Ariosto's Envy is feeding on the 'carne venenosa... d'una cerasta' (5-6) ('poisonous flesh of a horned viper'); unlike Ovid's entirely isolated figure, however, this figure of Envy has 'cento ministri' (41.1) ('a hundred servants') doing her bidding. In the *Cinque Canti*, Envy's insinuation of herself is similarly magnified. Instructed to poison Ganelon, Envy travels to France and invades his dreams, before sliding her poisonous snakes into his heart (56). His latent envy compounded by this infection, Ganelon is stirred to 'tradimento' (66.8) ('treason') when Charlemagne gives gifts more lavish to the court of Clairmont than to his court at Mainz. Escalating infighting and a succession of treacherous betrayals ensue. Ariosto's personification of Envy is, like Ovid's, alive to the irony of an interior state embodied externally, but his geographical positioning of Envy's cave in Asia adds a new layer to the irony. Having faced and defeated threats from external forces, the armies of Europe are destroyed from within by a radically interior mental state; that mental state, however, has its source in the Himalayas, on the other side of the world.

Lust's Cave and the Irony of Agency

The two prominent caves examined above belong in the landscape of Book I and the 1590 text. The second instalment of *The Faerie Queene* is often supposed to be less densely allegorical (or to feature less personification allegory), though some have challenged this

⁷¹ Ludovico Ariosto, *Cinque Canti* [1526-28], *Cinque Canti / Five Cantos*, trans. by A. Sheers, ed. by Sheers and David Quint (London: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 76-77.

position.⁷² Caves enclosing allegorical personages do feature in the 1596 text; some work in ways broadly similar to the caves of Error or Despaire. Halfway through Book IV, a personification of Lust abducts Amoret as she walks through the forest ‘for pleasure or for need’ (IV.vii.4.2). The cave where he imprisons her, and where she meets Aemylia, is as sequestered from the world as the cave of Despaire: located ‘farre from all peoples hearing’ (8.8), it is blocked off with a ‘stone... wont to stop the mouth’ (20.4-5). Like the caves in the 1590 text, it extends the body of its inhabitant and seems infected by his essence. Re-entering the cave to feast on Amoret, Lust commits a ‘wonted sinne’ (20.8) that leaves him ‘spredding ouer all the flore’ (7): suggesting masturbation, this image also recalls the welling of blood from Terwin’s body and the flood of vomit from Error’s mouth. With masturbatory meanness, however, it spreads only within the cave, not outside it. When Timias fatally wounds Lust a few stanzas later, he bleeds the ‘streame of coleblacke bloud’ (27.8) that issued also from Error’s body. Spenser frames the exposition of Lust with the reminder that he is ‘no man, yet onely like in shape’ (5.2). As a physical figure, Lust is less recognisably human than even self-consumed Despaire, with the teeth of a ‘tusked Bore’ (5.6), a sagging ‘neather lip’ (6.1) used to ‘stow’ (4) the ‘cruell spoyle’ (4) of his cannibalistic hunts, and ears ‘more great then th’eaes of Elephants’ (9). His monstrosity is somewhere between that of Error, whose otherness is revoltingly obvious, and Despaire, whose vicious nature is concealed.

The ambiguity of Spenser’s portrayal of Lust – a figure of ‘monstrous shape’ (32.7) but human enough to possess a ‘sowle’ (3), albeit ‘sinfull’ (3) – alerts the reader to similar

⁷² Kenneth Borris argues against ‘assumptions of the general decline of allegory *circa* 1600’. See Kenneth Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 145.

ambiguities in the story of Amoret's imprisonment. On first reading the description of the cave, at an extreme remove from the world and depriving its captive women of all freedom, might suggest that the episode is easily interpreted: Amoret is captured, and taken against her will to a place representing lust; she does not enter of her own volition like Redcrosse at the caves of Error and Despaire. Yet Aemylia's account of how she ended up there challenges the simple sequestration of Lust suggested by the cave. Aemylia's father disparaged her love for Amyas due to his 'low degree' (15.7); Aemylia's plan ('which in my heart did lurke' (17.3), she says) was to meet Amyas in a 'priuy place' (7) but to her dismay she met Lust instead who, 'trussing' (18.7) her, brought her to his cave. Spenser implies a causal link between the encounter Aemylia plans (with Amyas) and the one she experiences (with Lust). In disobeying her father, and planning to consummate her love for Amyas before the conferral of chastity by marriage, Aemylia is presented as guilty of lust, complicit in her imprisonment. As the canto's argument box suggests, Lust with a body and a capital 'L' may also exist as a diffuse and lowercase 'lust' (*Arg.1*).

Aemylia's story serves as a gloss with which to re-read Amoret's capture. Amoret is 'snatcht' (4.6) as she wanders through the forest 'for pleasure or for need' (2); she shrieks 'feebly', and the repetition of 'so feebly' (7) in the next clause suggests, troublingly, that she does not struggle enough. If embraced too hastily, though, the idea of Amoret's complicity in her capture, her own lustfulness, obliterates the allegory and produces a kind of victim blaming. John Hankins, for whom 'allegorical characters are not people but abstract qualities', reads Amoret's wounds as 'the woman's shame at having yielded to... sensual temptations'.⁷³ Sheila Cavanagh provides a sharp critique of the way rape scenes

⁷³ John Erskine Hankins, *Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 21, p. 160.

are read by male critics. 'Deflections of responsibility', like the one Hankins makes, are typical and suspicious. Deflection of responsibility from Lust to Amoret is the same mental operation as immediate dis-personification.⁷⁴ However, Cavanagh understates the uncomfortable extent to which Amoret does seem already infected by her captor. Amoret's errancy in the forest, she argues, indicates only 'a need for bladder relief or a stretch'.⁷⁵ Yet after experiencing the House of Temperance, in which readers and visitors are invited to compare bodily and spiritual forms of continence, it is hard not to read Amoret's 'need' as a bodily looseness signifying a psycho-sexual one. There is, as Lauren Silberman expresses it, 'deliberate ambiguity about whether Amoret is at all responsible'.⁷⁶ Yet the description of Lust's cave, with its marked separateness from the world, initially obscures from the reader the episode's complication of agency, suggesting instead a moral landscape in which vices can be neatly shut off from the people who experience them. The cave is a misleading, ironic 'simplification'.⁷⁷

Amoret's incarceration in Lust's cave plays on the trope of the imprisoned lover, adding allegory and inverting gender. Palamon in 'The Knight's Tale', for example, finds himself locked in a prison so easily escaped it is perhaps nothing more than his mind-forged manacles. The confinement of the Petrarchan lover in a depleting and inescapable mental space was part of a familiar poetics of incarceration.⁷⁸ Yet the figure of Lust stockpiling

⁷⁴ Sheila Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 145.

⁷⁵ Cavanagh, p. 145.

⁷⁶ Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 120.

⁷⁷ Colin Burrow, *Edmund Spenser* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), p. 46.

⁷⁸ On early modern prison literature, see Rivkah Zim, 'Writing Behind Bars: Literary Contexts and the Authority of Carceral Experience', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 72 (2009), 291-311. Interest in early modern carceral experience and poetics has grown recently, as demonstrated by a recent conference, 'Prison/Exile: Controlled Spaces in Early Modern Europe', 10-11 March 2017, University of Oxford.

his prey in his cave (Aemylia has seen him eat ‘seauen’ (13.5) women) might also have reminded early modern readers of the outlaws and criminals who fled to caves from moral and legal constraints. George Pen’s pamphlet *Newes out of Germanie* (1584) rehearses the career of a figure called Gempertinga who purportedly murdered over 960 victims.⁷⁹ Like Despaire and Lust, Gempertinga disdains the outside world, venturing out only to rob and murder passing travellers, whose possessions ‘he caryed to his Caue’.⁸⁰ The setting of Pen’s brief account in ‘Germanie’ allows him to exaggerate, turning the man into a monster characterised, like Lust, by a terrible excess of desire and lack of temperance. Gempertinga’s ravenous desire for the possessions of others has driven him, ironically, to a state of quarantine from society; Lust, similarly, wishes to infect and consume others so much that he has become an outlaw, the exact inverse of the concept of friendship Book IV explores.

Sensationalised real outlaws such as Gempertinga had literary analogues, to which Lust’s cave also alludes. In Book VIII of the *Aeneid*, Evander describes the ruined cave of Vulcan’s son Cacus:

hic spelunca fuit vasto summota recessu,
 semihominis Caci facies quam dira tenebat
 solis inaccessam radiis; semperque recenti
 caede tepebat humus, foribusque adfixa superbis
 ora virum tristi pendebant pallida tabo.
 (VIII,193-7)⁸¹

⁷⁹ George Pen, *Newes out of Germanie* (London, 1584). ‘I saw the scrole which was found in the murtherers Caue’, says Pen, ‘wherin he had written the names of al one that he had muredred’. Pen, p. 2.

⁸⁰ Pen, p. 3.

⁸¹ *Aeneid*, pp. 72-73.

A place that is now civilised, the kingdom of Evander (and, for Virgil's readers, Augustan Rome), was in the mythological past a 'vasto... recessu'. Like Lust, Cacus is 'semihominis', half-human and half-monstrous. The monstrosity of Virgil's figure proceeds from his half-divine ancestry; Spenser's Lust, on the other hand, lacks complex personhood by being a personification. Yet in both cases figures have been driven into a cave due to an appetite so insatiable it destroys what surrounds it. The ground is wet, as in the caves of Lust and Despaire, with bodily fluids ('recenti / caede'), and 'ora virum... pendebant' ('the visages of men hung') from the entrance. Like the owl perching above Despaire's cave, Cacus's 'adfixa... ora' repel visitors from a place created by its inhabitant's capacity to consume them. As Evander elaborates the tale of Cacus, overthrown (like Echidna) by Heracles, this curious mixture of repulsion and consumption is articulated in a more explicit metaphor. Cacus stole eight of Heracles's cows; so as not to leave evidence, he dragged them 'cauda in speluncam' (by the tail into the cave), so that their footprints lead away from it. Cacus succeeds as long as he is able, like Gempertinga, to seclude himself from the world. That seclusion, however, permits a destructive consumption of the world and its bodies, which are drawn into the cave to be consumed and flow out as gore.⁸² The irony of Lust's reification as a cave participates in the irony of the outlaw – the person who must flee from society, because he spreads himself onto society so destructively.

III. Caves in Context

⁸² In William Warner, *Albions England* (London, 1597), Cacus is 'Spanish', a tyrant pursued from his kingdom by Heracles. Eventually he comes to 'repose his wearied limmes' in a cave on Mount Aventine where he resolves 'thenceforth himselfe to hide'. His flight from Heracles and settling in the cave bears striking resemblance to the trajectory of Spenser's Malbecco. Cacus realises that his 'title now must change' from King to something else, along with the shift from 'Royall seat' to 'ragged Caue'. Malbecco, similarly, 'is woxen so deform'd' (III.x.60.8) in the 'balefull mansion' (58.2) of his resting place that he loses his name.

There are intriguing differences between the three caves discussed above; Error, Despaire and Lust are contained and exuded in varying ways. There are also some deep similarities: in each episode Spenser uses the isolation of the cave to reflect ironically on mental states which, when allegoresis occurs, emerge as diffuse and entangled. In the remainder of this chapter I will examine the cave in some early modern cultural contexts that explain why it might have lent itself so easily to allegorical use.

Caves and Sixteenth-Century Antiquarianism

In Book III, before their journey to Fairyland, Britomart and Glauce visit Merlin in his headquarters at Cairmardin, a 'deepe delue' (III.iii.7.7), whose description links it in some respects with the allegorical caves examined above: its location is remote, 'farre from the vewe of day' (7) and 'darksom' (15.7). 'And if thou euer happen that same way' (8.1) Spenser tells the reader, 'go to see that dreadfull place' (2):

It is an hideous hollow caue (they say)
Vnder a Rock that lyes a litle space
From the swift *Barry*, tombling downe apace,
Emongst the woody hilles of Dyneuoure...
(8.3-6)

In this secluded but specific nook of contemporary Wales, Merlin's 'cruell Feendes' (9) are struggling to erect the 'brasen wall' (10.3) they were commanded to 'complye' (3) in ancient time. Within *The Faerie Queene's* topography this 'wall' is also a symbolic boundary between the real landscape of the island of Britain and the allegorical world of Fairyland. Merlin is not a personification, but his control over his fiends demonstrates the magical influence and causation common beyond the border in Fairyland, where

allegorical personages inhabiting caves infect the environs with their agency: 'writing strange characters in the grownd' (8), Merlin has the 'feendes' (9) 'to his seruice bound' (9). Britomart and Glauce's approach to Cairmardin is overlaid by a rehearsal of its aetiology, of how Merlin came to be imprisoned, 'buried vnder beare' (11.2) in a cave confusingly similar to the one where, in Britomart's ancient time, Merlin is still working. *The Faerie Queene* typically describes gradual approach with digression, as the next chapter shows, so that the snapping back to the scene from which the digression departed functions as a narrative mimesis of the abrupt drawing up at the entrance. Britomart and Glauce's arrival is communicated by such a digression that ends, as is typical, with 'they here arriuing' (14.1). Unusually, however, the digression that symbolises their gradual approach is not a switch of perspective but a switch of temporality, forward to the present day. The ancient cavern in which Merlin delivers his advice is thus superimposed with the present 'hideous hollow caue' which 'thou' can visit.

'They say' (3) mimics the documentary tone of the antiquarian writers from whom Spenser borrows heavily in this canto. Traditionally, critics have focused on the way Merlin's prophecy of England's destiny and the present 'royall Virgin' (III.iii.49.6) engages with Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Spenser's contemporaries Holinshed and Camden.⁸³ Yet Merlin's cave, as well as his words, reflects Spenser's reading of antiquarians, and how the antiquarian characterisation of the British cave suggested to him its usefulness as an allegorical place. While Merlin's imprisonment is based on Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, the 'hideous hollow cave' (8.3) itself, echoing with noises of labouring fiends has its source in Giraldus Cambrensis, whose *Itineraria* describes it in similar terms:

⁸³ See Carrie Anna Harper, *The Sources of the British Chronicle History in Spenser's Faerie Queen* [sic] (Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr University, 1910). See also *Variorum*, vol. 3, pp. 232-234.

Est autem hic notabile, quod in ipso insulae introitu, in rupe marina apparet rima permodica, ad quam, si aurem apponas, audies operae strepitum quasi fabrilis.⁸⁴

Preserving Giraldus's direct address to the reader ('si aurem apponas, audies'), Spenser suppresses his sceptical explanation of the 'strepitum' as the sound of the sea's flow. Like many antiquarian writers, especially Drayton, Spenser describes his cave in terms of the river beside it – 'the swift Barry, tombling downe apace' (8.5). Spenser gets his rivers wrong: 'the swift Barry' runs fifty miles to the north; the river by Cairmardin is the Towy. The moment of perhaps mischievous imprecision suggests that Merlin's cave is a fantastical literary place more than a geographically precise one. Richard McCabe argues for 'the essentially literary quality of classical and contemporary historiography' in the late sixteenth century.⁸⁵ Spenser certainly uses antiquarian writing for its fictions rather than its demonstrable facts. Yet his description of Merlin's cave claims an apparently historical pseudo-objectivity ('they say') which, as the text soon demonstrates, is unwarranted. Spenser alludes to the antiquarians but also adapts them, and situates this adapted material alongside borrowings from romance. Merlin's cave thus seems on the one hand real and precisely situated, and on the other a magical place in an amalgam of locations.

⁸⁴ 'It is an odd thing that in a rock by the sea where one first lands on the island there is a small crack. If you press your ear to it, you can hear a noise like that of blacksmiths at work'. Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales), *Itinerarium Cambriae* [1191], ed. and trans. by Lewis Thorpe, *The Journey Through Wales and The Description of Wales* (London: Penguin, 1978), *Journey* I.6, p. 125. Giraldus goes on to compare the 'blowing of bellows' and 'strokes of hammers' to the steel being forged in the Chalyb (Chaldean) 'cavernis' (*Aeneid* VIII.420-421) in Book VIII of the *Aeneid*. See also *Variorum*, vol. 3, p. 224.

⁸⁵ Richard McCabe, 'Spenser and Holinshed', in *The Oxford Handbook to Holinshed's Chronicles*, ed. by Pauline Kewes, Felicity Heal and Ian Archer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 543-558, pp. 545-6.

Spenser's distortions of antiquarian facts demonstrates his willingness to reposit the language and imagery of antiquarianism. He adapts two characteristics of antiquarian caves, and uses them in *The Faerie Queene* to foreground the cave as allegorical location, emphasising it as a remote, sequestered enclosure of vice. The first is the notion of the cave as a space that preserves ancient or primitive time and people. William Camden's *Britannia* (1586, translated in 1610) takes in, at the extremity of its range, the distant island of Thule:

[H]eere in a British Iland, as Plutarch recordeth, there goeth a tale how Saturne is kept sleeping in a depe cave or botome of a golden pumish stone; that he is by Jupiter cast into a most deepe and dead sleepe, which serveth instead of bonds... also that he hath many spirits or daemones attending about him as servitours.⁸⁶

Though Camden goes on to dispute this 'prety fable', the image of Saturn frozen in the far north demonstrates the capacity of caves to preserve a past in which demonic agents and magical causation abounded.⁸⁷ Saturn's 'spirits or daemones attending' recall Merlin's 'feendes'; the 'golden pumish stone', and suggestion of buried resources, echoes the Cave of Mammon. The Roman empire itself is also preserved in caves closer to home. Describing Moresby in Cumbria, Camden reports 'many monuments of antiquity', including 'caves which they used to tearme Picts-Holes'; the caves have turned up 'stones with inscriptions engraven in them... Of which upon I read this, LUCIVS SEVERINVS ORDINATVS'.⁸⁸ Like Merlin's cave, the Moresby 'Pict-Holes' preserve a former civilisation and its 'straunge characters' (*FQ*, III.iii.14.8). Elsewhere, caves preserve not the

⁸⁶ William Camden, *Britannia* [1586], trans. by Philemon Holland [London, 1610], *Britain, or a Chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1637), II, 'The Smaller Ilands in the British Ocean', pp. 201-223, p. 220.

⁸⁷ The story, Camden supposes, really means that Thule and surrounding islands are rich in 'veines or mines of Mettals, over which Saturne is president'. Camden sees this more prosaic meaning as 'covertly couched by a *Mythology*' of the figure in his cave. Camden (1637), p. 220.

⁸⁸ Camden (1637), 'Cumberland', I, pp. 765-780, p. 766.

precarious ancient civility of the Romans, but the primitive anarchy of giants. Describing Cornwall, Camden rehearses the notion that the ‘brawny and strong limmed’ Cornish are the last descendants of the British giants. They were overthrown by the Titans, and for the few who survived, ‘caves serv’d for cabins’.⁸⁹ Harrison’s *Description of Britaine*, part of Holinshed’s *Chronicles* (1587), also explores the myth of prehistoric giants and associates them with caves. He alleges that ‘neither our Iland, nor any part of the maine, haue at one time or other been altogether without them’.⁹⁰ He cites the numerous giants of the Old Testament, as well as Boccaccio’s story of the Sicilian giant in the *Decameron*, in which ‘an exceeding high giant’ is discovered, his teeth intact, ‘in the caue of a mountaine’.⁹¹ To go deep into Europe’s landscape is to go backwards in time.⁹² As a rare opening into the earth’s interior, the cave overlays the present on the past, just as Spenser does in his description of Cairmardin.

Richard Stanihurst’s ‘Description of Ireland’, also part of the *Chronicles*, records ‘an infinit number of giants slaine’ in Ireland’s pre-history. ‘Certaine there were’, however, ‘that got them into some lurking dens or caves’.⁹³ The giants’ caves preserve their ancient life beyond its natural time: emerging from the caves, they find ‘no resistance’ and settle ‘in the best part of the countrie’.⁹⁴ Like Harrison’s, Stanihurst’s images of giants reflect what Arthur Ferguson calls ‘the cave myth’, the notion popularised by colonial experience that

⁸⁹ This translates the Latin (‘terga dabant vestes... antra lares’) of ‘Havillan the poet’. William Camden, *Britannia* [1586], trans. by Philemon Holland [1610], ed. by Robert Mayhew (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2003), ‘Cornwall’, vol. 1, pp. 183-198, p. 186-187.

⁹⁰ Harrison, *The Description of Britaine V*, in Holinshed (1587), p. 8.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² The preservation in caves of the ancient time of the giants adds heft to the association of the cave with (heroic) childhood. Artegall was brought up by Astraea in ‘a caue from companie exile’ (*FQ*, V.i.6.7).

⁹³ Richard Stanihurst, *The Description of Ireland*, in Raphael Holinshed, *The Second Volume of Chronicles: conteyning the description, conquest, inhabitation and troublesome estate of Ireland* (London, 1586), p. 48.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

ancient or supposedly primitive peoples 'lived a solitary and exiguous existence in caves and forests'.⁹⁵ As Stanihurst shows, the near empire as well as the distant colonies could confirm the cave myth. Spenser himself participated: in the *View Irenius* explains the Irish wearing of mantles and 'long glibbes' as a preservation of ancient Scythian custom, obscured under the Roman Empire and renewed after its decline by the 'Northern Nations' who 'breakinge out of their Colde Caues and frozen habitacion into the swete soile of Europe... broughte with them their vsuall weedes'.⁹⁶ The native Irish mantle is the last vestige of an ancient culture; the metaphor becomes explicit when Irenius says of the Irishman that 'his mantle is his Cave'.⁹⁷ The cave myth reveals a paradox which it then must suppress: the primitiveness of colonised natives disqualifies them from determining their relationship with, and sovereignty over, their land; but that primitiveness is proved by an image of their total immersion in the land – their inhabitation of its caves.

The second characteristic of the cave in antiquarian writing which Spenser adapts for allegorical use is the association of caves with marvels and wonders. The antiquarian project sought to describe the land rather than to re-enchant it; or, as Walsham suggests, the antiquarians tried to re-enchant a reformed landscape *by* describing it, and without mystification.⁹⁸ As Bart van Es shows, Elizabethan chorography's break from conventional forms of history was its 'use of land as the organizational [*sic*] template'.⁹⁹ In this rational template the wondrous could not be completely excluded, but its range

⁹⁵ Arthur B. Ferguson, *Utter Antiquity: Perceptions of Prehistory in Renaissance England* (London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 61.

⁹⁶ *View*, fol. 28v, p. 100.

⁹⁷ *View*, fol. 29, pp. 100-101.

⁹⁸ See Walsham, pp. 476-479.

⁹⁹ Bart van Es, *Spenser's Forms of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 50.

could be severely reduced: magic in the landscape becomes the exception rather than the norm. It's striking, therefore, that in the pared-down antiquarian catalogues of inexplicable wonders in Britain's landscape, caves feature so prominently. The 'maruels of England' listed at the end of Harrison's *Description* are restricted to only four; two of these include caves. First recorded is the 'vehement and strong wind' that blows out of the hills at the 'Pek' (known today as the 'Peak Cavern' or 'Devil's Arse'): 'if a man doo cast his cote or cloake into the caue from whence it issueth, it driueth the same backe againe'. Wookey is also considered a wonder, 'an ample and large hole under the ground'.¹⁰⁰ Harrison attaches as an afterthought to his four wonders the 'litle rockie Ile in Aber Barrie' which Spenser transforms into Merlin's preserved headquarters: 'wherevnto if a man doo laie his eare, he shall heare such noises as are commonlie made in smiths forges'.¹⁰¹ To avoid dismissal as superstition, the wonder must offer itself to be experienced: Harrison's 'man' is equivalent to Spenser's 'thou', who might 'trauail the same way'. The association of the cave not only with the past, but also with the past's magic, allows its folkloric associations to survive as respectable wonders.¹⁰² The magical causation and suspension of natural law in caves is transposed to the infectious and

¹⁰⁰ Harrison, *The Description of England* XXIV, in Holinshed (1587), p. 129.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Landscape wonders in English antiquarian writing often possess a mysterious resistance to the operation of otherwise ubiquitous forces. Caves are a particularly tangible example, excluding light and other forms of infiltration. Yet some of these wonders include invisible resistance of exterior force. Stanihurst describes a 'window not glazed or latized' in Castleknocke, a village near Dublin; 'let the weather be storme, the wind bluster boisterouslie... yet place a candle there, and it will burne as if no puffed wind blew'. Stanihurst, in Holinshed (1586-7), p. 30. George Owen's *The Description of Pembrokeshire* (London, 1603) comments of Whitechurch that 'within the limits of that parish there was never seen any adder alive'. Owen, p. 194. Thomas Fuller's *The History of the Worthies of England* (London, 1662) describes many such wondrously resistant zones, such as Fishtoft in Lincolnshire where 'no Mice or Rats are found', and a stream in Merionethshire which preserves itself and its ecosystem as it flows through a lake. Fuller gives such resistant zones the name of 'antipathetical places', characterising them as '*Aenigmaes* in nature'. Fuller, 'Lincolnshire', p. 151. Thus the resistance of the antipathetical place to natural force has a metaphorical equivalent in its defiance of easy understanding.

expulsive places of Fairyland. What is wondrous in the antiquarian cave – in a detailed and characterful but de-mystified landscape – becomes allegorical in *The Faerie Queene*.

As van Es has argued, English antiquarians did not exclude poetry from their project. The success of Spenser's efforts to incorporate antiquarian detail and style into *The Faerie Queene* is reflected in its foundational influence on Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*. Drayton's poem uses rivers as its organising principle, but his stylised English landscape is also full of caves. Continually figured as persons, the rivers of *Poly-Olbion* often explain their origins in personal terms, identifying as their parents a cave or hole. Thus Drayton draws on the Spenserian motif of the expulsive and productive cave. The poem's survey of all the rivers of Britain takes in many caves. One of the first mythical figures the poem depicts is Saturn, exiled after his overthrow by Zeus. Saturn's prison, Drayton alleges, is under the Ducalidon, the sea north of Scotland, where he is still 'bound in those gloomie Caves with Adamantine chaines' (I.30). Caves and rivers are intimately connected throughout *Poly-Olbion*. Rivers flow underground, like the Lyd in Devon which 'throwes / Her selfe amongst the rocks; and so incavern'd goes' (I.222), and also originate from caves: Wookey Hole in Gloucestershire is treated in Song 3 among several wonders. Her apostrophe to Britain, which laments its neglect of Glastonbury, ends in tears:

Which issued through her breast in many a boysterous blast;
And with such floods of teares her sorrow doth condole,
As into rivers turne within that darkesome hole.
(III.316-18)¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* [1612-1622], ed. by J. William Hebel, *The Works of Michael Drayton* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1931-1941), Song III.316-318, vol. 4, p. 56.

Extending his personification of the cave, Drayton imagines the air and water expelled from it as sighs and tears. Dis-personified, this emanation is the river Cheddar, who 'himself' speaks several lines earlier. Outraged at Wookey's wrongs, he himself gushes forth so strongly that he is 'like to breake

The greater bankes of Ax, as from his mothers Cave,
He wandred towards the Sea.
(285-6)

Wookey's tears are compounded by the gushing forth of her own emanation, the Cheddar flooding into the Axe. The cave in this instance is the origin of powerful flows. Most significantly, it is personified by Cheddar (himself a personification) as a 'mother', an originary body. Caves, in Drayton's survey, are mothers and mouths of rivers. They demonstrate the influence of Ovidian literary landscapes, of course, but can also be traced to *The Faerie Queene*, in which virtues and vices flow from one another in quasi-progenitive relationships. Spenser's caves have a close association not just with rivers, but also with the effusion of concepts.

Caves in Court and Country Entertainment

Early modern readers, especially those interested in antiquarianism, probably associated caves with a set of qualities which in Spenser's hands come to participate in the dynamics of allegory. Yet Elizabethan audiences had another, less literary, reason to associate caves with allegory. The entertainments and pageants devised for the queen, at the beginning of her reign and in its late 'second decade', at court and in the grounds of private estates, are full of personifications. Some of these share names with characters in *The Faerie Queene*; many live or hide in, and emerge dramatically from, caves.

Entering London for her coronation, Elizabeth Tudor witnessed an allegorical pageant of just authority, *Veritas Temporis Filia* ('Time the Daughter of Truth') devised by Richard Mulcaster. (Mulcaster was Spenser's headmaster at Merchant Taylors', and a connection to the circle around Leicester, which itself set great store by pageantry and entertainment.) At the Little Conduit in Cheapside, she was met with two adjacent hills marked 'Ruinosa Republica' and 'Republica Bene Instituta'. Between them, in Mulcaster's account, was 'one hollow place or cave, with a door and lock enclosed, out of the which... issued one person whose name was *Time*'.¹⁰⁴ Time and his daughter Truth, like the personages surveyed above, are embodiments of concepts in particular places; unlike Despaire and Lust they are benign, but like them they live in caves. Hester Lees-Jeffries's analysis of *Veritas Temporis Filia* suggests that this device might have neatly 'integrated the conduit itself into its structure', dividing the mountain of ruinous authority from that of just rule.¹⁰⁵ The classical association of caves with water, on which Spenser's caves and their perverted effusions play, is realised temporarily in the imaginative use of public architecture. If, as Lees-Jeffries proposes, the conduit flowed between the two hills and therefore from the cave, it represents a visual equivalent to the emergence of Time himself, who in Mulcaster's term 'issued' from the cave. Considering the pageant in the context of a detailed study of fountains in Elizabethan literature, Lees-Jeffries notes that conduits were 'points of contact... between real and ideal London': fulfilling the everyday function of water supply to the city, they also possessed all the symbolic capacities of

¹⁰⁴ Richard Mulcaster, *The passage of our most drad Soueraigne Lady Quene Elyzabeth through the citie of London* (London, 1558), p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ Hester Lees-Jeffries, 'Location as Metaphor in Queen Elisabeth's Coronation Entry (1559): *Veritas Temporis Filia*', in *The Progresses, Pageants and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. by Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Sarah Goldring and Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 65-85.

fountains – one of the most potent symbols in the Bible, and also a popular contemporary metaphor for describing the Bible.¹⁰⁶ Like Merlin’s cave, and like allegorical devices in general, the conduit combines materiality – in this case of an urban, everyday kind – with fantasy and myth.

Figures ‘issuing’ from caves abound in the private entertainments devised for the Queen on her summer progresses. Notified that the Queen planned to ride around Norwich during her progress there in 1578, Thomas Churchyard hastily prepared entertainment for her. ‘I caused a place to be made’, he recounts in his *A Discovrse of the Queenes Maiesties entertainment in Suffolk and Norffolk* (1578), ‘and digged for the Nymphes of the water’.¹⁰⁷ This cave-like ‘place’ will hide the water nymphs, and from it strange music will flow. Churchyard envisaged that when the Queen arrived ‘one Nimph shoulde poppe vp out of the caue first, and salute the Queene with a speech, and then another, and so till four of them had finished their speeches’.¹⁰⁸ ‘Poppe vp’ is playfully impish, suggesting that the Queen would be entertained by being surprised. Churchyard’s nymphs showered the Queen with praise, but the abruptness of their emergence, and the concealment of the place they emerge from, suggests the potential for critique, even confrontation, that lurks beneath the surface of the progress entertainment. Commenting on Churchyard’s report of his makeshift entertainments, David Bergeron notes that ‘he emphasizes [*sic*] himself as solitary author’, struggling to accommodate the whims of monarchy and nobility.¹⁰⁹ His emerging nymphs certainly do not express any resentment, but their impish up-

¹⁰⁶ Hester Lees-Jeffries, *England’s Helicon: Fountains in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 109.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Churchyard, ‘Thurseday’, *A Discovrse of the Queenes Maiesties entertainment in Suffolk and Norffolk* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1578), fol. E4.

¹⁰⁸ Churchyard, fol. E4v.

¹⁰⁹ David M. Bergeron, ‘The “I” of the Beholder: Thomas Churchyard and the 1578 Norwich Pageant’, in Archer and others, pp. 143-159, p. 159.

popping playfully expresses Churchyard's defiance. John Lyly scripted a similarly cheeky surprise for the Queen at Elvetham in 1591. Sailing across the lake towards Elizabeth, Nereus signals to a person hidden nearby in the undergrowth, who 'presently did cast himselfe downe, dooing a Summerset from the Ile into the water, and then swam to his companie'.¹¹⁰ Nereus's minion emerges with particular suddenness, probably causing great delight. Perhaps the Queen's age (57 in 1591) and her probable inability to 'summerset', affords it a slight edge. Again, the figure inside the cave (or hidden space) appears attractive and expresses deference to the monarch. Yet the cave and the manner of emergence from it suggests a degree of wildness and effrontery to which Spenser, filling his caves with personified vices, is clearly attuned.

Caves are one of several hidden spaces in pageants and court entertainments from which figures, often allegorical, abruptly emerge. The figures who addressed Elizabeth at Kenilworth, during the spectacular entertainments Robert Dudley organised there in 1575, often issue from an enclosed space. In the script written and subsequently published by George Gascoigne, the Lady of the Lake declares that the Queen's visit has afforded her the courage to emerge to the surface for the first time in a hundred years. Gascoigne describes how 'Neptune (pitying her distresse) had envyroned her with waves': her refuge, cave-like in its insulation from the exterior, is paradoxically constructed from water itself, the most diffuse and continuous of materials.¹¹¹ At the visit's close, Sylvanus shows Elizabeth around the forest, glossing the various trees as

¹¹⁰ John Lyly, *The Honorable Entertainment giueen to the Queenes Maiestie in Progresse, at Eluetham in Hampshire* [1591], ed. by R. Warwick Bond, *The Complete Works of John Lyly* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), vol. 1, pp. 431-452, p. 442.

¹¹¹ George Gascoigne, 'The Princelie Pleasures at Kenelworth', in *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. by John Cunliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-1910), pp. 91-131, p. 94.

metamorphoses visited by the nymph-queen Zabeta on her allegorical court. Constancy has been changed to an oak, inconstancy to a poplar, and desire to a holly bush. Yet 'this holly bush', Sylvanus notices, 'doth tremble at your presence, and therefore I beleeve that Deepe desire hath gotten leave of the Gods to speake unto your excellent Majestie'.¹¹² Desire's voice proceeds, from within the bush, to entreat Elizabeth to stay. The 'trembling' of the bush, and the emergence of a voice from it, exemplifies the pattern of concentration and flow characteristic of figures in personification allegories, but with a special (inverted) Ovidian dimension: Deep Desire flows out of his place by being temporarily refigured into his original form, a human figure.

Caves and Houses

Even after Elizabeth's death, and the gradual turn away from allegory in late sixteenth-century dramatic writing, allegorical caves continued to feature in royal and civic pageants. Thomas Dekker's *Troia-Nova Triumphans* (1607) was staged for the entry of Sir John Swinerton into London. Its principal mobile figure is the Lady Vertue, carried on her throne past static allegorical representations of vice. (She renounces them by progressing past them, so that the carrying out of the pageant itself is an ethical triumph.) The third device Dekker places in her way is 'a forlorne Castle' stationed, with perhaps a deliberate nod to *Veritas Temporis Filia*, 'close to the little Conduit in Cheap-side':

as the throne of Vertue comes neerer and neerer, there appeare above (on the battlements) Envy, as chiefe commandresse of that infernall place... her body naked, in her hand a knot of snakes, crawling and writhen about her arme. The rest of her litter are in as ugly shapes as the dam... All the rest likewise on the

¹¹² Gascoigne, p. 127.

battlements offering to discharge their black artillery at her: but she [Vertue] onely holding up her bright shield, dazzles them.¹¹³

As in Elizabethan pageants, allegorical figures emerge aggressively from their hiding places when the time is right, popping up over the battlements. Envy and her daemonic company threaten to 'discharge' themselves on Vertue. In general this staging of Envy recalls her dwelling in the *Metamorphoses*; twisted into 'ugly shapes', however, her 'litter' is particularly suggestive of Error and her brood in *The Faerie Queene*. Significantly, Dekker finishes his description of his device for Envy remarking that 'this cave of monsters stands fixed to the Conduit, in which Envie onely breathes out her poyson to this purpose'.¹¹⁴ Poisoned by its obnoxious inhabitant, the 'forlorne castle' becomes like Error's dwelling, a 'Cave of monsters'.

Spectators who were familiar with Ovid's depiction of Envy might well have noted that, as in Ovid, the place from which Dekker's Envy erupts combines element of house and cave. Built dwellings (the subject of the next chapter), are easily imagined as the opposites of the cave, the superiority of culture over nature. Yet, just as the culture/nature distinction is notoriously fragile, the line between caves and houses can easily blur. In *The Faerie Queene* Spenser explores the allegorical potential of this blurring, depicting a number of dwelling places that claim the civility of the house, but in actual fact are 'darksom holes'. Orgoglio's apparent castle might as well be a cave: its surface looks grandly aristocratic, but for Redcrosse imprisoned in the 'balefull darkness' (I.viii.38.5) it is indistinguishable from the cave of Despaire. Orgoglio may have decked

¹¹³ Thomas Dekker, *Troia-Noua Triumphans. London Triumphant* [London: 1612], ed. by Friedson Bowers, *Thomas Dekker: Dramatic Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), vol. 3, pp. 227-249, p. 238.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

his rooms with 'royall arras' (35.2), but the floor, 'filthy... With blood of guiltless babes' (5-6), is that of a giant in his lair. The House of Pride, where Redcrosse began the journey that would leave him imprisoned, similarly combines elements of castle and cave. From far away, it seems a 'stately Pallace' (iv.4.1) whose gleaming surface can't be discerned for the mere 'golden foile' (4) it is. Its 'hinder partes' (5.8), however, are 'ruinous and old' (9): Redcrosse's dwarf spots the 'dungeon deepe' (v.45.8) where 'huge numbers' (8) are kept prisoners of pride. In order to conceal their wickedness, or to entice curious figures, these vicious castles relegate their wild immorality to their hinder parts; in performing this architectural suppression, however, they create cave-like spaces that frighten and repulse.

To these cave-like houses from Book I we might add Malbecco's eventual dwelling in Book III. Malbecco, for whom there is no distinction between a home and a hiding-place, withdraws to 'a caue with entrance small' (III.x.57.9) underneath a craggy cliff, of whose potential fall he lives in a jealous fear. I argued in the first chapter that Malbecco retains what Linda Gregerson calls his 'catalytic' function, his ability to spread the vice he exemplifies and becomes. He no longer transmits jealousy through a causal chain of actions (guarding his wife like property, only to provoke in Paridell an equally intense, intemperate desire to possess), but through the magical influence of the allegorical cave, which simultaneously hoards and transmits the personified vice it contains. The castles of Lucifera and Orgoglio conceal their true cave-like nature; Malbecco's story, which moves from castle to cave, replaces this perceptual substitution with narrative sequence.

Spenser explores the conflation of the house and the cave in most detail in the Mammon episode. The cave Guyon enters with Mammon is a complex of many places and figures,

but all are contained within the cavernous space accessed by a 'darkesome way' (II.vii.7) that leads 'through the hollow ground' (8). Sitting above ground 'sunning his treasure' (*Arg.2*) – the 'masse of coyne' (4.7) in his lap – and surprised by Guyon, Mammon instantly pours his money 'through an hole full wide' (6.4), perhaps connected to his underground lair, 'into the hollow earth, them there to hide' (5). Guyon's first glimpse of Mammon evokes him in terms familiar from the cave of Despaire: an 'vnciuile wight' (3.4) who is 'sitting' (3) on the ground like Despaire, and whose face is similarly disfigured ('bleard' (7) with smoke). His hands are as 'cole-blacke' (8) as the blood of Lust and Error. Mammon's portrayal as a half-monster prompts a comparison of his 'hole' to the allegorical caves studied above. Yet here the flow is reversed: unlike Error, Despaire and Lust, who emanate from their habitats, Mammon pours his 'coyne' back *into* his house. Spenser's inversion of the effusive cave motif is a preliminary indication of the nature of Mammon's vice: hoarding and never spending, he is as intemperately tight as Phaedria, in the previous canto, was loose. Mammon's extreme tightness means that his house has become 'lyke an huge caue' (28.2). The door opens quickly for Mammon but shuts again 'streight way' (26.5), so as not to risk loss of treasure. 'With rich metall loaded euey rifte' (5), the house is so clogged with gold that it has devolved into a stockpile, like a dragon's hoard, whose contents accumulate for their own sake rather than for a purpose. Like Orgoglio's castle, Mammon's dwelling looks like a civilised house, but in its intemperance is really an entrapping cave.

Mammon and his cavernous underground house do not, like the caves discussed in the first section of this chapter, represent a single vice. Within Book II, his attitude to his possessions exemplifies miserliness as a form of intemperance. Yet Mammon's cave is also an allegorical reification of wealth, the worldly and therefore material kind. Wealth

is not a vice, nor a mental state; the distortions and ironies of turning vicious mental states into places which attend the caves discussed above, however, apply also to the place Harry Berger refers to as 'Mammon's'.¹¹⁵ Financial wealth is a social phenomenon, a means of power in a group; money's value therefore can only be fully appraised with reference to society. In sixteenth-century England, as David Landreth argues, debasement of the currency under Henry VIII, and the price revolution it helped to exacerbate, raised consciousness of the way different values converged and competed in the material coin: the intrinsic value, subject to 'the international market in precious metals'; and the extrinsic, social value restricted to a certain time and a national space, dependent on 'the stamp of the prince'.¹¹⁶ To reify wealth allegorically, therefore, is to concentrate in a place a phenomenon whose meaning relies on dispersal, on flow and currency. To concentrate wealth in the antisocial space of a cave furthers this distortion. This reveals a paradoxical attitude to concentration itself which wealth seeks to suppress: the end of buying and selling, of currency, is to amass wealth, but that wealth only has value if it is (at least potentially) current. Perhaps Mammon is afraid of what Craig Muldrew describes as the entanglement of wealth, in sixteenth-century England, with the 'terms of sociability', and the origin of that entanglement in the rise of credit.¹¹⁷ Mammon's cave reifies the fearful, paradoxical desire to hoard wealth from its constitutive circulation, and thus reify it.

¹¹⁵ Harry Berger, *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 22.

¹¹⁶ David Landreth, *The Face of Mammon: The Matter of Money in English Renaissance Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 12.

¹¹⁷ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 123.

Maureen Quilligan has argued elegantly that Mammon's cave exposes the global and slave-based economy of colonial early modern Europe, most of whose precious metal came from mines in the Spanish Empire.¹¹⁸ Mammon's demonic helpers, fanning the 'bellows' (36.1) and inflaming the fuel with 'forced wind' (2), resemble the 'forced' labour of the Peruvian silver mines and goldsmiths depicted in Theodor de Bry's *America* (Frankfurt, 1596). Quilligan's parallel is compelling, and her conviction that *The Faerie Queene* is concerned with labour practices seems vindicated by Burlinson's work to show how the poem's space conceals them.¹¹⁹ I would make one adjustment, however: Mammon's cave brings into spatial unity two places – the industrial workplace, where labour is cheap, and the place where the extracted wealth is hoarded – which in the emergent imperial economy are necessarily found apart. It compresses the circularity and currency of wealth, which even outside allegory can be difficult to glimpse beneath concealment by ideology, and puts them in the same, isolated space. His *locus* retains the power to infect: if Guyon touches any of its metal, he will be destroyed. Yet the contamination it threatens relies not on dissemination outwards, but on the inward movement of the curious hero. Unlike the caves of Error, Despaire and Lust, 'Mammon's' does not expel foul liquids. Its viciousness derives from its refusal of any kind of currency. If the other caves resemble corrupted fountains, spreading poison through society and its land, Mammon's cave could be compared to a fountain corrupted by not flowing at all, turned stagnantly in on itself.

IV. Fast Caves: The Decline of Allegory

¹¹⁸ Maureen Quilligan, 'On the Renaissance Epic: Spenser and Slavery', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100 (2001), 16-39, 21.

¹¹⁹ Christopher Burlinson, *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), p. 215.

The penultimate canto of *The Faerie Queene* features a cave which seems rather less inextricably linked to its inhabitants, and infested with their characteristics, than those examined above. Coming home to the 'shepherds cottage' (VI.25.2) where he has made Pastorella 'his' (x.32.3), Calidore discovers that she has been kidnapped by brigands who move about 'through hollow caues' (42.2) of a 'little Island' (41.6). Disguised as shepherds who join the brigands in their 'hellish dens' (xi.41.2), Calidore and Coridon locate Pastorella in the 'Captaines nest' (42.7) which seems to be a fortified cave within the underground cavern. Like Mammon's dwelling it possesses architectural features, but only those of exclusion: doors locked 'fast' (43.1) which Calidore breaks. Having killed the new captain, Calidore is then 'assayled' (43.3) by the other brigands:

But Calidore in th'entry close did stand,
And entertayning them with courage stout,
Still slew the formost, that came first to hand,
So long till all the entry was with bodies mand.
(46.6-9)

'Entertayning' the brigands with deadly 'courage', Calidore parodies a host receiving visitors. The use of the language of hospitality¹²⁰ emphasises not only that the cave is ironically lacking in civility, but also that ownership seems to have passed to Calidore: having killed Pastorella's new master, he now owns the cave. Calidore spends little time in this den, but his ability to convert it from a prison into a sanctuary suggests a divergence from the kind of allegorical caves found more commonly in the 1590 text. Unlike the cave of Despaire, this environment does not seem infected with the essence of its occupant. The cave which extends its occupant's body has been replaced by a space

¹²⁰ *OED*, 'entertain', 12-14.

amenable to appropriation. The loosening of the relationship between a cave and its inhabitant, away from inherence and towards accident, has already begun in Book V. Burlinson notes that when Arthur, Artegall and Talus overcome Malengin, personification of guile, they do not destroy the 'fast' space of his cave, leaving open 'the possibility that it could be occupied, and used for the same nefarious purposes, by other malefactors'.¹²¹ Here in Book VI, the contingency of dwelling is exaggerated even further: once the brigands are expelled, their cave becomes amenable not only to other 'malefactors', but to their enemies. The cave of Book VI is 'fast' in another, new way: neither virtue nor vice leave lingering traces in it.

Conclusion

This discussion amounts to the first dedicated study in Spenser criticism of the cave as an allegorical location. I have read the caves of Error, Despaire and Lust as allegorical concentrations, whose literal effusiveness suggests the *sparagmos* of the concepts they represent throughout *The Faerie Queene*. Supplementing or perhaps underlining these readings is my account of the Cave of Mammon as the vicious, paradoxical concentration of currency and circulation itself. This interpretation keeps in view an irony reiterated in each episode: mental states which outside the allegory are experienced in entanglement with their virtuous opposites are presented as sequestered from those virtues, as a cave from its surrounding landscape. In the case of Error, the specific irony of figuring a state experienced as placelessness in a place, is at work. I have suggested that despair, of the extreme suicidal variety which Spenser portrays, also entails a raving placelessness

¹²¹ Burlinson (2006), p. 143.

alongside the stasis of melancholy. The cave of Lust introduces a new irony as to agency: a state that appears to imprison the lover against her will emerges, as allegoresis happens, to be in part a prison of their own making. Setting the early modern cave in a variety of cultural contexts in the second half of this chapter, I have shown that caves made effective allegorical locations. In antiquarian descriptions of Britain's landscapes, they preserve an ancient, mostly extinguished magic; that magic intersects with the magical effects of contagion and transmission which belong to allegorical reifications. It also explains why so many figures from civic and royal allegorical pageantry live in caves.

Amoret's implied assumption in the cave of Lust – that her imprisonment by Lust has nothing to do with her thoughts or actions – entails a splitting of the self and its vices into antinomies. In the landscape of Fairyland, where virtues and vices are similarly separated. The impression of discrete particularity conjured by the apportioning of aspects of the self in other bodies is strengthened by a landscape which, similarly, implies the sequestration of vices in their own places away from the heroic figures. However, the various images and metaphors of flow Spenser employs in the description of his caves are the first indication that this sequestration is false: the capacity of Error and Despaire to diffuse into the world hints at their actual distribution, and at the entanglement, in Spenser's vision of experienced ethics, of virtues and vices.

This chapter, having examined caves from across *The Faerie Queene's* six Books, has moved implicitly between two poles: the caves of Book I, where vices internal to Redcrosse, and characterised by placelessness, are reified as external, bounded places; and the cave of Book VI, whose relationship with its inhabitants is not one of inherence, but of convenience. The cave of Lust stands between them: obviously allegorical, like the

caves in the 1590 text, it also belongs to the 1596 text's vision of ethical concepts as social phenomena. Lust's cave, as I have argued, extends his body and malign influence; but what exactly does this compound represent? Is the cave a externalising projection of a vicious disposition in Amoret's soul, or is it a natural space invaded by an othered outlaw, whose body has similarly been invaded by a concept? As I've argued here, neither is quite the case. The cave of Lust reifies a concept in its general, ordinary form, of which part of Amoret's soul is an instance. Each of the caves analysed here can be construed differently, regarding the degree to which they project what is within the minds of Spenser's heroes. The error reified in the cave of Error, for example, is Redcrosse's inability to perceive error's ubiquity and presence in himself. Each cave, however, has in common its enclosure of a diffuse phenomenon in a bounded space. What I have argued of Spenser's personifications, therefore, is also true of his caves: they are characterised at once by their similarity, as types of one another, and by their irrepressible difference.

Chapter 5

Allegorical Architecture in *The Faerie Queene*

Introduction

One of the imaginary legal disputes in Alexandre van den Busche's *Epitomes De Cent Histoires Tragicques* (1581), translated by Lazarus Pyott as *The Orator* (1596), concerns the intersection of architecture and punishment.¹ In 'Declamation 23', two men live separately in the same building, 'one... in the lower part, and the other in the higher part thereof'. Van den Busche alludes to Cicero's *De Domo Sua* and the originally Roman legal institution of punitive demolition. The man on the ground floor has committed a crime, for which the law insists 'that his dwelling should bee pulled down'; his upstairs neighbour complains to the Attorney General that such a strict application of the law is unjust, because to demolish the ground floor of a building is to demolish all of it.² 'What is he that doth not very well vnderstand', asks the comically deliberative plaintiff, 'that in pulling downe the nether part of an house, the vpper part therof falleth of it selfe, as being without foundation, or an vnprofitable mansion?' He does his best to frame his motives as not entirely personal, arguing that the 'void place in a chief street' will become 'a lurking place for theeues'.³ In his contradiction, the Attorney General argues that, conversely, the demolition will 'warne those that bee landlords' not to rent houses to disreputable characters.⁴ But these practical arguments are parenthetical, and mask a more profound disagreement as to what constitutes a dwelling place. If one part must be

¹ Alexandre van den Busche ('Le Sylvain'), *Epitomes de Cent Histoires Tragicques* (Paris, 1581), trans. by Lazarus Pyott, *The Orator: handling a hundred seuerall discourses, in forme of declamations* (London, 1596). For a consideration of the possible influence of van den Busche's disputes on John Fletcher, see Eugene M. Waith, 'John Fletcher and the Art of Declamation', *PMLA* 66 (1951), 226-234.

² Pyott, p. 135.

³ Pyott, p. 136.

⁴ Pyott, p. 138.

demolished, argues the plaintiff, why not organise a simple swap, and then demolish the top floor, leaving him to dwell on the ground floor, cold and moist though it is? The Attorney General, pointing out that both the criminal and the innocent plaintiff are tenants afforded apartments 'by lot', believes that the building cannot meaningfully be divided. The plaintiff disagrees, and Pyott's phrasing suggests some sympathy with him: he describes the upper apartment as 'another dwelling in the same house'.⁵ The Attorney General's insistence that the whole house be demolished is framed as fidelity to justice, but his failure to dismiss the practical proposal of a swap belies something less logical: the 'lurking' intuition of a link between the inhabitant of the ground floor, and his dwelling place. In his view, the house is complicit.

This chapter, which approaches the buildings of *The Faerie Queene* as a particular kind of allegorical space, begins with the assertion that even outside allegories, architecture prompts thinking which is broadly or residually allegorical. Van den Busche's dispute turns on a disagreement about the difference between a building and a 'dwelling'. An allegorical building, standing as a metaphor for abstract concepts, extends to an unusual degree an everyday mental operation of endowing a physical structure with associations and meanings that transform it from space into place. The Attorney General's suggestion of a causal link between the criminal and his dwelling place is a form of magical thinking; the plaintiff, with his pragmatic plan for a swap, has a more prosaic view of the relationship between architecture and human character. But in forming an attachment to the physical structure in which he lives, turning the anonymous space which he received 'by lot' into a personal place, he follows the Attorney General some of the way. Magical

⁵ Pyott, p. 135.

thinking about architecture partakes of the allegorical impulse. A contemporary example would be the common practice in Germany and Austria of leaving houses lived in by prominent Nazis empty.⁶ An example of the less extreme intuition that a built space can become a lived space would be the practically universal understanding of the difference between house and home.

Spenser's allegorical buildings specifically represent ethical concepts: passions, affections and attitudes both virtuous and vicious. In this respect we can already note a significant difference from his allegorical caves, which as the previous chapter demonstrates mostly depict vices. Virtues such as holiness and chastity, as well as vices like pride and erroneous desire, are represented in and by buildings, usually but not always monumental. Before outlining the literary sources of this moral architectural allegory, it is worth pointing out that in sixteenth-century European culture it was difficult to write of building and dwelling without writing of virtue and vice. Treatises by fifteenth-century Italian humanists modelled on Vitruvius' *De Architectura*, such as Leon Battista Alberti's *De Re Aedificatoria* (1443-52), had begun to articulate architecture as a noble art, and to elevate the architect from the artisan status of the builder. Aestheticising building, such treatises open the possibility that, in a neo-Platonic aesthetics of the beautiful as a symbol of the morally good, a building might embody virtue in its beauty. More commonly, however, buildings in early modern writing *demonstrate* human virtue or vice: as integral parts of a socio-economic system, they exhibit the generosity, pride or disdain of their owners. As well as exhibiting the virtues of their builders and inhabitants, buildings also provided space for ritualised interactions with others. Such interactions

⁶ See Despina Stratigakos, *Hitler at Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

also demonstrated ethical conduct, understood either by traditional notions of hospitality or by the language of courtly manners that became fashionable at the end of the sixteenth century in England.

At this point, however, we encounter a significant complication. William Harrison's *Description of England* (1587) includes a section entitled 'Of the Manner of Building and Furniture of Our Houses', in which he outlines with unease some continental trends in housebuilding.⁷ Elsewhere, in a chapter on 'Woods and Marshes', and the use of timber for construction, he complains of vanity in contemporary building. 'When our houses were builded of willow', he says, 'then we had oaken men'; now the reverse is true.⁸ Harrison's remark is a conventional, though witty, piece of conservative complaint. But as it posits an inverse relationship of quality in the relationship between buildings and dwellers, it highlights an important fact about attitudes to architecture in sixteenth-century England. Excessive effort to make buildings impressive and expressive is a species of folly, a kind of vanity and therefore a vice. Virtuous allegorical buildings, therefore, are in trouble: how can a building represent a virtue if a close link between buildings and meanings risks pride? As I will show in this chapter, Spenser's virtuous buildings evade this problem in part by stressing the ubiquity of the good qualities they also enclose. But Harrison's remark nevertheless speaks of a more general principle which will underscore much of my argument below. Allegorical thinking extends widespread intuitive assumptions about the connections between people and built space, as van den Busche's Attorney General shows. On the other hand, sixteenth-century

⁷ William Harrison, *The Description of England* [1587], ed. by Georges Edelen, *The Description of England: the Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life* (1968), 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), II.XII, pp. 195-204.

⁸ Harrison ed. by Edelen, II.XXII, p. 276.

English attitudes to architecture are based on a set of ethical beliefs which cloud and complicate the abstract significations of an allegorical building.

In the previous chapter, I argued that Spenser draws on some cultural associations of caves that assist their ability to signify allegorically. Like its caves, *The Faerie Queene's* buildings contain concepts which, in the non-allegorical world, are not easily contained. The cultural connotations of caves, I argued, work with their use as allegorical spaces: their status as last refuge of the extremist, and their association with an antiquated magical view of landscape, enable Spenser to imagine them in *The Faerie Queene* as incubators of antisocial, effusive vices and of ancient, wondrous kinds of influence. I will argue in this chapter, however, that the dominant associations of Spenser's buildings cut against the dynamics of allegory. Buildings representing temperance are intemperately shut to the visitor; places of unrest occupy the position of resting-place on the heroic journey. The result of this conflict, between the cultural associations of buildings and their spatial practices in the non-allegorical world, and the allegorical meanings they take on in Spenser's allegory, is the illegibility which characterises the world of *The Faerie Queene* as its figures experience it. I want to propose, however, that this illegibility, born of the imposition of allegorical onto architectural functions, is itself part of Spenser's allegory. It works as a kind of meta-allegory, for the impossibility of comprehending an ethical concept prior to experience of it.

Foundations

Architecture has become increasingly prominent in criticism of early modern literature. It provides an opportunity to combine the insights of the 'spatial turn', and the

subsequent ‘mobility turn’, with the orientation of cultural materialism towards what the sixteenth century looked and felt like, as well as attention to the early modern body.⁹ Newly paid attention to buildings characterises the rise of English antiquarianism at the end of the sixteenth century. As a natural consequence, considerations of architecture in Leland and Camden have emerged from critical work in recent decades on early modern history and chorography. Anne Myers’s *Literature and Architecture in Early Modern England* is a good example.¹⁰ Such studies tend to draw heavily from the work of architectural historians, whose rehabilitation of Elizabethan architecture from the low position to which its reputation had sunk in the mid-twentieth century is still underway.¹¹ This chapter is also indebted to these architectural historians; however, I try evade an exclusively art-historical gaze, in which buildings, both real and literary, are reduced to aesthetic objects. Self-revising and speculative voices within contemporary architectural history have shown how we might avoid such a reduction. Inspired also by the usefulness of philosophically inclined studies, I have also attempted to apply some insights gleaned from philosophy of architecture, in both analytical and continental traditions.¹²

⁹ See Kimberley Skelton, *The Paradox of Body, Building and Motion in Seventeenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015). See also Jennifer C. Vaught, *Architectural Rhetoric in Shakespeare and Spenser* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019).

¹⁰ Anne M. Myers, *Literature and Architecture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

¹¹ I have found the following particularly useful: Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era* (London: Country Life Limited, 1966), and *Elizabethan Architecture* (London: Yale University Press, 2009); Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life, 1460-1547* (London: Yale University Press, 1993); Tara Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Colin Platt, *The Great Rebuildings of Tudor and Stuart England: Revolutions in Architectural Taste* (London: UCL Press, 1994); Maurice Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England* (London: Yale University Press, 2007); Paula Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden: Architecture and Landscape in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Yale University Press, 2005); Matthew Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: from Medieval to Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹² For recent work that approaches to architecture in the analytic tradition, see Gordon Graham, ‘Architecture’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. by Jarrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford

Spenser's poetry is full of architecture. Even the *Shepherds Calender's* eclogues, set in a pastoral landscape supposedly devoid of human constructions, includes buildings in its woodcuts. Ruined buildings are a motif and a source of contemplation across his work, especially in *Complaints*. *The Faerie Queene*, meanwhile, features a remarkable number and variety of buildings. Yet dedicated critical studies of them are few. Frederick Hard's article on Spenser's 'Princelie Pallaces' is a pioneering piece of criticism, because in arguing that *The Faerie Queene's* buildings are more 'suggestive of substantiality' than the castles of 'medieval romances', it establishes a base for talking about Fairyland's buildings without immediately dismissing the relevance of their architecture.¹³ Thirty years later, an essay by Judith Dundas lays similarly useful foundations for how we might draw connections between Spenser's palaces and 'the Elizabethan house', and between allegorical architecture and the architectonics of a literary work in Renaissance poetics.¹⁴ Yet more recent work on Spenser's buildings exhibits a tendency to winnow 'architecture' from 'allegory', as if the two concepts exist in inverse proportion. David Lee Miller's sophisticated reading of the House of Temperance through a psychoanalytic lens is a classic of Spenser criticism.¹⁵ Yet in reading the building's lack of sexual organs as a

University Press, 2005), pp. 555-571 and Rafael de Clercq, 'Architecture', in *The Continuum Companion to Aesthetics* ed. by Anna Christina Ribeiro (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 201-214. Architectural aesthetics in the continental tradition, in which Heidegger's 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' looms large, provides stimulating frameworks for approaching this question. *The Journal for the International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture* 3:1-2 (2018), proceedings from the Society's 2016 conference on 'The Human in Architecture', provides a snapshot of contemporary thinking on the issue. See Martin DÜchs and Christian Illies, 'The Need for a Philosophical Anthropology of Architecture', 3:2 (2018), 95-104.

¹³ Frederick Hard, 'Princelie Pallaces: Spenser and Elizabethan Architecture', *The Sewanee Review* 42 (1934), 293-310, 303, 310.

¹⁴ Judith Dundas, 'Elizabethan Architecture and *The Faerie Queene*: some structural analogies', *The Dalhousie Review*, 45.4 (1965), 470-479, 475.

¹⁵ David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

register of its sublimation of sexuality into idealised meaning, Lee Miller neglects the castle's fine-grained architectural details.

On the other hand, recent work in a materialist vein on Spenser's buildings has, while transferring the emphasis from 'allegory' to 'architecture', upheld the inverse relation of the two ideas. By far the most thoughtful and provocative instance of this work is Burlinson's study, several chapters of which are devoted to buildings. *Allegory, Space and the Material World* ensures that any consideration of Spenser's buildings must acknowledge the 'houses of the poor' within Fairyland, alongside its princely palaces, and be suspicious of any attempt to flatten buildings – structures within which real people live – into 'architecture' in its narrowest sense of attractive surfaces.¹⁶ A recent article by Jane Grogan, meanwhile, on objects in the Renaissance epic, focuses on material 'obstacles' which give the poem and its heroes pause by proving 'not assimilable to the allegory'.¹⁷ Grogan says little of buildings, but her article began life as a seminar paper delivered at the University of Cambridge in 2014, where *The Faerie Queene's* buildings were treated as a kind of 'object'.¹⁸ Their exclusion from the article is, I would suggest, significant: Spenser's buildings are not easily 'assimilable' to what we call 'material culture', because their physical characteristics do indeed lend themselves to allegory. Grogan and Burlinson both draw on a Teskeyan view of allegory as the intrusion of the ideal into the material, and therefore spatial, real. This is only one way of envisaging the relationship of spatiality and allegory, and here I take a different approach. I ask how the

¹⁶ Christopher Burlinson, *Allegory, Space and the Material World in the Writings of Edmund Spenser* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 196-217.

¹⁷ Jane Grogan, 'Style, Objects and Heroic Values in Early Modern Epic', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 57 (2017), 23-44, 28.

¹⁸ Jane Grogan, 'Epics, Objects and Interruptions', Renaissance Graduate Seminar, University of Cambridge, 21 October 2014.

buildings in *The Faerie Queene* are experienced by the poem's figures as they approach, enter and move through them, and how those experiences might signify allegorically.

Spenser's buildings have three major sources; this chapter, which is more about how his architectural allegory works than where it comes from, refers to each of them. First, there are the fantastical castles of medieval romance, sites of both rest and risk, which often possess strange autonomy and idiosyncratic customs. Secondly, many of the allegories Spenser imitates include architecture: Langland's *Piers Plowman* and Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure* both apportion virtues and vices to particular built spaces, while *The Romance of the Rose*, in which a fantastical landscape is peopled by personifications, is an especially important analogue as an allegorical romance. Thirdly, Spenser is influenced by the architecture of sixteenth-century England and Ireland. Of principal relevance to his monumental buildings are the 'prodigy houses', aristocratic (though not royal) residences built in Elizabeth's reign in new, experimental styles. In Dublin and on the Munster Plantation, Spenser's homes in Ireland, architecture both symbolised to the New English the arrival of 'civilisation' and in many instances provided defence and security against potential rebellion. This chapter does not treat Spenser's 'house of Kilcolman' in detail, though I have argued elsewhere that Spenser's poetry exhibits awareness of the similarities and differences between the processes of building and writing.¹⁹ Finally, though Spenser makes no direct references to the treatises on architecture written by fifteenth-century Italian humanists, his early intellectual circles had contact with this new way of thinking and writing about buildings: as Lucy Gent has shown, by the 1570s such

¹⁹ Archie Cornish, "His Midas Touch": building and writing in the poetry of Edmund Spenser and Seamus Heaney', in *Architectural Space and the Imagination* (Palgrave, forthcoming).

treatises were widespread in private libraries including Leicester's.²⁰ Spenser's sustained interest in Ficino and other neo-Platonists means that he was immersed in the work of writers who themselves read Alberti and his contemporaries.

Drawing on these broad areas of influence, the chapter first identifies some patterns in the ways buildings are described and experienced in *The Faerie Queene*, and then studies a few of them individually. I have paid attention and given space to buildings which tend to be neglected: the houses of Corceca and of Care; Castle Ioyeous and the unnamed castle at the beginning of Book IV; the inhospitable castle of Crudor and Briana in Book VI. First, however, I study the way in which the poem's buildings are approached, and suggest the allegorical significance of the particular movement they compel. Moving on, I study the poem's frequent moments of hesitation or frustration on the threshold, placing them in the context of cultural norms of hospitality. In both these comparative sections I argue against a wholesale adoption of the idea that architecture is a 'language', and that buildings can be 'read'. If this is only partially true for us, as we read *The Faerie Queene* or study Wollaton Hall with guidebook in hand, it is certainly untrue for the figures in the poem. Like early modern travellers, they are journeying through a landscape whose form they do not, and often cannot, understand. Spenser's buildings prove illegible for two reasons: because architecture, both real and imaginary, is both more and less than an experience of reading; and because they behave simultaneously like allegorical and non-allegorical spaces. Once more, however, I claim that this illegibility is not the trace of stubbornly resistant materiality, but part of the way in which the poem's allegory works.

²⁰ Lucy Gent, *Picture and Poetry, 1560-1620: Relations between Literature and the Visual Arts in the English Renaissance* (Leamington Spa: James Hall, 1981).

I. Prospects

Pleasant Approach: Spenser's Horizontal Prospects

One of the most discussed qualities of the Elizabethan country house is its 'prospect room', the airy space at the top of the house from where the surroundings can be surveyed. Where possible, builders in sixteenth-century England avoided the treacherous ground of valleys as the 'seat' of the house. In *On the Art of Building* Alberti gives theoretical heft to this practice, commenting that selecting a location on low ground and by bodies of water leaves the building vulnerable to thick and corrupted air.²¹ At the top of a building itself set ideally on high ground, the prospect room afforded viewers what Philip Sidney, describing Basilius' lodge 'built in the forme of a starre' in the *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1590), calls 'lordship over a good large circuit'.²² As 'lordship' implies, the far-reaching and panoramic view from the prospect room was readily interpreted as a spatial metaphor for dominance and comprehension. Such sensitivity to architectural metaphor is not confined to imaginary buildings, like those in the *Arcadia*. England's most spectacular prospect room can be seen at the top of Wollaton Hall, built in the 1580s with Robert Smythson as master mason. The uppermost story, dedicated to the prospect room, departs from the rectilinear patterns of the stories below, with its large traceried windows and outwardly expanding turrets. Mark Girouard proposes that the room's relative singularity, and lack of obvious function, show that it

²¹ Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria* [1443-52], trans. by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach and Robert Tavernor, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (London: MIT Press, 1988) I, p. 16.

²² Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* [1590], ed. by Albert Feuillerat, *The Prose Works of Philip Sidney* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), I.13, p. 91. On the building's symbolism, see Victor Skretkowicz, 'Symbolic Architecture in Sidney's New Arcadia', *The Review of English Studies* 33 (1982), 175-180.

was possibly intended as an allusion to Solomon's 'towering Temple sanctuary'.²³ Perhaps Girouard, who does not stretch this suggestion beyond conjecture, underestimates how much store Sir Francis Willoughby set by the commanding prospect the room afforded, how much delight and fascination in it he and his guests found. But as Sidney's metaphor indicates, Elizabethan builders and dwellers were sensitive to the metaphorical value of visual prospect. More generally, as metaphors for knowledge become increasingly spatial in the sixteenth century, they also achieved more actual manifestation in architecture. William West's sophisticated reading of Montaigne's essays with reference to the round study in which he wrote argues that Montaigne's seated position, his back to the flattened part of a library resembling cranium and globe, provided his eyes with physical evidence for his fantasy of intellectual mastery. His reading room was understood to give 'physical form to what had previously been confined... to thought'.²⁴

Strikingly incongruous, the prospect room at Wollaton is a place to look out *from*, but is also designed to be looked *at*. As Mary Hazard writes of Hardwick Hall, built in Derbyshire in the 1590s by Robert Smythson, 'it is built on a hilltop, not only so that the owner can oversee the surrounding domain, but also so that the house can be seen'.²⁵ The architectural construction of a panoramic vantage point anticipates, and also creates, a different kind of prospect – the horizontal view from the ground of the monument rising high in the distance. Journeying through Arcadia, Sidney's figures find relief in the delight of an elevated view, but they also show awareness of being within the prospective vision

²³ Girouard (2009), p. 244.

²⁴ William N. West, 'Reading Rooms: Architecture and Agency in the Houses of Michel de Montaigne and Nicholas Bacon', *Comparative Literature* 56 (2004), 111-129, 114.

²⁵ Mary E. Hazard, *Elizabethan Silent Language* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 137.

of a monumental building. In Book II, Pyrocles recounts how Leucippe was committed 'to a house' dedicated, like Spenser's Temple of Venus, 'to *Vestall Nunnes*'. The following morning, he narrates how 'we (having striven with the Sunnes earlines) were scarcely beyond the prospect of the high turrets', when they were overtaken by Zelmane.²⁶ In such idealised landscapes of pastoral romance, monumental buildings exert quasi-planetary influence over the sight and awareness of those nearby. Whereas a pleasant view over miles of countryside in many directions could be read as a visual metaphor of 'lordship', Pyrocles's position in the shadow of the house's 'high turrets' can easily be read as a figure of intimidation. Complication arises, therefore, when the intimidating building up ahead is also a port of call. On several occasions in *The Faerie Queene*, distant buildings dominate the horizontal prospect of a questing figure, but also promise rest and shelter. In Fairyland's undefined forest, detached from particular spatial co-ordinates, such buildings might also be the only guarantee that the quest is not going in circles, and thus ensure its epic linearity.

Britomart begins Book III of *The Faerie Queene* lost in this forest, doggedly searching for Artegall:

At last as nigh out of the wood she came,
A stately Castle far away she spyde,
To which her steps directly she did frame.
That Castle was most goodly edifyde,
And plaste for pleasure nigh that forrest syde,
But faire before the gate a spacious playne,
Mantled with green, it selfe did spredden wyde...
(III.i.20.1-7)

²⁶ Sidney, ed. by Feuillerat, II.22.3, p. 291.

This 'stately Castle' is identified a few stanzas later as '*Castle loyeous*' (31.2), but only non-diegetically. Britomart lacks the information necessary to recognise the castle, as in this stanza, where it is merely an outline appearing 'far away'. Spenser staggers topographical detail, to suggest an unfolding sequence of self-revisions in Britomart's perspective. Emerging from the wood, she is relieved ('at last') to find her vision extending beyond immediate, labyrinthine surroundings: she has a definite, unmoving point in the distance to which she can 'frame' her steps.²⁷ The stanza's second sentence is temporally ambiguous: does it refer to Britomart's perspective at the edge of the wood, or to the appearance of the castle as she gets a little closer? There is no way of knowing, but the fact that Britomart notes its 'goodly edifyde' (4) exterior suggests the latter. However, the greater resolution of the castle might also give the traveller second thoughts: she can now see that the building is 'plaste... nigh that forrest side' (5), that the wood she was trying to escape is actually coming with her. 'For pleasure' affords the reader an extra, allegorical gloss: if proximity is a metaphor for susceptibility, the castle's situation makes it ominously associated with pleasure; the situation near a forest also recalls Archimago's dwelling in Book I. As she reaches the building, though, Britomart sees that castle and forest are not as close as they seemed: a 'spacious playne' (6) of green divides them. Perhaps this is a virtuous castle after all, though she soon discovers that the 'spacious playne' is far from decorous, filled as it is with hostile knights. Readers might already have noted the echo of the 'spacious plaine' surrounding the Bower of Bliss (II.xii.50.2-4). As it unfolds, this stanza demonstrates a sequence of perspectives, increasingly resolved into detail, of the same unmoving point, and shows how each impression modifies the

²⁷ 'Frame', in this instance, hovers between the decisive positivity of 'to shape, form, direct (a person, a person's life, thoughts, actions, etc.); to discipline, train (a person, animal, one's tongue, etc.); to dispose, lead incline (someone) to something (*OED*, 'frame', II.5.a) and the passivity of 'to adapt, adjust... *to* or *unto* something; to reconcile, submit' (II.5.c).

viewer's assessment of what she is seeing. The reader moves with Britomart but also ahead of her, provided with clues as to how to infer what kind of building Castle Ioyeous will be. We should connect the way in which *The Faerie Queene's* figures experience its buildings with their approach to them, but this connection is rarely made. R.F. Hill distinguishes some of Spenser's houses as 'dynamic', places which host a 'confrontation between the values of the "House" and a character... being tempted', from 'static' buildings devoid of interpersonal drama.²⁸ Yet he does not extend this notion of 'confrontation' to the houses' architecture, or the particular approach their prospects compel.

Once more, however, Britomart is not attempting something neatly analogous to textual interpretation. She cannot be accused of a deficiency in reading, because she is too far away to see the details. She can only form a holistic judgment of the building by submitting to the quasi-gravitational pull of its prospect. When large buildings appear on the horizon in *The Faerie Queene*, they tend to be visible as wholes: Spenser more commonly has his heroes noticing a faraway castle, rather than inferring from one visible element (like the spire of a church) the rest of the hidden building, as one would in a city. By virtue of distance, the architectural details which characterise the building remain hidden: its plan and style, and the particularity of ornamentation on its façade. Elizabethan architecture provides many examples of such detail disclosing interpretable information as to what the building 'means', such as the initials 'E.S.' in pierced stone carving on the balustrades at Hardwick Hall, marking the building for the cognoscenti as home of Elizabeth Shrewsbury, or the heraldic devices densely incorporated into the stained windows at Gilling Castle.²⁹ Such ornamentation, however, is best understood

²⁸ R.F. Hill, 'Spenser's Allegorical "Houses"', *The Modern Language Review* 65 (1970), 721-733, 722.

²⁹ Girouard (2009), p. 226.

without unreserved deployment of the metaphor of reading. One of the reasons for my caution is that it can only be 'read' by those who have got close.

Among the monumental buildings in *The Faerie Queene*, only the temple of Isis in Book V is portrayed (V.vii.3.5-8) without a description of how it is approached. In Book VI Calepine carries Serena, gravely wounded by the Blatant Beast, in search of somewhere to recover:

Downe in a dale forby a riuers syde,
He chaunst to spie a faire and stately place,
To which he meant his weary steps to guyde,
In hope there for his loue some succour to prouyde.

But comming to the riuers side, he found
That hardly passable on foote it was:
Therefore there still he stood as in a stound,
Ne wist which way he through the foord mote pas.
(VI.iii.29.6-9; 30.1-4)

'To which he meant' echoes Castle Ioyeous, 'to which' Britomart 'her steps... did frame'. 'Guyde', like 'frame', implies the monumental building's power to organise navigation and compel approach. Like Britomart, however, Calepine discovers that the castle up close is more complex than its appearance on the horizon suggests. From afar, the river seems to cling to the castle, running 'forby' (30.1) it; up close, the river which at a distance looked picturesque, two-dimensional and static, proves 'hardly passable' (2). Turpine's castle is separated from the river by considerable space, the equivalent of the 'spacious playne' on which Britomart is challenged: Calepine does not arrive until 'fall of day' (37.7). Even on his late arrival, though, he cannot identify the castle as Turpine's, thinking that the discourteous knight who scorned him from the far bank is simply a passing traveller.

I shall return to the discourteous spaces of Book VI and the allegorical value of their defective hospitality. First, we can relate the experience of Calepine and Serena to an earlier example of perilous approach in *The Faerie Queene* where the allegorical suggestiveness is more explicit. In Book I, Redcrosse has fallen in with Duessa and has 'long with her traueild' (I.iv.2.5) until they spy a distant palace. Like Duessa, the reader knows ahead of Redcrosse that the castle might exemplify or represent something vicious. In the description of the approach to the House of Pride, the reader's perspective outstrips Redcrosse's: the building is described as it appears from afar, 'a stately Pallace built of squared bricke' (4.1) with 'many loftie towres' (6) and 'goodly galleries' (7) and 'on the top a Diall' (9). 'And golden foile' is 'all ouer... displaid' (4), as the palace's walls and 'windowes' (8) catch the evening sun. In the next stanza, however, the reader learns that this impressive palace is built on the 'weake foundation' (5.4) of 'a sandie hill' (5), and that its 'hinder partes, that few could spie / Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly' (8-9). Redcrosse, from a distance and unable to see around the building to its 'hinder partes', cannot know the information disclosed to the reader. Yet he acts with a reader's confidence, thinking that the palace's distant appearance promises a place of magnificence, and marching through the open gates and 'to the hall... with rich array and costly arras dight' (6.6). His error is not one of misreading, but of presuming, proudly, that the building can be read.

The consistent inclusion of a gradual approach in descriptions of other monumental buildings in *The Faerie Queene* shows the horizontal prospect to be an important, if neglected, motif in the poem. It suggests that we consider its possible allegorical significances. I have argued so far that a property of allegorical worlds like Fairyland is the difficulty of separating what is substantive in the allegory from what is accidental,

and that we should pay more attention to movement in the poem. In the middle chapters I argued that in personifying nature Spenser alters the movement of rivers and the night, transforming motion into human mobility. Alteration of movement was, in those instances, an effect of the spatial distortions effected by personification. Here, I show that a particular kind of movement, possessing what theorists of mobility call a 'constellation' of characteristics, is itself the allegorical signifier, available for interpretation as a metaphor for a mental process.

The gradual approach to a house seen in the distance works as a metaphor for the difficulty of comprehending an abstract concept that is foreign to the self at a given stage, prior to the experience of being confronted by that concept. Britomart cannot surmount and reject unchaste desire without coming close to being corrupted by it. But by expressing this close encounter in the image of a castle which cannot be decoded without being approached, Spenser preserves a complex sense of Britomart's complicity. Like Guyon above Mammon's cave in Book II, she is attracted to Castle Ioyeous by an impulse more innocent than complicity, or concupiscence.³⁰ Guyon was curious about a vice he has not yet seen; Britomart hopes, but cannot know, that the castle on the horizon is the seat of goodness. But regardless of the kind of action, vicious or virtuous, that Castle Ioyeous encloses, going there furthers Britomart's quest by providing her with a bed for the night, and by ensuring that she moves on from the endless forest, whose lack of particular coordinates means that she risks going round in circles. The poem's monumental buildings are, therefore, illegible to its figures. This illegibility comes from the combination, in a single stanza, of the reader's perspective with that of the questing

³⁰ See Berger (1957), pp. 1-37, for an account of Guyon's aristocratic curiosity as a response to Mammon.

heroine. It also comes from the crossing of allegorical and architectural significances in a building which 'means', at the same time, lack of chastity and the furtherance of a quest.

Romance Analogues

Apart from Isis Church, Spenser's buildings do not appear without warning, and the motif of a monumental building appearing on the horizon similarly has literary precedent. Most obviously, buildings like Castle Ioyeous allude to analogous structures in medieval and late medieval romance. The typically errant tendency of romance narrative, and the vagueness of its landscapes' geography, means that romance heroes are regularly confronted by distant views of castles whose 'meanings' they cannot know. The 'Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney' in *Le Morte Darthur* recounts the adventures of Sir Gareth as, disguised as a kitchen boy called Beaumains, he journeys to liberate Dame Lyonesse. Accompanied by her sister, Lyonet, Beaumains encounters and defeats a series of knights identified by their colours. Having defeated the green knight, they progress through the 'Pass Perilous':

So within a mile they saw a white tower as any snow, well machicolated all about and double dyked; and over the tower gate there hung fifty shields of diverse colours. And under that tower there was a fair meadow, and therein were many knights and squires to behold, scaffolds and pavilions; for there upon the morn should be a great tournament. And the lord of the tower was within his castle, and looked out at a window and saw a damosel, a dwarf, and a knight armed at all points.³¹

³¹ Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* [1470], ed. by Helen Cooper (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998), p. 132. For Spenser's reading of English medieval romance, see Andrew King, *The Faerie Queene and Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). On the emphasis of English romances, especially in comparison to French texts, on social identity, see King, p. 45.

The 'fair meadow' seems a direct influence on Castle Ioyeous's 'spacious playne', similarly thronging with armed knights. As he describes gradual approach, Malory like Spenser constantly weaves together and pulls apart the reader's perspective, and the perspective of Beaumains and Lyonet. Like the errant travellers, the reader is introduced to the castle by its 'white tower'; its 'fifty shields', however, are visible to the reader as the heraldic devices of the 'many knights and squires', but to Beaumains and Lyonet probably only as points of colour. 'To behold' implies that the description returns to focalisation through Beaumains and Lyonet, but the explanation of the tournament, of which they are ignorant, departs from it. Finally, Malory's description of the castle juxtaposes the gradually developing and self-correcting horizontal prospect of the castle ('within a mile they saw a white tower') with the fixed vertical prospect from the castle: the 'lord of the tower' watches from on high, unmoving, as he sees three figures moving towards him.

Spenser's castles also gesture to analogues from European romance in their awesome appearance and substance. The House of Pride, dazzling and deceiving with its cunningly applied golden foil, moralises a recurrent motif in *Orlando Furioso*, of the castle of precious substance. In Canto 6, Ruggiero encounters Alcina's 'splendid city':

Off in the distance stood a wall which curved away, embracing a vast stretch of land; it was so high, its top seemed to merge with the heavens, and it looked as if it were solid gold from summit to foot. (There are some who part company with me here and maintain that it is an effect of alchemy; they may know better than I, but, again, they may be quite mistaken. To me it looks like gold, the way it gleams.)³²

³² Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* [1516-1532], *Orlando Furioso*, ed. and trans. by Guido Waldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) 6.59, p. 57.

Ariosto's playful posture of doubt and reticence ('to me it looks like gold') foregrounds the difficulty, implicit throughout, of marshalling multiple sources. More specifically, however, it also imitates Ruggiero's experience of being awestruck by what appears 'solid gold'. The possibility of 'alchemy' points to a paradox at the heart of attitudes to precious metal: its value, and ability to produce sublime effects ('to merge with the heavens'), derives at once from its massy solidity, and from its purity – which even in a vaguely alchemic framework tends towards quintessence, lack of substance. Tellingly, those castles in medieval romance which are constructed from crystal or glass, and which appear transparent, produce a similar effect, like this one in *Sir Orfeo*:

Amidde þe lond a castel he sighe,
Riche & real & wonder heighe.
Al þe vtmost wal
Was clere & schine as cristal;
An hundred tours ther were about...
(355-359)

Clarity, and perhaps transparency, of solid material ('riche and real') is here so unexpected that it produces 'wonder'.³³

The dazzling castles of romance, both solid and see-through, differ markedly from the architecture of medieval allegorical literature. Stephen Hawes's *The Pastime of Pleasure* (1517) narrates the education of a Christian soul, called Graunde Amoure, in the arts and virtues. Graunde Amoure's first port of call, after choosing the path leading to the Active Life, is the Tower of Doctryne, built of 'claryfyed' (407) stone.³⁴ Within this building, Graunde Amoure is guided by Lady Doctryne. From the chamber of Gramer, of which a

³³ *Sir Orfeo* [c.1330], ed. by A.J. Bliss (1954), 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 32.

³⁴ Stephen Hawes, *The Pastime of Pleasure* [1517], ed. by William Mead (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 21.

firm grasp enables its student to read things, 'to construe euery thyng ententyfly' (600), Graunde Amoure moves upwards to Logic, and upwards again – 'vp we went a stayre' (651) to Rhetoric.³⁵ The Tower of Doctryne's effect is true to its 'claryfyed' substance: it makes all things plain, and manifests to Graunde Amoure's sights the sequence in which the components of the *trivium* build on one another. Employing a tower to illustrate a hierarchical and static image of ethical and intellectual concepts, Hawes draws from *Piers Plowman* and its own tower, from which the field of folk is surveyed. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser combines the principle of allegorical architecture, familiar from medieval English allegories, with the descriptive language of romance, in which buildings are marvellously inscrutable, and strike awe in or cast doubt on those who approach them. The difference between Hawes's Tower of Doctryne and the House of Pryde is more than the gradual shift Simon Thurley describes in sixteenth-century monumental architecture, from vertical or 'stacked' sequences of rooms to the horizontal sequence exemplified by the Long Gallery.³⁶ It represents Spenser's realisation that the dazzling buildings of romance could signify allegorically, and specifically that their illegibility itself could be part of the allegory.

Early Modern Travellers

Spenser's buildings, and his description of how they are approached, draw not only from romance sources, but also from the real buildings of Elizabethan England. The combination of influences need not be framed as a tension: Spenser often sets romance

³⁵ Hawes, pp. 29-29.

³⁶ See Thurley, pp. 40-58. Thurley traces the end of the period in which 'stacked lodging' was dominant to the demise of Wolsey in 1529.

structures and motifs in new contexts, appropriating them for allegorical ends, and accommodating them to a protestant world-view. This section compares *The Faerie Queene's* description of approach with similar experience in the material world of the sixteenth century: aristocratic and royal encounters with the prodigy house, and travel writing by the English abroad.

In August 1579, Lord Burghley wrote to Sir Christopher Hatton expressing admiration at Holdenby, the country house Hatton had recently built in Northamptonshire:

But approaching to the house, being led by a large, long straight fair way, I found a great magnificence in the front or front pieces of the house, and so every part answerable to [the] other, to allure liking. I found no onething of greater grace than your stately ascent from your hall to your great chamber; and your chamber answerable with largeness and lightsomeness... I visited all your rooms, high and low, and only the contentation of my eyes made me forget the infirmity of my legs.³⁷

Burghley's language is striking for its passivity. His eyes encounter the house's brilliance after 'being led' to it; he discovers its features ('I found... I found') as if by happy accident. The house possesses the power to stimulate curious desire, or as Burghley puts it 'to allure liking'. Allurement arises from a combination of visibility and hiddenness in the prospect: Holdenby presents itself as an aesthetic whole, 'every part answerable to [the] other', but the aesthetic unity of the façade hints at the presence of intentional design, and of human activity, in 'all your rooms' behind. With the power to allure comes the power to exhaust and to deprive, for even Burghley is left after his visit with the ache of 'infirmity' in his legs. Burghley does, of course, get in: his visit was certainly pre-arranged, and as one of the most senior figures of Elizabeth's government he can have expected a

³⁷ Emily Sophia Hartstone, *Memorials of Holdenby* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1868), pp. 15-16.

courteous welcome. Able to access Holdenby, and the view of and from its rooms, his eyes are afforded refreshing 'contentation'.

James Sutton uses Burghley's letter to provide the theoretical underpinning of his extended study of the country seat of the Cecils themselves, Theobalds. Its power, he argues, depended on a particular combination of 'allurement' and 'contentation'.³⁸ 'Contentation', in its sense of 'contentment', fulfilled the desire stimulated by 'allurement', when the visitor gained entry to the house or was delighted by its 'largeness and lightsomeness'. In its alternative sense of 'containment', however, it restricted the visitor's body by cordoning off some spaces as private and inaccessible, exploiting the relative freedom of the sight compared to the other senses to stimulate yet more 'allurement'. Thus the visitor is shepherded into the building's 'grid of Cecilian power'.³⁹ Yet Theobalds exerts power over its captured visitor, as Sutton argues by a reconstruction of approach to the house in 1590, through an architectural symbolic language. Lord Burghley replaced the 'pre-existing winding lane' with a 'long axial entryway' stretching between the house and the London-Ware road.⁴⁰ This drive manipulated the approach of pedestrians and vehicles to accentuate this sense of purposeful linear movement: 'shadows formed by the guests' bodies and by the elm and ash trees lining the drive would point forward (westward) toward the house'.⁴¹ Sutton combines materialist sensitivity to detail with a New Historicist understanding of Theobalds' drive as a text. The first of several gateways on the drive was an archway topped with a 'taffrell' that probably supported the Cecil arms, which Sutton describes as

³⁸ James Sutton, *Materializing Space at an Early Modern Prodigy House: The Cecils at Theobalds, 1564-1607* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

³⁹ Sutton, p. 32.

⁴⁰ Sutton, pp. 32-33.

⁴¹ Sutton, p. 35.

'the primary vocabulary of Theobalds'.⁴² Sutton's study concerns an elite building, and thus the approaching journeys that interest him most are those of the Queen or Burghley's fellow aristocrats. To such visitors the building certainly stimulated 'allurement' through a strategy that can be described as 'symbolic', combining emblematic signs (the coat of arms) with a sensory experience of awe (the straight drive). But for non-elite or unscheduled or displaced visitors, like the wandering knights of *The Faerie Queene*, the New Historicist thesis of space as a symbolic language of power is less convincing. Busirane's house intimidates Britomart not by symbolising its power, but by its enigmatic signification, or even refusal to signify. This is not to say that monumental buildings never confounded royal or aristocratic visitors: as Elizabeth Kolkovich shows in a recent study of the entertainments that greeted Elizabeth on her visits to country houses, a playful enigma and estrangement often characterised the house when the Queen arrived.⁴³ But the scheduled nature of the visit and the power of the Queen meant that this confoundment was unthreatening. Britomart is aristocratic, but unlike the Queen coming purposefully to Theobalds, her arrival is an accident of her wandering. Castle Ioyeous, accordingly, affords her no contentation; it never resolves into legible form.

The relation of Spenser's questing figures to the buildings before them differs fundamentally from that of the Queen or any scheduled aristocratic traveller at houses like Theobalds, even one comically misrecognised in a pageant devised for their honour. If we look for equivalents in the lived experience of sixteenth-century buildings, we are

⁴² Sutton, p. 33.

⁴³ Elizabeth Kolkovich, *The Elizabethan Country House Entertainment: Print, Performance and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

more likely to find them in travel writing, where the dislocation of the traveller from an architectural environment through which he or she can easily navigate means that buildings strike their observers as awesome and illegible, even as they approach them. Among the spectacular experiences recounted by William Lithgow, an early seventeenth-century traveller from Scotland, is the sight of the pyramids in Egypt. Having arrived in Cairo, Lithgow journeys to Giza with 'two French Merchants', and climbs the Great Pyramid:

All the Historians that euer wrot of these wonders, haue not so amply recited their admirable greatnesse, as the experience of the beholder may testifie their excessiue hugeness and height. The first we approched vnto, is biggest... Hauing outwardly mounted by degrees, with great paine to the top, I was maruellously rauished to see such a square plat-forme, all of one peece of stone, which couereth the head... Truely, the more I beheld this strange worke, the more I was stricken in admiration: for before we ascended, the top of this Pyramide did seeme so sharpe as a pointed Diamond; but when we were mounted thereon, we found it so large, that in my opinion, it would haue contained a hundred men.⁴⁴

From afar, the pyramid seems to taper to a point as sharp as that of a 'Diamond'; having climbed it gradually, the traveller sees that it is really a three-dimensional 'plat-forme'. The difference between the monument in the horizontal prospect it constructs and as it seems up close is broadly analogous to Lithgow's contrast between the narratives of 'the Historians' and 'the experience of the beholder'. Like Cecil at Holdenby, Lithgow is left 'maruellously rauished' by the Pyramids. Here, it is not just the built structure's sheer power to exhaust and delight, to stimulate awe and curiosity at once, that accomplishes this ravishment. It is also the discrepancy between the building as it appears from afar, and as it is experienced up close. Exemplifying the way a monumental structure

⁴⁴ William Lithgow, *A most delectable and true discourse, of an admired and painefull peregrination from Scotland, to the most famous kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affricke* (London, 1616), pp. 117-118.

modulates in perception as it is approached 'by degrees', Lithgow's account illuminates the similarly gradual character of buildings in *The Faerie Queene*.

Openly fictional narratives of travel also include useful examples of non-elite and non-scheduled arrivals at powerful houses. At the start of Nicholas Breton's dialogue *A merrie dialogue betwixt twoo travellers* (1603), Lorenzo tells his companion Dorindo that he is mired in 'griefe'; it stems, he says, from 'mistaking'.⁴⁵ In his early life he was 'perswaded' into taking actions without giving them due consideration, and with 'onely a litle obseruation'.⁴⁶ He boarded a ship called the 'Buon-à-venture', almost certainly the HMS Bonaventure commanded by Sir Francis Drake during the attack on Cadíz in 1587, and sailed only a short distance before they were shipwrecked. 'Trauelling till I was wearie, penillesse, and exceedingly hungrie' through a foreign land, Lorenzo 'came to the view of a goodly, faire, & gorgeously built house'.⁴⁷ He combs his beard and adjusts his clothes, nervous of seeming like a disreputable vagrant:

But when I came neare vnto the house, and finding the doore shut, I did imagine (being about the mid time of the day) that the seruants were all at dinner, and the lord of the house either laid downe to sleepe, or gone into his closet... but staying awhile, and neither hearing any voice within, nor any poore creature without at the gate, that might hope of almes from the hall, I feared the charitie that was so litle, that my comfort without would be according: but after I had stood a while, loth to lose time, I knocked at the doore; where I knocked long, before I had any answer.⁴⁸

Lorenzo is eventually hailed from a window, and told that the master of the house is not there; turning around, he sees a 'foole in a pyed coate', who tells him that this is a

⁴⁵ Nicholas Breton, *A merrie dialogue betwixt twoo travellers* (London, 1603), p. 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Breton, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Breton, p. 5.

banqueting house, 'where the gazers are onely fed with conceipts'.⁴⁹ He misunderstands the house, which allures him with the promise of 'almes' and hospitality, but confounds him with its illegibility. His experience bears uncanny similarity with the arrival of Britomart and company at Malbecco's castle.

The usefulness of an Egyptian pyramid, and of Breton's banqueting house, in understanding structures like Castle Ioyeous prompts the question of how closely we can compare Spenser's questing, journeying figures with characters from early modern travelogues. Certainly the experience of Britomart emerging from the wood, or Redcrosse approaching the House of Pride, bears more resemblance to Lithgow's experience at the Pyramids than to the Queen's experience at Theobalds. In some respects the figures of *The Faerie Queene* are even more disoriented than the adventurers of the late sixteenth-century travel narrative roving prodigally around the world.⁵⁰ Like the world beyond Christendom, Fairyland is constantly opaque. Unlike Lithgow, however, Redcrosse and Britomart are journeying *through* rather than *in* the country around them, in pursuit respectively of the dragon and of Artegall. Their quests entail the wandering of romance, but to a specific end, which is to say that their quests reflect the generic intertwining of epic romance. Finally, Redcrosse is accompanied by a figure devilishly adept at being other than what she seems. Only the most xenophobic readers of Lithgow's narrative would have drawn similar conclusions about the 'two French Merchants' with whom he visits the Pyramids.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ On prodigality as a motif in Elizabethan culture and a meta-structure underpinning a variety of Elizabethan narratives, see Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

As I have argued, Britomart's sensory apprehension of Castle Ioyeous is comparable with reading only if reading is understood, as it was in late medieval theories of perception, as a kind of seeing.⁵¹ Her experience is more passively receptive than the 'interpretation' asked of actual readers of an allegory. Given the tendency of Spenser's critics to conflate the spatial perception required of his figures with the interpretation offered to his readers, it is not surprising that little critical work on Spenser's buildings has analysed this pattern of gradual movement from two to three dimensions, from enigmatic wholes to wholes filled out with surprising details. John Bender's study, *Spenser and Literary Pictorialism* (1972) opens fruitful ground by articulating and preserving the physical complexity of *The Faerie Queene's* objects of ekphrasis. Rather than flattening the tapestries, statues and buildings of the poem by focusing solely on their iconography, Bender observes the different ways in which they are perceived. Spenser's 'framed' images command a static 'kind of attention' by being cordoned from their surroundings.⁵² Other sights, like buildings, require 'scanning', which is defined as either a pageant-like 'motion... across or through a scene' or 'from a distant and general view... to a closer view in which various details appear'.⁵³ Bender's perspective of the physical appearance of Fairyland is usefully nuanced, and I wish to preserve his notion of 'scanning' as a distinct kind of perception in the poem. However, though his argument doesn't define the hero's perception as a species of reading, Bender similarly collapses the distinction by arguing

⁵¹ See (or read) Michael Camille, 'Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing', in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 197-223.

⁵² John B. Bender, *Spenser and Literary Pictorialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 68.

⁵³ Bender, p. 105.

that Spenser makes the reading experience imitative of the perceptive experiences of his figures. The emphasis merely shifts from reading to perceiving: Spenser's poetry 'is pictorial... [because] its relationship to our experience of the visual world is analogous to the relationship of the visual arts to that world'.⁵⁴ As I have argued so far, Spenser's descriptions of how distant buildings are scanned are best understood if we preserve the differences between the reading of the poem, and the perceiving that happens in it.

Architectural history of late medieval and early modern England tends, when it hypothesises the experience of approach, to emphasise the gaze of the high-status observer over that of the uncertain outsider. Paula Henderson's history of sixteenth-century houses includes a chapter on the typological evolution of the gatehouse. Tudor gatehouses played the twin roles of 'securing access to the house', deterring thieves with their imposing solidity and the porter's vigilance, and providing 'an introductory embellishment'.⁵⁵ Henderson argues that across the century the second aesthetic function replaced the first social one, especially in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean houses such as Montacute in which the gatehouse is split in two to reveal the house's façade. Henderson demonstrates this shift convincingly. But she obscures the residual non-aesthetic experience of buildings by assuming that those subjecting themselves to what she calls 'the orchestrated approach' were well versed in reading buildings.⁵⁶ Britomart's orchestrated approach to Castle Ioyeous begins a long way before any gatehouse is visible. Unlike Henderson's hypothetical viewer, she evaluates the building

⁵⁴ Bender, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Henderson, p. 35.

⁵⁶ Henderson, pp. 35-71.

before her with reference to her quest, her lack of orientation and her need for rest. She does not, and cannot, 'read' it as an aesthetic or symbolic object.

Mark Girouard's recent general study of Elizabethan architecture includes a chapter on 'speaking buildings'. With its decoration and embellishment, figurative sculpture, inscription and illustration, Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture is 'full of messages, designed to inform, to exhort, to encourage, to delight or to mystify'.⁵⁷ Girouard stresses the importance of allegorical personages such as 'personifications of the Five Senses' in exterior and interior statuary, or the statues of Justice and Charity on the gallery chimneypiece at Hardwick.⁵⁸ Despite its elegant flexibility, Girouard's account of 'speaking buildings' elides some important distinctions. It moves silently from exterior to interior decoration: niche statues of the Five Senses are immediately followed by the Nine Worthies as they 'climb in wood up the staircase at Hartwell House in Buckinghamshire'.⁵⁹ This belies the assumption that those afforded a view of the house's exterior, who interpreted its 'speaking' parts, were also granted access to its equally legible interior. Thus we might infer that Girouard's hypothetical gazers-on-façades are elite guests, or at least those intended to be there. Furthermore, we could draw a distinction of degree, but nevertheless an important one, between a near and far perspective of a house. Someone standing a few feet away from a façade might experience its symbolic decorations as confounding barriers to entry, but can nevertheless see them. The perspective of a traveller like Britomart, who spies the building at distance, excludes detail altogether. The perspectives of alien, non-elite and distant travellers are not taken

⁵⁷ Girouard (2009), p. 218.

⁵⁸ Girouard (2009), p. 220.

⁵⁹ Girouard (2009), p. 223.

into Girouard's account. He considers what built space looks like and symbolises, but not how it is experienced, as Gaston Bachelard does in *The Poetics of Space*.⁶⁰

Matthew Johnson's work on the history of medieval castles in the British Isles provides a particularly useful critique of the art-historical perspective on buildings, its elisions and blind spots. The critique arises from self-revision. In *Behind the Castle Gate* (2002), Johnson questions the notion that the castle evolved according to a telic impulse, towards one of several 'true' forms or 'ideal types'.⁶¹ On the contrary, Johnson argues, the design of a particular castle, however deviant from its authoritative supposed model, reflects the constraints of its environment and the needs and intentions of its inhabitants: 'any search for the... "distinguishing characteristics... runs the danger of descent into essentialist argument', and into the marginalisation of the building's function in favour of its form.⁶² However, Johnson's study also thinks of buildings as containing 'meanings' which are constructed and comprehended in a textual manner. Comparing Bodiam and Burghley, for example, he concludes that at the former 'the references are implicit, hardly overtly commented on', while 'at Burghley, they are self-conscious, overtly allusive'.⁶³ Buildings in his argument are not works of art, but they signify like literary texts. His reconstruction of the experience of a visitor – 'a male visitor towards the end of the sixteenth century' – at Kenilworth Castle demonstrates this latent tension.⁶⁴ Johnson's later work revises his reliance on 'meaning' in *Behind the Castle Gate*. Adopting more of a sociological focus on

⁶⁰ Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'Espace* [1957], trans. by Maria Jolas, *The Poetics of Space* (London: Penguin, 1964). Of course, Bachelard's phenomenological approach itself stands open to critique of a broadly Marxist kind. He seems astonishingly untroubled by any sense of the contingency and difficulty of owning or occupying a house, and the social factors involved.

⁶¹ Matthew Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate: from Medieval to Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 99.

⁶² Johnson (2002), p. 121.

⁶³ Johnson (2002), p. 134.

⁶⁴ Johnson (2002), p. 144.

inhabitation, Johnson moves 'away from abstract and unquantifiable ideas and attributes like... "meaning", and toward questions of movement, visibility, the senses, sequential experiences'.⁶⁵ He repoints his own assessment of Bodiam 'from the outside... in aesthetic terms', describing the castle afresh as 'an arrangement of spaces'.⁶⁶ It is this revised sense of a building's 'meaning', which pays more attention to what it does rather than the recognised forms it quotes, which will underscore my analysis of hospitality in *The Faerie Queene*.

II. Hospitality

Defective and Deceptive Hospitality

I have argued so far that the monumental buildings in *The Faerie Queene* prompt a particular kind of approach, one that renders them illegible to the poem's questing figures. Houses loom large as outlines on the horizon and, given the vagueness of the forest or plains around them, leave no choice to the quester who approaches them before he or she can make inferences from their details. I have suggested that this unknowing approach towards a whole, whose details cannot be discerned, functions as an allegory for the acquisition of, or tendency to, new ethical states. In the following section, I want to examine the palaces and castles of *The Faerie Queene* in closer detail. Having arrived at the buildings which they necessarily could not read, the poem's questing figures nervously await a hospitable welcome. True hospitality, I will argue here, is rare in the

⁶⁵ Matthew Johnson, 'What do Medieval Buildings Mean?', *History and Theory* 52 (2013), 380-399, 391.

⁶⁶ Johnson (2013), 394.

poem. It is often defective: porters are absent, or refuse to perform their role properly, and gateways lie enigmatically open, with no human welcome forthcoming. Or it is deceptive: welcomes are extended disingenuously by malevolent agents who seek not to accommodate the poem's heroes, but to trap them. In general, the failure of hospitality in *The Faerie Queene* compounds the enigma and illegibility of its allegorical architecture.

I'm indebted to Felicity Heal's *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (1990).⁶⁷ Her account of the changing nature and perception of hospitality has been supplemented but never significantly challenged.⁶⁸ This section draws in particular from three interlinked tenets of Heal's argument. First, she stresses the social character of hospitality as it was defined until at least the middle of the sixteenth century. Great houses were economic centres of their districts, providing food and drink to some of those who asked for it. Among the first generation of dwellers in prodigy houses were 'builders in the new style' like Cecil and Hatton, 'who endeavoured to identify themselves with the old traditions of public generosity to all comers'.⁶⁹ Such public generosity has an apparently paradoxical relationship with hierarchy. All except the so-called disreputable poor received food, and in very traditional performances of hospitality social divisions were relaxed, as everyone ate in the hall. During the Christmas season of 1526, for example, the Duke of Norfolk dined on one occasion with 'two hermits'.⁷⁰ But in reality, social position was reflected spatially by the part of the house in which refreshment was provided. Visitors able to present themselves as members of the 'merchant/professional' and 'yeomen' classes might be served at the table in the hall, while those deemed to be from the

⁶⁷ Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁶⁸ See Lisa Celovsky, 'Ben Jonson and Sidneian Legacies of Hospitality', *Studies in Philology* 106 (2009), 178-206, 180.

⁶⁹ Heal, p. 155.

⁷⁰ Heal, p. 63.

'crafts/trades/retail', 'service' or 'labourer' classes were served at the buttery bar. Vagrants or the so-called 'deserving poor' received their alms at the gate.⁷¹ As Heal observes, traditional hospitality has something in common with the ritual of 'lords of misrule': it encourages 'an atmosphere in which hierarchy was temporarily modified or discarded in order to be reaffirmed'.⁷² Traditional, public hospitality instantiates the social order by showing the flexibility of that order, its adaptability to circumstance, and by demonstrating its capacity to sustain the life of those it subordinates.

Secondly, traditional hospitality was held to be a national trait. The entertainment of foreigners asserted the distinctiveness of the English in an environment which also expressed their superiority. 'When the English élite did entertain foreigners', Heal observes, they tended to expend more effort and interest upon feeding than accommodating them'.⁷³ From the late fifteenth century, the inn functioned as 'the primary grid of accommodation for travellers in England'.⁷⁴ As we shall see, trustworthy inns are conspicuously absent in Fairyland, where a stable English nation is also either absent or under construction.

Thirdly, Heal argues that by the end of the sixteenth century hospitality was perceived to be in decline. She connects the various stages of the Reformation with an actual and perceived decline in performative public hospitality. The onus for charitable relief of the poor was shifted somewhat to local government in the middle of Henry VIII's reign, and

⁷¹ My terms are drawn from Alexandra Shepard's study of how English people described their own social position, as opposed to how they were described by elites. See Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1-44.

⁷² Heal, p. 76.

⁷³ Heal, p. 204.

⁷⁴ Heal, p. 202.

the profligacy of noble magnificence was subjected to the same critique as visual superfluity in religious spaces. The rise of the culture of civility, promoted by the reading of Seneca and of Italian conduct manuals such as those of Guazzo, della Casa and Castiglione, placed new emphasis on the entertainment of friends, rather than of neighbours and travellers. Heal links these social shifts to the gradual diminishment of the importance of the hall in sixteenth-century houses. 'Semi-public forms of open dining' survive, she stresses, but move 'into the chamber', the smaller room traditionally located to the right of the hall as the house is entered.⁷⁵ Coloured by cultural values inherited from Italian humanism, hospitality 'was more likely to become a matter of personal taste'.⁷⁶ As I will show, Spenser dramatises this perceived decline in traditional hospitality, depriving his questing heroes of the reliable welcome they expect.

Early Modern Housekeeping

Before analysing the inhospitable castles of *The Faerie Queene*, it is worth making brief examination of some records of sixteenth-century housekeeping in England, and parts of its empire. The two surviving sequences of accounts and disbursement books from Robert Dudley's household provide a valuable context for the economic functioning of an aristocratic house compelled to provide hospitality in various forms. The first set of running accounts, kept by Dudley's servant William Chancy, cover 1558-59. They show that the everyday economic life of his household was characterised by a mixture of buying and selling, and gift exchange. Chancy's accounts record the compensation of servants from other households, bringing curious or lavish gifts from their masters: a sum is paid

⁷⁵ Heal, p. 42.

⁷⁶ Heal, p. 140.

‘to my Lord of Darbyes servant for bringing your lordship j brace of puffins’, for example.⁷⁷ It’s unclear whether the sum paid to Darby’s servant is anything like the market price of the puffins, or whether it is a discretionary tip. In examples of more commonplace deliveries, whose provenance suggests that they are everyday purchases for the kitchen rather than courtesies to Dudley, Chancy still uses the language of gift-giving: a sum is ‘gyvin in reward to Mr Purveis man bringing sucking rabetts and other presents’.⁷⁸ Such variety of courteous gifts and everyday purchases is extended, on occasion, to include acts of charity. Chancy’s account mentions ‘a power woman of Hatfield bringing apples’.⁷⁹ Several items later, he mentions a sum paid ‘the same daye for almes’.⁸⁰ As Heal’s account makes clear, the giving of ‘almes’ belonged to the encompassing conceptual domain of hospitality along with the entertainment of equals and elites. As Simon Adams’s edition notes, however, the mention of ‘almes’ in Chancy’s list is struck through. Perhaps Chancy decided not to record the household’s charitable donations, or to account for them elsewhere. Yet the uncertain status of ‘almes’ demonstrates the ambiguous nature of hospitality in relation to the everyday activities of a household. Those activities of exchange themselves had a tendency to be described in the language of gifts. (As my analysis of the castle of Briana and Crudor shows towards the end of this chapter, Book VI of *The Faerie Queene* establishes sustained links between concepts of courtesy, hospitality and gift-giving; the ‘dore’ of Calidore implies both a door and the Greek word for gift, *dōron*.) But hospitality itself, as a kind of supposedly unconditional giving that had to disguise its participation in both in a social hierarchy and

⁷⁷ *Household Accounts and Disbursement Books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1558-1561, 1584-1586*, ed. by Simon Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 49.

⁷⁸ *Household Accounts*, p. 51.

⁷⁹ *Household Accounts*, p. 44.

⁸⁰ *Household Accounts*, p. 45.

a system of mutual reliance and exchange, had reason to be cordoned off into its own zone.

Spenser lived in London during his early life, made contact through his early publications with the periphery of the court, and in the 1570s probably lived under Dudley's employment in Leicester House.⁸¹ Yet most of his adult life was spent not at England's political centre but on the frontiers of its empire. As Secretary to Arthur Grey, Elizabeth's Lord Deputy in Ireland, Spenser lived in Dublin. A fortified city at the heart of the English Pale, Dublin afforded more opportunities than the rest of Ireland for the exchange of hospitality between English administrators. Lodowick Bryskett's *A discourse of civil life* (1606) records one such gathering, in 'a litle cottage... built vnto Dublin', of military and intellectual figures from Dublin's New English community.⁸² The party includes one 'M. Edmond Spenser'.⁸³ Yet even in the relative security of Dublin, Bryskett frames the gathering as a retreat rather than an event in English political life in Ireland. As Bryskett welcomes his guests, his apothecary Mr Smith is advising him on a new course of 'physicke', and observes to the company that the master of the house needs treatment for melancholy; what else but a 'melancholy humor' could have induced him to have 'giuen ouer such an office as he hath resigned'?⁸⁴ Like *The Faerie Queene*, the ensuing Erasmian dialogue treats of practical virtue (the figure of 'Edmond Spenser' mentions his ongoing work on the poem, representing 'all the morall vertues'),⁸⁵ but it does so from a fashioned position of intellectual and geographical retirement.

⁸¹ Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 91.

⁸² Lodowick Bryskett, *A discourse of civil life containing the ethike part of morall philosophie* (London, 1606), p. 5.

⁸³ Bryskett, p. 6.

⁸⁴ Bryskett, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁵ Bryskett, p. 26.

Hospitality on the Munster Plantation, where both Bryskett and Spenser subsequently lived, differed in character from its equivalents in London or the English countryside. The houses of the richer New English, often fortified, provided refuge not just from a weary journey but from the (real and imagined) hostility of the local population. Heal's account, scrupulous in avoidance of any anachronistic association of the countryside with peace and order, shows that English travellers also felt precarious at home. But the threat of assault lacked the ethnic or national dimension it had in Ireland. The sense of encirclement on the Plantation interacts with the rise of the cult of civility to create a defensive *côterie* culture. Administrators fostered mutually reinforcing social and intellectual links, a more intense and inward alternative to traditional notions of English hospitality. An example of another kind of imperial life away from the centre, and the species of hospitality derived from it, is provided by the correspondence of Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, and his wife Honor, Viscountess Lisle, during Lisle's time as Lord Deputy of Calais from 1533-1540. We can make a broad comparison of the experience of keeping house in Calais with life in Dublin in the 1580s, and again with life on the Munster Plantation, though the experiences vary with regard to time, place, political contingencies and the social status of those involved. Lisle's correspondence shows that, as a close relative of the King, he was compelled and able to maintain an active presence in court life even as he lived away from it. He continues to participate in the rhythm of mutual gift exchange: William Kingston thanks him, in a letter during the summer of 1533, 'for my good cheese that your Lordship sent me', before laconically

informing him that 'we be like to have a war with Scotland'.⁸⁶ Lisle is close enough to be exchanging gifts, but sufficiently far to keep up with the news.

The Lisles' hospitality to English visitors, similarly, at once confirms the Englishness of Calais, and acknowledges its distance from England itself, its slight precarity. (What felt like precarity in Calais felt in Ireland, given the very different nature of relations between the English and those surrounding them, like present danger.) As befits the paradoxical nature of hospitality, the Lisles could demonstrate the Englishness of Calais by opening its doors to French guests, like the Lord Admiral of France whose associate Jehan de Moucheau thanks Lady Lisle for 'divers your good favours'. Lord Lisle's generosity in Calais does the Admiral well at the Court; Moucheau reports that he considers himself 'the most bounden of any man in the world to your ladyship and lord', and that 'there was never man made such good report'.⁸⁷ Serving in Henry's government during its last, tyrannical phase, the Lisles could also use their hospitality towards certain Englishmen as evidence to militate against the charges of treason which ultimately were brought. A letter of 1537 from Richard Lee advises Lady Lisle that talk abounds in the Church of her covert recusancy: 'I showed him', says Lee, referring to the archbishop of Canterbury, 'that there was never preacher that came thither but that your ladyship did entertain him'.⁸⁸

Defective Entrances

⁸⁶ William Kingston to Lord Lisle, 20 July 1533. *The Lisle Letters: An Abridgement*, ed. by Muriel St. Clare Byrne (London: Secker & Warburg, 1983), p. 143.

⁸⁷ Jehan de Moucheau to Lady Lisle, 29 November 1534, *The Lisle Letters*, p. 62.

⁸⁸ Richard Lee to Lady Lisle, 16 September 1537, *The Lisle Letters*, pp. 297-298.

Spenser's heroes encounter genuine and generous hospitality on the threshold of only a single castle, the House of Holiness in Book I, where they are greeted by the porter, 'an aged syre' (I.x.5.5) called Humiltá, and 'a francklin faire and free' (6.4), Zele in his first of two appearances in the poem.⁸⁹ Yet even this friendly welcome follows a moment of uncertainty on the threshold: when Redcrosse and Una have 'arriued' (5.1) at the castle, 'the dore they find fast lockt' (1). Nowhere do Spenser's questing figures encounter a personification of hospitality itself, like Fair Welcome in *The Romance of the Rose*, who points the hedge surrounding the roses, and guarantees the narrator against 'evil or discourtesy'.⁹⁰ The experience of an enigmatically closed entrance is repeated across the poem, often in phrases that echo 'the dore... fast lockt'.⁹¹ In Book I, Arthur comes to rescue Redcrosse from Orgoglio's castle, 'whose gates he found fast shutt' (I.viii.3.3). Forcing his way in with the help of Timias' bugle, he is then met with 'an yron doore / that fast was lockt' (37.4) and for which there is no key.⁹² In Book III Britomart and Glauce come to Cairmardin, Merlin's dwelling, to hear his prophecy; '[t]hey heare arriuing', stay nervously 'a while without' (III.iii.14.1). Later in the same Book, Paridell and Satyrane approach Malbecco's castle. '[S]oft knocking' (III.ix.10.1) on the door, Paridell is told that it can't be opened because its keys have been given to the master of the house:

⁸⁹ In his second, Zele appears as prosecutor of Duessa in the allegory of the trial and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots (V.ix.39).

⁹⁰ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose* [c.1230-1275], 2749-2791, ed. and trans. by Frances Horgan, *The Romance of the Rose* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 43.

⁹¹ To encounter a locked door in early modern England often meant seeing the outer parts of the locks – doors tended to possess several. This encounter could, in turn, be an aesthetic one, as locks were opportunities to display the wealth of the house and its access to high-quality craft. On the use of locksmithing designs in early modern prosthetic technology, see Heidi Hausse, 'The Locksmith, the Surgeon and the Mechanical Hand: Communicating Technical Knowledge in Early Modern Europe', in *Technology and Culture* 60 (2019), 34-64. On the history of locksmithing, and its relation to other guilds and other countries, see A.M. Allen, *The Locksmith Craft in Early Modern Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2007).

⁹² The word 'key' was acquiring its specific meaning of 'an explanatory scheme for the interpretation of a cipher' in Spenser's lifetime: Bacon's reference to a 'kay-cypher' in 1605 is the first instance. *OED*, 'key', n1, 5b.

And now so long before the wicket fast
They wayted, that the night was forward spent.
(11.2-3)

The same fate awaits the knight who comes the next day: 'flatly he of entrance was refusd' (12.6). In Book V, Artegall approaches Lady Munera's castle, 'of whom he entrance sought, but was denide' (V.ii.20.4). Last in the line of antagonists who deny access is Turpine in Book VI. Calepine comes to his castle begging him to help the wounded Serena:

But the rude Porter that no manners had,
Did shut the gate against him in his face,
And entraunce boldly vnto him forbad.
(VI.iii.38.1-3)

The situation of a benign character denied access by a malicious one is often repeated, so much so that some readers have invented their own versions of it. Wordsworth's 'Epistle to George Howland Beaumont' (1811) compares a 'Curate's Dog' (131) to a 'gaunt shaggy Porter forced to wait / In days of old romance at Archimago's gate' (152-3).⁹³ It's significant that every example of denied entrance quoted above comes near the beginning of the stanza. An initial frustration of forward momentum endows the stanza with a reflexive, backsliding dynamic. Similar complexity is contained in the word 'fast': used here in its sense of 'firmly fixed in... place', the adjective describes a closed entrance which frustrates movement, stopping Spenser's heroes from moving 'fast' in its adverbial sense.⁹⁴

⁹³ William Wordsworth, 'Epistle to George Howland Beaumont', in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, vol. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 147.

⁹⁴ *OED*, 'fast', adj., 1a.

‘How concrete everything becomes in the world of the spirit’, comments Bachelard, ‘when an object, a mere door, can give images of hesitation, temptation, desire, security, welcome and respect?’⁹⁵ Functioning doors construct a dialectic of inside/outside, which allows us ‘to make inside concrete and outside vast’.⁹⁶ Yet in several poetic instances, Bachelard shows this dialectic breaking down. We could add to them Spenser’s aloof castles, where hospitality is conspicuous in its defective absence. If doors work properly, they move, alternatively permitting and blocking the access of sight and the body. ‘Fast lockt’, however, the door of the Spenserian castle fails to function as a normal door; it seems to become part of the wall.⁹⁷ Yet Spenser complicates the respective associations with intimacy and vastness which Bachelard ascribes to either side of the inside/outside dialectic. The entrances are part of monumental buildings, and by staying closed conjure grandeur and enigma rather than intimacy. As Britomart stands outside Malbecco’s castle, Fairyland suddenly falls away, having been vast, and it is now the enigmatic building which is vast both as an exterior, horizontally and vertically, and for the mystery and inaccessibility of what is inside.

How might the image of frustrated entrance on the threshold of a house, which recurs so frequently in *The Faerie Queene* that it becomes a motif, participate in the poem’s allegory? The House of Temperance provides an example of how the ethical value of hospitality can be juxtaposed with other ethical concepts contained or enclosed by the threshold. It also demonstrates the inherent complexity of allegorical architecture sketched in the introduction to this chapter: buildings simultaneously *demonstrate*

⁹⁵ Bachelard, IX.5, p. 239.

⁹⁶ Bachelard, IX.2, p. 231.

⁹⁷ We could map this distinction, between the normally functioning door that opens and closes and the defective door that remains closed, onto the theoretical distinction proposed by Bill Brown between things and objects. See Bill Brown, ‘Thing Theory’, *Critical Inquiry* 28 (2001), 1-22, 4.

human virtues and vices, in their construction and appearance and the behaviour of their inhabitants, and in an allegory *symbolise* those concepts. In the ninth canto of Book II, Guyon, Arthur and Timias spy 'a goodly castle... in a pleasaunt dale' (II.ix.10.3-4). 'Which choosing for that euenings hospitale' (5), they approach it:

but when they came in sight,
And from their sweaty Coursers did auale,
They found the gates fast barred long ere night,
And euery loup fast lockt, as fearing foes despight.
(6-9)

The heroes can only overcome this 'fowle reproch' (11.1) by force: Timias blows the gates open with his horn. The castle is being besieged by Malaeger's army, but Spenser explicitly frames its refusal to open as a deficiency of hospitality. This looks strange, in light of the convincing case that Malaeger expresses the fears of English Planters about encirclement by Irish rebels.⁹⁸ As the canto unfolds, the castle opens and reveals itself as the House of Temperance, the allegorical 'centre' of the virtue which itself is at the centre of the 1590 text. Representing temperance allegorically as an inhospitable house, though, generates a series of conceptual paradoxes. Firstly, a building which encloses and symbolises a cardinal virtue is compelled by its protection of that virtue to deny hospitable welcome to its guests, thus acting viciously; by symbolising the virtue of temperance, it demonstrates or exemplifies the vice of inhospitality. (The metaphor for a virtue is, here, a metonym of a vice.) Within this paradox lies another that pertains specifically to temperance. In Spenser's Aristotelian account, temperance is the ability to steer a course between extremes; a specific instance of this is the duty to find a *via media* between loose openness and jealous closure, the former personified by Phaedria and the

⁹⁸ See Richard McCabe, *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 122.

latter by Mammon and later Malbecco. Yet 'barred' and 'fast lockt', the House of Temperance strays, even as it protects its internal balance, to the imbalance of excessive closure, of 'frowardness'.⁹⁹ In its own terms of bodily health, the building seems constipated. More fundamentally, this paradox extends to the very notion of representing temperance allegorically. How can a virtue characterised by Spenser as evenness and balance be concentrated in a single, hermetically sealed place?

The most vivid example of a castle which refuses hospitality, and thus renders its entrance enigmatic, comes at the conclusion of the 1590 text, and the centre of *The Faerie Queene* in its final form. Busirane's house presents Britomart and Scudamour with a challenge:

There they dismounting, drew their weapons bold
And stoutly came vnto the Castle gate;
Whereas no gate they found, them to withhold,
Nor ward to wait at morne and euening late,
But in the Porch, that did them sore amate,
A flaming fire, ymixt with smouldry smoke,
And stinking Sulphure, that with griesly hate
And dreadfull horror did all entraunce choke,
Enforced them their forward footing to reuoke.
(III.xi.21)

Approaching the 'gate' (2), in the physical sense of 'gatehouse', they find that there is 'no gate' (3), in the cultural sense of a part of the building fulfilling an expected cultural role. The castle lacks a 'ward' (4), which describes the roles both of porter and of guardsman. In its suspended syntax, the stanza preserves the momentary optimism Britomart and Scudamour might feel: 'no gate... them to withhold' (3) might at first seem declarative,

⁹⁹ On the redefinition of the classic distinction between 'concupiscible' and 'irascible' vices in Book II as errors of 'forwardness' and 'frowardness', see James Carscallen, 'The Goodly Frame of Temperance: Book II', in *Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1968), pp. 347-365, p. 352.

leaving the castle straightforwardly accessible. But it is contrastive: the gatehouse which would filter guests has been replaced by an indiscriminate-seeming 'flaming fire' (6). To 'amate' (5) is to 'dismay, daunt, dishearten, cast down'; here, at a building which comes to enclose and represent the perils of erotic desire, it also plays glancingly on the supine of the Latin verb *amo*.¹⁰⁰ To desire is to be dismayed. In this stanza, such dismay confounds the body: the flaming 'Porch' leaves them 'sore' (5), while the 'stinking Sulphure' (7) and 'smouldry smoke' (6) assault the heroes' senses. Frustrating their 'entraunce', the castle seems to 'choke' (8), repelling physical access the way a body rejects food.

This vivid image, of a castle's porch on fire, differs from the previous examples of defective hospitality. The castles of Orgoglio and Malbecco fail to provide a proper porter because their owners, mired in repulsive pride and jealousy, wish for no-one ever to enter. Busirane, however, knows that Britomart is coming. He has withdrawn all traces of himself and his household from the castle's entrance; yet the calculated, malevolent playfulness of his withdrawal paradoxically also underscores his presence, or the presence of a controlling intention. This replacement of hospitality, by devices or contrivances that suggest intentions even as they hide them, implies a startling link with the Elizabethan tradition of the country house entertainment. I have already traced the similarities between the allegorical personages Spenser locates in *The Faerie Queene's* caves, and the figures who addressed the Queen on her visits to the countryside. Critics

¹⁰⁰ *OED*, 'amate', v1.

have also elaborated on the similarities between the masque to which Busirane subjects Britomart inside his castle, and the court entertainments which it perverts.¹⁰¹

The castle's flaming entrance, however, darkly parodies not so much the court masques, which flourished in the final years of Elizabeth's reign and the first of her successor, as the performances staged for the Queen on her visits to courtiers in their country houses. Kolkovich's recent study of these entertainments, as they survive in their often heavily revised printed forms, opens fruitful ground by considering their architectural politics.¹⁰² Like Girouard and Henderson, and Sutton in his study of Theobalds, she considers the 'orchestrated approach', but dwells on the moments in which the household honoured by the queen's visit sought, playfully, to bemuse and dazzle her. Visiting Harefield in 1602, Elizabeth encountered (the textual accounts of the entertainment suggest) a dairymaid and a bailiff, who seemed not to recognise her. Informing the Queen that Harefield is not ready to host visitors, and that she has seen workman there two hours ago, the bailiff and dairymaid offer to host Elizabeth in a nearby cottage – free of charge, says the bailiff. The dairymaid explains that her 'mistress', Alice Egerton, has charged them to accommodate 'all idele hearuest folks'.¹⁰³ 'Idele' sounds a note, as faint as possible, of challenge, pointing out that preparing a house for a royal visit and entertainment is harder work than being transported to it. Probably, however, the feigned ignorance of the characters, and their offer of hospitality, amused the Queen and her travelling household. Subsuming their

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Susan Frye, 'Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane', *Signs* 20 (1994), 49-78, and Silberman (1995), pp. 58-67.

¹⁰² Kolkovich, pp. 1-121. The dairymaid's persona, and the fiction of her failure to recognise the Queen, amplifies Harefield's styling of itself as distanced, for good and for ill, from court. It therefore resonates with the pastoral mode, as interpreted by Paul Alpers. For Alpers, in the wake of Empson, pastoral is about its shepherds, who represent courtly figures in a manner akin to allegory, 'putting the complex into the simple'. Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), p. 37.

¹⁰³ Kolkovich, pp. 114-116.

Queen into the category of ‘all... hearuest folks’, the dairymaid and bailiff parody the universality of hospitality, converting it into a kind of social blindness; hospitality itself, I have argued, performs the suspension of social hierarchies in order to assert their validity. By analogy, the country houses that hosted Elizabeth’s spectacular visits performed their total deference to her as a new householder, in order to function in reality as sites of ‘contested authority’, advancing the interests of the householder, on his or her estate, to the visiting Queen.¹⁰⁴ Both total deference and political negotiation are implicit in the act of inviting the Queen into one’s great house. The tension between them was resolved by playfulness. In the previous chapter I compared the demons lurking in Spenser’s caves to some of the spirits who emerge suddenly from ‘lurking holes’ in the country house entertainments devised by Gascoigne and Churchyard. Their interactions with the monarch seem designed to surprise and, initially, baffle her. Yet the playfulness of the performance, its fictional nature, and the Queen’s unequalled power, show the contrast between the experiences of approach Spenser describes in *The Faerie Queene* and Elizabeth’s orchestrated arrivals at the houses of her subjects. Kolkovich’s study demonstrates that monumental houses imposed their authority on their visitors not so much with what Sutton calls ‘symbolic power’ as with their illegibility. Yet Britomart’s arrival at Castle Ioyeous differs from the queen’s arrival at Harefield in respect to her social status, lower than the Queen’s even as it is playfully, momentarily lowered. Whereas the Queen’s carefully organised and ‘orchestrated approach’, as Henderson would call it, is only performatively misinterpreted as an unscheduled visit, Britomart’s arrival is truly random, a contingency of her errant quest.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Kolkovich, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ A Proclamation of 1601 declared that ‘those who opened their homes to banned commoners during a royal visit would face three hours in the stocks and the temporary closure of their households’. See Kolkovich, p. 116.

Deceptive Entrances

As I've argued, Spenser rarely affords his questing heroes the hospitable welcome for which early modern travellers hoped. Instead, the doors where they arrive tend to remain 'fast lockt'. But unluckier than the knights outside Malbecco's castle are the questing travellers met with hospitality that is deceptive rather than defective – performances of true hospitality that lure a knight into a false sense of security even as he or she chooses to resign power by crossing a threshold as a guest. Already in this chapter we have seen how the castle at the beginning of Book III, eventually named retrospectively as Castle Loyeous, compels Britomart's approach as she wanders in the forest, while withholding the particular details that would render it legible. Arriving there, Britomart encounters not an enigmatically dysfunctional door, but the violent spectacle of a strange knight (later revealed as Redcrosse) fighting off six others. As one of the six explains, they are upholding the wishes of the castle's 'Lady fayre' (III.i.26.2): any single knight who passes into the castle's jurisdiction must render her permanent service; if he has a lover, he must forgo and renounce her, or else defeat the six guards to gain entry. Britomart, leaping to the embattled knight's defence, makes short work of the 'dastard Curses' (22.1); the two left standing yield to her and seem to offer a grovelling, deferent welcome. This (seeming) surrender on the dwellers' part into hospitality is (seemingly) confirmed inside, as Spenser skims over the 'the goodly frame, / And stately port of *Castle loyeous*' (31.1-2) to describe their welcome:

Where they were entertaynd with courteous
And comely glee of many gracious
Faire Ladies, and of many a gentle knight,
Who through a Chamber long and spacious,

Eftsoones then brought vnto their Ladies sight...
(4-8)

'Courteous' and 'gratious', making a bold and imperfect rhyming pair, both tumble into the next line without Spenser's usual syntactic or punctuational pause. Metrically over-eager, the lines perhaps, as Hamilton supposes, 'emphasize [*sic*] excessive courtliness'.¹⁰⁶ Given what is actually happening, however, it seems more likely that the tumbling rhythm imitates the sensation of looking and walking down the 'Chamber long and spacious', the castle's Long Gallery. The experience of the castle is focalised, in these lines, through the perspective of Britomart and Redcrosse: the metrical deviation from the norm suggests that they might be overwhelmed or thrilled. Despite entering the castle as victors over its system, Britomart and Redcrosse are nevertheless taken in by its splendid welcome. In the following stanzas, it becomes clear that the castle is anything but 'gratious', or 'courteous' in its best sense. Britomart and Redcrosse are invited 'into a bowre, disarmed for to be' (42.4), and while Redcrosse falls to the temptation of lust Britomart is assaulted that night by Malecasta's 'close intent' (57.5) of undoing her chastity. Britomart manages to resist, and at the canto's end defeats with Redcrosse's help the six knights once and for all.¹⁰⁷ But a performance of true hospitality, the seemingly warm welcome, has managed to obscure both the original hostility at the castle gate in the mind of the guests, and the true intent of the castle's controlling agent. Deceptive hospitality, therefore, conceals both from Britomart, and even perhaps from readers, the eventual ethical value of the castle, the lustful infidelity and sexual incontinence it comes to stand for.

¹⁰⁶ *FQ*, p. 294.

¹⁰⁷ At the gate she seems to have killed four of them outright; perhaps she only wounded them. Or perhaps this is one of *The Faerie Queene's* miniature narrative inconsistencies..

It also covers the allegorical meaning of Britomart's temporary residence in the castle. On the one hand, it would appear that Britomart can only access the castle because she renounces and trumps the attitudes towards love held by Malecasta and her six knights: 'truth is strong, and trew loue most of might' (29.8) concludes the speaker, of her victory. But if Malecasta's deceptive hospitality, her 'goodly edifyde' (20.4) castle's 'goodly frame' (31.1) and its gracious, spacious long gallery begins to charm Britomart and Redcrosse, a reader might conclude that the allegorical meaning of the episode is that Britomart is experiencing lustful infidelity. Or, as Malecasta's attempt to access her room that night suggests, she is purely its victim, and just as when Amoret is imprisoned in Book IV, Spenser's allegory of lust blurs the boundary between perpetrator and victim; or she feels the passion of lust but second-hand through the behaviour of Redcrosse, who is 'soone disarmed there' (42.6), and once more *The Faerie Queene's* spatial allegory is suggesting that one can only resist and overcome a vicious ethical disposition by risking infection by it. Yet alongside these two interpretations, one straightforwardly exonerative and the other a reading of Britomart as tempted by lust, Castle Ioyeous has a different, ethically neutral value: as well as representing a kind of lust it also 'means', in Matthew Johnson's self-revising, capacious sense of that word, the promise of refuge. The double signification renders it illegible to Britomart; this illegibility on approach, as I've suggested in this chapter, itself functions as a meta-allegory for the experience of acquaintance with unfamiliar ethical concepts.

The idiosyncratic rules governing entry to Castle Ioyeous make for a 'heads-I-win-tails-you-lose law of hospitality' which, as Fowler puts it, 'burlesques a common romance

motif'.¹⁰⁸ That motif is the 'custom of the castle', the particular social laws that commonly govern castles in medieval romance. Castle Ioyeous alludes to the Castle of Tristram episode of *Orlando Furioso*, where only the triumphant knight and the most beautiful woman can lodge in the castle. We could also compare it with the Castle of Maidens in *Le Morte Darthur*, where seven champions must be defeated by a single knight, or the Castle of Tears in the prose *Tristan*. Charles Ross, in *The Custom of the Castle* (1997), interprets the appearance of such customary castles in *The Faerie Queene* as evidence for Spenser's unease about custom.¹⁰⁹ Perverting natural law, and wrapped up with Catholic ritual, custom nevertheless has a role to play in ethical systems, a role which Ross sees outlined in Book VI. He quotes Thomas Wilson's *Rule of Reason* (1551), in which 'custome is the mother, and the suckegeber, unto al erre'.¹¹⁰ Ross's sense of the ambivalence of custom in sixteenth-century ethics, and *The Faerie Queene*, seems accurate. Yet as Burlinson points out, his account of imaginary castles governed by custom pays little attention to their material traces, or to the effects of their spatial dynamics on figures in the texts.¹¹¹ Castles are taken as symbols for certain customs which a reader evaluates. I want to use Burlinson's objection as a basis for arguing that Spenser deploys the motif of the custom of the castle for allegorical ends: to render his castles illegible, and thus depict the process by which new ethical dispositions and states, virtues and vices, are acquired.

At the beginning of Book IV, Britomart and Amoret chance on a castle uncannily like Castle Ioyeous:

It so befell one euening, that they came

¹⁰⁸ Alastair Fowler, 'Six Knights at Castle Joyous', *Studies in Philology* 56 (1959), 583-599, 595.

¹⁰⁹ Charles Ross, *The Custom of the Castle* (London: University of California Press, 1997).

¹¹⁰ Ross, p. 12. We should note in passing how Wilson's image strikingly anticipates, even as it inverts, Spenser's image of Error as a 'suckegeber'.

¹¹¹ Burlinson (2006), pp. 121-122.

Vnto a Castell, lodged there to bee...
The custome of that place was such, that hee
Which had no loue nor lemman there in store,
Should either winne him one, or lye without the dore.
(IV.i.9.1-2,7-9)

An unnamed 'iolly knight' (10.1), acting according to the castle's 'custome', claims Amoret as his; Britomart fights him and has him 'soone... ouerthrowne' (11.2). The castle's 'Seneschall' (12.1) is 'cal'd to deeme the right' (1), and the phrase draws attention to the local value of rightness: what is deemed 'right' by the castle's custom is by no means 'right' outside it, or in an ideal ethics. With its unforgiving custom, this unnamed castle recapitulates Castle Ioyeous. Here, however, the response of Spenser's unwitting guest is different. In Book III, Britomart fought the six knights into submission and forced entry; here, recognising that the 'iolly knight' seems 'valiant, though vnknowne' (11.5) and has 'made repent' (3), she casts around for a way to respect the custom 'so none should be out shutt' (12.9). She draws on her androgyny, or androgynous appearance: Amoret will remain hers, by virtue of her victory, while the knight can be 'claim'd.. to her selfe, as Ladies det' (7), just as he would have claimed Amoret. Britomart's adaptation of the castle's custom leads her to stumble on the new virtue of friendship, the means by which plural desires can be accommodated in concord. In *The Faerie Queene*, encounter with unfamiliar or unmastered ethical states resembles Britomart's stumbling far more than a process comparable to informed reading.

III. Some Buildings in Detail

In the final section of this chapter, I want to examine in detail a few of *The Faerie Queene's* less famous buildings. I have argued throughout that the poem's buildings signify allegorically not despite but, in part, because of their spatial and material characteristics. Prospects, doorways and hospitality (or its absence) are part of the ethical allegory, even if they complicate the obvious correspondence of the building to a particular ethical concept. I want to focus on some of the poem's more obscure buildings first because of the relative lack of critical attention they receive, and secondly because of my unease with cordoning off those buildings in the poem which, in criticism following C.S. Lewis, qualify as allegorical centres or 'cores'.¹¹² I will start with the House of Care, where Scudamour spends the night in Book IV. Scudamour's experience of this building returns us to questions raised in the first chapter, and elaborated in subsequent ones, about the agency and intention of personifications and other figures in allegorical spaces. I pursue these questions by comparing the House of Holiness with the dwelling-place of Corceca and Abessa. Finally, I return to entrance and entertainment: hospitality's interaction with allegory is particularly complex and ironic in Book VI, whose titular virtue of courtesy includes or subsumes hospitality. I'll illustrate this interaction by focusing on the castle Briana has built for Crudor in the first canto.

¹¹² C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: a Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 334.

The House of Care

Full of jealous rage, Scudamour journeys from the tournament where Britomart has denied him access to Amoret. His internal strife remains unquenchable 'for ought that *Glauce* could or doe or say' (IV.v.31.6). They press on through a night of 'cloudie storme and bitter showre' (32.2), the bad weather forcing them to seek a 'couert bowre' (5) where they might find some 'quiet rest' (6). They spy 'a litle cottage, like some poore mans nest' (9); approaching it, they hear the sound of hammers beating, and on entering find a blacksmith, Care himself, working at the forge with six assistants. 'Care' in sixteenth-century English meant two similar states of concern, a negative state of anxiety for the self and a healthier concern *for* someone or something. It could also specifically denote an artisan's focused concentration in his work.¹¹³ John Steadman's forensic analysis of the passage's iconography sheds light on Spenser's sources: the six smiths allude to the 'six *malleatores*, each stronger than his predecessor' of Vulcan, he argues, a reading strengthened by the subsequent likening of Care to Bronteus and Pyracmon (37.2), Cyclopes in Vulcan's cave. Steadman identifies the hammers themselves as *martelli*, and thus forges a connection between Scudamour's anxious care and a state of jealous suspicion: 'Spenser has given poetic expression to a contemporary Italian idiom which described jealousy metaphorically as "martello" or "martello d'amore"'.¹¹⁴ Establishing a connection between anxious care and jealousy, Steadman's authoritative comparisons

¹¹³ The meanings of the adjective 'careful' exemplifies this range: to be careful is to be 'full of care, trouble, anxiety' (*OED*, 'careful', 2), or 'full of care and concern *for*' (3), as well as 'applying solicitous attention' (4). Depending on which of these meanings is foremost, the 'carefull minds' (35.9) which the 'vnquiet thoughts' (9) fashioned by Care's smiths 'inuade' (9) could precede the invasion by unquiet thoughts in their carefulness, or experience carefulness simultaneously: their carefulness in the sense of (2) could precipitate anxiety; or anxiety and its unquiet thoughts could cause, as a symptom, carefulness in the sense of (1).

¹¹⁴ John M. Steadman, 'Spenser's House of Care: A Reinterpretation', *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960), 207-224, 208.

implicitly set the House of Care in relation to Malbecco's castle, another centre of jealousy which looks like a hospitable house but behaves, as does the house in this canto, like a sequestered and sequestering cave. Sequestration interacts with the dynamics of both anxiety and jealousy, states in which attention is obsessively turned inwards. It also participates in the social dynamics of the Care episode: as Burlinson argues, Care's isolation, the way his work is not connected to, or exploited by, an external economic network, reflects the fear sown by contemporary social ideology that 'a worker will use his house for harmful activities'.¹¹⁵ Care's harmful action is to sequester himself, to concentrate himself in a potentially contagious place; in other words, to be allegorical.

It's strange, given the fruitfulness of his arguments for making connections across the poem, that Steadman does not analyse in similar detail Spenser's description of Care's habitat, or ponder its typological echoes within *The Faerie Queene*. Care's 'cottage' is a version of Archimago's 'litle lowly Hermitage' (I.i.34.1) where Redcrosse, like Scudamour, spends a restless night. Care's house is 'placed' (IV.v.33.1) 'vnder a steepe hilles side' (1), and Archimago's is situated 'downe in a dale, hard by a forests side' (I.i.34.2): both houses lie at the edge of frightening and uncivil zones. Archimago's house has trickling by it 'a christall streame... / Which from a sacred fountaine welled' (8-9), whereas the river passing before Care's house is 'a little brooke... / Of muddie water, that like puddle stanke' (IV.v.33.3-4). Archimago's intentions, and the malicious devices to which he employs his house, are of course anything but 'sacred'. The poem seems to have learnt, in the space of four Books, the true character of an isolated cottage. Yet once more, the perspective of the reader must be distinguished from that of the questing figure. Scudamour is not

¹¹⁵ Burlinson (2006), p. 215.

Redcrosse, and thus lacks the ability to make the comparative inference which would make him careful not to enter this place of excessive care. Furthermore, his allegorical quest to find a good state (chaste love with Amoret) and avoid bad ones (jealous care) is juxtaposed with an imperative belonging to the literal world of romance, and the material experience of travel, to find refuge for the night. On the threshold of Care's house, the incompatibility of these two values, the allegorical significance of jealous care and the conventional significance of hospitality, becomes a direct and ironic contrast and thus a trap. As quester in an epic romance, Scudamour sees in the cottage and its promise of hospitality respite from the interior feelings that dominate him as he journeys with Glauce through the 'cloudie storme'. Yet because the house is allegorical, it also signifies a critical intensification of the vicious state to which Scudamour is subject. The promise of hospitality compels Scudamour to seek refuge from care in its generative centre.

Like Malbecco, Care disdains to accommodate travellers with hospitality. Contemplating the blacksmiths, Scudamour praises 'the manner of their worke and wearie paine' (38.2), and asks 'the end thereof' (4), but gets no reply. Yet Care's dwelling does provide Scudamour with the refuge he was seeking, at least initially. Met with silence, he says no more:

But in his armour layd him downe to rest:
To rest he layd him downe vpon the flore,
(Whylome for ventrous Knights the bedding best)
And thought his wearie limbs to haue redrest.
(39.2-5)

It is unwise, when hosted in the strange castles of Fairyland, to take off your armour, as Britomart sees Redcrosse discover at Castle Ioyeous; nevertheless, 'in his armour layd him downe to rest' conjures a forlorn image. Yet with the oddly redundant next line, and

the aside about the plain 'flore' being the 'bedding best' for the 'ventrous knights' of romance, the text seems to rally itself. Scudamour, perhaps, does not need full hospitality. Care tolerates Scudamour in his house, even if his tolerance proceeds from indifference to everything except his work; he grants him shelter, even as he denies him sleep. These disparities ask us to ponder the nature of Spenser's giant blacksmith, the *ethos* behind, but illegible in, his *prosopon*. Returning to the distinctions set out in the first chapter, we might imagine Care as a person who suffers from a particular psychological condition, so badly that he is named after it and cannot help but insinuate it in others; in Andrew Escobedo's terms, he would in this conception primarily 'enact' care, and 'transmit' it as an unintended secondary effect. Alternatively, we might imagine Care as a daemonic agent who is unafflicted by care, and insinuates it in others because of his evil nature. Onto this pair of possibilities we can map, by analogy, the distinction of defective and deceptive hospitality I have outlined above. If Care is a fellow-sufferer, his hospitality is well-intentioned but flawed; if he is malicious, his hospitality is a deceptive strategy for inflicting suffering. In the canto's last few stanzas, seeing that Scudamour has fallen asleep, Care takes a 'paire of redwhot yron tongs' (44.2) and 'vnder his side him nipt' (4); this gives credence to the latter interpretation of his person as daemonic, and his hospitality as deceptive. Up until this point, though, Care's malice has not been definitely manifested, just as Archimago's is concealed from Redcrosse in his similar cottage. The warning made available to the reader, by internal comparison, is not available to Scudamour, who must presume hospitality is genuine.

We can also relate Care's house to the process I have described throughout as 'dispersonification'. 'Nipt' by the blacksmith's tongs, Scudamour wakes and jumps up 'auenged for to be' (44.6) on whoever has cruelly awoken him. 'Yet looking round about

him', Scudamour can 'none... see' (8): the blacksmith seems to have vanished. Conclusions about how we should imagine what has happened here can only base themselves on suggestive details, and thus are conjectural. Care could have hidden himself out of further malice. Yet 'none could see' suggests that everyone, the *malleatores* as well as the smith himself, has disappeared; this in turn would highlight the feigned nature of the persons in the house, their capacity to disperse into the environment. If we understand the burning of Scudamour by tongs as an example of Escobedo's 'transmission', we might conclude that Care and his six *malleatores* have dispersed back into the person from whom they were projected. If this is the case, it's unclear what has happened to Care's house. Perhaps Scudamour is waking up in a derelict forge which, in his possession by 'gealous dread' (45.9) seemed to him to be haunted by feigned personages of his own projection. Yet Care's dwelling-place is not mentioned again, either because when Scudamour 'did flee' (44.9) it was not just from the sensation of being burnt, but from the house itself, or because it too has vanished: in the next stanza 'pearly dew' is 'sprinkling the morning grasse' (45.5). The viability of these two interpretations, which differ only minutely, demonstrates that the allegorical buildings of *The Faerie Queene* exist in a complex relationship with the personages inhabiting them. They behave on the one hand like containers, neutral in ethical value and having an accidental rather than inherent relationship with their inhabitants. On the other, they seem like extensions of the daemonic bodies in them, constructed in part by projection from the questing figures, and capable of sudden vanishing.

Corceca's house and the House of Holiness

Two buildings which allude to one another from the beginning and end of Book I deserve our closer attention: like the House of Care, their architecture and hospitality demonstrate the spatial ironies of allegory elicited earlier in this thesis. The House of Holiness (I.x) is really a network of buildings, which have received some critical consideration, but only occasionally alongside the small, dark house where Abessa and Corceca live (I.iii) and Kirkrapine brings his stolen goods. The architectural details of either location, and their influence on the allegory, have been entirely neglected. Una and her Lion appeal to Abessa as travellers might to a local, asking 'if dwelling place were nigh at hand' (I.iii.11.2). Scared not just of the lion but of Una's virtuously open 'fayce of fayre Lady' (8), she denies them hospitality and flees towards her house, where she transmits her fear to her mother and 'shut[s] the dore' (12.8). Una and the lion 'requere' (9) entrance but are denied, and in the next stanza the lion 'with his rude clawes' has 'the wicket open rent' (13.2). A 'wicket' is 'a small door or gate made in, or placed beside, a large one'.¹¹⁶ Wickets appear several times in Donne's sermons and biblical exegesis as metaphors for access to knowledge: the Scriptures, he says in his treatment of Genesis in *Essays in Divinity*, possess 'the properties of a well provided Castle, that they are easily defensible, and safely defend others'; but these fortified scriptures 'have also this, that to strangers they open but a litle wicket, and he that will enter, must stoop and humble himselfe'.¹¹⁷ In light of the little gate's use as a metaphor both for good knowledge and

¹¹⁶ *OED*, 'wicket', 1a.

¹¹⁷ John Donne, 'In the Beginning God created Heaven and Earth', *Essayes in Divinitie I* [1651], in *Essays in Divinity by John Donne*, ed. by Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 5. See also John Donne, 'A Sermon Preached at Pauls Cross, 24. Mart. 1616', in *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), vol. 3, pp. 183-222.

good acquisition of knowledge – a metaphor which in a theological context has its roots in the camel passing through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24) – the lion’s ripping down of Corceca’s ‘wicket’ risks seeming cruelly hasty, or ‘rude’. Thinking ahead to Book VI, it resembles some of Calidore’s over-hasty destructive entrances into intimate spaces whose ‘seclusion and defenselessness [*sic*] invite invasion’.¹¹⁸ The allegorical resonance of breaking down the door, refusing to stoop through the wicket, is unclear; so, in this episode, is the meaning of withheld hospitality. Abessa’s barring of her house to Una seems to represent the absence of charity among what *The Faerie Queene* sees as the obsessive rituals of Catholicism. But when Kirkrapine returns with ‘heavy’ (16.7) loot and demands to be let in, he finds ‘that ready entraunce was not at his call’ (6).

John King argues, according to his portrayal of *The Faerie Queene* as essentially Reformed in its theology, that ‘the Lion’s breaking down the door of Corceca’s house and suppression of Kirkrapine... is richly suggestive of the Cromwellian campaign to suppress the monasteries’.¹¹⁹ King acknowledges the strangeness of Spenser’s decision to paint Kirkrapine not just as an abusive Catholic priest but also as a protestant iconoclast: he is ‘wont to robbe Churches of their ornaments’ (17.2). Yet he contends that Spenser’s ‘attitude is dialectical rather than ambivalent’.¹²⁰ King is correct, to the extent that Spenser could have opposed both Catholic monasticism and protestant iconoclasm without inconsistency. Yet the architectural nature of the allegory means that the complexity of his views does indeed condense into ambivalence. Entrance and hospitality can be construed allegorically in divergent ways; as in the other buildings studied in this

¹¹⁸ Theresa Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation, and the Decorums of Vision* (London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 122.

¹¹⁹ John King, *Spenser’s Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 55.

¹²⁰ King, p. 56.

chapter, the architecture and spatial practices of a building also carry multiple meanings, and thus complicate its ability to represent a single concept. But the architecture and spatial practices of Corceca's house complicate its ability to represent *two contrary things*: the hoarding of wealth in falsely holy spaces, and the destruction of those spaces by over-zealous puritans. Kirkrapine feeds Abessa 'fatt' (18.5) with what he steals, and thus a protestant excess (iconoclasm) enables a Catholic abuse (the monastic draining of the land's 'plenty' (6)) and the continuance of Catholic sin. Furthermore, the underlying or 'meta-allegorical' principle that a building can represent a concept by enclosing it, converges at Corceca's house with one of the specific vice it encloses, because that vice is itself one of hoarding, of sinful enclosure.

Carol Kaske, who does compare Corceca's house and the House of Holiness as locations, argues that the progression from the former to the latter exemplifies a pattern in *The Faerie Queene* whereby an image of virtuous truth corrects its similar but erroneous precedent.¹²¹ Corceca, emblematic of Catholic superstition, prays 'day and night... vpon her beads' (13.6-7), but so does Coelia in the House of Holiness (I.x.3.8), as Kaske notes. The difference from Corceca's constant, obsessive telling of the rosary is that Coelia spends the night praying with 'bedes' (8), but dedicates the day to 'godly deedes' (9). Forming the stanza's final rhyming pair, 'bedes / deedes' suggests both similarity and contrariness. Kaske's elegant argument is supported by her marshalling of contemporary protestant notions of, and debates about, *adiaphora*. She suggests that in Spenser's theology a rosary acquires indifference if set in 'complementary distribution with good deedes', as well as a protestant acceptance of the subordination of such good deedes to faith

¹²¹ Carol V. Kaske, *Spenser and Biblical Poetics* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 84-88.

as the guarantor of salvation.¹²² Kaske accurately characterises Coelia's rosary as benign, but does not acknowledge that the architecture of the House of Holiness complicates the possibility of good 'deedes' on which the virtuousness of the rosary depends. We cannot dispute that the 'deedes' Coelia commits are good. Yet as the allegory constrains her to remain in the House, the centre of her own holiness, it restricts those good deeds from achieving their full goodness in the reformed sense.

We might frame the tensions implicit in the allegorical architecture of Corceca's house and the House of Holiness as analogous to the conflict in contemporary institutional architecture between ecclesiastical and pedagogical imperatives. Churches, both in the Catholic conception and the kind of reformed positions which Spenser implies, are holy places: they enclose holiness in the manner of a sanctuary. Yet they also have a duty to disseminate the values they stand for, to spread the Gospel. If its deeds are to be good in the protestant sense, the House of Holiness must disseminate and inspire holy acts beyond its walls; as the originary centre of holiness in Spenser's allegory, however, it must contain it. The conflict of the desire to sanctify with the imperative to educate can be mapped, therefore, onto the general tension in the buildings examined in this chapter, between architectural and allegorical 'meanings'. A version of this tension can be seen at a pedagogical institution which received one of the most distinctive architectural additions of its kind during Elizabeth's reign. The three allegorical gates built (1565-73) under the direction of John Caius, at the Cambridge college which took on his name, represent humility, virtue and honour.¹²³ As at the House of Holiness, the arrangement of

¹²² Kaske, p. 84.

¹²³ Paul Binski, 'Humfrey Lovell and the Gates of Gonville and Caius College: A Note on the Sources', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 166 (2013), 179-188, 179, 187.

the space's parts configures a *route architecturale* which is itself allegorical: Redcrosse moves from the suffering of Penance to the work of Repentance, to the spiritual fulfilment of Contemplation; in Caius's scheme, similarly, a student enters at Humility, makes progress by loving Virtue, and thus attains Honour on leaving the college. The gates at Caius not only avow their allegorical nature, but allude to other allegorical structures in public space: as Tom Nickson shows, they display 'a debt to pageant architecture' and seem to fix in stone the temporary archways erected for royal and civic entrances across sixteenth-century Europe.¹²⁴ Specifically, gates representing Virtue and Honour also appear in Achille Bocchi's *Symbolicarum Quaestionum* (1555).¹²⁵ Imposing such a fixed scheme on the lived space of his college, Caius must have accepted that the ideal, allegorical progression *through* the college as emblematic space would be compromised by the less directed and more cyclical movement *around* the college as domestic space. As at Corceca's house, the allegorical signification of a building and its spatial practices collide. Furthermore, the Gate of Honour's allegorical function, of releasing virtuous undergraduates into the world which promised them honour, was juxtaposed by its contrary spatial function of keeping students in and townsfolk out.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ In particular, the Gate of Honour resembles 'the arch erected by Spanish merchants to celebrate the entry of Philip II into Antwerp in 1549'. Tom Nickson, 'Moral Edification at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge', *Architectural History* 48 (2005), 49-68, 54, 49.

¹²⁵ Giovanna Guidicini, 'A Scottish Triumphal Path of Learning at George Heriot's Hospital, Edinburgh', *International Review of Scottish Studies* 35 (2010), 65-96, 75.

¹²⁶ On Caius's determination to maintain absolute separation, both conceptual and physical, between university men and the town's 'mechanicals', see Anthony Grafton, 'Philological and Artisanal Knowledge Making in Renaissance Natural History: A Study in Cultures of Knowledge', *History of Humanities* 3 (2018), 39-55, 41.

Briana's Discourteous Castle

Setting off to capture the Blatant Beast, Calidore encounters a distressed squire, who warns him of trouble ahead:

Not farre from hence, vppon yond rocky hill,
Hard by a streight there stands a castle strong,
Which doth obserue a custome lewd and ill,
And it hath long mayntaind with mighty wrong...
(VI.i.13.1-4)

This 'castle strong' has been built by Briana, the squire explains, out of love for a man called Crudor. He has promised her his love on the condition that she make him a 'Mantle' (15.4) made of hair, of 'Ladies locks' (13.8) and 'knights berd' (9). This is the 'custome lewd', the object of 'obserue'; the verb's subject, in a typical architectural anthropomorphism, is the 'castle' itself. Briana's gathering of hair, delegated to her seneschal Maleffort, perverts a romance motif in which love is granted on condition of a feat being carried out, like the gathering of stones from the beach in Chaucer's 'Franklin's Tale'. Typically a man (Chaucer's Aurelius) carries out the seemingly impossible feat, and a woman (Dorigen) decides whether to grant her love on its completion. Spenser inverts this pattern to stress the lewdness of Briana and Crudor's 'custome', its deviation from the supposed universality of natural law. Yet courtesy, the titular virtue of Book VI, itself relates paradoxically to universality. Understood with reference to good manners, courtesy implies both a quasi-universal code of gentle conduct, and sensitivity to local customs and practices so that they can be exploited. Calidore pursues Maleffort to the castle gate, where he kills him, just as Artegall kills Geryoneo in the porch of his castle (V.x). Briana's castle travesties hospitality: instead of emerging from their dwelling-place to welcome a visitor into it, members of Briana's household flee towards it (like Lust into

his cave) in the hope of selfish 'refuge' (18.5). Hospitality in Book VI is both analogous to, and a species of, courtesy: in its duty to welcome travellers indiscriminately, it pretends to suspend social hierarchy while subtly instating it, just as the courtesy literature which achieved such popularity in sixteenth-century Europe served the double function of showing the way to social advancement, while also checking that advancement by formalising the mystified, cryptically encoded manners it required.¹²⁷

Lawrence Humphrey's *The Nobles* (1563) argues in theological terms for the centrality of hospitality in any definition of good manners. He appeals to 'that charge, credited [by] Paule to the bishoppes... namely to entertaine, and loue strangers'.¹²⁸ Yet as he asserts this link, Humphrey admits that like other customs, hospitality is a matter of outward show as well as inner feeling. Its inherent danger is that an accomplished deployment of the former can mask an absence of the latter. He observes wryly that Caesar commended the Germans for their hospitality ('they thought it detestable to missuse a stranger... [a]nd shielded all suche, as for anye occasion fledde to them'), but that the same commendable attribute in the British caused Caesar grief: 'for they [the ancient British] ayded the frenchmen, his enemies, and succoured them with frendly and commodious harborough'.¹²⁹ Two paradoxes emerge from Humphrey's treatment of hospitality as a species of courtesy. First, hospitality's relationship with national identity is vexed: the ancient British and Germans shore up their distinctive national identity by opening themselves hospitably to other nations. Secondly, hospitality as a social ritual, a kind of

¹²⁷ As Frank Whigham notes, 'the corpus of Renaissance courtesy literature began to develop at a time when an exclusive sense of aristocratic identity... was being stolen, or at least encroached upon, by a horde of young men not born to it'. Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 5.

¹²⁸ Lawrence Humphrey, *Optimates, Siue De Nobilitate* [1560], *The Nobles or of Nobilitye* (London, 1563), II, fol. P5.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

good manners, is easy to perform cynically as a means to an inhospitable end. Moreover, the line between genuine and insincere hospitality is crossed by another line, drawn subjectively, between helpful and hostile hospitality: for Caesar, British hospitality towards the French is obstructive, and therefore sly; for the French (we presume), it is salutary and thus genuine.

Returning to Book VI, we find an entwining of these paradoxes at Briana's castle. Calidore arrives from Gloriana's court, bringing civil manners to the unreformed corners of Fairyland. Liberating Briana from Crudor, he erases from her castle a barbaric custom. However, if the hospitable welcome which Calidore demands is aligned with the courtliness, ideal but cultivated, that he espouses, then hospitality can no longer be defended by an appeal to universality: it is a custom, like Maleffort's cutting the hair of passersby. It might exceed other customs in its civility, but cannot claim universality. Briana accuses Calidore, who has killed Maleffort and entered the castle, of coming 'to rob my house vnmand, / And spoile my selfe, that can not thee withstand' (25.4-5). Her rebuff implies her 'frustration in love', according to Hamilton's gloss, and 'that she cannot resist him'.¹³⁰ Hamilton's flippancy, and the wincingly regressive sexual politics into which his commentary lapses, mask the pointedness with which these lines relativise custom.

Hospitality in Book VI becomes subsumed under the heading of manners, which in sixteenth-century conduct literature are themselves concerned with performance. Hospitality thus leaves itself vulnerable to exploitation by insincere, good performers. Calidore leaves Briana and Crudor having extracted promises of repentance and reform.

¹³⁰ *FQ*, p. 607.

Three times they pledge themselves using the metaphor of a bond: with Crudor 'bynding himself' (44.2) to refraining from barbarity, Briana 'her selfe acknowledg'd bound' (45.8) and, in the next stanza, 'her selfe bound to him for euermore' (46.8). Given the link between courtesy and formalised, performative expression, Calidore cannot know whether Briana and Crudor mean what they say. Courtesy, inseparable from customary manners and thus from performance, is inevitably illegible to him. In the previous chapter, I argued that in Book VI the caves of Spenser's landscape lose their close identification with an abstract concept. This example suggests that something similar happens with Book VI's houses. No epiphany as to the nature of where he has been comes to Calidore as he leaves Briana's castle. (Redcrosse, on the other hand, realises as he leaves it that he has sojourned in the House of Pride.) In the landscape of Book VI, hospitality as a species of courtesy is necessarily illegible in respect of its sincerity. Buildings, similarly, are interpretable as the sites of a range of demonstrated virtues and vices, and never resolve into one allegorical meaning.

Conclusion

This chapter includes a brief consideration of the House of Temperance, the building that looms largest in Spenserian criticism. By way of conclusion, I want to return to that building, this time to dwell on the most glossed stanza in *The Faerie Queene*. Stanza 22 describes the plan of Alma's castle, combining the forms of circle, triangle and square, releasing the numerological and cultural meanings of each into play.

The frame thereof seemd partly circulare,
And part triangulare, O worke diuine;
Those two the first and last proportions are,
The one imperfect, mortall, foeminine;

Th'other immortall, perfect, masculine,
And twixt them both a quadrate was the base,
Proportioned equally by seuen and nine;
Nine was the circle sett in heauens place,
All which compacted made a goodly diapase.
(II.ix.22)

Exegesis of the stanza's numerological symbolism began with Kenelm Digby's *Observations* (1643), an excellent piece of close reading showing sophisticated grasp of neo-Platonic numerology. Digby begins by setting the stanza apart from all others in *The Faerie Queene*: here, he says, Spenser 'seems to me to proceed in a different manner from what he doth elsewhere generally through his whole Book'.¹³¹ Elsewhere, Spenser makes his intended meaning initially cloudy, but 'in the processe of it... declares[s] his own conceptions in such sort as they are obvious'; in this stanza, he 'seems only to glance at the profoundest notions' before returning 'on a sudden... to the gentle relation of the Allegorical History he had begun'.¹³² Digby sees the stanza as exceptionally dark in its conceit, though he then proceeds to unravel it. I wish to preserve his intuition of opacity, but transfer it from us, the readers *of* the text, onto the figures *in* the text, and in doing so query the cordoning off of the stanza from its context. The opening stanza of the poem's first canto declares, in its description of Redcrosse, that 'full iolly knight he seemd' (I.i.1.8); glossing 'seemd', Hamilton notes that 'the ambiguous use of this word warns the reader to be aware of the disparity throughout the poem between what is and what seems to be'.¹³³ The first line of Spenser's stanza could easily have substituted 'seemd' for 'was'; they hold the same metrical value. 'Seemd' does not cast doubt on the description, as it does on Redcrosse's cheerfulness (and, later, Archimago's goodness), because the House

¹³¹ Kenelm Digby, *Observations on the 22. stanza in the 9th. canto of the 2nd. book of Spencers Faery Queen* (London, 1643), p. 3.

¹³² Digby, p. 3.

¹³³ Hamilton, p. 31.

of Temperance faithfully articulates Spenser's ideal vision of bodily 'diapase'. What 'seemd' does preserve, however, is the perspective of Arthur and Guyon as they approach and tour the castle from the ground. Theirs is not the top-down, bird's-eye or 'mind's-eye' view of the building 'bisected by an imaginary plane', established in late fifteenth-century Italian drawings and which, Kathryn Blair Moore argues, implies 'the Platonic Idea of a building as it existed in the architect's mind'.¹³⁴ Instead, Guyon and Arthur see the various forms that combine in the plan of Alma's castle horizontally, incompletely and in overlap. From the imagined overhead perspective, the castle's walls make significant shapes ('Forms'), and disclose their being; from the ground, they *seem* to suggest their Forms but at the same time block the sight, preventing a comprehensive visual grasp of the castle's shape. Just as the castle's symbolism juxtaposes the 'perfect' value of the masculine with the 'imperfect' feminine, so does this stanza suggest two divergent perspectives of reader and questing figure, which this chapter has continually tried not to conflate.

In the first half of this chapter, I showed these two perspectives to be at variance in the numerous scenes of approach to buildings in *The Faerie Queene*. I argued that the attention critics have paid to the prospect room and what Sidney calls its 'lordship over a good large circuit' should prompt more focus on the other, more horizontal prospect that such monumental buildings construct. Britomart's experience as she approaches Castle Ioyeous can be construed as an allegory for the tendency towards, or acquisition of, an ethical state which the questing subject has not yet mastered: by withholding their parts, and striking the viewer with their sublime whole, the palaces of *The Faerie Queene*

¹³⁴ Kathryn Moore, 'Ficino's Idea of Architecture: the "mind's-eye view" in Quattrocento architectural drawings', *Renaissance Studies* 24 (2009), 332-352, 335. Moore develops the notion of the 'bird's eye view' of a building first historicised by Wolfgang Lotz.

compel approach. Similarly, virtues in the poem can only be learnt by straying undiscerningly towards or stumbling upon them, which risks contamination by the vices with which those virtues are entangled. I analysed the motif of the enigmatically sealed doorway similarly, as an allegory for the opacity of new ethical states prior to their experience. In the penultimate section, I argued that even in those buildings where hospitality is provided, it tends in *The Faerie Queene* to be defective. On this basis, I suggested that the experience of Britomart and other questing figures on the threshold has much more in common with the experience of early modern travellers, as narrated in their own accounts, than with the monarch or one of her senior courtiers on a scheduled visit to a country house whose symbolic communication is easily decodable to them. Buildings in *The Faerie Queene* and (in some instances) Elizabethan England derive their power not by signifying their high status, but by refusing to signify to those standing in front of them. In making this argument, I have cautioned against the wholesale adoption, in Spenser criticism, of both New Historicist and more traditional art-historical notions of architectural 'meaning'.

My focus reflects the approach articulated in the second and third chapters, both of which concentrate on movement. *The Faerie Queene* cannot be neatly divided into parts which are allegorical and parts which are not; by this logic, I argued that the contingent mobility of personified rivers and of Night deserve consideration for what they might symbolise. In this chapter, by extension, I have analysed not only *The Faerie Queene's* famous palaces and their allegorical meanings, but also the spatial practices in and around them. Yet I have also approached the poem's houses as originary centres, in the world of the poem, of ethical concepts, just as in the previous chapter I argued for the distinctiveness of caves in the landscape of Fairyland as the enclosures of vices imagined as effusions. Here,

however, a distinction needs to be drawn. In the previous chapter, I argued that the meanings carried by caves in late sixteenth-century British antiquarianism, and their deployment in allegorical courtly entertainments and masques, amplify their status in *The Faerie Queene* as the enclosures of vice: caves in the accounts of antiquarians preserve the magic purged from the landscape by the Reformation, and thus can be adapted to extend the quasi-magical, contagious space of a personification; in courtly and civic entertainments and masques, allegorical personages routinely live in caves. However, the connotations of buildings as lived spaces are more complex than those of caves. In *The Faerie Queene*, as I have shown, they complicate rather than amplify the buildings' allegorical signification. Castle Ioyeous is at once the enclosure of a ruinous kind of sexual desire, and a place to stay in a hostile and shifting landscape. Hospitality in Spenser's epic participates in the allegory, suggesting in its defectiveness the opacity of unfamiliar concepts prior to experience. It also complicates it, crossing the vicious meanings of a house like Castle Ioyeous, the House of Care or Corceca's house with the virtuous spatial practice of refuge. This crossing, as I argued here, reflects not only Spenser's intertwining of romance (a mode in which strange houses promise adventure) with epic (where any delay, no matter how delightful, jeopardises the quest), but also of epic romance with allegory. The juxtaposition of the social functions of built spaces and their practices with their allegorical meanings makes buildings in *The Faerie Queene* especially illegible. Their surfaces are hard to read because, as I have argued, all surfaces in *The Faerie Queene* are hard to read. Yet they are particularly difficult to understand for the poem's questing figures, because they mean contrary things at once.

Conclusion

I began with the claim that allegory, in Spenser's hands, is a spatial conceit. In Fairyland, the figurative status of metaphors seems deliberately to be forgotten. Figures of speech take on a physical existence in space. *Allegoria*, as Renaissance rhetorical and literary theory emphasised, implies 'other-speaking', an unusual distance between the 'surface' image or action and the 'hidden' meanings to which it points. In my readings of *The Faerie Queene*, I have shown the spatial aspects of this allegorical rift: the gap between the spatial characteristics of an allegorical reification, and its spatial characteristics and consequences prior to reification outside the poem, and following reification within it.

This thesis has examined three spatial forms – bodies, caves, and houses – into which natural or abstract phenomena are changed, and five instances of allegorical reification. The first chapter rooted itself in sixteenth-century European theories of *prosopopoeia*, to argue that personification creates an 'otherness' not so much of meaning, as of space: concepts experienced outside allegories either as independent, abstract forces, or as parts of a self, become persons in their own right. The next two chapters examined Spenser's contrasting embodiments of natural phenomena. In Book I, a malevolent old woman is fashioned out of (literally) nothing. The figure of Night personifies the rhythmic and gradual night which provoked fear and anthropomorphising superstition in early modern society. In Book IV, however, the world's discernible, everlasting rivers turn into human figures as they celebrate universal concord. Spenser was afraid of the night, but found rivers alluring, and at first sight differences between their reifications abound. Underlying both embodiments, however, is the same spatial alteration: as a natural, impersonal phenomenon (the night, a river) is transformed into a person, its natural

motion is exchanged for personal *mobility*. The consequences of this exchange are themselves multiple, but underlying them is the estrangement or defamiliarisation of nature. In Spenser's embodiments, nature becomes both intimidatingly incomprehensible and seductively plastic.

In the last two chapters, I moved beyond bodies, but back to virtues and vices, to consider two typical places where ethical concepts are reified. First, I examined the vices which Spenser imagines as caves, a continual feature of Fairyland's landscape. At first sight, they contrast markedly with the allegorical architecture of the final chapter, though this instance of a nature/culture binary suppresses what is actually a dangerous potential blend of characteristics. Many of the vices examined in Chapter 4 have as their 'spatial consequences' placelessness, restlessness, wandering, entanglement; it's ironic, therefore, that they are sequestered in the bounded space of a cave. Frequent images of effusion suggest the capacity of the enclosed vices to disperse, their actual ubiquity. The errors of perception that allow Spenser's questers to fall into vicious mental states are themselves based on a false sense of the discrete nature of ethical concepts in the world. In Chapter 5, I showed how virtues and vices become enclosed in buildings, whose distant, monumental façades compel uncertain approach, and whose resistant entrances construct enigma. Here, Spenser creates spatial otherness not so much by juxtaposing states of placelessness and entanglement with the bounded, remote locations that represent them, but by crossing the allegorical significance of a building with its social 'meanings'. In particular, Spenser employs the language of hospitality, and dramatises cultural anxiety about its decline, to show how his figures must balance a building's ethical value against its promise of a place to stay. My analysis of *The Faerie Queene's* allegorical caves and houses develops my earlier claim about Spenserian personification:

that the relation it presents, of signifying person with signified concept, moves fluidly between the poles of metonym (where the reification *exemplifies* the concept), and metaphor (where the reification *is* the concept). In the caves, images of effusion imply the dispersed nature of the concepts being reified, at variance with the properties of the cave; the embedding of the houses into the perspective of Fairyland, and the social system which all buildings occupy, shows that places which seem to *be* a concept might lapse into a looser, more *exemplary* relation to that concept. In both cases, *The Faerie Queene* performs a disembodied allegorical interpretation, or *allegoresis*, on its own reifications.

This account of Spenserian allegory places less emphasis on the material world, and its fluctuating presence in Fairyland, than Christopher Burlinson's study. My argument rests, however, on Burlinson's conviction that we should take the spaces of the poem seriously as spaces. Fairyland resembles the landscape of sixteenth-century Europe less than, for example, the England of Nashe or the London of Dekker. Its forest lacks geographical coordinates. Yet to resolve Fairyland into a set of logocentric episodes, interspersed with bright images, not only obscures the poem's reconfiguration of the material world but also, as I've argued, prevents us from seeing the spatial aspects of the poem's allegory. I differ from Burlinson, therefore, not in the emphasis on Fairyland's spatiality, but in the relationship I posit between allegory and space. Allegory, Burlinson implies, is the invasion of material space by ideas. My account does not deny this process of capture so much as simply arguing that ideas are themselves spatial: that ideal, theoretical structures are imposed onto material ones. Furthermore, I have argued that Spenser's reifications are perhaps more successful than a theory of allegory stemming from Walter Benjamin might suggest. I read the poem's ability to perform *allegoresis* on itself, to deconstruct its own reifications, as an indication of this success. Space asserts itself in

Fairyland not by massing its material in defiance of its intended meaning, but by proving itself illegible to the figures questing through it.

This principle – the illegibility of buildings, enchanted landscapes and (most controversially) bodies-in-space – is itself based on Burlinson’s reading of Lefebvre. If Fairyland is to be treated seriously as a set of imagined places, it follows that its reifications are experienced spatially. My discussion of how *The Faerie Queene’s* buildings are approached highlighted serious flaws in the notion that Elizabethan built spaces signified their power through a symbolic language. They communicated their power, I’ve argued, by being illegible even as they stimulated curiosity and appealed to need, thus compelling approach. This analysis queries a tired New Historicist conception of a culture as a text; it also makes a sharp distinction between the figures *in* Spenser’s poem and readers *of* it. I have questioned the tendency in criticism of *The Faerie Queene* to think of Redcrosse, Britomart and company as simple transpositions (personifications, perhaps) of us, the poem’s readers. Fairyland speaks to its travellers not in textual signs but with directions for the furtherance or delay of their quests. They fail to read its spaces not because they are bad readers, but because unmediated space cannot be read.

I have argued throughout, however, that the illegibility of Fairyland also holds an allegorical or meta-allegorical value, suggesting the opacity of ethical concepts, even when known and named in theory, prior to their being directly experienced. Spenser does not just portray the process of self-acquaintance with an unfamiliar mental state; he constructs dynamic, spatial metaphors (Redcrosse blundering into Error’s cave, Britomart framing her steps to Castle Ioyeous) of that process. If this notion of meta-allegory is accurate, it reveals the extraordinary extent to which Spenser involves the

allegorical signification of *The Faerie Queene* with its epic romance imagery and setting. Romance narratives offered to Spenser not delightful, brisk stories with which he could divide his static allegorical episodes, as C.S. Lewis thought. They provided conceptual structures usefully 'other', in their implied spatial dynamics, to his view of ethical concepts. The protestant soul's acquaintance with the world's entangled virtues and vices is depicted in narratives whose division into loosely contiguous episodes and places contradicts that entanglement. It underestimates Spenser, therefore, to speak of a juxtaposition of 'narrative' and 'allegory'. In *The Faerie Queene*, (romance) narrative is allegorical; specifically, in its relation to the ethical processes it signifies, it exhibits a spatial otherness.

At the end of *The Phantom Tollbooth*, Milo returns to his bedroom and discovers that he has been gone for only an hour. Eager to return to the kingdom he has helped to unify, he finds that his map of 'The Lands Beyond' has vanished, replaced by a note addressed 'to Milo, who now knows the way'. Milo's physical journey through the space of the imaginary kingdom beyond the tollbooth has enabled him to navigate in a more metaphorical sense through this world. Juster's novel demonstrates the rich suggestiveness of journeys and maps as metaphors. Leaving Fairyland, I want to conclude by thinking about the interaction of the allegorical epic with the map or atlas. Spenser lived in a time of cartographic development and expansion. It's been argued that Fairyland, with its ever-shifting forest, mythical landscape and fantastic figures, expresses an anxious resistance to the proliferation of maps in the sixteenth century, and their new precision. Yet this misses the metaphorical tendency of the map implicit in the ending of *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Rather than evading the cartographic impulse, perhaps *The Faerie Queene* extends it to the world of concepts. The absence of co-ordinates or

distances is, so to speak, neither here nor there: the virtues and vices encountered in life are distributed in vague but continuous spatial arrangement. Allegory, in Spenser's hands, becomes more spatial in a host of ways. In the sixteenth century, meanwhile, cartography's expansion permits the dissemination into other spheres of the thinking it fosters. In *The Faerie Queene*, with all the crazed, extraordinary ambition of the atlas, allegory and cartography start to converge.

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