Spenser's Poetics of Corporeality and its Influence on Milton

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Abstract

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This thesis is concerned with the relationship between rhetoric, reading and fallen bodies—both natural and imagined—within Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and the influence of Spenser's practice on his greatest 'poetical son', John Milton. It begins and ends with allegory, from the 'continued allegory, or darke conceit' through which Spenser examines the fallen world to Milton's account of the genesis of allegory through the experience of the Fall.

A longstanding critical tradition tends to perpetuate the assumption that allegory is a form with an inherently authoritarian bias, dictating the renunciation of the literal, or bodily. This thesis demonstrates how Spenser's view of the fallen corporeal self, in which the material is as wholly valent as the spiritual, necessitates his adoption of a mode of allegory that does not always privilege, or clearly offer, an abstraction over an image. Affirming with Augustine that both allegorical thinking and the related condition of mortality and embodiment inexorably define fallen life, Spenser delivers a 'body poetic' that finds value in such experience, rather than struggling to elude it. His poetry, I argue, meditates upon how a state of congenital corruption might be turned to restorative effect. The amorous quest, which requires the development of an interpretive temper founded in love, rather than reason alone, becomes Spenser's troubled response.

Milton, it might be objected, was no allegorist and his hermeneutical anti-allegorism—with particular regard to interpreting Scripture—has been recently traced in detail. While acknowledging both these formal differences and related conceptual differences in Milton's attitude to the body, to sex and to reason, this thesis seeks to explain why he nevertheless chose Spenser as a poetical pedagogue above his other predecessors. I argue that the mode of engaging directly with our embodiment, and our situation in the corporeal world that Spenserian allegory demands, is crucial to Milton's continuing project that seeks to 'repair the ruines of our first parents'. Spenserian influence is apparent everywhere in his canon from the construction and critique of ideal forms of virtue in *A Maske*, to wedded love and labour in Eden, and perhaps most crucially, in his adoption of a poetics that figures mutability and materiality as both a challenge to human perfectibility, and the central expression of Providence in the world.

In contrast to those who broadly oppose the two poets' manner of teaching, to those who claim that Milton's relationship to Spenser might be summarised in his decision *not to write* an allegorical epic and to those who claim that Milton was a covert allegorist, I argue for an important affinity between the way in which Spenser represents (through narrative), and Milton describes, the relation of the physical to the metaphysical. My thesis shows how a technique of figuration in Spenser, a peculiarly literal form of allegory, might be seen to become a systematic cosmology for Milton: literary materiality into a monist materialism that excludes the dualism of matter and spirit. Through sustained close readings, I demonstrate how the *allegorical* procedures of *The Faerie Queene* are adapted and enlarged in *Paradise Lost* as *accommodated* vision. To summarize, this thesis illuminates a new facet of a powerful, but highly elusive relationship in English literary history.

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Conventions of Citation and Abbreviations

Conventions

When quoting from early modern sources not in modern editions, original spellings and punctuation have been retained, unless otherwise specified.

When citing early modern works in footnotes and the bibliography, I cite the short title, or a section of the title long enough for it to be identifiable.

With regards to Greek and Latin texts, I have cited from the Loeb Classical Library editions of these texts, unless otherwise indicated. References to the Bible are to the Revised Standard Version.

When citing primary or secondary sources in footnotes, I provide the reference in full when citing for the first time, in every chapter. Subsequent footnotes of the same source include the author's last name, the volume (if relevant) and page numbers, as well as the year of publication if there is more than one work by the same author. Multiple authors with the same last name are distinguished by initial.

Abbreviations

ACMRS	Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
CPW	*Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, eds. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82)
EEBO	Early English Books Online, ProQuest LLC <http://www.http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>
ELH	*English Literary History*
ELN	*English Language Notes*
ELR	*English Literary Renaissance*
FQ	Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, eds. A. C. Hamilton et al. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007)
A Maske	John Milton, 'A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634 [Comus]' in *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems,* ed. John Carey (London: Routledge, 2013)
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Edition, Oxford University Press
CWM	*The Complete Works of John Milton*, eds. Thomas Corns and Gordon Campbell, 11 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008-)

PL	John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Routledge, 2013)
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
RES	*The Review of English Studies*
SEL	*Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*
Spenser Encyclopedia	*The Spenser Encyclopedia*, eds. A. C. Hamilton et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990)
Variorum	*A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton*, ed. Cheryl H. Fresch (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2011), vol. 5, part 4

Introduction

Interpretation is, to the largest possible degree, lived.
(George Steiner)

Edmund Spenser's *Prothalamion,* published in 1596, was composed to commemorate the double betrothal ceremony of Katherine and Elizabeth Somerset, eldest daughters to the fourth Earl of Worcester. While the composition of poems and songs in honour of betrothal festivities was common, the title is of Spenser's own invention, as if he 'wished to regard the betrothal poem as a separate genre', or somehow acknowledge the curiousness of his poem.[1] Being generally praised for its beauty, the question of genre has passed largely unremarked, but this occasional poem has, perhaps unexpectedly, been objected to as an instance in which 'the Author has manifestly transgress'd'.[2] The indignant party is Spenser's apologist and eighteenth century editor, John Hughes, who identifies a transgression against a 'Rule' of allegory.

Literary scholars have long observed that the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries involve a shift to a new notion of allegory as a particular category, or literary genre.[3] A plausible reason for this shift has been drawn out of the familiar, grumbling displeasure of such readers as Dr. Johnson, and Joseph Addison, in their comments on Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*. Both readers complain of the incongruity of such 'airy beings', or 'Chymerical' abstractions, being given 'real employment', or a share of the narrative's action.[4] These critical complaints have been associated with a shift in significance, in contemporaneous literary criticism, from 'canons of form to canons of character'.[5] John Hughes is thus representative, when, in his 1715 edition of Spenser he affirms

[1] Edmund Spenser, 'Prothalamion', *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser,* ed. W.A. Oram (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 753-70, 755. All quotations from Spenser's shorter poems are from this edition, with line references given parenthetically.
[2] John Hughes, 'An Essay on Allegorical Poetry', *The Works of Mr. Edmund Spenser: In six volumes* (London, 1715), I:xxv- lviii, xlix.
[3] Andrew Escobedo, 'Daemon Lovers: Will, Personification, and Character', *Spenser Studies* 22 (2007), 203-25, 213 observes that 'Renaissance readers had no formal category, as we do, of "non-allegorical fiction"; all fiction, unlike history, could take on a secondariness and signify an alternative order of ideas'. History, when treated allegorically, was conceived of as God's writing.
[4] Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; With Critical Observations on their Works*, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), I:291. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), II:563, No. 273 (January 12, 1712).
[5] Jason Crawford, *Allegory and Enchantment: An Early Modern Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 30, reminds us of the new emphasis on drama as what Dryden describes as the '*just and lively Image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject*'. See John Dryden, 'Of Dramatic Poesy', *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

that '[p]ersons of this imaginary Life are to be excluded from any share of the Action in Epick Poems'. Of course, according to this logic, Spenser's entire *Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596) should be judged bizarre and inadmissible. Consequently, Hughes refines his claim with an important exception, alerting us to a new literary category with its own rules of representation and meaning: 'But what I have here said of Epick and Dramatick Poems does not extend to such Writings, the very Frame and Model of which is design'd to be Allegoricall; in which therefore, as I said before, such unsubstantial and symbolical Actors may be very properly admitted'. In this distinctive kind of writing, the poet can escape the strictures of congruity only because of the underlying, unifying 'moral Sense' it must convey. Allegory, or 'the Fairy Land of Poetry', as Hughes has it, 'abounds in such Licences as wou'd be shocking and monstrous, if the Mind did not attend to the mystick Sense contain'd under them'.[6]

The narrative of allegory has a liberty indulged to it, in other words, because it is but a secondary surface, subject to the coherence of the mystic sense. Hughes protests that 'Men of Critical Learning' have given us rules about epic, and other kinds of poetry, but they have 'chosen to let this Forest [allegory] remain wild, as if they thought there was something in the Nature of the Soil, which cou'd not so well be restrain'd and cultivated in Inclosures'. Rather than dwelling in the wantonness of its vegetation, or the strangeness of its soil, Hughes lops, prunes and implants a set of four rules. The first two insist that the fable, or literal narrative, be lively, and elegantly chosen, rather than distractingly various. The fourth is that the allegory be 'clear and intelligible', the fable being designed only to clothe and adorn the moral, but not to hide it. The third rule, in the service of the fourth, insists that the fable 'be every where consistent with itself'.[7] It is this demand for consistency that Spenser's *Prothalamion* is charged with violating, and so falling into absurdity. The poem's conceit is of 'two Swannes of goodly hewe', softly sailing down the Thames, which represent the two brides to be. The pair of swans are referred to as 'goodly' and 'joyous' birds. The noun 'birde' occurs four times, and its anagram and near homophone, 'bride', repeats fifteen times in various inflectional forms. Hughes objects to the fact that the 'Allegory breaks before the Reader

1900), I:21-109, 36. See Jane K. Brown, *The Persistence of Allegory: Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 1-10 for a discussion of the relationship between neoclassicism and the priority accorded to 'psychological mimesis'.

[6] Hughes, xliii, xxxiii-xxxiv.

[7] *Ibid*., xlvi-l.

is prepar'd for it'. The birds swim onward, approaching two 'gentle Knights of lovely face and feature', the bridegrooms, but are received at the poem's close as 'two faire *Brides*' (169, 176; emphasis added). As Hughes remarks, 'we see them, at their landing, in their true Shapes, without knowing how this sudden Change is effected'.[8]

Prothalamion breaks the rules of allegory belatedly laid down by Hughes, and eighteenth century readers more generally, in allowing the narrative to break free of the proper economy of signification. Given, however, that all Spenser had to do to preserve decorum is to have described the pair as birds, rather than brides (in line 176), we can assume he deliberately chose not to, and that his choice suggests an alternative model of reading. The swans are 'a sight so fayre, | Of Fowles so lovely' (60-1); with a characteristic Spenserian pun, they recall George Puttenham's classification of allegory as both the figure of 'false' and 'fair semblant', as if commenting on their own representational capacities.[9] Their transformation is swift, unexpected, but preceded by subtle hints that witness the slips between 'birdes' and 'brides'. We are told that although the birds did 'not seeme | To be begot of any earthly Seede, | But rather Angels', they were 'bred of *Somers-heat*', which is to say, on earth in summer's heat, by Somerset (64-7). They outstrip the whiteness not only of Jove's swan form, but also of Leda's womanly form (42-4). The nymphs draw stores of flowers from their baskets and scatter them over the birds and water, which makes the bloom-strewn river '[l]ike a Brydes Chamber flore' (82). As if altered by the simile, the stream as bridal bower affects its inhabitants, and gives rise to two fair brides, rather than the birds with which it first flowed. The transformation, following the logic of the anagrams 'bride' and 'birde', suggests that the two entities cannot be separated into two levels of literal and signified meaning; there is something of participation, and literality, in both, as if the birds swell in synecdochal power to express the brides.

Hughes's attempt at cultivating the wilds of allegory somewhat shapes its future production, its ensuing reputation, and its dismissal. Samuel Taylor Coleridge comes to provide the most stinging indictment, defining it as 'a translation of abstract notions into a picture-language which is itself nothing but an abstraction from the object of the senses; the principal being more worthless

[8] *Ibid*., xlix.
[9] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), eds. Frank Whigham and W. A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 271, 379.

even than its phantom proxy, both alike unsubstantial, and the former shapeless to boot'.[10] Coleridge observes elsewhere that allegory, unlike symbolic writing, must necessarily be 'spoken consciously' and is therefore artificial, because it involves a 'disjunction of faculties' in presenting on the one hand, an image of a body to the eye or imagination, but on the other, a concept to the mind.[11] Traces of this opposition linger on as late as 1936, when C. S. Lewis writes that 'symbolism is a mode of thought, but allegory is a mode of expression'.[12] Of course, twentieth century critics have produced influential accounts that reevaluate or reject Coleridge's claims. Angus Fletcher, for example, observes that defining allegory was important for Coleridge insofar as it allowed him to make the distinction between 'organic' and 'mechanic' form, and provide an instance of literature born out of the subordination of the imagination to the logical powers of reason. The assumption that the 'duplicity of meaning in all allegory' follows from a split between reason and imagination is called into question.[13] Gordon Teskey, too, argues that his 'claustrophobic reaction to mechanical psychology' provoked Coleridge to adopt a theory of the symbol explicitly defined by its hostility to allegory, where, in literary theory, such an opposition makes little sense.[14]

Vitriol aside, discourses such as Hughes's and Coleridge's have influenced how we think of allegorical signification. Jason Crawford's recent study describes them as 'sensitively attuned' to the dynamics of allegory.[15] They hark back, indeed, to a Platonic metaphysics, in which form exerts violent control over matter. They enshrine the division between the atemporal order of mind, or ideas, and the mutable order of bodies, wherein the latter is necessarily secondary, and of little value. Put briefly, they view allegory as indelibly marked by dualism, composed as such, and

[10] S. T. Coleridge, 'The Statesman's Manual', *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 6, ed. R. J. White, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 3–52, 30. Crawford, 22, 37 notes that Coleridge assimilates his account to Lockean psychology and argues further that the 'importance of likeness to Lockean epistemology', or the taxonomy of, and relationships between, sets of ideas within the mind, leads to a comparable demand for formal correspondence in allegory, i.e. the movement of allegorical ideas into images must be exact, or as Hughes has it, consistent. See also Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 101-7 for a discussion of the impact on allegory from Locke's dark room model of the mind: 'Allegory was therefore submitted to *method*' (104).

[11] Coleridge, 'Lectures on Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Spenser, Ariosto, and Cervantes' (1819), and 'Lectures on the Principles of Judgement, Culture, and European Literature' (1818), *Lectures 1808–1819: On Literature*, 2 vols., *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 5.2, ed. R. A. Foakes, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 418, 99.

[12] C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 60.

[13] Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 15-18.

[14] Teskey (1996), 106-7. See also Edwin Honig, *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory* (London: Faber, 1960), 44-54.

[15] Crawford, 33.

translatable as such. In this vein, modern commentators have also approached allegory, and more specifically, personification, as a figure or mode associated with inaction, stasis, violence and death. Think, for example, of Fletcher's obsessive, or daemonic agents, Steven Knapp's account of 'radical self-absorption', Paul de Man's anthropomorphism, which 'freezes the infinite chain of tropological transformations', and Teskey's devoured material.[16] Kenneth Borris's latest work on Spenser presents a visionary poet whose allegory depends wholly on Platonizing mimetic idealism; the flashes of the 'higher order of "reality"' are what truly count.[17] Crawford's broader thesis is that the dynamics of allegory are related to the dynamics of disenchantment, and that early modern allegorical works are infected by a kind of historical weariness and escapism, which manifests as an unease with narrative. Consequently, allegorical characters—particularly in *The Faerie Queene*—fail to act and are ultimately self-cancelling. Allegorical narrative is said to regard 'its own narrative material as a veil, or as chaff', and so unmakes itself. As his language suggests, Crawford relies, among other sources, on Benjamin's influential account of allegory as enveloping bodies in 'the eccentric embrace of meaning'.[18]

With these varying emphases on capture and inactivity, we might usefully remember, that in general, the discussion of *prosopopeia* or personification in early modern handbooks of rhetoric did not describe congealed or moribund figures. They illuminate, instead, the poet's act of animation, in enduing non-human creatures, or things, with human qualities. Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (1595) famously calls attention to the liveliness of literary making.[19] According to Puttenham, *'Prosopopeia*, or the Counterfeit Impersonation' is the figure that attributes 'any human quality, as reason or speech, to dumb creatures or other insensible things, and do study (as one may say) to

[16] See Fletcher (1964), 25ff.; Steven Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime: Milton to Coleridge* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 4; Paul de Man, 'Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric', *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 239-62, 241; Teskey (1996). See also Susanne Wofford, *The Choice of Achilles: The Ideology of Figure in the Epic* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) on the costs of allegory and its closeness to tyranny.

[17] Kenneth Borris, *Visionary Spenser and the Poetics of Early Modern Platonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8-17.

[18] Crawford (2017), 11-16, and Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* tr. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 1977), 217. On the slightly different tradition of allegory as being characterized by obscurity, veiling mysterious truths, see Michael Murrin, *The Veil of Allegory: Some Notes Toward a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 21-53.

[19] See Philip Sidney, 'A Defence of Poetry', *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 59-123. Chapters one and two will look at Sidney's text and its model of poetic creation in more detail. Escobedo's 'Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels', *ELH* 75/4 (2008), 787-818, 788, reminds us that personification was 'energy' for Renaissance commentators.

give them a human person'.[20] Henry Peacham, too, describes this trope as the 'faining of a person', in attributing qualities such as 'speech, reason, and affection'. Indeed, *prosopopeia* is so enlivening that the poet or orator who uses it 'sometimes…raiseth againe as it were the dead to life, and bringeth them forth complaining or witnessing what they knew.[21] Allegory, being the 'chief ringleader and captain of all other figures', includes *prosopopeia* as a part of its techniques.[22]

In spite of these definitions, critics have often sought out a sense of phenomenal deadness in Spenserian personification and allegory. Kenneth Gross, for example, writes of the 'universe of allegorical imposture, the domain of meanings imposed on a text…the masking of a body's more disorderly impulses…the sense of something killing within its animations'.[23] Gross' analysis of Spenser's 'Envie'—from the pageant of the House of Pride—is insightful, but Theresa Krier is right to stress that allegory in *The Faerie Queene* 'is of many kinds…amenable to infinite modulations and gradations, including a capacity not to represent deadness but to endow intensified life to a character'. Krier locates this lively alternative in the motions of the elements—specifically, in Luce Irigiray's notion of elemental movement—and their potential relationship to character in the *Mutabilitie* cantos.[24] My own approach is different, but the significance of liveliness and of personhood, as the rhetoricians emphasize, is central; what if the bodies of allegory might mean *and* live?

This thesis is entitled *Spenser's Poetics of Corporeality and the Influence on Milton*. Focusing, at present, on the title's first part, this project proposes a model of Spenserian allegory that is ungoverned by the dualism that typifies most critical approaches to allegory, as rhetorical trope, or genre. As many of the preceding critical comments have hinted, the vision of allegory as constituted by a literal or physical level, beyond which lies an abstracted level, is seen to ideationally correspond to a model of selfhood that subordinates body to soul, or mind. In the simplest terms, 'corporeality' is that 'quality or state of being corporeal', having 'bodily form or

[20] Puttenham, 324.
[21] Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1593), 136.
[22] Puttenham, 271.
[23] Kenneth Gross, 'The Postures of Allegory', *Edmund Spenser: Essays on Culture and Allegory*, eds. Jennifer Klein Morrison and Matthew Greenfield (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 167-79, 167-9.
[24] Theresa Krier, 'Daemonic Allegory: The Elements in Late Spenser, Late Shakespeare, and Irigiray', *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003), 315-42, 319-20.

nature; materiality'.[25] In naming a 'poetics of corporeality', I argue that Spenser's view of the fallen body-self, in which the material is as wholly valent as the spiritual, necessitates his adoption of a mode of allegory that does not always privilege, or even offer, an abstraction over an image. Spenser affirms that both allegorical thinking and the common condition of embodiment inexorably define fallen life, and so delivers a poem, his *Faerie Queene*, that finds value in such phenomenal experience, rather than struggling to escape it. Put differently, this thesis is concerned not only with the representation of bodies—natural and imagined—but also with the 'body' of the representational mode.

Attending to the literality, the narrative, of Spenser's dark conceit isn't new, per se. Paul Alpers's inspiring work, *The Poetry of 'The Faerie Queene'*, memorably states that 'one apprehends the [poem's] depths only by staying on the surface…. Abstract statements and analyses, moral terms and attitudes, are as a much a part of the surface of *The Faerie Queene* as descriptions and other evocations of sensuous experience'.[26] Joe Moshenska's recent essay on John Dryden's note on *The Faerie Queene* V.vii.24 provides another reminder. Passing in silence over the hallucinatory, and frankly bizarre, dream episode of Isis' Church, Dryden is perturbed by Britomart's bestowal of 'rich reward' and 'royal gifts' upon the priests and their goddess: 'Whence had she all this wealth?', he asks in the margin.[27] Moshenska suggests that the 'delightful perversity', or literal mindedness, of this marginal note might offer a 'useful historical foundation for certain ways of reading Spenser that might otherwise be open to criticism as…lacking historical warrant', in answer to interpretive approaches grounded in the histories of the book, or reading, that seek to establish demonstrable early modern limits of meaning. Dryden's note is thus enlisted in defense of the claim 'that the literal surface of *The Faerie Queene* prompts us to ask deeply strange and delightful questions of it'.[28]

My own approach is certainly informed and inspired by critics who stress the generative disjunction of meanings in the poem. Yet even these readings frequently take the form of unfolding

[25] See the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (*OED*), s. v. 'corporeality, n.'
[26] Paul J. Alpers, *The Poetry of 'The Faerie Queene'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 157-8.
[27] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, eds. A. C. Hamilton et al. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007). All quotations from the *FQ* refer to this edition. Line references will be given parenthetically in the main body of the text.
[28] Joe Moshenska, '"Whence had she all this wealth?": Dryden's Note on *The Faerie Queene* V.vii.24 and the Gifts of Literal Reading', *Spenser Studies* 33 (2019), 301-13, 303, 306.

moments of pleasure, care, jubilance or ordinariness that escape allegory's totalizing drive. Jeff Dolven eloquently describes the brief intimations of 'ordinariness' in *The Faerie Queene*, as 'not the rupture of its instruction, but its surcease'. The 'domestic regularity and sexual satisfaction' of Hellenore with the satyrs in *FQ* III.x.36 is one such moment, a counter-feeling to the punishment and skepticism of allegory: Hellenore is happy, permitted by the poem, 'as housewife euer to abide' (III.x.36).[29] In his discussion of Spenser and Hegel, Moshenska fairly observes that we do not know if Grill, the intractable hog of Book Two, is silenced by being excluded from 'the poem's system…driven into the *deep and drowning sea* of allegorical understanding'.[30] Colleen Rosenfeld's recent study on the 'indecorous' thinking of figures of speech offers an account of Spenserian simile, as more important and frequent a trope than 'allegory'. At II.iii.36-37, Braggadochio is compared to a fond and fearful fowl, preening its feathers, and in his 1617 *Spenser*, Ben Jonson annotates the verse thus: 'An excell. Simile to expresse cowardnesse'.[31] Consequently, Rosenfeld charges Jonson with lazy allegoresis in prioritizing logical abstraction, and cancelling out the deliberate protraction and confusion of the figure.[32] This project seeks to explore Spenser's 'continued Allegory, or darke conceit' as the poem itself, and not as an invisible, grasping system of abstraction from which the poem must periodically be rescued.[33]

Classical and Renaissance commentaries both describe allegory as continued, or moving, metaphor. Cicero's Crassus describes it not as 'the metaphorical use of a single word but…a chain of words linked together'.[34] Quintilian accords with Cicero in his description of a continued series of Metaphors.[35] Peacham and Puttenham follow suit. Judith Anderson asserts that in being a chain of words, or continued metaphor, allegory occurs in 'the contiguous relationship that characterizes

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[29] Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 236-7. Dolven borrows the term 'ordinariness' from Stanley Cavell, in his writings about Shakespeare and Wittgenstein. It is understood over and against skepticism: 'the ancient task of philosophy, to awaken us, or bring us to our senses, takes the form of returning us to the everyday, the ordinary'. See Stanley Cavell, 'Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture', *Inquiry* 31/3 (1988), 253-64, 262.
[30] Moshenska, 'Why Can't Spenserians Stop Talking About Hegel? A Response to Gordon Teskey', *Spenser Review* 44.1.2 (Spring-Summer 2014); emphasis added.
[31] See transcription in James A. Riddell and Stanley Stewart, *Jonson's Spenser: Evidence and Historical Criticism* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1995), 167.
[32] Colleen Ruth Rosenfeld, *Indecorous Thinking: Figures of Speech in Early Modern Poetics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 101-4.
[33] See Longman edition, 'Letter to Raleigh', 714-19, 714.
[34] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, tr. E. W. Sutton, H. Rackham, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), II: III.xli.166.
[35] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, ed. D. A. Russell, 5 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), III: 8.6.44.

narrative'.[36] More importantly, its compressed structure of comparison allows metaphor to instantiate a relationship between two terms that draws attention to both reciprocity and difference. Rosamund Tuve's seminal work, *Allegorical Imagery*, emphasizes the 'thoroughgoing metaphorical nature of allegory' and its implications: 'metaphor implies what it cannot overtly state without losing the formal character which defines it as a figure; both figures are, as it were, open at one end, allowing interpretations which can be supported by proper evidence, but not proven'.[37] Spenser's presentation of a 'continued *Allegory*', rather than 'metaphor', seems to insist on a complication and multiplication of continuous, various, and even rivalrous implications, wherein meaning arises from the matter of the dark conceit, rather than being exerted from without. As my first chapter shows, applying interpretive 'codes' extrinsically is deeply suspect in Reformed contexts, and even more so in Spenser's poetry.

Prudentius' *Psychomachia*—according to Coleridge, 'the first Allegory compleatly modern in its form'—has the maiden Chastity affirm the value of embodied life, 'since a virgin immaculate has borne a child': 'since the day when man's body lost its primeval nature, and power from on high created a new flesh…. From that day all flesh is divine, since it conceives Him and takes on the nature of God by a covenant of partnership…neither has God lessened what is his by taking on what is ours, but by giving his nature to ours He has lifted us to the height of his heavenly gifts'.[38] The Christological basis from which to value the body and bodily experience is powerful, and clearly has implications for the body of allegory. Yet as Crawford points out, the soul of Prudentius' psychomachia is 'not really a [human] subject', but rather like the cosmos, populated with personified virtues and vices. The soul is modeled on the paradox of the god-man in that its virtues are grounded in Christ. Chastity's speech, quoted above, is delivered to Lust, whom she defeats because 'it is his [Christ's] gift that thou [Lust] liest conquered' (87). In this way, divine gifts

[36] Judith H. Anderson, *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 5-6. Anderson argues that what Alastair Fowler claims of genre is true of allegory. See *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 23: 'the character of genres is that they change'.
[37] Rosamund Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and their Posterity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 220.
[38] *Prudentius*, tr. H. J. Thomson, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1949-53). See vol. 1, 'The Fight for Mansoul', (75-86). Coleridge, *Collected Works* 5.2, ed. Foakes (1987), 102. See also Paul *Col*. 1:24, 3:3 and *Gal*. 2:20, *The Holy Bible: containing the Old and New Testaments: Revised Standard Version* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971).

accrue, replacing sins, and the breath of God is opposed to the body's filth. The poem ends with an aching vision of the court of Christ where Wisdom reigns.

Put briefly, the model of Christ can be used to justify a sacrificial, self-cancelling logic, an emptying of humanity to be replaced with divinity. Spenser's poetry, however, is distrustful of the too ready movement towards the perceived transcendent, or divine, and to simply deny or ignore the needs or presence of the body, in and of the poem, will not do much good. *The Faerie Queene* is avowedly postlapsarian, and demands the labour of learning to read and act aright in the corporeal realm. There is no guarantee that its inhabitants will achieve perfection, or order the 'jewels of the virtues in a pure setting'—as the *Psychomachia* has it—before their time expires, or the poem concludes. They must simply live, and practice their powers of discernment, which will be continually tested as fallen life dictates. It is this resolve, and the elation, exhaustion, frustration, and value of corporeal life and labours that *The Faerie Queene* strives to incarnate in its readers. John Milton's *Areopagitica* warns that 'it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other frie; that must be the Angels Ministry at the end of mortall things.'[39] The thorny world of Spenser's poem impresses this upon us, while demanding that we try to, anyway. There is no obvious promise of a paradise within, only fragile glimmers of grace, and the poem seems to sense the weight of its claim on readers.

The second part my title, and thesis, is concerned with the influence on Milton. The term 'influence' has fallen out of favour in the last few decades. Anderson suggests that this is partly the result of the rise of the term 'intertextuality'—originally coined by Kristeva—that has been 'worked to find', and degrade, an *other*, not because the two are in opposition, but rather because they are tough to cleanly separate.[40] The term 'influence' is additionally strongly coloured by Harold Bloom's use of it in his theory of poetry, or story of intra-poetic Freudian family romances. Bloom's discourse is conflictual, one of strength, weakness, violence and anxiety, which describes an appropriative Milton who came to replace 'the unitary illusion of Spenserian romance by an

[39] John Milton, 'Areopagitica', *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), II:564-5. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Milton's prose refer to this edition and references will be given parenthetically.

[40] Anderson (2008), 3-4. Anderson cites Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), who discusses the changing uses and meanings of Kristeva's term. According to Orr, the term has frequently been used to signify a mosaic, or collage of quotations, which misses Kristeva's emphasis on the reconstitutive power of texts. See Orr, 20-32 and Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 35-56.

acceptance of an actual dualism as the pain of being'.[41] I am not concerned with poets confronting each other as psyches; nor do I believe that influence is reducible to source hunting, image patterning and idealizing, as it was caricatured in the early years of death-of-the-author scholarship.

Rather than restriction, I choose to conceive of influence in the spirit of the open movement and fluidity it implies. Think for, example, of Spenser's call for the 'infusion sweete', or flowing 'little drops' from the Chaucerian spring.[42] In *The Shepheardes Calender*, Colin claims that with the little drops he might 'teache the trees, their trickling teares to shed'. Perhaps their 'wayl[ing]' will be louder and more expansive than the imagined Chaucerian spring ('June', 96-7). The stream is not stagnant, but changes with each rebirth, perhaps remembering the old, but expressing something new, in shifting and reconstitutive relationships to potential source(s).[43] As with Milton's scriptural description of Truth, poetic influence must aspire to a 'streaming fountain', not 'sick'n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition' (*CPW* II: 543). In rhetorical terms, this is what John Hollander called *transumption*, or *metalepsis*, a particular kind of allusiveness charged with multiplicity and revisionary power, seen as characteristic of Milton.[44] In using the term 'influence', I am interested not only in explicit instances of acknowledgment, such as Dryden's report of Milton's avowal that Spenser was his 'Original', or Milton's recognition of Spenser as his 'better teacher' in *Areopagitica*, but also in oblique moments of allusion and echo in a verse, line, or word, as the case may be.[45] As John Guillory reminds us, the links between poets can be 'intertextual (the matter of echo) and contextual (large areas of shared concern)'. This thesis hopes to illumine some of what Milton may have shared, revised, ignored, amplified or exploded, through the particular lens of Spenser's interest in corporeality, and the kinds of reading, knowing, unknowing and action it

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[41] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Pres, 1973), 5, 8, 34.
[42] *FQ* IV.ii.34.6; *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'June', 93.
[43] Indeed the peculiarities of acts of remembering are already remaking. Chapter four acknowledges the overlap between Milton's emphasis on his own singularity and the possibility of Spenserian influence.
[44] John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 114. See also Fletcher (1964), 241n. Puttenham, 267 names *metalepsis* the 'Far-fetched', a kind of elliptical meta-trope. It is said to alter the sense it retreives, 'entangle' the conceit and appear more pleasing to women. See Quintilian 8.6.37; 'Metalepsis or Transumption, which, as it were, makes a path from one thing to another… it is very rare and highly incorrect, but commoner with the Greeks'. As Dr. Johnson wrote, Milton 'never fails to fill the imagination…He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, *through the spectacles of books*', compressing and connecting multiple pasts in ways that necessarily produce 'an alternate exercise of the memory and the fancy… His great excellence is amplitude' (*Lives* I:287).
[45] John Dryden, *The Poems and Fables*, ed. James Kinsley (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 521. Dryden named Milton the 'poetical son of Spenser'. See *Essays of John Dryden*, II:247.

implies. It does so by attending to Milton's *Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634) and his great epic, *Paradise Lost*. [46]

In his monograph on the Ludlow Masque, Fletcher issued a provocative, revisionary statement: 'Although much has been made in literary histories of the link between Spenser and Milton, we need to insist on the relative unimportance of this link. Milton was not unduly perturbed, surely, by the example of *The Faerie Queene.* Milton perceived the problem of being Milton: it was that he came after Shakespeare'.[47] Fletcher's injunction implies that perturbation is the true mark of formative significance. Yet an obvious example in which Milton owns his Shakespearean unease, also signals the spectral presence of Spenser. The early eulogizing poem, 'On Shakespeare', contrasts the fluidity and fancy of Shakespeare's verse with the motionlessness he affects in his auditors. He has built himself, writes Milton, a 'live-long monument' in the astonishment of his audience, made 'marble', with 'too much conceiving' (6-9, 14).[48] This is grand praise, but it does distance the speaker from 'Shakespeare' and 'fancy', as several critics have noted. The curious mention of the 'star-ypointing pyramid' that Shakespeare has no need for (being immortalized in our wonder), evokes the archaism of Spenser. It is difficult to escape, then, on reading the clever close of the conceit—Shakespeare, sepulchered in the marble of our minds—that the arresting effect attributed to Shakespeare is usually morally dubious in both Spenser and Milton's works; think of Malbecco, Verdant, the Lady of *A Maske*. Whether or not Milton is deliberately dividing a 'line' of poetry, including Spenser and himself, from the native woodnotes of Shakespeare, it is clear that perturbation cannot encompass influence.

Gordon Teskey remarks that were it not for Dryden's testimony, 'other candidates'—such as Homer, Virgil, Tasso or Ariosto—'might be chosen for the office of Milton's "original"'.[49] There

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[46] John Guillory, *Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 74. Guillory dismisses influence and prefers the term 'acknowledgment', in the service of explaining the techniques through which an author becomes as *auctor*. Guillory's interest in Spenser and Milton lies in their 'aggressively scriptural' mode of poetry, and their 'polemicizing' against the imagination. He is, however, more interested in the 'spectral' (and anxiety inducing) sources behind each, Ovid for Spenser, and Shakespeare for Milton (vii, x).

[47] Fletcher, *The Transcendental Masque: An Essay on Milton's 'Comus'* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 142-3.

[48] Milton, 'On Shakespeare' in *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (London: Routledge, 2013), 126-7. All quotations from shorter poems refer to this edition and line references will be given parenthetically.

[49] Teskey, 'From Allegory to Dialectic: Imagining Error in Spenser and Milton', *PMLA* 101/1 (1986), 9-23, 9. See n.1 on a brief timeline of criticism on the relation between Spenser and Milton. Teskey maintains that it is

are, as he observes, more frequent echoes of Homer in *Paradise Lost*, and John Carey's edition counts thirty more verbal echoes of Shakespeare, than Spenser, in *A Maske*. This is fair, and I do not claim superlatives—'most important', or 'most alluded to'—for Spenser. Yet Dryden's report names Spenser, as does the stationer's note to the *Poems* of 1645, and Milton, who rarely acknowledges English poets by name, praises his poetic instruction in *Areopagitica*.[50] The question is then, in what ways might Spenser have been Milton's original? Readers have answered this variously, some in expansive contextual terms, and some more narrowly. The former includes Edwin Greenlaw, who argued that it is not a relationship 'manifested in repetition of plot or incident…but a far deeper and more intimate relationship of the spirit', and emphasized a shared idealism, an understanding of Temperance, and a treatment of man's relation to the scheme of Nature.[51] In addition, James Holly Hanford has highlighted the poets' use of Plato, and C. A. Patrides, their Protestant poetics.[52]

Others have emphasized what Joseph Wittreich described as a tradition of 'visionary poetics', or the tradition of prophecy, and the whole aesthetic system it implies. He argues that it was 'appropriated by Spenser, perfected by Milton, and then delivered by them to a future generation of poets'.[53] John Steadman agrees that both fostered 'the persona of the inspired poet and seer', but that this was a 'carefully contrived fiction'. Bloom asserts that Milton distanced himself from Spenser, and retained a sense of him as 'the Other', while Guillory explains that they are joined in their rejection of the secular imagination, but differentiated in that *The Faerie Queene* completes its 'critique of origins by giving up the truth claims of allegory'.[54] Maureen Quilligan finds that the reader their poetry posits connects Milton and Spenser: 'if Spenser seduces a reader into a response,

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difficult to 'see more in Milton's acknowledgment to Dryden that Spenser was his "original" than what Bush aptly refers to as a "spacious remark"'. See Douglas Bush, *John Milton: A Sketch of his Life and Writings* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 144. See also Annabel Patterson, 'Couples, Canons, and the Uncouth: Spenser-and-Milton in Educational Theory', *Critical Inquiry* 16/4 (1990), 773-93 for a critique of the automatic 'coupling' of Spenser and Milton as a process of canon formation.

[50] Milton, *Poems of Mr. John Milton: both English and Latin* (London, 1645), sig.A4v.

[51] Edwin Greenlaw, 'A Better Teacher than Aquinas', *Studies in Philology* 14/2 (1917), 196-217, 197, and 'Spenser's Influence on "Paradise Lost"', *Studies in Philology* 17/3 (1920), 320-59.

[52] James Holly Hanford, *A Milton Handbook* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1946), 163-5; C. A. Patrides, *Milton and the Christian Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

[53] Joseph A. Wittreich, *Visionary Poetics: Milton's Tradition and his Legacy* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1979), xiv. Wittreich draws on Bloom's definition of tradition as a carrying over of influence, and Northrop Frye's claim that the real relation between poets is their common relation to an archetypal vision.

[54] John. M. Steadman, *Moral Fiction in Milton and Spenser* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995); Bloom (1973), 34 and *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 125-6; Guillory (1983), 45.

then Milton demands one', but Milton finds Spenserian polysemy to be 'a problem'. Linda Gregerson similarly writes that they shared a 'specular understanding of poetic function' and that their epics 'are devices for the formation, and reformation, of subjects'. Teskey recognizes that Spenser became what Milton declared a poet must be, 'an interpreter and relater of all the best and sagest things', but in presenting his epic as an extension of the original Word, Milton 'rejected Spenser's manner of teaching', allegory, because it 'denies the possibility of stating the truth in a positive way'. In his study of the special affiliation of allegory with heroic poetry, Borris disagrees, and suggests that the composite heroism of allegorical epic is in fact assimilated into Milton's doctrine of the mystical church; *Paradise Lost* evinces allegorism through the imagery of incorporation.[55] I admire, and have learnt much from these accounts, and many more, and throughout this thesis, attempt to engage with the poetry in conversation with the rich tradition of scholarship it has bred.

The relationship of Spenser's representational practice to Milton's is a pressing and difficult question. I do not hold with those who see *Paradise Lost* as allegorical, yet nor do I see the poetry of *The Faerie Queene* as so oblique as to give up any claim to truth (c.f. Guillory). Indeed, 'conning over the visible and inferior creature' is the method Milton recommends, to tend towards the sum of all learning, to know God aright, and to imitate him, and this involvement with the creaturely is precisely what *The Faerie Queene* invites and demands (*CPW* II: 369). This thesis suggests that there is an important affinity between the ways in which Spenser represents (through narrative) and Milton states, or describes, the relation of the corporeal to the metaphysical. Milton's understanding of the principle of accommodation, and indeed his manner of imagining truth in this world, is defined not by the expected metaphoric, or substitutive relation, but by a surprising synecdochic relation. One of several images of Truth and its recovery, in *Areopagitica*, is the mangled body of Osiris:

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[55] Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 24, 41, 93; Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6; Teskey (1986), 16; Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8, 184-6. Other critics, such as Mindele Anne Treip and Catherine Gimeli Martin, consider *Paradise Lost* a profoundly allegorical poem, both indebted to, and at odds, with *The Faerie Queene*. I engage with their work in detail in chapter five. See Treip, *Allegorical Poetics and the Epic: The Renaissance Tradition to 'Paradise Lost'* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994) and Martin, *The Ruins of Allegory: 'Paradise Lost' and the Metamorphosis of Epic Convention* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

> Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after Him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as that story goes of the *Ægyptian Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good *Osiris*, took the virgin Truth, hewd her lovely form into a thousand peeces, and scatter'd them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that *Isis* made for the mangl'd body of *Osiris*, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second comming; he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature of lovelines and perfection. (*CPW* II: 549)

The friends of Truth have not, and will not, find every hewn bodily part; nor will they be able to put them together. And yet they can collect some pieces, and must 'continue seeking', continue to do obsequies.[56] Correspondingly, when describing the necessary and collective endeavour in building the House of God, the Temple of Reformed theology, Milton warns that the artfully laid stones 'cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world' (*CPW* II: 555). The incapacity to achieve perfection must not stop one from building, but aspire instead to as graceful a symmetry as possible. Even in Eden, the plant of Raphael's explanation of 'one first matter all' begins as a simile, but becomes a synecdoche.

The ultimate synecdochic relation is expressed, of course, in the image of God in us, and after the Fall of the first couple, the *ruined image* of God in us. To 'repair the ruines of our first parents', then, is to repair the divine image within the human creature, or improve in our power to express God's image. This, Milton declares, is the end of all learning, and can be worked towards by 'regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the neerest by possessing our souls of true vertue' (*CPW* II: 366-7). Learning well, in other words, is difficult to distinguish from living well, and the activity of reading is explicitly a kind of making, remaking, or rather, repairing. Milton's subtle, but crucially modifying sub-clause, 'as we may the neerest', gently reminds one that virtue isn't self-sufficient; learning must continue to ascend to meet divine descending grace. Only the meeting of the two will make up 'the highest perfection' (II: 367). *Paradise Lost*'s closing promise of a possible 'paradise within' is bold and inspiring, as if it seeks to breathe the spirit of its maker's aspirations into all that encounter it.

In *The Faerie Queene*, this process of living being inseparable from reading, and reading as *poiesis*, or making, is implicit, visible through narrative action. It has long been recognized that

[56] In *Carnal Rhetoric: Milton's Iconoclasm and the Poetics of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 119, Lana Cable argues instead that 'the images relinquish all claims to even symbolic possession of truth'.

both Spenser and Milton present good and evil as twins, difficult to tell apart (*CPW* II: 514).[57] The quests that they call for require the recurrent activity of practicing discernment, or good reading and use of our selves, others and world. As readers of Spenser well know, the temptation to give up, to fall into a false form of rest, is the most pervasive enticement of *The Faerie Queene*. The continual activity of better reading is indispensible, precisely because it can work to make one a better sign of one's 'end', from one's perspective: the adventures of the Redcrosse knight and Britomart, in particular, illustrate an increase in signifying power, becoming better signs of themselves as they learn through love, to read and choose better.

In other words, without disregarding the differences between assertion, and indirection, that most critics observe of Milton and Spenser, respectively, I hope to show that Spenser's mode of representation does influence Milton, and that this influence does not simply manifest itself in Milton's decision to not make *Paradise Lost* a continued allegory. Rather, the kind of direct engagement with our embodiment and our situation in the corporeal world that Spenserian allegory demands, is crucial to Milton's enduring project that seeks to 'repair the ruines of our first parents'. The construction and critique of ideal forms of virtue, and the suspicion that the temptation to transcendence is more dangerous and devastating than the temptation to sensuality, are some important Spenserian inheritances that I hope to draw out in detail.

The Chapters

The first chapter takes its cue from prevalent dualist critical frameworks that view Spenser's allegory as constituted by a literal level beyond which lies an abstracted level, which corresponds to a model of selfhood subordinating body to mind, or soul. It argues that Spenser's view of fallen creation, in which the material is as wholly valent as the spiritual, necessitates his adoption of a mode of representation that does not always privilege, or even offer, an abstraction over an image. Affirming, with Augustine, that both allegorical thinking and the common condition of embodiment define fallen life, Spenser delivers a 'body poetic' that finds ethical value in such phenomenal experience, rather than struggling to elude it. This chapter closes with an analysis of Temperance and its titular knight in *The Faerie Queene*, with particular emphasis on the reading experience.

[57] See, for example, Quilligan, 48.

The second chapter continues to analyse ways of encountering and reading one's environs, with special focus on three gardens of *The Faerie Queene*, including the temple of Venus, the Bower of Bliss and the garden(s) of Adonis. Variously manifesting desire for an unfallen world, these gardens are important *loci* with regards to this project's concern with materiality, and with the poetry's persistent return to the problem of whether and how noumenal traces might be felt in the phenomenal realm. This chapter draws on Philip Sidney and Torquato Tasso's accounts of *poiesis* as garden-making, which have been generally read as contrasting. It suggests that they each emphasize one of two chief meanings of *inventio*, a foundational stage in classical rhetoric. Invention, first thought of as 'discovery', or rediscovery, began to also signify 'conception', or creation'. This chapter shows that the most perplexing of green places, Spenser's Garden of Adonis, is a special site in which invention as creation and discovery coincide in the form of 'inclination', which indicates the movement of creation to its proper place, and discloses its meeting with Spirit.

Chapter three argues that the image of the Hermaphrodite, or Androgyne, rather than the expected image of Concord, might be productively viewed as the poem's governing motif. It does so by exploring Spenser's engagements with the source fables of Plato and Ovid, and their transformations in the writings of sixteenth century Italian commentators. Concord's 'golden chain' is crafted out of the partisan attitudes and politic reactions of knights. The hermaphrodite, on the other hand, is never actualized or directly named, but reoccurs in the *look* of divine figures—Venus, Nature, Genius—and as momentary *relations* between mortal actors. It is used therefore, not only as an object of representation, but a condition of representation that inspires heroic action, particularly in terms of Britomart's development. The image as a goal that is always unattainable in this world inspires repeated mental and physical labour, making phenomenal encounters instructive and reformative, rather than simply opportunities to transcend the world. Eros breeds a heroism that is distinguished not only by the exceptionalism of deeds, but by their repetition, retrial and renewal.

Chapter four shows how Spenser's mode of representation influences Milton's construction and critique of the ideal form of Chastity in the Lady of *A Maske.* In the Ludlow masque, Milton references, re-writes and re-combines Spenser's Guyon, and several of his heroines. The threat Comus poses is a sensual one, but the Lady only acknowledges the freedom of her mind. Insufficiently aware of, or attentive to, her status as an embodied creature, she is unable to achieve

victories akin to Spenser's Knight of Chastity. This chapter suggests that *A Maske*'s Spenserian inheritance is the implication that, excluding what is revealed by grace, ideal forms of virtue are merely human responses to, even defenses against, the trials of worldly matter.

Chapter five argues that the mode of engaging directly with our embodiment, and our situation in the corporeal world that Spenserian allegory demands, is crucial to Milton's continuing project that seeks to 'repair the ruines of our first parents'. It engages with Milton's perceived 'hermeneutic anti-allegorism', and examines the controversial allegory of Sin and Death, proposing for them a more robust function than the indication of non-being. Following this, it reassesses Spenserian inheritances in the Garden of Eden, arguing that Milton's Paradise refashions Spenser's deceptive Bower of Bliss, pretending at Innocence, but invests it with the redemptive spirit of the fallen garden of Adonis. In his sublime portrayal of the cosmic sympathy of creation, in particular, in the flowers of Paradise, Milton alerts us to the peculiarities of his version of the doctrine of scriptural accommodation. Milton understood accommodation to operate through synecdoche, rather than the usually assumed logic of metaphor. This unique emphasis on the accommodating image, rather than the typical strategy of discarding the image in order to emphasize the transcendent subject, speaks directly to the depiction of Spenser's knights of Holiness and Chastity, whose quests entail an increase in their synecdochal power, or makes them better images of the virtues they represent, and so better images of God. Finally, this chapter analyses the event and effects of the Fall and their relationship to Spenserian allegory, as differentiated from the mystifying mode of allegory related to Sin and Satan.

The canons of Spenser and Milton are too immense to allow of exhaustive, or definitive, treatment. The specific texts chosen for analysis, therefore, are those which seem most likely to afford the best insights into the ways in which the poets' differing treatments of corporeality illustrate the complex relationship between them, and elucidate the sort of hermeneutical approaches they demand of their readers. I am concerned, that is to say, with how they both read the traditions that preceded them, and how they in turn might be read.

Chapter One
Spenser and the Matter of Allegory

Allegories are the natural mirrors of ideology.
(Angus Fletcher)

I. A Poem for Fallen Humankind

As the Introduction to this thesis suggests, my discussion takes its cue from an entrenched critical framework marked by dualism. Formally, it views allegory as constituted by a literal or physical level beyond which lies a symbolic or abstracted level; ideationally, this is seen to correspond to a model of selfhood that categorically subordinates body to soul, or mind. This chapter argues that Spenser's view of the fallen body-self, in which the material is as wholly valent as the spiritual, necessitates his adoption of a mode of allegory that does not always privilege, or even offer, an abstraction over an image. Affirming that both allegorical thinking and the common condition of embodiment inexorably define fallen life, Spenser delivers a 'body poetic' that finds value in such experience, rather than struggling to elude it. Fashioning itself out of rapidly changing conceptions of bodies natural and politic, his poetry meditates upon how a state of congenital corruption, predisposed to disease, might be turned to restorative effect.

In the house of Alma, within *The Faerie Queene*'s Legend of Temperance, Sir Guyon chances upon a book in Eumnestes' chamber, 'that hight, *Antiquitee* of *Faery* lond' in which he finds 'th'ofspring', or origin and history of elves and faeries (II.ix.60.2-4).[1] The tome tells,

> … how first *Prometheus* did create
> A man, of many parts from beasts deryu'd,
> And then stole fire from heuen, to animate
> His worke, for which he was by *Iove* depryu'd
> Of life him self, and hart-strings of an Aegle ryu'd.
>
> That man so made he called *Elfe*, to weet
> Quick, the first author of all Elfin kynd:
> Who wandring through the world with wearie feet,
> Did in the gardins of Adonis fynd
> A goodly creature, whom he deemed in mynd
> To be no earthly wight, but either spright
> Or angell, th'authour of all woman kynd;
> Therefore a *Fay* he her according hight,
> Of whom all Faryes spring, and fetch their lignage right. (II.x.70-1).

[1] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, eds. A. C. Hamilton et al. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007). Subsequent quotations from the *FQ* refer to this edition.

In its account of the meeting of mates in a garden, Spenser's Promethean myth draws on the pattern of the Edenic narrative of the Book of Genesis and casts Prometheus in the role of God the Maker; the classical representation of Prometheus *plasticator* is recast in Christian terms.[2] At the same time, Spenser's Prometheus resonates with a description contained within Richard Haydocke's translation of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura, scoltura, et architettura* (1584/5), one that epitomizes the contemporary tendency to use the language of 'pregnancy' to denote a capacity for ingenuity and invention. When translating Lomazzo's account of the 'first inventor of Plasticke', Prometheus is described as being of 'a *most pregnant wit*… whence… the Poets tooke occasion to invent such fables as we read of him' (emphasis added).[3] The adjective 'pregnant' is especially apposite, for Spenser's Prometheus creates a body, which we are told, he 'called *Elfe*'—it means and is, 'quick' or 'living'. The terms 'Elfin kynd', 'woman kynd' and 'Faryes' converge confusedly, but are all 'made' and 'author[ed]'; procreation is cast in terms of *poïesis*.

One might recall Sir Philip Sidney's happy reminder of the Greek use of the name 'poieten', which 'whether by luck or wisdome…Englishmen have met with the Greekes in calling [God] a Maker'.[4] Poetry is seen to correspond with the living body. Sidney affirms that 'pens [deliuer]' and refers to the 'body' and 'weight' of poetry, which possesses the capacity to 'substancially' and forcibly move its readers.[5] Promethean creation, and his creation's ensuing procreation, presents itself as a synecdoche—both a part of, and a representation, in small—of the 'liuing art' and 'liuing colours' of *The Faerie Queene* (Pro.III). Consequently, Spenser invites one to read this moment as an instance of auto-mimesis, Promethean creation as Spenserian creation. His poem, 'being a continued Allegory, or darke conceit', inhabits the lexis of 'pregnancy' in announcing itself to have

[2] Late antique biblical illustrations of the creation of Adam—the Grandval Bible in particular—present a figure of the Lord that resembles that of Prometheus on third-century pagan sarcophagi. See Olga Raggio, 'The Myth of Prometheus: Its Survival and Metamorphoses up to the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21 (1958), 44-62, esp. 48-50. See A. B. Ferguson, *Utter Antiquity: Perceptions of Prehistory in Renaissance England* (London: Duke University Press, 1993), 1-13 on late Renaissance habits of drafting figures from classical mythology into schemes of divinely ordained universal chronology.

[3] Richard Haydocke, *A tracte containing the artes of curious paintinge carvinge and buildinge* (Oxford, 1598), 7.

[4] Sidney, 'A Defence of Poetry', *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 59-123, 77.

[5] Sidney, 75, 78-9, 101. 'Move' and its inflectional forms recur twenty-two times in Sidney's 'Defence'.

been 'conceived', begotten, or born.[6] In Spenser's time, 'conceit' referred not only to the product of conception, but also to the 'faculty for conceiving'; in addition, it functioned as a verb.[7] Spenser thus intimates that his creation is, in turn, both generative and self-reflexive.[8] His allegory presents itself as a 'body poetic', 'of many parts'.

Prometheus' 'worke' comprises 'many parts from beasts deryu'd' infused with celestial fire. H.G. Lotspeich, William Nelson and more recently, Maik Goth have suggested that the passage derives from Horace and Natale Conti.[9] In his *Mythologiae*, however, Conti describes how Prometheus made men '*as* fearful *as* rabbits, *as* clever *as* foxes, *as* pompous *as* peacocks' (emphasis added).[10] His account is governed by a comparative structure, which ontologically separates man from beasts through the use of simile. In contrast, Prometheus' and indeed Spenser's work evinces a radical literalism in the formation of a body. This man, called *Elfe*, summons forth Sidney's claim regarding the corpus poetic; it registers 'a verie inspiring of a divine force', yet simultaneously 'could not consist' (i.e. 'exist') without the 'workes of nature' within it.[11] The Promethean body structurally involves both the earth-creeping and the sky-soaring, both nature and the capacity to transcend it. This peculiar intermixing is, I suggest, the mark of a fallen body.

Although the *Antiquitee* does not specifically refer to 'the Fall of Elfin-kind', it strongly suggests that Prometheus makes a fallen body. First of all, the body is made from the parts of beasts, rather than dust. Prometheus' creation distinctly evokes the model of man in Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*.[12] Pico's text similarly omits any reference to the Fall; however, the very fact that man is thought to contain seeds of vegetal, bestial and angelic life and therefore, able to move up or down the scale of being is read—by Sir Walter Raleigh, for

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[6] See *OED*, s.v. 'Conceive', II. Sidney, 78 refers to 'Arte *deliuered* to mankinde' (emphasis added).
[7] *OED*, s.v. 'Conceit, n.' 2a; *OED*, s.v. 'Conceit, v.'.
[8] Readers of *The Faerie Queene* have long intuited its powerful self-reflexivity. See, for example, Harry Berger jr., *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 154.
[9] H. G. Lotspeich, *Classical Mythology in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser* (New York: Gordian Press, 1965), 102-3; William Nelson, *The Poetry of Edmund Spenser: A Study* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 263; Maik Goth, 'Spenser as Prometheus: The Monstrous and the Idea of Poetic Creation', *Connotations* 18.1-3 (2008/2009), 183-207, 188.
[10] *Natale Conti's Mythologiae*, trs. John Mulryan and Steven Brown, 2 vols. (Arizona: ACMRS, 2006), I:260. See also Plato, 'Protagoras', *Laches; Protagoras; Meno; Euthydemus*, tr. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 85-258, 320D-322.
[11] Sidney, 109, 78.
[12] Pico, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, eds. Francesco Borghesi, Michael Papio and Massimo Riva (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. 121.

example—as an indication of the Fall: 'man hauing a free will and liberall choyce, purchased by disobedience his owne death and mortalitie'.[13] One is thereby invited to read the body Prometheus makes as fallen by inter-textual association. Secondly, the elves of the *Antiquitee* are clearly mortal and so imperfect. The elfin dynastic continuity and aspiration to immortality is shown to be through acts of generation, both civic construction and procreation (II.x.72-5). Indeed, the faery folk within the poem are not noticeably different from the non-faery folk; all are subject to test and trial. Finally, *The Faerie Queene*'s curious deviation from the usual account of the myth of the old titan supports my claim. Rather than the perpetual torment of Prometheus' eternally re-growing liver being devoured, the tendons held to sustain the heart are 'ryu'd' and he is 'depryu'd | Of life'.[14] The Longman edition states that these lines signify that Prometheus was 'deprived of happiness' (II.x.70n), yet the poetry does not appear to suggest that 'life' is equivalent to 'happiness' in this context. The titan 'animates' or gives life, and for this his own is taken; it is a sacrifice for human (or elfin) kind, more suggestive of Prometheus being likened to Christ.[15] Prometheus' adoption of this Christ-like position further intimates that the created beings are fallen. As a result, in addition to understanding *The Faerie Queene* as a body poetic of many parts, one might further regard it as a fallen body.

It seems, therefore, inevitable that the poem is a 'continued Allegory'. Augustine asserts that allegory, in particular, is necessitated by the Fall and serves as a reminder of the promise of immediate vision belonging to the new covenant: 'there is use for tongues, the variety of meanings whereby one thing is conveyed by another in allegory to the mind that cannot yet contemplate in purity the eternal light of transparent truth'.[16] This is perhaps what C. S. Lewis, for example, recalled when he claimed that allegory belongs to man in general, or that *The Faerie Queene* is an instance of the *natura naturans*, not the *natura naturata*, being without the fixed and single perfection implicit in the latter term.[17] Postlapsarian communication cannot be without allegorical troping, which as the next section goes on to discuss, reconfigures the relationship between 'literal'

[13] Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* (London, 1614), 32-33.
[14] See Raggio, 45.
[15] See Bart van Es, *Spenser's Forms of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 117-122 on the Euhemerism of the *Antiquitee*.
[16] St. Augustine, 'The Spirit and the Letter', *Augustine: Later Works*, tr. John Burnaby (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1995), 182-251, 225 (41).
[17] Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 55, 447.

and 'allegorical' within Protestant hermeneutics. In referring to his work as a 'darke conceit' that presents 'mirrours more than one' (III.Pro.5.6), Spenser invokes the dark prismatics of Pauline theology and implies that his allegory, or fallen body poetic, is reciprocally for a fallen readership. Recalling the analogy between Spenser and his Prometheus, one is left with the suggestion that Spenser's creation is, correspondingly, for mankind.

It is precisely this hinge-like position, characterized by the Fall, of a corporeal self poised between the phenomenal and the super-phenomenal that the poetry of *The Faerie Queene* instantiates. In making this assertion, this essay situates itself against the recent claims made by an editor of *Spenser in the Moment*, a collection of essays which attempts to establish the ways in which Spenser's poetry should be read: i) that Spenser's poetry is 'prelapsarian', free from 'angst' and 'uncertainty' and ii) that Spenser 'wishes his readers to attend to…not the poetry, but the conceit'.[18] I am uncertain about the meaning of the first claim, with regards to Spenserian or indeed any poetry. It perhaps relates to the second in the injunction to immediately apprehend a perfect conceit. This chapter seeks to approach *The Faerie Queene* without this brand of interpretive dualism, which regards the 'poetry' as the dull and disposable husk from which the kernel of 'conceit', or abstraction, must be extracted. In doing so, it should reveal new and important ways in which Spenserian allegory—within which, I argue, poetry and conceit[s] are inseparable—might function. Furthermore, this chapter argues that the peculiar mode of allegory that does not privilege, or even always offer, an abstracted meaning over a literal one, is necessitated by Spenser's vision of the fallen body in which the material is as fully valent as, and often inextricable from, the cerebral or spiritual.

II. Allegory and the 'Two Bodies'

In advance of setting out my approach to *The Faerie Queene*, it would be useful to consider the critical framework out of which it emerges, and from which it is to be distinguished. The entry

[18] J. B. Lethbridge, 'The Poetry of *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser in the Moment*, eds. Paul Hecht and J. B. Lethbridge (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015), 169-217, 180; 209. This chapter was drafted soon after, and partly in response, to the publication of *Spenser in the Moment*. Since then, monographs such as Kenneth Borris's *Visionary Spenser and the Poetics of Early Modern Platonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), Cynthia N. Nazarian's *Love's Wounds: Violence and the Politics of Poetry in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017) and Jason Crawford's *Allegory and Enchantment: An Early Modern Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) have further emphasized the violence and dualism of Spenserian allegory through varying thematic foci.

under 'body' in *The Spenser Encyclopedia* opens with the assertion that 'the human body is more than an insistent structural device: it is central to the poem's whole meaning—in an important sense, it is what the poem is "about"'. The entry closes, however, with a claim of abandonment, avowing that '[t]he story of *The Faerie Queene* is…the story of how an individual may transcend the earthly' and the bodily.[19] The seminal work of criticism which argues that 'the poem's vision' is of an 'incorruptible aesthetic body' that 'rests on a pervasively internalized principle of self-renunciation' is, of course, David Lee Miller's *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene*.[20] Miller's title plainly alludes to Ernst Kantorowicz's influential account of Medieval and Tudor political theology, or the metaphysics of state, *The King's Two Bodies*.[21] The resulting critical argument presents Elizabeth I not only as the poet's principal addressee, but also his 'principal mimetic object' and takes Spenser's allegory to be 'organized with reference to the anticipated-but-deferred wholeness of an ideal body'.[22] This ideal body is the imperial counterpart derived from the religious myth of the *corpus mysticum*: the notion of the monarch as incarnating an ideal and unchanging political body. The basis of this doctrine is the unquestionable superiority of the body politic over that of the body natural, implying an indifference to the mortal incarnation or individuation of the natural body.[23] Consequently, Miller reads the 'poetry' of *The Faerie Queene* as a natural body that incessantly internalizes acts of iconoclasm in order to upraise a 'symbolic' body politic or conceit: the faerie queene Gloriana, or Elizabeth I. This reading suggests that Spenser appropriates the spiritual to the political, thereby placing the political out of the reach of criticism; as such, it imputes 'a deeply interested mystification' to Spenser. Given that the body

[19] David Ormerod, 'Body', *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, eds. A. C. Hamilton et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 257-60; 257.
[20] David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 81. Lee Miller has pursued diverse lines of inquiry since, but his monograph remains a canonical critical text.
[21] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study of Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). The term 'political theology' in the subtitle likely refers to Carl Schmitt's book of 1922, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, tr. George Schwab (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Schmitt's general claim, which Kantorowicz borrows, is that all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts. The sixteenth century common lawyer Edmund Plowden is the central source for Kantorowicz's language of the king's two bodies. See Lorna Hutson's essay, 'Not the King's Two Bodies: Reading the "Body Politic" in Shakespeare's *Henry IV,* Parts 1 and 2', *Rhetoric and Law in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Victoria Kahn and Lorna Hutson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 166-98, which establishes that Plowden cites legal discussions of the king's two bodies only to show that they were largely rejected by common lawyers.
[22] Miller (1988), 19, 4.
[23] Kantorowicz, 9. Of course, in his discussion of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, Kantorowicz discusses the apparent movement in Richard's attitude from 'Realism' to 'Nominalism' (c.f. 'Now mark me how I will undo myself'), and notes that the 'fiction of the oneness of the double body breaks apart' (29, 31).

politic is conceived of as possessing the *character angelicus*—of representing the Immutable within Time—Miller imbues the poem with immutable intention, arguing that Spenser offers it 'as a symbolic womb for the reproduction of an imperial ideology'; it seeks recurrently to fashion its readers as the *figurae* of a millennial imperium.[24] In an article that was to become a part of his monograph, Miller adds that '[f]or modern readers such a response is historically impossible, not to mention ideologically unacceptable' and yet 'the poem still demands from us' such a reading.[25]

At a panel discussion at the British Academy a few years ago—the theme of which was the 'Relevance of Edmund Spenser'—Colin Burrow observed that *The Faerie Queene* has been approached over the past few decades through a poetics of relevance.[26] A poetics of 'relevance' in our critical terms refers to the historical-political and ideological embeddedness of the poet and poem; in the sixteenth century, however, the term belonged chiefly to legal discourse and was meant to indicate whether the legal argument was sufficient to indicate the guilt or innocence of the accused. *The Faerie Queene* of *The Poem's Two Bodies* inhabits both these valences; in being approached primarily as a product and producer of Tudor ideology, it is found guilty of being unable to resonate with readers of the present. As Burrow reminds one, however, Spenser's verse is more resonant than narrowly relevant. Although one may certainly chance upon some transparent political allegory within the poem—famously, the trial of Duessa—one is more likely met with gestures away from contemporary application—if only to avoid political danger—to what Spenser calls the 'infinit'. The poem, in other words, is both densely historical and aspires to endure. It makes the passage of time its principle of vivification rather than constricting itself to being a panegyric to a dynasty whose end Spenser could forsee. *The Faerie Queene* demands, therefore, reading of a different sort, which while retaining historical specificity is irreducible to a poetics of imperialism. Stephen Greenblatt's well-known reading of the poem—published a few years before Miller—conflates Spenser's poetry with his role as a colonial administrator in Ireland, and this consonance made the evaluation compelling.[27] This chapter thus proposes to rethink two interrelated critical ideas; it seeks to interrogate the perceived congruity between the dynamics of

[24] Miller (1988), 224.
[25] Miller, 'Spenser's Poetics: The Poem's Two Bodies', *PMLA* 101/2 (1986), 170-185, 181.
[26] Audio file available at: http://www.britac.ac.uk/events/2012/The_Relevance_of_Edmund_Spenser.cfm.
[27] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 157-93.

Spenser's body poetic and the Tudor body politic and their relationship to the human body; furthermore, it suggests that in order to do so, *The Faerie Queene* demands a new approach to allegory which is born out of Reformed anxieties about being faithful to the 'literal', rather than the reigning dualistic method.

At the Renaissance Society of America's meeting in 2007, Greenblatt commenced the panel celebrating 'Fifty Years of *The King's Two Bodies*'. While noting that the body natural as a mortal body plays a crucial role in Kantorowicz's text, Greenblatt finely observed that, 'the crucial fact of mortality aside—the material body in its insistent, peculiar specificity is only modestly present in *The King's Two Bodies*'.[28] The implication, to my mind, is that Kantorowicz's text overlooks or sublimates historically specific understandings of the natural body—philosophical, or medical, for example—in order to establish the myth of the royal superbody drawn primarily out of medieval legal and theological arcana.[29] In other words, while acknowledging both the fictiveness and divisibility of the double body, it enacts the very doctrine it describes. Similarly, Miller's account of Spenser is founded upon the assumed untroubled rise of the incorruptible symbolic body, which the act of reading helps to resurrect. Rather than using early modern ideas concerning the human body, he makes perceptive use of the psychoanalytic thought of Jacques Lacan, which correspondingly details the sublimation of the human subject into symbolic registers. Miller rightly observes that Elizabeth was already, as monarch, a historical fiction and 'an allegorical figure invested with the visionary body of the state'.[30]

Andrew and Catherine Belsey's excellent analyses of portraits of Elizabeth I, for example, do demonstrate Miller's hypothesis. They begin with the 'Armada' portrait by George Gower (1588/89?) in which the Queen is shown to wear a vastly exaggerated set of sleeves and skirt that efface between them all hint of a human body. The dress extends the dimensions of the figure to make the arms an 'anatomically improbable', encompassing semi-circle, which invites comparison with the Holbein portrait of Henry VIII.[31] There are obvious dynastic, or legitimizing reasons for

[28] Greenblatt, 'Introduction: Fifty Years of *The King's Two Bodies*', *Representations* 106/1 (2009), 63-66, 64.
[29] This is particularly evident in Kantorowicz's selective interpretation of *Richard II*. See Kantorowicz, 24-42.
[30] Miller (1988), 3. See also L. A. Montrose, 'The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text', *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, eds. Patrica Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 303-40.
[31] A. and C. Belsey, 'Icons of Divinity: Portraits of Elizabeth I', *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture*, eds. L. Gent and N. Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 11-36, 12.

this similitude. What's more, it reflects the theory of the King's Two Bodies in its illustration of the tyranny of symbolic form, in that the begetter and the begotten appear the same. Yet the dissimilitude is as illuminating. At the point corresponding to her father's codpiece lies an enormous pearl, which simultaneously suggests the self-containment of the virgin Queen, but also a particular national power derived from impregnability. The Belseys add that a decade later in a series of portraits attributed to John Bettes, Elizabeth I becomes 'pure geometry', or pure abstraction.[32] In 1588, John Case's frontispiece of the *Sphæra Civitatis* extraordinarily portrays the earthly monarch outside the universe, endowing the imperialist theme with a universal claim. The queen here adopts the position of the ultimate masculine, superphenomenal figure. As Peter Stallybrass observes, Elizabeth's literal virginity and figurative motherhood (of her people) allow her to escape the category of 'woman'—and, I would add, of the 'human'—and make her available for symbolic deification.[33]

Miller's conception of Spenserian allegory, therefore, is shaped by the way in which the myth of the monarch's two bodies is understood as a special case of body-soul dualism. This dualism is seen to be the key structural feature that informs the 'long medieval tradition of allegorical and philosophical fiction' wherein allegory is split into vehicle and tenor, or poetic figure and conceit.[34] The former term in each case corresponds to the 'body', and the latter to the 'soul', which is erected at the expense of the 'body' through the programmatic attenuation of the materiality of the figure. This understanding, which invests all allegory with an inherently authoritarian basis, is one that is shared by most critics. Angus Fletcher refers to the 'daemonic compulsion' of the form; Gordon Teskey understands it as *raptus*, structurally inclined to violence; Jeff Dolven describes it as 'a species of skepticism', governed by a sacrificial logic.[35] D. W. Robertson Jr. developed a marginally different, yet insistently dualistic principle for reading medieval texts that views the 'incoherence of the surface materials' as 'essential to the formation of the abstract pattern'.[36] Miller sees this dualistic mode of thought as endemic to Christianity and Platonism. Indeed even Pico's

[32] A. and C. Belsey, 21.
[33] Peter Stallybrass, 'Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed', *Rewriting the Renaissance*, eds. M. W. Ferguson et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 123-45, 133.
[34] See Miller (1988), 70, 77.
[35] Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 25-65; Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 133.
[36] D. W. Robertson Jr., *A Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 56.

syncretic *Oration*, which envisions a human body filled with the seeds of every order of life, follows its admiring question, 'who would not wonder at this chameleon [man]?', with the injunction to spurn and flee the earth (image or body), in order to emulate the angelic order (abstraction). Yet, soon after, Pico acknowledges that because we 'are flesh and smell of the earth', the angelic order is out of reach. This tragic recognition results in the *Oration's* ultimate command that man gather himself 'into the centre of his own unity' and become a single spirit with god.[37] Spenser's poetry, however, less interested in doctrinal coherence than in humankind and the possibilities of life, thinks deeply on how the shared fleshliness of fallen man might become a thing of value, a condition that is redemptive rather than merely wretched. From this inexorability of being embodied stems Spenser's choice of allegory, a mode defined by bodying forth, a darke conceit, whereby the darkness might refer to matter rather than mystification.

Sidney's Platonic division of the body poetic into 'that idea, or fore-conceit of the work' and 'the work itself', does reproduce to a certain degree, the dualist natural body.[38] In this vein, Spenser's 'Letter to Raleigh' indeed announces itself as an expounder of the poem's fore-conceit, and declares, '[i]n that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in particular I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of our soueraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land'.[39] Being one of the 'Letter's' several unfulfilled statements of 'general intention and meaning', however, that Faery Queene notoriously does not grace *The Faerie Queene* with her presence. The inconsistencies between the claims of the 'Letter' and the poem occur early and often; they make one suspect that the annexed epistle serves more to mislead than enlighten its 'gealous' readers. Lines out of Raleigh's commendatory verses—another one of the poem's paratexts—claim, 'Meane while she [the Queen] shall perceiue, how farre her vertues sore | *aboue the reach of all that liue*'.[40] This presents a version of the humility topos, suggesting that Elizabeth might recognize the transcendence of her own glory precisely in the deficiencies of the verse; it is also likely a deft casting of covert political criticisms as flaws of poetic craft; however, if inadvertently, these lines also acknowledge the utter severance of Gloriana (the alleged fore-

[37] Pico, 217, 121.
[38] Sidney, 79.
[39] Longman edition, 'Letter to Raleigh', 716 (emphasis added).
[40] Longman edition, 721 (emphasis added).

conceit) from the poem's life, that 'darke' and lively body poetic.[41] In other words, the 'Letter' temporarily and tantalizingly suggests that the 'darke conceit' both originates from and expresses a fore-conceit. This fore-conceit, the faerie queene, does not manifest itself in the poem as we have it.

Yet even Sidney's *Defence* notes that the poet's fore-conceit must be 'delivered' or born into the materiality of the poem in order for it to work 'substancially' in the world.[42] *The Faerie Queene*'s substantial efficacy—by which I mean both 'sizeable' and 'material force'—is not, therefore, derived from 'our soueraine, the Queene', but by its instantiation of a body poetic which aspires to enter into the world through inspiring readers to read and live aright within a reciprocal fallen condition. In this it is an 'unperfit' and an 'endlesse worke', both self-interested in its desire to perdure, and possessed of a reformative dispensation. The poetic aspiration to 'liveliness' to the extent that it might reconstitute itself in humankind is, of course, an aspiration to and a thanksgiving for the utmost gift to humankind, the word made flesh.[43] Indeed, George Puttenham's classification of *allegoria* as a 'sensable' or mind affecting and altering figure suggests that the poem holds this transformative power.[44] Spenser, as we will see, makes ample use of those figures thought to lend verse experiential immediacy, to confront readers and auditors with the problems of involvement and detachment. The audacity of *The Faerie Queene* is, therefore, in being 'a continued Allegory, or darke conceit' unmoored from a paratextually professed fore-conceit or abstraction (Gloriana) to which it does not return and, as I argue, does not necessarily express. Rather than embodying an uncompromising and hierarchical dualism, it expresses the insistent corporeality of its conceit(s), powerfully implying the enabling role of flesh in human life.[45] Consequently, rather than erasing the distinction between 'surface-matter' and abstraction, or transcendence, *The Faerie Queene* foregrounds it as the inter-animation, dependency, even rivalry between equal powers. And so

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[41] Recalling the despair that sears Irenius' reasoned formulations – 'that is muche to be dislikd that the gouvernour shoulde lie so far of in the remotest place of all the province whereas it were meter that he *shoulde be Continewallie abidinge in the middest of his Charge*' – the very fact of Gloriana's absence is in itself a criticism. See Spenser, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 132.

[42] Sidney, 79.

[43] Augustine reminds one that 'flesh' is a synecdoche for 'man', and not simply 'body'—it involves both materiality and immateriality. See *The City of God Against the Pagans,* ed. T. E. Page et al., 7 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-72), vol. IV, tr. Philip Levine: XIV.2.

[44] Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, eds. Frank Whigham and W.A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 270.

[45] Recall, for example, John Donne's 'the *soule* it seemes is enabled by our *body*, not this by it', *Juvenilia; or Certaine Paradoxes and Problems* (London, 1633), 25.

Spenser's body poetic demands a new and distinctive approach to its allegory, an approach fashioned out of Reformed theology.

It is easy to find contemptuous sentiments about allegory in the hermeneutic works of Martin Luther. Interpreters are instructed to 'as much as possible avoid allegory', that 'beautiful harlot, who proves herself especially seductive to idle men'.[46] This rejection appears to be supported by theological reasons; allegory wrests attention away from the words of God, away from Luther's two chief hermeneutic principles, *sola scriptura* and *sola sensus litteralis*. Yet, evidently, the manner of his rejection of allegory is through metaphor. Luther's anti-allegorical stance is, in actuality, directed against a very specific mode of allegorizing. In his contestation with Erasmus over the process of figuration in the Bible (1524), Luther sees the occurrence of a figurative explanation as being a *part of the literal sense*. Deploying a marvelously literal reading of the Greek *tropos*, he argues that to read figuratively—or allegorically—is to 'twist' particular textual moments. Rather than being externally affixed—which would be a divergence from truth—there is an involution of the figural in the literal.[47] He thus makes a crucial distinction between kinds of allegory: the Scholastic method (which came to be known as the 'Catholic' method) applies allegory extrinsically, and changes meaning to suit any position one might wish to endorse; Luther's own interpretation, on the other hand, (which came to be generalized as the 'Protestant' method) accepts allegory only when it can be shown to work intrinsically, as if intended by the text.

William Perkins' *The arte of prophecying* aims at a complete theory of Protestant interpretative methodology. He rehearses the four-fold interpretation of Scripture 'the literall, allegoricall, tropological, & anagogical,' in the exegesis of the Catholic Church, a methodology that 'must be exploded and reiected.' He then continues with a program of protestant hermeneutics: '*There is one onelie sense, and the same is the literall*'. An allegory 'is onely a certaine manner of vttering the same sense,' a specialized type of the literal. In the same way, anagogical and

[46] Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, 56 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1955–86), I:233; 347. See also Frederic W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*: *Bampton Lectures* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1886), 327.

[47] *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, eds. Gordon Rupp and P. S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 223-4. The Luther-Erasmus debate is cited in Brian Cummings' insightful article to which this discussion is indebted. 'Protestant Allegory', *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, eds. Rita Copeland and P.T. Struck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 177-190.

tropological meanings are simply 'applied' forms of the same, single, literal sense.[48] The literal sense is never self-interpreting, but subsumes figurative reading as a necessary part of its interpretive demands. Although one might reasonably point out that Luther's and Perkins' understanding of the category 'literal' renders it absurdly capacious, both men were adamant about the validity of their distinction between Protestant and Scholastic methods. This should leave one with two vital implications with regards to approaching Spenserian allegory. First, that *both* 'figurative' and 'literal' reading are a proper part of the critical repertoire; second, that the Protestant reliance upon what was perceived as intrinsic working or textual intention inadvertently entitles generations of readers to transforming interpretive discoveries. It authenticates and advances the act of reading anew.

This particularly Protestant understanding is discernible in Puttenham's classification of allegory as the most 'common figure', or the 'chief ringleader and captaine of all other figures'.[49] The abundance and import of allegory in the world, indexed in Puttenham's treatise, is in line with Augustine's assertion concerning the inescapability of allegorical thinking within fallen life. Both allegory and the fallen body-self are fundamental features of postlapsarian experience.[50] Therefore, in announcing itself to be 'continued allegory', Spenser's poem finds a way in which to explore, and to value, the fallen body and the kinds of experience and relationships it makes possible. This is perhaps Spenser's implication in the daring, tongue-in-cheek claim in the Proem to Book Two that his 'darke conceit', or Faery land, exists and we might find it for ourselves. Being simultaneously the figure of 'False semblant' and the figure of 'Faire semblant', Protestant allegorical thinking enables one, even forces one, to think in ways ungoverned by binaries or dualisms, even as it engages with them.[51] Spenser's allegory becomes, in other words, the counterpart to fallen man as incomplete and undecided, a 'sheer [manifest] contradiction', rather than 'a single, perhaps perfect,

[48] Perkins, *The arte of prophecying, or, A treatise concerning the sacred and onely true manner and methode of preaching* (London, 1607), C4v, C5r.
[49] Puttenham, 378-9, 271.
[50] The acute self-consciousness of being embodied, of the naked body—and the attendant fear and shame in Genesis 3:7-10—is directly related to postlapsarian experience.
[51] As the Introduction acknowledges, Judith Anderson through sustained engagement with the works of Jacques Derrida, Paul Ricoeur and Erich Auerbach, among others, has described allegory as a 'process of thinking'. See *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

human being'.[52] This chapter sees Spenser's body poetic as fashioning itself out of contemporary, changing conceptions of bodies natural and politic while being reducible to neither. If the 'darke conceit' is to be seen as a fallen 'body poetic', it is necessary to consider the ways in which models of the human body and the body politic were thought not to work, and not to be in harmony. That is, of the bodies in disease and the efforts to cure them.

III. Diseased Bodies: Causes and Cures

It is of utmost importance to note the perplexingly transitional status of the human body and the analogies it bred—or was made to breed—by the turn of the century when Spenser was composing. The theory of the King's Two Bodies is one of a variety of relationships between *corpora* and, as we have noted in both Kantorowicz and Miller, one that vastly diminishes import of the natural body. Shakespeare's *Richard II,* usually held to have been composed in the early 1590s, is the well-known case in which the idea of the unity of the two bodies is put to the test and spectacularly fails, exposed to be little more than a desperate rhetorical plea. It was, in other words, a vulnerable myth, whose structural inconsistencies and *aporia* were subject to literary engagement and scrutiny. Put differently, it was an enabling fiction subject to ideological critique, wherein literary works were capable of both building and dismantling the fiction.[53] While the model of the King's Two Bodies involves a markedly unsymmetrical relationship, organic political analogy—rooted in classical and medieval thinking—was predicated upon the assumption of symmetry, that 'the bodies politic and natural have similar form and possess a similar life or mind'.[54] E. M. W. Tillyard, in *The Elizabethan World Picture*, notes that the idea of the body politic is a part of a large complex of relationships between microcosms and macrocosm. It partook in the cosmological and analogical orders that offered divine sanction to established structures of authority. Yet as the title suggests, Tillyard's account is univocal in assuming that the analogy is fundamentally and

[52] Luther in Rupp and Watson (1969), 152; Leonard Barkan, *Nature's Work of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 6.
[53] This is not to deny, for example, the prevalence of the so-called 'cult' of Eliza, or—as evidenced by the royal portraits—the propagandist uses to which the theory was put. It is rather to suggest that the study of bodies natural and politic became more of a natural-philosophical endeavour than solely a means to preserve doctrinal or imperial coherence i.e. a study of the present state rather than a claim about the future perfect. Spenser partakes of this turn in his representation of Belphoebe, a mortal 'mirror' of the Queen, and one that is subject to critique.
[54] D.G. Hale, *The Body Politic: A Political Metaphor in Renaissance English Literature* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 7.

consistently conservative.[55] With the Reformation and the rise of royal supremacy came subtle, but central alterations to the way in which the symmetries between bodies were thought about. These changes manifested themselves as a preoccupation with bodies as sites of pathology, both natural and social. In being regarded as loci of potential corruption and contamination, bodies and the analogies they engendered foregrounded a potential for subversion.

Donne's image of men as 'sponges, which to pour out, receive', imparts a sense of self that prevailed in the period: a dynamic, humoral self-conception based on Aristotelian, Hippocratic and Galenic ideas of embodiment.[56] The Galenic body discloses a distributed, embodied and imbricated self, one that is materially consonant with the cosmos. Not only does the Galenic ontology entail a correspondence between microcosmic and macrocosmic entities, but also, a literal continuity between bodies and environment, one that breached the boundaries between 'interior' and 'exterior' or self and world. Human beings were thought to contain four humors, which were analogous to the four elements, and which corresponded to the four temperaments. The body, therefore, was held to be in continual osmotic interaction with its environs, and by extension with other bodies. Galen's teleology of the body presumes that the parts are made by Nature's prescience so as best to fulfill their own particular functions—both in terms of specificity, and of belonging to a larger whole—and thereby advance the general wellbeing of the organism.

This model of the body, which includes what is external to it, and is composed of agential parts endued with subjectivity, even 'godlike faculties', intimates a particular kind of corresponding body politic.[57] It implies what D. G. Hale refers to as the 'traditional medieval' model of the body politic, governed by love, charity and harmony that derives from the concept of the *corpus ecclesiasticum*.[58] The pattern of the body politic demanded by a symmetrical relationship to the Galenic body is founded on the Pauline doctrine of unity amidst diversity, figured as the mutual interdependence of the body's many parts knit together through love. This is epitomized in 1

[55] E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1943).
[56] Donne, 'Verse Letter to Sir Henry Wotton', *The Major Works*, ed. John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 47-48 (l.37). On Renaissance editions of Galen, see R.J. Durling, 'A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen', *Journal of the Warburg and Cortauld Institute* 24 (1961), 230-305. The sixteenth century witnessed nearly six hundred new editions and translations of Galen's works by scholars in Western Europe.
[57] Galen, *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, ed. M. M. Tallmadge, 2 vols. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), I:185.
[58] Hale, 56, 59.

Corinthians 12:26, where 'each part' is 'equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it'. Interrelation, rather than exceptionalism or hierarchy prevails. As Jonathan Gil Harris points out, however, even pre-Reformation formulations of organic political analogy—which he discerns in Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue*, written as Henry contemplated his final break with Rome—demonstrate significant shifts away from the residual Pauline doctrine.[59] To this observation I would add that new permutations of the Galenic ontology also registered a significant change; these changes expressed an ideology of absolutism.

Helkiah Crooke's magisterial *Microcosmographia* (1615)—an English compilation of continental anatomy—is widely viewed as an acme of Renaissance medicine, composed at the apex of the Galenic revival and not yet deeply affected by the numerous challenges to Galenism that would erode the tradition by the end of the seventeenth century. As Eve Keller has pointed out, however, a close reading of Crooke's prose reveals that although the body he describes is Galenic, the distributed, embodied Galenic self is replaced by a new sense of self, one that is 'separate from and presides over' the body.[60] Crooke's altered version of the Galenic self is evidenced in his description of the stomach. He begins by discussing the placement of the stomach, which appears to instantiate a caring relationship between parts: the backbone provides a 'strong and thicke defence' and the 'Loynes…a soft bed'. Crooke soon makes plain, however, that the stomach serves an abstracted whole that is—in an un-Galenic way—conceptually separable from it: the stomach is hollow with the capacity to be full so that '*wee* may have leisure for other businesse', so as to avoid that '*we* should be constrained to bee always eating'.[61] Active verbs are allotted to the disembodied 'we' or 'us' while the stomach is passively full. In Galen, on the other hand, the stomach is a 'workman skilled', an intentional and interactive agent from which the creature is inseparable.[62]

This peculiar attribution of agency is not incidental in Crooke's text; the ends of the *Microcosmographia*'s 'self' are served by, but not coextensive with, the ends of the body.[63] Indeed, the *Microcosmographia* displays an acute sense of anxiety about the extent of agency allowable to

[59] Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 32.
[60] Eve Keller, *Generating Bodies and Gendered Selves: The Rhetoric of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 58. To my knowledge, Keller's is the only critical work to signal this difference.
[61] Crooke, *Microcosmographia* (London, 1615), 117-18 (emphasis added).
[62] Galen, I:205.
[63] See Keller, 63.

the body's parts.[64] A number of eminent scholars have argued in recent years that the individuated agencies of body parts, which do not rely upon reintegration into a predetermined whole, are unique and emergent features of the early modern period. Yet Crooke's compendium reveals that the rise of a superior and prior self, one that subordinates the (Galenic) body, is what is new.[65] Spenser, I argue, distances his body poetic from this burgeoning body-self—although he confronts it—because it is contingent upon the sealing off of the body from its surroundings. This self-enclosure, as we will find, is precisely what can damage the fallen body, even as it seeks to defend it.

The emergent sense of personhood indexed in Crooke's prose corresponds to the body politic in Starkey's *Dialogue*, figured as the unquestioning obedience of the body's members to the monarch. Furthermore, the Church as the universal body with the Pope at its head was replaced with a variety of competing national bodies—English, Spanish, French—with monarchs at the head. Starkey's *Dialogue* insists on this plurality; the body politic is localized and defined in terms of distinction and opposition.[66] Thirdly, as Harris points out, the 'movement from ecclesiastical to civil bodies…enabled a committed biologization [sic] of the metaphor'.[67] Significantly, Starkey's inaugural attempt to seek sustained correspondences between bodies natural and politic is situated in the realm of pathology. Similarly, the writings of Francesco Guicciardini and Niccolò Machiavelli, as well as Spenser's own *Vewe of the Present State of Irelande*, offered what might be seen as a diagnosis of the diseased 'present state'. Consequently, it is easy to see how the prescribed remedy—a unified body politic—is a legitimating strategy rather than a cosmic or divine ordinance. The fallen body natural was necessarily a site of congenital corruption; yet now a new emphasis is placed on the predilection to social and medical disease.

The bodies' autocratic self-conceptions resulted in a fixation with infection that was twofold. The first kind is endogenous: the eight afflictions within the English body in Starkey's catalogue, including that of 'pestilence', are caused entirely by internal problems. This is aligned with the

[64] See Crooke, 121, 170.
[65] Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama an the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); David Hillman and Carla Mazzio eds., *The Body in Parts* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
[66] Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue Between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset*, ed. K. M. Burton (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), 78.
[67] Gil Harris, 33.

Galenic idea of disease as humoral imbalance, or a deviation from the Platonic ideal of proportion.[68] The 'cures' Starkey offers are a pretext for the defense of autocratic rule, designed to entrench the authority of government institutions. He works here from a Neoplatonic tradition of referring to the 'pestilence of the body', subordinated to the soul's dominating influence, wherein the king occupies the position of the head or soul.[69] In terms of the body natural, this fascination with the refractory and rebellious potential within the body contributes to the desirability of an autonomous self that could only ever be achieved through an intense degree of self-discipline, often tending towards stoicism, or asceticism, and turning against one's own body.[70] The attribution of internal causes to bodily disease, however, suggests that neither monarch nor 'mind' or 'self' are exempt from critique, given that they operate from within the diseased matter. The problems and inconsistencies of this programme of self-discipline is a central preoccupation of Spenser's Legend of Temperance to which the following section of this chapter will turn.

The second type of disease, exogenous, arose from new medical paradigms. Partly as a result of periodic epidemics of plague and the emergence of syphilis throughout Europe, notions of contagion inexplicable in terms of humoral imbalance began to acquire greater currency. In 1536, the Veronese physician Girolamo Fracastoro both gave syphilis its name and proposed that it was caused by *semina*, or seeds of disease, rather than humoral imbalance. He modified, rather than repudiated Galen, by suggesting that these seeds sought out and adhered to humors to which they felt affined, making manifest the effects of the illness.[71] The interactive quality of the body and the somatic openness it implies is seen as essential to the absorption of contagion.[72] That Spenser was aware of both endogenous and exogenous pathological models is particularly evident in two

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[68] Starkey, 78-88.
[69] See Starkey, 59. See also Laura Westra, 'Love and Beauty in Ficino and Plotinus', *Ficino and Renaissance Neoplatonism*, eds. K. Eisenbichler and Olga Z. Pugliese (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1986), 175-87, 177.
[70] See Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, tr. Mario Domandi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 95 for a discussion of what Cassirer believes to be the achievement of a modernist anthropology, the rise of *homo autonomous*, during the Renaissance. See also Richard Strier, *The Unrepentant Renaissance: From Petrarch to Shakespeare to Milton* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) on writers (primarily Shakespeare and Montaigne) who embrace an ethic of intersubjective openness and embodied passions, over such self-disciplinary philosophies.
[71] Fracastoro, *De Contagione et Contagiosis Morbis et Eorum Curatione*, tr. Wilmer Care Wright (New York: Putnam, 1930), 34-35, 151. See also Vivian Nutton, 'The Seeds of Disease: An Explanation of Contagion and Infection from the Greeks to the Renaissance', *Medical History* 27 (1983) 1-34.
[72] Paracelsus went further in rejecting the Galenic system of humors, in asserting that disease is exogenous and ontological in its own right. The seed of disease directs itself through the body's pores towards organs to which it relates by a predetermined sympathy; the union of seed and organ engenders disease, with a life of its own. Harris, 24-25 explains these pathological innovations in detail.

episodes of Book Two: the castle of Medina bears the mark of humoral imbalance, while deadly infiltrators besiege the earthen house of Alma. This new paradigm of disease resulted in a phobic desire for the body to be constructed as closed-off from the environment—*homo clausus*—in addition to being self-ruling by squelching the subversive energies within it.[73] Whether in terms of natural, or national corpora, the emergent tendency to rigorous definition and boundary surveillance encouraged the displacement of the origins of disease on to 'other' bodies, rendering them inferior, foreign or evil. Medical diseases, particularly venereal ones, were usually imbued with a moralistic etiology; the traditional maxim that sin penetrated the body through its pores was still in circulation.[74]

Despite the dedication with which contemporary political thinkers attempted to 'biologize' the political analogy, however, there is no equivalent within the body politic to Original Sin. Not only is the human body-self a palimpsest of seminal, humoral and morally inflected discourses of pathogenesis; its very presence is a manifestation of ineluctable corruption. This fundamental difference between the two analogues discloses the inadequacy of the realpolitikal 'cures' proposed for the body politic—involving fortification and the hacking off (death or imprisonment) of 'cankered' parts—to the body natural. Given that its corruption cannot be extracted, or indeed prevented, one might infer that the body's cure can only arise out of its disease. This notion concerning the conversion of the body into its own cure is given further support by the anatomical-medical discourses. As previously discussed, seminal and humoral contagion were thought to be contingent upon the osmotic and sympathetic capacities of the body. As Paster notes, however, somatic perviousness was equally indispensable to the body's 'capacity for transpiration and evacuation – the exchange of elements' with its surroundings, in order to achieve balance and to be lively.[75]

If the preconditions for somatic disease—frequently interpreted as a manifestation of spiritual disease—are equivalent to the preconditions for life, one is left with the logic of Plato's *pharmakon*,

[73] See Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, tr. Edmund Jephcott, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978-82), I:257.
[74] John Davies, *Microcosmos* (Oxford, 1605), sig. P3 affirms that 'the outward senses are the Doores through which sin enters'.
[75] Paster (1993), 9. See also Eric Langley's article, 'Plagued by kindness: contagious sympathy in Shakespearean drama', *Medical Humanities* 37 (2011), 103-09 on how early modern conceptions of disease were predicated upon a notion of sympathetic transference, thus freighting likeness between Shakespeare's characters with specific anxieties.

a condition that is simultaneously venomous and remedial.[76] The *pharmakon* does not have the stability or simplicity of a *coincidentia oppositorum*; it is in a fundamental sense irresolvable, the reserve that demands dialectical thinking.[77] It challenges one to continually envision and pursue the redemptive possibilities of the fallen body, including the fact that it is a shared and interdependent state of being. Consequently, the emergent tendencies to *homo autonomous* and *homo clausus* are problematized: while grounded in the desire to civilize and self-defend—to be sovereign—they unwittingly isolate the body from what may sustain or heal it. *The Faerie Queene*'s second book meditates uneasily upon the autarchic self and its discontents, particularly on the preservation of sexual distance. It suggests, I argue, that such a self is dangerously low in self-compassion and consequently, compassion for others. This results in monologic interpretations of events and experience, readings that bear little room for restorative potential.

IV. The Autonomous Elf

On opening the Legend of Temperance, one encounters Sir Guyon, 'A goodly knight, all armd in harnesse meete, | That from his head no place appeard to his feete' (II.i.5.8-9). The corresponding note in the Longman edition observes that the 'goodly knight' Guyon is juxtaposed with 'that godly knight' (II.i.2.3), Redcrosse, and labels this 'the chief difference' between them. This judgement implicitly differentiates Redcrosse, as *microchristus*, from Guyon, as *microcosmus*.[78] Given that Guyon is 'Elfin born' (6.4), one might reasonably assume that he forms a part of the Promethean line of creation and creativity, constituting that strange and literal mixture. The early couplet through which he is introduced, however, alerts one to his emphatic encasement from head to toe—'all armd'; 'no place appeard'—in 'harnesse meete', which signifies both 'appropriate' and 'close-fitting'. This first sighting intimates an imperviousness and invulnerability

[76] Plato 'Phaedrus', *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus*, tr. H. N. Fowler (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 423-5, 505ff; See also Jacques Derrida, 'Plato's Pharmacy', *Dissemination,* tr. Barbara Johnson (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 65-176, 99, 127.
[77] John Woodall, in *The Surgeons Mate; Or, Military and Domestique Surgery…with a Treatise of the cure of the Plague* (London, 1655), 229-30, labels the *pharmakon* a medical 'Hermaphrodite'. This characterization looks forward to the third chapter of this thesis, which examines the motif of the hermaphrodite and its relationship to the poem's questing knights.
[78] See Paul Cefalu, *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50ff., for a survey of critical opinion on the divisions and interrelations between 'nature' and 'Grace' in Books One and Two.

that Guyon will attempt to preserve, or augment throughout the legend.[79] John Milton famously praised the manner in which Spenser's *'Guion*' 'might see and know, and yet abstain', yet Spenser appears to implicate Guyon in the Proem's critique of those who cannot see and read aright.[80] The Proem to Book Two mocks 'witlesse man' (Pr.3.4), with senses 'blunt and bace | That no'te without an hound fine footing trace' (Pr.4.4-5), punning on both faerie land's ways, but also the poetry's metre and thereby, the ability to follow it. A mere twelve stanzas later, this very image is repeated as Guyon misreads the duplicitous enchanter Archimago and demands to know how he might find, 'that treachour', Redcrosse, (accused here of violating Duessa): 'by what meanes may I his footing tract? [sic] | That shall I shew (sayd he) as sure, as hound | The stricken Deare doth chaleng by the bleeding wound' (II.i.12.6-9). Guyon is aligned with the ridiculed reader *via* repetition. While the parenthetical 'sayd he' undoubtedly fulfills metrical requirements, it also stresses the elfin knight's self-proclaimed capacity to play the hound, a capacity which—as one discovers—he does not fulfill.

Soon after this, in the selfsame canto, one is obliquely prompted to the image once more in the figuration of Amavia as 'Gentle hynd', or deer, with all it might imply. Guyon and the Palmer are greeted with 'a ruefull voice, that dearnly cride, | With percing shriekes, and many a dolefull lay'. The recurring caesurae stress the sound's penetrative efficacy, retrieving the etymological and particularly early modern nuance of 'dolor' as a painful affliction or state of disease. The pair, moving onward to 'attend' to the cause of this song of suffering, come across Amavia whose husband Mordant is dead, having been seduced and empoisoned by Acrasia. Meanwhile, as Amavia's gurgling babe bloodies his hands in her wound. Guyon, Palmer and reader are now privy to resonating pain:

> …a deadly shrieke she forth did throw,
> That through the wood reechoed againe,
> And after gaue a grone so deepe and low,
> That seemd her tender heart was rent in twaine,

[79] The description perhaps anticipates Spenser's 'yron man' Talus, of the Legend of Justice. See Jessica Wolfe, *Humanism and Machinery in Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 203-36 for an account of the interpenetration between the domains of 'humanity' and 'machinery' in Book Five.

[80] See Milton, *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, eds. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), II:517. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations out of Milton's prose refer to this edition.

> Or thrild with point of thorough piercing paine;
> As gentle Hynd, whose sides with cruelle steele
> Through launched, forth her bleeding life does raine…
> Braies out her latest breath, and vp her eies doth seele. (II.i.38).

The stanza is bewilderingly aural. It presents the reader, or indeed the auditor, with a potent overlapping performance of *enargeia* and *energeia*, two rhetorical figures that are central to poetry's ambition to liveliness.[81] The first refers to visual lucidity or vividness, while the second refers to 'actuality' or 'energy' (*ergon*), in this instance the surge of pain. Aristotle related the two figures solely in terms of visual clarity, which informs the history of rhetoric, and somewhat diminishes their potency.[82] Puttenham, however, in an unexpected deviation from Greek, Roman and contemporary sources, assigns *enargeia* an 'auricular' function and *energeia* a '*sensable*' (ie. a mind-altering) function, the very same effect attributed to *allegoria*. Together they are amplifying and efficacious; assailing both ear and mind, they confront auditors and readers within and without the poem with the problem of affect.[83]

Amavia is said to 'throw' and ['give']. Her intractable, noisy pain is emitted both as a violent release and as an offering. Uncontainable within the category of 'the human', it spills over into the 'braies' of a deer from which not blood, but 'bleeding life' outpours. *Enargeia* and *energeia* coalesce, extending themselves to Guyon, asking him to partake of their force. In imagining Amavia as a hynd, the allegory invites its patron of Temperance to rise to the 'chaleng' and play the hound, to attend to the 'fine footing' of her pain persistently sounded forth. This subtler cue, rather than an overt repetition of image, indexes the poetry's demand that one learn, in increments, how to read it. It asks that one adapts one's thinking in relation to its own dynamics; that one be open to being altered.

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[81] I am indebted to Joseph Campana's discussion in 'On Not Defending Poetry: Spenser, Suffering and the Energy of Affect', *PMLA* 120/1 (2005), 33-48, although I do not attribute a rigid opposition between the two figures as he does, nor do I argue that Spenser's poetics are anti-Sidneyan/Horatian. Recall Sir Fulke Greville's affirmation of enargeia's capacity to transform 'barren Philosophy precepts into *pregnant* Images of life' (emphasis added), *Sir Fulke Greville's Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Nowell Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 14-16. See also Heinrich Plett, *Enargeia in Classical Antiquity and the Early Modern Age*: *The Aesthetics of Evidence* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 146.

[82] Aristotle, *The 'Art' of Rhetoric*, tr. J. H. Freese (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 405-7. See Linda Gaylon, 'Puttenham's *Enargeia* and *Energeia*: New Twists for Old Terms', *Philological Quarterly* (1981), 29-40, 29-32, for a survey of the progressive confusion of the two terms, following Aristotle's definition. '*Enargeia*' from Greek *enarges* ('visible', 'manifest') and *argos* ('bright'); '*Energeia*', a technical term variously translated as 'actuality' or 'activity', from Greek *ergon* ('work', 'energy'). Erasmus follows Aristotle in translating *energeia* as *evidentia.*

[83] See Gaylon, 31-33; Puttenham, 227, 244.

Guyon, however, responds in a reductive interpretive mode that is associated with the rising autonomous self—that of visual objectification. He rushes forth towards Amavia, only to '[arrive]' at 'that sad pourtraict | Of death and dolour' (II.i.39.3-4). Although this description is voiced by the narrator, it is telling that it is in relation to Guyon's 'arrival' and what he 'beheld'; the lexis of pictorial, but motionless clarity that frames the stanza is an effect prompted by Guyon. The deictic gesture compels one to forget the representation that precedes it, and accept this version, which is a progressive projection of Amavia into a restraining visual scaffold. The following stanza poignantly tells of her 'louely babe' happily embaying his 'little hands' in her blood (II.i40). This is a particularly powerful instance of material intersubjectivity, heightened by Amavia's being 'halfe dead, halfe quick' (II.i.39.4). Her baby's unconsciously 'cruell sport', playing in her 'streaming' lifeblood, is an acute instance of a body's immersion in its environment. The babe's actions transform Amavia's rain and stream of blood into an ecological feature, supported by the revelation that the 'bubbling fountain', beside which she lay, was 'increased with her bleeding hart' (II.i.40).[84] Within this vignette, the baby evokes the contemporary thought (and concern) that a newly born infant 'differeth but a little from brute beasts'.[85] In dabbling unawares in his dying mother's blood, he recalls—as Amavia's pain does—forms of life that are silenced in the name of the 'human' and reminds one of the 'undecided' image and permeable ontology of the fallen body-self.

The stanza's first and final lines, however, both begin with the phrase, 'Pitifull spectacle', enclosing the pathos of particularity within a frame of generality and detachment. Mordant's '[painted]' corpse beside mother and child completes the portrait (41.5). The focus shifts from the reciprocity of *energeia* and constitutional change to *enargeia*, in the Greek sense of visual clarity. Guyon stalls at a safe distance in order to reify the scene and so possess it, rather than be transformed by it. Consider his immediate response: 'His hart gan wexe as starke, as marble stone, | And his fresh blood did frieze with fearfull cold' (42.2-3). Jeffrey Dolven notes that Guyon's

[84] Nazarian, 'Sympathy Wounds, Rivers of Blood: The Politics of Fellow Feeling in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and *A View of the State of Ireland*', *Modern Philology* 113/3 (2016), 331-52, 341, argues that Amavia is being 'pushed into the landscape' as a part of the poem's strategy to naturalise violence. She does not acknowledge the baby Ruddymane's perspective. Paster, 'Becoming the Landscape: The Ecology of the Passions in the Legend of Temperance', *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, eds. Mary Floyd Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 137-52, 141, reads in Amavia an 'incontinent desire' to merge with nature.

[85] Primaudaye, *The Second Part of the French Academie*, tr. T[homas] B[owes] (London, 1594), 427 is representative.

reaction is a 'mirror of her [Amavia's] suffering', perhaps due to a 'sudden contagion of affect'.[86] The observation of likeness is astute, yet in light of our discussion, Guyon's sympathetic correspondence occurs only towards an object of his own making, i.e. to the motionless and silent portrait of Amavia, rather than her piercing outpour of pain. This fine distinction refutes Dolven's assertion that it is 'allegory' (in general) that erects 'protective boundaries' between its inhabitants; indeed, we have witnessed that the act of 'dying' is a homographic pun, indexing both the end of life and the insanguination of other lives with one's own (II.i.39). Guyon closes the episode with an act of petrifaction, verbally '[engrauing]' Amavia even before he lowers her into the earth: 'Old syre | Behold the ymage of mortalitie, | And feeble nature cloth'd with fleshly tyre,' he declares, after which he extracts the maxim 'The strong through pleasure soonest fallles, the weake through smart' (57). The burial that follows is perhaps Guyon's most humane moment in Book Two, particularly his confession of the lack of a right to judge or 'tryall' Amavia. This unique moment of unreasoning bears a rare expression of tenderness. It is, however, inevitably preceded by *sententia*, an unsatisfactory distillation that diminishes the dynamism of the experience. Dolven's vision of allegory 'as a species of skepticism…a mediating language intended not so much to access the truth as to keep the world at bay' is specifically applicable to Guyon's interpretive decision, rather than Spenserian allegory at large, or even Book Two, and is revealed to be insufficient to being human.[87]

Before she dies, Amavia reveals that Mordant died upon drinking of a well, fulfilling Acrasia's curse of death, '*So soone as Bacchus with the Nymphe does lincke*' (II.i.55.6). On Amavia's death, Guyon attempts to cleanse the baby Ruddymane's bloodied hands in the well and finds that they 'might not be purgd' (II.ii.4.2). The Palmer then offers what Colin Burrow identifies as an important Spenserian formal borrowing from Ovid, the 'etiological flashback'.[88] One learns that the well is the result of a nymph's terminal metamorphosis. Pursued by an unrelenting Faunus, she sits down weeping, and calls to Diana for aid. As a result, she is transformed from 'streames of

[86] Dolven (2007), 154. Dolven's study includes an excellent account of what he refers to as Guyon's habit of 'example-making', 157-73.
[87] Dolven (2007), 157, 236 fn.47.
[88] Colin Burrow, 'Original Fictions: Metamorphoses in *The Faerie Queene*', *Ovid Renewed*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99-121, 103.

teares' and 'stony feare' to 'a stone from stedfast virgins state' (II.ii.5-8).[89] As Burrow observes, Spenser's well retains something of the toxic purity of its Ovidian origins in contributing to Mordant's death and refusing to cleanse Ruddymane's hands. Burrow convincingly interprets the nymph-well as a critique of uncompromising chastity liable to slide into punitive insensibility.[90]

Guyon supposes the babe's hands to bear an '[imprint]' of 'bloodguiltinesse', 'with secret filth infected' (II.ii.4); the well, as the Palmer has it, 'is chaste and pure, as purest snow, | Ne lets her waues with any filth be dyde, | But euer like her selfe vnstayned hath beene tryde' (II.ii.9.7-9).[91] The communality of mankind's diseased condition is willfully rejected. On the one hand, Mordant—literally 'death-giving'—is chiastically or reciprocally given death; on the other, the stony nymph's refusal to temper 'Bacchus' travesties the traditional symbol of temperance. In Francis Bacon's terms, liquids, in particular, possess a strong appetite for union with other bodies; furthermore, nymphs are traditionally assigned a generative function within Neoplatonic discourse, for example.[92] The stony nymph is incapacitated by 'old conceiued dreads' and can only repeat her past actions, thereby unable to fulfill the additional expectations she sets up. She is aloof from the processes of intersubjectivity and renewal that Spenser's poetry instances and invites.

Consequently, the babe's bloody hands are rebuffed rather than redeemed; the repudiation is emphatic in that the second party is a newborn, which should appeal immediately to primary sympathy and love. The nymph, however, is not lively in the most fundamental sense—as Spenser repeatedly avows that his verse, or indeed first 'Elfe' is—that of life giving. Being 'euer like her selfe', she is diametrically unlike that multiform mixture with the capacity to encounter otherness within itself, that is man. She recalls Augustine's argument that to be a part of the shared flesh of mankind is not to sin, but rather an effect of original corruption. To live only 'according to [one's] own self', however, is to sin.[93] At the conclusion of the Palmer's etiological explanation, Guyon swiftly returns Ruddymane to the Palmer to 'beare' (II.ii.11.2). The verb becomes a disquieting

[89] See Ovid *Metamorphosis*, tr. F. J. Miller, rev. G. P. Goold, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), II: XIV.700-25 for the transformation of the cruelly chaste Anaxarete—who caused the death of Iphis—into stone.
[90] Burrow (1988), 105-7.
[91] The Longman edition's note to 4.7-9 offers the reasonable critical commonplace that the indelible bloodstains are a manifestation of original sin. Burrow (1988), 106 wittily points out that the bloodstains persist as much due to the nymph-well's original virtue, as to original corruption.
[92] Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, eds. James Spedding et al., 14 vols. (London: Longmans, 1861-79), II:437-8.
[93] Augustine, *City of God*, IV: XIV.4.

pun, evoking the episode's dismissal of life-bearing in favour of bearing as an existential burden. In the very first canto of the Legend, it grows clear that the autarchic self abstracts itself from material consonance and kinship. In doing so, it evades the potential to love and bear life, the twin tendencies that imbue fallen life with curative possibility and a promissory mark.

Guyon reveals that he was made a knight of '*Maydenhead'* by that 'glorious virgin Queene' (II.ii.42.4) who is, unsurprisingly, imaged upon his shield, the instrument that separates individual from world. While this might explain the deflection of sexual contact, it mushrooms into an unwillingness towards any form of reciprocity or emotional exchange. As a result, in exposing the deficiencies of the knight's style of personhood, the second book also critiques his absent Queene, and therefore, the model of self-discipline based upon the dictates of a political abstraction. Guyon's disinclination to somatic osmosis—in terms of self-eviron and self-other interpenetration—is distressingly evident in canto viii when he is found by the Palmer 'layd in swowne' and 'slumbring fast' in a 'senceles', vegetative state, having not imbibed any food or drink (Arg.viii; viiii.4.8-9). This canto opens with the crucial affirmation that there is 'care in heauen', that God 'loues his creatures so' (viii.1.1-6). The winged angelic figure that we find succouring Guyon is then associated with cupid ('like as *Cupido* on *Idaean* hill'), which as Sythrie Pugh observes, is of all the names for love, the one most connotative of earthly and physical love (viii.6.1).[94] Why, for instance, was he not compared to Apollo, or Asclepius, gods of healing? This event strongly suggests that as shared flesh and somatic openness are the effect of sin, the diseased and permeable body becomes its own cure in the act of affirming and pursuing human love; the congenital disease must be transformed into erotic disease. Both afflictions are, after all, defined by privation, but only the latter is pursuable within the mortal mould. The emergent autonomous self is in danger of denying both dependencies, the one on human love (think of Britomart, who loses 'all guidance of her selfe' on looking into Merlin's glass), the other on divine grace. Early on in the first canto, Guyon's Palmer addresses Redcrosse, 'But wretched we, where ye haue left your marke, | Must now anew begin, like race to runne' (II.i.32). The internal rhyme and alignment of 'we' and

[94] Syrithe Pugh, 'Acrasia and Bondage: Guyon's Perversion of the Ovidian Erotic in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*', *Edmund Spenser: New and Renewed Directions*, ed. J. B. Lethbridge (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), 153-195, 156.

'ye' appear at first to emphasize continuity between the two knights. And yet the lessons of the New Testament, of greatest import in Book One's encounter with Despair, are forgotten.

The concluding canto of Book Two opens with the ascension of the abstract self; our 'goodly' knight has become 'this goodly frame of Temperance', rising with increasing violence. Guyon and Palmer '[march]' and '[sally]' forth towards the Bower of Bliss, setting their martial tone long before their arrival. Furthermore, it is now emphasized that 'his sage Palmer…him *gouerned'* (xii.38; emphasis added), adopting the lexis of the body politic in order to express the self's unquestioning obedience to Reason.[95] The abstract and autonomous self erects and preserves itself, as we have seen, in two ways: i) by shutting itself off to external influence and ii) by bounding or objectifying the life or *energeia* it encounters, so that they can no longer threaten to alter the self. In responding with hostility to every interpretive situation he is presented with in the Bower, Guyon is subject to Luther's scathing critique of human reason for her tendency to enshrine repetition. 'Reason' is said to compulsively repeat her responses and forcibly '[make] a universal out of a particular', without attending to the specificities of circumstance.[96] At the Bower's gate, one discovers that it is made more 'for pleasure, then for battery or fight' (xii.43.9), which casts the violence of its new visitors into high relief. Being 'poured forth with plentifull di*spence*' (xiii.42.8; emphasis added) it perhaps nods towards the poetic powers and bounty of its creator, Spenser; but Guyon, who 'suffred no delight | To sinke into his sence, nor mind affect' strives to extract himself from 'that sweet place', even as he occupies it (xii.53). It is true that Guyon's response to the Bower is conditioned by Amavia's account of Acrasia. And yet, Mordant's death—as both Guyon and reader were told—was only made possible by the nymph-well's refusal to 'lincke' with the sorceress's wine, rather than the wine itself. This suggests that the Bower's lethal effects are actualized in conjunction with subjects whose attitudes to sexuality and the possibility of contact are uniformly punitive or disdainful.

Having shattered the staff and bowl of Pleasure's porter, the knight of Temperance confronts a 'comely dame' under a porch:

> In her left hand a Cup of gold she held,

[95] The Palmer has long been read, at least in part, as an externalization of the knight's reason.
[96] See Rupp and Watson (1969), 185.

> And with her right the riper fruit did reach,
> Whose sappy liqor, that with fulnesse sweld,
> Into her cup she scruzd, with daintie breach
> Of her fine fingers, without fowle empeach,
> That so faire winepresse made the wine more sweet:
> Thereof she vsd to giue to drinke to each,
> Whom passing by she happened to meet:
> It was her guise, all Straungers goodly so to greet. (xii.56).

The language achieves an incomparable degree of alliterative sensuous particularity, hauling one into lingering over its descriptive activities. To be sure, Guyon is predisposed to see the Bower and its inhabitants in a particular way. The scene is a complex one in that Guyon is partly right to mistrust the vision. The presence of the cup in her left hand might suggest that its contents are sinister; the reference to 'her guise' could disclose her 'pretence' or 'disguise'. Yet 'guise' was more commonly (and innocuously) used to refer to one's usual manner or custom, and it is this sense that the *OED* illustrates through an example out of Spenser's poetry.[97] The point is not that Guyon's reading is untrue, or impossible, but rather that he does not seem capable of reading in any other way. His monologic interpretations will only ever result in attempts at expulsion, which have to be compulsively repeated because never successful; the netting, rather than destruction of Acrasia exemplifies this. Returning to the stanza of the comely dame, the language accentuates the plenitude—'fulnesse sweld'—and generosity of the vision—'all Straungers'. The adjective 'goodly' recalls one's first impression of Guyon, 'a goodly knight'. In addition, the verb 'scruze' reappears to describe the militantly chaste Belpheobe squeezing sanative sap into Timias' wound (III.v.33.4). In other words, as we observe the dame perform her habitual tasks, we are privy to a (authorially) finely wrought, but seemingly unselfconscious presentation of delicacy and care. Indeed Sidney, in describing how poets 'not onely shew the way, but giveth so sweete a prospect into the way, as will entice anie man to enter into it', suggests that 'at the verie first' they 'give you a cluster of grapes, that full of the taste, you may long to passe further'.[98] The Bower's dame, in other words, could be a shining instance of poetry's capacity to enliven readers, to move them to desire to know and live actively, through delight.

She '[offers]', rather than forces, the wine to Guyon, 'Who taking it out of her tender hond, | The cup to ground did violently cast, | …And with the liquor stained all the lond' (57.1-5). The

[97] See *OED*, s.v. 'guise, n.', all senses.
[98] Sidney, 91-2.

accidental beauty bred of detail—'tender hond'—vivifies his violence; with the allusion to Sidney's 'Defence of Poetry' in mind, Guyon fails to answer poetry's call. It is only after this act that the dame is named *Excesse*, a characteristic movement of Spenserian allegory that invites impressions irreducible to the subsequent abstraction, thereby alerting one to the insufficiencies of an 'abstract' epistemology and ontology.[99] 'Personifying' abstractions is an act of imagining and *embodying* an idea as human, or as alive, enduing it with the multiform nature, reciprocity and moral claims of mankind.[100] The act of naming asserts autonomy and violence; the separation of an entity from oneself, followed by its circumscription and subjection in an act of epistemological mastery. 'All the lond', as a result of Guyon's reaction, is constitutionally altered. Does it bear the trace of *Excesse's* excess, or Temperance's? In delivering another 'ruddy main', or red-stained land, the allegory suggests that Guyon repeats—with mounting hostility—the role of the stony nymph. He begins to look suspiciously like the figure of invulnerable 'mould' and 'hasty hand' encountered in Mammon's cave: Disdain (II.vii.426-9).[101] Given Guyon's determination to be nothing but the impenetrable frame of 'Temperance', the allegorical invitation to see him as an instance of *paradiastole*—or, the capacity for vice and virtue to appear interchangeable—is bitingly ironic. It might be seen as a reminder of the incompatibility between virtuous self-sufficiency and fallen life.

Guyon's irascibility and indolence (or combination of fire and fluidity) on entering—he '*slacke*[s] his pace…and in his *sparkling* face | The secret signes of *kindled* lust appeare' (xii.68.4–6)—and in destroying the Bower—'the *tempest* of his wrathfulnesse' (xii.83.4; emphasis added)—align him with the paynim brothers Cymochles and Pyrochles. The reemergence of their defining qualities within Guyon suggests that despite his concerted efforts to remain uninfected, he is unable do so. Both the human body and the allegorical body poetic are founded upon a principle of interanimation between entities, a condition of disease. In struggling to extricate himself from this state, rather than striving to transform it into a curative condition through love, Guyon becomes an instrument of infection, turning the Bower into 'the fowlest place'. As the Palmer would have it,

[99] This reading is against Murrin's assertion that 'A figure like Excess', being a personification rather than allegory, 'requires no interpretation', 'Renaissance Allegory from Petrarch to Spenser', *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory* (2010), 162-76, 175. Readerly expectations raised by personified abstractions are repeatedly exploited.
[100] As Joe Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 135 affirms, we cannot 'flee from the interpretive situation', as Guyon does.
[101] Campana, 44 notes the visual similarity between the two.

human love can only be experienced as ‘a Monster fell’ (II.v.35). The verse reveals that the Bower understood solely as a site of sin or evil is an image that Guyon must make in order to break it.

Indeed, Spenser uses the phrase ‘bower of bliss’ in numerous noble contexts including one of several laudatory epithets of his beloved’s ‘Fayre bosome’ in *Amoretti* 76, and in stricken Timias’ mouth when he imagines that Belphoebe is an angel sent ‘from her bowre of blis’ (III.v.35). Consequently, one is led to suspect that even if led to the gardens of Adonis, Guyon would react with equal contempt. At the episode’s conclusion when Guyon and Palmer bind Acrasia and Verdant, it is with ‘captiue bands, *which there they readie found*’ (xii.82.5; emphasis added). In other words, the ‘goodly frame of Temperance’ rises violently and problematically out of the materials of the Bower, and its patron fails to recognize that health is made possible only through interventions from without, in acts of love.

The next chapter continues to analyse ways of encountering ones environs, with particular focus on three gardens of *The Faerie Queene*. It does so through the framework of readerly ‘invention’, and the various interpretive possibilities it might imply.

Chapter Two
Spenser's Gardens: Invention, Interpretation, Inclination

And that this place may thoroughly be thought
True Paradise, I have the serpent brought.
(John Donne)

I. 'Invention, that old grandfatherly subject'[1]

Gardens of early modern poetry—and indeed Spenser's gardens in particular—cannot help but express desire for an unfallen world. They are unavoidably repetitions of that first garden, Eden, although their belated manifestations might be wistful, nostalgic, desperate, escapist, demonic, deceiving, or a mixture of all or any, as the case may be. They broadly present two kinds, organic, and artificial, or represent natural materials in artificial designs.[2] In his study of the garden *topos* in Renaissance epic, A. Bartlett Giamatti argued half a century ago that the garden's status as a simulacrum both makes it an image that is always potentially false and seeming, *and* allows it to become the locus in which poets could 'represent the conflicting forces' that underlie, and—according to Giamatti—are eventually resolved by their works.[3] The notion that the garden is a poetic site in which contradictory forces interact with especial vigour and exigency is germane to how we read Spenser's poetry; the issues of resolution and relation to the poem at large, however, are knottier than Giamatti suggests, and are continually tested in *The Faerie Queene*.

The judgment so magnificently articulated by one of Spenser's most sensitive readers, C. S. Lewis, of how '[t]he clashing antitheses…meet and resolve themselves into higher unities', is rooted in eighteenth century readings, an heir of the Kantian revolution and progression towards transcendental idealism; more recent criticism has paid particular heed to the innumerable ways in

[1] Jacques Derrida, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, tr. Peggy Kamuf, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007-8), I:5.
[2] While this is a useful heuristic distinction, Rebecca Bushnell reminds us that it is hard to 'think of something that is purely "natural"'. In doing so, Bushnell quotes C. S. Lewis's remarks on the impossibility of distinguishing between nature and culture as that which is 'not interfered with' (nature), and that which is the 'product of interference' (culture), because "total mutual interference…is of the essence of nature". See Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2-3; see Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 45.
[3] A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 6.

which the poetry confounds this appealing inference.[4] Both Kenneth Gross and Andrew Wadoski, for example, have argued that the self-reflexive and self-critical tendencies so characteristic of Spenser's poetry are particularly concentrated and complicated in his gardens, an observation that points more towards sustained irresolvability or even deliberate irresolution.[5] The questions of irresolution and synthesis are vital, given that they work to attribute and alter the implied moral and truth-values associated with different kinds of making, materiality and interpretation.

Two of the best known sixteenth century accounts of poesis as a kind of garden-making provide different models with nuanced implications, which Spenser could adapt or transform within his poetic spaces: those of Philip Sidney and Torquato Tasso. Wadoski discusses these models at some length and presents them as broadly contrasting. I follow him in drawing upon their richness, but read them as rather more overlapping, both between themselves and at work in Spenser's poetry. I argue that these models express different but interrelated meanings of *invention*, a foundational element or stage of Roman rhetorical procedure, and that both are required to read aright. The Sidneyan 'right' poet-gardener is one who works both 'hand in hand with nature', forming verse out of her fallen, 'brazen' stuff, and one that 'freely rang[es] *only* within the zodiac of his own wit'. Sidney's bold claim that 'poets only deliver a golden [world]', like and unlike nature's world of brass, implies a garden poesis that is *restorative*, or *newly creative* in aspiration. It might reconstruct, to some degree, the lost perfection of Eden by bettering 'nature', or make a whole new golden world.[6] The ambivalent verb, 'deliver', permits the poet to be a messenger, or perhaps a parent of the golden world, although one suspects that Sidney is in favour of the latter. Sidney appears optimistically to believe that certain forms of 'erected wit' 'maketh us know what perfection is', although we are constantly embattled by the rivalrous force of our 'infected will' which blocks us 'from knowing what perfection is'.[7] George Puttenham says of poets that 'if they be able to devise and make all these things of themselves, without any subject of verity…they be

[4] Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in the Medieval Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 447.
[5] Gross explores this in the Garden of Adonis, while Wadoski looks at several Spenserian gardens. See Gross, 'Green Thoughts in a Green Shade', *Spenser Studies* 24 (2009), 355-72; A. M. Wadoski, *Spenser's Gardens: Poetry, Fantasy, and Allegory*, Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy (Rochester, 2008).
[6] Sidney, 'The Defence of Poetry', *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 78 (emphasis added).
[7] Sidney, 79.

(by manner of speech) as creating gods'.[8] His statement is doubly qualified by the conditional 'if', and the distance of 'by manner of speech'; as Brian Cummings argues, for him the poet is more 'like a conjurer or a counterfeiter'. In comparison, Sidney's claim that the poet is not 'tied' to the 'subjection' of nature, but 'lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, [to] grow in effect another nature', is far more radical.[9]

While the Sidneyan poet's 'only' golden world is founded either upon principles of improvement and selectivity, or difference, in relation to the natural world, Torquato Tasso's 'great poet' composes poetry that 'resembles the plan of the universe':

> [T]he world that contains so many diverse things in its womb is one, and one the bond that links its many parts and ties them together in discordant concord…just so, I judge the great poet (who is called divine for no other reason than that he resembles the supreme Artificer in his workings as he comes to participate in his divinity) can form a poem…as in a little world.[10]

Tasso's poet is a maker within certain constraints. There is none of Sidney's sense of improvement or gilding; nor are nature's gifts represented as being within 'narrow warrants'.[11] The universe is an immense, amassing harmony and the poet deliberately strives to fashion a microcosm that formally discloses nature's innate *discordia concors.* Tasso's model is *revelatory*.[12] Wadoski observes that these 'contrasting accounts' of how poesis affects the way in which we experience the phenomenal world resonate with Spenser's use of gardens. More specifically, he suggests that Sidney's account 'could serve as a paraphrase of the Bower of Bliss while Tasso's with its images of a womb, divine emanations, and of "discordant concord", closely resembles the Gardens of Adonis'. Wadoski recognizes that readers of Spenser have long interpreted these two gardens—and the types of poesis they represent—as diametrically opposed, C. S. Lewis's account being the paradigmatic one. He argues instead that Spenser places 'these juxtapositions in conversation' in his garden imagery, 'depicting the ways their interests and ambitions mirror, even interanimate, one another.'[13]

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[8] Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, eds. Frank Whigham and W.A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 94.
[9] Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 267-8. Sidney, 78.
[10] Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, tr. Mariella Cavalchini (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 78.
[11] Sidney, 78.
[12] Wadoski (2008), 3-5 differentiates between Sidney's vision of the garden as an analogy for poesis as redemption, and Tasso's as poesis that works prophetically. I am indebted to Wadoski's discussion, although not always in agreement with his inferences.
[13] Wadoski (2008), 5; see Lewis (2013), 415.

I situate myself in the critical trend that Wadoski develops, although it must be noted that the formal and lexical correspondences between Spenser's gardens have long been acknowledged, including by Lewis himself. Furthermore, I argue that the relation between these versions of poesis—improving, or newly creative invention, and revelatory discovery—can be delineated more precisely as broad extensions of the double sense of *inventio*, a preliminary element of classical rhetoric. As Rhodri Lewis explains, '[a]lthough *inventio* is the etymon of the modern English invention, it is more accurately thought of as the "discovery" — or, rather, the creative rediscovery of prearranged arguments within the imaginary space of the orator's *loci*, or places'.[14] In this light, Sidney's poet—'lifted up with the vigour of his own invention [creative power or *ingenium*]'—invents (in the more modern sense) a golden world of verse, whereas Tasso's poet forms a poem like the world, which should facilitate the 'discovery' of preexisting ties of *concordia* (assuming, of course, that this is what the world is like).[15] Spenser draws deeply and imaginatively on these models, intermixing them to be sure, but also placing shifting emphases on each in different gardens of *The Faerie Queene*. In these *loci*, Spenser reminds us of what Sidney recognized in his 'Defence of Poetry'; that '*poiesis'*, or making, belongs not only to the writer of verse, but also to the reader: *The Faerie Queene*'s gardens are used as 'imaginative ground-plots of…[readerly] invention', by their various visitors, and by ourselves.[16]

In his study of the 'palimpsest' of invention, Roland Greene writes that at the beginning of the early modern period, 'as the classical concept of invention is revived and reinterpreted, the principle of reality against which human capacity asserts itself is matter, or the raw things or facts of the world as organized by logic'.[17] In the mid-sixteenth century, for example, the rhetorician Thomas Wilson notes that the first of the five things to be considered in an orator is 'the findyng out

[14] Rhodri Lewis, 'Francis Bacon and Ingenuity', *Renaissance Quarterly* 67/1 (2014), 113-63, 10.
[15] Colleen Rosenfeld, *Indecorous Thinking: Figures of Speech in Early Modern Poetics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 24 writes that '[b]y the second half of the sixteenth century, the word "invention" had already begun to tilt toward its more modern sense of the making of something that did not previously exist'. Roland Greene, *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 19 describes invention after the Middle Ages not only as 'a rhetorical process received from classical antiquity, but a figure that represents the confrontation between two factors, the human capacity to touch reality and that reality itself', or invention as 'conception', and invention as 'discovery'.
[16] Sidney, 79, 103.
[17] Greene, 20-21.

of apte matter, called otherwise Invencion', or a 'searchyng out of thynges true, or thynges likely'.[18] Wilson's description draws on Cicero's treatment of invention, which, as Greene observes, is in a sense, 'fundamentally materialist', and begins at the relation between *materia* and *inventio*: 'In his art there is, first, *materia* or matter, which is his principle of reality: *materia* may be literally material or it may not, but Cicero leaves no doubt that like other disciplines, rhetoric takes place in an ontological setting conditioned by an existing matter'.[19]

On the one hand, invention as a stage in rhetorical procedure shapes the sense, which continues through the Middle Ages, of invention as 'discovery'. In the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, it begins to become more of a metonym for 'human capacities', mind centered, rather than matter centered, a purposive act of creation that shapes and defines matter.[20] This newer signification of inventiveness is indexed in Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* in cautionary form. He praises the masterful eloquence of his 'friend *Osorius*' (Jerónimo Osório), but warns that he has 'so ouer reached [himself] in making trew difference in the poyntes afore rehearsed as though [he] had bene brought vp in some schole in *Asia*', rather than in Athens. Ascham warns that *Osorius* has breached the limits of inventive decorum, 'the hardest point, in all learning', and the most important, if scholars are to be 'sounde in Religion' or wise 'in any vocation of the common wealth'.[21] Ascham's concern helpfully alerts us to the potential of invention as an instrument of power with which to shape matter, religious, political, or otherwise.

It is certainly not that one sense of 'invention' simply comes to replace the other—hence Greene's use of 'palimpsest'—but that alternative meanings and uses exist, possibly in tension with one another. While Wadoski reads Tasso and Sidney's accounts of poesis as 'contrasting', and I seem to follow in suggesting that the one appears to emphasize 'discovery', and the other, 'conception', there is a subtle, but critical overlap between their writings. The quotation from Tasso (on page 3) parenthetically justifies why poets are 'called divine': 'for no other reason than that he

[18] Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. T. J. Derrick (New York: Garland, 1982), 31.
[19] Greene, 23; See Cicero, *De Inventione*, tr. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), I.7. Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* ed. D. A. Russell, 5 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), opens Book Seven with the acceptance that 'enough, I imagine, has now been said about Invention' (III:vii.1).
[20] Greene, 26: '*Invention* changes with the first phase of humanism in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which was engrossed in the exploration of human capacities'.
[21] Roger Ascham, *English Works: Toxophilus, Report of the Affaires of the State of Germany, The Scholemaster*, ed. W. A. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 249.

resembles the supreme Artificer in his workings as he comes to participate in his divinity'. Sidney too prays that it not 'be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficacy of nature; but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker…when *with the force of a divine breath he bringeth things forth* [in poetry]'.[22] Whether conceiving of poetic invention as discovery or creation, Sidney and Tasso affirm that at their best, both forms testify to, even 'participate' in, the spirit, or breath of God.

This chapter shows that the most perplexing of green places, Spenser's Garden of Adonis, is a special site in which invention as creation and discovery coincide in the form of 'inclination', which indicates the movement of creation to its proper place, in Aristotelian terms, and discloses its meeting with Spirit, in Protestant terms. It is no coincidence that we witness this particular garden without an associated 'observer', other than the narrating voice. In order to best approach it, we will turn at first to the gardens of the Temple of Venus, and the Bower of Bliss, both of which include accompanying guests, or assailants. The first example involves the knight Scudamour, whose interpretive acts, though presented as 'discoveries', are creative projections strictly governed by a martial framework. The second example is of two parts; the first concerns Guyon who strives to refuse interpretation, and so invention; the next attends to the Song of the Rose and draws out the Bower's unexpected hostility to corporeal life in its anxieties about time and mutability. Each of these three perspectives shares a thirst for fixity, and prepares us for the extraordinary energy of the Garden(s) of Adonis.

II. Scudamour and the Temple of Venus

As we approach the gardens surrounding Venus' Temple, we are twice told of Scudamour's victory, even before he begins his first-person recollection. Early on in Book Four, the narrator reveals that Scudamour fetched Amoret, 'From twentie Knights, that did him all assay: | Yet fairely well he did them all dismay: | And with great glory both the shield of love, | And eke the Ladie selfe he brought away' (IV.i.2.4-7). The 'shield of love' and 'the Ladie selfe' are balanced in successive lines, both the spoils of battle. In the same vein, the argument of canto x summarizes what follows: 'Scudamour doth his conquest tell, | Of vertuous Amoret: | Great Venus Temple is describ'd…'.

[22] Sidney, 79.

The verse forewarns that Scudamour's experience and memory of the Temple is governed by a matrix of martial victory. His first stanza nods to 'the day that first with deadly wound | My heart was launcht, and learned to haue loued', highlighting a seeming fall into love. Scudamour's fourth stanza, however, which describes the day he goes forth 'on that hard aduenture' (presumably the same day), details a desire for martial glory alone. The episode is defined as a 'brave emprize', or chivalric enterprise, and the fair and ancient Temple of Venus is a 'place of perill' (IV.x.1.7-8; x.4.7, x.5.2). As Andrew Escobedo finely observes, in *The Faerie Queene* 'such motivations [martial honour and love] are not mutually exclusive, but in Scudamour's account of his intentions they seem unusually separate'.[23]

The resolute knight, wielding the recently won shield of Love, comes to the garden in the wake of battling Doubt, Delay, Danger and a squadron of knights. It is little wonder then that it 'did seeme…The onely pleasant and delightfull place, | That euer trodden was of footings trace' (IV.x.21.5-6). Scudamour's account announces its own subjectivity, composed of uncertain conditionals and subjunctives: 'seem'd', 'ghesse', 'if', 'would' and 'mote have' (IV.x.23). And yet, his description sounds oddly as if he is being ventriloquized by Sidney's familiar text:

> For all that nature by her mother wit
> Could frame in earth, and forme of substance base,
> Was there, and all that nature did omit,
> Art playing second natures part, supplyed it. (IV.x.21.6-9)

There is a rehearsed quality to Scudamour's response, in its resemblance to Sidney's poet-gardener, who 'goeth hand in hand with nature' and grows 'in effect another nature'. 'Nature' and her 'wit' are severed from the 'earth' and 'substance base', as if earth were not a part of nature. 'Nature' and 'Art' are as sisters, working in harmony, and both endued with a kind of creative intelligence; Art is Nature's understudy and her supplement. The description begins, however, with Scudamour relating the vision according to his 'simple doome', or judgment, which reminds us that the 'wit' he attributes to 'Nature', and the accord he lends art, are in fact his own (IV.x.21.3).

He follows with an observation that aligns Venus' garden with the Bower of Bliss in terms of swelling fullness, exhaustiveness and allure, claiming that 'any quient deuice' a heart could wish for

[23] Escobedo, 'The Sincerity of Rapture', *Spenser Studies* 24 (2009), 185-209, 202.

‘there…present was, and did fraile sense entice’ (22.8-9). And yet once more, Scudamour names ‘enticement’ without betraying any sense of having been enticed. We do not see him in a ‘creeping slomber’, like Cymochles, nor do we see him ‘creeping’ onward to a sudden release of wrath, as Guyon does (II.v.30; II.xii.76). We do not see him in any way ravished, or enraptured, as one might expect upon the day his heart was launched open with love’s wound. Instead he is pricked forth into making evaluative interpretive judgments:

> In such luxurious plentie of all pleasure,
> It seem'd a second paradise to ghesse,
> So lauishly enricht with natures threasure,
> That if the happie soules, which doe possesse
> Th'Elysian fields, and liue in lasting blesse,
> Should happen this with liuing eye to see,
> They soone would loath their lesser happinesse,
> And wish to life return'd againe to bee,
> That in this ioyous place they mote haue ioyance free.
>
> Fresh shadowes, fit to shroud from sunny ray;
> Faire lawnds, to take the sunne in season dew;
> Sweet springs, in which a thousand Nymphs did play;
> Soft rombling brookes, that gentle slomber drew;
> High reared mounts, the lands about to vew;
> Low looking dales, disloignd from common gaze;
> Delightfull bowres, to solace louers trew;
> False Labyrinthes, fond runners eyes to daze;
> All which by nature made did nature selfe amaze. (IV.x.23-24)

Notwithstanding the prudent hesitancy of ‘seem’d’ and ‘ghesse’, the garden is presented as a glorious iteration of that first paradise, Eden. This is reinforced by his speculation that the blessed souls of the pagan paradise, Elysium, would ‘wish to life return’d again’ in order to experience this superior garden. This first stanza is conspicuously tautological, repeating the ideas of ‘plentie’ and ‘all’, of ‘life’, ‘liue’ and ‘liuing’, ‘happie’, ‘happinesse’ and blesse’, and culminating in the hexameter that explicitly and unnecessarily links the ‘joyous place’ with the imagined joyful inhabitants. The succeeding stanza, 24, similarly appears to have no effect in particular on the speaker, but is wonderfully formed out of parallel constructions, lending shape to what are essentially loose and recognizable pastorally associative tropes (fresh, fair, sweet, soft). As Barbara Lewalski remarked, the ‘Happy Garden’ in classical myth and the ‘Earthly Paradise’ in biblical poetry and exegesis have many qualities in common. Both are pastoral, sensuous and of perfect

climate, filled with soft, gurgling winds and waters.[24] Scudamour, in other words, appears to recount some sort of collective literary experience, instead of his own. The penultimate lines appear at first to juxtapose nature and art and their respective effects, consolation and confusion: delightful bowers that provide solace and false labyrinths that daze. They are resolved, however, almost instantaneously within the chiasmic hexameter, which echoes the concluding line of the previous stanza. Nature's reign previously implied, is now established. Indeed, the 'false labyrinth' is re-formed and reflected within nature's punning amazement at her own creation, taken from art and placed within nature's remit.

The Sidneyan claim in which art 'plays nature's second part', which is to say, it either improves nature or is as if another nature while being distinct from nature, is silently retracted as art is flattened into equivalence with nature at the close of Scudamour's account. What is oddly clear as one reads or listens to his recollection is that apart from the formal sense of an ending that the hexameter lends itself to, his sense impressions (even coupled with the evaluative second clauses) do not correspond to his tautological conclusion. Scudamour's privileging of common literary garden experience over other directions his sense perceptions might point towards, speaks to what Jeff Dolven identifies as the principles of similarity and familiarity in *example* as a persuasive and pedagogical tool. 'The most effective examples', he writes, explicating George Puttenham, 'will therefore be the most familiar, the subjects of the greatest cultural consensus; they will function best as evidence if they are self-evident.'[25] Scudamour might be seen to be drawing upon the humanist high regard and 'peculiar sanctity' of example, which Dolven notes in the writings of Roger Ascham, Juan Luis Vives and Erasmus, among others.[26] Consequently, Cupid's knight is seen to exert a 'pressure toward maxim', characteristic of humanist examples; the maxim, or rule, as we will see, is that of the order of Concord as the natural end.[27] And yet despite all the trappings of persuasive example, the episode does not permit the speaker's account to be wholly convincing.

[24] See Barbarba Kiefer Lewalski, 'Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden', *New Essays on Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 86-117, 88 and Giamatti, 11-86, on 'paradise', the beautiful sites associated with the classical concept of the Golden Age, and the *locus amoenus*.
[25] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 156. See also Puttenham, 128-9 on 'Historical poesy' and history as the fount of examples.
[26] Recall, for instance, Ascham's discomfort at 'over-reaching' inventiveness. He would prefer one to 'discover' the familiar, to support cultural hegemonies.
[27] See Dolven (2007), 148, 151.

Instead, it lays bare the motivations driving this single interpretive perspective, which is put forth as a universal perspective, and intimates the dangers of such reading.

We witness the knight fashioning and affixing explanatory principles to visual forms. These acts prepare the readers—both Scudamour and ourselves—to readily 'discover' a diffuse sense of *concordia discors*, which is drawn out unequivocally by the knight in the stanzas that follow, '*Concord* she cleeped was in common reed' (34.1). The mode of Scudamour's interpretive-making now seems closely allied with Tasso's revelatory model of poesis, the discovery of the 'one' bond that binds the world. This episode, however, does not univocally express that it should be read as 'revelatory', but instead exposes the construction of Scudamour's conclusion. He seems to know what he is looking for, before he looks. It is more accurate to describe Scudamour's readerly invention as his own conception, masquerading as discovery. In other words, against Tasso's explanation, Spenser suggests through this episode that true inventive or interpretive 'discovery', which participates in, or coincides with the eternal creative Spirit, is irreducible to easy claims of seeing concord all about us.

Importantly, Scudamour's insistence upon *Concordia* is also personally motivated; it allows him to naturalize (just as 'art' is naturalized) his chivalric intent and desire for martial honor. It enables him to establish that 'it fitteth best, | For *Cupids* man with *Venus* mayd to hold' (54.6-7). In addition, stanza 34 tells how Concord 'to afflicted minds sweet rest and quiet sends'. This is to say, the knight spurred on by martial thirst and its associated love-wound, in the midst of his chivalric adventure, is primed to receive the 'rest' thought characteristic of Concord. Given that the canto begins with Scudamour's complaint that he is relentlessly plagued by care—not to mention his frightening experience in the house of Care, and the fact that Britomart finds him 'distrest'—one might reasonably conclude that the kind of 'rest' he so willingly received from Concord is insufficient, or illusory (IV.v.39ff, III.xi.arg). Upon entering the cottage of Care, Scudamour, described as 'the warrior', lays down to rest 'in his armour' (IV.v.39). Expecting sleep, he tosses and turns so that 'euery place seem'd painefull', and he 'by no meanes could wished ease obtaine' (IV.v.40.88-9). The strange image of him lying down, encased in armour, indicates the persistence of a warlike interpretive framework, which does not lead to true respite. Later in time, but earlier in the tale, when Britomart finds him distressed and helps him, he is prone upon the ground, and his

haberieon, helmet and the shield of Cupid, are thrown off (III.xi.arg, xi.11). In Dolven's words, 'care is its own complement, its own answer', and that answer is 'not the wise…preventative care of the humanists, but something more in the nature of consolation or simply comfort'.[28] Britomart is pierced with grief at Scudamour's cares, and cares for him, lending her hand to heal his woes. Her rescue of Amoret coincides with the removal of Scudamour's armour, and the piercing of her own armour. This further suggests that a 'perpetual play' of sorrow and salve is the kind of remedy of care possible in fallen life, rather than the ever-after rest that Scudamour desires.[29] And this perpetual play necessitates collaborative work.

If we think about the process of attempting to read rightly as a kind of labour, we might say that Sudamour does not quite work hard enough. It is curiously at the close of the episode of Care that the image of the poet-plowman first appears: 'But here my wearie teeme nigh ouer spent | Shall breath it selfe awhile…' (IV.v.46.8-9). The poet as a labourer, with his team of oxen, is wearied by the work of the fifth canto, and longs for relief. Yet when this image reappears in Book Six, in fuller form, it registers a change in tone. No longer is the poet-plowman weary and wistful, but a 'jolly swayne', eager to return to his furrows and exclaiming at the future fairness and fruitfulness of the soil he turns (VI.ix.1). Furthermore, this stanza mingles the language of georgic labour with the language of chivalry, using phrases such as 'too great a shame' and 'great dishonour and defame'. As Anthony Low has argued, this mixing of registers reveals a radical shift in the typical attitude towards agricultural labour.[30] Through the motif of the poet-plowman, and the use of georgic language to describe heroic endeavour, *The Faerie Queene* represents labour as necessary, relentless, honorable and capable of glorious fruits. Calidore, for example, is afforded the possibility of 'reaping eternall glorie of his restlesse paines', as he passes through paths and perils, over hills and plains (VI.ix.2). In Book Two, Belpheobe's critique of courtly bliss affirms that '[w]here ease abounds, yt's eath to doe amis; | But he who his limbs with labours, and his mind | Behaves with cares, cannot so easie mis' (II.iii.40). In the wider context of the poem's approval of

[28] Dolven, 'Besides Good and Evil', *SEL* 57/1 (2017), 1-22, 12. Dolven concentrates on the care expressed between 'bad' characters, towards establishing a 'temptation of care' that challenges the poem's 'moral architectonics' (2). A comparison of such moments, however, to the care between 'good' characters, and 'good' and 'bad', could point to different conclusions.
[29] *Ibid*. Dolven uses the term 'perpetual play' in relation to Venus and Adonis in his garden, in continual convalescence.
[30] Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 39. See also William A. Sessions, 'Spenser's Georgics', *ELR* 10/2 (1980), 202-38.

'painfull toile', Scudamour's wished for ease and his related methods of reading and acting seem unlikely to be fruitful. In addition, the presence of the plowman's 'teeme' implies that heroism must now be collective, communal, rather than individual, if it is to be effective. Scudamour, as we know, is frequently in need of aid. Although his interpretation in the gardens of Venus neatly places his seizure of Amoret within the broader garden and cosmic paradigms of Concord, he is not awarded the 'rest' that would suggest that he has read—and acted—aright. Indeed Spenser's gardens increasingly suggest that the very idea of total 'rest' in the winding ways of Faery, is worrisome, more often than not.

Scudamour's commitment to his particular model of reading results both in the avoidance of considering alternative possibilities and in the avoidance of interpretive *impasse*. His eye fixed on Venus' face, for example, continues to read her expression as 'amiable grace' and favourable laughter, despite Amoret's combination of coy and tearful pleas to be released from his grasp (IV.x.56). Similarly, when Scudamour first looks upon the goddess, he perceives that 'all about her necke and shoulders flew | A flocke of litle loues' and concludes that '*Cupid* their eldest brother' is away, enjoying his kingdom 'with Lordly sway, | And to his law compels' all creatures (42). This is certainly one kind of 'Cupid', and one that licenses Scudamour's own sense of mastery, being Cupid's man and carrying Cupid's shield. And yet we might remember the Proem to Book Four that offers a rare instance in which Spenser refers to Cupid as Venus' 'dearling doue' (Pro.5.2): perhaps there is something of Cupid in those fluttering amoretti about Venus' neck that Scudamour, enclosed within his interpretive field, cannot access. He does not linger upon the goddess's mysterious veil, or the snake about her feet, but simply affirms that the cause '[w]as hard to know' (41.2).

Finally, we see him exercise deliberate choice in taking Amoret. Crucially, at the exact moment in which he beholds Venus' charge, his 'hart gan throb', not in love, or erotic rapture, as one might expect, but 'in doubt, what best were to be donne' (53.1-2). Put differently, his reaction is not construed as the *admiratio* or *paradoxon*, the 'wonder' of falling in love, but *aporia*—Puttenham's Doubter—which Scudamour promptly subjects to his chivalric code and snuffs out: 'Tho shaking off all doubt…Which Ladies love I heard had never wonne | Mongst men of worth'

(53.6-8).[31] Once again, his language reiterates that he is driven not by love, but by martial desire, of which having won love is an outward show. His 'shaking off' is resolute. As described by Puttenham, the Doubter is 'not much unlike the Wonderer', which is to say, Scudamour casts off doubt and along with it, any possibility of love's rapture or ravishment.[32] Cupid's knight is paradoxically not ensnared by love and not subject to wonder because he is in full and determined possession of his will. Exercising his will in this way might make his decision-making simpler, but it ignores the warning articulated by Amoret's twin in Book Two that the easy way and passage plain lead only to pleasure's palace, or false rest (II.iii.41).

A different, but related point regarding Scudamour's lack of both interpretive toil and rapture is that he is shown to miss the twin aspects that famously characterize poetic composition and operation, and more specifically, Faery land's ways: difficulty and delight. The Proem to Book Six contrasts the poet's 'weary steps' with the 'delightfull land of Faery', whose ways are 'so exceeding spacious and wyde, | And sprinckled with such sweet variety', that 'ravisht with rare thoughts delight', his 'tedious travell' is forgotten, and his dull spirit is enlivened and strengthened (VI.Proem.1). This is, of course, an ancient and conventional notion, but one that Scudamour does not benefit from. Erotic wonder might have better motivated his interpretive work and cheered the cares that followed, but Scudamour's experience in the Temple's gardens is neither exceptionally difficult, nor delightful. What might have been governed by a poetic framework, was governed by a martial one instead.

Consequently, with the structure of *Condordia* in mind, grown out of his vision of the garden, Scudamour can make sure his decision is one that 'fitteth best'. I am generally in agreement with Escobedo's thesis that the absence of erotic rapture—in seizing Scudamour's will—betrays a lack of *sincerity* in love.[33] We are, for example, told of Amoret's falling in love, in the canto of the Gardens of Adonis. To make an absolute judgment regarding whether Scudamour is to be censured for his want of authenticity in love, or for his apparent aggression in the seizure of Amoret proves trickier. Yet this canto begins with the knight confessing that since the 'adventure', he 'neuer ioyed

[31] Gillian Rose writes that 'the aporia, or gap, is the Janus-face of the universal'. Rather than shaking it off, Scudamour might raise the difficulty of how to know, or not know, in relation to it, to investigate it further. See *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 10.
[32] Puttenham, 311.
[33] See Escobedo (2009), *passim*.

howre, but still with care was moued' (1.9). In the Legend of Chastity, Scudamour is incapable of entering the House of Busirane and taking up Amoret once more. We might infer then, that although both the third-person narrator and Scudamour have cast his experience as a victory and conquest, there is something amiss about these summations.

The heart of the matter, I argue, is not entirely to do with sincerity, but to do with the projection of a single interpretive perspective. Scudamour's manner of reading speaks to the new sense of invention as imposition on matter around us, rather than matter directing invention, although he presents it as a revelatory discovery. Put another way, sincerity of love in Spenser's poetry is often associated with modes of knowing that allow for difference and change, and for knowing as a process, rather than knowledge as possession. The difficulty of 'discovery' that Scudamour's adventures disclose does not lead to the conclusion that one should give up. It emphasizes, instead, the kind of knowing that Gillian Rose came to call the 'activity beyond activity', rather than knowledge as acquisition, and therefore, rest.[34] Monologic perspectives are seen to be structurally dangerous, troubling because of their necessary exclusion, rather than what they entail. As we have seen, the sameness and rest ostensibly achieved through Scudamour's choices are rapidly falsified.

On the one hand, we have witnessed Scudamour adopt both Sidney and Tasso's models of experiencing nature through poesis, in his recollection of the Temple's garden. One could even suggest that in his attempts to knit together the diverse forms he sees in the manner of Tasso's poet, Scudamour attempts to 'discover' the garden's foreconceit, through exercising his wit, to borrow Sidney's language. If this is the case, the perfection—which is to say the completeness or concord—that he possesses through his interpretive maneuvers, is shown to be wanting. Rather, because he is in full possession of (or fully possessed by) his necessarily 'infected' will, he can only inhabit a single perspective from which to search for truth, Providence or an organizing principle at work in the world about him. Reading Scudamour's recollection of the episode shows how much of the unity and 'fitness' he discovers—apart from the self-announcing tableau of *Concord* and her sons—is of his own making. His example movingly suggests that the temptation to transcendence,

[34] Rose, 121.

in this instance the attempt to too easily cast off the uncertainties and particularities of this world, is perilous, and does not provide anything more than transient satisfaction.

III. The Bower of Bliss and the Song of the Rose

Acrasia's Bower of Bliss is architecturally similar to, but conceptually different from the garden of the Temple of Venus. As Robert Durling has observed, it has been routine to assume that Spenser was merely imitating Tasso's account of Armida's palace in *Gerusalemme liberata* (xv-xvi) in this particular passage. Durling cites Ernest de Selincourt's remark that Spenser 'had no need to change the spirit of the model'; to this one might add a footnote from *The Allegory of Love* that contains the aside, 'all the references to Art in the Bower are copied from Tasso'.[35] I part ways with Durling's analysis in terms of its conclusions, primarily in his affirmation and extension of C. S. Lewis's judgment: 'It is not merely man's sexual nature which is diseased in the Bower, of course; it is the entire soul—reason, spirit, and appetite'.[36] His lucid discussion of the changes and additions that Spenser introduces to borrowed material, however, is immensely useful.

We have, of course, already examined certain aspects and inhabitants of the Bower, and the responses they provoke in Guyon and his Palmer in chapter one. While the focus of discussion now shifts toward different features of this garden, particularly auditory ones, it is inevitable that we closely examine them in relation to the knight '[i]n whom great rule of Temp'raunce goodly doth appeare' (II.Pro.5.9). This is because the Bower's garden is described almost entirely from the viewpoint of Guyon and the Palmer, rather than from an 'omniscient' point of view as in Tasso's description.

Stanzas 43-50, which detail the Bower's fence, gate and porter, appear to be a narratorial address to readers. This description—languid and pleasing—is disrupted at its close with Guyon disdainfully breaking the porter's bowl and staff. In terms of visual detail, Acrasia's space seems to be virtually defenseless, most unlike Armida's palace, not to mention her garden, enclosed by a labyrinth of walls. Its gates 'euer open stood to all', the fence is 'weake and thin', and its porter,

[35] Robert M. Durling, 'The Bower of Bliss and Armida's Palace', *Comparative Literature* 6/4 (1954), 335-47; *Spenser, Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), xlii-xliii; Lewis (2013), 407.
[36] Durling, 342.

false *Genius*, is said to hold a staff for 'more formalitee' (II.xii.46.2, 43.4, 48.9). And yet we are led to suspect that it must somehow be able to enclose and exclude because it is said to hold the 'unruly beasts…*without'*, and 'entred guests to keepe *within'* (43.2-3; emphasis added). The collective noun 'guests' is peculiar, as if the Bower's visitors are required to suffer its hospitality, and rest awhile, as if its visitors couldn't possibly be anything other than willing. Moreover, it is conspicuously governed by a principle of selectivity. Undoubtedly plentiful and abundant, it is also a place '*pickt out by choice* of best alyve', in which 'the Heauens *always Ioviall*…still in stedfast state' look on continually; it admits no 'scorching heat, nor cold intemperate | T'afflict the creatures, which therein did dwell' (51; emphasis added). On the one hand, place appears agential, caring for its dwellers or constituent parts. On the other, the pun on 'still', signifying both 'continually' and 'immobility', and the repeated negative constructions, which keep out extremities, lend it an air of stagnation. Indeed, the 'sweet spirit and holesom smell' in stanza 51's final line, trails into stanza 52's opening, 'More sweet and holesom', which is unusual in Spenser's poetry. The concatenating sweetness suggests that it might be overpowering, or sickly, and the adjective 'sweet' recurs frequently in this garden.[37] The olfactory description evokes a kind of rest through sensory repetition, as if one is made motionless in its lingering sweetness and unchanging clime.[38]

Like the garden of Venus' Temple, the Bower's garden is compared to Eden. The opening lines of stanzas 50 and 53, between which this comparison lies, suggest that we are privy to Guyon's perspective ('they behold'; 'Much wondred Guyon'). An anaphoric 'Or' is deployed in order to claim the Bower's superiority to five *loci amoeni*, the final example being '*Eden* selfe, if ought with *Eden* mote compayre' (52.9). Each of the examples—barring Parnassus—comes to know sin and death. As the epigraph to this chapter suggests—from Donne's 'Twickenham Garden'—the authenticating mark of paradises after Eden is their loss, or fallen state. The Bower's portrayal is then ironic, repeatedly assured as we are of its exclusive 'sweetness', and apparent lack of change, or mutability, and mortal time. The concluding *correctio,* 'if ought', betrays a sense of guilt about blaspheming; unlike Scudamour's hesitant mood—'seems' and 'ghesse'—Guyon is

[37] 'Sweet' also occurs frequently in the short description of the Bower in canto five: II.v.31.8, 32.3, 33.4.
[38] It is telling that when John Evelyn quotes Spenser's unsettling description of the Bower of Bliss—with comical sincerity—in explaining how to create an earthly paradise, he situates the verse in a chapter on 'Fencing and Enclosing'. Despite its open gates and weak boundaries, the Bower seems to enclose. See Evelyn, *Elysium Britannicum*, ed. J. E. Ingram (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 98.

convinced of this comparison, but suspects that his certainty is illegitimate.[39] Following this self-emendation, we are given Guyon's reaction:

> Much wondred *Guyon* at the fayre aspect
> Of that sweet place, yet suffred no delight
> To sincke into his sence, nor mind affect,
> But passed forth…
> *Brydling his will and maystering his might*: (xii.53.1-5; emphasis added).

The poetry explicitly tells that Guyon actively avoids being affected by the fair aspect, although his initial wonder suggests that he can be. The verb 'suffred' suggests that he does not 'allow' delight to transform him; yet it also carries valences of 'endure', or 'submit', most likely to hardship of some sort, as if the elfin knight is presented with a trial that he avoids. One could easily conclude that his antagonistic and readying response is the result of his own comparison of the garden to Eden. As the Proem to Book Two promised, the 'rule' of Temperance 'appears' in this knight. But Spenser's allegory, so attuned to and so anxious about seeming, guises, semblance and appearances, could not but be aware that the appearance of temperance, is not itself temperance.[40] The Bower's gardens, 'poured forth with plentifull dispence', is cast into direct conflict with Guyon's might, staging a fierce and ambivalent struggle between what Sidney refers to as the 'erected wit' of the garden and the will of its visitor. When we first enter the gardens, the narrator reveals that 'nought feard theyre [the Bower] force…But wisdoms power, and temperaunces might' (43.5-6). The deliberate contrast between 'force', and 'power…and might', suggests that the latter terms *do not* refer to physical violence. This makes Guyon's actions, his manifestation of 'temperaunce', all the more surprising.

The Bower follows the *Liberata* in many ways, but it is also an example of Sidneyan erected wit ('art stryuing to compayre, | With nature', II.v.29.1). In his *Defense*, Sidney 'conjure[s] you', his readers, into poetry's world of 'virtue breeding delightfulness', inscribing the vital and troubling

[39] We can usefully compare the prickly comparison of the Bower to Eden and classical *loci amoeni* to the description of '*the well of life*' in Book I, canto 11 (29-30). The well of life is explicitly said to excel both *Hebrus* and *Cephise and* the Gospel waters of *Silo* and *Jordan*. As Hester Lees-Jeffries finely notes, Spenser's well of life thus asks to be read as 'the ultimate type…the unifying signifier', and not as a node of syncretism and multivalence, as is typical of other fountain analogues. Crucially, and in contrast, the Bower of Bliss foregrounds issues of moral, generic and interpretive choice and does not solicit a unifying interpretive strategy. See Lees-Jeffries, *England's Helicon: Fountains in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 153.

[40] Wadoski (2008), 134 also affirms that Spenser 'is too careful…a reader of Paul to make an accidental distinction between the 'rule of temperance' and temperance itself'.

relation between poetry and magic.[41] This relation is particularly resonant in the music of Acrasia's Bower, and evokes the magic described by Marsilio Ficino and Giordano Bruno. Wadoski argues elegantly that, for Spenser, 'and here his thinking is entirely in line with the Neoplatonists – music, magic, and poetry are substantially (and, to a certain extent, formally) one and the same. Each effaces the (illusory and artificial) boundaries between the worlds of matter and idea, revealing the sympathies connecting evidently different registers of being'.[42] Ficino exclaims that music 'floods us with a wonderful pleasure: by its nature, both spiritual and material, it at once seizes, and claims as its own, man in entirety'.[43] What is most interesting, however, is that despite the Bower providing a near textbook instance of this theory, it is ineffective with regards to Guyon. Ficino elaborates that

> song and sound arise from the cogitation of the mind, the impetus of the phantasy, and the feeling of the heart, and together with the air they have broken up and tempered, strike the aerial spirit of the hearer, which is the junction of the soul and body, they easily move the phantasy, affect the heart and penetrate into the deep recesses of the mind.[44]

According to this model, the correspondence between the medium of producing sound (disturbed air) and the medium of consuming it (aerial spirit), results in the synthetic engagement or 'moving' of the fantasy, of feeling, and of understanding. This is the sort of process Sidney appears to have in mind when he names poetry the 'instrumental cause' of virtue, and suggests that its transformative powers might even operate without conscious knowledge or consent. Genevieve Guenther's insightful monograph on 'instrumental aesthetics' identifies this theory of efficacious beauty and the poetic practices it motivated. In particular, she argues that Spenser's art does not find its greatest virtue in 'mimetic fidelity to transcendent reality'; rather, his poetry can be identified with magic because it is instrumental, and requires that mind and feeling be materially affected.[45] Thus, it aspires to interconnect the registers of matter and idea, which necessitates the act of reading, rather than attempting to materially imitate the realm of ideas.

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[41] Sidney, 102, 120.
[42] Wadoski (2008), 112-13.
[43] Ficino, *Opera Omnia* (Basileae, 1576), 1453, quoted in and translated by D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 9.
[44] Ficino (1576) 651; Walker, 6.
[45] G. J. Guenther, *Magical Imaginations: Instrumental Aesthetics in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 38.

Returning to Guyon's reaction, the knight is specifically said to suffer no delight '[t]o sincke in to his sence, nor mind affect'. Instead he 'bridles' his will and 'masters' his might, which are disciplining, mental 'actions' that do not, like sound, or vision, involve the material medium of air. His 'might' seems particularly noteworthy. 'Sense', 'mind' and 'will' index his deliberate lack of receptivity, but 'might' intimates that he will not only resist, but exert his own powers in a manner distinctly unsympathetic to the moving forces at work in the Bower. That is, he will attempt to destroy them. The point here is not to do with the Bower's moral quality, but to recognize that its instrumental qualities—as described by Ficino and by Sidney—do not successfully operate without the willingness of its reader/auditor. Guyon's unchanging and hostile reactions suggest that he is unlikely to be moved by any environment, not merely the Bower of Bliss.[46] This idea of the unreceptive and antagonistic reader is clearly one that *The Faerie Queene* is anxious about. It is related to those critiqued in the Proem to Book Four, who cannot 'in their frosen hearts feele kindly flame', those readers upon whom the poem's instrumental power depends.

The Bower of Bliss—following Tasso's model—presents its visual aspects, followed by its auditory pleasures. Consider its sounds:

> Right hard it was, for wight, which did it heare,
> To read, what manner musicke that mote bee:
> For all that pleasing is to liuing eare,
> Was there consorted in one harmonee,
> Birdes, voyces, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.
>
> The ioyous birdes shrouded in chearefull shade,
> Their notes vnto the voyce attempred sweet;
> Th'Angelicall soft trembling voyces made
> To th'instruments diuine respondence meet:
> The siluer sounding instruments did meet
> With the base murmure of the waters fall:
> The waters fall with difference discreet,
> Now soft, now loud, vnto the wind did call:
> The gentle warbling wind low answered to all. (xii.70.5-9 – 71).

Punningly instrumental, the pentatonic harmony comingles natural and artificial forms. The garden's auditory aspect somewhat reforms the rivalrous relations between nature and art so prominent in the visual stanzas. It is a harmony 'right hard' to 'read', which is to say, it cannot be

[46] As chapter five will show, Milton acknowledges this danger when he deliberately imports glistering descriptions from the deceiving Bower to his divinely planted Eden, and asks that we trust them. Too much suspicion may be as perilous as too little.

separated into its constituents, or interpreted by the understanding or cogitation of the mind alone. It invites the kind of collaborative receptivity of the imagination and understanding together, that Ficino touches upon in his discussion of music. The sonic tessellation ('tempered' and 'trembling', 'voyces', 'instruments', 'water' and 'wind') combined with the synaesthetic 'siluer sounding instruments', visually suggestive of the waters, and the central repeated rhyme 'meet', result in the isomorphism of medium and meaning.

In spite of the powerful impression of this harmony, Guyon and his Palmer are unyielding. Having just been rebuked by the Palmer for his 'wandring eyes', the two are 'creeping' along wholly intent on taking Acrasia by surprise (II.xii.69.8). Thus, having 'heard a most melodious sound', their preconceived purpose to capture the witch appears to prevent their aerial spirits, in Ficino's terms, from being moved. The pressing question, therefore, has less to do with the provenance of the sounds—whether or not they are 'angellical' as the language suggests, or diabolical—although this is often the central Spenserian anxiety. The knight and his Palmer do not even attempt, like Scudamour, to 'read' the beauty, or to attend to it at all. The concern appears to be with the efficacy of beauty—unlike Sidney, for Spenser, the reformative dispensation of beautiful verse requires something of its auditors and readers. In the Bower of Bliss, neither the might of will nor the erected wit of verse appear to be sufficient, to seem to offer any kind of access to privileged meaning, immateriality or divinity. Instead, they expose each other's deficiencies and lead to a violent close. It is important to note here that the episode's power is premised upon Guyon and his Palmer's act of destruction upsetting most readers i.e. the difference in feeling between their interpretive response and ours. While I part ways with its conclusion, Stephen Greenblatt's now classic statement makes the point: Spenser 'can secure… [the] self only through a restraint that involves the destruction of something intensely beautiful'.[47]

Although, as we have noted, the Bower's garden appears visually defenseless, 'weake and thin', it erects a different kind of enclosure through its music. The chanting maiden's 'louely lay' closely follows the parrot's song in Armida's palace, but presents the topos *carpe diem* with greater

[47] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 175.

emphasis and poignancy.[48] It seeks to suspend time despite the stanza's forward progression, recalling the 'always' smiling heavens with which we entered, or the all-pervasive 'sweetness'. The lack of seasonal change simply tells us of the ever-present clemency; the lay charges us to act, to grasp and maintain the present time:

> The whiles some one did chaunt this louely lay;
> Ah see, who so faire thing doest faine to see,
> In springing flowre the image of thy day;
> Ah see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
> Doth first peepe forth with bashfull modestee,
> That fairer seemes, the lesse ye see her may;
> Lo see soone after, how more bold and free
> Her bared bosome she doth broad display;
> Loe see soone after, how she fades, and falles away.
>
> So passeth, in the passing of a day,
> Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flowre,
> Ne more doth flourish after first decay,
> That earst was sought to decke both bed and bowre,
> Of many a Ladie, and many a Paramowre:
> Gather therefore the Rose, whilest yet is prime,
> For soone comes age, that will her pride deflowre:
> Gather the Rose of love, whilest yet is time,
> Whilest louing thou mayst loued be with equall crime. (xii.74-75)

Unlike in Tasso's original, the topos is presented as being both endued with sinfulness, and aware of its sinfulness. The Rose's prime corresponds not to the 'bashful modestee' that conceals more than reveals, nor to the fast fading, falling bloom of the hexameter. It is the 'bold and free', broadly displaying stage of the present moment. The injunction to gather inscribes the attempt to squeeze out both naissance and decay, as if one might evade mutability, and so mortality. Paradoxically, the pun on 'deflowre' simply asks that one pluck the Rose oneself, before time does, as if this will prevent it from fading, resting unnaturally in an eternal present that is a parody of divine time. The concluding hexameter is quite different to Tasso's line and to Fairfax's rendering of it. They read, '*amiamo or quando | esser si puote riamato amando*' and 'Louing, be lou'd; embrasing, be embras'd'. Esolen's modern translation has it as 'and love while you yourself can be loved too' (XVI.15.8). The chiasmic and reciprocal love and embrace, and the power of loving in mutuality,

[48] See *Godfrey of Bulloigne* translated by Edward Fairfax, ed. Kathleen M. Lea (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), XVI.14-15. Fairfax's translation is not a source, but might be usefully viewed as an analogue. See also Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered: Gerusalemme liberata*, tr. Anthony Esolen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), the modern translation to which I refer in chapter three.

descends into ‘equall crime’. This transforms Spenser’s first clause into a kind of perpetual, symbiotic sinfulness; it does not suggest that love might redeem a shared condition of lapse.

The metaphor of time’s Rose—budding, blooming, fading—finally comes to crystallize into an unchanging material manifestation, a visual form of carnal knowledge: ‘a bed of Roses’, upon which the enchantress is laid (77.1). Comparably to Scudamour’s pervasive vision of *Concordia*, the Song of the Rose offers an epistemological possibility, a way of thinking about how one might improve one’s experience of the world, or recover a golden world. In ‘On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity’, Milton writes of the power of the ‘holy song’ of the spheres, to make time ‘run back and fetch an age of gold’, in which sin will ‘melt from earthly mould’ but he recognizes, ‘this must not yet be so’; there is no easy road back (135-138, 150).[49] In contrast, the Song of the Rose asks that we force an age of gold by resting in sin, and ignoring the trials of the world. The lay’s poignancy derives from the confession of its motive anxiety, laying bare its strategies in a way that Scudamour does not. It does not, however, even briefly consider whether there might be something to be gained from temporal loss, nor reflect on the relation between the stages in the cycle of life. It does not consider that the meaning and worth of the present is contingent upon past and futurity, in mortal life. Guyon’s own unswerving and vengeful ‘creeping’ perspective does of course contribute to transforming the ‘louely lay’ and its ‘Rose of loue’ into lovemaking alone, i.e. the image of the post-coital Acrasia on a rose strewn bed.

The trouble with the Bower and its garden is less to do with its physicality *per se*, despite this being what Guyon and the Palmer suggest, and despite its early critics finding it to be too mired in the fleshly realm. The curious, but crucial point is that change is of the essence of material things, and the Bower’s distaste for change makes it *less* comfortable with the conditions of materiality. Flesh and matter are characterized by their susceptibility to change; change is constitutive of fallen human life and its capacity for redemption. Consequently, the Song of the Rose in its yearning for temporal immobility—a type of ‘rest’ as illusory as that of Scudamour’s Concord—becomes comparable to the rule of Temperance’s destructive reason. Both impulses are driven by a desire for fixity. The invitation to piece out time, to isolate the present, and to prohibit change, growth and

[49] John Milton, ‘On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity’, *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems,* ed. John Carey (London: Routledge, 2013), 101-16. All quotations from Milton’s shorter poems refer to this edition.

decay in order to maintain sinful reciprocity is shown to be restrictive and culpable. This kind of love finds its object of desire in the human alone; it cannot extend to our 'image and likeness', our origin and end, which is God.

Consider Spenser's 'Easter Sonnet', *Amoretti* 68; its central claim is that the love between the couple is imbricate in the love that one owes to God and to fellow human beings. The sonnet's radical sense of surprise, however, derives from its structure. It does not present an anabatic ascent from lover to God as one might expect, or indeed as one finds in Book Two, for example, when Guyon insists to Arthur with obstinate neoplatonic logic that the 'picture dead' of Gloriana etched on his shield is incomparable to the 'beautie of her mind' that is 'her bountie and imperiall powre' (II.xi.3). The sonnet's final couplet instead reveals a sudden shift of address from God to the beloved: 'So let us love, deare love, lyke as we ought, | Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.' (13-14).

The injunction is inclusive, with the particular grammar of 'let' signaling both request and instruction, which prevents one from performing a purely spiritual reading of the address. Furthermore, it does not reflect the Renaissance commonplace suspicion that pleasure in, and love of, the corporeal world leads one (at best) to choose a lesser good in place of the greater.[50] Nor does it endorse the entrapping chiasm of 'equall crime' as in the maiden's lay. Similarly, Sonnet 76, an apostrophe to the lady's 'fayre bosom', addresses it variously as '[t]he nest of love, the lodging of delight, | The bowre of blisse, the paradice of pleasure, | The sacred harbour of that hevenly spright' (2-4). The sonnet peculiarly distinguishes the speaker's thoughts from the speaker, suggesting that his thoughts are afforded some 'happy rest', which he has oft 'wisht, yet never was so blest' (13-14). In other words, within this sonnet, the 'bower of bliss' is changeful in being diversely named. Furthermore, while it appears to create a desire for rest—both material and immaterial, being the lady's bosom, but also the resting place for thoughts—it is one that is temporary and one that eludes the speaker.

If love is to be a 'chiasm', the *Amoretti* suggests that it must rightly recall the Greek 'crossing', and be able to reflect many kinds of love, love of 'kinde', and love for divinity, within

[50] See William A. Oram, 'Spenser's Crowd of Cupids and the Language of Pleasure', *Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 87-104.

its lights, while also being love for one's beloved. It advocates a love that is dynamic and desirous, certainly pursuing a kind of 'rest', but making no pretense at having achieved it. The gardens of Venus' Temple and the gardens surrounding the Bower, on the other hand, both appear to offer types of rest, the one to assuage troubled minds and the other, a more literal stalling of movement within one's journey. The episodes suggest, however, that while these offers of respite are attractive, even instructive, the restlessness, the motion, and the irresolution they seek to evade—rather than interrogate or embrace—are inseparable from fallen life. These strategies, linked as they are to the agendas of individual knights, might at most temporarily achieve those aims before they are shown to be wanting.

IV. Inclination in The Garden(s) of Adonis

Both the gardens of the Temple of Venus and of the Bower comprise discrete elements, the *Concordia* set piece and the Song of the Rose, for example, that intermix with the interpretive tempers, and agendas, of their viewers. This co-creativity has been seen to seek largely monologic visions of each garden; Scudamour's recollection sought to portray the fittedness of his seizure of Amoret within the larger garden and cosmic principle of Concord; Guyon's perception strongly suggests that he takes the Bower's placement of value upon the present time to mean that the present must be deceiving and without worth. The Garden(s) of Adonis, on the other hand, announces itself to be different, and more difficult. It is mentioned on three separate occasions: in the Promethean creation and meeting of Elf and Fay in Book Two, in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* and in the argument of Book Three, canto four. These references describe it in the plural sense, whereas the intricate account in the sixth canto is in the singular.

The ambivalence around the garden being one, or many, might inscribe the poet's attempt to recall the multiple 'cultic and proverbial' gardens of Adonis that flourished in antiquity and the Renaissance, as *The Spenser Encyclopedia* fairly suggests.[51] It might also be the result of textual error. Nonetheless, this obvious discontinuity in naming accentuates the teeming variety and changefulness of the place, in terms of its topography, philosophic and narrative implications, and interpretive demands.

[51] R. T. Neuse, 'Adonis, gardens of', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 22-26.

'"What do you mean," he asked, "by gardens of Adonis?" "I mean," said Silenus, "those that women plant in pots, in honour of the lover of Aphrodite, by scraping together a little earth for a garden bed. They bloom for a little space and fade forthwith."'[52]

Would a sensible husbandman, who has seeds which he cares for and which he wishes to bear fruit, plant them with serious purpose in the heat of summer in some garden of Adonis, and delight in seeing them appear in beauty in eight days, or would he do that sort of thing, when he did it at all, only in play and for amusement? - Socrates.[53]

These passages out of Julian and Plato, quoted in Donald Cheney's classic study, relate the mythic gardens to diminution, fragility and triviality.[54] They are celebratory, in memoriam, but fast fading. They recall, in fact, the life span sung of in the Bower's Song of the Rose, yet the poet makes something quite different of these gardens. Unlike with Acrasia's Bower, there is no attempt to account for temporal loss by isolating the present moment, or feigning the absence of change and decay. As Cheney argues, Spenser—in contrast to the sources of antiquity—appears to celebrate permanence in the midst of mutability. And yet it eludes being summarized simply as some sort of deft literary legerdemain that achieves intransience by making Adonis, an archetypal figure of fruitlessness and frustration, an element of its generative core. One can hardly refute this garden's visionary quality, its 'abstractedly mythical fecundity', and its peculiar sense of remoteness from the poem of which it forms a part. Yet it cannot be reduced to a 'desperately ingenious' attempt with which to accommodate the uncertainties of human life.[55] Colin Burrow quotes Ernst Cassirer's perceptive remarks on mythic sanctity:

'All the sanctity of mythical being goes back ultimately to the sanctity of the origin… By being situated in the depths of the past, a particular content is not only established as sacred, as mythically and religiously significant, but also justified as such'.[56]

Burrow argues that the 'original fictions' of canto six, those of Chrysogonee's conception and the garden of Adonis, have just this 'recessed sanctity' afforded to them by their temporal relation to the main narrative. This insight rings true, particularly in the wake of the curtailed

[52] 'The Caesars', *The Works of the Roman Emperor Julian*, tr. W. C. Wright, 3 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1913-23), II:329D.
[53] Plato, 'Phaedrus', *Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus*, tr. H. N. Fowler (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 276B.
[54] Donald Cheney, *Spenser's Image of Nature: Wild Man and the Shepherd in 'The Faerie Queene'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 119.
[55] Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 280-1.
[56] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, tr. Ralph Manheim, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955) II.105, quoted in Burrow, 'Original Fictions: Metamorphoses in *The Faerie Queene*', *Ovid Renewed*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99-121, 111.

encounter between Timias and Belphoebe whom we leave behind. But the garden of Adonis is an original fiction—that is, original and originary—that announces itself to be i) different to Chrysogonee's creation of the twins and ii) tangentially related to a variety of fictions. We are told that the golden born nymph '[v]nawares she them conceiud, vnawares she bore: | She bore withouten paine, that she conceiu'd | Withouten pleasure:'. We are told, on the other hand, in juxtaposition to the birth of the twins, of 'The Gardins of Adonis fraught | With pleasures manifold' (III.vi.arg). The adjective 'fraught' is poised emphatically at the line's end, relaying a sense of being 'laden' but also perhaps agonizingly so, unstoppably replete with 'pleasures manifold'. 'Manifold' evidently signifies the plenitude and variety of the garden's pleasures; belatedly, but illuminatingly, it also comes to be the philosophical term for unorganized sensory particulars before they are unified by the understanding's synthetic activity.

The garden or gardens of Adonis is characterized by a blooming, perspectival resistance that will not lend itself to a single explanatory fiction, as for example, the governing narrative of Concord 'discovered' by Scudamour in the Temple of Venus. The Bower of Bliss is said (by Amavia) to be situate on a 'wandring Island', and yet we find it with ease along with the knight and his Palmer. The garden of Adonis, though 'far renowmed [sic] by fame', and known 'by triall', or experience, according to the narrator, defies being plotted in a particular location (III.vi.29). Crucially, we do not experience this garden through a specific knightly perspective, or as a part of someone's quest. It is Venus' 'ioyous Paradize | Where most she wonnes, when she on earth does dwell'; it is 'the first seminary | Of all things, that are borne to liue and dye'; it is Amoret's nursery, and Cupid's home. It also witnesses the union of Elf and Fay: solitary Elf, 'wandring through the world with weary feet' finds, and names, 'Fay', '[o]f whom all *Faeryes* spring, and fetch their lignage right' (II.x.71). The coincidence of discovery and naming, combined with the reference to both creatures as the first *authors* of elfin and women-kind, recall Adam and Eve. Indeed Elf's footfalls look forward to—and are possibly recollected in—Milton's postlapsarian couple, 'with wandring steps and slow' making their solitary way through Eden.[57] This allusion to Genesis draws

[57] Jeff Dolven (2007), 257 writes that the 'wandering steps' that close *Paradise Lost* do not provide 'the kind of ending that is easily pried away from the story; it is not a form of understanding we can apply backward to it'. Dolven suggests that it is this moment in literary history that represents the possibility 'to hope to learn by trial and error, to subscribe to an education by experience'. He argues that the 'landscape into which they

out the supposed etymological link between Adon and Eden.[58] As discussed in chapter one, however, given the conspicuous absence of the Fall in the fiction of Elf and Fay, the 'gardins of Adonis' are implicitly cast as postlapsarian. There is no sense of an 'equall crime' (as in the Song of the Rose) in this passing originary fiction. The two are already fallen; they fall in love; they found the fairy lineage that is the consummate Spenserian invention. Their acts of discovery and naming enact both senses of invention, old and new, to paradoxically come upon and invent anew at the same time. This coincidence of discovery, and the naming of one another and their progeny, is presented as more authentic than Scudamour's application of concord to his environment and actions.

The intricate portrayal of the sixth canto reveals that the garden is 'sited…in fruitfull soyle of old', as if itself both a creating seminary and the residuum of something still more primary (31.1). This is to say, it includes '[a]n huge eternal *Chaos*' that supplies the substance of life, but also 'borrow[s] matter' out of it (36.8; 37.2). This is perhaps the most heightened scene of poesis confronting itself and acknowledging its own workings in *The Faerie Queene*; great poetry must be a part of a larger creative force of turning, of troping and of mutability. Consequently, destructive Time, the 'troubler', is necessarily its constitutive centre and vital force, as we will see. The crux of the matter is of course that the Garden of Adonis is just as contrived as the Bower of Bliss or the Temple of Venus. Each indexes Edenic aspirations. Yet rather than offering 'sweetness' and sweetness alone, or pre-existent *Concordia*, it appears in multiple narratives and enfolds multiple creative sources: natural 'kinde', poesis, divine fiat, mythic generation, and chaotic stuff contend and interweave while retaining distinction.

In addition, the garden dwellers' stories intimate the garden's incompleteness and imperfection. Stanza 40 reveals that the gods, and 'great mother Venus' in particular, lament to see the place 'mard, and spoiled'. Yet no amount of pity permits her to 'find redresse for such

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walk is that of a genre neither Sidney nor Spenser nor any of their contemporaries could contemplate, the bildungsroman'. While *The Faerie Queene* is not a bildungsroman, I argue that it is deeply preoccupied with a kind of postlapsarian 'wandering', and almost compulsively stages the failure to learn by trial and error, so that the reader might learn by experience. And given that Guyon is clearly a recipient of grace at certain points in the poem, for example, in the cupid-like angel episode, this difference between elfin and readerly interpretation cannot be fully subsumed into Dolven's observation of learning at the expense of character.

[58] See 'Adonis, gardens of', *Spenser Encyclopedia*. The Garden of Adonis is also linked to Eden through its use of the language of Genesis in III.vi, for example, the suggestion that it contains every plant and 'endlesse progeny', or that it remembers God's command to go forth and multiply (III.vi.30-34).

despight'; she walks through the garden, one fiction among many. Donald Cheney proposes that Amoret's capture might indicate some inadequacy in her education within the garden.[59] Reared up in 'trew femininitee' and 'all the lore of loue', sister to Pleasure and daughter of the winged boy in his familial and playful form, she is unprepared for the cupid of courtly domination and civil strife (51). Despite the claim in *Colin Clout* that Cupid, growing in the garden of Adonis, 'his owne perfection wrought', we see that the garden's Cupid is but one aspect of the god (805). The multiplicity and partiality of creative and narrative accounts willfully evades a hegemonic perspective and suggests that each contender acknowledge its fictive status, its inventiveness. This is why the poet writes of the 'Long worke…. Here to account the endlesse progeny' (30.7). The impossibility is not merely to do with quantity, but also to do with difference and alteration. In being associated with no one guest in particular, the Garden of Adonis overtly demands epistemological labour.[60]

The diverging sources within or about the garden do not, I believe, compete to be the Supreme Fiction of this place, or of the poem. Rather, they seem to recognize that any claims to truth might only be made through multiple fictions. When the erected wit proliferates in different directions and will and understanding are stalled from synthesizing, when mind cannot prevail over poetry's matter, what are we left with? This is uniquely Spenserian allegory; it does not present itself as mimetic of, or as the material manifestation of, immaterial Ideas or transcendent truth. Nor does it promise to be a conduit to such truth. As Rosalie Colie noted, the purest realm of Being, Platonically speaking, is neither mentioned nor implied here.[61] Luther's notorious indictment of allegory, that it allows readers to 'think that they are in the middle of Paradise and on God's lap whenever they indulge in such speculations', could not be less true of this avowedly fallen garden. I do not quite suggest that this is 'a garden of mind, a garden of thought', or an image 'of the life and motions of human thought'.[62] It asks instead that we sidestep thought as acquisitive, and avoid the fashioning, and fastening, of logical principles in the manner of Guyon and Scudamour. It asks that

[59] Cheney (1966), 122.
[60] This is significantly different to the English Romantic readings of Spenser, encapsulated perhaps in William Hazlitt's contention that Spenser is, of all the poets, 'the most poetical', precisely because his poetry 'was not active; it is inspired by the love of ease'. See *Spenser: Selections* ed. W. L. Renwick (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 1.
[61] Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 335.
[62] Gross (2009), 355.

we discover ways with which to engage with poetry's matter that do not conclude in a graspable abstraction.[63]

The Garden of Adonis appears to name this activity, 'inclination'. This particular term appears only twice in the entirety of Spenser's oeuvre, both instances in *The Faerie Queene*. Andrew Wadoski pauses over the term 'inclination' in the Garden of Adonis—used to describe the arbor in the garden's centre—and suggestively describes it as 'the relaxing of the mind to natural instinct', despite the fact that it is used in relation to trees. Wadoski does not comment upon the uniqueness of the term in Spenser's writing, but argues that throughout the poem, 'images of *concordia discors* such as the birds around Venus's temple and Mt. Acidale are depicted as an abandonment of self-interest to Venus's "pricking," allowing natural inclination to overtake that self and to govern all action'.[64] Wadoski acknowledges that this notion seems more in keeping with Romantic valorizations of the inward self than with Renaissance moral psychology, but argues that the motivation between Spenser's 'inclination', in the diffuse sense that he describes it, is 'deeply orthodox'. He speculates that Spenser would argue that 'erected wit', 'insofar as it is manifest in allegorical poetry, is nothing but fiction, inextricably entwined with the interests of the "infected will", perhaps nothing more than a doubling or mirror of that will deceptively masquerading as something more or better than what it actually is'.

Spenser's inclination, therefore, is a kind of memory, 'of an intuition or the feeling of something ancient and prior to anything we tangibly know about ourselves…the spark that draws us like a magnet towards the locus of our creation'.[65] This provides a compelling critical narrative and, Wadoski notes, acts to 'theologize' Gordon Teskey's oft-quoted, subtle intuitions regarding 'courtesy and thinking' in *The Faerie Queene*, in which he uses Martin Heidegger's language to explore how Spenser's poetry encourages one to relax the mind away from itself.[66] This is an elegant connection, although the point might be more strongly supported with evidence from the garden itself, whose flora is said to 'remember well the mightie word', first spoken by God, that 'bad them to increase and multiply'. Following this description of the plants in general, it is likely

[63] See Teskey, '"And therefore as a stranger give it welcome": Courtesy and Thinking', *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003), 343-59.
[64] Wadoski (2008), 155.
[65] *Ibid*., 156.
[66] Teskey (2003), *passim*.

that the obviously special arbour, formed out of the trees' 'owne inclination', is intelligible in theological terms.

The term 'inclination' is used, however, on only two occasions, and two quite different occasions. A more detailed consideration of these instances, coupled with a more searching discussion of what 'inclination' might signify, could clarify and enrich our reading of the poem, and the extent of its ambitions. I begin with the second example of 'inclination', in the Legend of Courtesy, with regards to its eponymous knight Calidore. We are told that, 'Calidore of courteous inclination | Tooke *Coridon*, and set him in his place, | That he should lead the daunce, as was his fashion;' (VI.ix.42.1). The *OED* offers several senses of the noun, 'inclination'. The first set of senses are those relating to tendency, disposition, or preference, broadly divided into, '[t]he overall or innate disposition of a person or animal; nature, character' and 'a tendency, disposition to behave, think, feel, etc., in a particular way; a readiness or willingness to do something'.[67] The first, said to be obsolete, and frequently attributed to the influence of the planets, stars, and humours, draws on the Aristotelian sense of the term, as it is found in *De Caelo* (*On The Heavens*) and the *Physics* (Gr. ῥοπή, 'inclination'). Helen Lang defines it powerfully and succinctly: 'Inclination is nothing other than an [intrinsic] ability to be moved toward, or to rest in its proper place: the nature of each element'.[68] We will return to this idea.

Calidore, 'of courteous inclination', presents a complex case. Being the knight of courtesy within the legend of courtesy, one might reasonably assume that the courteous inclination refers to his innate disposition or nature. Yet Book Six opens anxiously and contradictorily. It claims, as we have previously noted, that 'vertues seat is deepe within the mynd, | And not in outward shows, but inward thoughts defynd'—but how does one access such inward thoughts if not through outward shows? Courtesy is also said to be both of the fairest of flowers, 'planted in earth' by God—suggestive of the garden of Adonis—and to be 'of court', abounding amongst the nobility, as is suggested by its name (VI.Pro.3; VI.i.1). Courtesy is divinely, organically and socio-hierarchically textured all at once. To add to the confusion, we are told that it is 'now so farre from that, which

[67] See *OED*, s. v. 'inclination', n.1a and b.
[68] Helen S. Lang, *The Order of Nature in Aristotle's Physics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 171. The Greek term ῥοπή has also been translated as 'impetus' and/or 'tendency'; Lang argues that 'inclination' is a more appropriate rendering to illuminate the specific nuance of natural as opposed to violent motion.

then it was, | That it indeed is nought but forgerie, | Fashioned to please the eies of them, that pas' (VI.Pro.5). Both what the virtue is, and how it might be verified, is called into question. There is a comparable lack of clarity when Calidore is first described,

> In whom it seemes, that gentlenesse of spright
> And manners mylde were planted naturall;
> To which he adding comely guize withal,
> And gracious speach, did steale mens hearts away. (VI.i.2.3-6)

At first glance the verse reads as though his 'comely guize' and 'gracious speach' act as supplements or even ornaments to his 'naturall' gentleness. Upon closer examination, the mildness and gentleness only 'seem' as if planted naturally. Calidore's artifice, rather than nature, is the verifiable quality, and the effect—stealing hearts—is used, optimistically, to infer a 'natural' and positive cause. The Legend of Courtesy is in fact rife with examples of the disjunction between intent and outward show. In addition, the deceptiveness involved in Calidore's own courtesy is highlighted; recall, for example, the 'counter-cast of slight' that he is said to 'deuize', '[t]o giue faire colour' (i.e.) conceal the lady Priscilla's love for Adeline from her father (VI.vi.16). Courtesy is revealed to be an art of colouring, of blandishment, in the service of ensuring that social norms seem to be preserved. Similarly, although Calidore is said to '[hang]' upon old Meliboe's words, 'his hungry eye was always bent' upon the man's daughter. This is rendered particularly ironic as Meliboe emphasizes contentment with what one has, as Calidore loses himself in raptures over Pastorella. Finally, turning to the example in which his 'courteous inclination' is recognized, we note that it is followed by another act of 'deuize', or calculation. He gallantly insists that his rival in love, Coridon, should lead the dancing; he bests Coridon in the shepherd games but deliberately gives him the oaken victors' crown 'and said he wonne it well', allowing his rival to wear it well, despite not having won it at all. Calidore carries himself in such a manner that demands commendation and sows the seeds of 'perfect loue' in Pastorella (VI.ix.42-46). The strategic bent of Calidore's courtesy is exposed, even at the very moment when it is named 'inclination'. Its eponymous hero is but one of the ways in which the Legend of Courtesy is preoccupied with the discovery of virtue to be an organic, innate disposition, but comes up instead with a readiness to certain kinds of outward show, directed by circumstance and agenda. Returning to the Garden of

Adonis, we find the first appearance of 'inclination' in Spenser's poetry, and it is unlike that of Calidore's.

While the knight of Courtesy is inclined to smoothing things over, at consolation, the garden is a repository of contradiction. It contains being that in itself 'eternall moisture' does 'imply' (vegetal life, literal and metaphoric), but also the pit of chaos from which matter must be borrowed, and first being fetched, with violence ('ketch', 'inuade'; III.vi.34, 37). It requires no 'Gardiner to sett, or sow', yet is marked by 'wicked *Tyme*' who with his scythe, seems much like a gardener (vi.34, 39). It is also a repository of loss, with destructive Time and the losses it incurs, being named after the lost lover of Venus, and preserving at its centre the flowers 'which sad louers were transformed of yore' (vi.39; 45). Yet Time, its 'great enimy', is also said to 'spring' in the garden, as if to suggest some sympathy between the winged troubler and the flowering herbs he mows down. The emphasis on loss results in an intimation of recovery and an emphasis on desire, produced out of this lack. It tells us that 'All that to come into the world desire'. The hyperbaton deliberately places the verb at the line's end so as to concurrently suggest that things desire to come into the world, and that things in the world are characterized by their desire (32.2). Similarly, stanza 41 discloses that 'here all plenty, and all pleasure flowes, | And sweete loue gentle fitts emongst them throwes'. The obvious absence of any subject with which to anchor the pleasure or fits of love suggest that they are somehow material forces irreducible to the effect of creaturely activity, or to a promissory enticement to generation.

This vital image of matter that remembers loss and so desires is central to the garden's law, a law that is boldly stated, seemingly intuited, rather than proved in any way: 'All things decay in time, and to their end do draw'. This is one of the passage's most poignant puns, given that 'their end' could refer to the end of life, or to their final cause. It is a governing idea of Spenser's poem, articulated previously in Book One when, after Arthur has dreamt of—or been visited by—'the Queene of Fairies', he is '[sure]' that her love was 'bent' to him, and 'when iust time expired should appeare'. There is no guarantee that these ends coincide, only the hope that they may. The Bower's yearning to enshrine the present moment, or Venus's Temple to exist in the image of *Concord*, are both longings for time that does not suffer change. The garden of Adonis recognizes the gains allowed by time's changes and temporal loss, generative of hope, desire, creative possibility, and

the remembrance of 'the mighty word', '[t]hat bad them to increase and multiply', an injunction that requires corporeal response.

Within the very centre of this fallen paradise, we encounter what seems to be the *OED*'s first and 'obsolete' sense of 'inclination', Aristotle's 'nature' or innate disposition:

> And in the thickest couert of that shade,
> There was a pleasant arbour, not by art,
> But of the trees *owne inclination* made,
> Which knitting their rancke braunches part to part,
> With wanton yuie twyne entrayld athwart,
> And Eglantine, and Caprifole emong,
> Fashiond aboue within their inmost part,
> That nether Phoebus beams could through the[m] throng,
> Nor Aeolus sharp blast could worke them any wrong. (44; emphasis added).

This description is an echo of the account of Belphoebe: 'Ne suffred she the Middayes scorching powre, | Ne the sharp Northerne wind thereon to showre' (51.4-5). With regards to Belphoebe, however, the impenetrability is related to her upbringing by Dame *Phoebe*'s nymph, in 'perfect Maydenhead'. In the case of the garden's arbour, it is not to do with the cultivation of chastity, but 'of the trees owne inclination'. The noun puns seamlessly, inscribing both the inward tug felt by the trees, as well as their sloping form, so that they might intertwine and create the arbour. This could be read as an instance of anthropomorphosis, the poet conceals his 'art', and renders the trees as desiring. And of course, being the product of the poet's pen it inevitably is anthropomorphic, artificial in some way. Yet the peculiarities of the language ask one to think differently. The adjectives 'rancke' and 'wanton' for example, coupled with the verbs 'knitting' and 'entrayle', invoke a similar description of an 'arber' in the Bower of Bliss, within which Cymochles sojourns in Book Two. They could easily belong to a lexical field of lewdness, particularly in *The Faerie Queene*, but one feels that they do not. The effect is comparable to the 'mazy error' of the rivers of Milton's Eden, or his Eve's 'wanton ringlets' waving (*PL* 4.239, 306). As critics observed of Milton decades ago, it is recognizable as an attempt to recover or represent something of an earlier purity, or innocence, through the intimation of specific meaning and unmeaning; error has not yet come to mean mistake or wrongdoing.

Although, as I have emphasized, this garden makes no pretense at being prelapsarian, the effect of the rank and wanton branches so inclined into a natural arbour is one of recovery. They

make something new—an arbour—but their act of making is simultaneously a kind of remembrance. They are related to the tug and flow of pleasure, and fits of love in the garden, a kind of materially felt desire.[69] 'Inclination' comes to be understood, in Kantian terms, as narrowly opposed to reason. I do not suggest that this is the case in the gardens of Adonis, although the attribution of natural inclination to a vegetal, rather than rational life form may be telling. The noun 'inclination' and its relation to 'their inmost part' speaks to the movement of elements as described in the *Physics*.[70] In the *Physics* II, Aristotle depicts the nature of each element to be unique, that is, it belongs to each element to be moved to its proper place.[71] In the Mutabilitie Cantos, Dame Nature echoes this sentiment more generally as she asserts that all things '[d]oe worke their owne perfection', and are thus not truly ruled by the haphazardness of 'Change' (VII.vii.58.7.). Spenser appears to suggest, through his use of 'inclination' in this garden, that as fire, by nature, is carried to the empyrean, and river to sea, so created beings and creaturely life to creation perfected, or creation repaired.

It is not equivalent to human memory, which is a mental faculty, but more like a kind of material memory.[72] As previously observed, this canto explicitly tells us that the plants of this garden 'remember well the mightie word', first spoken by God, that bad them to increase and multiply. This description of the memory of flora in general suggests that the 'inclination' of the trees, which form the central arbour, is likely to be divinely ordained, or directed. Augustine's use of the idea of the 'movement' or 'gravitation' of all bodies to their 'proper place' in order to convey

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[69] In the episode of the giant with the scales in Book Five, Artegall challenges the giant to 'weigh the thought which from man's mind doth flow' (V.ii.43). Teskey perceptively notes that thought flows *from*, rather than within, the mind. This distinction suggests the strange *materiality* of Spenserian thought, comparable to the flow of love and pleasure. See 'Thinking Moments in *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies* 22 (2007), 103-25, 120.

[70] The term occurs seven times in *De Caelo*: Book II: 1.284a25, 14.297a28, b7, 10, 14; Book III: 2.301a.22, 24, 6.305a25; Book IV: 1.307b33. See Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, tr. W. K. C. Guthrie (Cambridge MA Harvard University Press, 1939).

[71] Aristotle, *Physics*, tr. Francis M. Cornford, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1952-7), I: II.1.193b, II.2.194b.

[72] John Calvin writes that 'there exists in the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renews and occasionally enlarges'. While Calvin's statement leads primarily to the condemnation by one's conscience if one does not 'consecrate [one's] life to his service', his recognition of 'natural instinct' is suggestive of Aristotle's elemental law. This is not to suggest that their ideas are equivalent as Calvin does go on to criticize Aristotle's 'frigid doctrine' that chains soul to body. It is simply to point out that the 'law of being' that Calvin identifies, and the notion that 'all things…to their end do draw' that Spenser versifies, appear to resonate with Aristotle's explanation of the nature of elements in the *Physics.* See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (London: James Clarke, 1953), I:43, 48, 53 (1.3-5).

the force of love in human beings, which clearly draws upon both Aristotle's elemental 'inclination', as well as Plato's association of human desire with cosmological forces, may be more clarifying:

> Under its own weight a body gravitates to its proper place; that gravitation is not always downward, but rather to that proper place. Fire's natural path is upward, that of stone is downward…What is out of its proper place is restless; once in its proper place it finds rest. My love is my gravitational force; wherever I am carried, it is love that carries me.[73]

The trees' own inclination might be read as representing the love of creation towards its maker, forming a unique structure that the forces of the pagan gods cannot penetrate. As we will see in chapter five, this design influences the nuptial bower in Milton's Eden. Yet in *The Faerie Queene*, the fact that 'inclination' is used in this way only in relation to the garden's trees emphasizes the absence of its use with regards to human characters.

As witnessed in the examples of Scudamour and Guyon, their interpretive acts are not afforded the gravitational certainty of 'inclination'. We are told that neither Pheobus' beams nor Aeolus' sharp blast can breach this extraordinary arbour. In the similar description of Belpheobe, it is simply heat and wind that are barred. The particular naming of the gods suggests that this moment is not quite like that of the Bower, for example, which bans severe climes. It seems to imply that the mythologies, the fictions, the inventions that these names represent, and the explanations that they offer, are unable to traverse the threshold of inclination. As necessary as multiple and rivalrous inventions are to Spenser's poetry and this poem's world, they cannot all perform the activity of inclination, in which the creative impulse and the discovery of Spirit coincide.[74] Aristotle names this true activity: when an element reaches its proper place, its actuality, then activity ensues. In this light, in the fullest expression of being, activity is rest, and rest is ever active. The garden of Adonis implies and inspires this understanding of what it might be to achieve real 'rest'—the rest of 'Sabaoths sight', as the eighth canto of Mutabilitie has it—as distinguished from its illusory counterparts in Venus' Temple or the Bower of Bliss.

[73] Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), II: xiii.9.10.
[74] Teskey's (2003), 357 description of *The Faerie Queene* is suggestive: 'an intellectual action: a poetic releasement of the self for moving into nearness with wisdom'. If we reduce the emphasis on it being a purely intellectual action, we might imagine how the poem, in all its diverse inventiveness, aspires to moments of inclination that can only be realized through the act of reading.

Chapter Three
'That faire Hermaphrodite': Reading with Love in *The Faerie Queene*

He thought he kept the universe alone;
For all the voice in answer he could wake
Was but the mocking echo of his own
From some tree-hidden cliff across the lake.
Some morning from the boulder-broken beach
He would cry out on life, that what it wants
Is not its own love back in copy speech,
But counter-love, original response.
(Robert Frost)

I. Concord and its Discontents

This chapter argues that the image of the Hermaphrodite, or Androgyne, rather than the easily assumed image of Concord, is the poem's governing motif. In doing so it troubles the critical consensus articulated by Thomas Roche that the 'analogical nature of the universe' is the basis for allegorical reading.[1] Although concord's 'golden chain' is conceived of as a heaven-sanctioned linking of virtues, it is shown to be crafted out of the partisan attitudes and politic reactions of individual knights, which leaves it vulnerable to disintegration upon the divergence of their aims. This discrepancy is at its clearest at the opening of Book Three, when Arthur and Guyon encounter Britomart. Britomart appears to replace Arthur in aiding knights, and therefore brings a quality other than 'reason' (associated with Arthur), to her quests.[2] In exposing how the manipulation of metaphysical claims might reinforce partisan power, *The Faerie Queene* does not disavow its Platonic heritage. Rather, it engages deeply with the polyphony of Plato's dialogues and their Renaissance rewritings in an attempt to represent how providence might be expressed in the fallen world and how embodied beings might navigate creation, with specific reference to the motif of the hermaphrodite. Consequently, this chapter explores Spenser's engagements with the foundational fables of the hermaphrodite and androgyne from Ovid and Plato and the succeeding transformations

[1] By this Roche means that in 'an hierarchical universe where each thing has a fixed place the relationship of any two things in the same world or sphere may adumbrate the relationship of two other things in another world or sphere'. In 'allegorical reading…words must represent this basic analogical relationship'. See Thomas P. Roche, *The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 8. The problem with this 'analogical' assumption is that it prejudges the logic of relation between the corporeal and metaphysical realms.
[2] Arthur is also associated with Grace on several occasions, but my line of analysis concentrates on his connection to reason.

in the writings of sixteenth century Italian commentators.[3] It argues that the 'hermaphrodite' is neither actualized nor directly named (except in the subjunctive mood), but recurs in two ways: (i) in the look of divine figures such as Venus, Nature, Genius and (ii) as momentary relations between mortal actors. It is used therefore, not only as an object of representation, but as a condition of representation (i.e. an allusion that governs interactions) that inspires heroic action, particularly in terms of Britomart's development. It is an image aspired to, but unachieved, in the lives of the poem's protagonists.

This first section considers the articulation and disarticulation of Concord and its relation to Britomart's separation from Arthur and Guyon. Section two contextualises the idea of the hermaphrodite, and androgyne, to draw out its possible implications, both figural and physical. Section three traces the shifting significance of the hermaphrodite as a condition of representation in relation to the Redcrosse knight. It begins with an example in which the bodies involved ask to be read as transparent signs of spiritual waste. It concludes with a scene that offers a momentary, but honorable union between Britomart and Redcrosse, in which their bodies are conceived of as both fleshly *and* signifying beyond themselves. This development attests to the Redcrosse knight's improving interpretive judgment in terms of reading and action. Section four analyses Britomart's fall into love and the ways in which it becomes not only erotically, but also ontologically and epistemologically significant to her quest. Augustine's theory of signs in *De doctrina Christiana* provides a useful framework with which to read the evolving significations of Britomart's development. Finally, the fifth section explores how and why the hermaphrodite is never fully realized in the mortal world of *The Faerie Queene* as we have it, offering a new understanding of Scudamour and Amoret's iconic embrace. This chapter closes with a reading of the only figure to materialize the ideal androgyne, which is continually promised and withdrawn by the poem: Dame Nature of the mythic cantos of Mutabilitie.

[3] Although there is no direct evidence for how Spenser acquired his extensive knowledge of Italian, he probably began his studies at Cambridge in the early 1570s. Based on Spenser's earliest poems (translated from French sources), Jason Lawrence suggests that Spenser did not know Italian when he arrived at Pembroke Hall, but was familiar with it a decade later. See Lawrence, *Who the Devil Taught thee so much Italian*: *Italian Language Learning and Literary Imitation in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 12-13.

While the provocative Proem to Book Two anticipates, and roundly mocks, inadequate readers of Faeryland's ways, the Proem to the Legend of Chastity opens as if by necessity, 'It *falls* me here to write of Chastity'. In light of Guyon's vision of the Bower and its constituent verse as inherently sexually malignant—in Lewis' formulation, 'the whole sexual nature in disease'—the poet's voice might index an obligation to write of 'chastity', or celibacy, as an antidote of sorts.[4] And indeed as the poet asks, 'what needes me fetch from *Faery* | Forreine ensamples… Sith it is shrined in my Soueraines brest[?]', he sings in praise of his queen's virginity of great renown (III.Pro.1). In referencing his 'humble quill', Spenser expresses the conventional *topos* of inadequacy. Yet in begging the pardon of his 'dredd Souerayne' because he cannot 'figure playne' her glory, and in particular her abstemious chastity, he places her in the realm of Platonic ideas. The verb 'shrined' indicates the ontological gulf between this kind of chastity and the poem's fallen Faeryland. This deft verbal maneuver, which casts the queen into the heavenly realm, is of course eulogizing, but it is not the remit within which his quill operates. She is, in other words, a symbol that is useless to the Legend of Britomart because it cannot descend to operate in the poem's world.

A crucial moment of hermeneutic conversion recorded in Augustine's *Confessions* underlies this tacit critique of the incapacity of Platonic ideas to operate effectively in the phenomenal world.[5] In the seventh book, Augustine realizes that the *libri Platonici* do not account for the most important events in human history: that the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and died on the cross. Consequently, these books cannot teach the humility of the *logos*, and the 'sublimity' of their 'grander' teaching demonstrates how 'they have come to nothing with their powers of reason'.[6] In this I part ways with Kenneth Borris's thesis that,

> [t]o exempt his own work from the censures of poetry current in early modern cultural politics, Spenser embraces a poetic of idealized imitation that seeks to represent ideals rather than conventional reality, and thus promote pursuit of virtue and truth.[7]

[4] Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 415.
[5] James Schiavone, 'Spenser's Augustine', *Spenser Studies* 20 (2005), 277-91 confirms the availability of a complete ten-volume set of Erasmus's edition of Augustine's *Opera* in Pembroke College Library during Spenser's time.
[6] Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), II: VII.9.14.
[7] Borris, 'Platonism and Spenser's Poetic: Idealized Imitation, Merlin's Mirror, and the Florimells', *Spenser Studies* 24 (2008), 209-69, 209. See also *Visionary Spenser and the Poetics of Early Modern Platonism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

The poet will 'shadow' chastity 'in colourd showes', which is to say, he will beget its expression in the phenomenal, fallen world. In declaring that he will 'fitt' his fancy to 'present persons', he refers both to his queen, *and* to the lives within his poem, as the pun on 'fitt' implies (III.Pr.3). These representations will necessarily differ from the chastity enshrined in his remote and dread Sovereign's heart, as they negotiate between the demands of ideas, the demands of narrative action and of history, all of which are enmattered. Spenser's shadowing demands direct encounters with worldly matter and reveals the necessity of such encounters, their potential to be reformative. These encounters involve the possibility of sexual love, and significantly, of breeding. Thus, the proem pointedly concludes with an invitation to Eliza to see herself within (the absent) Gloriana and the militantly chaste Belphoebe. Britomart, the titular knight of Chastity is conspicuously not named one of the queen's 'mirrours more then one'. Nor is her quest, unlike those of her male counterparts, at the Faery Queen's behest. Just as we glimpsed the subtle ties by which Guyon is aligned with Gloriana, we note here that Britomart is detached from her.[8]

That the hoggish Grill stays stubbornly put at the close of Book Two, while Acrasia is bound and ferried into the next Legend is extremely awkward. The first canto reports that Guyon sent her away with 'a strong gard' to Faery court. Given that *akrasia* (incontinence, or appetitive desire overwhelming self-command) is particularly named in the *Republic* as 'one of the principle dangers to a well-governed state', the image of the enchantress riding through Faeryland's ways reiterates that one is not in an ideal state from which vices can be banished, but a phenomenal one in which their effects are experienced.[9] Consequently, Acrasia's quality surfaces in the actions of the Faery knight (and Briton Prince) in the very same stanza in which she is dismissed. As C. D. C. Reeve puts it, within Plato's concept of *akrasia* in the *Republic*, the 'desires that cause incontinent action do not aim specifically at the bad, which is not their natural object, but at food, drink, sex, or

[8] Gloriana's relationship to Book Three (Chastity) is different from her relationship to Book One (Holiness). The hermit Contemplation, in particular, tells the Redcrosse knight that in terms of his quest, she is 'heauenly borne, and heauen may iustly vaunt', placing her at the intersection of divinity and mortality (I.x.59). Contemplation's speech works to distinguish the 'glory' of Gloriana's court from the self-glorification of the House of Pride. See Paul Suttie, 'Edmund Spenser's Political Pragmatism', *Studies in Philology* 95/1 (1998), 56-76, esp. 67-71. See also Borris (2017), 177: 'whatever the shortcomings of the Elizabethan state and the monarch herself, the anagogical application [of Gloriana] can continue to validate the poem's celebration of English potential epitomized in faery'. I do not, however, agree with Borris's contention that Gloriana is immovably the ultimate focus of aspiration in the poem.

[9] R. A. McCabe, 'Spenser, Plato and the Poetics of State', *Spenser Studies* 24 (2008), 433-53, 436.

honour, which may, in some circumstances, happen to be bad'.[10] One might also note that had Arthur travelled with Acrasia to Faery Court, he might have had a more likely chance of sighting its queen. But instead, Guyon and Arthur 'betooke another way, | To make more triall of [their] hardiment, | And seek aduentures' (III.i.2.7-9). Their victories are not detailed, but compressed into a single stanza by means of a catalog of abstractions: they travelled '[w]here daungers dwelt, and perils…wonne, | To hunt for glory and renowmed prayse…they honour euer wonne' (i.3). The list-like form, the recurrence of 'many', and the want of specificity combine to diminish the impact of their triumphs.

We are pulled all suddenly into the present, an open plain, on which they see a knight and his aged squire. This shift does not bring further victories to the elfin knight and Prince. Guyon beseeches Arthur who grants him the 'grace' to charge the new knight (5.2). The noun is clearly used to denote 'favour' in this context, but inevitably alludes to Arthur's role as an instrument of divine grace in previous situations. In this moment, he does not—and presumably cannot—ensure his companion's success. Guyon begins his own legend by mistakenly attacking Redcrosse; he wrongly charges once more. As Guyon 'sharpely…spurne[s] [sic]' his steed whose 'fiery feet' are said to 'burne | the verdant gras', one remembers the intemperate rage in which he burnt down the Bower. His 'revenging rage' is the same mood in which he wrought his 'dew vengeance' against Acrasia (III.i.11.2, II.xii.61.11). Guyon's inexplicable anger recalls Augustine's comments concerning lust; he writes, '[e]ven anger itself…is nothing but a lust for revenge'. There are many different kinds of lust, including anger, and the lust of 'winning at any price', named obstinacy.[11] In this light, Guyon's reaction is dangerously similar to the very energies he condemned in the Bower.

The alignment of Arthur's favour with Guyon's actions is correspondingly damaging. The seepage of destructive energy from the Legend of Temperance is squarely met: 'ere well he was aware, | Nigh a speares length behind his crouper fell' (6.6-7). The fall is an inglorious one, leaving him 'dishonored…sore'. Suspecting as one might that the new knight is the knight of chastity, this unseating i) reframes Guyon's actions as worthy of criticism and ii) suggests that the virtue of

[10] C. D. C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's ''Republic''* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 134.
[11] Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, eds. T. E. Page et al., 7 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-72), vol. IV, tr. Philip Levine: XIV.15.

chastity is both incompatible with, and more powerful—or at least, immediately necessary—than the anti-eroticism of the knight of maidenhead. The narrator discloses that the knight in question is 'the famous *Britomart'* (8.6). This formulation echoes the description of Arthur as 'The famous Briton Prince' and supports Thomas Roche's suggestion that Britomart begins to replace Arthur in aiding individual knights.[12]

Arthur is persistently associated with the rational faculty, particularly in the poem's first two books: it is his 'goodly reason, and well guided speach' that save Una from Despair's call in Book One, and with 'better reason' that he protects Guyon from the pagan brothers in Book Two, although we have seen that Guyon was not unaffected by them (I.vii.42.1; II.viii.26.6). Generally considered a 'humanist's humanist', Spenser shared in the values articulated by the philosophers at the fore of the Italian Renaissance.[13] They believed, as Tullia Giersberg writes, in Thomas Elyot's words, that on account of the 'questing curiosity of his reason, and by the light of his intelligence,' man is 'lesse than god almyghty, and excellynge not withstanding al other creatures in erth'.[14] Giersberg shows convincingly how figures like Grylle, the Salvage Man and Talus raise questions about the limits of what a humanism based solely in reason and eloquence can achieve, seeing Book Five as a particularly severe test of this humanist project. Yet the first canto of Book Three appears to acknowledge the limits of reason alone, and suggest a complement, if not an alternative. In being heralded as a kind of substitute for the prince—and in defeating Guyon despite him having purchased Arthur's 'grace'—Britomart's entrance implies that she will bring a quality other than reason with which to serve virtue and living aright, to pursue her own quest. And so in first introducing the martial Britonesse to the reader, the narrator tells that she is in Faeryland 'To seeke her louer… Whose image shee had seene in *Venus* looking glas' (8.8-9). At this moment we might usefully remember Tasso's use of the looking glass. In the *Liberata*, Rinaldo—in Armida's

[12] Roche, 197.
[13] The phrase is Ayesha Ramachandran's, in 'Humanism and its Discontents', *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015), 3-19, 3.
[14] Tullia Giersberg, '"The art of mightie words, that men can charme": Language, Reason, and Humanity in *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015), 57-75, 58. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Gouernour, deuysed by syr Thomas Elyot knight* (London, 1537), 122.

garden—is faced with a diamond shield-mirror, 'the brilliant shield', in which he is made to see himself as tressed up and tasseled, or as Tasso writes, 'what he was' (16.30).[15]

Tasso's shield is unambiguous; it shows Rinaldo a particular, morally directed image of himself, which results in his departure and the garden's dissolution. When Spenser rewrites Armida's garden as the Bower of Bliss, it seems as if Guyon adopts the role of Tasso's shield. He reflects, as I have shown, a monologic vision of all he encounters, and has to confront Verdant—feminized, and sans sword, like Rinaldo—with the error of his ways. Yet Guyon cannot truly function like the magic object; the bower cannot simply dissolve. Instead, it is broken and burned bit by bit, revealing the violence underlying Tasso's vanishing garden.[16] The mirror as an object appears as '*Venus* looking glas' in which Britomart first sees the beloved she must seek. In the argument to canto ii, it is referred to as '[t]he wondrous myrrhour, by which she | in love with him did fall', as if it were the cause; soon after, it is described as 'round and hollow…and seemd a world of glas' (III.ii.19.8-9). Rather than an instrument of repulsion, it is one of attraction. Formed spherical and hollow like world, or womb, it is prophetic—pregnant with futurity—rather than merely reflective. Where Guyon as shield-mirror razes erotic energies in all forms, Britomart's glass compels her to pursue her erotic longings. The change Guyon brings to the people, objects and place he destroys is superficial, rather than constitutional; ruination, rather than reformation. The glass, as we will see, effects a constitutional change in the knight of Chastity.[17] Her love and desire is precisely the ground upon which her growth and heroism springs, and by which she acquires self-knowledge.[18] This difference suggests that the legend of Chastity needs to work towards an understanding of sexual desire as regenerative, to repair the ruins of Book Two.

To return to canto one, before we can work out what *Venus* looking glas' might be, we are abruptly returned to Guyon's uncontrolled fury: '[f]ull of disdainefull wrath', 'revenge',

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[15] Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered: Gerusalemme liberata*, tr. Anthony Esolen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000). All English quotations from the *Liberata* are taken from this edition, and line references will be given parenthetically.

[16] See Andrew Wadoski, 'Spenser, Tasso and the Ethics of Allegory', *Modern Philology* 111/3 (2014), 365-83 for an insightful account of how 'the *Liberata* forced Spenser to…think of allegory not merely as the means through which ethical ideals are projected into images but as an ethical act caught up in the ambiguities that attend all social praxis' (365).

[17] Spenser famously proffers the poem to his Queen as a mirror held up to herself and her land. On the psychology of icon-making, and Spenser's 'mirrours more then one', see McCabe, *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 7-18.

[18] Wadoski (2014), 383 notes that Spenser's mirror alters Tasso's version of the object: 'Britomart's mirror figures…the complex world of wonders, pleasures, and desires for which we cannot account'.

'reprochefull shame', 'reuenging rage', 'wrathfull will'. The Palmer, by his 'mightie Science', can see the 'secret vertue' and deadliness of Britomart's weapon, and yet his 'fayre [perswasions]' or governing counsel has no effect on Guyon (III.i.10, 11).[19] The Prince has more success. Although we are told that he assuages Guyon's 'wrathfull will' with *reason,* Arthur's response is framed as one tactfully mollifying a peevish child: he 'laid the blame, not to his carriage, | But to his starting steed…And to the ill purueyance of his page'. One could, in agreement with Hamilton's notes, suggest that the horse signifies the unruly passions, but the wealth of detail in apportioning blame—not to mention Guyon's past behavior—suggests otherwise. In either case, the knight of Temperance is being held accountable. And would either Palmer or Prince have attempted to pacify had they thought Guyon might prove the victor? It is upon this rickety foundation that reconcilement is said to be 'knitt, | Through goodly temperaunce, and affection chaste'. Arthur, too, is placed in this accord, 'And with that golden chaine of concord tyde' (12).

This conclusion summons the 'goodly golden chayne, wherewith yfere | The vertues linked are in louely wize' as described in Book One.[20] Chapter One explored how the theory of the two royal bodies, for example, was being called into question as a stable metaphysical framework upon which to base moral interpretation. In this case, rather than knightly behaviour (and the virtues they are said to represent) replicating a pre-existing order of *Concordia*, the goodly chain is tied in accordance with the self-interested actions of the 'goodly' knights. The sequence of 'original' and 'copy' is reversed, as the cosmic harmony appears to imitate or indeed be initiated by pragmatic socio-political agreements.[21] This reading troubles the classic critical proposition that the assumed

[19] Guyon now looks a little like Grille, if we read Grille as expressing man's wilfull lapse from reason.
[20] In *Paradise Lost*, when Raphael describes the war in heaven to unfalllen Adam, he uses suppositions as comparisons and requires Adam to *imagine* discord in order to aid his understanding: 'as if on Earth | Winds underground or waters forcing way | Sidelong had pushed a mountain', or 'if nature's concord broke, | Among the constellations war were sprung' (6.195-7, 311-12). Here we are subtly invited to imagine concord. All quotations from *Paradise Lost* are from ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Routledge, 2013), and line references will be given parenthetically.
[21] Compare Ulysses' use of anthropomorphic language in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. David Bevington (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), I.3.85-90, which inadvertently implies that the cosmos imitates the social order.
We might usefully recall Francis Bacon's cautionary reading of Homer's golden chain in the *Iliad* (9.18-27): '"That men and gods were not able to draw Jupiter down to the earth; but contrariwise Jupiter was able to draw them up to heaven." So as we ought not attempt to draw down or to submit the mysteries of God to our reason; but contrariwise to raise and advance our reason to the divine truth.' See Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, eds. James Spedding et al., 14 vols. (London: Longmans, 1861-79), III:350.

'analogical nature of the universe' is the basis of reading Spenser.[22] Or rather, it complicates what we understand by 'analogy', as does the work of Gillian Rose. Rather than expecting parallels, or prejudging the logic of the relation between physical and metaphysical, Rose writes that 'the "ana" expresses the gap, while the "logy", the logos, makes it possible to speak, to propose to raise the difficulty of knowing or not knowing the relation'.[23] It is moments such as this one, which reveal how metaphysical claims are made to reinforce 'a partisan art of power', that convince Paul Suttie that *The Faerie Queene* treats its Platonic heritage as 'a lost cause'.[24] Rather than viewing the poem's treatment of the arguments and images from the pages of Plato and his Renaissance interpreters as a disavowal, I argue that it engages deeply with their polyphony in an attempt to represent how providence might be expressed in the fallen world and how embodied beings might navigate fallen creation, with particular reference to the motif of the hermaphrodite. In this, we are invited to read Spenser's own work in a mode comparable to his own implied reading of source texts.[25] Attending to our knights, within five stanzas of the newly knit concord, an event occurs to disband them.

Gordon Teskey names this instance '*The Florimell moment*', one that 'appears to raise the narrative out of time and into mental space'. Such moments, he explains, are distinguished by a curious combination of stasis and motion, or '*kinestasis*'.[26] The knights are said to travel long and wide, eventually coming into a forest that '[f]ull griesly seemd', with 'tract of liuing creature none'. 'Long' and its cognates are thrice repeated lending the stanza a forbiddingly inertial quality (14). Just as soon as we are told of the forest's desertion, the following stanza enters violently,

> All suddenly out of the thickest brush,
> Vpon a milk-white Palfrey all alone,
> A goodly Ladie did foreby them rush,

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[22] Roche, 8, who refers to the second proemium of Pico's *Heptaplus* in support of this statement. See also Jon Quitslund, *Spenser's Supreme Fiction: Platonic Natural Philosophy and the Faerie Queene* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 135.
[23] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 10.
[24] Paul Suttie, 'The Lost Cause of Platonism in *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies* 24 (2008), 413-31, 413, 427.
[25] See R. A. McCabe (2008) on how Spenser constructs a 'Platonic' defense to the widely held Platonic condemnation of poetry; see also Gilles Deleuze, 'Plato and the Simulacrum', tr. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 27, (1983), 45-56, 47 who phrases it, hyperbolically, as Plato being the first 'to indicate…the overthrow of Platonism'.
[26] Teskey, 'From Moment to Moment', *Spenser in the Moment*, eds. Paul Hecht and J.B. Lethbridge (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015), 217-35, 221, 227.

Whose face did seeme as cleare as Christall stone,
And eke through feare as white as whales bone:
Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold,
And all her steed with tinsell trappings shone,
Which fled so fast, that nothing mote him hold,
And scarse them leasure gaue, her passing to behold.

Still as she fled, her eye she backward threw,
As fearing euill, that pursewd her fast;
And her faire yellow locks behind her flew,
Loosely disperst with puffe of euery blast:
All as a blazing starre doth farre outcast
His hearie beames, and flaming lockes dispred,
At sight whereof the people stand aghast:
But the sage wisard telles, as he has red,
That it importunes death and dolefull drerihed. (III.i.15-16).

The first stanza opens and closes with rapid, fleeting motion. And yet for all its speed, we are invited to note the sympathy of colour between the goodly Lady's face, and the horse she sits upon, and the cause—fear—of such pallor. Nor is the hue vaguely white, but compared specifically in clarity and tone to crystal stone and whalebone. Both palfrey and lady are swathed in gold; despite them fleeing 'fast', their impression appears sufficiently powerful to fasten itself in narrator, knight and reader. Given the professions of the final couplet of stanza 15, one expects to hear no more of the lady, but she remains in sight. Her flight, 'still', is both onward and unmoving. The Homeric simile endues her flowing hair with the inimitable wonder of a comet, drawing out the common etymology, *stella comata*, 'yellow locks' and 'flaming lockes'. This kind of cratylic correspondence between tenor and vehicle seems intended to alert one to the transcendent quality of the lady. The received wisdom about the disastrous portent of blazing stars that closes the epic simile is dragged into the present with the appearance of the 'griesly forster… Breathing out beastly lust' (17.2-3). The repreated adjective reiterates the 'griesly' seeming forest; coupled with the ambiguous pronouns that fail to distinguish the forester from his 'tyreling Iade', the very environment appears to hound the lady (17.4). It legitimizes her fear of fast pursuit by general 'evil', rather than an individual.

The 'gentle knights' are at first discrete from the 'outrage' they 'see', but soon add to it (18.1). 'Full of great enuy and fell gealosy' they spur after the maiden with exaggerated speed and competitiveness. The stanza's fifth line presents a final clause—of motive—which fails to account for their force: 'To reskew her' (18.2-5). Indeed the lines that follow reveal that both Prince and

Guyon hope to win her as '[m]ost goodly meede, the fairest Dame aliue' (18.8), as if they have replaced the forester. Only Timias, the squire, pursues him. In spite of the proem's insistence that the faery poetic does not extend unto the realm of Ideas, this first sighting of Florimell comes close to announcing itself as Beauty manifest. Spenser and his readers would have been familiar with the *Republic*'s injunction to seek out those

> who have the innate ability to track down a natural goodness and beauty in order that our youngsters… may benefit from everything, wherever it may come from, which brings to their eyes or ears something resulting from fine works of art, like a breeze bringing health from wholesome places and leading them unawares into… harmony with the beauty of reason.[27]

Guyon and Arthur's reactions betray a consuming and seemingly monomaniacal chase (one that ranges over cantos), seemingly out of joint with beautiful, or indeed any kind of reason. This is, surely, a parody of the Neoplatonic injunction to pursue Beauty. Indeed the association of the natural world—particularly the forest—with appetitive matter might suggest that in joining the chase, the knights form a part of this material appetency that hounds the lady. It is in pointed contrast then, that we hear that '[t]he whiles faire *Britomart*, whose constant mind, | Would not so lightly follow beauties chace…did stay behind' (19.1-3). The want of particularity is emphatic. Britomart chooses not to partake of 'beauties chace', i.e. in what she seems to perceive as beauty in general, but journeys onward within the phenomenal realm. We are explicitly told of her courage and goodness, and so encouraged to wonder why she does not trail behind her fellow links on that goodly golden chain.

Colin Burrow argues that Britomart's constancy is only 'apparent', as Spenser displaces 'the deviant emotions she might feel on to other figures, leaving her almost a blank'. Spenser does so, because it is near impossible to show someone 'amorously pursuing honour, without representing them as either honour-conscious to the point of irascibility, or as simply loving'. Spenser's ideal, 'a synthesis of intrinsically irreconcilable forms of feeling, can only be represented in opposition to deviant forms of behaviour—be they desiring appetency or wrathful consciousness of honour'. Burrow points out that Britomart wounds Marinell 'with just the arbitrary passionateness', with

[27] Plato, *Republic*, tr. C. J. Emlyn-Jones, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), I: III.401c-d.

which her fellow knights chase Florimell, with 'suddein wrath' (III.iv.12.6).[28] This is true, and yet the narration appears to legitimize Britomart's actions in a way that it does not with regard to Arthur and Guyon. As Britomart keeps on her course, her love-sickness is described as a '[h]uge sea of sorrow, and tempestuous griefe', in an extended three-stanza lamentation (iv.8-10). Soon after, she wrathfully wounds and topples Marinell, only to leave him on the shore. The disdain of her actions is mitigated by the correspondence between the stormy 'sea' of her grief and Marinell as a son of the sea. It is in part a representation of her quelling her own sorrow. On the other hand, it is revealed that Britomart's attack forms a piece of Marinell's destiny, and is necessary, so that he might reinterpret Proteus's prophecy, and consequently learn to love. As the narrator implies, the lesson 'too too hard for liuing clay' is not in fact Marinell being wounded, but his adoption of the role of 'loues enimy' (iv.26.3-9).

Marinell's fear and pride suggest that he lacks the humility—the voluntary vulnerability and relational conception of identity—of Christ's example, until he learns to love. When Marinell's wound is filled with 'soueraine balme, and Nectar good', it holds an ontological mixture of divinity and mortality, and also prefigures *Florimel*, the second kind of 'nectar' that will change him (III.iv.40.8). His later acceptance of her love is revealed to be a type of reconstitution: '[t]hen gan [Marinell] tread his steps anew, | And learne to loue, by learning louers paines to rew' (IV.xii.13).[29] Britomart unseats two knights of male chastity, which strongly suggests her growing understanding that love is corporeal, and *worthily so*, in addition to being contained in minds and mirrors. She does not wound Guyon and cannot wound Marinell until she herself is struck by Gardante.[30]

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[28] Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 109-10. We do not yet know that Britomart is a woman, which could make her lack of interest in Florimell gendered.

[29] Paul Chandler Phelps, *'Wounded Harts': Metaphor and Desire in the Epic-Romances of Tasso, Sidney and Spenser* (University of Oxford D.Phil Thesis, 2014), 238 describes Marinell's reconstitution by means of his wound. In a paper presented at the Renaissance Society of America meeting (2018), Lorna Hutson persuasively argues that the union between Marinell and Florimell effects a transformation of what space signifies: 'sea and land must wed, the seas restrictive walls must become the sea's loving embrace, the relation between land and sea jurisdictionally transformed…The gift of Florimell [from Proteus via Cymoent's plea and consequently, Neptune's command] is thus Marinell's agreement to be transformed by the Protean energies of the sea'. Hutson's argument is that the marriage of the Thames and Medway produces an Anglo-Imperial vision. Yet the mixture of coastal with chorographical and topographical (even used to different ends) supports the idea that Marinell is constitutionally transformed by his love. See also Andrew Zurcher, *Spenser's Legal Language: Law and Poetry in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007) 107.

[30] See Roche, 71.

This process of transferring wounds might be seen as an example of the kind of readerly praxis, the actions that follow exegesis that Sidney endorses in his *Defense*.[31] Britomart reads her wound—delivered by Gardante—as the significance and necessity of sexual love and rewrites her interpretation in her encounter with Marinell, therefore resulting in his new reading of himself. This might suggest that success in her amorous quest is contingent upon her success as a reader. While Arthur's quest for Gloriana ('glory in [Spenser's] generall intention') is indeed a redirection of love's digressive forces toward primarily Glory, and secondarily, a dynastic partner, Britomart's is not.[32] She has been told that the nation's future rulers 'will fetch their being from the sacred mould | Of her immortall womb', but this knowledge seems to have little to do with her 'hart-thrilling throbs' and trembling limbs when she thinks of Artegall's image (III.ii.5).

The two symbols we encounter to begin with appear to be inadequate. The first, Gloriana, contained within the Proem to Book Three, is too unmoored and out of reach to be of much help within this legend. The second is the golden chain of Concord, afflicted with the opposite problem. Announced as heavenly, it is shown to be only too dependent upon the partisan attitudes and politic reactions of the knights. In exposing its process of construction, it reveals its vulnerability to deconstruction; if the aims or agendas of the knights diverge, it could fall quite easily into discord. Recalling Kenneth Borris's terms, Gloriana is too insubstantial to actively promote virtue, and concord's ties expose their foundation in 'conventional reality'. We turn thus to a third symbol, one that emerges both in and out of the phenomenal realm: the hermaphrodite, or androgyne. It is of particular significance in Book Three, but also surfaces in various guises in Books One, Four and Five.

II. Contextualizing the Hermaphrodite and Androgyne

The word 'Hermaphrodite' is a *hapax* in Spenser's extant poetry; its only occurrence is in the original but excised ending of Book Three, in the 1590 version of *The Faerie Queene* (III.xii.46*), in which Scudamour and Amoret 'streightly did embrace' (III.xii.45*.2).

[31] See Gavin Alexander, 'Loving and Reading in Sidney', *Studies in Philology* 114/1 (2017), 39-66, esp. 44 in which he discusses Sidney's description of the reader's role in terms that echo the job of the writer.
[32] Burrow (1993) argues that this allegorical redirection of love to images of nobility—and ultimately active sexual fertility—characterizes Spenser's intention to 'overgo' Ariosto, 103.

> Had ye them seene, ye would haue surely thought,
> That they had beene that faire *Hermaphrodite,*
> Which that rich *Romane* of white marble wrought,
> And in his costly Bath causd to bee site: (III.xii.46*1-4).

In this singular instance, it is an allusion modified by two conditional clauses, which—despite 'the definite pronominal adjectives applied twice for emphasis'—points to a statue that has not been successfully identified and is likely fictional.[33] To add to the confusion, Roman statues show a single bisexual individual, rather than an embracing couple. The reference to a statue could look forward to the mysterious Venus in the Temple of Book Four, but the unnecessary weight placed on riches and cost attest to a knowingly teasing tone. It doesn't quite point to a referent that doesn't quite exist. The term 'hermaphrodite' is deliberately elusive in Spenser's poetics; we will return later to this image of the iconic clinch. The nouns 'Hermaphrodite' and 'Androgyne' have been (in the early modern period, and now) used interchangeably, although they point towards different founding fables.[34]

The first refers largely to Ovid's story in the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses*, although there are sources that predate this that refer, for example, to a fountain of Salmacis with enfeebling effects.[35] There is much less clarity regarding sources of the Hermaphrodite figure itself; the main difference is that references prior to Ovid ascribe the Hermaphrodite's bisexuality to birth, rather than metamorphosis.[36] Ovid tells the story of Hermaphroditus, 'a little son' of Hermes and Aphrodite, who rejects the advances of the watery nymph Salmacis. When he takes a dip in the pool of which she is the tutelary spirit, she clings on to him. She prays to the gods to be joined to him and they are 'knit in close embrace', no longer two, but one. Hermaphroditus sees himself as having

[33] See Donald Cheney, 'Spenser's Hermaphrodite and the 1590 Faerie Queene', *PMLA* 87/2 (1972), 192-200, 194.
[34] Marian Rothstein, 'Mutations of the Androgyne: Its Functions in Early Modern French Literature', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34/2 (2003), 409-37, 409.
[35] See Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, tr. Frank Granger, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), I: 2.8.12; *The Geography of Strabo*, tr. Horace Leonard Jones, 8 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1917-32), VI: 14.2.16.
[36] Marie Delcourt surveys what is known about the cult of the Hermaphrodite and notes this difference, in *Hermaphrodite: Mythes et rites de la Bisexualité dans l'Antiquité classique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), 43-78. See Lauren Siberman's fascinating 'Mythographic Transformations of Ovid's Hermaphrodite', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19/4 (1988), 643-52, which briefly discusses these sources that predate Ovid and explores the reappearance of myth in the works of Medieval and Renaissance mythographers.

become ‘but half-man’ and curses the fountain, so that anyone who drinks from its waters will become effeminate.[37]

The second term refers to the myth of the Androgyne in Plato’s *Symposium*, as related by Aristophanes. In Plato’s dialogue dedicated to love, Phaedrus delivers the first speech in which he emphasizes love’s antiquity, nobility and inspiring force. Pausanias follows, with a taxonomy of earthly and heavenly eros. Aristophanes is meant to be next, but a fit of hiccoughs prevents him from speaking, which results in Eryximachus’ praise of love as cosmic harmony. Leo Strauss argues that this change in sequence redistributes the speakers into two groups, the first intellectually weak, and the second, strong.[38] Aristophanes begins the stronger group by distinguishing the strain of his speech from the physician and sophist who preceded him.[39] He proclaims that humanity has ‘entirely failed to perceive the power of Love’, and proceeds to explain the origins of humankind. Aristophanes describes the Androgynoi—primeval mankind—that were bizarre, spherical double beings, both male-female and same sex, with four arms and legs and two faces in opposite directions. For their hubris in conspiring against the gods, Zeus split them in two, and moved their genitals to the front of their bodies. Consequently, they are compelled to search forever for their lost halves.[40] Love, according to Aristophanes, is no more or less than a constitutive craving for enduring physical contact, in order that one might heal the wound of human nature. Socrates’ speech—which he takes from the Mantinean priestess Diotima—maintains the premise that love springs from lack. Love, the son of Poverty and Plenty (or ‘Resource’) is said to be a spiritual intermediary that guides one to pursue the trace of intelligible Beauty. Eros should lead one to ‘the right and regular ascent’ (anabasis) from the particularities of bodies and things to a ‘wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature’, the very essence of beauty.[41] Bodies are but a vanishing rung in a ladder that values immortality alone. Where Aristophanes’ account centered on a yearning for closeness between lovers, Socrates’ mandates distance.

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[37] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, tr. F.J. Miller and revised by G. P. Goold, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), I: IV.285-391. All references to the *Metamorphoses* are to this edition, unless otherwise indicated.
[38] Leo Strauss, *Leo Strauss on Plato’s Symposium*, ed. Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 95-6.
[39] Plato, *Symposium* in *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias*, tr. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 73-247, 189D. All quotations from this text refer to this edition, unless otherwise indicated.
[40] Plato, *Symposium*, 189C-193E.
[41] Plato, *Symposium*, 201D-212C.

Plato's is a polyphonic and aporetic dialogue; it does not provide a single satisfactory explanation for, or definition of Eros. Marsilio Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium—De amore*—written in 1469 and translated into Italian in 1474, remarkably re-enacts its source. Staged as a banquet attended by influential late fifteenth century Florentine intelligentsia, it was composed, according to its author, to 'summon the lost lovers of earthly beauty to return to the love of immortal beauty'.[42] As this note suggests, *De amore* provides a monochord interpretation of the *Symposium*. As Pablo Maurette points out, 'in a way, all the speeches are commentaries on Diotima's speech.'[43] Cristoforo Landino—commenting on Aristophanes's speech—remarks that it is 'wrapped in very obscure language', 'in the shadows of metaphors'.[44] He explains—astonishingly—that the speech of the severed androgyne actually refers to the soul and its two lights, one natural or innate, the other, divine or infused. The soul, in paying attention to the needs of the body, loses its divine light. Pursuing this lost divine light is the true purpose of lives dedicated to philosophy.[45] Maurette notes that this type of allegorical exegesis is Neoplatonic, with a precedent in Plotinus' *Ennead,* in particular, the myth of Poros and Penia. As Leone Ebreo grumbled, however, such 'disproportionate allegories', or extrinsic allegories, 'do not correspond to the letter of the story'.[46] Sexual difference and the desiring body, so central to Aristophanes' account, are written out to make the myth accord with a conceptual framework that has no place for a positive physicality. Ficino's reading was extremely influential; Jayne asserts that 'Ficino was responsible for shifting the emphasis in treatises on love' to 'love as desire for ideal beauty'.[47]

The force of Ficino's dominant interpretation is prevalent in literary explorations of the androgyne. A. R. Cirillo's now classic essay refers to the 'androgyne' and 'hermaphrodite'

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[42] Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium of Love*, tr. Sears Jayne (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985), 1. All quotations from this text refer to this translation.
[43] Pablo Maurette, 'Plato's Hermaphrodite and a Vindication of the Sense of Touch in the Sixteenth Century', *Renaissance Quarterly* 68/3 (2015), 872-98, 880. I am indebted to Maurette's sensitive reading of the *trattato d'amore* tradition. See also Sergius Kodera, 'Renaissance Readings of the Myth of Aristophanes from Plato's Symposium (189C-193D): Marsilio Ficino, Leone Ebreo, Giordano Bruno', *Quaderni D'Italianistica* 26/1 (2005), 21-58, 26-36.
[44] Ficino, *Commentary*, 71, 72.
[45] *Ibid*., 76-79.
[46] Leone Ebreo, *The Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi D'Amore)*, tr. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and J.H. Barnes (London: Soncino Press, 1937), 368. All references to Leone are to this edition. Leone's critique is leveled at an exaggerated reading of Diotima's myth of the birth of love, with detailed reference to Ficino's commentary (although he does not name *De amore* directly).
[47] Ficino, *Commentary*, 3. See also Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New York: Norton, 1968), 200-204.

interchangeably, citing both source fables. He argues that '[i]t is, in fact, a topos which includes a generic and metaphysical concept of love as a union of two souls in one. Through mutual love, two lovers achieve that perfect fusion of souls that makes them one-neither he nor she, but both he and she in one spiritual union'.[48] In so doing, he asserts that the readings of Northrop Frye, Thomas Roche (and many others), who read the embracing Scudamour and Amoret as 'emblematic of Christian marriage wherein the impulse is toward union in one flesh', are too narrow; the image speaks to a more generic application.[49] Cirillo is aligned with Kathleen Williams's position (whom he does not quote), who states, '[t]he hermaphrodite image there used is a symbol of marriage, but of marriage as itself a symbol of the necessary concord of opposites on which the world depends, and individual human welfare also'.[50] I do not suggest that readings of this nature are incorrect, so much as insufficient. They too readily sublimate the corporeal implications and tensions of the source myth(s), and indeed the detail within the Spenserian moment to which they refer. There are instances in Spenser's poetry in which the androgyne/hermaphrodite is alluded to, in look rather than name, as an ideal of cosmic harmony, but the clinch between Cupid's man and Amoret is not one of them.

Aristophanes' speech is extraordinary because it suggests a different path of Platonic exegesis, one that might reevaluate the roles of corporeality and tactility in the dialectics of human love. Maurette's article shows how Italian love treatises in the second half of the 16th century—including Agnolo Firenzuola (1493–1545), Flaminio Nobili (1533–91), and Francesco Patrizi (1529–97)—make Aristophanes's speech, rather than Diotima's, the key to understanding an eros with the capacity for a positive assessment of bodily love. In particular, he traces the changing reception of the sense of touch from the Ficinian hegemony of awkward necessity, or degradation, to something forgivable only in youth, to a sense that is worthy and even sacred. Furthermore, by the 1540s, women had become key interlocutors in the realm of love philosophy, both as characters

[48] A. R. Cirillo, 'The Fair Hermaphrodite: Love-Union in the Poetry of Donne and Spenser', *SEL* 9/1 (1969), 81-95, 81.
[49] *Ibid.,* 82. See Northrop Frye, 'The Structure of Imagery in *The Faerie Queene*', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 30/2 (1961), 109-27, 123. See also Roche, 133-6 and Lewis (2013), 430.
[50] Kathleen Williams, 'Venus and Diana: Some Uses of Myth in *The Faerie Queene*', *ELH* 28/2 (1961), 101-20, 115. See also Gayle Whittier, 'The Sublime Androgyne Motif in Three Shakespearean Works', *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19/2 (1989), 185-211.

and as authors.[51] Jon Quitslund reminds us that 'at an early stage, Italian influences were crucial to Spenser's development'.[52] Spenser's representation of Britomart, her quest and her legend, engage with this context. A female knight can and must slip in and out of armour, just as she must '[slip] in and out of male-identified modes of behaviour' in order to pursue her beloved, in all his corporeality, in the phenomenal world.[53] She develops across two legends, and none of her trials result in utter wretchedness or unconsciousness (unlike the preceding titular knights). Why are her adventures so peculiarly 'intermeddled'? Why, as R. L. Reid asks, is Britomart so capable of surprising one, 'the most fully developed character'?[54]

Britomart's androgyny is characterized by spontaneity and improvisation and her heroism is oddly distinguished by a lack of interest in gaining glory through deeds of arms, precisely because of the felt pain and hunger of her wound of love. As John Brenkman reminds us, Aristophanes does not (and cannot, given the myth itself), claim that the lost oneness is ever retrieved: '[e]very love relation is but a substitute for the original condition, an approximation rather than a recovery of lost wholeness'.[55] The union that it implies, not only the general 'necessary concord of opposites', but also the joining of two distinct entities in a relation of voluntary submission on both parts, rather than one of hierarchy or dominance, is ultimately elusive and unavailable to the existing poem's mortal lives. It might only be glimpsed as we look upon such figures as Venus, Genius or Nature. Consequently, this ideal of what the androgyne might mean is an object of representation only in divine figures; with regard to mortal figures, it becomes a condition of representation. Flashes of this ideal suggest that it must guide action, even if, perhaps especially if, the poem will not sanction its actualization in the material, mortal world.

The hermeneutic this entails, interpretive humility combined with interpretive determination with respect to creation, might be understood in the light of John Donne's method of scriptural exegesis outlined in his *Essayes in divinity*. As Katrin Ettenhuber observes, Donne's text

[51] Maurette, 885. Maurette is concerned with the Italian treatises, but it is possible that the developments he traces inspired Spenser's decision to make his androgynous champion of love and charity, Britomart, a young woman.
[52] Quitslund, 'Platonism', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 1434-38, 1434.
[53] Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of the Faerie Queene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 51.
[54] R.L. Reid, *Renaissance Psychologies: Spenser and Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 219.
[55] John Brenkman, 'The Other and the One: Psychoanalysis, Reading, the Symposium', *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (1977), 396-456, 411.

'constantly re-affirms the priority of sustained and thorough hermeneutic enquiry', which applies both to creation and the Word.[56] On the subject of creation, Donne notes that '[t]he Meditation upon Gods works is infinite' and that 'there is enough to make us inexcusable, if we search not further'.[57] So too in Spenser's poem, continuing efforts to read aright, followed by action in the phenomenal world, is a form of explication that is a form of service to God, an act of praise. Donne writes that 'God will be glorified both in our searching these Mysteries…and *in our not finding them*'.[58] Devotional worthiness and resolve is made to coincide with, or even be recognized by, heuristic failure. Thus, in terms of creation, this makes the constant cultivation of virtue converge with an ongoing act of devotion. The poem displays numerous representations that allude to the hermaphrodite/androgyne in ways that transgress, twist or mock the ideal. On the other hand, some repeated failures to achieve such a union become worthy repetitions, because as substitutes they result in affection, friendship and the common bond of love; they point towards reproduction and future generations. Such repetitions are a testament to unceasing mental and physical labour in the fallen world, in which phenomenal encounters are instructive and reformative, rather than used as opportunities to discard or transcend the world. Eros breeds a heroism that is distinguished not only by the exceptionalism of deeds, but by their repetition, retrial and renewal.[59] Let us turn to the different manifestations of the hermaphrodite, or androgyne, in relation to the Redcrosse knight.

III. The Case of the Redcrosse Knight

Lauren Silberman argues that 'Ovid's story of the Hermaphrodite is the subtext that underwrites the shift from Christian eschatology in Book I to the project of making sense of the mortal world in Book III.'[60] I am indebted to, and inspired, by Silberman's reading of the Hermaphrodite allusion in Book One. I suggest, however, that the structural markers by which the hermaphrodite/androgyne image reappears, refers not only to Ovid but also to Plato. In addition, its

[56] See Katrin Ettenhuber, *Donne's Augustine: Renaissance Cultures of Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113.
[57] Donne, *Essayes in divinity: being several disquisitions interwoven with meditations and prayers*, ed. Anthony Raspa (Montreal: Mcgill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 45, 10.
[58] *Ibid.*, 32; emphasis added.
[59] See E. M. Simon, *The Myth of Sisyphus: Renaissance Theories of Human Perfectibility* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 313ff: 'Although the hero's quest for perfectibility is necessitated by the fall, it can only be performed by those means necessitated by his fallen nature.'
[60] Silberman (1995), 49.

recurrence is not simply within the original ending of Book Three; allusions shifting in source and significance can be traced in relation to the Redcrosse knight himself. Silberman's reading of Ovid's text illuminates 'a gap between [Hermaphroditus'] understanding of his own experience and what the narration of that experience conveys to the reader.'[61] As she explains, the process composing what Hermaphroditus reads as the loss of his masculine shape offers an unmistakable, if humorous, representation of sexual intercourse, through the double entendre of words such as 'perstat' [stands firm], 'mollita' [soft] and 'mollescat' [soften or become effeminate].[62] Ovid's myth is shown to display a body that is interpreted solely in moral terms (as intelligible form) as opposed to physiological terms (as an instrument of sense experience). As Jonathan Bate claims, the description (even in Arthur Golding's famously moralizing translation) contains a 'wonder-filled sense of total coition…not halving of strength but doubling of perfection'.[63] Hermaphroditus' curse, heard and granted by each of his parents, reify their son's reading; they ensure that the fountain of Salmacis will cause enfeeblement. Silberman concludes that the Hermaphrodite excludes its own sexuality and effectively emasculates itself by emphasizing the power of one parent—Hermes, and language—over the other, Aphrodite, and love.[64] His curse ensures that others are doomed to endure his partial version of the experience of the pool, rather than form their own.

This is the context in which we approach the Redcrosse knight dallying with Duessa at the centre of Book One. The dramatic irony is crucial—we know that 'the false *Duessa'* is 'cloked with *Fidessaes* name' and that nothing good can come of this alliance (I.vii.1). The two come upon a fountain in which, '[t]he sacred Nymph, which therein wont to dwell, | Was out of *Dianes* fauor, as it then befell' (I.vii.4.8-9). The narrator tells that 'her waters wexed dull and slow, | And all that drinke thereof, do faint and feeble grow' (5.8-9). The nymph, while once on Phoebe's chase, sat down to rest mid-race, resulting in her moral disgrace and the punishing transformation of her waters (5.4). Redcrosse, correspondingly in the 'middest' of his own quest, 'unweetingly' drinks of this crystal clear stream: '[e]ftsoones his manly forces gan to fayle' (6.1-4). As a general rule, Galenism values heat, gendered as male. Redcrosse's powers turn 'crudled cold' and in 'fayntnes

[61] *Ibid,* 51.
[62] See Ovid, *Met.* IV.381-5.
[63] Jonathan Bate, 'Sexual Perversity in "Venus and Adonis"', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 23 (1993), 80-92, 90.
[64] Silberman (1995), 52-3.

chill did melt', expressing the link between water and the phlegmatic temperament. Phlegm is cold and wet, related to fear and desire (at their worst, sloth and gluttony) and is gendered female.[65] With the onset of this swelling chill,

> Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame,
> Pourd out in loosenesse on the grassy grownd,
> Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame:
> Till at the last he heard a dreadfull sownd,
> Which through the wood loud bellowing, did rebownd.
> That all the earth for terror seemd to shake,
> And trees did tremble. (7.1-7)

What began as an allusion to the tradition of the nymph Salmacis as an emblem of moral laziness moves to another tradition, which holds 'that the fountain…is aphrodisiac and promotes impotence through sexual overindulgence'.[66] The possessive reference to Duessa as 'his Dame' indicates Redcrosse's culpability, his moral loss from the House of Pride. As he is 'pourd out in loosenesse', the knight's body suffers the fate of Hermaphroditus' interpretation of his own body; morally, however, both Redcrosse and Duessa are aligned with the moral lassitude of Salmacis. In this rendition, there is deliberately no room for the potential 'doubling of perfection', only spiritual waste. The 'dreadfull sownd' is of course the rapid approach of the 'huge great body' of the giant Orgoglio. And yet before one identifies the monstrous mass as the aural source in the following stanza, it seems as though creation quakes in sorrow for the knight's sins. Indeed John Milton's description of the world, 'while Adam took no thought, | Eating his fill' of that fallacious fruit, surely remembers this moment: 'Earth trembled from her entrails, as again | In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan' (*PL* 9.1000-1005).

Spenser ensures that this encounter must be read in terms of a profound spiritual transgression; Duessa is later arrayed in scarlet, gold and glitter as the Whore of Babylon. The physiological component of the story congeals into the grotesque, but hollow syre of earth and Aeolus, puffed up in pride, who entraps the destitute Redcrosse knight. Colin Milburn has drawn out the extended 'syphilography' of the Legend of Holiness, showing how Spenser imbues his

[65] See Reid's useful table of the four temperaments, 86. See also Paster, 'The Unbearable Coldness of Female Being: Women's Imperfection in the Humoral Economy', *ELR* 28 (1998), 416-40 and *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
[66] See Silberman (1995), 55 who cites *Ovide moralisé* (4.2284-2311) and Thomas Peend, *The Pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis* (London, 1565), B2v for the tradition of moral laziness. See also Ovid, *Met.* IV.302-311. See Vitruvius, I: II.8.12 for an example of the enfeebling tradition.

apocalyptic iconography with the symbol of Pestilence from the Book of Revelation in its contemporary incarnation as the pox, or syphilis; Redcrosse's fall into sin and redemption is represented in particular terms of infection and treatment.[67] In this vein, the allusion to the Hermaphrodite in Redcrosse's encounter with Duessa, is not an allusion to the creation of a biform being—or even the possibility of one—but to a creature divided in sin. The body, in this scene, is only a flimsy sign of spirit, without concern for the *fleshliness* of that sign.

At the end of the first Legend—after he has been recued from Orgoglio, withstood Despair, passed through the House of Holiness, learned his future identity and defeated the old Dragon, gaining glory by Grace—the Redcrosse knight meets Una's parents, the King and Queen of Eden. The royal sire, pierced with pity and passion at the account of the Redcrosse knight's adventures, suggests that, surely, no other man living 'so sore | In a *sea of deadly daungers* was distrest'. He affectionately asks, since the knight is now 'well arriued', to 'deuize of ease and euerlasting rest' (I.xii.17.6-9; emphasis added). The watery metaphor, although conventional, recalls Redcrosse's fluid pleasure in the gloomy glade, in which he took on the indolence of the tutelary nymph. It is unsurprising, therefore, when he instantly responds, 'Of ease or rest I may not yet devize'; he is bound to serve the Faery Queen for another six years. Consequently, Redcrosse and Una cannot now be wed, but vow to accomplish the marriage eventually. This conclusion is notoriously uneasy. On receiving Duessa's letter, which charges that '[Redcrosse] already plighted his right hand | Unto another loue' (I.xii.26), the King tells the knight that if he finds himself at fault, '[o]r wrapped be in loues of former Dame', to 'disclose the same' (30.8-9). The King's choice of 'Dame' specifically recalls the 'goodly court' he made unto 'his Dame'. But Redcrosse conveniently omits any mention of his experience in that 'ioyous shade', and Una, 'the goodly royall Mayd', supports his claims.

As Paul Suttie argues, the competing narratives offered by Duessa and the knight do not provide a clear-cut case of truth versus falsehood, but 'two manifestly biased and self-interested versions of the same story'.[68] It is essential to remember that the Redcrosse knight is, at this point, aware that he has been 'chosen' (I.ix.53; x.57) and must become St George. This tension between the sinfulness of his fallen human behaviour and what he knows—through grace—to be divinely

[67] Colin Milburn, 'Syphilis in Faerieland: Edmund Spenser and the Syphilography of Elizabethan England', *Criticism* 46/4 (2004), 597-632. See esp. 603-17.
[68] Suttie (1998), 72.

ordained is unresolved. Having understood the magnitude of his crimes, the Redcrosse knight here pragmatically re-interprets them in a way that permits him to complete a stage in his quest. This is possible and permissible because it moves events towards what he knows to be their divinely ordained conclusion. In other words, had he dwelt on the entire truth and not persuaded the King of his eligibility, he would be repeating his entrapment in the cave of Despair.[69] The narrative reveals the disquieting thought that interpreting aright does not (and perhaps cannot) necessarily coincide with the whole truth because of the gulf between human action and divine decree.

The King is deeply moved by his daughter's speech, and with '[h]is owne two hands, the holy knotts did knit, | That none but death for euer can diuide' (37.1-2). Una is arrayed in garments '[a]ll lilly white, withouten spot, or pride' and invokes the Spouse in the Song of Solomon, in whom 'there is no spot' (22.7; IV.7). The 'sweete Musicke' and 'song of loue and iollity' anticipate the twenty third fitt of Spenser's own *Epithalamion*; celestial sound ('heauenly noise') and influence appears to resound within the palace, as stanza 39 alludes to the ninefold harmony of the music of the spheres, which has not been heard since the Fall, and leaves the guests 'rauished with rare impression'. In short, this contract of wedlock anticipates the Marriage of the Lamb (*Rev.* 19: 6-9)—the mystical hermaphrodite constituted by Christ and his church—which cannot come to be in the mortal world. As a result, the narrator soon demurs, 'their exceeding merth may not be told', and their heaven-grazing happiness is restated as '[t]he usuall joyes at knitting of loues band' (40.3-6). The Redcrosse knight's 'heart did seeme to melt in pleasures manifold', whenever he looks upon his bride to be. The language of ravishment is now applied to the heart, implying that this union points to a spiritual coming together, as well as a bodily one, as 'eie' and 'hand' remind us. Unlike Redcrosse and Duessa, these bodies are acknowledged as fleshly signs, capable of corporeal *and* spiritual joy.

It is this relation, rather than the one between Scudamour and Amoret that Roche cites, which points to the biblical promise 'they two shall be one flesh', and implies 'the mystical significance of

[69] See Abraham Stoll, 'Spenser's Allegorical Conscience', *Modern Philology* 111/2 (2013), 181-204, 183-5 who reminds us of the relation between conscience and despair. Stoll, with reference to Luther's tower conversion, shows how the claims of conscience can become a temptation, 'tempting us to focus on our bad works and to imagine God as the righteous judge of the law rather than the merciful deliverer of the Gospel'.

Christian marriage' that grants the lovers a unity akin to Venus.[70] The knight is said to be 'swimming in that sea of blissful joy', rewriting the dull waters and sea of deadly dangers associated with the nymph's pool (41.5). Yet precisely as he is said to be swimming in bliss, we are told that 'He nought forgot…[v]nto his Faery Queene backe to retourne' (41.6-8). The contiguity of these lines suggests that his joy is intimately joined to the remembrance of his continuing duty, and his recognition that these bonds are only 'signes' or tokens for the future 'knitting of loues band' (40.5). In other words, the allusions to the canticles suggest that this betrothal symbolizes something beyond itself, and yet the knight's remembrance of his Faery Queen turns the betrothal back into an earthly event that must be moved past, for now. At the canto's close, and for the present time, Una is 'left to mourne' (42.9). If these rites and celebrations are only signs, the poem suggests that the Redcrosse knight must face further trials, to become a better sign as he is brought into a more fully redeemed relationship with God, or in the poem's universe, with first Cleopolis, and then the vision of new Jerusalem that he was afforded a glimpse of. Only then might these 'signes' be fully materialized.

In order to establish the third instance in which the Redcrosse knight is briefly shown to participate in a symbol of the androgyne in the mortal world, we turn back to Britomart in the first canto of Book Three, who comes upon a 'stately Castle'. The new space that she approaches—without Arthur or Guyon—is instantly lexically associated with the Bower of Bliss. It is 'goodly edifyde, | And plaste for pleasure', while before the gate, 'a spatious playne, | Mantled with greene, it selfe did spredden wyde' (III.i.20.1-7).[71] Indeed the latter descriptor is nearly identical. Recalling how Guyon and the Palmer belligerently sallied forth to the Bower, despite it not being made 'for battery or fight', the difference in the martial maid's progress is emphasized. We are told that 'her steps directly she did frame' to the castle, which not only signifies her movement towards it, but also suggests an approach that answers rather than opposes the tone of the edifice. The final couplet defies our expectations: 'she saw six knights, that did darrayne | Fiers battail against one' (20.8-9). The Redcrosse knight—anonymous, here—reveals that he will never yield to these adversaries and 'chaunge [his] liefe', because he 'loue[s] one', i.e. Una. What follows is importantly the first

[70] Roche, 135.
[71] C.f. *FQ* II.xii.43.9, II.xii.12.50.

instance in which Britomart is heard to speak. Redcrosse punningly names Una in saying he loves 'one, the truest one on grownd', and has tasted 'many a bloody wownd' in the name of faithfulness (24.6-9). This is starkly different to the Redcrosse readily deceived by Duessa; it is an intimation of the 'knotts' between himself and Una, and, I argue, recognition that she is his true partner, or half.

In acknowledging his repeated wounds for Una's sake, the Redcrosse knight acknowledges his status as *symbolon* (Plato, *Symposium* 191D 'σύμβολον', 'other half'). Consequently, his bitter wounds become manifestations of the wound of human nature, tokens of remembrance for his lost half, whom he aspires to be fitted to in an ultimate act of recognition.[72] Within his sea of blissful joy he remembers Gloriana, who represents his enduring journey, but within this continuing quest he remembers Una who is his 'grownd' and end. Britomart's own experience (as yet untold) informs her sympathy to all those vulnerable to the 'losse of loue', that love 'but one'. In claiming that all loss pales in comparison to this kind, she suggests that it is a loss she might herself suffer. She goes on to declare that 'ne may loue be compeld by maistery; | For soon as maistery comes, sweet loue anone | Taketh his nimble wings, and soone away is gone' (25.7-9). This is a paraphrase of Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*, 'Love wol nat been constreyned by maistrye. | Whan maistrie comth, the God of Love anon | Beteth his wynges, and farewell, he is gon!' (764-66).[73] Yet Spenser's reworking of Chaucer's formulation diminishes the mythologizing effect, and endues love with an agential force that is less dependent on personification. In lending Britomart this conviction, Spenser reveals her understanding that true love is characterized by love holding 'maistery' over both lovers, a reciprocal enthrallment. Britomart's first words contradict Linda Gregerson's assertion that the 'mutual love of equals is not only missing from the varied and sweeping erotic vistas of *The Faerie Queene*; it is not meant to *register* as missing'.[74]

The rules of Castle Joyeous, that every passing knight 'forgoe with fowle defame' his Lady or love, or prove by dint of sword that his Lady rivals the beauty of Malecasta, scorns the unity of the primordial Androgyne as represented in Plato's myth, in its suggestion that the continual search for one's *symbolon* be replaced by the endless substitution of other halves, thus writing out the need

[72] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays,* tr. Nicholas Walker, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 31-2.
[73] Chaucer, 'The Franklin's Prologue and Tale, *The Riverside Chaucer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 178-190.
[74] Linda Gregerson, *The Reformation of the Subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 54.

for labor and resolve. Malecasta's law points to a different inflection in Aristophanes's story. When Zeus—out of pity for the languishing split beings—moved their 'privy parts' to the front, so that they might be joined, conceive and continue their kind, he created the possibility of temporary satiety between any two halves.[75] This relief is only physical. It negates the opportunity for one to aspire to that holistic union promised by the presence of one's true love, and replaces aspiration with false achievement. Spenser suggests that sexual love is acceptable as an effect of Eros, but cannot be its primary cause. The image of the androgyne in the form of Leone Ebreo's (Judah Abravanel) anthropological transformation of the myth of Aristophanes particularly haunts this canto, presenting ignoble, necessary and honourable manifestations of union in the poem's world.[76]

In his *Dialoghi d'Amore* (*The Philosophy of Love*, 1535), Leone directly relates Genesis to the myth of Aristophanes. He claims that it was from Moses, 'that Plato took this myth, amplifying and polishing it after the manner of Greek oratory'. Leone revives the Rabbinical notion that God created Adam male-and-female, androgynous, referring to the contradiction in the sacred text, wherein Moses speaks of Adam in the singular and then in the plural. Consequently, the separation of the double-humans in Plato's story is said to refer to the creation of Eve in Genesis, from Adam's side, 'the word in Hebrew being equivalent to rib, but here…the side or feminine person'.[77] Leone allegorizes the Adamitic division: primordial Adam was a harmonious (hermaphroditic) unity of body and mind. Leone does not adequately explain why he was not left this way but states that the intellect neglected the flesh, forgetting to eat or preserve the race. To balance spirit and matter, God divides Adam so that they might be connected in love and care, as mates. Yet Leone confusingly claims that 'sin may be said to spring from division—according to the version in the Scriptures—and division from sin—according to Plato'. He explains that division in Eden created the *possibility* of sin. In bring separate, Eve could be deceived. Generation becomes the remedy for mortality, and humans might come together in a union of the flesh.[78] The married couple is seen to form Aristophanes' androgyne, and by extension makes Adam's union the prototype of marriage.

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[75] Plato, *Symposium*, 191B-C. At 191E Aristophanes claims that heterosexual men and women descending from the he-she composite produce the greatest number of adulterers.
[76] Quitslund affirms that Leone decisively contributed to Spenser's formation, although he perhaps exaggerates the extent of Ficino's influence on Leone's work. See *Spenser Encyclopedia,* 1434.
[77] Leone, 345, 348, 347. Leone omits the presence of same-sex androgynoi that are present in Plato.
[78] *Ibid.,* 348-53. See Kodera (2005), 36ff for a detailed explanation of Leone's commentary on Plato.

Thomas Roche observes that nothing ever really happens in Castle Joyous.[79] This seems true in that it simply provides an occasion for 'lascivious disport' and 'swimming deepe in sensuall desyres' (III.i.40.8, 39.8). Crucially, however, despite Britomart's distaste or disinterest in such 'loose demeanure', the Castle is the site at which she is struck by Gardante (who represents amorous gazing). Britomart is seldom wounded, which attests to the significance of this stroke, and perhaps warns of the proximity between noble and loose love. The Castle seems to ask in what ways one might practice love that is both ennobling and physical, without sliding into wantonness. The capacity for eyes to draw and be drawn to beauty forms the basis for lewd and noble love. The Castle's mistress, Malecasta, has 'wanton eyes', which '[d]id roll too highly, and too often glaunce', attesting to her adulterous longings (41.7-8). In contrast, Britomart is inexperienced, unversed in sexual love. All about her 'were faire knights, and goodly well beseene, | But to faire *Britomart* they all but shadows beene' (45.8-9). Opulence and beauty without the felt significance of love or care has no reality, making their physical presence remote and shadowy. As Malecasta's fiery lust for Britomart 'ransackt all her veines', we are told that she has 'discust' (shaken off) 'all regard of shame', and is a 'shamelesse beauty' (47, 48). Shame comes with the guilt of the Fall, with sexual shame being the most vivid and uncontrollable. Augustine memorably writes in the *City of God,* that after the Fall, the sexual organs grew rebellious and confounding, 'a constant reminder of a selfhood that is scattered and imperfectly wielded'.[80] Malecasta's febrile burning powerfully evokes Augustine's description of the 'obscene heat' of lust. As Steven Justice explains with reference to Augustine, the impudence of the genitalia is not 'boldness of assertion, boldness of choice'. It is rather not choice at all, but inaction, 'abjection rather than cheek'.[81] Shame becomes the critical consciousness of how little we belong to ourselves. In being shameless, Malecasta is barred from this consciousness, and therefore, from seeking to redeem it.

Spenser invokes Leone's myth through the sustained repetition of the noun 'side', beginning with the inappropriate advances of the Lady of the Castle. The trembling Malecasta softly and soundlessly lays herself by Britomart's 'side', and 'inly sigh'd', evoking her arousal through a

[79] Roche, 68.
[80] See Augustine, *City of God*, IV: XIV.16. Steven Justice, '"Shameless": Augustine, After Augustine, and Way After Augustine', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44/1 (2014), 17-44, 29.
[81] Justice, 28-9.

homophonic pun and alerting one to the way in which the idealized image is being misused (61.4, 7). Britomart then shifts in her sleep—referred to as 'the royall Mayd', an epithet only used to describe Una and the faerie queen, it here suggests her incompatibility with Malecasta—and 'chaunged her weary side', as if withdrawing her side from the proffered union (61.9). In the next stanza she feels 'one couched closely by her side' and leaps out of bed towards her weapon. The six knights run in and the now 'warlike Mayd' is '[o]n thother side', both physically, and because she is revealed to be female, rather than male (63.6-7). Gardante's shot is seen to 'gore her side', making a corporeal sign of Britomart's symbolic incompleteness and 'loss of love', and of her new knowledge of the fleshly aspect love, which cannot be suspended in mind or mirror. This spurs her on to 'dreadful strokes', a maid who 'dismayd' her assailants. As she flies at her foes, the *Redcrosse* knight 'gaue her good ayd, | Ay ioyning foot to foot, and side to syde' (66.7-8), before they jointly take to their steeds and ride onward. The final use of 'side' in the canto presents a momentary, but honorable union, two knights who are both rived from their loves and questing together in order to rejoin them.[82] This insight is upheld as the Redcrosse knight gives Britomart her first real descriptions of the shadowy man in the glass.

This section has traced the motif of the hermaphrodite through a more unusual route than is customary in critical writings (which tend to focus on Scudamour and Amoret), in relation to the Redcrosse knight, in order to show its shifting importance and meaning. We have seen first the purely theological and (im)moral signification, based on the tradition of Salmacis as deceitful and seductive, and unconcerned with attending to the body as an instrument of experience. We then looked at the subtle rewriting of the image in terms that alluded to the mystical marriage of Christ and His Church, although this rewriting is contingent upon a lie of omission—if not a falsehood—concerning the first example, i.e. Redcrosse's experience with Duessa (said to represent falsehood). As the bonds between Redcrosse and Una are revealed to be promissory 'signs' (I.xii.40.5), rather than actual marriage, we turned to the third instance of union between Britomart and Redcrosse. While the second example is founded upon the erasure of the first, the third is founded upon the truth and the remembrance of the second, attesting to the Redcrosse knight's improving exegetical

[82] James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 608 notes this momentary union.

powers, now more closely aligned with divine ordinance. This last example involves both knights bearing physical and symbolic wounds, and emphasizes the place of the body in the amorous quest. Their wounds are healed in a temporary, but honourable union as they set forth side-by-side, and Britomart learns of her love.

IV. The Hard Begin

This section analyses Britomart's agonizing fall into love and her subsequent encounter with Merlin. Before we explore the ways in which Britomart herself is an androgynous figure and the effects of her meeting with Artegall, we will look at (i) the ways in which she reads and relates to him in the light of her initial vision in a looking glass, and then the prophesy, and (ii) the force with which her love is the source and pathway of her quest, becoming erotically, ontologically and epistemologically significant. The previous section concluded with an example in which both the physicality and figurality of the wounded body is important. As we turn to Britomart's flashback, Augustine's theory of signs in *De doctrina Christiana* provides a useful framework with which to read the evolving significations of her quest. It will also help illuminate the possibilities and limits of the martial Britonesse's prophesied union within the poem's remit of representation.

The first section briefly touched upon the mysterious '*Venus* looking glas' in which Britomart has seen the image of her future lover; we return now to the mirror and its effects in closer detail. Eager to hear more of this knight—named Artegall—Britomart pretends (to the Redcrosse knight) that she seeks him because he has done her 'foule dishonour' (III.ii.8.8). Before she can conclude her speech, Redcrosse exclaims that she must be 'misauised' to cast such 'vnknightly' aspersions upon 'the noble *Arthegall*' (III.ii.9). Britomart inwardly rejoices to hear 'her Love so highly magnifyde', and her delight is compared to that of a loving mother who safely delivers her babe after nine months in 'the deare closet of her painefull syde' (11.7). The simile suggests both the importance of Artegall to her future—even hinting at dynastic promise—and the smart of keeping her vision a secret. The recurrence of 'syde' affirms that Artegall must be Britomart's partner. We might note that this figurative pregnancy is quite different to what David Lee Miller identifies as the 'allegory of Arthur's "pregnancy"'.

As Miller has argued, Arthur's 'symbolic femininity' is developed through an initial moment of 'conception'—his enigmatic dream of the faerie queene—followed by references to the numbers of gestation, as he is said to rescue Redcrosse out of Orgoglio's dungeon nine months after his vision.[83] Miller also notes that the references reveal that the Redcrosse knight's liquefaction on grass with Duessa is contemporaneous with Arthur's dream. This simultaneity, I suggest, creates reservations about the quality of Arthur's dream and his interpretation of it. As the last section showed, Redcrosse's actions were a terrible transgression that led to entrapment and despair. If, as Miller argues, Spenser's male protagonists are made spiritually androgynous 'by refiguring their noble hearts or minds as symbolic wombs in which their own identities are reborn in the image of some "glorious great intent"', they do not appear to deliver.[84] Indeed the only occasion on which the Redcrosse knight directly refers to the 'brood of glorie' in his noble heart is searingly ironic, as he fights for Duessa (I.v.1.4). Arthur's quest for Gloriana appears both frantic and forlorn. Returning to Britomart, the simile that centres on the joy of a safe delivery suggests that her labour—more closely related to body and mind, to touch, proximity and literal generation—is perhaps more significant, and her adoption of 'symbolic masculinity', more successful. She becomes, in other words, a better androgynous knight than either Arthur or Redcrosse, and her androgyny is not motivated by the pursuit of abstract glory.

As Redcrosse describes Artegall, we witness Britomart's flashback in which she details the 'straunge occasion' of her fall into love and knighthood (III.ii.18.1). We discover that the object, previously called '*Venus* looking glas', has been made by the great magician Merlin for King Ryence. It is magical and said to show '[w]hat euer thing was in the world conteyned | Betwixt the lowest earth and heuens hight', as it appertains to the viewer (19.2-4). Being 'round and hollow shaped', as if a crystal ball, it suggests its own prophetic power, perhaps an extension of its maker's powers. William Blackburn writes that '[s]ince it shows all things truly, it is an image of prelapsarian Eden, of a world free from illusion and error', comparing this 'world of glas' to the Sidnean poet's golden world (19.9).[85] This does not seem to be the case. Rather, it is cautionary,

[83] Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 131, 113.
[84] *Ibid*., 113.
[85] Blackburn, 'Merlin', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 1234-36.

and discloses what one's foes have wrought against one, or friends that feign, and is so used by the King to guard his kingdom against invasion. When Britomart comes to the 'mirrhour fayre' in her father's closet, she remembers its virtues and begins to wonder whom fortune has in store for her as a husband. The statue of Venus in the Temple of Book Four stands upon an altar 'like to christal glasse', which may attest to the truth of this mirror's answering vision. A combination of substance and the viewer's own curiosity might make it Venus's glass. The image of a 'comely knight' soon appears before her, heroic and handsome, bearing arms that claim to be won from Achilles. She is soon afflicted with a powerful lovesickness, which makes her 'sad, solemne, sowre', that she mistakes for melancholia.

Britomart's reaction to the mirror's image and her first attempts to express her affliction were sweepingly dismissed by Lewis, who refers to her as 'little better than a big-boned country girl' whose 'love-sorrows [are] without dignity'.[86] Thomas Roche simply notes that her response leaves us 'puzzled and disturbed', while Kathleen Williams finds her 'childish and bewildered', giving way to 'the exaggerated feminine terrors of an Ovidian heroine'.[87] Yet dismissing her speech as dull or perplexing seems insufficient when its achingly diseased description takes up so much space. Britomart laments to Glauce that the source of her love is neither man, nor any 'liuing wight… But th'only shade and semblant of a knight, | Whose shape or person yet I neuer saw' (38.1-4), which makes her situation hopeless. She conceptualizes the image as bait with hidden hook that gravely wounds her:

> Sithens it hath infixed faster hold
> Within my bleeding bowels, and so sore
> Now ranckleth in this same fraile fleshly mould,
> That all mine entrailes flow with poysnous gore,
> And th'vlcer groweth daily more and more;
> Ne can my running sore find remedie,
> Other then my hard fortune to deplore,
> And languish as the leafe falne from the tree,
> Till death make one end of my dayes and miserie. (III.ii.39)

We cannot ignore the physiological claims of this stanza. Maureen Quilligan quips that Britomart's running sore sound more like a 'clinical account of stomach cancer' than a complaint of love, while

[86] Lewis (2013), 382.
[87] Roche, 51; Kathleen Williams, *Spenser's World of Glass: A Reading of the Faerie Queene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 93.

James Broaddus wittily agrees, and suggests that this could be because the young women both imagines an internal humour to cause her feelings of distress, and observes a humour issuing from her body.[88] He suggests that gore could be female seed—citing the *OED*, which suggests a clear liquid in addition to blood as a relevant meaning—understood, in Galenic physiology, to be emitted during orgasmic dreams. Indeed the young Britomart is said to be plagued with 'dreames, and with fantastick sight | Of dreadfull things' as she thinks continually 'of that fayre visage' (29). Furthermore, as Broaddus notes, Britomart's dream in the Temple of Isis involves a pride-swollen crocodile that she subdues, and through which she is 'enwombed', and brings forth 'a Lion of great might' (V.vii.16.5-6).[89] In terms of Galenic thought, a dream-like conception of this sort could not occur without the emission of seed.[90] In other words, a Galenic critical emphasis reminds one that Britomart's first experience of the wounds of love is frighteningly physical, despite the shadowy insubstantiality of the source.

These stanzas provide a powerful contradiction to R. L. Reid's recent contention that 'Spenser's leading ladies'—including Britomart—'are basically bodiless, the body conceived as veiling their spiritual being'.[91] Such an observation might be true of Gloriana, who *is* bodiless, but utterly misreads the knight of chastity. These verses do of course carry symbolic weight, but their relationship to the felt distress of the encounter is complex. Most immediately they recall the *symbolon* of Aristophanes's tale: love, born into every human being 'calls back the halves of our original nature together; it tries to…heal *the wound of human nature*. Each…is a "matching half [*symbolon*]"…always seeking the half that matches him.'[92] In this regard, Britomart's vision, followed by her consciousness of the wound which 'hath infixed… Within [her] bleeding bowels' is a necessary, but belated recognition of her incompletion.[93] These painful sores within her 'fraile fleshly mould' signal the path to recovery, which must be undertaken within this fleshly world. Love, in other words, is born into humankind both as a sign of division and a way with which to

[88] Quilligan, 'Words and Sex: The Language of Allegory in the *De planctu naturae*, *Le Roman de la Rose*, and Book III of *The Faerie Queene*', *Allegorica* 2 (1977), 195–216, 200; Broaddus, '"Gums of Glutinous Heat" in Milton's *Maske* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*', *Milton Quarterly* 37/4 (2003), 205-15, 206-7.
[89] Broaddus, 207.
[90] See Crooke, *Microcosmographia* (London, 1615), 284, 288.
[91] Reid, 146.
[92] Plato, *Symposium*, tr. Alexander Nehemas and Paul Voodruff, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989), 27 (emphasis added).
[93] See Marion A. Wells, *The Secret Wound: Love Melancholy and Early Modern Romance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 222-34 for a psychosomatic account of Britomart's 'love-sick hart'.

navigate the changeability and imperfection of creation. What is critical, however, is that until Glauce and Britomart's desperate meeting with Merlin, the maiden and her nurse are unaware of the significance of the knight's image, and therefore, its disturbing effects. The twofold weight of both fleshly felt experience and the understanding that the experience points beyond itself, that it is a sign of something else, is crucial to Britomart's quest. The force with which she speaks the claims of the body in her dialogue with Glauce is surprising and moving.

Glauce strives to reassure her young ward by telling her that her situation is unlike the 'monstrous' desires of *Myrrhe, Biblis* or *Pasiphae*, which depart quite from the 'course of nature' (III.ii.41). Britomart, rather shockingly, replies that this differentiation brings her no ease because these women, though 'lewdly bent', were fortunate, and 'did possesse their horrible intent' (43.2,7). Rather than the lustful metamorphoses whose 'fortune good' she lacks, Britomart compares herself to Narcissus,

> But wicked fortune mine, though mind be good,
> Can haue no end, nor hope of my desire,
> But feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food,
> And like a shadow wexe, whiles with entire
> Affection, I doe languish and expire.
> I fonder, then *Cephisus* foolish child,
> Who hauing vewed in a fountaine shere
> His face, was with the loue thereof beguild;
> I fonder loue a shade, the bodie farre exild. (III.ii.44)

The third line's juxtaposition of feeding on shadows whilst dying for food recalls the penultimate sonnet of the *Amoretti.* The beloved is absent and the speaker attempts to comfort himself by 'beholding th'Idæa playne', and 'feed[ing]' his 'love-affamisht hart' with 'light' (*Amoretti* 88, 9-12). The sonnets final couplet, however, upturns the metaphoric nourishment and expected neoplatonic valorization of soul over body: 'But with such brightnesse whylest I fill my mind, | I starve my body and mine eyes doe blynd' (13-14). As William Oram argues, 'spiritual brightness…is not *enough*', just as a full mind is not enough.[94] Rather than the expected anabatic ascent of love, Britomart desires this shadowy knight to be made flesh. Dismissing Britomart's lament as childish or dreary misses the important claim that a love (even one bestowed upon a

[94] William A. Oram, 'Spenser's Crowd of Cupids and the Language of Pleasure', *Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 87-104, 93.

'worthy' object) which languishes upon a diet of shadows, is insufficient and does not properly care for one's own body. She sees herself as 'fonder, then *Cephisus* foolish child' because rather than being too full of self-love, she cannot give herself the love she needs. The example of Narcissus is particularly interesting because it calls to mind Ficino's unexpected reading of the myth. Discussing an Orphic source, Ficino writes that the tragic fate of Narcissus shows 'the pitiable calamity of men':

> *Narcissus, who is obviously young*, that is, the soul of rash and inexperienced man, *does not look at his own face*, that is, does not notice its own substance and character at all. *But admires the reflection of it in the water and tries to embrace that*, that is, the soul admires in the body, which is unstable and in flux, like water, a beauty which is the shadow of the soul itself. *He abandons his own beauty, but he never* reaches the reflection. That is, the soul, in pursuing the body, neglects itself…For this reason, *melted into tears, he is destroyed*; that is, when soul is located outside itself, in this way, and has sunken into the body, it is racked by terrible passions and, stained by the filths of the body, it dies, as it were.[95]

Narcissus is not punished for scorning love, or made a victim of his own self-love, but forms an odd allegory for the soul's disastrous descent into matter. He perceives the dim and material reflection (be it in water or mirror) as its own cause, rather than a diluted effect of his original brilliance, and so perishes. Sergius Kodera reads the endorsed self-reflective gaze as dominating, a male strategy of self-fashioning, because it requires matter to be the passive medium upon which soul or form is imprinted. Spenser's Merlin-made mirror, however, is unlike Tasso's didactic reflective shield or Ficino's looking glass, which seem to represent the deceptive and 'rebellious shadow' within created beings.[96] In relation to Britomart, it is '*Venus* looking glas'; it draws her into the world of flesh and desire, which it presents as vital and indispensable and within which her quest must take place. In other words, this mirror is related to matter, but it does not present it as evil, privative or disposable. In this case, Britomart's comparison to Narcissus does not signal a fruitless and terminal metamorphosis. As Augustine reminds us, 'flesh' and 'spirit' or soul, cannot be reduced to a dualism of mental and physical: 'For when anyone approves the substance of the soul as the highest good and denounces the substance of the flesh as an evil, surely he is carnal both

[95] Ficino, *Commentary*, 140-1 (italics original); see also Kodera, 'Narcissus, Divine Gazes and Bloody Mirrors: The Concept of Matter in Ficino', *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, eds. M. J. B. Allen, Valery Rees, Martin Davies (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 285-307 for an account of the relationship of the metaphor of the mirror to male discourse in Ficino's theories of matter. See also Plotinus, *Ennead*, tr. A. H. Armstrong, 7 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), I: I.6.8 for a comparable reading of the transgressing soul.

[96] Kodera (2002), 305. It is also entirely different to the 'faire mirrhour' found in the proem to Book Two, or 'shadows' in the proem to Book Three wherein the Queen is invited to view a dim reflection of her glory.

in his pursuit of the soul and in his avoidance of the flesh inasmuch as it is through human vanity and not divine truth that he holds this view'.[97] What matters is the inclination of the will.

The third canto appears to introduce a new form of desire. It is preceded by Glauce's failure to cure Britomart through the use of herbs such as calamint, dill or camphor, thought to be inimical to lust.[98] The canto's very first lines describing that '[m]ost sacred fyre, that burnest mightily | In liuing brests, ykindled first aboue…And thence pourd into men, which men call Loue' startlingly distinguish it from 'filthy lust' in 'brutish mindes'. This 'sweete fit' it sings about loves 'true beautie' and 'choseth vertue for his dearest Dame, | Whence spring all noble deedes and neuer dying fame' (III.iii.1). Colin Burrow argues that it 'sits uneasily against the uncivic and narcissistic love of an epyllion'—Britomart's pining modeled on Scylla's lament in *Ciris*—'struggling to transform it into the motive force of an active and fertile life'.[99] As Burrow notes, this process of transformation is radical and difficult. Yet the proem does not only suggest that Britomart's will be a dynastic story by means of a chivalric chase. It also apostrophizes love, '[w]ell did Antiquity a God thee deeme', for its capacity to 'direct aright' the actions of humankind and effect '[t]he fatall purpose of divine foresight' in their lives (III.iii.2). The image is one of divine love poured into mortals to impel them to live aright. It recalls, as we have noted in discussing Britomart's wounds, the constitutive craving of Aristophanes' explanation. It speaks also to Augustine's arresting association of human desire with cosmological forces:

> Under its own weight a body gravitates to its proper place…Fire's natural path is upward, that of stone is downward…What is out of its proper place is restless; once in its proper place it finds rest. My love is my gravitational force; wherever I am carried, it is love that carries me.[100]

Augustine's words draw upon the Aristotelian concept of 'inclination'—from the *Physics*—that we found at the centre of the Gardens of Adonis; its arbor, so properly inclined, tended to a state of rest. In terms of Britomart, the opening of canto iii suggests that her love—her youthful passion and pleas, her wounds—is also her weight, and must propel her across land and narrative. The initial pain she feels does not appear self-centered. It cannot be reasoned or magicked away, but is already looking

[97] Augustine, *City of God*, IV: XIV.5.
[98] Hamilton's notes to III.ii.49 cite Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* 3.2.5.1, which records that *camphora* is hostile to lust.
[99] Burrow (1993), 104. See *Ciris: A Poem Attributed to Virgil*, ed. R.O.A.M. Lyne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 11. 220–377 and Nohrnberg, 446-7.
[100] Augustine, *Confessions,* II: XIII.9.10.

outward with the mysterious image of the knight as its only guide. The mirror's maker must lend her more clarity.

The initial encounter with Merlin is quite funny. Glauce and the ailing damsel disguise themselves 'in straunge | And base atyre' so as not to be recognized and arrive at the magus's 'hideous hollow caue' (III.iii.7.1-2, 8.3). Although he has foreseen their visit, he hears Glauce's vague explanation of the disease afflicting the 'virgin bright' (16) and teasingly suggests that more leech-craft is in order. When the women continue to dissemble, he erupts in laughter and identifies them, causing Britomart to blush, as if the blood from her wounds makes itself known on her face. In an important instance of variation that authenticates his words, Merlin 'the Prophet' proclaims,

> Most noble Virgin, that by fatall lore
> Hast learn'd to loue, let no whit thee dismay
> The hard begin, that meets thee in the dore,
> And with sharpe fits thy tender hart oppresseth sore.
>
> For so must all things excellent begin,
> And eke enrooted deepe must be that Tree,
> Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin,
> Till they to heauens hight forth stretched bee.
> For from thy wombe a famous Progenie
> Shall spring, out of the auncient *Troian* blood,
> Which shall reuiue the sleeping memorie
> Of those same antique Peres, the heauens brood,
> Which *Greece* and *Asian* riuers stained with their blood. (III.iii.21.6 – 22)
>
> The feeble Britons, broken with long warre,
> They shall vpreare, and mightily defend
> Against their forrein foe, that comes from farre,
> Till vniuersall peace compound all ciuill iarre.
>
> It was not, *Britomart*, thy wandring eye,
> Glauncing vnwares in charmed looking glas,
> But the streight course of heauenly destiny,
> Led with eternall prouidence, that has
> Guided thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas:
> Ne is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill,
> To loue the prowest knight, that euer was.
> Therefore submit thy wayes vnto his will,
> And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill. (III.iii.23.6 – 24)

This encounter parallels a fortuitous episode at the start of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*; Bradamante, already in search of Ruggiero, encounters Merlin and Melissa by chance, who do not tell her anything she doesn't already know. As Burrow observes, the episode is accidental, 'without motive

effect on its heroine', and fits in 'with the chaotic randomness of the early *Furioso*'.[101] In Spenser's version, however, the heroine seeks out the magus and receives a prophecy, which brings her a new consciousness of dynasty and destiny that spurs narrative action. With all the weight of ancestral virtue behind it, the prophecy demands a fitting legacy (and heroine), and the canto holds a far greater sense of Virgilian purposiveness than its Italian predecessor.

The two women counsel and conspire as to how they might possess this purpose; it is Glauce who frames the 'bold deuise'. She describes Angela, the Saxon warrior, and exhorts the example of 'many women valorous' who have adventured, 'in paragone of proudest men', concluding that they must make Britomart 'a mayd Martiall' (53-56). On hearing Glauce's 'harty words', 'that great desire | Of warlike armes…[a]nd generous stout courage' is kindled within her, as she resolves to adopt adventurous knighthood (57). This particular determination does at first imply that Britomart's desire has been redirected, from her first impression of a powerful man to glory in arms and dynastic triumph.[102] Merlin's history lesson suggests that she and Artegall are to become the poem's vital hermaphroditic couple, from which Britain's imperial history will flow into the poet's present. Her initial dismay turns to being dis-maid, into a massy habergeon with spear and shield and Glauce as her squire, fulfilling the etymology of her name. Yet, as previous sections have discussed, Britomart is not simply desirous of praise and martial conquest. It was her pangs of love that led her to Merlin in the first place, and the single-minded excitement of her love that helped her free the Redcrosse knight and form 'affectionate, | Friendship professed with vnfained hart' (62.7-8). Remembering the dramatic intensity of her sorrow—like a 'pyned ghost'—one might argue that the very extent of her desire left her open to accept a prophecy and pursuit of such magnitude.

Her love drives her quest and leads her to develop *caritas*, which lends her *claritas* in negotiating the obstacles she comes upon, as seen in Castle Joyous. In a kind of hermeneutic circle, her love informs her quest—building up love for others—just as her quest augments her love. This is the logic of Augustine's model of scriptural hermeneutics in *De doctrina Christiana*; it

[101] See Burrow (1993), 105-07 for an analysis of Spenser's episode in relation to Ariosto, and to the Hades episode from *Aeneid* 6, underlying it. Citing Thomas Elyot, he also notes the humanist commonplace—that the hereditary aristocracy should renew its 'ancestral virtue in order to merit supremacy'—that is used to persuade the heroine to rise to her destiny.

[102] Lewis (2013), 394, for example, saw her love ennobled only by the prophesied famous offspring.

illuminates Merlin's injunction to 'submit [her] wayes vnto [God's] will'.[103] What has been named the first throes of 'childish' love, or 'simply loving', is not quite transformed so much as reassured and justified by Merlin's words. It was not lust, was not her 'wandring eye | Glauncing vnawares', but happened to be destiny led by 'eternall prouidence'.[104] This flashback of her fall into love draws us into a world of fleshly signs, which ask to be read and used in different ways, simultaneously. Augustine's *De doctrina* provides a clarifying framework with which to illuminate them.

Augustine's treatise, particularly in Book I, makes two fundamental distinctions: (i) between *res* and *signum* or things and signs and (ii) between two different ways of relating to things, *uti* or *frui* to use or to enjoy. 'Things', he writes, are learnt about through signs' (*DDC* I.2). A thing is something that is not determined by virtue of signifying something else, although it may become part of such a system and be both *res* and *signum*; Augustine compares a stone to the stone that Jacob placed under his head. A thing enjoyed is one that gives us satisfaction wholly in itself, whereas a thing used is one that is a means to something more, intending more than simply itself (I.3).[105] Augustine's innovation is in the triadicity of his model; it involves the subject for whom signs signify, or beings that do the enjoying or using. Platonic anthropocentric teleology is therefore re-written in the light of the doctrine of creation; rather than a gulf between semiology and ontology, 'there is a single created nature that has different valences according to the meaningful intentionality it can acquire in human society'.[106] Although Augustine does not explicitly make this link, Rowan Williams infers that the 'distinction between *frui* and *uti* (I.3) is thus superimposed on the *res—signum* distinction, and will pervade the whole of *DDC*; it is the means whereby Augustine

[103] See Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, tr. Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 1996), I.40.44 and II.42.63. All quotations in English refer to this edition.
[104] *The Faerie Queene* does contain tragic examples of those whose lives are without the blessing of providence. Take, for instance, Cymochles. In Book Two, the narrative tone appears to condemn his 'wandring thought' and 'frayle eye', peeping 'through their lids' at the Bower's women, 'to steale a snatch of amorous conceipt' (II.v.34). In the closing canto of Book Two—when the Bower appears in prolonged luxuriance—its stanzas reveal that its maidens are 'bare to ready spoyle | Of hungry eies, *which n'ote therewith be fild* '(II.xiii.78.1-2 emphasis added). Cymochles' 'frayle eye' is unsuspectingly destined to be unfulfilled.
[105] 'Enjoyment, after all, consists in clinging to something lovingly for its own sake, while use consists in referring what has come your way to what your love aims at obtaining, provided, that is, it deserves to be loved'. (*DDC* I.4.4)
[106] See Hill, 'Introduction', 39-40.

links what he has to say about language with what he has to say about beings who "mean" and about the fundamentally desirous nature of those beings'.[107]

As Tzvetan Todorov also explained, things used 'are transitive, like signs, and things enjoyed are intransitive….This distinction has an important theological extension. In the last analysis, nothing other than God deserves to be enjoyed, to be cherished for itself alone'.[108] In respect of God who is *res*, all else is *signum*. He alone is to be enjoyed, and in respect of him all else to be used (I.22.20). The twofold love upon which the law and scriptures depend is love of God and neighbor, the latter of which includes the love of your self, by yourself (I.26.27). Williams points out that as Augustine himself seems well aware, at face-value, 'there is something odd in saying that the proper love of neighbour is a "using" of the neighbour to draw closer to God'.[109] The language of *uti* is simply designed to warn against making any finite person or object the end and sum of our joy, because such a cessation of desire is absurd in relation to finite objects of love.[110] One can 'use with delight', or love, (*cum delectione/ cum dilectione*) but must allow 'the capacity for…self-forgetful *dilectio* opened up in these and other such loves to be opened still further'.[111]

Returning to Britomart, we might see how the mirror's image of Artegall affected the heroine in a way that clearly pointed beyond itself, although her initial self-diagnoses of sickness and of monstrous lust were wrong. Merlin's historical prophesy revealed not only the man the image represented, but also the potential relationship between him and Britomart, and what that union will breed: joy, famous progeny, the restoration of *Briton* rule, the reign of a royal Virgin and 'vniversall peace'.[112] Britomart's love for Artegall, therefore, clearly cannot be an end in itself as it is made to signify a destiny far beyond him, or herself. And yet on her particular quest, it is her love for him,

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[107] Rowan Williams, 'Language, Reality and Desire in Augustine's *De Doctrina*', *Journal of Literature and Theology* 3/2 (1989), 138-51, 139. Williams presents this insight as a plain sense reading, although it has been critiqued for making a postmodern of Augustine. See, for example, James A. Andrews, *Hermeneutics and the Church: In Dialogue with Augustine* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2012), 46, 88-89; see also Jeffrey McCurry, 'Towards a Poetics of Theological Creativity: Rowan Williams Read's Augustine's *De Doctrina* after Derrida', *Modern Theology* 23/3 (2007), 415-34, who approves.
[108] Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, tr. Catherine Porter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 41.
[109] R. Williams (1989), 140.
[110] See Gregerson (1995), 54 on Malbecco's error in clinging to his wife and money for their own sake, in opposition to any symbolic, circulatory or generative capacities. In Augustine's terms, this is *cupidity*, as opposed to charity (see *DDC* III.10.16).
[111] *DDC* I.33; R. Williams (1989), 140.
[112] Bart van Es suggests that the 'Queen's fate is…closer to that which Britomart momentarily imagines for herself', the image of the waning Narcissus, than to Merlin's prophecy of a divinely ordained husband. See *Spenser's Forms of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 169-71. See also Andrew Fichter, *Poets Historical: Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 156-206.

her resolve to find him (and by extension her love for country, kin and promised peace) that enables her to develop bonds of love and sympathy for the Redcrosse knight, for Scudamour and Amoret, to even initially show Malecasta kindness. Indeed when she and Artegall separate, with her consent (IV.vi), she accompanies Scudamour in his search for Amoret and is beholden to 'vertues onely sake, which doth beget | True loue and faithfull friendship', rather than her initial spousal love quest (IV.vi.46).

In other words, as glimpsed through the case of the Redcrosse knight, Britomart must, through trial, become a better 'sign' of what she is destined to be. As with Augustine, the impulse to love is shown to be ontological, in addition to being erotic, and becomes hermeneutic. From love and marriage must spring dynasty, which drives history. Merlin presents the lineage of the contemporary dynasty as an image of the Apocalypse; yet citing Christ's words to his disciples, he warns, 'But yet the end is not' (III.iii.50.1). Britomart and Artegall do not wed, and consequently, do not breed in the poem as we have it. They do not form the amorous androgyne—and the eternal universal union it implies—as prophesied. Indeed Britomart's absence from the middle cantos considerably reduces the force and direction offered by Merlin's speech. The Apocalypse is unreached and as Roche reminds us, and Spenser knew, the 'true Apocalypse will make poetry meaningless'.[113] Spenser stays Britomart, and ourselves, in the mobile realm of history and mortality in which she is made to renew her endeavours at reading and living through love. He allows her little room for the stasis of pride—desire misdirected, or misconceived—despair, or the mastery of knowledge. In the spirit of *Amoretti* 6, that love which 'harder wonne, the firmer will abide'; but Britomart experiences no consummation—excepting her dream—and cannot yet abide. The following, final section analyses the failures of both Britomart and Artegall, and Scudamour and Amoret, to materialize the promised ideal androgyne and turns to the only figure that does so: Dame Nature.

V. An Endlesse Worke

Merlin's chronicling monologue announces that Britomart and Artegall are to form the poem's originary hermaphroditic couple from which dynastic event will flow unto the present in

[113] Roche, 50.

which Spenser writes. But before we get to their travails, we must ackowledge how Britomart is a complex androgynous figure in herself.[114] Although she wears the armor, 'all fretted round with gold', said to belong to the Saxon princess Angela, her armed presence is consistently read as male, as culturally expected. Judith Anderson points out that her adoption of arms is both the result of her encounter with Merlin and a process suggested and facilitated by the maternal Glauce, reiterating its conceptual doubling. The Briton princess is thrice wounded by love, first by her vision, then by Gardante's arrow and finally, at the hands of Busirane through her armor, 'as if the armor [has] become more fully a part of her'.[115] When she leaves Artegall to help Sudamour seek the lost Amoret, her commitement to 'vertues onely sake' draws on 'virtue', the moral form, and *virtus*, the power derived from *vir*. What the example of Britomart makes clear is the startling success of her androgyny. She possesses an 'artifactual' masculinity, one that uses objects in order to execute a heroism usually gendered male.[116] The narrator states at one point that 'record of antique times' remembers female heroism, '[t]ill envious Men fearing their rules decay, | Gan coyne straight lawes to curb their liberty' (III.ii.2.1-6); women are not excluded by nature. Furthermore, Britomart's disarmament—the exposure of her body—does not disable her, but disarms others, as in dwellings of Malecasta and Malbecco, or when her ventail is struck open by her beloved.

The same cannot be said of Artegall. He is oddly described in the fourth canto of his legend as being 'preseru'd from yron rust', as if he is consubtantial with the arms he bears, quite unlike Britomart's instrumental relation (V.iv.2.7).[117] When Artegall submits himself to Radigund, she 'caused him to be disarmed quight, | Of all the ornaments of knightly name…In stead whereof she made him to be dight | In womans weedes, that is to manhood shame' (V.v.20). Stripped, in Heraclean subjection, of the arms that herald his fame and might, he all but disappears. The 'vmanly maske' of men 'disguiz'd in womanishe attire' appears a 'lothly uncouth sight' to Britomart, and the sight of her own love 'no lesse deformed' makes her turn her head aside, 'abasht

[114] This is different from being an 'androgyne', as the adjectival form suggests a property, while the nominal form is more definitive and suggests being.
[115] Judith H. Anderson, *Spenser's Narrative Figuration of Women in the Faerie Queene* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2018), 98, 102. Anderson traces Britomart's development—through her armour—across books Three to Five. See also Anderson's earlier essay 'Britomart's Armor in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration', *ELR* 39/1 (2009), 74-96.
[116] Kathryn Schwarz uses the term 'artifactual heroism' and analyses the difference between the signifying structures of weapons with relation to Artegall and Britomart. See *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (London: Duke University Press, 2000), 151.
[117] Schwarz too comments on the effect of this strange syntax, *ibid*.

with secrete shame', not to mention jealousy (37.6-9; 38). Artegall in women's dress could be analogous to his predestined lover, approaching him in full men's armor. His enforced cross-dressing, however, is not an instrumental femininity, not an equivalent to Britomart's 'manly terror'. This is a deflationary reunion.

Britomart takes charge, bringing him to a bower and dressing him in armor (41). She frees the city's captive knights and makes them 'sweare fealty to *Artegall*' who now decides he is suffieciently recovered to proceed 'vppon his first aduenture' (43.6-9). The narrator—in a claim that rings hollow—states that Britomart 'did true Iustice deale', by repealing the liberty of women and restoring them to 'mens subjection'. The capitalized 'Iustice' implies that in doing so, she performs Artegall's duties. The men (and women?) are said to all adore her as a 'Goddesse' and '[hearken] to her loring' (42). Anderson argues that this unnamed Goddess—whether Isis or Minerva—to whom she is assimilated 'offers a substitute for Britomart's former figural integrity'. Through a process of incremental metonymy, which Britomart is now seen to willingly participate in, she is immobilized and made 'properly statuesque'.[118] Anderson's point is a good one, but overlooks the emotional agency we are privy to. Britomart, understandably miserable about her knight's departure (seemingly without so much as a word of thanks or farewell), '[moderates] her owne smart' and tempers her heaviness (44.3-9). There is a gaping absence of symmetrical gender exchange between them that could have provided spousal promise; she leaves canto (and poem) still suited in armour, and presumably, still upbuilding her capacity for charity. The two do not, in the poem as we have it, evenly manage to adopt the qualities of the other. Only Milton's first parents perform this proportional interchange when they fall.

The fifth book only seems to present a strong narrative drive. As Oram observes, although Artegall's association 'with Justice and the future of the British race' recalls the figure of Aeneas, his development over the course of Book Five is 'less consequential than either Redcrosse or Guyon's'. Irena, once mentioned early on, is utterly forgotten until after Artegall leaves Mercilla's court. Furthermore, none of the fifth legend's incidents are causally connected. Rather, they are thematically associated as dramatizations of Artegall's 'somewhat limited understanding of justice',

[118] Anderson (2009), 96. Her point is furthered by comparing Dolon's accidental misreading of Britomart as Artegall to her willing adoption of 'Iustice's' role.

one that evidences no radical change or improvement.[119] The deepest (and final) impressions of Book Five are the result of the attacks by Envie, Detraction and the Blattant Beast. Recalling Artegall's first encounter—and duel—with Britomart, we realise that the fraught relation between them is hinted at early on. As he shears her ventail and looks upon her face,

> His powerlesse arme benumbd with secret feare
> From his reuengefull purpose shronke abacke,
> And cruell sword out of his fingers slacke
> Fell downe to ground, as if the steele had sence,
> And felt some ruth, or sence his hand did lacke,
> Or both of them did thinke, obedience
> To doe to so diuine a beauties excellence.
>
> And he himselfe long gazing thereupon,
> At last fell humbly downe vpon his knee,
> And of his wonder made religion,
> Weening some heauenly goddesse he did see,
> Or else vnweeting, what it else might bee; (IV.vi.21.3-22.5)

Once more the description of the sensible steel seems coextensive with senseless limb, linking Artegall to armour. His psychological powerlessness and physiological numbness make him look more like 'a victim of Medusa', than anything else.[120] Scudamour, delighted that his jealous fears of Amoret's unfaithfulness have proved unfounded, crows, 'I ioy to see you lout so low on ground, | And now become to liue a Ladies thrall, | That whylome in your minde wont to despise them all', augmenting the image of petrifaction (IV.vi.28.7-9).[121] Williams observes that this swerve from wrathful to fawning is precisely what Britomart's dream of the crocodile in the Temple of Isis depicts; yet on this ocaasion it does not result in harmony.[122] Of course, on hearing Artegall's name, Britomart's trembling hart-strings answer her beloved's quaking members and quailing heart, but this tremulous sympathy seems not enough to level his reaction, which 'of his wonder made religion'.[123] The difference in power that the language of devotion implies recalls the unbreachable

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[119] Oram, 'Looking Backward: The Evolving Genre of *The Faerie Queene*', *Modern Philology* 115/3 (2018), 327-47, 342. For more positive evaluations of Artegall's achievement, see Anderson, *The Growth of a Personal Voice: "Piers Plowman" and "The Faerie Queene"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 169–70 and Donald Stump, 'Isis versus Mercilla: The Allegorical Shrines in Spenser's Legend of Justice', *Spenser Studies* 3 (1982), 87–98.

[120] See Schwarz, 147.

[121] Given the analysis of Scudamour's abduction of Amoret in chapter two, his speech here could also suggest that he is likely to read relations in terms of dominance and subjection. Even so, the language of idolatry is disturbing.

[122] K. Williams (1961), 117.

[123] Artegall's reaction is emphatically not what Milton's first parents achieve: a startling combination of erotic delight and conscious piety.

distance between Gloriana and Arthur. As discussed in chapter two, and again upon entrance to Malecasta's house, love requires mutual and voluntary subjection. Artegall is not awarded the precarious balance of power that governs reciprocity. This is made amply clear when, in a second instance—parodying the first—he unhelms and yields to Radegund, who promptly 'as her vassal him to thraldome tooke' (V.v.18.3).

Although his name suggests that he might grow into the 'equal' of 'Arthur', it is Britomart who must take on the rescuing role and retrieve him. Merlin's prophecy claims that Britomart and Artegall will marry and found a dynasty. The priest's interpretation of Britomart's dream in Isis' Temple emphasizes the same. Yet as Oram notes, the dream itself is far more obscure and raises larger questions: 'The figures of Justice and Equity, Osyrus and Isis, are more than simple images of British royalty. On the one hand, they embody cosmic forces; on the other, they raise questions about the equivocal relations between male and female, violence and fecundity'.[124] Whereas Britomart's own androgyny is seen to be spectacularly effective, she cannot seem to unite with her destined partner to materialize either prophetic vision and, thus, the harmonies they imagine. Perhaps, then, Britomart is susceptible to the risk of Narcissus, but not in the way she first imagined. She does not fall in love with an image of herself, and she does develop charitable relations with others, but appears to perform both her role, and the role of her beloved, without him being able to do the same.[125]

We return now to the embracing Scudamour and Amoret, read by many as the singular manifestation of the hermaphrodite in *The Faerie Queene*, representing, in Kathleen Williams's words, 'a symbol of marriage, but of marriage as itself a symbol of the necessary concord of opposites on which the world depends'.[126] Here is the relevant verse:

> At last she came vnto the place, where late
> She left Sir *Scudamour* in great distresse,
> Twixt dolour and despight halfe desperate,
> Of his loues succour, of his owne redresse,
> And of the hardie *Britomarts* successe:
> There on the cold earth him now thrown she found,
> In wilfull anguish, and dead heauinesse,
> And to him cald; whose voices knowen sound
> Soone as he heard, himself he reared light from ground.

[124] Oram (2018), 343-4.
[125] See Norhnberg, 474 on the similarities between Ovid's myth of Narcissus and the Hermaphrodite.
[126] K. Williams (1961), 115.

There did he see, that most on earth him ioyd,
His dearest loue, the comfort of his dayes,
Whose too long absence him had sore annoyd,
And wearied his life with dull delayes:
Straight he vpstarted from the loathed layes,
And to her ran with hasty eagernesse,
Like as a Deare, that greedily embayes
In the coole soile, after long thirstinesse,
Which he in chace endured hath, now nigh breathlesse.

Lightly he clipt her twixt his armes twaine,
And streightly did embrace her body bright,
Her body, late the prison of sad paine,
Now the sweet lodge of loue and deare delight:
But she faire Lady ouercommen quight
Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,
And in sweete rauishment pourd out her spright:
No word they spake, nor earthly thing they felt,
But like two senceles stocks in long embraceme[n]t dwelt.

Had ye them seene, ye would haue surely thought,
That they had beene that faire *Hermaphrodite*,
Which that rich *Romane* of white marble wrought,
And in his costly Bath causd to bee site:
So seemd those two, as growne together quite,
That *Britomart* halfe enuying their b[l]esse,
Was much empassiond in her gentle sprite,
And to her selfe oft wisht like happinesse,
In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse. (III.xii.43*-46*).[127]

Both Britomart and readers of this canto are made spectators to the scene; but what does each see? Lewis wrote that Spenser's image is 'obviously a visual emblem' of true marriage in the Biblical sense, 'of *henosis*'.[128] Roche—who points to two emblematic examples—agrees, arguing that Spenser 'grants to his lovers a unity akin to that Venus which is the source and end of their love'.[129] As Donald Cheney argues, however, this 'comic' ending of marriage that closes the 1590 poem raises at least as many questions as it resolves.[130] As mentioned previously, the term 'Hermaphrodite' is couched confusingly amid two subjunctives and two definite pronominal

[127] For classic readings of the image of the hermaphrodite, see Lewis (2013), 430; Roche, 133-36; Donald Cheney (1972), *passim* and Cirillo (1969), *passim*. See also Silberman, 'The Hermaphrodite and the Metamorphosis of Spenserian Allegory', *ELR* 17/2 (1987), 207-23; Mary-Rose Logan, 'Androgyne', and Silberman, 'Hermaphrodite', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 103-5, 937-9.
[128] Lewis, *Spenser's Images of Life*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 38.
[129] See Roche, 134-6; See also Johannes Sambucus, *Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1564), 124-5 and Nicholas Reusner, *Aureolorum Emblematum* (Strassburg, 1591), sig. Diii.
[130] Cheney (1972), 197. Cheney suggests that an emblem of the Hermaphrodite from Aneau's *Picta Poesis* seems the most suggestive of Spenser's vision (99). The emblem in question does see the Hermaphrodite as *Matrimonii Typus* but complicates it. It shows a pair lovers (in one body with two heads) kissing, enshrined by the branches of a tree full of birds. On one side of them is the pointing figure of Moses (showing approval), but on the other, a laughing satyr. The peeping satyr seems to imply that the Hermaphrodite is simultaneously funny, grotesque and two struggling creatures, rather than one mystical being. See also Barthélemy Aneau, *Picta Poesis* (Lyon, 1552), 14.

adjectives, which point to a statue that has never been identified and is likely made-up. The reference could look forward to the enigmatic Venus in the Temple of Book Four as Roche implies. Yet the odd emphases on riches and cost (not to mention, a bath) equally betrays a teasing tone, or more worryingly, points to the lingering presence of the cultural site of Busirane.[131] Secondly, the not quite invoked referent 'hermaphrodite' is, as we have seen, always-already teetering between wondrous fulfillment and direst punishment, synthesis and dissolution. As Edgar Wind and later, Gayle Whittier point out, the hermaphrodite can—according to some mythographers—invoke sublime harmony, but may also represent monstrosity and lend itself to ribaldry.[132] In Whittier's words (on reading Shakespeare's twentieth sonnet), 'the delicate ambiguity of the androgyne cannot survive in the world'.[133]

In the verse at hand, we might note the protrusion of unresolved 'worldly' problems. The narrator's description of Scudamour 'in great distresse', 'dolour', 'despight', 'desperate', coupled with Britomart's perspective, who finds him in '*wilfull* anguish and dead heauinesse', makes him sound rather narcissistic (emphasis added). Indeed his relief on seeing Amoret is dwarfed by the reiteration of his 'sore [annoyance]' and 'dull delayes'. This brand of willful hopelessness survives in the new ending of 1596. While Amoret is said to have endured seven months of torment, Scudamour barely lasts two days before his 'expectation to despaire did turne', and he departs (III.xii.45). The extended metaphor that compares him to a hasty deer, 'that greedily embayes | In the coole soile', momentarily relates him to the fleeing Florimell, and reverses gender roles. Yet the image of the hart wallowing in a muddy pool also suggests a scene out of venery, where the creature finds temporary respite, but is not necessarily free from danger. This is proved only too true in the 1596 version. Nonetheless, the metaphor makes Amoret the 'coole soile', resonant with Salmacis, and the embracing couple can be said to figure a second Hermaphroditus and Salmacis wherein pleasure, rather than fear, is in focus.[134]

The fluid language of ravishment, the silence and senselessness of melting in pleasure and long dwelling in 'embracement' is forcefully suggestive of orgasm, as Amoret's body becomes the

[131] See Anderson (2018), 94.
[132] See Wind, 200ff, who refers to the 'wanton statues' that inspired Beccadalli's *Hermaphroditus*, dedicated to Cosimo de Medici.
[133] Whittier, 191.
[134] Moshenska, *Feeing Pleasures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 122, notes that 'the reader cannot read their embrace as a figure for higher truth without becoming lost in its pleasurable details'.

'sweet lodge of loue'. Britomart's 'halfe enuying' response seems understandable. Kimberly Anne Coles has recently argued that in this moment, individual subjectivity and heteronormative relations are completely abandoned, as they (Scudamour and Amoret as one creature) move from time to eternity to express the 'universalism of the Pauline church', which necessitates the erasure of principal terms of identity. This suggests that the third legend closes with a demand of 'spiritual ethics' that sets aside 'the particular claims of the body' in favour 'of one catholic body'.[135] In light of the various details traced here, including the fact that the hermaphrodite is only subjunctively hinted at and that the two only 'seem' grown together, Coles's reading appears out of joint. As Cheney notes, the construction '[h]ad ye them seene' occurs elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*, typically in situations that caution against the ambiguity of appearances, for example, when Archimago pretends to be the Redcrosse knight, or in relation to False Florimell, or Calidore in pastoral disguise.[136] Indeed Britomart's presence as the remainder or residuum in her own Book also jars with this interpretation. *Contra* Cole, who reads the clinch between Scudamour and Amoret as Charity 'realised in its ideal form', I argue that this scene, from which Britomart cannot be forgotten, highlights not only the impossibility of materializing such an ideal form, but also the struggle to 'loue and…not liue amisse' in an earthly and social context.[137]

Joe Moshenska observes that Britomart is *halfe enuying*; we are not told what the other half might be doing.[138] Anderson argues that the partiality of her envy, or moderation of it, is evidence that she has learnt something, but has more learning to do.[139] As we have seen, following this, Britomart also tempers her jealousy and sorrow upon finding Artegall in Radegone, and on his departure. On the one hand, her envious response clearly discloses her unfulfilled desire. On the other hand, her restraint recalls Augustine's differentiation between the world and the city of God. In this world, where temporal goods are finite, one's gain is seen to be another's loss, which results in envy. In understanding and aspiring to the kingdom of charity, however, one sees that the love of God and of fellow beings is superabundant and grows with sharing, and should make partakers

[135] Kimberly Anne Coles, 'Gender in the 1590 *Faerie Queene*', *Edmund Spenser in Context*, ed. Andrew Escobedo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 352-63, 352-55.
[136] Cheney (1972), 196.
[137] See Melissa E. Sanchez, 'Sex and Eroticism in the Renaissance', *Edmund Spenser in Context*, ed. Andrew Escobedo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 342-52. Sanchez persuasively shows how sex and eroticism remain specters of moral suspicision, even within the bounds of companionate marriage.
[138] Moshenska (2014), 122.
[139] Anderson (2018), 94.

willing equals. This is what Abdiel strives to explain to the furious and unconvinced Satan of *Paradise Lost*, that the glorification of the Son will exalt the state of angels, not cast them down. Britomart is half-envying as she encounters the embracing couple whom she has reunited, negotiating responses of time and providence.

Although the new fourth book of the 1596 edition begins with a spirited defense of love, this emblematic ending of Book Three is excised and Amoret is subjected to brutal ordeal, while Scudamour wastes away in the smithy of Care. Amoret is 'snatched' up by Lust, '[a]ll ouergrowne with haire', with a nether lip resembling 'a wide deepe poke', an enormous nose 'empurpled all with bloud' and 'wide long eares' (IV.vii.5, 6). Lust is plainly a frightening assemblage of male and female genitalia, travestying the symbol of the hermaphrodite, reminding one what it might look like if forced into literal resolution. Sudamour's sanity and will being hammered away in the forges of Care mockingly remembers the reverse; the *Symposium*'s anecdote that lovers, if granted a single wish from the gods, would call upon Hephaestus to fuse them together as one. With or without the original ending, the proem to Book Four implores Venus' 'dred infant' to strew the earth and its inhabitants 'with drops of melting loue' gotten 'from aboue' (IV.Pr.5). This suggests that neither Amoret—who, adopted by Venus is by extension a kind of surrogate Cupid—nor Scudamour—who is 'Cupid's man'—nor even their joint reunion, might materialize the ideal androgyne, or the love that it implies, in this world. The narrator-poet directs his prayers and fitts 'above'.

And yet, despite Scudamour's untimely exit in the second installment, the excised embrace reappears in an unexpected form. Britomart and Amoret ride into Book Four on a single horse, a 'traditional symbol of passion'. As Anderson notes, Britomart is in a full suit of armor. She also deceives Amoret by allowing her to believe she is a man. This image replaces the hermaphrodite of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*. Britomart attends to and honours her charge, and when she unlaces her helmet, Amoret sees she is a woman, and 'freed from feare', offers her 'franke affection' (IV.i.15.6-7). Rather than a dubious manifestation of an 'ideal', the hermaphrodite is rewritten as a condition governing the loving relationship between characters, here two women, a symbol that illuminates the fraught project to make virtue, or more specifically charity, active in the world. This is all well and good, but simultaneously reiterates that *The Faerie Queene* does not permit its pairs of lovers—even predestined ones—to materialize the hermaphrodite or androgyne as an object of

representation. As this chapter has argued, this enduring difficulty should lead to continual conversation within and with the created world, forming a kind of interpretive humility and hope from which *caritas* might grow. Yet the inaccesibilty of the image as an object of representation in mortal beings also indexes a persistent anxiety; are sexual relations lived as respectable, or free from sin in relation to a wider social existence ever possible?

As Sanchez points out, the 'promotion of companionate marriage' is but one of the politico-cultural and religious discourses in which Spenser's poetry participates; both Luther and Calvin warn that even conjugal relations have been adulterated with lust.[140] In his section on 'due benevolence', the Pauline term for conjugal love, William Whately highlights the interdependence between sexual and societal relations: 'Doth not euery mans priuate wel-fare, and the publike also for the most part, depend in a manner altogether vpon the successe of this societie? The hope of posteritie…together with the flourishing and populous estate of euery Church and Common-weale, doth euen hang vpon the fruit of matrimony'.[141] The poem promises offspring it does not deliver, suggesting that the relationship between sex and society is more tense and complex than Whately describes. The elusiveness of the 'fruit of matrimony', or even matrimony, is therefore, doubly challenging. On the one hand, it could be a symbolic indication of the inaccessibility of closure in the phenomenal world; on the other, it is an immediate concern about the compatibility of conjugal love and political and societal welfare.

In this light, *The Faerie Queene* presents a predicament almost opposite to that of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a related text governed by the motif of the androgyne. While Shakespeare's drama pleads that the embrace with which it begins ('The nobleness of life | Is to do thus') endures in wake of the lovers' death ('husband, I come'), Spenser's poem asks, among other things, how to translate a spiritual symbol into an earthly model in the quest to love, and not live amiss.[142] Spenser's *Amoretti*, however, is remarkably followed by his *Epithalamion,* wherein the 'little loves' of his

[140] Sanchez (2017), 343, 345. She cites Luther, *The Estate of Marriage* and *A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage* in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 148, 413-15 and Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (London: James Clarke, 1953), I:350 (2.8.44). Of course, Spenser's *Prothalamion* asks that the respective marital beds of Katherine and Elizabeth Somerset 'with pleasures chast abound' (103), but the wish of a betrothal song differs from narrative representation.
[141] William Whately, *A bride-bush: or, A direction for married persons* (London, 1619), 16-17.
[142] Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. John Wilders (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1995), 1.1.55; 5.2.286.

sonnet sequence become 'an hundred little winged loves' that attend the consummation of his marriage. This image reappears in Book Four of *The Faerie Queene*, in the Temple of Venus: 'all about her necke and shoulders flew | A flocke of litle loues' (IV.x.42.1-2). The language suggests that the vision of love and marriage in the *Amoretti* is perhaps the only Spenserian example that truly expresses its participation in the symbolic unity of alma Venus.

Reid writes that in Book Three, Spenser 'feminizes the epic', with its many female 'heroes' and Britomart's 'ascendancy'.[143] Yet there are several central details that trouble this thesis. Britomart is absent from the central cantos and the gardens of Adonis hardly contribute to epic momentum. Furthermore, as Oram points out, Spenser minimizes the importance of Britomart's quest in the Letter to Ralegh, because it has 'little relation to Gloriana's court and because it looks so unlike the epic being advertised in the "Letter."' Oram contends that 'in his bid to become England's Virgil, Spenser wrote the "Letter" to obscure how much his poem's fundamental…structure departs from the norms of Virgilian epic'. In doing so, he convincingly reads the 'Letter' as an attempt to reinterpret the poem in a mode 'consonant with the project' of the new national laureate.[144] Indeed, details of design—the poem's organization by select virtues, for example—and the mounting interpretive trials faced by its figures, and readers, suggest that it is philosophical and pedagogical aspirations that are at stake in *The Faerie Queene*. This is a far cry from Tasso's theory of epic writing, which demands that the poet not 'show himself ambitious in natural philosophy or theology'.[145] Instead of a 'feminized' epic, then, Book Three presents a thinking through of the ways in which the amorous androgyne is an organizing principle, of what it represents in shifting circumstances, of how it might be aspired to, and the achievements and anxieties of such endeavours. This chapter concludes with the poem's clearest example of the androgyne or hermaphrodite, manifest as an object of representation: Dame Nature.

The mysterious Dame appears in the *Cantos of Mutabilitie*, which despite being composed in the same 'Spenserian stanza', differ in many respects from the poem at large. They are unrelated through plot and character (excepting Cynthia) and include no mortal actors. Their mythic nature,

[143] Reid, 205.
[144] Oram (2018), 335-6.
[145] Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, tr. Mariella Cavalchini and Irene Samuel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), II.34-51.

and more specifically, mythic debates, emphasize the poetry's new direction, its philosophical, cosmological leanings.[146] The final stanzas of the eighth canto, 'unperfit', close in prayer. Although Dame Nature is referred to momentarily in other passages, her only appearance is in canto seven. It is clear from the start that she is more than just 'nature'. In the sixth canto, Mutabilitie (justly) argues that Jove is 'no equall Judge' of her desert, and appeals to 'the highest him, that is behight | Father of Gods and men by equall might…the God of Nature' and 'great Natures presence' for a true trial (VII.vi.35, 36). As the entry for 'Nature' in *The Spenser Encyclopedia* states, '[w]hether as God, Christ, or the vicar of God, Nature is superior to the planets, the stars, and the earth with everything upon it'.[147] Spenser's Nature is clearly intended to overgo her medieval predecessors, as 'the highest him' is surely a claim never been made so explicitly for *natura,* or *natura* seemingly perfected.[148] As Weatherby, Oruch and others note, Dame Nature resembles the transfigured Christ.

The splendid glare of the 'bright and wondrous sheene' of her garment is compared to the effect of the glorious 'Lord in strange disguise | Transfigur'd', whose robes 'dazed' the eyes and wits of the saints on mount *Thabor* (VII.vii.7).[149] The point of similarity is, of course, the effect, or amazement; yet if effect is being compared and cause stated, then by extension, the causes are also analogous. Spenser audaciously bypasses old *Dan Geffrey* who 'durst not…mel' with such a subject, and leads us to seek out *Alane* (de Lille) and his '*Plaint of kindes*' (vii.9) who is said to describe it 'wel'. As Weatherby notes, however, we turn to Alain to find only that the vestments of his Nature are quite unlike the brilliant white ones on Arlo Hill. They are colourful, multifarious and shifting, rather more like Spenser's Mutabilitie. Alain's Nature is distinguished from God, but

[146] See Ramachandran, 'Spenser's Lucretian Metaphysics: Skepticism and the Cosmic Process in Spenser's *Cantos'*, *Celebrating Mutabilitie: Essays on Spenser's 'Mutabilitie Cantos'* ed. Jane Grogan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 210-45 and 'Edmund Spenser, Lucretian Neoplatonist', *Spenser Studies* 24 (2009): 373–411. See also Goldberg, *Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Representations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 63-121. Oram (2018), *passim*, argues that reading the poem from the perspective of the 'mutabilitie cantos' more clearly illuminates the poem's generic values, than the 1590 opening.

[147] Jack B. Oruch, 'Nature', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 1317-21, 1317. See Alice Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 35-45, for an iconographic history of *Natura*.

[148] H.L. Weatherby argues this point. See 'Dame Nature and the Nymph', *ELR* 26/2 (1996), 243-58, 245-6. See Elizabeth Fowler, 'The Failure of Moral Philosophy in the Work of Edmund Spenser,' *Representations* 51 (1995), 47–76, esp. 69-70, and Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 372 on the ambiguities of Nature's judgment.

[149] See Matt.17.2; Weatherby, 276. Weatherby's larger argument is that Spenser's Nature draws on the idea of the deifying effect of the Incarnation upon nature, detailed in the works of the Greek Church Fathers. See Lewis (2013), 117-8 who distinguishes *Natura* from *Physis*.

Spenser's is far more confusing.[150] It is in this strange amalgam of creation and Creator that we find the hermaphrodite as an object of representation.

Dame Nature is of course prefigured in the *magna mater* statue of Venus within the Temple of Book Four and the Lucretian lines behind her. As Chapter two observes, Scudamour does not particularly dwell on her mystery. Yet her 'feete and legs together twyned | Were with a snake, whose head and tail were fast combyned', wherein the *ouroboros*, or tail-devouring serpent is a familiar symbol of eternity, here eternal generation and perhaps matrimonial fidelity.[151] The goddess' statue is also veiled, the cause of which is 'hard to know', but it is said, the narrator claims, that 'she hath both kinds in one, | Both male and female… She syre and mother is her selfe alone' (IV.x.40, 41). Although we witness this Venus in a flashback after we hear of Scudamour and Amoret's embrace and separation, she is actually encountered by Scudamour before he seizes Amoret. Consequently, Book Four suggests that Cupid's warrior and his little love were unable to replicate, or participate, in this symbol of generative harmony. This enigmatic Venus seems to reappear in Dame Nature, but without any human characters to gaze upon her.[152] Nature also recalls the Venus invoked in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, whose 'selfe doth soly couples seeme | Both male and female through commixture joined' and whose son Cupid is 'in the Gardens of Adonis nurst' where 'growing he his owne perfection wrought' (801-5). The growth of Venus's son sounds terribly similar to Dame Nature's conclusion that all things 'worke their owne perfection' and dilate their being in unfolding through time (vii.58.7). In summary, this strongly suggests that whether she is called Venus or Nature, goddess or god, her creative and preservational force is the same.[153]

All of creation assembles on Arlo Hill and are 'well disposed' by Nature's sergeant, said to be *'Order*', which recalls the grand harmony of 'that necessary concord of opposites' that Kathleen

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[150] Weatherby, esp. 247. See Alan of Lille, *The Plaint of Nature*, tr. James J. Sheridan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 124.

[151] See Douglas Brooke-Davies, 'Mercury', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 1232-34, 1233. The kiss of the embracing serpents on Hermes' caduceus is the kiss of love, according to Macrobius.

[152] As McCabe, *The Pillars of Eternity: Time and Providence in The Faerie Queene* (Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, 1989), 204, writes, '[t]he hermaphroditic character of Spenser's goddess Nature associates her with the Lucretian Venus as the universal principle of biological generation while at the same time recalling the Idol of Venus in book four and the image of the passionate embrace with which the third book originally concluded'. Yet while the statue of IV.x is akin to the mythic Nature, the clasping lovers are in contradistinction to them both.

[153] See John Manning, 'Venus', *Spenser Encyclopedia* on this point, 1857-63, esp. 1861. He cites Seneca on the inextricability of God and Nature.

Williams attributes to the symbolic structure of the hermaphrodite (vii.4.6). While this chapter argued against its presence between Scudamour and Amoret, or any other mortal actors, it shows itself in Nature. Although Nature is referred to as 'she', 'great dame', 'great goddesse' and the 'Grandmother of all creatures', she is profoundly ambivalent:

> Being far greater and more tall of stature
> Then any of the gods or Powers on hie:
> Yet certes by her face and physnomy,
> Whether she man or woman inly were,
> That could not any creature well descry:
> For, with a veile that wimpled euery where,
> Her head and face was hid, that mote to none appeare
>
> That some doe say was so by skill deuized,
> To hide the terror of her vncouth hew,
> From mortall eyes that should be sore agrized;
> For that her face did like a Lion shew,
> That eye of wight could not indure to view:
> But others tell that it so beautious was,
> And round about such beames of splendor threw,
> That it the Sunne a thousand times did pass,
> Ne could be seene, but like an image in a glass. (5.3-6)?

She is quite literally greater than any other power on the hill. She(-he) cannot be 'descried' or accurately interpreted in terms of her sex by any 'creature', reiterating her deified status. She is veiled and wimpled, and can be looked upon only as a reflection, despite the fact that she *is* present, making her multiply obscured in a poem that is itself of mirrors and shadows. While it is clear that none might look upon her face, the precise reason is ambiguous, although the narrator seems to prefer the final suggestion that is given most stanzaic space. The claim that it blindingly, 'the Sunne, a thousand times did passe' is, in Spenserian terms, a powerful marker of divinity. Furthermore, in addition to both and neither sex, Nature is a compound of discordant qualities: 'euer young yet full of eld, | Still moouing, yet unmoued from her sted; | Unseene of any, yet of all beheld' (vii.13.2-4). Mutabilitie knows only alteration, but Nature contains stillness and motion causing the Titanesse to be 'feld', both physically humbled at her presence and later, dialectically defeated. Nature's more than human glory recalls the transfigured Christ, and it is this descriptive force that allows her to show forth the androgyne.

Finally, in response to her presence, the whole earth responds with the *inclination* we first glimpsed, in small, in an arbor within the Gardens of Adonis (chapter two), which has since eluded the poem's human figures. She is placed in a pavilion, not crafted by the skill of man,

But th'earth *her self of her owne motion*,
Out of her fruitfull bosome *made to growe*
Most dainty trees; that, shooting vp anon,
Did seeme to bow their bloosming heads full lowe,
For homage vnto her, and like a throne did shew.
…

And all the earth far vnderneath her feete
Was dight with flowers, *that voluntary grew*
Out of the ground, and sent forth odours sweet,
Ten thousand mores of sundry sent and hew,
That might delight the smell or please the view: (8.5-9, 10.1-5; emphasis added).

Not only does the earth rise to voluntarily elevate Dame Nature upon the hill, but renders inclination inseparable from adoration, love and thanksgiving. This moment of miniature congregation of gods, nymphs, and creatures of all kinds, looks forward to the love made in *Paradise Lost*, where conversation, sexual congress and worship are intertwined in the biblical manifestation of 'one flesh'.

But Nature's philosophical judgment against Mutability's aspiration to rule is notoriously undercut in the 'unperfit' eighth canto. The speaker does accede to the statement that the titanesse 'beares the greatest sway' in this 'tickle' state of life (viii.1.5), and his weary image (*contemptus mundi*) of Time's 'consuming' sickle mowing down 'flowring pride' threatens the impression of the lush and giving earth in the prevous canto. The speaker, however, then turns to meditate upon the 'time when no more *Change* shall be', the justification for Dame Nature's supremacy. His prayer for the 'rest of all things', and for his own rest, with 'the God of Sabbaoth', hinges upon his equal acceptance of the androgyne, Nature's glorious presence, of the eternity implied in that wimpled face as she somehow looks up with 'chearefull view'. The earth's inclination and growth in Nature's presence recalls, as I mentioned, the gardens of Adonis. This echo reminds us that although Nature as goddess, or *natura naturata*, does not enter the poem at any other point, we are always amidst nature as process, an on-going working of creation, or *natura naturans*; this is perhaps why she is 'euer young yet full of eld'. Indeed, the perpetually sexually active and generative Venus and Adonis within the gardens of Adonis remind us of this, being but another manifestation of the same life-giving force. The garden's narrator also foreshadows Nature's law: 'All things decay in time, and to their end doe draw'. Things decay, yes, but 'draw' towards an 'end' that can also be interpreted as the fulfillment to which they tend. This dual understanding of

nature as both process or pathway *and* end is supported by her comparison to Christ. As Augustine writes, Christ 'deliberately' makes 'himself the pavement under our feet along which we could return home'.[154] James Nohrnberg compares Nature to the biblical Wisdom, also a 'creatrix'. Unsurprisingly, Wisdom too is described as another way in which God becomes the road as well as the destination: 'So since she herself is our home, she also made herself for us into the way home'.[155] Mortal lives and mortal loves must be pursued, worked in and through the created world in the hope that each new effort augments one's ability to live aright. The ideal androgyne will never materialize in this world, but inspires action anyway.

In *De Doctrina*, Augustine writes that if one has understood the scriptures, one must necessarily build up the twin loves of God and neighbour by this understanding; the two are inextricably bound. If, he continues, a reader is misled in an interpretation that still builds up charity, he is 'mistaken in the same sort of way as people who go astray off the road, but still proceed by rough paths to the same place as the road was taking them to' (I.36). These detours are not preferable to Augustine, but if applied to the book of the world, seem to provide an apt description for the 'rough paths' and winding ways through Faerie land. Spenser does not typically bring us, or his characters, to the place at the end of the road, as it were. He does not promise a paradise within. The closest he comes to this is when the narrator says of the garden of Adonis in Book Three, 'well I wote by tryall, that this same | All other places doth excell' (III.vi.29.6-7). Perhaps he intimates that his experience of the gardens resides in the creative bliss of human love.

The next chapter turns to Milton. It aims to show how Milton's reading of Spenser might have shaped his construction and critique of the ideal form of Chastity in the Lady of the Ludlow masque.

[154] *DDC,* I.17.16.
[155] Nohrnberg, 753; *DDC,* I.11.11.

Chapter Four
'The Unexempt Condition': Chastity in Milton's Ludlow *Maske*

Next, (for heare me out now Readers) that I may tell ye whether my younger feet wander'd; I betook me among those lofty Fables and Romances, which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of Knighthood founded by our victorious Kings…There I read it in the oath of every Knight, that he should defend to the expence of his best blood, or of his life if it so befell him, the honour and chastity of Virgin or Matron. From whence even then I learnt what a noble vertue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies by such a deare adventure of themselves had sworne… Only this my minde gave me that every free and gentle spirit without that oath ought to be borne a Knight, nor needed to expect that guilt spurre, or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder to stirre him up by both his counsel, and his arme to secure and protect the weaknesse of any attempted chastity…Thus from the Laureat fraternity of Poets, riper yeares, and the ceaselesse round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy, but chiefly to the divine volumes of *Plato*, and his equall *Xenophon.* Where if I should tell ye what I learnt, of chastity and love, I meane that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only vertue which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy.

(John Milton, 1642)[1]

I. Wandering Labours

Milton's only masque, *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634*, was composed for performance in the great hall of Ludlow Castle to welcome and secure the position of the king's deputy in Wales and the Marches, John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, and his wife.[2] It was first played on the Michaelmas night of 29 September, 1634, wherein the Earl's youngest daughter Alice, aged fifteen, played the Lady, and his only surviving sons John and Thomas, aged eleven and nine respectively, played the Elder and Second Brothers. Their music teacher Henry Lawes wrote the music for *A Maske* and acted the part of the Attendant Spirit. It was first published in 1637 with significant additions, specifically, the Lady's defense of chastity in her last speech to Comus, the first part of Comus' reply (in which he admits his fear), and the description of the gardens in the epilogue.[3] The ages of the young masquers, unexpectedly playing themselves, suggest that some of the masque's effects are contingent upon a deliberate 'celebratory/comic tone' in the writing. The children are to be admired for memorizing long parts, hefty moral argument, and to be indulged at

[1] Milton, 'An Apology Against a Pamphlet', *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, eds. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), I:890-92. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Milton's prose refer to this edition and page references will be given parenthetically.
[2] *Arcades* is more properly classified as a rural entertainment.
[3] See 'A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634 [Comus]', *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems,* ed. John Carey (London: Routledge, 2013), 173-234, 174 for a brief summary of the dates and relations between the two extant manuscripts—Trinity and Bridgewater MSS—and later printed editions. All quotations from *A Maske*, and shorter poems, refer to this edition and line references will be given parenthetically.

times for appearing naïve.[4] Yet in addition to being an 'occasional' text to mark new governance, *A Maske* also feels like an atypically personal one—particularly in published form—preoccupied with ideas and images that Milton would return to repeatedly in later writings.[5]

Years after composing *A Maske*, in 1642, Milton fondly recollects the wanderings of his 'younger feet', through 'those lofty Fables and Romances' that recount the deeds of knighthood, and the 'shady spaces of philosophy', particularly the 'divine volumes of *Plato*, and his equall *Xenophon*', from which he learnt of 'chastity and love', which bestow virtue upon those who are worthy to receive it (*Apology*, quoted above). The records of these early mental movements appear to refer to Spenser's great poem in both content and form. The first, inscribing his enthusiasm for the literature of chivalry, and foregrounding 'chastity', seems obvious. James Holly Hanford argued long ago that 'above all, [Milton] is thinking of the "solemn cantos" of the "sage and serious" Spenser who becomes henceforth a dominant influence in his poetic aspirations…. The outcome of these elevated yet fervid imaginings is *A Maske,* in which the correlative influences of Spenserian, Platonic and Apocalyptic allegory are clearly to be traced'.[6] That Milton represents his reading and response as a kind of 'wandering' is a more understated allusion. The question of the ways in which we might read, navigate and value fallen creation is a central Spenserian fixation bequeathed to Milton, and these negotiations are portrayed in the form of wandering through that mutable world.

Spenser's *Elfe*, 'the first author of all Elfin kynd' was 'wandring through the world with wearie feet', suggestive of the kind of ceaseless postlapsarian labour discussed in chapter three, before he comes upon his mate, *Fay*, in the fallen gardens of Adonis (II.x.71). *The Faerie Queene* famously begins with an image of an errant knight 'pricking' on a plain and also warns of the anesthetic and amnesiac properties of the Bower of Bliss, which makes '[t]he wearie Traveiler, wandring that way' 'forget | His former paine, and [wype] away his toylsom sweat', and falsely

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[4] Cedric C. Brown, 'Milton's Ludlow Masque', *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25-38, 28.
[5] On *A Maske*'s occasional and political significance see Michael Wilding, 'Milton's "A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634": Theatre and Politics on the Border', *Milton Quarterly* 21/4 (1987), 35-51 and in the same issue, Brown, 'Presidential Travels and Instructive Augury in Milton's Ludlow Masque', 1-12 and Leah Marcus, 'The Earl of Bridgewater's Legal Life: Notes Toward a Political Reading of *Comus*', 13-23. See also, John Creaser, '"The Present Aid of this Occasion": The Setting of *Comus*', *The Court Masque*, ed. David Lindley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 111-34.
[6] James H. Hanford, *A Milton Handbook* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1946), 370-71.

escape the vital and formative pains of the fallen quest (II.v.30).[7] At the close of *Paradise Lost*, Milton's first couple must, 'with wandring steps and slow', make their 'solitarie way' out of the ruins of Eden and into the world. This particularly Spenserian verb, and the ethical expectations it evokes, abounds in Milton's masque. The Prologue to *A Maske* refers to the 'forlorn and wand'ring Passinger' of the woods (39); the Lady, left alone, imagines that her brothers have 'ingag'd their wandring steps too far' (193); her Second Brother in turn laments 'where may she wander now' (351); Comus is said to entice every 'thirsty wanderer' with his cup (524) and finally, in the Epilogue, 'after her wandring labours long', Psyche becomes the eternal bride of Cupid (1006). As *A Maske* is situated firmly after the Fall, in Spenserian fashion, wandering becomes the necessary movement through, and engagement with, the mutability and materiality of fallen creation that defines worldly trial.

In this light, Milton's description of his own youthful 'wanderings' imply his conviction that like his better teacher, Spenser, his poetic vocation is inextricably bound to moral virtue, and that literary patterns can and should permeate lives. The poet 'ought him selfe to bee a true Poem' (*CPW* I: 890). In his masque, Milton represents the Lady's, and similarly, the Elder Brother's response to such trial as a particular model of chastity as moral action, which, I will show, is very different to what we have seen of Spenser's Britomart, although she suggests herself as the obvious exemplar. While Britomart's chastity grows into something like charity, the Lady's chastity presents a species of temperance reminiscent of Spenser's Guyon. The demands and discontents of this model become the central theme and question of the drama. Consequently, this chapter argues that Milton's masque closely reads and refashions moments out of books two and three of *The Faerie Queene* in order to consider the role of the body, and the relation between body, mind and spirit in worldly trial, or what Comus names 'the unexempt condition' (685). *A Maske* calls for active virtue in such trials. As a result, against generic precedent, *A Maske* does not divide contrarieties between good and evil, but emphasizes the importance of the right use of bodies, of nature, and of rhetoric.

[7] John Guillory asserts that 'beneath the tragedy of the Fall is the romance of wandering', specifically relating 'wandering' to Spenser's Error, which he reads as a figure for the poem's narrative structure. See Guillory, 'Milton, John', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 1241-49, 1245-6. More recently, Andrew Wadoski's essay, 'Milton's Spenser: Eden and the Work of Poetry', *SEL* 55/1 (2015), 175-96, 182 reasserts that *Paradise Lost* 'figures the labor of Spenserian romance as the universal labor of walking' in the fallen world.

II. Himself in Every Line: The Problem of Influence

Milton's widow, Elizabeth Minshull, remembered that he had named Spenser among his best-loved English poets.[8] John Dryden named Milton 'the poetical son of Spenser', and reported that Milton had acknowledged Spenser as his 'original'.[9] This is a difficult literary relationship to deny, but an equally difficult one to develop with real precision, because, in John Guillory's words, 'in his repeated approach to that origin, Milton seems to become only more himself'.[10] Any attempt to trace his relation to Spenser as a kind of poetic origin must confront his formidable and self-proclaimed distinctiveness. Milton's readers have long intuited this strange combination of inheritance, allusiveness and above all, singularity. Hazlitt observed that 'Milton has borrowed more than any other writer; yet he is perfectly distinct from any other writer…the fervour of his imagination melts down and renders malleable…the most contradictory materials'.[11] Dr. Johnson, too, described the sublimating 'heat of Milton's mind', and Samuel Taylor Coleridge declared that it was the 'sense' of Milton's 'egotism' that gave him the 'greatest pleasure' in reading the works, for the poet 'is in every line', in every thing he writes.[12] Stephen Fallon's brilliant work on self-representation in Milton's writings recognizes that while he 'found it difficult to resist writing about himself', Milton unusually—at a time in which spiritual autobiographies, conversion narratives and anxious self-examinations of one's sinfulness proliferated—did little to compete for the title of 'the chief of sinners'.[13] Indeed, he often writes about himself as if he is without sin at all, as for example in a passage of self-reflection in the *Second Defence of the English People*, or in the defense of himself:

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[8] William B. Hunter, Jr., 'Spenser and Milton', *A Milton Encyclopedia*, eds. Hunter et al., 9 vols. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1978-83), 8:34-6, 34.
[9] John Dryden, *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), II:247; *The Poems and Fables of John Dryden*, ed. James Kinsley (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 521.
[10] Guillory, 'Milton, John', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 1242.
[11] William Hazlitt, 'Lecture III: On Shakespeare and Milton', *Lectures on the English Poets* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1818), 86–134, 115.
[12] Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; With Critical Observations on their Works*, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), I:286; Coleridge, *Table Talk*, ed. Henry Nelson Coleridge, gen. ed. Kathleen Coburn, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), II:253, I:125.
[13] Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton's Peculiar Grace: Self-Representation and Authority* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), ix, 21-7. As Fallon argues, it would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which Milton's attitude is anomalous in the context of his time.

> For my part, I call upon Thee, my God, who knowest my inmost mind and all my thoughts, to witness that (although I have repeatedly examined myself on this point [the cause of blindness] as earnestly as I could, and have searched all the corners of my life) I am conscious of nothing, or no deed, either recent or remote, whose wickedness could justly occasion or invite upon me this supreme misfortune. (*CPW* IV: 587).

> Singular indeed is the favor of God toward me, that He has called me above all others to the defence of liberty. (*CPW* IV: 735).

This astonishing conviction of peculiar grace infuses self-representations that Milton constructs and communicates early on. In the first Prolusion, or exercise delivered in college at his time of residence in Cambridge, Milton 'fears' that he must say 'something contrary to all the rules of oratory', and imagines that 'in all this great assembly' he encounters 'none but hostile glances' so that his task 'seems to be to placate the implacatable' (*CPW* I: 219). While the Second Defense makes his blindness a sign of divine favour in order to answer jeering critics who name it punishment, the first Prolusion imagines him encompassed round with critics, in order to display his singularity. In the seventh Prolusion, the orator imagines 'a single individual, endowed with the gifts of Art and Wisdom' who would 'prove to be a great gift of God, and sufficient to lead a whole state to righteousness', and in the well-known letter to Charles Diodati (1637), Milton, thinking of 'an immortality of fame', declares that he is '[g]rowing [his] wings and practising flight'(*CPW* I: 292, 327). He conceives of himself as a divinely inspired epic poet, at least in aspiration. As Fallon writes, 'Milton, toward the beginning of his writing life, is focused on prospect'; his writings are suffused with a sense of promised singularity that looks forward 'to a state of heroic completion'.[14]

Milton's relation to singularity in his repeated idealized reconstructions of self, however, is not untroubled. As Colin Burrow suggests, the critical reception of Milton (at least since Coleridge) as an egoist is better regarded as a poet who is at once attracted to, wary of, and even repelled by singularity.[15] Fallon's study comparably attempts to foreground the trajectory of his self renderings from 'early, relatively naïve, uncomplicated, and univocal assertions of preternatural virtue, through the unsettling of this…to the more conflicted and chastened self-representations of the mature' poet.[16] *A Maske* is an early work, but is also much revised, and its additions make clear its author's

[14] Fallon (2007), 45-6.
[15] Colin Burrow's lecture on 'Milton's Singularity', delivered in 2008 as a part of the Lady Margaret Lectures at Cambridge University, makes this point. The podcast is available at https://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/miltons-singularity.
[16] Fallon (2007), xii.

preoccupation with the power and possibility of assertions of self-sufficient virtue. The arc Fallon traces is already emergent within *A Maske*, and the conflicted representation of how virtue, particularly chastity, might act in the world, indexes both Spenser's influence *and* Milton's own probing uncertainty, which cannot entirely be disentangled.

Dr. Johnson exasperatedly grumbled about the masque's deficiency as drama, a series of 'declamations deliberately composed', rather than 'dialogue animated by reciprocal contention'.[17] Perhaps this feeds into William Kerrigan's argument that Milton inscribes *three* images of himself in *A Maske*, or Fallon's extension that the poet 'populates a world in *A Mask*', dwelling in the 'I' of *all* characters, while Shakespeare 'disappears' into them.[18] This may be true, but what of Spenser? As Maggie Kilgour observes, Shakespeare enters 'through verbal echoes that are often so slight and fleeting as to seem addressed to an extremely attentive reader who is saturated in the plays'. While they are surely carefully controlled, they '*appear* as forces that threaten the textual order'.[19] Spenser, however, enters through direct formal and thematic parallels, as well as in unmistakable allusions to original moments so brief that they appear strange in their insistence. Spenser is, as Kilgour writes, welcomed as a friend, father or official ally. But more specifically, I argue, he is invited in as a teacher. Although an early creation, *A Maske* does not produce a univocal assertion of preternatural virtue, in this case, the apparently all-encompassing Chastity that lapses confusedly into virginity. The Lady, the Elder Brother and the Attendant Spirit, in particular, certainly seem to voice Miltonic aspirations and fears. Simultaneously, several players, including those mentioned, invoke and recontextualise Spenserian figures in order to temper Olympian wishes for self-sufficiency and perfectionism in this life that the masque seems to express. The hesitation between the descending gift of grace, on the one hand, and the belief and longing for humankind to arrive at sufficient virtue through natural means on the other, is at the heart of *A Maske*, and indeed most of Milton's work.

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[17] Johnson, I:281.

[18] In *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of Paradise Lost* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 37-44 Kerrigan identifies the 'Shepherd lad', the Lady and the Elder Brother as the Miltonic triangle. See Fallon (2007), 62-4.

[19] Maggie Kilgour, '*Comus*'s Wood of Allusion', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 61/3 (1992), 316-33 offers an insightful account of the modes of allusion and poetic inclusion in *A Maske*, paying particular attention to difference in references to Spenser and Shakespeare. See 318.

The Ludlow masque clearly bears traces of what is commonly thought to be typical of Milton's early responses to Spenser's poetry, which is to say, verse that appears less mired in the concerns of this world. In Wadoski's words, the early works are guided by a 'transcendent and apocalyptic sensibility' in which poetry gazes '[a]bove the reach of mortall eye', as Spenser is figured as a 'prophetic visionary in relation to whom Milton frames his own vatic ambitions'.[20] 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity', for example, is indebted to both the alexandrines of Spenser's continued allegory and to the lyricism of his marriage odes—although to particular effect—as it appears to repeatedly reach out into eternity, rather than facilitate narrative.[21] In *Il Pensoroso* (1632?), Spenser is famously alluded to as the singer of 'sage and solemn tunes…Of forests and enchantments drear, | Where more is meant than meets the ear' (117-120).[22] In *A Maske*, the Lady's song to 'Sweet Echo' concludes with the wish that the unseen nymph may 'be translated to the skies | And give resounding grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies' (242-3), an unexpected apostrophe, but one that inscribes the melting voices and winning strains sung of in *L'Allegro* (1631?).

A Maske, however, also carries a second kind of Spenserian influence, not usually identified in Milton's work before the 1640s. As the previous chapter showed in relation to the chain of Concord, Spenser's allegory is fraught with the suspicion that, excepting what is revealed or healed by grace, ideal forms of virtue of the sort reified by his knights are fallen, human projections onto the difficulties of creation, which largely avoid the ethically required engagement with the world. This is importantly in contradistinction to Tasso's principles of poetic composition. Will Poole notes that Tasso 'would prove to be a fundamental theoretical reference point for Milton's own evolving ideas on epic', and indeed in *Of Education* (1644), Milton specifically recommends Tasso

[20] Wadoski (2015), 184; Milton, 'Psalm cxxxvi', ll. 93 (1624).
[21] See Guillory, 'Milton, John', *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 1242. Milton also uses alexandrines to close the stanzas of 'On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough' (1628), 'The Passion' (1630), 'On Time' and 'At a Solemn Music' (1633).
[22] I briefly refer here only to the early English poems and their Spenserian echoes. It should be noted that Milton's Latin poems, which, as Stella P. Revard has observed, curiously record his turn to *English* poetry and offer 'most intimate disclosures' about his 'poetics and personal life', dwell on the limits of making local histories—such as Arthuriana—the occasion for universal considerations. Local fame is not, after all, what Milton saw and sought for himself. See Revard, *Milton and the Tangles of Neaera's Hair: The Making of the 1645 Poems* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 4. See also the collection of essays in *Young Milton: The Emerging Author, 1620–1642*, ed. Edward Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), for a varied account of Milton's developing poetic.

on 'what the laws are of a true *Epic* poem' (*CPW* II: 404-5).[23] Of course *A Maske* is not an epic poem, but as Milton's revisions suggest, it is marked by reformative aspirations—and non-dramatic features—like that of *The Faerie Queene's* desire to 'fashion' readers in virtuous discipline, and combines 'allegory' and 'imitation', which Tasso sees as characteristic of heroic poetry.

Yet Tasso's central demand is that poets should not trouble the relation between 'outwardly' manifestations and universal truth for fear that it may leave readers uncertain of their moral responsibilities.[24] Instead, readers' minds are to be directly drawn up to the poetry's 'example', so that their intellect might paint the very 'patterns' they encounter—courage, temperance, prudence, justice etc—within themselves. Poets are to prescribe, and not to show themselves 'ambitious in natural or theological questions'.[25] The Ludlow masque, in Spenserian fashion, quite explodes these rules as it appears uneasy, if not critical, of the ideal form of chastity it constructs, and stages debates both natural and theological with mixed results. Comus' escape remembers several Spenserian ancestors, but would not have garnered Tasso's approval despite Milton's counsel in *Of Education*.

III. Sage and Serious Spenser: Milton's reads his teacher

Milton's readers have long felt the presence of *The Faerie Queene* in *A Maske*, variously identifying both sympathy and difference within this 'most Spenserian production'.[26] Christopher Kendrick highlights the latter; Spenser's conception of 'chastity' is as one virtue among several, while Milton's seems to encapsulate several, if not all, as he fixes 'virtue in chastity's form'.[27]

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[23] William Poole, *Milton and the Making of 'Paradise Lost'* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 55.

[24] Tasso, 'Allegory of the Poem' in *Jerusalem Delivered: Gerusalemme liberata*, tr. Anthony Esolen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 515-16. Tasso's attempt to explain and so control his allegory is well known.

[25] Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, tr. Mariella Cavalchini (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 171, 34-51. This is obviously untrue of *Paradise Lost* and we might usefully recall Dr. Johnson's remark that the 'dawn or twilight of *Paradise Lost*' glimmers in *A Maske* (I:280).

[26] Annabel Patterson, *Reading Between the Lines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 43.

[27] Christopher Kendrick, 'Milton and Sexuality: A Symptomatic Reading of Comus', *Re-Membering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions*, eds. Mary Nyquist, Margaret W. Ferguson (New York: Methuen, 1987), 43–73, 63. Kendrick relates this to a 'biographical datum', or what he sees as Milton's personal commitment to celibacy at the time. This follows William Kerrigan's discussion in *The Sacred Complex*, Ernest Sirluck, 'Milton's Idle Right Hand', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 60 (1961), 749-85 and Tillyard, *Milton* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), 318-26. On the question of whether the masque's theme of chastity may have held a more personal meaning for the Earl of

Following Foucault, Kendrick interprets the emphasis on chastity as an instance of the displacement of sexuality onto women; his Lady is over-determined and controlled. Deborah Shuger reads the Lady as 'ensnared', but 'guiltless' because she 'does not consent', which 'makes her captivity morally trivial and without repercussions'.[28] Shuger distinguishes this freedom of will (the will's non-consent to 'evil') from Spenser's 'Protestant understanding of sin as an existential condition', which she reads in how the Redcrosse knight is '*tricked* into abandoning Una', thus making the Lady the epitome of moral freedom.[29] Leah Marcus also sees *A Maske* as 'particularly attentive to women', but relates this to the text's 'deep and strong affinities' to *The Faerie Queene*, an unambiguous revival of the Spenserian mode.[30] John McMichaels reads the Lady's trial as a *psychomachia*, which he relates to Spenser's allegorical encounters, in which Comus operates as a projection of her own 'inner struggle between her reason and her appetites'. William Oram also identifies the kind of allegory in *A Maske* as deriving from Spenser, rather than Jonson, because it is 'rooted in the analysis of the individual mind', but distinguished by 'a richness of reference' wherein individual 'characters usually infold many meanings, related but distinct'.[31] My own approach is most akin to Oram's. What makes the Ludlow masque so indebted to Milton's 'original' is its frank concern with how to rightly use the fallen lives and world we inherit.

In addition to formal and thematic continuities or contrasts, critics have also diverged in terms of the Spenserian specifics they witness in *A Maske*. Sabrina of course makes a fleeting appearance in Book Two of *The Faerie Queene*. In addition, many critics see the structural influence of the close of Book Three, Amoret's rescue from the house and masque of Busirane, and

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Bridgewater and his family, see Barbara Breasted, '"Comus" and the Castlehaven Scandal', *Milton Studies* 3 (1971), 201-24; see also John Creaser, 'Milton's "Comus": The Irrelevance of the Castlehaven Scandal', *Milton Quarterly* 21/4 (1987), 24-34.

[28] The moral ambiguity of Spenser's Amoret, specifically her situation within the masque of the vile enchanter Busirane, questions Shuger's assumption.

[29] Deborah Shuger, '"Gums of glutenous heat" and the Stream of Consciousness: The Theology of Milton's Maske', *Representations* 60 (1997), 1-21, 4, 6 (italics original). Shuger's reading too readily conflates involuntary corruption or original sin with actually committing sin, as for example, when the Redcrosse knight lies with Duessa. Furthermore, this reading is not in keeping with Milton's own praise of Spenser as a 'better teacher', in *Areopagitica*, for his representation of an active virtue founded in moral choice.

[30] Leah Marcus, 'John Milton's *Comus*', *A Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas N. Corns (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), Blackwell Reference Online, unpaginated.

[31] John McMichaels, 'The Lady Rises: Stoicism and Spenser in Milton's *Comus*', *Renaissance Papers* (1998), 151-63, 156; William Oram, 'The Invocation of Sabrina', *SEL* 24/1 (1984), 121-39, 123-4.

indeed read the Lady as a version of Britomart.[32] Catherine Gimelli Martin argues for the non-Puritan, non-Calvinist ethics and metaphysics of both *The Faerie Queene* and to a greater extent, *A Maske*, well before Milton clearly upholds the Arminian position in *Of Education*, *Areopagitica*, *Paradise Lost* and *De doctrina Christiana.* As Martin oberves, Spenser's Meliboe claims that the 'mynd…maketh good or ill' and that 'each hath his fortune in his breast', which permits a 'more naturalistic scope for moral choice'. *A Maske* teaches that mortals who '[l]ove vertue' can learn to 'clime | Higher then the Spheary chime', but if natural virtue be naturally frail, 'Heav'n itself would stoop to her'; these lines are identified with Spenser who, alluded to in the form of Milton's Meliboe, leads the Attendant Spirit to Sabrina, who in turn facilitates the Lady rising.[33] Martin suggests that the figure of Guyon, particularly in relation to the Mammon episode, is used in Spenser to signify a link between the 'natural and supernatural' orders of 'spiritual liberation' or achieved virtue, and that *A Maske* strengthens this connection between nature and grace in the use of the material plant haemony, in addition to Sabrina.[34]

It is this Spenserian subtext—the legend of Temperance—I am most concerned with. I argue that Milton's Lady seems to be both a subtly reformed Guyon, with particular reference to the Bower of Bliss, and a figure fraught with her author's preoccupations. The Elder Brother seems a strange, intensified echo of his sister. Yet the Lady must herself be bettered by the Spenserian Meliboe and Sabrina, who apart from pointing to the brief reference in Book Two and to the marriage of rivers, also recalls and rewrites Marinell, Gloriana, and the guardian angel that revives Guyon. The effect is both of a Milton refashioning, even correcting, his 'original', and of a Milton invoking his 'better teacher' to show him a way through an impasse he creates. The fiction of

[32] See Kilgour (1992), 322. William Shullenberger, 'Girl, Interrupted: Spenserian Bondage and Release in Milton's Ludlow *Mask*', *Milton Quarterly* 37/4 (2003), 184-204 reads the Lady as undergoing a progression from childhood to womanhood that corresponds to a movement from a defensive chastity of negation to an active chastity. In this, Milton is said to draw on the difference between Amoret, read as fearful desire, and Britomart, as active desire, which assumes the relative fixity of Spenser's figures while endowing the Lady with a dynamic subjectivity. Broaddus, '"Gums of Glutinous Heat" in Milton's *Maske* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*', *Milton Quarterly* 37/4 (2003), 205-15, *passim*, is also concerned with sexual maturation, but uses a Galenic framework in order to relate the Lady's 'gumms of glutenous heat' to Britomart's response to the vision of Artegall.

[33] Catherine Gimelli Martin, 'The Non-Puritan Ethics, Metaphysics, and Aesthetics of Milton's Spenserian Masque', *Milton Quarterly* 37/4 (2003), 215-44, 215-17. Martin (2003), 218 notes that Milton's principles are derived not only from Spenser, but also from Bacon, Hooker and a wide variety of Christian humanists, including Lancelot Andrewes, who opposed Calvin's teaching on total depravity.

[34] Martin (2003), 224. See also A. S. P. Woodhouse, 'The Argument of Milton's *Comus*', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 11 (1941), 46-71.

Spenserian pedagogy tempers *A Maske* and its ambitions of singularity and separateness, just as *A Maske*'s Spenserian rewritings comment on *The Faerie Queene.*[35]

It is worth recalling Milton's later, memorable praise of Spenser in *Areopagitica* before we move into the masque's tangled woods in order to fully consider the relationship between active virtue and the generic expectations of a masque. The allusion to Guyon, not to mention the epithet, 'sage and serious', which also appears in *Il Pensoroso* and the published text of *A Maske*, suggest that this dense mesh of ideas concerning instruction, virtue and action was already being shaped before 1644:

> He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary. That vertue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evill, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank vertue…her whitenesse is but an excrementall whitenesse; Which was the reason why our sage and serious Poet Spencer, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher then Scotus or Aquinas, describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bowr of earthly blisse that he might see and know, and yet abstain. Since therefore the knowledge and survay of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human vertue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with lesse danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity then by reading all manner of tractats, and hearing all manner of reason? (*CPW*, 2: 514-17).

While Milton frequently mentions continental writers, he rarely acknowledges English poets by name, which emphasizes the unusual significance of this passage.[36] As all readers of Spenser recognize, Milton appears to misremember *The Faerie Queene*; the Palmer does not accompany Guyon into Mammon's cave. Spenser's poem rather belabours this detail and consequently, Milton's apparent error has bred much commentary (c.f. *FQ* II.vii.2). Sirluck's gloss on the passage suggests that Milton misses 'the exact point of Spenser's psychology'. The Palmer, according to Sirluck, represents Reason, and Spenser separates him from Guyon to show that 'the mere habit of temperance' is sufficient to withstand Mammon's solicitations. Milton's reworking, therefore, implies that he is less Aristotelian than Spenser, less likely to rely on habit and chooses an active

[35] The reciprocally reforming method I read in *A Maske*—although Milton is obviously writing both parts—suggests that the poet's dependence on his 'original' is less simply 'benign' than it seems; see Kilgour (1992), 325.

[36] Milton also cites 'our admired *Spencer*' as a moral authority in *Animadversions* and quotes at length from the May Eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender* (*CPW* I:722-3).

reasoning.[37] Martin reiterates this point more recently as she too reads this as a 'determination to prove the inseparability of Reason (Guyon's Palmer) from free moral choice'.[38] While these critical responses are poised between accident and deliberation, Harold Bloom sees an 'astonishing mistake' that is 'no mere lapse in memory' but 'a powerful misinterpretation' and 'a strong defense' against Spenser. Unsurprisingly, Blooms reads this moment as 'a movement against the father'. The passage becomes an unconscious re-writing that seeks to distance Milton from his poetical parent.[39]

I do not think that this passage betrays an anxiety of influence. As Guillory argues, Bloom's reading relies heavily on Milton's much later characterization of Abdiel in *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674), whom he reads as imitating Guyon. It is more likely that *Areopagitica* looks back to *A Maske*, whose Lady 'needs the accompaniment of someone like the Palmer'.[40] This particular episode in *The Faerie Queene*, as briefly discussed in chapter one, accentuates Guyon's lingering pride in being alone:

> So Guyon hauing lost his trustie guyde,
> Late left beyond that Ydle lake, proceedes
> Yet on his way, of none accompanyde;
> And euermore himselfe with comfort feedes,
> Of his owne vertues, and praise-worthie deedes. (II.vii.2.1-5).

He is made responsible for having 'lost' his guide, yet journeys on anyway, emphatically alone and figuratively feeding himself with praise. In the following canto, he is found by the Palmer, 'laid in swowne' and 'slumbring fast' in a 'senceles' vegetative state (Arg.viii, viii.4.8-9). Guyon's yearning for self-sufficiency, and his disregard for his body and the literal nourishment it requires is clearly critiqued. When the Palmer tries his pulse he finds 'life not yet dislodged quight', which reveals how close the knight of Temperance comes to death, even after the angelic young man's succour (viii.9.7). Given Milton's own fixation with the idea of singularity, his 'error' could be a

[37] Sirluck, (*CPW* 516 n.108). In fact, Milton uses the language of habit to describe virtue in *De doctrina*: '[t]he immediate causes of good actions are, generally speaking, good habits. These are called virtues, and in them is comprises the whole sum of our duty both towards God and towards man' (*CPW* VI:647).
[38] Martin (2003), 223. Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 51-65 argues that the revision introduces the presence of the Palmer as a reader of Guyon's actions, thus showing an extra presence that sees and knows.
[39] Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 127-8.
[40] Guillory, *Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 133. I don't believe that Milton reads the Palmer as so straightforwardly effective, as I will show later.

rhetorical move that confesses an uneasiness with self-reliance, admitting the Palmer just as he admits his 'better teacher' into his own text.

In addition to its hesitation over self-sufficiency, the passage in *Areopagitica* calls for *active* virtue as the basis of ethical life. A blank and fugitive virtue is always wrought with impurity because we bring not innocence into the world. The text suggests that purification by trial—and trial by what is contrary—is not a means to a virtuous end, but constitutes a virtuous life. Milton's thrice repeated 'and yet' syntactically delays the end of the 'race', and demands a simultaneity of responses to various forms of vice, which help constitute human virtue. The prose leaves one with the impression that like Aristotle, and indeed Spenser, the action of continual purification by trial both expresses and builds up virtue.[41] There is no easy way to that 'immortall garland', or a second innocence. As *A Maske*'s Prologue has it, 'the crown that Vertue gives' is only '*After* this mortal change' (9-10, emphasis added). Significantly, Milton's reference to Guyon mentions the 'bowr of earthly blisse' but avoids describing his intemperate violence; it certainly wouldn't aid his arguments against censorship. This revision is rooted in *A Maske,* whose Lady's pride and desire for autonomy recalls Spenser's knight of Temperance, but remains without his effort to purify by violence.

With the retrospective light of *Areopagitica,* the problem that emerges in Milton's reading and rewriting of Spenser in *A Maske*, is one of genre. As David Lindley explains, 'characteristically the masque does not debate but asserts, for all that its form appears to offer dialectical possibility'. It represents, in Orgel's words, the 'triumph of an aristocratic community', founded on a belief in hierarchy and the power of idealization.[42] In other words, the usual direct relation between the courtly audience and the celestial makes masques Platonic in terms of a dualist hierarchy, used to justify and celebrate the monarchy. Good and evil are contrasted, rather than brought into direct conflict. An active virtue, on the other hand, cannot be assumed, and must be contingent and continually tested. Obviously, this leaves the 'good', or royal power endangered as it implies the changeability and need for trial of all virtue, including royal virtue. Milton makes this generic

[41] See Moshenska, 'Aristotle and the Virtues', *Edmund Spenser in Context*, ed. Andrew Escobedo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 282-90.
[42] Lindley (1984), 'Introduction', 1-17, 4; Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theatre in the Renaissance* (London: University of California Press, 1975), 40.

vulnerability the ground for his masque. His representations neither simply celebrate, nor justify, but explore and antagonize. In the house of Busirane, Britomart's sheer luminous presence cannot dissolve the inset antemasque of Cupid and save Amoret, as one might expect. Instead she must fight the enchanter and doesn't escape unscathed. Correspondingly in *A Maske*, Milton brings masquers and antemasquers into genuine struggle. Furthermore, the fettered Lady is not unbound by the Earl, or royalty; she is freed instead by the local mortal-turned-deity Sabrina, who—because unnamed on the title-page—was likely played by a commoner.[43] Active virtue, garlanded with immortality on the brink of death, rather than mortal socio-political eminence, exerts transformative power. *A Maske* uses the language of dualism in two ways. The first is in order to separate the divine and human spheres; no human, however well born, is exempt from frailty. The second is in order to critique dualism, or the idea that mind and spirit are separable from the body in a mortal, mutable life.

IV. 'The starry threshold', 'The smoke and stir': How to Read Opposites

Its woods are drear and twisted, but the plot of *A Maske* is straightforward. The Lady is its protagonist and her Odyssean journey home confronts various obstacles. The conflict arises between the young virgin and her antagonist, the vile enchanter Comus, spawn of Bacchus, the first maker of 'mis-used Wine', and Circe, known to change man to 'groveling Swine' (47, 53).[44] Comus also frolics armed with a baneful cup and the capacity to alter men, although his potion works only upon their faces: 'their human count'nance, | Th' express resemblance of the gods, is changed | Into some brutish form…All other parts remaining as they were' (68-72). The attenuated change draws attention to his acts of catachresis, as unlike things are indiscriminately and literally yoked together with violence. Rather than trial by what is contrary, Comus simply marries and confuses contrarieties with unconcern for any law. These lines, spoken by the Attendant Spirit and detailing Comus' magic, establish a seminal feature of the masque: the presence of contrasts and antitheses and the implication of the choice between them. The resemblance of divinity and brutish

[43] Creaser (1984), 127 makes this point.
[44] Bacchus crushing mis-used wine opposes the 'true Vine' of Christ. See Brown (1999), 29-30 on Comus as the Latinized *komos*, or revelry. See Joseph M. Ortiz, '"The Reforming of Reformation": Theatrical, Ovidian, and Musical Figuration in Milton's *Mask*', *Milton Studies* 44 (2005), 84-110 on the Lady as an emblem of Puritan poetics.

countenance, light and darkness, heaven and earth, height and depth, Spenser and Shakespeare, solitariness and community, local and foreign, fetters and freedom, activity and passivity, silence and noise, sexual excess and abstinence, nature and grace and the metamorphic possibilities into one of Comus' band, or chaste being, are a few of the apparent binaries.[45] The abundance of seeming opposites throws up the question of how and what they signify. How do they relate to virtue and sin? Is their meaning absolute or contingent?

A Maske is unusual (of masques, but rather like *The Faerie Queene*) in 'swallowing other forms whole with a sublime disregard for generic neatness', which has made these questions difficult to answer.[46] T. S. Eliot declared that '*Comus* is the death of the masque' and Don Cameron Allen reads it as an 'attempted reconciliation of opposites' that ends in 'confusion', assuming that a resolution of conflict between good and evil was the intention.[47] Other critics have read it as philosophically significant and as dominantly indebted to forms of Platonism. Sears Jayne argued that while 'religious implications are unquestionably present', citing Woodhouse, Milton's Platonism has been relatively neglected. According to Jayne, *A Maske* evinces the Renaissance Platonism of Ficino.[48] J. B. Savage also argues for a Platonic framework, but approaches the text through the dialogues. Savage reads *A Maske* as a species of 'Renaissance Allegory', which he defines as 'the investiture of what is essentially invisible in a visible form'. In doing so, he advocates reading the 'fiction' to extract 'truth' or, exactly the kind of dualist method I have argued against with regards to reading Spenser. In his view, the virtues are 'animating principles', and 'the

[45] See, for example, Woodhouse (1941); C. L. Barber, '*A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*: The Masque as a Masque', *A Masque at Ludlow: Essays on Milton's Comus*, ed. John S. Diekhoff (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1968), 188-206 and Rosamund Tuve, 'Image, Form, and Theme in *A Mask*', 126-64 also in Diekhoff (1968). See also Richard Halpern, 'Puritanism and Maenadism in *A Mask*', *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe,* eds. Margaret W. Ferguson et al. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), 88-105. Guillory (1983), 73, 88 assumes that Shakespearean eloquence (including magic and rhetoric) is associated with Comus, while Spenserian allegory (including reason and logic) is associated with the Lady.

[46] Oram (1984), 122n.3. *A Maske* is variously thought to invoke Christian ritual, Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy, masque form, drama, debate and romance.

[47] T.S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950), 139. Don Cameron Allen, *The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 24.

[48] Sears Jayne, 'The Subject of Milton's Ludlow Mask', *PMLA* 74/5 (1959), 533-43, 533-4. Ficino is nowhere mentioned in Milton's extant works, but Jayne argues that Milton acknowledges his debt to Spenser, which is 'largely a debt to Ficino' (534).

state of chastity', in particular, in which we rid ourselves of the body and know ourselves in unalloyed perfection, is the 'end of wisdom'.[49]

On the one hand, these two approaches are different in that Jayne's Neoplatonism is ontologically monist (the world as a chain of emanations) where Savage's Platonism is dualist. On the other, they both indicate an axiological or moral dualism in which matter/darkness is equated with evil, and spirit/light with good. The problem with this kind of predetermined correspondence is that it does not allow for the kind of active virtue that is purified by trial because it can both feel temptation and exercise judgment. Furthermore, as Jayne acknowledges, it also emphasizes the role of unswerving innate virtue, and therefore, self-reliance. Although *A Maske* makes use of recognizably Platonic cues, I argue, *contra* Jayne and Savage that it does so as a rhetorical strategy used to critique both ontological and simple moral dualism, and by extension to question the methods of its protagonist, the Lady. As Rosamund Tuve first noted in her essay on 'light', some oppositions are not as clear as expected, and even intermix.[50] To this I would add some instances of deliberate repetition or connectivity between surprising characters, which should make one interrogate what, if anything, sets them apart. Unlike Martin or Fallon, I do not read the Lady as a 'model for imitation', or an exemplar of active virtue.[51]

The text begins with the Attendant Spirit descending from his mansion, '[b]efore the starry threshold of Joves's court' where 'immortal shapes | Of bright aerial spirits live ensphered'. The 'regions mild of calm and serene air' above are a foil for the 'smoke and stir of this dim spot, | Which men call earth'. 'Confined and pestered in this pinfold', according to the airy Spirit, our men and world are made to recall the Cave of Plato's *Republic* (1-8).[52] Perhaps from a heavenly perspective, this is what earth looks like. As mentioned previously, the surprise resides in the

[49] J. B. Savage, '*Comus* and its Traditions', *ELR* 5/1 (1975), 58-81, 61, 64-5. He refers primarily to the 'Platonic doctrine of purification' in the *Phaedo.*
[50] Rosamund Tuve, 'The Symbol of Light in *Comus* (1962)', *Milton: Comus and Samson Agonistes, A Casebook*, ed. Julian Lovelock (London: Macmillan, 1975), 76-84, 77.
[51] Fallon, 'Milton and Literary Virtue', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 42/1 (2012), 181-200, 196. See also Katherine R. Kellet, 'The Lady's Voice: Poetic Collaboration in Milton's *Mask'*, *Milton Studies* 50 (2009), 1-20.
[52] Noel Sugimura, *Matter of Glorious Trial: Spiritual and Material Substance in Paradise Lost* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 90 makes this comparison. Sugimura reads *A Maske* as dramatizing the competing ontologies of Plato and Aristotle, and argues that it is 'not altogether uncritical of Plato's philosophy of Forms' (82).

dissociation between the nobles and Jove's court.[53] Despite this division, there are few 'that by due steps aspire | To lay their just hands on that golden key | That opes the palace of eternity', and it is to 'such' that the Spirit's 'errand is' (12-14). The 'due steps' have, unsurprisingly, been read with reference to anabatic ascent, or to the soul gathering herself into herself. And yet they could refer to the children's wanderings within the masque, and the journey through creation they involve; aspiration, but not necessarily immediate achievement, and not without help sanctioned by Jove.

Indeed the masque's recurrent references to 'tread', 'footing', 'steps', 'pace' and wandering suggest the *complicatio* or imbrication of mind/spirit, body and world. By implication, the Earl's 'fair offspring nursed in princely lore' are such few who aspire to virtue's crown (34-35). Following the Spirit's descent, we find ourselves in a wood reminiscent of Spenser's Error, 'the wandring wood', which supports *Areopagitica*'s contention that the 'scanning' (quietly punning on meter, feet and wandering) of error is necessary to the 'confirmation' of truth. Their 'way', we are told, 'lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood', full of 'nodding horror' and 'shady brows' (37-8). Unlike the initial clear separation of serene air and the rank vapours of the world, a Spenserian wood does not allow for easy ascents of reason to divine Idea, nor does it necessitate the descent of grace. If the Redcrosse knight's example is anything to go by, it is a site that advances misreading and fools both the knight, and Una, into believing his victory over Error is absolute. As we will see, both the Lady and her Brothers can be seen to misread or misunderstand in particular ways.

V. The Form of Chastity: Blank Virtue

The Attendant Spirit soon becomes 'viewless' at the sound of 'the tread | Of hateful steps', which belong to Comus and his beast-headed band (91-2). They enter making a '*riotous and unruly noise*', and moving between the pulses of a Puck or Prospero, Comus begins to perform a Bacchanalian invocation to Cotytto. The lines droop with variations of darkness and secrecy; in asking that the deity 'befriend' them, as 'vowed priests', Comus is clearly turning away from a true concern for the 'God beyond Nature'.[54] But Cotytto never appears because the 'feel'—vibrations?—of a 'different pace, | Of some chaste footing' causes Comus and his rout to break off

[53] Creaser (1984), 124 notes that the praise of Jove's court unusually has 'a marked biblical coloring', which further emphasizes the refusal to fuse the monarch and heavens.
[54] See Oram (1984), 124-7 on the mixing of local and classical tradition in the invocation.

their measure (145-6). Just as the Spirit identified the enchanter's pace, Comus can 'distinguish' by his art the Lady's 'virgin' footfalls. Rather than startling her, he aims to 'cheat [her] eye with blear illusion' and 'the virtue of [his] magic dust', and appear to be some 'harmless villager' (145-6, 164-6); in this, he succeeds.[55] In describing his methods, the 'fair pretence of friendly ends, | And well-placed words of glozing courtesy | Baited with reasons not unplausible', Comus displays his ability to discern between true and fraudulent reason and sounds not unlike Puttenham's courtly captain of rhetoric, *allegoria*, the figure of 'faire' and 'false semblant' (160-3). The commonly considered opposites, Spenser and Shakespeare, intermix, and allegory, usually associated with the masque's unifying moral message, is evoked by the figure of the ante-masque. Furthermore, Comus' discrimination of 'reasons not unplausible' suggests that he is not simply a sensual opposition to the Lady's adherence to reified universals.

Upon entering, the Lady speaks: 'This way the noise was, if mine ear be true… methought it was the sound | Of riot, and ill-managed merriment' (169-71). Just like the Spirit and Comus, her ear *is* true and yet, although she identifies *komos* by definition, she will be taken in by the seeming 'Shepherd'.[56] The Lady is lost and roams with 'unacquainted feet' in the 'blind mazes' of the wood because her brothers have oddly left her here so that they might pick fruit. She refers to the 'labour' of her 'thoughts'—an inadvertent nod to our fallen obligation—now fixed on where they are and why they haven't returned. Her 'listening ear', her 'best guide' in darkness, is especially sharp (202, 170). She guesses that 'this is the place' from which the mirth was rife and wonders why she finds but 'single darkness' (201-3).[57] Deciding it is likely that her brothers 'had engaged their wand'ring steps too far' and been stolen by 'thievish Night', the Lady moves from fear to a steely certainty, suggestive of Milton's early insistence on singular virtue (192-4):

> A thousand fantasies
> Begin to throng into my memory
> Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
> And airy tongues, that syllable men's names
> On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
> These thoughts may startle well, but not astound

[55] The Attendant Spirit also takes the likeness of a swain (84).
[56] The Lady's speculation that the source of the noise is those who in 'wanton dance' praise 'the bounteous Pan' could be a mocking reference to the kind of festivity taking place outside Ludlow castle at the time of the Michaelmas performance.
[57] Perhaps the Lady remembers her author, whose student sobriquet was 'the Lady' of Christ's college—an allusion to Virgil's nickname *Parthenias*.

> The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
> By a strong siding champion Conscience….
> O welcome pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
> Thou hovering Angel girt with golden wings,
> And thou unblemished form of Chastity,
> I see ye visibly, and now believe
> That he, the Supreme good, t' whom all things ill
> Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
> Would send a glistering guardian if need were
> To keep my life and honour unassailed. (204-219).

For a young maid to be alone in the woods is rarely a good thing, particularly in Spenserian and Ovidian terms, and the Lady seems to know this. Think of Daphne, or her Spenserian granddaughter, the 'fearfull Damzell' Florimell, who is ever chased. Amoret, and even Britomart, are found to be 'fearful' on occasion in *The Faerie Queene*. Oram and McMichaels argue that it is the 'Comus within' that is responsible for such fantasies, this mental ante-masque, and relate him to her 'bodily nature'. Although Oram suggests that Comus works through that 'half-corporeal faculty, her imagination', it is oddly her 'memory' that the Lady names, as if a synonym for 'mind'.[58] In any case, in a swift act of *metanoia*, she claims that these thoughts may 'startle' but not 'astound | The virtuous mind'. Their effects on her body, if any, are unremarked on, and this lack of acknowledgement of herself as embodied will prove problematic. The references to 'maze', 'astonishment' and 'astound' foreshadow her coming immobilization at Comus' hands. Yet her words sound sure and enraptured, as if she is ravished by the very 'form of Chastity' she professes to see 'visibly'.[59]

It is too surprising to be accidental that the Lady's hypostatized trio involves Faith, Hope and Chastity, instead of the expected Charity. This contradicts both Georgia Christopher and James Obertino who write that chastity is 'a pervasive metaphor for faith', and 'a pervasive metonymy for charity, which binds Creator and creature…together', respectively.[60] The Lady's Chastity is expressly not 'charity', as Britomart's seemed to be, but a militant species of Temperance more closely related to Spenser's Guyon, as we will see in her debate with her captor. *A Maske* comprises

[58] Oram (1984), 132; McMichaels, 156.
[59] Sugimura, 90 makes this point, also citing John Leonard's note to line 214 in his edition of *The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 1998). See 91-5 on why Chastity might be admitted as a Platonic Form and the differences between bodily and spiritual chastity.
[60] Georgia Christopher, *Milton and the Science of the Saints* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 33; James Obertino, 'Milton's Use of Aquinas in *Comus*', *Milton Studies* 22 (1986), 21-43, 21. Christopher reads nature as 'inimical' to grace, while Obertino shows that they are linked.

15 references to ‘virgin’ or ‘virginity’ and 12 to ‘chaste’ or ‘chastity’, and none of these appear to signify the chastity of reciprocal love, but many suggest a kind of impenetrability of mind. However, in ‘seeing’ it externally, the Lady i) appears to share her author’s special sight and ii) appears to here acknowledge her virtue as a collaborative enterprise, from within and without. On the one hand, her conviction is correct according to the basic plot: the Attendant Spirit was dispatched for the children’s defense, and Sabrina, associated with translucence and brightness, does save her. Strangely enough, the only other use of ‘glistering’ is in a stage direction describing the garments of Comus’ rout, as if to suggest that the specificity of the Lady’s belief aids her initial misreading. If both the Spirit and the enchanter can dress in Shepherds’ weeds—think of Archimago—*A Maske* suggests that appearances need not and do not clearly correspond to ethics, reducing the impact of its apparent antitheses. Even if the Lady can see ‘visibly’ things invisible, can she distinguish between the visible?

The Lady’s speech both affirms the strength of ‘the virtuous mind’, as if self-sufficient, and depends on categorical divine intervention, as if inner strength is seamlessly substituted with external power. This conviction is repeated in the final five lines of the masque, spoken by the Attendant Spirit, and in the debate between the Elder and Second brother. The dialogue between the brothers, which follows the Lady’s departure with Comus, demonstrates why this understanding of virtue, or chastity, is insufficient. The Second Brother is worried about his lost sister, ‘that hapless virgin’. In imagining her ‘wild amazement’, ‘savage hunger’ or ‘heat’ he unknowingly hits on Comus’ threat: to prey on the thirst and heat (literal and figurative) of humankind and so hug them into snares. The Elder Brother responds thus:

> Peace brother, be not over-exquisite
> To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
> For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
> What need a man forestall his date of grief,
> And run to meet what he would most avoid?
> …
>
> Virtue could see to do what virtue would
> By her own radiant light, though Sun and Moon
> Were in the flat Sea sunk. And Wisdoms self
> Oft seeks to sweet retired Solitude,
> Where with her best nurse Contemplation
> She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired. (358-79)

He cautions against false alarms of fear, arguing that man need not 'forestall' or anticipate his meeting with 'grief', cares or evil, when he can avoid them. The Elder Brother then contradicts himself by insisting upon the autonomy of virtue's light and sight; if it is so impenetrable, why must it 'avoid' tests of its strength? Lines 372-4 allude to Spenser's Redcrosse Knight about to enter Error's den. As Una warns against it, he responds, 'vertue giues her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade' (I.i.12.12), and is, of course, terribly wrong. While the Second Brother talks about his sister in particular, the Elder refers to abstractions. His description of Wisdom pluming her feathers alone teeters on the edge of narcissism and does not extend into flight. Significantly, the Lady did not 'seek' solitude, but was left quite alone. His words are tautologous: virtue is fully autonomous and, therefore, shouldn't bother to seek experience, wherein the lack of trial confirms the myth of self-sufficiency. This is, in the language of *Areopagitica*, a 'blank', and 'excremental whiteness'.

The Second Brother counters with a second kind of predetermined relation. Where the Elder seems to argue for no real danger, the younger suggests that there is *always* danger and no defense. 'Danger will wink on opportunity', he states, comparing his 'unowned' sister in the woods to 'the unsunned heaps | Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den' (400, 397-8). As Victoria Kahn subtly observes, 'opportunity is not equivalent to the rhetorical notion of occasion as that which can be used well or badly', but is instead described as a hopelessly determined occasion for danger.[61] This makes the Elder Brother backtrack. He claims that he did not mean to suggest that he thought his 'sister's state | Secure without all doubt'—although that is precisely what he did—but inclines to hope rather than fear (408). He reminds us of his sister's 'hidden strength', which the Second Brother assumes is 'the strength of heaven' (414-17). The Elder agrees that heaven's power is a part of it, but invests the Lady with a strength of her own:

> Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
> She that has that, is clad in complete steel,
> And like a quivered nymph with Arrows keen
> May trace huge Forests, and unharboured Heaths,
> Infamous Hills, and sandy perilous wildes… (419-422)

[61] Victoria Anne Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 200. Kahn's focus is the 'Machiavellism' of *A Maske*, or the relation of virtue to *virtù* and the 'indifference' of rhetoric, within which the threat of Machiavellism resides, i.e. it may be impossible to differentiate between Comus and Sabrina.

This speech echoes his sister's insistence that the startling 'thousand fantasies' cannot astound her mind. He goes on to repeat that none 'will dare to soil her virgin purity', that no evil thing 'hath hurtful power o'er true virginity', as he waxes with passion of the 'arms of chastity' (426, 436, 439). In line with the Lady, he also declares that a 'thousand liveried angels lackey her', driving off sin and telling her 'of things no gross ear can hear' (454-6). This frequent 'converse' with 'heavenly habitants', he says, will turn her mind 'to the soul's essence | Till all be made immortal' (458-62). This certainly sounds like *anabasis*, and yet his speech, so rife with irony, appears to undercut its self. He casts the Lady as a Belpheobe figure (above), and goes on to compare her to 'the huntress Dian' and to the 'snaky-headed Gorgon shield' Minerva wore (440, 446). The kind of abstract, divinely compounded armour of chastity he describes does sound impassable. Unfortunately, it is simply not true of his sister. She is not clad in steel, which, although her mind may be immoveable, makes her unacknowledged body very vulnerable. The allusion to Medusa's petrifying gaze is laughable, as it is the Lady who is frozen and silent on Comus' seat, 'chained up in Alabaster'. This might even suggest the possibility that she self-congeals into a stony emblem.[62]

As far as we know, she is not always-already liveried by angels; the Spirit is sent to lend divine aid specifically because he knows she will need it to escape Comus. Although the Elder Brother refers to Diana's 'stern' expression, she is also known for her cruelty in the refusal of love. In his description, the Lady becomes an autonomous abstract entity, whose divine attendance can barely be distinguished from her own power. This culls all forms of relation and leaves little room for the progression to married love that some critics read into *A Maske.* The resemblance to Guyon as he responds with mounting inflexibility to all obstacles (particularly in canto xii), denies any possibility of change, and 'rises' as the abstract 'goodly frame of Temperance' is made vivid in the Elder Brother's argument. This correspondence aligns him with Spenser's Palmer, who as we have seen, supports Guyon's militancy, and tends to moralize without nuance. It also evokes the power of the Palmer's staff, which makes him seemingly unassailable.

[62] There is much debate over how and why the Lady is immobilized, whether through Comus' or her own powers, or complicity between the two.

The Spirit's entrance in the habit of a shepherd proves the Elder Brother inaccurate. His name, Thyrsis, is also the name of Bacchus' pinecone-topped staff, suggesting that the kind of rhetoric or power available to the aerial being and the enchanter is comparable, although its orientation is crucially different. It is, paradoxically, the correspondences between good and bad that express the greatest insight into virtue; that the inclination of will and right use of things is paramount. The Spirit explains that the 'aidless' Lady is entrapped by Comus (570-3), to which the Elder Brother—with trademark inconsistency—replies that 'evil on itself shall back recoil, | And mix no more with goodness', before he draws his sword and offers to find the wizard out (592-4). He also defines evil as being in perennial 'restless change', as if change, or mutability, the hallmark of mortality, is itself bad. The Spirit informs the brothers that help of 'divine effect' is required, and gives them a 'virtuous plant and healing herb', haemony, more 'med'cinal…than that moly' that Hermes gave to Ulysses. We are told that in 'another country'—presumably heaven—it bears 'a bright golden flower', but in this earthly soil it is 'a small unsightly root', darkish and prickled (628-36). This distinction strongly suggests that the root may not function fully, or will only function fully in the hands of those with the grace to use it. Given, however, that it appears to be a tool that should *shield* them from the temptations of Comus, it is unlikely to be entirely successful in Milton's poetic universe.

Its earthly appearance, as John Rogers notes, is phallic, and its name echoes *haimonios*, associating it with a specifically male *virtù*.[63] About two hundred lines later, just as Comus entices the now fixed and silent Lady to 'taste', the Brothers rush in, 'swords drawn', and wrest the cup out of his hands, dashing it against the ground, repeating Guyon's action against dame Excesse (812 stage direction). The enchanter's rout are 'driven in', but the Spirit's exclamation suggests that both Comus and crew manage to escape; the Lady is still stuck, and the fluid female deity Sabrina must undo the spell. The Brothers' subplot is thus ineffective and oscillates between definitions of virtue that expose their inadequacy, foolish threats, and an act of violence that only serves to spill wine. It appears to comment on both the lady's apostrophe to Chastity, with which we began, and on Spenser's autonomous elf, whose worst qualities it seems to magnify. In her debate with Comus,

[63] John Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 90. He argues that haemony embodies 'the rigid law of the father' that ultimately requires not virginity, but married chastity.

when he reveals his true self, the Lady is an improved version of Guyon in some ways, although she still requires the help of a revised Spenserian figure to set her free.

VI. Root-Bound: The Body and the Debate of Nature

We return now to the lost Lady, who determines to make 'such noise' as can be heard farthest. We might remember that Comus and his gang enter with 'unruly noise' and that the Lady hears their riotous 'noise' not long after (170). The noun could refer to barbarous dissonance or be 'pleasant and melodious'; the Lady's choice of noise is a song, to sweet Echo. As Katherine Larson argues, with raucous noise 'fresh in our ears', the Lady's resolve to produce noise is ambiguous.[64] We might go further to say that it offers shared ground, or air, between herself and Comus. Moreover, the Lady's song is rooted in D minor, and is alone among the five extant pieces from *A Maske* composed in the minor mode. As Larson points out, it relies on 'extensive chromatic colouring, dissonant intervals…and a series of rapid modulations', moving between tonal centres. Larson notes that in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597), Thomas Morley warns composers against the excessive use of such features because they reinforce the 'passions' of a piece, and might even evoke physical responses because they make the song more 'effeminate and languishing'. This could simply amplify her lost and frightened state, despite her protestations, but it is not insignificant that the harmonic qualities of her 'noise' bear the greatest resemblance to Comus' dissonance, of all songs in *A Maske*.[65] I will not discuss the Lady's song to Echo in great detail, except to note that many critics find the choice of addressee, and the reference to the nightingale—and so Philomela—perplexing. Some read the song as evidence of solipsism, and others as a call to subversive silenced figures that find special means to express themselves.[66] Kilgour's argument that the Lady's invocation of these figures 'enables her to…confront

[64] Katherine Larson, '"Blest Pair of *Sirens*… Voice and Verse": Milton's Rhetoric of Song', *Milton Studies* 24 (2013), 81-107, 93 (cites *OED* s.v. 3a). Larson writes sensitively about the ambivalent affective potency of song, drawing connections to Milton's praise of Leonora Baroni in 'Ad Leonoram'.
[65] See Larson, 97-8. She refers to Lawes's extant setting in the manuscript held at the British Library, MS Add. 53723. See Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (London, 1597), 177.
[66] See Maggie Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 181 on the structural narcissism of discourse. Stephen Orgel, 'The Case for *Comus*', *Representations* 81 (2003), 31-45, 39-40 argues that the Lady's choice of an 'auditory mirror image' introduces 'self-absorption and a dangerous vanity' into her character. See Kellet, 6-7 on subversion.

tragedy…to encounter evil without becoming it', enriches our understanding of the song and relates it to Milton's case against censorship in *Areopagitica*.[67] Sweet Echo, however, gives no reply.

And yet the Lady's noise is powerful; there is something of divinity in it. The Attendant Spirit 'was all ear' as he discovers the Lady's voice, 'a soft and solemn breathing sound | [that] Rose like a steam of rich distill'd Perfumes, | And stole upon the Air' (555-9). The attention to breath, which makes sound that in turn turns to fragrance, which steals through the air, produces the kind of synaethesia that anticipates a paradisal place. The aerial Spirit is moved entirely. Comus' reaction is also moving as it looks forward to Satan's sighting of Eve. He can hardly believe that 'any mortal mixture of earth's mould' can 'breathe such divine enchanting ravishment', and feels 'the sober certainty of waking bliss' (243-4, 262); he wants her for his queen. As the debate will reiterate, a crucial difference between the enchanter and the Lady lies in their reactions to one another. Comus is, more than once, sensibly struck and in effect 'tempted' by her holiness, and yet he seeks to bend her to sin. In contrast, there is no indication that the Lady is at all touched by his appeals, unlike Guyon's briefly wandering eyes in the Bower, which makes her virtue seem blank. Comus' reference to the Lady's 'fair' and 'unguarded' 'side', as he offers to shelter her in a cottage, uncomfortably recalls *The Faerie Queene*'s lewd mistress Malecasta (282). His magic dust must work as she is tricked into following, but there exists a sense that her model of knowing through concept, or allusion, cannot guide her through the woods of experience. In following, rather than waiting for her Brothers, McMichaels argues that she repeats the 'idle curiosity' and vainglory that led Guyon into Mammon's Cave.[68]

We next find the Lady in an enchanted chair in Comus' palace—not usually the haunt of evil or ante-masque—strewn with delicacies and diffused with soft strains. He offers her his glass, which she pushes away and makes to rise, when he speaks:

> Nay Lady sit; if I but wave this wand,
> Your nervs are all chain'd up in Alabaster,
> And you a statue; or as Daphne was
> Root-bound, that fled Apollo, (658-661).

[67] Kilgour (2012), 161.
[68] McMichaels, 160-1.

In *The Faerie Queene*, it is Acrasia who is bound up in adamantine chains, but *A Maske* has the Lady threatened and immobilized. This reversal might acknowledge that the destruction unleashed by Guyon on capturing the witch is steeped in his own *acrasia*, as if by contagion, and is deserving of those very chains. Her fixity could also allude to Comus' Shakespearean language of enticement that, in the words of *On Shakespear*, makes her marble with too much conceiving. Yet if we read her later silence as voluntary (as Platonizing interpreters do), the Lady is seen to retreat into 'non-performative' contemplation—odd, in the context of a masque—and become an emblem of frozen virtue, ineffective because quite stuck. In this she evokes Spenser's stony nymph, ever-chaste, and incapable of receiving or effecting change (*FQ* II.ii.9). Comus' reference to Daphne is somewhat confusing, as her rootedness can be taken as symbolic of the triumph of chastity. As Joseph Ortiz argues, however, Daphne becomes the symbol of Apollo's poetic power.[69] This suggests that the Lady's silence, even if agential rather than magically imposed, is not necessarily an assertion of her strength, simply because she cannot control how a noiseless icon is interpreted. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid has Apollo (self-interestedly) perceive the laurel as having 'waved her new-made branches, and [seem] to move her head-like top in full consent' (*Met* I.566-7). From the god, or enchanter's point of view, the root-bound Lady concedes, and this conflict is not easily resolvable.

The revised version of *A Maske* has the Lady interrupt Comus mid-line, with severe contempt: 'Fool do not boast, | Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind | With all thy charms, although this corporal rind | Thou hast immanacled' (661-4). Comus names the Lady a 'Stoic' and McMichaels agrees, arguing that this is indeed her philosophic position, more broadly related to the 'classical virtue of temperance' and the four natural virtues found in Cicero's *De inventione* (706).[70] One might also relate the Lady's chastity, as Sugimura does, to the Platonic tradition; the Greek *sophrosyne*, becomes *castitas*, and then *temperentia*, in Latin, and is pregnant with ideas about the ethical and intellectual power of chastity.[71] McMichaels argues that the Stoic position is also

[69] Ortiz, 93.
[70] McMichaels, 153. He also cites the *Tusculan Disputations* (in being used as a basis for Christian doctrine) and reminds readers of the relation between temperance and *castitas*, which are not just words for virginity, but for moral purity more generally, whether single or married.
[71] Sugimura, 92. See Plato, *Symposium*, 209b in *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias*, tr. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1925). See also Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire:*

Milton's, and the Lady, doing the best she can alone in the postlapsarian world, is thus caught. However, as McMichaels goes on to note, Milton explicitly criticizes Stoicism for its arrogant self-reliance in *Paradise Regained*: 'The Stoic last in Philosophic pride | By him call'd virtue' (4.300-1).[72] Yet it is not simply her alleged self-sufficiency that is imprudent, but her inability to properly identify that she is imperiled because her body is imperiled. She is right, of course, that Comus cannot 'touch' the freedom of her mind. It is intangible and he doesn't seem particularly interested in it. What he is concerned with are her 'dainty limbs' and 'soft delicacy', her 'vermeil-tinctured lip' and 'tresses like the morn', and he may evidently work upon her body, which is now trapped in its seat (679-80, 751-2).

The Lady does not realize that the divine help she relies on, and the divine help she receives, is underwritten by a non-dualist principle. As chapter three notes, Augustine complains that the central problem with Plato's Forms is that they *cannot* work in the mutable world; earth and Ideas are discrete. However, despite the Attendant Spirit's descriptive oppositions, both he and Sabrina can enter into the fallen realm and can be of real help. Consequently, the Lady's absolute division of rind and mind is inconsistent with *A Maske*'s solution to her sticky predicament. Where she discards the corporeal 'rind', we might look forward to the beautifully rehabilitating image of the rind in *Paradise Lost*. As Adam and Eve eat nectarine fruit on a downy bank, they chew the 'savoury pulp' and 'in the rind, | Still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream' (4.335-6). In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), Milton will write that coerced desire and sex, without the commixture of intellectual delight, is enough to 'imbase the mettle of a generous spirit'. Comus' threat to make the Lady 'root-bound' becomes more sinister; it might anticipate the 'senseless trunck' a person is reduced to when forced into 'servil copulation' in a loveless marriage (*CPW* II: 339, 624).[73] The Lady, in other words, should be less convinced of herself as divided, and therefore, more sincerely afraid.

Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 145, 158, on temperance as chastity.

[72] McMichaels, 154, 156, 161. This criticism contradicts William Shullenberger's contention that the Lady is 'Milton's exemplar of the autonomous ethical self of progressive Reformation culture'. See *Lady in the Labyrinth: Milton's Comus As Initiation* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008), 170.

[73] See Fallon, 'The Metaphysics of Milton's Divorce Tracts', *Politics, Poetics and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, eds. David Lowenstein, James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University

In the debate over nature and the right use of nature, the Lady is for the most part right. Unlike Guyon, she does not attack, but disputes with the enchanter in order to successfully point out his 'false rules pranked in reason's garb', showcasing her 'judgement' (757-8). An early version—nowhere included in the final text—has the Lady threaten to 'throw' his offerings 'on the ground', which suggests that Milton deliberately writes possible violence out of her character (754n). Comus describes a Nature who 'pours her bounties forth, | With such a full and unwithdrawing hand' that if we 'in a pet of temperance feed on pulse', the 'all-giver' would be 'unthanked', 'unpraised' and 'strangled with her waste fertility' (709-10, 720-22, 728). Be not cozened, he urges, with that 'vaunted name virginity', because 'good… [c]onsists in mutual and partaken bliss' (736-40). The Lady swiftly identifies Comus' argument for 'lewdly-pampered Luxury', and excess, as imposed upon Nature, a distorted reading, rather than in itself natural as he pretends (769). She argues for Nature's blessings to be 'well-dispensed | In superfluous even proportion', reforming Spenser's self-punning 'plentifull dispence' of the Bower of Bliss (771-2).

The Lady's speech, however, threatens to veer too far toward the other extreme, rather than the mean she first appears to propose. Comus' Nature is boastful and bountiful and this baits her into defending a 'most innocent Nature', which rings hollow (761). Nature is no longer innocent, but fallen, and this epithet works to naturalize the Lady's account of right use, rather than acknowledging it as active choice, the proper orientation of will. It appears to arise in response to the dictates (set by the enchanter) of the rhetorical situation, rather than in response to truth; think of nature's 'heavy change', lamented in 'Lycidas' (1537; 37). In fact, it is only Milton's divorce tracts that refer to 'natures unalterable', or 'the immutable bent of nature', to deterministically suggest that divorce is grounded in innocent nature (*CPW* II: 249, 328).[74] This self-interested necessity weakens the force of the Lady's case. Similarly, her description of temperance as 'spare' and 'sober' makes it sound more like 'the lean and sallow Abstinence' the enchanter accuses her of

Press, 1990), 69-85. Fallon shows how the apparent dualism of the divorce tracts is strategic and invoked to criticize dualists, who acknowledge the body before spirit in marriage. Rather than asserting the superiority of the separable spirit, Milton invokes monism to suggest the prospect of an ideal sexual life. However, the tracts do also involve a retreat from the body and a repudiation of sensuality, although they do not advocate a celibate life.

[74] See Fallon (1990), 78. The divorce tracts also express disgust at forcing contraries into a 'detested union'. However, as noted, the action and resolution of the masque depends upon the intermixture of oppositions. See *CPW* II:635.

practicing. Although the 'mutual and partaken bliss' her captor has in mind is surely sinful, it is a vaunted state in different circumstances, at least in Spenserian terms. The Lady retorts that she would not taste his offer 'were it a draft for Juno', which augments the abstemious quality of her 'temperance' (699). Finally, she claims for herself 'the sun-clad power of chastity', countering his Apollo with radiance of her own (a pun on 'Son'?), perhaps recalling the true and snowy Florimells as 'two sunnes' (*FQ* V.iii.19.1).

Yet, in an instance of variation, she then refers to the mysteries of 'the sage | And serious doctrine of virginity' that she refuses to unfold, deeming Comus unworthy of the knowledge, and more damningly, unworthy of more 'happiness' than his 'present lot' (785-8).[75] If not in violence, then in this desire for imperviousness, she remembers Spenser's Knight of Temperance. Although the phrase 'sage and serious' recalls Milton's better teacher, the celibacy it implies is not something he is usually known to have taught. The doctrine verbally enacts the impenetrability it expresses in her refusal to 'unfold' it. If this is an attempt at authorial singularity, an attempt to better his teacher, it is allowed only partial victory. She warns him, that should she try, the 'uncontrolled worth' of the cause would lead her to an Orphic 'flame of sacred vehemence', which reiterates her reference to 'most innocent Nature', as if she could recall the state of natural sympathy that was lost at the Fall of our first parents. As with her song to Echo, Comus 'feels' the pulse of 'some superior power', and despite his more than mortal frame, convulses with cold dew (800-1). His reaction is appropriate for an ante-masquer to the moral authority of the central masquer. In fact, her threat should really have undone his spells and banished him. Yet Comus persists in dissembling, warding off her words as 'mere moral babble' and pressing the Lady to 'be wise, and taste…' (806, 812). His urging anticipates Satan's to Eve. We don't know what might have happened; at this climactic moment, the Brothers rush in and the antagonist vanishes, leaving the Lady trapped and silent.

[75] Here she recalls Guyon's terrible moment in Mammon's cave. On meeting Tantalus, Guyon exhorts him to abide in his doom and 'ensample be of mind intemperate', robbing him of any reformative possibility. See Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 162-3 on the change between the 1590 and 1596 versions of the poem.

VII. Sabrina Rises: Rescuing Touch

The Attendant Spirit comically scolds the Brothers when he realizes that Comus has fled. They should have snatched his wand, and bound him, he says (815). This makes the Brothers a blundering version of the Palmer and Guyon, who did at least manage to capture and bind the witch. The Brothers, with swords uselessly still drawn, might comment on the futility of unconsidered violence ('rushing in') in the face of the kind of temptation the enchanter represents. Comus, still at large, reminds us that temptation endures, and we will continue to have to discern right usage, and right reason, from reasons 'not unplausible'. Without the necessary 'backward mutters' from Comus himself—as Britomart extracts from Busirane—they cannot free the Lady that 'sits here | In stony fetters fixed, and motionless' (817-18). The Brothers and their sister, and the sort of chastity they express, are most unlike Spenser's martial maid.

But the Attendant Spirit has another plan, learnt 'of Meliboeus old' (821), alluding to specifically Spenserian poetic reformative power. As Poole reminds us, the heart of Milton's proposed syllabus in *Of Education* is literary, 'overwhelmingly poetic', and georgic.[76] That the Spirit takes on shepherd's weeds, receives the herb haemony from a shepherd lad and knows of Sabrina through the 'soothest shepherd' Meliboe, suggests that *A Maske*'s reparative force is at once collective, poetic and active. To use Anthony Low's description of georgic labour, a model of life characterized by 'hard, cooperative effort by many heroes working together at a task' that remains unfinished, is what the Ludlow masque seems to ask for.[77] The 'means', learnt of Meliboe, is Sabrina, 'a virgin pure', a female deity presiding in the depths of the Severn. As Philip Schwyzer has pointed out, Sabrina, or Habren as Geoffrey of Monmouth named her in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136; Hafren is the Welsh name), is very different to her Miltonic incarnation.

In the source she is the 'bastard daughter' of Locrine and Estrild. After Locrine was defeated and slain in battle with his estranged wife, Guendoline, Habren was drowned along with her mother in the river Severn, which took her name. Schwyzer observes that most versions of this tale

[76] Poole (2017), 56. *Of Education* is explcit regarding the relation between georgic and heroic labor, or as we saw in the last chapter, the heroism of continually trying to use creation and humankind aright, to live aright. See *CPW* II:366-9, 389.
[77] Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 39-40.

preceding Milton emphasize the girl's illegitimacy, causing her bastardy to outweigh her chastity.[78] Sabrina makes a brief appearance in Book Two of *The Faerie Queene*, as the unlawful child, fair 'sad virgin innocent of all', who is hurled into the river by her pursuers. Milton's—somewhat unnecessary—reference to Meliboe links his Sabrina to Spenser, but his great innovation is to elide the illegitimacy of her conception. Furthermore, the Sabrina of *A Maske* is not attacked or forcibly drowned, but enters voluntarily and undergoes a startlingly beautiful metamorphosis:

> The guiltless damsel flying the mad pursuit
> Of her enraged stepdame Guendolen,
> Commended her fair innocence to the flood
> That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course,
> The water-nymphs that in the bottom played,
> Held up their pearled wrists and took her in,
> Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall,
> Who piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
> And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
> In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel,
> And through the porch and inlet of each sense
> Dropped in ambrosial oils till she revived,
> And underwent a quick immortal change
> Made goddess of the river; still she retains
> Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
> Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
> Helping all urchin-blasts, and ill-luck signs
> That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
> Which she with precious vialed liquors heals. (828-46).

As Oram notes, Milton's alterations make her, like Lycidas, 'an example of Christian patience rewarded with immortality'.[79] The flood's 'cross-flowing' course calls attention to the twist of the tale's usual tradition, and the maiden's remarkable actions, separated from those 'guilty' or in 'mad pursuit'. The verb 'commended' contains a special sense of 'committing' with an act of faith, or 'committal' to divine keeping.[80] In entrusting herself to her local river, and by implication, its Creator, she performs a self-sacrifice filled with humility and love and is so rewarded. Her character survives the 'immortal change'; she is forever a gentle maiden, and oft ascends her depths

[78] See Philip Schwyzer's 'Purity and Danger on the West Bank of the Severn: The Cultural Geography of A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634', *Representations* 60 (1997), 22-48, 23. Schwyzer argues that the marches in which the children go astray are related to the hybridity and degeneration of Comus, suggestive of local instability. By contrast, the qualities of boundary and limit, inviolable and pure, are ascribed to the Severn and its virgin goddess. This suggests that Milton reminds the Earl that he does not reside in the England for which Sabrina stands, and moreover, that his ability to alter the frontier over which he holds sway is somewhat restricted; Comus escapes. Schwyzer, 34 relates Milton's representation of the marches to Spenser's representation of the 'problem of degeneracy' in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*.
[79] Oram (1984), 129.
[80] *OED*, s.v. 'Commend, v.' 1b.

at twilight to help those around her. Sabrina is said to love 'maidenhood' and helping virgins in need, which attests to her chastity. But the rustic swains who are said to 'carol her goodness' testify to Sabrina's *charity*. It is her version of chastity shot through with feeling for her fellow creatures, mortal and immortal, that *A Maske* offers as a way out of Comus' seat.

Sabrina's transformation recalls Spenser's Marinell. Wounded by Britomart in the Legend of Chastity, he is tended to by sea nymphs. They clean his grisly wounds with care, softly wiping away the 'gelly blood', binding, and at last filling with sovereign balm and sweet nectar (*FQ* III.iv.40). It is after this stroke and the healing that follows that Marinell learns to love. Although Schwyzer and others describe Sabrina's change as Ovidian, this is not necessarily accurate. Ovidian virgins tend to undergo sterile or terminal metamorphoses, from which there is no end. Spenser's stony nymph is a case in point. Her waters can never be changed, nor can they effect change; her triumph of chastity is punitive, and occludes charity (II.ii.9). Remembering Marinell, Sabrina's nymph-led transformation emphasizes her ontological ambiguity in its sensuousness. She is bathed, strewn and dewed through 'the porch and inlet of each sense' before she revives as a river deity, as if retaining something of her humanity although no longer mortal. Her acts of kindness suggest that she continues to use creation rightly. Sabrina's intermixing of two worlds and natures looks forward to Milton's assertion that 'glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry both in divine and humane things' (*CPW* II: 405-6).[81] *A Maske* continues to remind us of the significance of right use, and the indifference of medium, in having Sabrina heal 'with precious vialed liquors' (not unlike Comus' glass), and speak in the iambic quadrimeter associated with him. She is not compelled to goodness, but chooses it. The invocation to Sabrina imagines her under 'a glassy, cool, translucent wave' in terms both sensual and pure (860); the 'loose train' of her amber-dropping hair is braided with white lilies.

The refrain, 'listen and save', replaces Comus' injunctions to 'be wise, and taste'. Sabrina rises, and this produces a counter-effect to the Spirit's descent, filled with dualist-seeming antithesis. Although immortal, her upward moving saving power reinforces the involvement of

[81] My argument contradicts a Platonic reading like Jayne's, for example, who conflates Sabrina with the Platonic Divine Mind. See also Eliza Fisher Laskowski, 'Transforming the "Corporal Rinde": The Songs of Milton's *A Mask Presented a Ludlow Castle*', *Uncircumscribed Mind: Reading Milton Deeply*, eds. C. W. Durham and K. A. Pruitt (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2008), 146-64 who reads the Lady and Sabrina as 'non-corporeal females' and sees the loss of the body as a symbol of divinity.

body and spirit, and highlights the role of human dignity and capacity for good. On the one hand, Sabrina is clearly a conduit for God's creative power in the natural world; she is, however, separate from the bright, airy inhabitants, and her ascent visually implies her closeness to humankind.[82] Sabrina's lilting song announces her arrival. She sets her curiously 'printless feet | O'er the cowslip's velvet head, | That bends not as [she] tread[s]'. Her printless pace might echo Prospero in *The Tempest*. About to abjure his rough magic, he calls to those 'that on the sands with printless foot' who chase 'the ebbing Neptune' and fly when he returns (V.i.33-5).[83] Yet the unpressed flowers underfoot also recall Arthur's dream of the Faery Queene, who leaves the reverse, 'nought but pressed grass'. In the case of Gloriana, the grass may be pressed, but her actual presence is uncertain and her aid absent; in the case of Sabrina, the flowers are printless, but her presence is assured and her help efficacious. In his revised Spenserian goddess, Milton remembers the problem of Plato's Ideas and saves his Lady. Consequently, the Lady's 'ensnared chastity' is not only rescued from Comus, but also from itself, from the Lady's (and her Brothers') definition.

I will not dwell on the question of whether the Lady's immobility is caused by her captor, or as Platonizing readers argue, by herself. Nor will I interrogate the famed 'gumms of glutenous heat' and the related debate of whether or not this heat signals her complicit desire.[84] It is sufficient to note that the Attendant Spirit is clearly aghast at her entrapment, which suggests that if it is an attempt at a mental/spiritual ascent that discards the body, it is hardly a good thing. The line of the present discussion suggests that her inability to move without external aid illuminates the Lady's imperfection and the need for divine assistance. It also reinforces the ways in which her argument reproduced some of Comus' misreadings (i.e. naturalization and necessity), and the fact that she was still facing temptation when Comus escaped. Another possibility is that her consistent lack of acknowledgement regarding the claims of the body has resulted in her loss of movement, just as Guyon lay comatose outside Mammon's cave. Either way, the Lady's motionlessness draws attention to the tactility of Sabrina's act of rescue.

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[82] In this, I do not read Sabrina as uncomplicatedly embodying 'Grace' (Woodhouse), or even a conduit for Grace (Sugimura).
[83] Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999).
[84] Various and contrasting discussions of this topic can be found in Shuger, Broaddus, Kerrigan and Leonard, 'Saying "No" to Freud: Milton's *A Mask* and Sexual Assault', *Milton Quarterly* 25/4 (1991), 129-40.

When the Spirit invokes her, he 'implore[s]' her 'powerful hand' (903). The watery goddess 'sprinkles' drops of water on the Lady's breast, on her 'finger's tip' and her 'rubied lip'. She then 'touches' the 'marble venomed seat' with her 'chaste palms moist and cold', and descends to her watery bower (910-20). Although the language recalls Comus' devouring looks upon the Lady's locks and lips, the enchanter did not touch her. It is as if Sabrina's chaste and saving touch reminds the Lady of her body and allows it to move. In an imitation of Sabrina's entrance, the Lady rises, a visual repetition that might indicate her having experienced, through touch, a new, charitable and embodied form of chastity. The Attendant Spirit swiftly calls to the Lady to 'fly this cursed place' while heaven 'lends us grace', lest the sorcerer entice the group with 'some other new device' (937-40). The Spirit's anxiety suggests that the children's 'triumph' over 'sensual folly, and intemperance', which he goes on to sententiously sing about as he presents them to their parents, is a highly conditional one. Both parties are seen to flee. The fear that Comus might still tempt the Lady, and might have gone on to succeed, but for the interruption, lingers on.

The Attendant Spirit speaks the Prologue and Epilogue and the difference between them is arresting. In inhabiting both borders, the Spirit presents himself as more liminal a character than Sabrina. His Prologue is composed of blank verse, which is also the mode of the Lady he descends to defend. The Epilogue, however, offers rhyming couplets, which are used by Comus and Sabrina.[85] Kilgour, who associates Shakespearean echoes largely with Comus, suggests that their spectral presence within the Spirit's closing remarks implies that they remain within the text, covertly contaminating his words.[86] In addition, this residual presence, or involuntary transmission of quality, is very Spenserian and informs the motions of his allegory. Perhaps it also indicates the Spirit's new understanding of the lesson that *A Maske* so emphatically displays; that different, or seemingly opposite kinds of rhetoric and literary form are not in themselves either good or bad. The Attendant Spirit can move between his starry mansion and dim earth *via* blank and rhyming verse. He sounds different but he also seems to see things differently. His descending Prologue was suffused with antithesis that constructed a pure heaven and a pestilent earth. His ascending Epilogue is more measured, gradual, and rises through steps or layers of 'gardens fair', fallen, but vibrant

[85] Comus begins in rhyming couplets but shifts to blank verse when speaking to the Lady. This could indicate her influence over him, or be a strategic, persuasive move on the sorcerer's part, or both.
[86] Kilgour (1993), 325.

fictional paradises (980), as he sucks the sustaining 'liquid air' on his way home. This dramatic change in perspective constructs a heaven and earth still far apart, but somehow interconnected by these sensuous mythological scenes, by poetry. The Spirit swings past the Hersperides and the golden tree, over the Graces and the Hours, through eternal summers and beds of flowers upon which wounded Adonis slumbers. Venus sits in sorrow, perhaps, like her counterpart in *The Faerie Queene*, mourning the works of time. Finally, he discovers,

> Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc't,
> Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranc't
> After her wandring labours long,
> Till free consent the gods among
> Make her his eternal Bride,
> And from her fair unspotted side
> Two blissful twins are to be born,
> Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn. (1003-10).

Milton plainly alludes to and revises Spenser's garden of Adonis. Where Spenser's garden is fallen and earthly, Milton's is situated 'far above in spangled sheen', crowning the ladder of demi-paradises on the way to the Spirit's starry mansion. The central couple of Spenser's garden is Venus and Adonis. *A Maske* has us pass them by to find Cupid, and Psyche, who has been made immortal, but only 'after her wandring labours long'. The vital significance of 'wandering', of questing, of the trials of mortality and mutability, are remembered even in the celestial sphere. This looks forward to *Areopagitica* in which Milton compares the almost inseparable 'growing' together of good and evil to the seeds given to Psyche:

> the knowledge of good is so involv'd and interwoven with the knowledge of evill, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discern'd, that those confused seeds which were impos'd on *Psyche* as an incessant labour to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixt. (*CPW* II.504).

The cruelty visited upon Cupid's bride by his mother is transformed into occasions for vigorous and enduring virtue, which Psyche confronts, and is so made eternal. This paradise of marital union, after labours long, is not something we find in *The Faerie Queene*. Milton's Psyche seems to be a kind of rehabilitated Eve. Yet this isn't the end; we are made to anticipate the birth of two children, the twins Youth and Joy. Spenser's Psyche is said to be Cupid's 'trew loue'—marriage isn't

specified—and their child is *Pleasure*, who pleases gods and men (III.vi.50).[87] His garden of Adonis is also 'fraught | With pleasures manifold' wherein pleasure is a constitutive force of its generativity and perpetuity (III.vi.arg). Kilgour subtly suggests that perhaps the one daughter, Pleasure, implies 'too simply a dialectical process, in which the individual child appears as the synthesis of the two parents'. Instead, the couple themselves 'generate a new couple…the relation between whom has yet to be worked out'.[88]

Spenser's scene is earthly, but Milton's, celestial; perhaps Pleasure cannot be so easily translated to the skies. It is also possible that Milton does not promise Pleasure because *A Maske* does not clearly map out the relation between virtue and pleasure. It is not the story of pleasure reconciled to virtue.[89] Youth and Joy, both prophesied and legitimated by Jove, could look forward to the end of Michael's speech in Book Twelve of *Paradise Lost*: when Satan 'with his perverted world' is dissolved, the Father will raise new heaven and earth, founded in righteousness and love, which will bring forth the 'fruits' of 'joy and eternal bliss' (*PL* 12.547-51). This anticipation, if it is one, strongly emphasizes the celestial and theological aspects of Milton's Cupid and Psyche. But the blissful twins from Psyche's 'fair unspotted side' recall another Spenserian precedent: fair, unspotted Chrysogonee, and the twins Belphoebe and Amoretta, taken from her loving side (*FQ* III.vi.4, 27). When the time comes, perhaps Milton implies, even his promissory heaven-born twins will have the chance to wander through this world, to discover who and what they are, and what they might mean.

[87] Apuleius names Pleasure the daughter of Cupid and Psyche. See *The golden asse*, tr. William Adlington (London, 1566), VI.23-4. See also Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, tr. Jon Solomon, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), I: v.22 for the development of the allegory, which Carey sees as nearest to Milton's (*A Maske*, n.1002-4).
[88] Kilgour (1992), 327.
[89] Shullenberger, 'Milton's Primavera', *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, ed. Ken Hiltner (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008), 63-90, 85, argues that pleasure and virtue are reconciled, seeing Psyche and Cupid as anticipating the angelic sexuality of *Paradise Lost.*

Chapter Five
Allegory and Accommodation in *Paradise Lost*

'[I]n such abundance lies our choice'.
(*Paradise Lost*, 9.620)

I. Milton Against Allegory?

As the previous chapter acknowledges, sensing the imaginative presence of Spenser in both prophetic and allegorical strains in the Ludlow masque, is not hard. It is instead the specificities of what kinds of Spenser—Platonic? Apocalyptic? Dualist? Violent? Visionary? Pedagogical?—which parts of his poetry, how he is rewritten and to what ends, that have commanded critical debate. In that *A Maske* is situated after the Fall, and that masques are traditionally allegorical—Milton's being particularly distinguished by a richness and simultaneity of reference—Spenser's influence seems evident from the start. *Paradise Lost* does not afford us these advantages. Gordon Teskey, for example, writes that Spenser's 'manner of thinking is so profoundly different from Milton's that one could be forgiven for supposing that any comparison between them as thinkers is doomed from the start'. In Teskey's terms, Spenser is 'the poet of hallucination', while Milton is 'the poet of delirium'. Spenser delivers a poetic experience without partaking of it himself, 'attaching the hallucination to the actual world…by means of allegory'. Milton, however, is an artist who undergoes the experience and 'mediates a portion of it to us'.[1] The subtleties of Teskey's distinction are not at present our concern; we need only note that Miltonic creation is differentiated from Spenserian creation, which describes itself as a continued *allegory*.

It might seem apparent to readers that *Paradise Lost,* in which Milton aspires to 'assert eternal providence, | And justify the ways of God to men', is not an allegorical poem (1.25-6).[2] Unlike Spenser in the Letter to Raleigh, he does not give any indication that it is. The representational mode of this epic, however, has been and continues to be a matter of critical debate. Thinking about the poem's Spenserian inheritances will add to this important critical dialogue. Seventy years ago, A. J. A. Waldock observed that critics differ not only in their approach

[1] Teskey, *Delirious Milton: The Fate of the Poet in Modernity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 6, 15.
[2] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Routledge, 2013). Quotations from *PL* are from this edition and line references will be given parenthetically.

to, and judgment of the poem, but 'differ also in their understanding of what occurs in it'.[3] This has been true at least since Joseph Addison and Richard Bentley, the former who found Milton's Paradise beautiful, dull and inactive, like 'Pictures of Still-Life', and the latter who was troubled by numerous poetic descriptions, which he rejected as textual errors.[4] Samuel Johnson characteristically makes both complaints, although their implications are opposing; that *Paradise Lost* bears a 'want of human interest' in its portrayal of an unknowable state, *and* that 'something of anticipation [of the Fall] is now and then discovered' in Eden.[5]

In doing so, Johnson anticipates mid-twentieth century arguments over whether or not Adam and Eve are fallen before the Fall. Tillyard, for example, argues that in practice, the transition from a state of innocence to one of sin required Milton to resort 'to some faking'. Dramatic necessity, he claims, results in the Fall being 'extended back in time' to Eve's dream at the beginning of Book Five; Adam is said to fall in Book Eight, when he confesses to the ways in which Eve's beauty affects his mind.[6] Millicent Bell's provocative essay takes Tillyard's contention further. She argues that the Edenic pair is fallen from the moment of creation and that their disobedience is the result rather than the cause of sin. According to Bell, Milton's real interest was in 'the present condition of humankind', which makes his state of Innocence a 'somewhat intractable legend' to characterize the 'state of fallen Man'.[7] While many critics, myself included, have disagreed with Bell, her essay remains influential, and implicitly allows for allegorical readings of *Paradise Lost* in its insistence upon the illusion of Innocence, and the futurity—rather than lost past—of Paradise. Considering the question of whether and how the poem is allegorical is of great importance; yet we might remember that allegory as it is usually understood, i.e. dualist and hierarchical—and sometimes maligned—is not always the same as Spenser's representational mode. The questions are related, but not identical. I will first review critics who claim that the poem is allegorical, and then discuss those who claim that allegory in Milton is purely diabolical. Curiously, critics on both sides use Spenser as a foil against which to illuminate their theses.

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[3] A. J. A. Waldock, *'Paradise Lost' and its Critics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), preface.
[4] Addison, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), III:170, No. 321 (March 8, 1712); see Bentley, *Dr. Bentley's emendations on the twelve books of Milton's 'Paradise Lost'* (London, 1732), 8, with reference to 8.494.
[5] Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; With Critical Observations on their Works*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), I.290-91.
[6] Tillyard, *Studies in Milton* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), 10-13.
[7] Bell, 'The Fallacy of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*', *PMLA* 68/4 (1953), 863-83, 864-5.

Waldock's problem of what does, or does not, happen in the poem frequently coincides with the question of whether the poem's representational mode is to be understood as 'thoroughly allegorical, thoroughly non- or even anti-allegorical, or suspended, consciously or unconsciously, coherently or incoherently, between these two opposing poles'.[8] Mindele Anne Treip approaches *Paradise Lost* as an allegorical epic, and employs an extremely broad definition of what it is to be allegorical. For example, she argues that Milton retains a wide range of 'effects from Spenser's allegorical apparatus, and a host of specifically allegorical devices' such as 'emblems, icons, dream-visions, allegorical landscapes, metamorphoses, as well as the Spenserian allegorical personifications and allegorical "Houses"'. Yet Milton's use of these elements is said to be 'kept more in the background [than in *The Faerie Queene*]', but nevertheless 'loaded with covert meaning'. She argues that the poem's concern with 'shadows', 'types' and 'accommodated' narration testify to Milton's 'persisting preoccupation' with allegory.[9]

Catherine Gimelli Martin also considers *Paradise Lost* 'a profoundly allegorical text', but one that is at odds with Spenser's. She claims instead that it is 'far more in harmony with Walter Benjamin's thesis that seventeenth-century allegories are to "the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things"—a baroque rupture with normative allegory [exemplified by Spenser]'.[10] By this she means that Milton's epic is a self-ironizing, self-reflexive, 'meta-allegory', rooted 'in a barely veiled plenum of linguistically and physically scared or absolute meaning', which 'ultimately demonstrates only the certainty of uncertainty itself'. Martin argues that as Reformation exegesis became more historically concrete, it also became more figural: 'Reformed figuration's most undisputed divergence from its past lies in the polysemous sense of inwardness exemplified in Milton, one that ultimately produces a more personal and therefore ambiguous sense of the fulfillments of biblical truth than any conveyed by a more outwardly oriented sacramentalism'. Martin's use of Spenser as a contrast is sometimes unfair—he is said to 'regard sexuality as a harbinger of death', for example—but she rightly notes that whole generations of critics have doggedly discussed Milton's aesthetics 'as if they fell within the exclusive domain of the symbol',

[8] Vladimir Brljak, 'The Satanic "Or": Milton and Protestant Anti-allegorism', *RES* 66/275 (2015), 403-22, 421.
[9] Mindele Anne Treip, *Allegorical Poetics and the Epic: The Renaissance Tradition to 'Paradise Lost'* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 135, 141.
[10] Martin, *The Ruins of Allegory: 'Paradise Lost' and the Metamorphosis of Epic Convention* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 60, 2.

which she attributes to the influence of Coleridge's reductive opposition of the symbolic to the allegorical mode. Milton's art can be typological, mythic, metaphoric, Neoplatonic, or anything but allegorical. Martin's contention is that extraliteral senses are generally allegorical—'when more is meant than meets the ear'—although they might also embrace, or overlap with, anagogy and typology.[11] She does not quote Puttenham, but seems to invoke his description of allegory as the 'chief ringleader and captaine of all other figures', while acknowledging the emphasis on typological literalism in the Reformation and revolutionary periods.[12]

In a recent essay, Vladimir Brljak admirably attempts to provide 'a welcome corrective to the terminological eclecticism' that has marked the scholarship on Milton and allegory, typified by the preceding examples, and perhaps even more so by Judith Anderson's extensive work on allegory as defined by 'doubleness', irreducible to 'abstraction, fable, and Idea alone'.[13] He takes as his point of departure the only instance of the word 'allegory' in Milton's poetry: the moment, in *Paradise Regained*, where Satan professes to doubt whether the kingdom portended for Christ is 'Real or Allegoric' (4.389-90). Rightly observing that allegorical *interpretation* emerges from Satan's mouth in *Paradise Regained*, and that allegorical *representation* ostensibly arises from Satan's head in *Paradise Lost* (in the form of Sin and Death), Brljak aligns Milton with the overlooked tradition in Protestant commentary, which maintains that allegorical reading was initiated by Satan in order to obscure the true meaning of Scripture.[14] His essay argues for Milton's hermeneutic anti-allegorism by tracing Milton's use of the term in his early prose writings and his apparent abandonment of the term after 1645.

In summary, Milton's usage before 1645 simply confirms what we have acknowledged previously: that allegory, metaphor and typology are often seen to overlap in the rhetorical or

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[11] Martin (1998), 15, 20, 65, 56, and 19. See, for example, Lewis, *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), or Isabel G. MacCaffrey, *'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth'* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1959). Sharon Achinstein's *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 177-223 provides an exception in its nuanced discussion of Milton's rejection of the royalist political investment in allegory, in particular, rather than allegory in general.

[12] Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, eds. Frank Whigham and W.A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 271.

[13] Brljak, 422; Anderson, *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 273.

[14] See *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, 56 vols. (St Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1955-86), 5:356 and Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Caluine, upon the first booke of Moses called Genesis: Translated out of Latine into English*, tr. Thomas Tymme (London, 1578), 59-60 (sig. D6r-v), which relate Roman Catholic allegories and the allegories of Origen to Satan.

literary sense, and that allegorical reading must not involve extrinsic applications of whatever one pleases, but follow the best Protestant practice in discerning meaning.[15] Unsurprisingly, Brljak argues for the irrelevance of these cases in approaching Satan's seeming uncertainty, 'Real or Allegoric'. He points out that in the last three decades of Milton's career, excepting *Paradise Regained*, the term 'allegory' is not used in the hermeneutical sense. For example, when adapting a passage from Johann Wolleb where *allegoria* is listed among the types of figurative language that cannot be charged with falsehood, Milton removes it from the list in *De doctrina*.[16] Similarly, *Paradise Lost* tells us of 'types and shadows', 'shadowy types', of things 'mysteriously…meant', of things foretold, and of 'likening spiritual to corporal forms', but not of allegory.[17]

To attend to terminological precision is certainly necessary, and the crucial fact is that prior to Satan's statement, Christian allegory is not yet in existence. Milton makes his Satan the first creature to explicitly raise this form of interpretation in relation to the emergent Christian faith. Yet this does not necessarily lead to Brljak's conclusion that Milton was hostile to allegory.[18] Apart from 'allegoric', Satan also claims to aid mankind with 'presages and signs, | And answers, oracles, portents and dreams' (*PR* 1.394-5). To this Christ replies that the tempter is 'composed of lies': 'For lying is thy sustenance, thy food' (1.407, 429).[19] What, he asks have been Satan's 'answers', 'what but dark | Ambiguous and with double sense deluding' (1.434-5)? Brljak claims that Satan's list details 'various forms of esoteric semiosis', and are all 'qualities that could with equal propriety be ascribed to allegory'.[20] Perhaps so, but he does not observe that Christ goes on to explain that 'God hath now sent his *living oracle* | Into the world…And sends his spirit of truth henceforth to dwell | In pious hearts, *an inward oracle*' (1.460-3, emphasis added). It seems that these forms of semiosis might equally be applied to Providence.

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[15] Brljak, 407-408. See, for example, *CPW* I:714, I:778, II:288, II:751.
[16] See Wolleb, *Compendium Theologiæ Christianæ* (Cambridge, 1642), sig. M11r, and *CPW* VI:761 and n.11. See also Brljak, 409 and *The Complete Works of John Milton*, eds. Thomas Corns and Gordon Campbell, 11 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008-), 8:1151.
[17] See *PL* 12.232-3, 12.303, 3.516, 10.191 and 5.573.
[18] Significantly, Brljak makes no reference to the considerable history of critical debate concerning Satan. Milton's arch-devil has long evoked both concern that he poses a threat to the poem's morality, and later, sympathy for his cause and plight. If the father of allegory is seen to be torn between such conflicting impulses, so too might allegory, unless of course we reduce the term to 'lies'.
[19] Lewis (1942), echoes this when he describes Satan as 'more a Lie than a Liar.' (95).
[20] Brljak, 419.

The poetry strongly suggests that it is Satan's relationship to language and his use of it, as if it has no value but to deceive, or persuade to evil, that is the trouble. Indeed Satan's use of the divisive 'or' in 'Real or Allegoric' appears to present the greater problem. In choosing the grammar of either/or, instead of allowing for both/and, Satan denies the right way of reading the old Law. Think of Donne, for example, who wrote that '[t]he *institution* of thy whole *worship* in the *old Law*, was a continuall *Allegory*; *types* and *figures* overspread all'.[21] As Barbara Kiefer Lewalski argued over three decades ago with reference to *Paradise Lost*, infernal dialogue—and especially satanic speech—takes on the characteristic of manipulative rhetoric.[22] The devils exhibit all of the technical skills and taxonomies taught by classical and humanist rhetorical theorists, but fail utterly to meet the most significant criterion of public poetry or oratory: to improve one's audience, or citizenry, or in Milton's words, 'to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtu…and set the affections in right tune' (*CPW* I: 816-7).

Anne Davidson Ferry's excellent study also argues that allegory is presented as one of the forces the devil loosed upon the world, and is equated with fallen vision, or the 'dissociated vision of Satan'.[23] Ferry's main point, that in the episode with Sin and Death, the shift in representational mode itself demands interpretation is well taken, but she does not account for the moments after the Fall in which Sin and Death appear to alter in power, to 'feel new strength' (*PL* 10.243). In aligning allegory with parody, Ferry's description of allegory—and, occasionally, of *The Faerie Queene*—becomes itself parodic and reductive. She surprisingly claims that Spenser's third book is about an abstraction, when Britomart has long been recognized as movingly mimetic, and there is no sure indication that 'Chastity' and 'Britomartis' are equated by the Legend's title. Ferry defines allegory as necessarily dualist, 'like extended simile', always implying 'a separation between the terms it is apparently comparing', against the unity and identity of metaphor, despite the fact that rhetoricians

[21] Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. Anthony Raspa (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1975), 99-100. Brljak, 420 argues that it is allegory, which is characterized by either/or and typology, by both/and, but Milton does not make this differentiation. In fact, Martin (1998), 19, argues the opposite, that types 'seemed to [Milton] more suspect than allegories, simply because they represent no more than the historically concrete or "outward signe or symbol of admission…[while] it is the *inward* calling of God that makes a Minister"' (*CPW* I:715).

[22] Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 80, 97.

[23] Ferry, *Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 139. Michael Murrin, *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in its Rise and Decline* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 167-9 also argues that the traditions of biblical and secular allegory were unavailable to Milton, or are presented as satanic.

usually defined allegory as a species of extended metaphor.[24] In addition, she claims that Milton is identified with music, while Spenser is identified with painting. She does not acknowledge that *The Faerie Queene* opens with a voice aspiring to 'sing of Knights and Ladies', and '[f]ierce warres and faithfull loues', which will moralize the 'song' (I.i.1.5-9). Nor does she observe that Adam and Eve are uniquely described as being made in God's 'image'.

It is true that Milton deliberately uses many kinds of language characterized by varying degrees of unity and disunity of meanings in order to express different degrees of creation before, and after, the Fall. It is also true that Satan's use of language is frequently mystifying (c.f. *PL* 9.695: 'whatever thing death be'), and often relies upon the disposability of the literal, as when Eve refers to 'this tree' that she is forbidden to taste or touch, and he proceeds to address it as 'sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant, | Mother of science' (9.651, 9.679-80). Mystification, especially of origins (c.f. 5.860: Satan's 'self-begot, self-raised'), and discarding the literal are charges that have been imputed to allegory.

Yet this is not the only kind of allegorical epistemology implied in either Milton's poem or prose writings. And given his esteem of Spenser as a poet of didactic epic, this is not surprising. The astonishing instance of Satan reading rightly provides evidence; he is the first to see that the 'happier Eden' is the condition of the couple imparadised in their reciprocal love (4.505-7). The first couple only explicitly recognizes the significance of the 'paradise within' on learning of their expulsion. When Adam and Eve, with the world all before them, make their solitary way out of Paradise, their condition has changed. Michael draws our attention to it at the beginning of Book Twelve: 'I perceive | Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine | Must needs impair and weary human sense' (12.8-10). No longer will our first parents, or the generations to come, be able to directly converse with angels, or God, who helpfully (and sincerely) accommodate divine truth to human sense. Indeed this is Adam's greatest lament: 'where shall I seek | His bright appearances, or footstep trace?' (11.328-9). Instead, Michael tells, of God's presence, 'many a sign', the 'track divine', still dwells in the world, but the means of knowing God aright have altered (11.350-4).

As Milton writes in *Areopagitica*, 'from out the rinde of one apple tasted…the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World. And perhaps this is that

[24] Ferry, 92.

doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evill, that is to say of knowing good by evill' (*CPW* II: 514). The ruins of our first parents are the ruins of allegory, and to repair them we must learn by repeated trial and examination to discern rightly, between the track divine and the track diabolical. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton refers to those 'allegorick precepts of beneficence fetcht out of the closet of nature', which might instruct us (II: 273). This does not mean that we dismiss corporeal life or make fables of the phenomenal world, but confront the difficulty of having to discover guiding providence ourselves. Significantly, there is no template or set of rules, or formulae, for how to do this. This is why, I suspect, that Milton would have found classifying rhetoric as either good or bad ultimately useless. His accounts of how to rightly read scripture should prove instructive, and suggest how best to approach *Paradise Lost.*

At least two seemingly contradictory urges are apparent in *Of Reformation,* where Milton states, in the same sentence, that the scriptures are 'protesting their own plainness, and perspicuity', *but also* 'requiring [from readers] the ability of searching, trying, examining all things, and by the Spirit discerning that which is good' (I: 566). In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton expands on the doctrine of *sola scriptura*: 'In controversies, there is no arbitrator except scripture, or rather, each man is his own arbitrator, so long as he follows scripture and the Spirit of God' (VI: 585). Although he begins with the typical acknowledgment of scriptural authority and scriptural perspicuity, he goes on to amend his statement, replacing 'scripture' with 'each man' as the sole arbitrator. He does not, however, simply transfer authority from the text to the interpreter, but in a circular movement, returns the authority to scripture and introduces a third term, the Spirit of God. Milton's formulations express that 'scripture' and 'Spirit' are not synonymous. Authority is, therefore, distributed between three interdependent, rather than opposing, terms. In *De Doctrina*, Milton goes on to explain the difference between scripture and Spirit in terms of what he describes as 'a double scripture'.

> We have, particularly under the gospel, a double scripture. There is the external scripture of the written word and the internal scripture of the Holy Spirit which he, according to God's promise, has engraved upon the hearts of believers, and which is certainly not to be neglected. (VI: 587)

Unexpectedly, the advisory negative construction 'not to be neglected' soon becomes more insistent, and transforms the earlier description of the interdependence and distribution of power between the two kinds of scripture. We are given instead a clear hierarchy of authority:

> Nowadays the external authority for our faith, in other words, the scriptures, is of very considerable importance and, generally speaking, it is the authority of which we first have experience. The pre-eminent and supreme authority, however, is the authority of the Spirit, which is internal, and the individual possession of each man. (VI: 587)

Milton explains that the external scripture, particularly the New Testament, has been liable to corruption, and is corrupt, due to passing through the care of untrustworthy authorities, and being collected from an assortment of manuscripts in an assortment of transcripts and editions. In contrast, the Spirit that guides man to truth cannot be corrupted (see VI: 587-8). Significantly, the conviction that there is no original version of external scripture does not lead Milton to the postmodern inference that there is no absolute origin. It leads him instead to the surety of the internal principle, the internal scripture. And yet the unresolved tension remains, that the preeminence of the internal scripture is itself authorized by citations from a text demonstrated to be corrupt: II Cor. iii.3, I John ii.20 and ii.27, among many others (see VI: 586).

Milton's belief, that 'on the evidence of scripture itself', all things are in the end 'to be referred to the Spirit and the unwritten word', safeguards the individual's freedom of conscience while maintaining the ground of the scriptures (VI: 590).[25] At the same time, he leaves open the problem of identifying the 'Spirit' when readers disagree.[26] Even so, when at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, the poet addresses 'chiefly thou, O Spirit, who dost prefer | Before all Temples the upright heart and pure', he makes an exhilarating claim for his poetry (*PL* 1.17-18). He asks that he be instructed, illumined and elevated so that his verse might be a true literary expression of that

[25] On the double authorities of scripture and Spirit, Regina M. Schwartz suggests that Milton 'needed one authority to dismantle the old, and another to preserve his independence in the face of the new…Authority becomes the instrument to de-authorize: if Scripture liberated men from the church, the Holy Spirit liberated men from other men' (238). See Schwartz's essay 'Citation, Authority, and *De Doctrina Christiana*', *Politics, Poetics and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, eds. David Lowenstein and James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 227-41 for a lucid discussion of the politics of Milton's practice of citation.

[26] The instability inherent in Milton's understanding of divine inspiration is evidenced in the anonymous *Answer* to the *Doctrine and Discipline*: 'We answer: this is a wilde, mad, and frantick divinitie, just like to the opinions of the Maids of Aldgate; Oh say they, we live in Christ, and Christ doth all for us; we are Christed with Christ and Godded with God, and at the same time we sin here, we joyned to Christ do justice in him, for our life is hid with God in Christ'. The logic of the divorce tracts is more deterministic than the logic of *De Doctrina*, and yet the author is able to charge Milton with a kind of hysterical antinomianism, based on the ways in which Milton reads Scripture. See *CPW* II:750, n.122.

indwelling Spirit, which had earlier inspired the scripture and since been engraved on the fleshly tablets of the human heart.[27] If we approach the poem in this way, then we are required to read it in the spirit in which it was written, raising our interpretive temper to the height of its great Argument.

This chapter argues that the mode of engaging directly with our embodiment, and our situation in the corporeal world that Spenserian allegory demands, is crucial to Milton's continuing project that seeks to 'repair the ruines of our first parents'. In the four sections that follow, I attempt to draw out the ways in which Milton's epic appears to adopt and transform aspects of Spenser's handling of materiality in order to express and interlink multiple levels of creation, and ways of knowing the world and its author. The first section examines Milton's controversial allegory of Sin and Death. It argues that Milton endues evil with the liveliness that Spenser typically reserves for good allegorical figures. Against claims that the allegorical status of Sin and Death expresses nothingness—the privation of being—or that allegory is itself evil, I argue that the representational mode of Sin and Death ingeniously presents the *aporia* of angelic sin, exposes their associated epistemology of mystification as stagnant and dangerous, and distances their violence from God, in an effort to protect the poem's theodicy. Section two reassesses Milton's Spenserian inheritances in the Garden of Eden, arguing that his Paradise refashions Spenser's deceptive Bower of Bliss, pretending at Innocence, but invests it with the redemptive spirit of the fallen garden of Adonis. In his sublime portrayal of the cosmic sympathy of creation, in particular, in the flowers of Paradise, Milton alerts us to the peculiarities of his version of the doctrine of scriptural 'accommodation'.

The third section shows that Milton understood accommodation to operate through synecdoche, rather than the usually assumed logic of metaphor. This unique emphasis on the accommodating image, rather than the typical strategy of discarding the image in order to emphasize the transcendent subject, speaks directly to the depiction of Spenser's knights of Holiness and Chastity, whose quests entail an increase in their synecdochal power, or makes them better images of the virtues they represent, and so better images of God. The final section analyses the event and effects of the Fall. It argues that Milton presents us with a Fall that results from the temptation to transcendence, rather than the expected temptation to sensuality. In doing so, he

[27] See Hanford, *A Milton Handbook* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1946), 227: '[Milton] too, had heard the voice of God and was no less than his predecessor [Moses] the author of divine fictions'.

cautions against the one-sided privileging of the spiritual, which is, ironically, the cause of Original Sin, and cannot be its remedy. Together, the four sections demonstrate that Milton displays two kinds of allegory within his great poem, the first associated with Sin, Death and the devils, and the second, with our first parents. The former is characterized by dualism and determinism, while the latter is marked by repeated occasions of choice and trial, which postlapsarian life demands, and which is more difficult, but related to the poem's prelapsarian examples of accommodation. The drive to read and use the world rightly, led by the spirit of charity, in order to become oneself a better sign of God, is forcefully present in the works of both poets. *Paradise Lost* reveals that Milton recognized the indispensable significance of the corporeal realm in striving towards this reparation, and that his recognition was inspired, at least in part, by his reading of Spenser.

II. Milton's Faulty Allegory

Dr. Johnson made the unambiguous judgment—twice—that 'Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty…. This unskillful allegory appears to me one of the greatest faults of the poem; and to this there was no temptation, but the author's opinion of its beauty'.[28] Addison, while acknowledging 'the Fineness of this Allegory', had also been moved to complain, 'I cannot think that Persons of such a Chymerical Existence are proper Actors in an Epic Poem'.[29] These improper actors have troubled many readers since, in being seen, as John King observes, 'as a problematic intrusion of Spenserian allegory'.[30] King defends Milton's allegory along the same lines as Ferry, although he does not quote her, suggesting that a different representational mode brings with it different generic expectations. He argues that Milton recovers the parody of Spenser's den of Error as 'a foundation for ecclesiastical complaint and satire in *Paradise Lost*' (*FQ* I.i.13-27), which makes Satan a kind of unholy Redcrosse, and Sin, 'a composite type who participates in the iconography of Error and Duessa'. King does not suggest that Milton does, or should, renounce allegory—quite the contrary—but in tying this episode to the Roman Church, he inadvertently implies a rejection. The seeming difficulty with following Ferry's direction is that critics have

[28] Johnson, *Lives* I:291.
[29] Addison, *Spectator* II:563, No. 273 (January 12, 1712).
[30] William Empson, *Milton's God* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 59, denounces it as 'bad allegory'. John King, *Milton and Religious Controversy: Satire and Polemic in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 69.

disagreed over the status of these actors, even while agreeing that they are allegorical. Philip J. Gallagher, for example, states that Milton's belief in the literal truth of his narrative suggests that the apparent shift in representation does not signal any ontological change, for 'Sin and her son Death are consistently real (i.e. physical and historical)' throughout the epic.[31] Quilligan, on the other hand, writes that Satanic creation cannot even manage 'pure *res*'; the poem's allegorical bits become self-consciously fictional 'brackets'.[32] Stephen Fallon ingeniously argues that the 'proper perspective' contains elements of both these preceding interpretations, which is to say, the literal truth of Milton's narrative and the unreality of Sin and Death are both correct. These elements are reconciled through Milton's ontology, specifically, his Augustinian ontology of evil.[33]

Augustine maintained that evil is the privation, rather than the expression of substance, the privation or corruption of good, and is only afforded a derivative existence.[34] In his own *De Doctrina* Milton states that '[a]ll entity is good; nonentity, not good' (*CPW* VI:310). With this understanding in mind, Fallon claims, allegory is used to embody metaphysical evil, thereby presenting us with characters of a lesser reality: [t]he embodiment is illusory and paradoxical, for metaphysical evil does not exist'. Consequently, his thesis might be seen as a complement to Ferry's, in that she argued that allegory expressed a 'deficient' epistemology, while Fallon argues that allegory expresses a deficient ontology.[35] He then goes on to make a case for why allegory is associated with nonentity. His choice in using Coleridge's definition of allegory, and citing Angus Fletcher's description of allegorical characters as 'daemonic agents' betrays the course of his argument.[36] To summarize, allegorical characters are bound by a monomaniacal singleness of purpose and no matter how much 'surface detail' or physical description attends them, they do not become mimetic ones; 'Sloth' can only be slothful. Fallon uses Spenser's Guyon as an example to illustrate his point, which is odd, given that Milton specifically cites Guyon in Mammon's cave as an example of the right exercise of reason and will in trial. If Milton thought Guyon a daemon, thus

[31] Gallagher, '"Real or Allegoric": The Ontology of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*', *ELR* 6/2 (1976), 317-35, 317. Lewis (1942), 66-72 also observes that Milton's ontology of evil is Augustinian.
[32] Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 126.
[33] Fallon, 'Milton's Sin and Death: The Ontology of Allegory in *Paradise Lost*', *ELR* 17/3 (1987), 329-50, 329.
[34] See Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, eds. T. E. Page et al., 7 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-72), IV: XIV.xi and *Confessions* tr. Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, 2 vols. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), I: III.vii.
[35] The adjective is Fallon's (1987), 330, 342.
[36] Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 26.

incapable of choosing, he would not have done so. Even more problematically, we are then told that allegory's 'vitality' depended much on the realist belief in the actual existence of universals, or Platonic realism; with the rising influence of scholasticism, universals lost ontological weight, and so too did allegory. Fallon quotes Thomas Rymer and Addison, among others, who complain that the 'long-spun Allegories' of old can 'charm an understanding Age no more', and argues that Milton's mixing of mimetic and allegorical characters in *A Maske*, and the early dramatic drafts of *Paradise Lost*, evidence his dissatisfaction with the mode.[37] Milton attentively responds to the decline in the status of universals and his contemporaries' disaffection with allegory by giving them allegorical agents that represent nothingness.[38]

In lumping Spenser with the medieval allegorists, Fallon turns a blind eye to the possibility that the troublingly rich use of physical description and the apparent mixing of mimetic and allegorical characters—not to mention the variety within allegorical characters—might be a Spenserian inheritance. Fallon himself must admit that Chaos, for example, is a different kind of allegory to Sin and Death, because Chaos is clearly material. Yet '[t]he character Chaos, inseparable from the realm he personifies', and encompassed by a Hesiodic court, is judged to be still 'less real' because it is matter unformed, not created substance.[39] The very decision to personify him, however, as 'umpire' and 'anarch old', unnecessarily separates him from Chaos, the 'wild abyss | The womb of nature and perhaps her grave' (*PL* 2.907, 910, 988-9). Spenser's Chaos in the gardens of Adonis is not so: 'in the wide wombe of the world there lyes, | In hatefull darkenesse and in deepe horrore, | An huge eternall Chaos, which supplyes | The substances of natures fruitfull progenyes' (*FQ* III.vi.36). Perhaps Milton is presenting Satan's professed 'uncouth errand sole', his 'wandering quest' through the deep, as the primordial source from which the Hesiodic and other Hellenic myths spring, and also criticizing them by associating them with the adversary. In any case, Milton uses personification allegory where he clearly need not have, on a journey presented as real, and it isn't to express nonentity. It is at these moments that it is particularly difficult to entirely

[37] Fallon (1987), 333, 335, 338, 340. Thomas Rymer famously blames the Italians 'for debauching great *Spencer's* judgement'. See *Spenser: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. M. Cummings (London: Routledge, 1971), 207, 224.
[38] In contrast, Thomas Newton wrote that because 'a great part of this poem lies in the invisible world…the actions of Sin and Death are at least as probable as those ascribed to the good or evil Angels'. In seeing them as capable of action, Newton reads them as representing a different reality, but not necessarily as diminished. See *Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Newton et al., 2 vols. (London, 1749), II:231, *PL* 10.230.
[39] Fallon (1987), 348.

shake off the doubt that Andrew Marvell voiced; that Milton's poetic strength might '[perplex] the things he would explain' and 'ruin…[t]he sacred truth to fable and old song'. The uniquely thrilling impression of *Paradise Lost* as both a transcription and an undoing of divine truth is lost in the relegation of its allegory to nothingness.

The surface description, which Fallon would have us overlook, filled Edmund Burke with the awful terror he came to associate with the sublime: Milton's Death, '[t]he other shape, | If shape it might be called that shape had none…Or substance might be called that shadow seemed, | For each seemed either' is 'dark, uncertain, confused, terrible and sublime to the last degree' (2.666-70).[40] And yet the 'dreadful dart' he wields as he advances seems less confused, than a clear threat; Sin warns her sire that none but God can resist 'that mortal dint' (2.672; 813). Once again, the model of Spenser's Death, a flat figure in the pageant of Mutabilitie, might have sufficed: 'grim and greisly visage', yet 'like a shade…[v]nbodied, vnsoul'd, vnheard, vnseene' (*FQ* VII.vii.46.2-5). It is instead Spenser's snakey, biform *Errour*, inseparable from her wandering woods, and whose apparent death only serves to contaminate her slayer, that Milton remembers in his Sin.[41] She fittingly aids Satan on his first '*wandering* quest', which will of course be taken up in different form by our first parents after the Fall (emphasis added). The inconsistencies of description are precisely what agitated Johnson: 'Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken'. Similarly, the bridge they build 'ought to be figurative', but is solid enough to facilitate Satan's dangerous passage.[42] Milton's representation recalls such sublime moments in *The Faerie Queene*, as when False Florimell, literally made of snow, is said to melt in the presence of Florimell's figurative sun (*FQ* V.iii.24).

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[40] Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London, 1757), 45. See also Victoria Kahn's subtle account of allegory and sublimity as 'things indifferent'. Kahn, 'Allegory, the Sublime, and the Rhetoric of Things Indifferent in *Paradise Lost*', *Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene*, eds. David Quint et al. (Binghamton: MRTS, 1992), 127-52.

[41] Error also recalls Phineas Fletcher's Hamartia in *The purple island, or the isle of man*: *together with piscatorie eclogs and other poeticall miscellanies* (Cambridge, 1633), xii.27-31, as well as Kampe and Echidna.

[42] Johnson, *Lives* I:291. Their peculiar power has led Teskey to argue that 'Milton's Sin and Death have little in common ontologically with medieval and Renaissance allegorical persons', but grow out of the daemonic forces in Homer and Hesiod. See *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 42.

It is tough to think of the hellish pair as simply an externalization of Satan's metaphysical evil (i.e. his turning from God) as they provide a further occasion to observe Satan's selfish, manipulative rhetoric. His initial response is revulsion, he never saw 'till now | Sight more detestable' (*PL* 2.744-5). But following Sin's cautioning explanation, we are told that 'the subtle fiend, his lore | Soon learned, now milder…answered smooth' (2.815-6). The easy success of his guile with these formidable shapes reminds us of the closeness of *hypsos* to *bathos*. As Sin recalls her parthenogenesis out of Satan's head, she tells, 'amazement seized | All the host of heaven; back they recoiled afraid | At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign | Portentous held me; but familiar grown, I pleased, and with attractive graces won | The most averse' (2.757-763). When, in Book Five, Raphael talks of discursive and intuitive intellection, he explains that 'the latter most is ours [angelic]' (5.589). It seems at first that 'latter most' refers to the second kind, intuitive, but Sin's account suggests that it might also mean that angelic understanding is 'mostly' intuitive. At Sin's birth, angelic intuition fails. They can shrink in fear but cannot know her, and must name her and be won over discursively and arbitrarily. Their horrified retreat might be due both to the sight of the shining vision, and to the experience of, for the first time, 'voicing a sound which brings no sense'.[43] There is something unknowable and irresolvable at the core of Milton's hybrid Sin and Death: 'what thing thou art, thus double-formed'?

When Sin is tentatively deemed 'a sign Portentous' by the host of heaven, Milton draws our attention to the ways in which his allegorical actors are not only ontologically murky, but also maintain a necessary epistemological murkiness. The particular circumstances of Sin's birth and the wealth of detail she is afforded allow Milton to acknowledge the dangerous and irresolvable question of angelic sin without having to plainly present Lucifer's deciding moment. As the *OED* details, and as Patrick Hume noted, 'portentous' might mean ominous or threatening, 'boding some Mischief', but also signifies a perversity, or 'bad Consequence'.[44] This makes Sin both precede *and* succeed some evil event, or perhaps appear to be both the cause, and the consequent reflection of

[43] As John Leonard writes, the Sin/sign pun does not reveal Milton to be a proto post-structuralist, as some have argued, but 'marks…an unprecedented and disastrous move in Heaven's language from natural to conventional arbitration'. See Leonard, *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 167-9. See Quilligan (1983), 91-2 on Sin as simply representing the proliferation of signs.

[44] See Hume, *Annotations on Milton's Paradise Lost* (London, 1695), 84; *OED*, s.v. 'portentous'.

some choice.[45] She is, therefore, both seemingly agential, 'a goddess armed', and a 'sign'. The event in question is of course the precise moment in heaven in which Lucifer is '[i]n bold conspiracy against heaven's king' (2.751). As Colin Burrow reminds us, the fall of Lucifer is among the most mysterious events in biblical history; 'the Bible says that he fell, but does not tell how, or clearly relate why'.[46] Fallon notes that the epic narrator is silent for over a thousand lines—a tenth of the poem—when Adam asks Raphael to explain how sin might have arisen in heaven.[47] In *Paradise Lost* we are not told how the archangel came to choose to rebel. Instead,

> All on a sudden miserable pain
> Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
> In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
> Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
> Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
> Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed
> Out of thy head I sprung; amazement seized
> All the Host of heaven; back they recoiled afraid
> At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
> Portentous held me . . . (2.752-61)

This is a long way away from Adam and Eve's deliberation, Eve's debate with the satanic serpent, and Adam's resignation, before they freely taste. When in Book Five Lucifer/Satan claims to be 'self-begot, self-raised', Abdiel ends their argument with the words, 'I see thy fall | Determined' (5.860; 878-9). As Andrew Escobedo acutely observes, due to its passive construction, Abdiel's pronouncement can plausibly be read in two ways: 'you have now determined your fall', or 'your fall is determined', or compelled.[48] The birth of Sin at this moment produces something like the effect of Redcrosse killing Error or Guyon reviving once Pyrochles is slain. It is uncertain whether Redcrosse errs, or Guyon rages, through choice, through infection, or some combination of the two, just as Sin's spontaneous birth muddies the movement from Satan's thoughts to his

[45] Noel Sugimura, *Matter of Glorious Trial: Spiritual and Material Substance in Paradise Lost* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 73 notes that Sin points to both past and future in her discussion of Sin's ontology.
[46] Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 256.
[47] Fallon, 'Milton as Narrator in Paradise Lost', *The Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3-17, 12. Raphael's explanation—the promotion of the Son—is importantly never acknowledged by Satan himself. See also Annabel Patterson, 'Milton and the Problems of Evil: A Preemptive Modernism?', *Uncircumscribed Mind: Reading Milton Deeply*, eds. C. W. Durham and K. A. Pruitt (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2008), 25-44.
[48] Escobedo, 'Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels', *ELH* 75/4 (2008), 787-818, 796; 804. This essay argues that allegorical characters are both deeply compelled and radically free. The volitional realization of conceptual essence, despite the demands of a predetermined narrative, or other characters, or shifting circumstance, constitutes a type of agency that is different to the deliberative freedom associated with novelistic characters.

decision. In Escobedo's words, '[i]t is scarcely right to say that it is Satan who wills. Rather, volition happens to him'.[49]

The Hebrew word for sin, *pesha*, means rebellion, which might make her a symptom of his choice.[50] Yet as we've seen, Sin is a deliberately strange personification, seemingly endued with the capacity to reflect. In Book Two she tells that upon arrival in Hell, when given the key to its gate and charged to keep it forever shut, '[p]ensive here [she] sat | Alone' (2.777-8). What is she thinking about, before her son tears through her insides? Following this, upon Satan's request for passage, Sin remembers that she has been forbidden to unlock the gates, but asks, 'what owe I to his commands above | Who hates me?' (2.856-7). It is not made clear as to whether Satan's 'bold conspiracy' preceded, or coincided with his choice. Consequently, the painful birth of Sin may reflect his will, but equally may have forced his decision. Of course, we might observe that the simultaneity of exercising one's will, and being alienated from one's will, is precisely how Augustine describes the fallen condition. Even so, both the particular moment at which Sin is made to appear, and her deliberate conceptual ambivalence, render Satan's choice inexplicable and allow Milton to represent the delicate question of angelic sin, negotiating between the demands of free will and narrative necessity.[51]

A poem like *Paradise Lost,* however*,* cannot leave us with a fair and scaly Sin who is simply unexpectedly sympathetic, or admirable for her unknowing portrayal of thorny origins. Most importantly, Milton portrays her as an erroneous reader who mystifies her experience, and so obscures God as the author. In this light, although allegory is irreducible to mystification, Satan is made the author of mystical reading, or the failure to search and examine, but retreat into incomprehensible, sympathetic 'magical' explanation. Seth Lobis reminds us that the adjective 'attractive' is first heard from Sin's mouth; her 'attractive graces' won the most averse, Satan chiefly.[52] James Turner makes the reasonable argument that, when in Book Four, Eve is described

[49] Escobedo (2008)*,* 808.
[50] See Kenneth Knoespel, 'The Limits of Allegory', *Milton Studies* 22 (1986), 79-99, 82 on the Hebrew etymology. Kahn (1992), 189 suggests that Sin's generation glosses the self-regarding activity of the imagination.
[51] Patterson (2008) argues that Milton 'took refuge in allegory', which flattens the complexity of his representation. We should remember that Milton does have Satan admit, in his Niphates soliloquy, that he 'hadst…the same free will and power to stand' (4.66-7).
[52] Seth Lobis, *The Virtue of Sympathy: Magic, Philosophy and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 140.

as having 'sweet attractive grace', attraction is placed in a positive light, and human sexuality is shown to be 'poised on a scale between Satan and Adam, Sin and Eve'. Phrases such as 'enamoured' and 'dalliance' are restored to the Edenic couple.[53] And yet soon after, Eve is described as gazing 'with eyes | Of conjugal attraction unreproved'; the modifying 'unreproved' must reassure us that attraction is indeed repaired (4.493). This latent concern can be elaborated if we look closely at what 'attraction' might mean. Lobis tells us that the *OED* does not record instances of 'attraction' to mean 'the action of drawing forth interest, affection, or sympathy', until the middle of the eighteenth century; this is not quite so, but there are certainly fewer examples of this sense before 1750.[54] However, with the reference to Eve's eyes—conventionally described as possessed of magnetic, infecting power in (fallen) love poetry and philosophy—and Sin, it is likely that the word also carries a sense of enchantment, or magical influence.[55] To digress briefly, this sort of attraction lends weight to the possibility of Sin's compulsive influence upon Satan. It is probably the specter of this sense that necessitates the 'unreproved' in Book Four, as Milton reminds us that his scene of love is Innocent.

That this magical sense of attractiveness is applicable to Sin is made evident in her reappearance after the Fall:

> Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
> Wings growing, and Dominion given me large
> Beyond this Deep; whatever draws me on,
> Or sympathy, or some connatural force
> Powerful at greatest distance to unite
> With secret amity things of like kind
> By secretest conveyance. Thou my shade
> Inseparable must with me along:
> For Death from Sin no power can separate. (10.243-251)

Sin feels 'new strength' arise, which alerts us to her transformation; we are told repeatedly of their power ('their power was great', 10.284). 'Power' might refer to potential, but Sin and Death are 'now in body', made actual (10.587). Of course, this 'rise' is related to the newly fallen, newly sinning first couple, but 'the smell of mortal change on earth' lends the infernal 'goddess' and her 'shade' the startling capacity to build, with 'aggregated soil' and 'asphaltic slime', 'a bridge | Of

[53] James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 260.
[54] *OED*, s.v. 'attraction', 6b and 7a.
[55] See Lobis (2015), 141. He argues that Eve's charms take on a Circean quality, which I disagree with.

length prodigious' (10.293, 298, 302). As Fowler's edition notes, Sin's '[w]ings growing' corresponds to Adam and Eve who 'fancy that they feel | Divinity within them breeding wings', both of which travesty the 'brooding wings' of the creative 'spirit of God' (n.244, 9.1009-10, 7.235). Sin's interpretation of her power is, critically, mystifying.[56] She posits the vague 'whatever draws me on', made even more imprecise by the disjunctive 'or'. Perhaps Death and Sin are inseparable, but she does not dwell on who joins them.

The phrase 'secret amity' provides a clue, harking back to Adam's desire for fellowship in Book Eight: 'Man…requires | Collateral love, and dearest amity', he tells God (8.426). It is God who fulfills Adam's sympathetic desire, by making Eve from Adam and moving her to him. Yet on the edge of Chaos, Sin names Satan the 'Author and prime Architect' of their newfound influence, and his success the source of 'this new-felt attraction and instinct' (10.356, 263). As Satan looks with approval upon 'his fair | *Enchanting* daughter', the narrator discloses with a pun Sin's practice of reading with ambiguous magic, rather than with Spirit (10.353, emphasis added). Sin declares, 'My heart, which by a secret harmony | Still moves with thine, joined in connection sweet, | That thou on earth hath prospered…straight I felt…yet I felt…Such fatal consequence unites us three' (10.358-64). This evokes a parodic pagan trinity, but also appeals to something like Frazer's 'Law of Contact or Contagion' in his discussion of 'Sympathetic Magic': 'Things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed'.[57] Sin's inference of 'fatal consequence' refers not to fate as God's will, but some compulsive '[feeling]', thought to stem from her incestuous sex with Satan.

There are two significant problems with Sin's speech. First, as previously noted, she erases God as the Author. In addition, her description of the mysteriously binding 'secret harmony' leaves no room for free choice. It allows for 'virtue' only in the sense of a determining, magically operative influence, but does not permit the rational exercise of moral virtue. In this, Sin recalls another incarnation of Spenserian Error, which appears in the letter prefacing the second version of Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline*. Milton employs the 'Allegory' of custom:

[56] Lobis (2015) makes this point in his discussion of Milton's attitude to sympathy, 142-9.
[57] Lobis (2015), 147 cites Frazer as a potential source. See James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), I.3.i and also Bacon's account in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, eds. James Spedding et al., 14 vols. (London: Longmans, 1861-79), V:203-4.

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> Custome being but a meer face…rests not in her unaccomplishment, until by a secret inclination, shee accorporat her selfe with error, who being a blind and Serpentine body without a head, willingly accepts what he wants, and supplies what her incompleatnesse went seeking. Hence it is, that Error supports Custome, Custome count'nances Error. And these two betweene them would persecute and chase away all truth. (*CPW* II:223)

Error and Custom are said to cast 'obscurities…upon our mindes' by 'suttle insinuating' (II:224). This bad marriage is clearly present in Sin, who both uses and disseminates the obscurities of secret inclination and amity, thereby driving away the potential for truth and virtue. Sin arrives in Paradise 'to dwell | Habitual habitant' (10.588). The only use of 'habitual' in the poem emphasizes the staleness and spuriousness of thinking with Sin, who relishes the thought of '[infecting]' the thoughts, looks, words and actions of man (10.608). In this all-encompassing, leveling line of thought, Death can declare, 'Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven' (10.598). Gone is the delicate, unresolved hesitancy of Raphael's question, 'what if the earth | Be but the shadow of heaven', which also implies, 'what if not?' (5.574-5).

And yet, lest we get carried away by the growing dominion of Sin and grinning Death, or start to accept their talk of 'some connatural force', God provides the right reading. 'These dogs of hell', 'these wasteful furies', enter at his command (10.616; 620): they know not 'that I called and drew them thither | My hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth', shed by the sin of man (10.629-30). Escobedo argues that in this moment, they are 'reabsorbed into the moral-punitive fabric of the poem's ethical cosmos'.[58] This is true, but the cost of such absorption is the nasty shock of recognizing God as the author of the ravenous pair, whose previous allegoric representational sublimity had distanced them from Him. We might remember Bentley's concerned emendation in Book Two. When Belial asks, 'what if…from above should intermitted vengeance arm again | His red right hand to plague us?' (2.173-5), Bentley writes, '*for* his, *read* her', as if anxious to allegorize 'vengeance', and distance 'her' from God (Him).[59] Although Bentley is troubled with some frequency, his note implies that the use of allegory might help preserve the poem's theodicy. Sin and Death are deliberately difficult allegories, used to both sublime and comic effect. They daringly represent the question of angelic sin without answering it, expose a stagnant epistemology and

[58] Escobedo (2008), 810.
[59] Bentley, 9 (*PL* 2.174).

distance their violence from God until, in the midst of Book Ten, they are shown to realize His will. This is hefty work for a medium allegedly stripped of its vitality.

The figure of Sin, in particular, comprises a force, a curious richness of description and apparent capacity for reflection that usually only marks Spenser's titular knights. It is as if Milton endues evil with the liveliness that Spenser typically reserves for good. Passage through a House of Holiness, however excruciating, cannot shield us against the infection of Milton's Sin. *The Faerie Queene* only covertly suggests that the Redcrosse knight can still omit details, or lie about Duessa, even after his ritual cleansing. The fearsome energy of Milton's allegorical actors, who are associated with a mystifying epistemology, implies the persistence and vigour required of the practice of active virtue and interpretation in fallen life, if we are to battle them. Before we consider Adam and Eve in their pre- and postlapsarian states, and the relation of their ways of knowing to this infernal triad, we will briefly turn to the Garden of Eden in order to tease out the effects of its Spenserian inheritances.

III. Spenserian Roots in Milton's Paradise

Maureen Quilligan asserts that Eden presents the 'starkest of contrasts' between Spenserian and Miltonic poetics, because it eschews the dense 'interwoven plurality of possibility in [Spenser's] fallen world' for topography that expresses clear moral distinctions.[60] Andrew Wadoski, on the other hand, finds in the 'Edenic landscape of *Paradise Lost* and its Spenserian antecedents, a common vision of poetry's virtues as inseparable from individual experiences of roaming, wandering and freely interpreting', while Treip argues that the negative comparisons used to describe Milton's garden 'move towards' Spenserian allegory (4.268-85).[61] Milton's descriptive method, and particularly his description of Paradise, was attacked in the 1930s. The general thrust of the complaint, a miserable lack of sensuousness, would seem to suggest that Eden is quite remote

[60] Quilligan (1983), 77. See Andrew Mattison, *Milton's Uncertain Eden: Understanding Place in Paradise Lost* (New York: Routledge, 2007) for the opposite view that 'the figural force of the descriptions' of Eden, 'disrupt[s] the moral logic the poem superficially invokes' (2). Mattison's bewilderingly deconstructive approach ignores the poem's moral dimensions, as well as central theological concepts.
[61] Wadoski, 'Milton's Spenser: Eden and the Work of Poetry', *SEL* 55/1 (2015), 175-96, 176. Treip, 246. See Teskey, 'From Allegory to Dialectic: Imagining Error in Spenser and Milton', *PMLA* 101/1 (1986), 9-23 who argues instead for great difference between Miltonic and Spenserian error.

from Spenser.[62] The Eden of *The Faerie Queene*, however, is mentioned only twice, in Duessa's troublesome letter addressed to the 'most mighty king of *Eden'*, and at the very beginning of Book Two, when Archimago intuits that the Redcrosse knight has 'departed out of *Eden* lands' (I.xii.26.1; II.i.1.5). It is, therefore, to Spenser's other paradises, or seeming paradises, to which we must look. Quilligan overstates the case; of course Milton's garden is prelapsarian and Spenser's are fallen, but echoes and phrases from the latter interweave the former. Wadoski seems too inclined to sameness in generally characterizing the Edenic landscape with wandering. As we have seen, wandering first appears in suspicious contexts relating to Satan and the devils, in innocent contexts of riverine motion, in accusatory contexts after the Fall, and finally, in the regenerative context of the poem's close.[63] Furthermore, the divine prohibition clearly establishes limits in Eden. I do not, like Treip, find Milton's Paradise to be allegorical, but certainly deem the resemblances to Spenser's gardens worth thinking about.

Many critics have argued that we first see Paradise through Satan's eyes.[64] It seems more precise to say that we see it for the first time 'on occasion of Satan's entrance into it', but not as he does.[65] The language of the description is the language of the narrator. Paradise is bordered with 'hairy sides…grotesque and wild', remembering the *mons Veneris* of the garden of Adonis, where it stands 'right in the middest' (4.135-6; *FQ* III.vi.43).[66] In displacing the centre of Spenser's garden, and indeed Book Three, to the edge of his Eden, Milton suggests that the love of his human actors overgoes that of Spenser's mythic ones. As we ascend through 'loftiest shade', '[s]hade above shade', the narratorial description signals a shift in language (4.138; 141). These shades and shadows of Eden are not those of Death; they do not signify 'allegorical', or 'meager' in substance,

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[62] See *A Variorum Commentary on the Poems of John Milton*, gen. ed. P. J. Klemp, vol. ed. Cheryl H. Fresch (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2011), vol. 5, part 4: 87, esp. the comments from Eliot, F. R. Leavis and G. Wilson Knight. See 84-94 (on lines 4.205-87) for a summary of the history of critical perspectives on Milton's Eden.

[63] In addition to Satan's wandering quest', or the fallen angels 'in wandering mazes lost' (2.561), we hear of 'streams | Run diverse, wandering' (4.234), of Eve's 'wandering vanity' (10.875) and of the couple's 'wandering steps and slow' (12.648).

[64] See, for example, Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1935), 189-90, or Lewis (1942), 48. See also John R. Knott, 'Symbolic Landscape in *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies* 2 (1970), 37-58, 38. See *Variorum* vol. 5, part 4: 93-4 for a summary.

[65] Ferry, 51.

[66] 'Grotesque' might recall E. K.'s 'Epistle' before *The Shepheardes Calendar,* which tells that 'in most exquisite pictures they use to blaze and portraict not onely the daintie lineaments of beautye, but also rounde about it to shadow the rude thickets…'. See *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser,* ed. W. A. Oram (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 15. Fowler's note to 4.136-7 records this comparison.

but simply indicate the presence of sunlight and lofty trees. They form 'a woody theatre | Of stateliest view', which prepares us for the drama of the Fall, and looks back to Belpheobe's 'pleasant glade', made 'like a stately Theatre' (4.141-2; *FQ* III.v.39.5). Timias the squire is both healed *and* wounded in this space; this verbal echo reminds us that if we are determined to see Paradise and our first parents as already anticipating the wounds of the Fall, we must also work to discover anticipations of regeneration.[67] Wadoski observes that while Milton returns to innocent beginnings, Spenser's 'most redemptive garden—the Garden of Adonis—situates itself most avowedly in the post-Edenic world'.[68]

This is true, and yet there exist significant, and critically unnoticed, qualities that Milton appears to have borrowed from Spenser's Garden of Adonis. The first is its wildness. Were it not for the decay of wicked, scythe-wielding *Tyme*, its vegetation would grow unchecked. The 'stately Mount' comprises shady boughs 'neuer [lopped]' by 'sharp steele', nor cropped by beasts (*FQ* III.vi.43). The second is related to the arbour, made of the 'trees owne inclination', through which neither *Phoebus*' beams nor *Aeolus*' blasts might pierce. As discussed in chapter two, the pagan deities are banished here. In Milton's Eden, we first hear of 'universal Pan' leading on eternal Spring. Within the same book, however, in describing the first couple's 'blissful bower', we are told, '[i]n shadier bower | More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned, Pan or Silvanus never slept' (4.690; 705-7). As in the central arbour of the garden of Adonis, pagan and pastoral gods are dismissed, stripped of their power by the superior, animating spirit of either arbour or nuptial bower.[69] In naming it the 'blissful bower', Milton implies that his Paradise refashions Spenser's seeming Bower of Bliss, pretending at Innocence, and invests it with the redemptive spirit of the garden of Adonis. Yet in being unfallen, perfect (though not immutable), the first garden, it is greater than both; it absorbs and outdoes all of its literary predecessors and successors. Spenser's Bower 'pour[s] forth with plentifull dispence' and his Garden of Adonis bursts with 'wanton

[67] See Leonard's informative chapter on 'Innocence' in volume two of *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost*, *1667-1970*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), for a lively discussion of the central debates over life in Paradise. Diane K. McColley's *Milton's Eve* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 13 argues for 'hints and prolepses of regeneration', in addition to taints of Original Sin, in Milton's depiction of original righteousness.
[68] Wadoski (2015), 176.
[69] Critics who argue that the dance of Pan represents the intrusion of allegory, and leaves 'a crack in the description', somewhat miss the point. See, for example, J. B. Broadbent, 'Milton's Paradise', *Modern Philology* 51/3 (1954), 160-76, 170.

Pryme' (*FQ* II.xii.42.8; III.vi.42.4), but in Milton's Eden, Nature '[w]antoned as in her prime, and played at will…pouring forth more sweet…enormous bliss' (5.295-7). In Milton's Eden, 'here on earth | God hath dispensed' (5.330).

The echoes of Spenserian description occur too frequently, and are too suggestively situated, to be coincidental. The negative comparisons in the service of establishing Eden's superiority ('Not that fair field of Enna…') have an equivalent in stanza 52 of Spenser's Bower. Spenser's stanza suggests that the Bower is 'more sweet' than '*Eden* selfe, if ought with *Eden* mote compayre'; Milton returns that it is not. Chapter two observed the strange concatenation of 'sweet' and 'sweetness', combined with stillness, that pervades Acrasia's Bower in cantos five and twelve, and also fills Phaedria's isle. In Bower and isle, the sweetness results in a kind of stagnancy, making them escapist, illusorily immutable. In *Paradise Lost*, 'sweet' and its inflectional forms form an Edenic refrain, characterizing the garden, its scents, its sounds, the couple, their love and their labour. We come upon 'odorous sweets' (4.166), Eve's 'sweet attractive Grace' and 'sweet reluctant amorous delay' and their 'sweet gardening labour' (4.298, 311, 328). Adam declares that all 'with thee [Eve] were sweet' and Eve fittingly responds with the first prelapsarian serenade, woven with the *epanalepsis* of 'sweet', that nothing 'without thee [Adam] is sweet' (4.439, 641-656).[70] Eve presses 'dulcet creams' from 'sweet kernels'; angelic discourse is 'sweeter' than Eden's 'sweet repast', and marital bliss is sweeter still (8.211-16).[71] Eden's 'wilderness of sweets', love's '[p]erpetual fountain of domestic sweets' and angelic joy in 'communion sweet' are interconnected, partaking in a common quality (4.760; 5.294; 5.637). Excepting the three instances in Book Five included in Eve's discomposing dream, which carry a different sense, 'sweet' is sounded twenty-nine times between Books Four, Five and Eight. Sweetness seems to flow, as 'pleasure flowes' in the garden of Adonis (*FQ* III.vi.41.4); in infusing life and landscape, love and labour, it seems to take on the characteristics of spirit. 'How shall we breathe in other air?', Eve asks in horror as she hears of their banishment (11.284).

[70] See Revard, 'Eve and the Language of Love in *Paradise Lost*', *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, ed. Ken Hiltner (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008), 31-45 on Eve as the initiator of love lyric.
[71] See Quint, *Inside Paradise Lost: Reading the Designs of Milton's Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 181-3 on the use of 'sweet' in transforming 'the epic banquet into a Christian feast of love'.

Edenic vegetation is strongly evocative of Spenser's false paradises. Acrasia's garden contains fruit 'of burnisht gold', and others like rubies, and emeralds (*FQ* II.xii.54-55); Proserpina's garden in Mammon's den is 'loaden' with 'goodly golden fruit' (II.vii.53-55). Eden offers 'goodliest trees loaden' with fruits 'of golden hue…with gay enameled colours mixed', 'blooming ambrosial fruit | Of vegetable gold' and 'fruit burnished with golden rind' (4.148-9; 219-20; 249). The flowing gold of Eve's wanton ringlets participates in the garden's glistering allusions and indeed, in Book Nine, the serpent surges on 'with burnished neck of verdant gold' (9.501). The fruits would sound assuredly suspicious—especially to readers of Spenser—were we not reminded of their 'sovereign planter' (691). Against those who infer that the 'clandestine discrediting' of Adam, Eve and their home 'begins almost with the first lines which described them to us', I argue that it is made deliberately difficult, but necessary, to believe in the goodness of the couple and Edenic nature.[72] The fruits described are not those prohibited by divine Law, not in the words of *Areopagitica*, that 'provoking object' (*CPW* II: 527).

Milton famously suggested that the 'doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and evill' was 'knowing good by evill', that is of discerning correctly between 'two twins cleaving', which seem alike. The trial of 'the state of man now' is not to blindly assume a correspondence between corporeal and spiritual goodness, but to read and use corporeal forms rightly (II: 514). Spenser's poetry is replete with the wariness that excluding what is revealed by grace, we are apt to read wrongly, to wrongly make metaphysical conclusions. Indeed when Satan sits like a cormorant on the tree of life, he 'used only | For prospect, what well used had been the pledge | Of immortality'. 'So little knows | Any', we are told, in an echo of Spenserian caution, 'but God alone, to value right | The good before him' (4.196-203). One face of the doom we fall into is misguidedly reading 'good' for 'evil'. Yet in his description of Eden, Milton seems to suggest that the other danger is to only ever discover evil.[73] When we are told of Eden that He 'framed | All things to man's delightful

[72] See Davis P. Harding, *The Club of Hercules: Studies in the Classical Background of Paradise Lost* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), 81. Harding's conclusion is with reference to Adam and Eve, through demonstrating that the passion of Hera and Zeus on Mount Ida in the *Iliad* is alluded to in the love of the first couple at 4.497-501 ('as Jupiter | On Juno smiles') *and* in the lust of the first couple at 9.1037-45. Giamatti, *Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 321 n.24 agrees with Harding and further argues that fallen sex takes place in a bower that recalls (and so taints) the nuptial bower.

[73] Stanley Fish's *Surprised by Sin: the Reader in 'Paradise Lost'* (London: Macmillan, 1967) famously argues that the fallen reader is mired in fallen sense and so sees evil everywhere. As Leonard (2013), II:581 remarks,

use', we are asked to trust this declarative, which praises God, and Milton, for achieving that perfect combination of goodness, delight and use, that poetry aspires to (4.692).

Giamatti's study argues that the use of the language of craft—'wrought | Mosaic' and 'rich inlay | Broidered' (4.700-2)—'makes the Bower of Adam and Eve into a work of art'. This implied artifactual similarity with the Bower of Acrasia means '[s]ome damage has been done'.[74] But Giamatti misses the allusion to the arbour of Adonis—'in the thickest couert of that shade'—in 'Of thickest covert was inwoven shade' (*FQ* III.vi.44.1; 4.693). Combined with the banishment of pagan deities in both Spenser's arbour and Milton's bower, as we have observed, the language strongly suggests that Milton mixes and reforms *two* of Spenser's gardens to fashion his innocent nature. Spenser's arbour is made 'not by art', but of the 'trees owne inclination'. The verbs of artifice that Giamatti identifies are applied to flowers, enduing them with agency, or inclination. Like Spenser's arbour, the nuptial bower seems to rise out of the earth: Laurel and myrtle wove shade, acanthus '[f]enced up the verdant wall', irises, roses and jasmine 'wrought [m]osaic', and the violet 'broidered' the ground (4.694-702).[75] We intuited the theological sense of nature's 'inclination' in Spenser's garden of Adonis, particularly because we are told that the garden's lush growth 'of their owne accord…remember well the mightie word…That bad them to increase and multiply' (*FQ* III.vi.34). In *Paradise Lost* we are explicitly told that the spirit of the great Planter infuses all things, that all things 'tend', or incline, in varying degrees, to God (5.476).

This is the light in which we are invited to approach Milton's repeated allusions to Spenser's fallen paradises, particularly the Bower. The narrator affirms that neither 'gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles | Wanted' (4.337) between the first couple. Giamatti attentively notes that 'gentle purpose' is a Spenserian phrase, used in specific relation to the dalliances of False Florimell and Duessa (*FQ* III.viii.14; 'goodly purpose' I.ii.30).[76] When 'at table Eve | Ministered naked' with unsparing hand, crowning the flowing cups of Adam and their angelic visitor, she echoes the sensuous hospitality of Spenser's *Excesse* (5.443-4). While the dreaming Eve lies asleep in unquiet

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the easy riposte to Fish is, 'I didn't do that', but nevertheless Fish does helpfully contest those too apt to find the taint of sin in Innocence.

[74] Giamatti, 312.

[75] Ken Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 25-6 argues that the nuptial bower is a living planted house, emerging from place, rather than built of the place's resources.

[76] Giamatti, 318.

rest with 'tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek', Adam, 'with looks of cordial love | Hung over her enamoured' (5.10-13). This is surely a rewriting of Acrasia hanging over Verdant, her eyes fixed fast, 'greedily depasturing delight', and it is a particularly ingenious allusion (*FQ* II.xii.73). Adam is not an iniquitous sorceress, nor meant to symbolize or engender incontinence, but we might note that Eve, like Verdant, is undergoing some kind of troubling experience, the source of which we suspect to be Satan, but is left unconfirmed (4.801-9). While dreaming, she also thinks that the 'gentle voice' she hears is Adam's. Strangely both Adam in waking life and the voice in her dream begin by telling her to awake.

The fact that Spenser's knight Verdant has hung up his weapons and is lying asleep in a vegetative state is terribly inappropriate. His 'braue shield', once 'full of old moniments, | Was fowly ra'st, that none the signes might see', suggesting that the letter of his existence is being effaced (*FQ* II.xii.80.3-4). His face with 'downy heare' that '[d]id now but freshly spring, and silken blossoms beare', both expresses his name, and more menacingly, the idea that he is becoming a part of the bower's landscape as its mistress 'depastures', or grazes (II.xii.79.8-9). The opposite is true of Adam and Eve, who are afforded a positive and special relationship to their environment. As we have observed, the flowers in the nuptial bower play a unique part, inclining and growing in ways that deliberately frame the space and seem to sanctify the couple's activities. As Ruth McIntyre argues, flowers matter. They dramatize 'prelapsarian communion and community', as well as Milton's animist materialism, and articulate a yearning for 'an unmediated relationship with nature', which indexes the illimitable generosity of the divine spirit that suffuses creation.[77]

Nature's silent praise at sunrise is perhaps the best example: 'whenas sacred light began to dawn | In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed | their morning incense, when all things that breathe, | From the earth's great altar send up silent praise', the 'human pair' join 'their vocal worship to the choir | Of creatures wanting voice' (9.192-9).[78] The flowers of Eden movingly

[77] See Ruth Summar McIntyre, '"Flowers Worthy of Paradise": Milton and the Language of Flowers', *Milton Studies* 47 (2008), 145-67, 145-6. McIntyre rightly argues that Milton's floral expression signals more than his participation in the emblematic or pastoral traditions, as Allen and Martz have suggested. See D. C. Allen, *Image and Meaning: Metaphoric Traditions in Renaissance Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), 110 and Louis Martz, *The Paradise Within: Studies in Vaughn, Traherne and Milton* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 119.

[78] See Lobis (2015), 127 on the 'sympathetic connectedness' of Milton's universe. See also *FQ* VI.Proem.3-4 which describes the flower of courtesy that is 'planted in earth', but derived 'from heavenly seeds', and nursed with 'carefull labour'.

express the spiritual capacity of earthly matter, rising to its Creator, and enact Raphael's memorable monist materialist explanation, in the form of analogy, of 'one first matter all': '[s]o from the root | Springs lighter the green stalk…last the bright consummate flower | Spirits odorous breathes' (5.472-82).[79] Of course, the flowers then become '[m]ans nourishment', gradually sublimed into the soul (5.483-7). As Fallon observes, the plant begins as a metaphor for the scale of matter, but becomes a synecdoche for the process by which creatures might ascend. Although the flower is digested and sublimed into man, man too 'may at last turn all to spirit', sublimed, or in Fallon's words, 'digested' by the animate world.[80] In short, unlike Verdant, whose youthful, but unconscious vegetative appearance is represented as a gorgeous, but frightening reduction, the first couple experiences an extraordinary interanimation between themselves and the garden.

In the first iconic description of the pair, we are told of Adam's 'hyacinthine locks…Clustering', and of Eve's ringlets waving as 'the vine curls her tendrils' (4.301-7). The noun 'tendril', which evokes the threads of both plants and hair, emphasizes the sacred nature of this comparison. It looks forward to their morning's work in Book Five, in which they lead 'the vine to wed her elm', to twine 'her marriageable arms' about him, indicating the correspondence between the plants and themselves (5.216). Eve, in particular, has a special relationship to flowers. When first created, she wakes 'on flowers' (4.451), and later, works 'among her fruits and flowers…Her nursery' (8.44-6). They are not treated as either objects, or products, but as live beings, expressing divinity and deserving care.[81] Stopford Brooke brilliantly recognizes that Eve 'treats the flowers like children'.[82] In Book Four, 'the flowery roof | Showered roses' on the embracing, sleeping couple (4.772-3). The bard's hymn, 'Hail wedded love', makes it clear that their love is the ground of all future social relations; yet on this night, as the pair offer their prayer 'unanimous' and acknowledge 'mutual love, the crown of all [their] bliss', all of Paradise is drawn onto the plane of

[79] See Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth Century England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 102-7 on Milton's materialism as expressed in Raphael's lines. See Sugimura (2009), 47 on the strange and fleshly appearance of 'fruit', following 'spirits odorous'. *Contra* Fallon, Sugimura's argument is that 'it is an error to say that Milton believes in either monism or dualism. Milton's poetry does not present us with a question of either/or' (xvi).
[80] Fallon (1991), 105-6.
[81] See Hiltner (2003), 38-9 on Eve as the genius of the garden. See Lewalski, 'Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden', *New Essays on Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 86-117 on work in Eden. See also McColley (1983), 121-3 on how Milton represents prelapsarian labour more positively and seriously than his contemporaries.
[82] Stopford A. Brooke, *Milton* (London, 1879), 132; cited in Leonard (2013), II:546.

the lovers (4.728-36). The nightingales, the flowers, the earth rejoices. In Book Nine, '[v]eiled in a cloud of fragrance', stooping to upstay her floral children, Eve herself is the 'fairest unsupported flower, | From her best prop so far' (9.425-33). In Book One, even Satan speaks of God intending to create and 'plant | A generation' (1.652-3), making Paradise their nursery.[83] When Eve returns, flushed and newly fallen, Adam exclaims that she is 'deflowered', as the garland wreathed for her drops from his hands.

The language rings richly true; Eve has lost her intimate connection with the community of flowers. This is evidenced by the immediate confirmation that '[e]arth felt the wound', when she did pluck and eat, and Nature gave a 'second groan' when Adam tastes the fruit. (9.782; 1001). On learning that she must leave Paradise, she lovingly addresses 'thee native soil', and laments this 'unexpected stroke, worse than of death' (11.270; 268). In particular, she mourns 'flowers, | That never will in other climate grow…which [she] bred up with tender hand', and named (274-7). This sublime depiction of prelapsarian connectedness between the first couple and creation, so devastatingly lost, is unprecedented. Spenser's narrator tells that Amoret is brought to dwell in Venus' 'ioyous Paradize', the garden of Adonis (*FQ* III.vi.29.1). Towards the end of the canto, we discover that Psyche 'tendered' her with utmost care, and 'she to perfect ripenesse grew', before she is brought out into the world (III.vi.51-2). There is only the faintest of implications that Amoret is a flower, or fruit, of this fallen but fecund seminary and nursery. Spenser does not, as we have acknowledged in preceding chapters, represent his human characters as partaking in the vegetal 'inclination' of the mythic garden of Adonis. Milton overgoes Spenser in restoring this shared communion in the creative spirit to his human beings, before he must express its loss. He presents us with a Paradise that is worth the reparation signaled at the close, worth the quests, trials and toils of Faeryland.

[83] The relationship between the Edenic pair and Edenic plants undermines critical complaints of the early and mid-twentieth century that Adam and Eve were idle or bored, or that their 'gardening is not yet serious work'. Milton's representation considerably enlarges the notion of labour in imbuing it with love and care. See Tillyard (1951), 69. Tillyard, *Milton* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), 239, famously quips that the couple are 'Old Age Pensioners'.

IV. Accommodation in Paradise and *De Doctrina*

Before we turn properly to the first couple and the Fall, it is worth pausing over the association between Raphael's explanation of one first matter through the image of the flowering plant, and the flora of Eden. The simultaneity of the explanatory metaphor—or perhaps simile, 5.479: '*So* from'—and the corporeal presence of the flowers is more significant than has been previously realised. Against Edward Said's claim that 'language begins after the Fall', McIntyre asserts that Milton's treatment of flowers draws our attention to 'a language of presence', or of being, because it recalls a time 'when nature and humankind were not separate from the presence of…their creator'.[84] They do not merely signify the creator, but partake of His spirit. McIntyre's claim illuminates Fallon's acute observation regarding Raphael's comparison. The flowering plant begins as a simile, but *becomes a synecdoche*. That is, the image of the flower does not merely express a transcendent process that is separate from it; rather, the image itself is a part of that process. This movement from metaphoric to synecdochal signification is important because it plays out, in small, the radical shift in strategy in Milton's theory of scriptural accommodation.

Despite the great difference in the methods of biblical exegesis used by the early Church Fathers such as Augustine and Origen, to Reformation theologians such as Luther and Calvin, to Milton's contemporaries William Ames and Wollebius, the theory of accommodation suffered little change.[85] Scriptural accommodation was—and still is—understood to operate by expressing the incomprehensibility of God in terms that 'accommodate' him to human understanding. Consequently, it presupposes that language cannot truly describe God and that the resulting image is not a true representation of God. As such, as with normative or dualist allegory, the image must be substituted with a concept which could not otherwise be understood, making accommodation both a method of writing, and interpretation. Origen argued that the 'language of Scripture

[84] Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (London: Granta Books, 1997), 280; McIntyre, 147. See also McColley, 'Milton's Environmental Epic: Creature Kinship and the language of *Paradise Lost*', *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, ed. Karla Armbruster (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia), 57-73.

[85] I am indebted to Neil D. Graves's essay, 'Milton and the Theory of Accommodation', *Studies in Philology* 98/2 (2001), 251-72, which briefly traces the history of the theory of accommodation and maps out the ways in which Milton departs from this tradition. To summarize, Milton substitutes the usual metaphoric theory of accommodation with a synecdochal one, which asserts that the scriptural images of God embody the truth—but not the whole truth—of God himself. Rather than being symbols or metaphors for what cannot be expressed, biblical images are to be taken seriously as a part of what they seek to express.

regarding God is adopted to an anthropopathic point of view', comparable to when we ourselves, 'talking with very young children', adopt our speech 'to the weakness of our charge'.[86] Augustine agrees, and adds that it is essential to distinguish between the image, and what it connotes, in order to 'grasp this truth with our intellect'.[87] Calvin writes that God 'lisps' with us, to 'accommodate the knowledge of him to our slight capacity', and Luther states that when God reveals himself to humankind, it is 'necessary for Him to do so through some such veil or wrapper'.[88]

Since the eighteenth century, Milton's writing has been understood within the context of this generally homogenous tradition as critics from Addison to Patrides have attributed a traditional understanding and application of the theory to him, and many continue to do so.[89] In 1962, H. R. MacCallum's essay on Milton's biblical interpretation began to probe the ways in which Milton's 'doctrine is unusually daring'. In particular, MacCallum points out that Milton writes against theories of accommodation that require one to explain away anthropomorphic descriptions of God, and asks instead that we accept them.[90] Following MacCallum, more critics began to identify ways in which Milton's thought was singular, but Graves is the first to attempt to present a coherent picture of Milton's relevant (and not always consistent) pronouncements in *De Doctrina* as synecdochal, rather than metaphoric, in strategy.[91]

Milton's statements in the second chapter of *De Doctrina* are clearly founded in his insistence upon the clarity, simplicity and literality of the scriptures, which we have noted in previous sections: God teaches us 'not obscurely or confusedly, but simply and clearly, in plain words' (*CPW* VI: 287). Milton begins by stating the typical premises of the theory of accommodation: that God 'as he really is, is far beyond man's imagination, let alone his

[86] Origen, *Contra Celsum* (4.71) in the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*: *translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. Alexander Roberts, 25 vols. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867-72), 23:236.
[87] Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis,* tr. J. H. Taylor, 2 vols. (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 1:113 (4.8.15).
[88] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, tr. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (London: James Clarke, 1953), I:110 (1.13); Luther, *Lectures on Genesis* in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, 56 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1955–86), 1:15 (42.15).
[89] Graves, 255. See C. A. Patrides, '*Paradise Lost* and the Theory of Accommodation', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 5/1 (1963), 58-63 and *Milton and the Christian Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).
[90] H. R. MacCallum, 'Milton and Figurative Interpretation of the Bible', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 31/4 (1962), 397-415, 402-3. Augustine, for example, insists that 'we must first drive from our minds all anthropomorphic concepts that men might have'. See Augustine, *The Literal Meaning*, I:113 (4.8.15).
[91] See, for example, Shullenberger, 'Linguistic and Poetic Theory in Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*', *ELN* 19/3 (1982), 262-78; Marshall Grossman, 'Milton's Dialectical Visions', *Modern Philology* 82/1 (1984), 23-39, and Poole, *Milton and the Making of 'Paradise Lost'* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 93.

understanding', and that he 'has brought himself down to our level' (VI: 133). Humankind's narrow capacity and the deity's condescension – so far, so orthodox. In this very same passage, however, Milton unexpectedly asserts that '[i]t is safest for us to form an image of God in our minds which corresponds to his representation and description of himself in the scared writings' (VI: 133). This assertion is crucial, in that it expresses Milton's firm conviction that God authorizes his own presentation in the Scriptures. As Michael Lieb argues, 'Milton's hermeneutics is a hermeneutics of intentionality'.[92] It is with this belief in divine self-inscription that we approach Milton's unusual doctrine:

> [T]heologians do not need to employ anthropopathy, or the ascription of human feelings to God…We ought not to imagine that God would have said anything or caused anything to be written about himself unless he intended that it should be a part of our conception of him… If *he grieved in his heart* Gen. vi. 6, and if, similarly, *his soul was grieved*, Judges x. 16, let us believe that he did feel grief. For those states of mind which are good in a good man, and count as virtues, are holy in God. (VI: 134-5)

And even more astonishingly:

> [I]f *God is said to have created man in his won image, after his own likeness,* Gen. i. 26, and not only his mind but also his external appearance (unless the same words mean something different when they are used again in Gen. v. 3: *Adam begot his son after his own likeness, in his own image*), and if God attributes to himself again and again a human shape and form, why should we be afraid of assigning to him something he assigns to himself, provided that we believe that what is imperfect and weak in us is, when ascribed to God, utterly perfect and utterly beautiful?
>
> Let there be no question about it: they understand best what God is like who adjust their understanding to the word of God, for he has adjusted his word to our understanding, and has shown what kind of an idea of him he wishes us to have. (VI: 135-6)

In his chapter, 'Of God', and in the exemplary extracts above, Milton presents a theory with several radical innovations. He affirms that the description, or image of God, rather than the transcendent subject, is what we should focus on, thereby discarding Luther's model of the veil, or wrapper. According to Milton this sort of dualist hermeneutic would lead 'into vague subtleties of speculation' (VI: 134). As a result, Milton's theory of accommodation reduces the conventional gap between sign and signified by accepting the representation of God as true, but incomplete. In this light, Milton appears to suggest that the biblical image or description is not a metaphor, but a synecdoche.[93]

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[92] Lieb, 'Reading God: Milton and the Anthropopathetic Tradition', *Milton Studies* 25 (1989), 213-43, 224.
[93] A. D. Nuttall, *Overheard by God: Fiction and Prayer in Herbert, Milton, Dante and St. John* (London: Methuen, 1980), 100 suggested that a solution to the epistemological dilemma of requiring the scriptural

This is further supported by his discussion of the odd passage from Exodus, *you will see my back parts*, in the seventh chapter of *De Doctrina*. Milton argues,

> We cannot imagine light without some source of light, but we do not therefore think that a source of light is the same thing as light, or equal in excellence. Similarly, we do not consider that what are called *the back parts* of God in Exod. xxxiii, are, strictly speaking, God, yet we do not deny that they are eternal. (*CPW* VI: 312)

The passage makes clear that while the curious 'back parts' viewed by Moses are not, 'strictly speaking, God', they are also not merely a sign of God with no direct relation to their subject. Rather they are a faintly or fragmentarily perceived part of God's being, and are appropriately accorded the predicate, 'eternal'.[94] As a result, there exists a kind of reciprocity, or double accommodation, which does not characterize the metaphoric model: God has adjusted his incomprehensible reality so that he might be partially perceived by mortal minds, and the limited faculties of humankind are raised up to perceive rightly.

Following the insistence on the scriptural image as the locus of our understanding, and its synecdochal function, Milton goes on to seriously consider some form of divine materiality and to defend the possibility of divine passibility, as evidenced by the quotations above: why should we be afraid of assigning to him something he assigns to himself? The descriptions of God are not anthropomorphic, nor anthropopathetic, because we are made in His image, and not the other way around. Put briefly, Milton does not do away with accommodation, or deny that some kind of accommodation has taken place; he is in line with the theological tradition that God is described in such a way that is conceivable to us. However, the nature of the accommodation is, unlike the metaphoric strategy, to be *believed,* as a partial truth, which testifies to Milton's faith in scriptural literality.

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presentation of God to be both the picture that God wanted people to perceive, *and* symbolic, as opposed to real, might have been to define the '"accommodated picture" [as] a part but not the whole of the truth'. He concluded, however, that 'Milton does not clearly adopt it'.

[94] Graves, 262 cites this passage. This synecdochal mode of representation is what Coleridge would come to claim for his non-discursive, numinous 'symbol', pitted against his discursive and arbitrary conception of 'allegory'. It should be noted that the interpretive link between the theological theory of accommodation and the rhetorical figure of synecdoche is not absent from the writings of Milton's near contemporaries. However, when confronted with passages that present God as corporeal and/or passible, they tend to use accommodation as metaphoric divine condescension. See Calvin, *A Commentarie* (1578), 44 on synecdoche in relation to 'spiritual regeneration', or repairing the image of God in us. See also Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 79-82, 101-10.

Finally, we might remember why working out how to read God correctly was of utmost importance to Milton: '[f]or God in his goodness has revealed to us in ample quantity those things which we need to understand about him for our salvation' (VI: 136). We must be able to read the scriptural images of God aright in order to know him, and facilitate our spiritual regeneration, which is, in Calvin's words, 'nothing else' but a 'repairing' of the image of God in us that was razed by the fall of Adam.[95] Reading becomes repairing, and therefore, a kind of making. Milton's unique approach to scriptural figuration recalls the shifting strategies required to approach Spenser's 'continued allegory' which, as we have seen, is not usually best read through discarding the image and grasping a transcendent subject. More significantly, the idea that we might repair the ruins of our first parents by learning to read aright and so know God aright, thereby becoming ourselves better images of God, is a process that is obliquely indicated in the development of Spenser's Redcrosse knight, and Britomart, as we have seen in chapter three.

Returning to *Paradise Lost*, we can appreciate how Raphael's image of the flowering plant appears at first to be a simile for the ascent of the scale of nature, and is then revealed to be a synecdoche, or a part of that whole process. The living, thanksgiving presence of the flowers in Eden reiterates this synecdochal relationship. When, after the meal, Adam wishes to use the occasion of Raphael's visit to 'know | Of things above his world', we are told that 'sudden mind arose in Adam' (5.452-5). Raphael responds and when Adam desires to hear more, of warring spirits in particular, the angel explains,

> Yet for thy good
> This is dispensed, and what surmounts the reach
> Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
> By likening spiritual to corporeal forms
> As may express them best, though what if earth
> Be but the shadow of heav'n, and things therein
> Each to other like, more than on earth is thought? (5.570-76)

[95] Calvin, *A Commentarie* (1578), 44. In *Tetrachordon*, Milton writes that the 'Image of God…All which being lost in *Adam*, was recover'd with gain by the merits of Christ' (*CPW* VI:587). This suggests that to imitate Christ is to help repair the ruins of our selves and our world. See Bryan Adams Hampton, *Fleshly Tabernacles: Milton and the Incarnational Poetics of Revolutionary England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012) for an insightful account of how Milton's poetry seeks to help readers properly embody the Word, and so strive towards the divine through moral conduct. I part ways with Hampton's insistence that truly Incarnate reading stems from the habitual practice of the virtue of temperance as self-denial.

De Doctrina affirms that God lowers his word to our understanding and so too should we raise our understanding to his word. In the present example, sudden mind arises in Adam as he recognizes the privilege of Raphael's condescension to enter, and to eat food not of angels. Correspondingly, Raphael goes on to liken spiritual to corporeal forms, or to accommodate. While this does at first sound like a broadly metaphoric relation, the following, questioning clause—'what if' earth is more like heaven than on earth is thought—suggests that the delineation might be truer, more synecdochal, than we imagine. This point is made clearer by the fact that Adam has already been told that God 'created all', that all created things are made of one first matter and partake of his spirit in varying degrees. Lastly, we might note that Raphael explicitly states that his explanation is 'for thy good…dispensed'. It is this direct and honest communication between the first humans, and God and the angels, that will be lost in the Fall.

As observed in the first section, Adam rightly intuits that God's footsteps, guiding providence, will now be sought in creation with more difficulty (11.329). Even before the Fall, the first couple is mindful of the 'attempt…intended by [their] foe', mindful of his desire to work them into woe and shame (9.295).[96] This knowledge should, by extension, suggest that not all communication they enter into will be dispensed for their good. Yet Eve, in wonder at the serpent's capacity for speech and without experience of being lied to, is deceived. She was, however, sufficient to stand because in spite of any possible argument made by the serpent, she had the power to recognize the preeminence of the divine prohibition, or as Adam put it in Book Four, 'the only sign of our obedience left | Among so many signs of power and rule…One easy prohibition' (4.29-33). After the Fall, or as *Areopagitica* has it, in the state of man now, good and evil are 'as two twins cleaving together' (*CPW* II: 514).[97] We cannot assume that all our communications and encounters in the fallen world will be for our good. They are for our good insofar as they provide opportunities to try our virtue and to learn; but they can be used for good and for evil ends.

In a seldom glossed passage in *Areopagitica*, Milton writes, 'God therefore left him [Adam] free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein

[96] See Teskey, *The Poetry of John Milton* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2015) 437-8 on 'temptation' and its cognates 'intent' and 'attempt'.
[97] John S. Diekhoff, 'Eve, the Devil, and *Areopagitica*', *Modern Language Quarterly* 5/4 (1944), 429-34 addresses the issue of why Milton allows Eve, and later Satan, to paraphrase arguments from *Areopagitica* in the separation and temptation scenes, respectively. He highlights the phrase, 'as therefore the state of man now is', to argue that Eve uses an argument that applies to the fallen world in a prelapsarian context.

the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence' (II: 527). 'Provoking' is a strange choice of adjective. It does not mean 'provoking one to sin'; Milton states clearly in *De Doctrina* that 'God tempts no one in the sense of enticing or persuading him to sin' (VI: 338). It is instead a generative object, providing an occasion to love, and to obey, freely.[98] In Paradise, the first couple knows that they must not eat of the Tree of Knowledge, and knows that the punishment for transgression is death, but they do not know what death is. As Kahn points out, 'the partial obscurity' of the prohibition leads to a failure in cognition, which is recuperated in the 'recognition of the task of obedience to God's word'. This limit on knowledge is of ethical importance, the precondition of choice and virtue.[99] After the Fall, the obscurity of things, and restrictions on understanding, are greater, due to the change our spiritual vision suffers, the lack of direct communication with heavenly beings and the seeming similarity of good and evil. Our task of discernment and choosing is harder.

This might be compared to the idea of work before, and after, the Fall. In Eden, their gardening labour is serious, but 'sweet', made sweeter still by their reciprocal love (4.328). After the Fall, labour 'calls…with sweat imposed'; Adam's sentence is to eat bread in the sweat of his face and to till the ground in the world beyond the garden (10.205, 11.172, 260-2). McColley is right in arguing that the 'processes of prelapsarian and regenerate response to [divine] calling' are the same.[100] Martin writes in a similar vein that 'repairing the ruins of our first parents means resuming a process of accommodation interrupted, not instituted, by the Fall'. It is certainly necessary to remember that Milton's Eden never excluded 'the indeterminacy at the core of linguistic and ethical danger', just as it never excluded toil, yet we might also remember that he does differentiate between the state of man then, and now.[101] This discussion has shown how accommodation has emerged in the context of the perspicuity of the Scriptures, and in angelic explanation. The fallen world is thornier, more difficult to distinguish rightly and abounds in good and evil temptations (see *CPW* VI: 338). Milton's reference to the 'allegorick precepts of

[98] See W. Gardner Campbell, 'Temptation', *The Cambridge Companion to 'Paradise Lost'*, ed. Louis Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 164-78, 175 on the complexity of provocation for Milton.
[99] See Kahn (1992), 195-7 on prelapsarian prohibition as a sublime obstacle and the precondition of virtue. Kahn seems to identify no real difference between pre- and postlapsarian conditions.
[100] McColley (1983), 17.
[101] Martin (1998), 51.

beneficence' fetched out of 'the closet of nature' in the *Doctrine and Discipline*, and his implication in *Areopagitica* (and *A Maske*) that Spenser's continued, fallen allegory provides and demonstrates trials of virtue, seems to suggest that allegory, or living allegorically, is a means of reparation. This is, as I have maintained, not the application of a dualist formula, but the exercising our faculties to best listen to the inward spirit, to best discover the track divine, and so begin to repair the Paradise within.

V. Reason is but choosing: Love and the Fall

As we have observed, prelapsarian life is not without the need to interpret, and to choose rightly, despite there being a difference between the state of man then and now. More importantly, the task of understanding, interpreting and acting correctly is not consistently as straightforward in Eden as it seems in the example of Raphael's accommodating explanation. In order to analyse the failure of choice that led the first couple to Fall, particularly Adam, it is useful to first consider a moment of real triumph in Adam's judgment in Paradise. Following that, we will assess the kinds of difficulties his reason is met with, and then move on to the tragic events of Book Nine. John Leonard reminds us that the view that Book Nine is the heart of the epic only dates from the twentieth century.[102] It is remarkable that Edwin Greenlaw's 1917 essay, 'A Better Teacher than Aquinas', was instrumental in recuperating the ninth book in critical estimation, and in establishing the importance of Adam's fall and recognizing the role of passion within it. Greenlaw tends to explain away 'disobedience' as 'intemperance' and fails to account for Eve; I do not agree with several of his arguments regarding Spenser, Milton and Platonism.[103] Yet his critical breakthrough in highlighting the significance of the human Fall was enabled by attending to the fact of Milton's Spenserian influence. As we will see, the events of Book Nine are set in motion by a kind of bad reading and elision of choice that is related to the mystifying methods of Sin. In this way, allegory as mystification, which leads to disobedience, is clearly distinguished from the implied postlapsarian allegory as trial, which can lead to reparation. The first substitutes choice with compulsion, while the second acknowledges the need to choose, and choose well.

[102] Leonard (2013), II:601.
[103] See Greenlaw, 'A Better Teacher than Aquinas', *Studies in Philology* 14/2 (1917), 196-217.

In Book Eight, Adam, desiring to converse with Raphael still longer, relates his creation and first moments on earth as he remembers them. Strangely, he first sits 'pensive' on a shady bank, as Sin did on her arrival in Hell (8.287). He is soon led to the 'garden of bliss, [his] seat', by a divine apparition, as he discovers who he is, who God is, and what he might do and not do in Paradise. Following his intuitive naming of birds and beasts, fish and fowl, Adam addresses God: 'In solitude | What happiness, who can enjoy alone, | Or all enjoying, what contentment find?' (8.364-6). Adam suspects that his question is presumptuous, but we are told that the vision '[a]s with a smile more brightened', with approval. As Lewalski notes, God plays the role of a Socratic pedagogue in the dialogue that follows.[104] His apparent resistance to Adam's desire for a mate prompts the first man to discover the need for reciprocal human love and companionship to be complete, being neither beast nor God. Adam's discontent is astonishing, and courageous, given that he has just been born and just been introduced to his maker. God replies that the earth and air are filled with 'various living creatures', all at Adam's command to 'come and play' before him—a belief Milton acknowledges in *Tetrachordon* (II: 595)—and so directs him to '[f]ind pastime, and bear rule' in this large realm (8.370-5). But Adam persists. We were told that he understood the 'nature' of each bird and beast as he named them (8.353), and perhaps this understanding allowed him to properly distinguish between himself, Adam, and other creatures. As Turner has it, when Adam 'feels the "intelligible flame"…the relationship imagined by man and approved by God is described in egalitarian terms'[105]:

> Let not my words offend thee, heavenly power…
> Hast not thou made me here thy substitute,
> And these inferior far beneath me set?
> Among unequals what society
> Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
> Which must be mutual, in proportion due
> Given and received; …
> Of fellowship I speak
> Such as I seek, fit to participate
> All rational delight, wherein the brute
> Cannot be human consort; they rejoice
> Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
> So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined. (8.379-94)

[104] Lewalski (1985), 214.
[105] Turner (1987), 283.

God mischievously objects that He is happy, though 'alone | From all eternity' for he knows none 'second to [Himself] or like, equal much less' (8.406-7). This is a reasonable objection; given Adam's egalitarian premise, God should be unhappy. Yet Adam also recognizes the difference between God and himself, and humbly answers:

> Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
> Is no deficience found; not so is man,
> But in degree, the cause of his desire
> By conversation with his like to help,
> Or solace his defects. No need that thou
> Shouldst propagate, already infinite;
> And through all numbers absolute, though one;
> But man by number is to manifest
> His single imperfection, and beget
> Like of his like, his image multiplied
> In unity defective, which requires
> Collateral love, and dearest amity. (8.415-26)

God is delighted at Adam's self-knowledge. Adam's realization without being told that he is 'imperfect', or incomplete in himself, that he desires 'rational delight', or conversation with an equal 'human consort', and that he cannot propagate, or make children, without another, is far more strenuous a trial than naming the creatures of Paradise (c.f. 8.445-8). God reveals that it was his hope that Adam could exercise such judgment and assures him that He will bring 'thy fit help, thy other self, | Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire' (8.450-1). The fact that Adam's desire for fellowship is represented as neither peevish, nor errant, but wonderfully rational, is vital. Although *The Faerie Queene* presents many examples of fit and unfit love (Helena and Malbecco being a prime case of incompatibility), it does not present the wish for a partner as itself rational. Britomart, for example, is said to wonder about her future husband simply because that is what women her age are wont to do. It is only when Glauce witnesses Britomart's miserable lovesickness that she reassures the young woman after the fact: 'But this affection nothing straunge I find; | For who with reason can you aye reproue, | To loue the semblant pleasing most your mind'? (*FQ* III.ii.40.5-7). Of course, the image of Artegall pleases her mind *and* body; Glauce simply suggests that it would be unreasonable to reprove, or make a monster of true love.

Milton, more precisely, expresses in verse what he insisted upon in *Tetrachordon* (*CPW* II: 595); it is not good for man to be alone, and both Adam and God know this. Only God can be alone, and although he is said to be '[b]est with [himself] accompanied, '[seeking] not | Social

communication', we often find him being quite chatty. 'Collateral', emphatically beginning a line and ending a sentence, evokes both physical and metaphysical senses and suggests that Eve will be Adam's other self both as a part of him, and partner for him. Adam's need for 'dearest amity' recalls Sin's mysterious feeling of 'secret amity'; yet in this case it expresses his rational burning for a partner. The sympathy and love between the first couple, in which nature too has been seen to participate, is *reasonably* wished for, approved by God, and so privileged.[106]

Adam's arguments imply that a fitness and meeting of minds is essential to the idea of a couple becoming one flesh; in the language of the *Doctrine and Discipline,* it 'incorporates'. If there is no correspondence of the mind, Milton argues, instead of becoming one flesh, 'they will be rather two carkasses chain'd unnaturally together; or as it may happ'n, a living soule bound to a dead corps' (II: 326). The horrid allusion to the *Aeneid* gives us a perverse hermaphrodite, forcibly and unnaturally joined. That Adam and Eve form a kind of ideal androgyne, truly formed of one flesh, and more importantly, truly united in spirit and conjugal love—as the divorce tracts read Scripture as requiring—is shown in their peculiar, paradoxical state of solitary companionship. Milton's representation strives to reconcile autonomy and interdependence, singularity and mutuality. In the third book, the couple are seen by God in the happy garden, '[i]n blissful solitude' (3.69). In Book Four, they are described as being 'in happy nuptial league | Alone', although about them 'frisking played | All beasts of the earth' (4.339-41). Adam and Eve both refer to each other as their 'sole', whether partner, part or associate (4.411, 5.28, 9.227). Their love is the 'sole propriety' in Paradise (4.751). When Adam relates, '[t]o the nuptial bower | I led her blushing like the morn', the blush might belong to either or both (8.510-11). Memorably, the poem's closing lines portray them as 'hand in hand with wandering steps and slow, | Through Eden [taking] their solitary way' (12.649). The chill of cosmic loneliness is touched by their mutual singularity.

[106] There are critics who think that Adam did not receive another self in Eve, because they believe her to be less capable than him. Both Thomas Luxon and Douglas Trevor wryly suggest that God's promise implies 'a male gift for Adam', based on the literature of classical friendship that Milton draws on. In doing so, they do not consider the difference between proportion and identity. Moreover, these arguments are surprising given the clarity with which Milton rejects the 'crabbed opinion' of '*Austin* [who] contests that manly friendship…had bin a more becoming solace for *Adam*'. Milton insists upon a 'peculiar comfort in the maried state besides the genial bed' (*CPW* II:596). See Trevor, *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 186; Luxon, *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage, and Friendship* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 56-7, 110. See Turner (1987), 98-105 on Augustine's self-contradictions in the relevant passage in *De Genesi ad Litteram*. See Augustine, *The Literal Meaning* (1982), vol. II:75 (9.5): 'I do not see in what sense the woman was made as a helper for the man if not for the sake of bearing children'.

The fellowship Adam requests must be 'mutual', he says, 'in proportion due | Given and received'. On the one hand, these lines simply reiterate that the partners should be equals, on the other, they remind us that the union within marriage does not collapse into identity. 'Total they mix, union of pure with pure | Desiring', Raphael can say of angelic sex, but this kind of mixing, '[a]s flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul', is impossible for humans (8.627-9). This impossibility informs Milton's arguments in the divorce tracts that the 'likeness' and meeting of minds and dispositions might 'breed the Spirit of concord and union' between spouses (*CPW* II: 605). Yet as David Quint asserts in his discussion of proportionality in the poem, 'Milton's imagination also and equally balks at total spiritual union, "soul with soul" (8.629) with others, even if such union is the goal toward which human charity strives, whether in marital or communal form'. When describing the unanimity bred by Christian charity in *De Doctrina*, Milton uses the phrase 'quantum fieri potest', or 'so far as possible', which leaves open a space for individuality, 'and hence, freedom' (see VI: 748).[107] Instead of total mixture, there is 'proportion', which both bridges and protects the space for free choice. The compatibility of this union with the free use of reason is, as we will see, extremely important and not to be forgotten.

Despite reason playing a role in Adam's wish for a partner, *Paradise Lost* shows us that the experience of encountering one's other self is so powerfully 'transporting', that it threatens to bewilder one's reason. Consequently, the use of reason in love is not a complacent given; the compatibility of sympathy and reason requires *work*. This could be viewed as a complement to the gardening labour, which is infused with love. Milton conveys this through the momentous change in Adam when he first lays eyes on Eve. Watching, as under God's 'forming hands a creature grew':

> That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now
> Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
> And in her looks, which from that time infused
> Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
> And into all things from her air inspired
> The spirit of love and amorous delight. (8.470-77)

Eve is fashioned out of Adam's left side, from a rib, 'with cordial spirits warm, | And life-blood streaming fresh'; exegetes have long suggested that her creation, which stems from nearest the seat

[107] See Quint (2014), 185 and also the *CWM* 8, part 2: 1122 [MS 633b-34b].

of the passions, links her to the sensual realm.[108] I do not of course suggest that Adam represents reason, and Eve sense, but emphasize that Eve's beauty produces new effects in Adam, 'unfelt before'. The repetition of 'seemed' attests to his confusion, his inability to read her. His feelings are both corporeal and spiritual and are here in harmony, the spirit of love and amorous delight. Yet we soon discover, a mere fifty lines later, that Adam must work to maintain his composure and knowledge, of himself and Eve, when at the slightest touch or glance:

> transported I behold,
> Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
> Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
> Superior and unmoved, here only weak
> Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
> Or nature failed in me, and left some part
> Not proof enough such object to sustain,
> Or from my side subducting, took perhaps
> More than enough; at least on her bestowed
> Too much of ornament, in outward show
> Elaborate, of inward less exact.
> For well I understand in the prime end
> Of nature her the inferior, in the mind
> And inward faculties, which most excel,
> In outward also her resembling less
> His image who made both…
> yet when I approach
> her loveliness, so absolute she seems
> And in herself complete, so well to know
> Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
> Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
> All higher knowledge in her presence falls
> Degraded. (8.529-552)

Adam's admission of Eve's effect on him, to Raphael, sounds much more like the baffling, rapturous effect produced by the dazzlingly bright women of *The Faerie Queene*. Indeed, his initial rational request for a consort does not anticipate this. In that previous dialogue with God, Adam could clearly identify that God alone is self-containing and self-completing. Here, Eve's loveliness makes her seem 'in herself complete', and the inward faculty of reason, which enables judgment, appears to fail in her presence. Adam also anticipates the ugly postlapsarian scene in which he calls Eve, 'but a Rib | Crooked by nature, bent', in his dangerous suggestion that God didn't do the best job, by either leaving him with too little, or by making her too beautiful. Charis Charalampous has recently argued for a form of 'soft' dualism, or anthropological dualism, in *Paradise Lost*, rather

[108] See McColley (1983), 11-13 on the application of dualist allegory to Adam and Eve by some interpreters of Genesis, including Philo Judaeus, Ambrose, Augustine (although more cautiously), and Vives.

than the generally accepted monism. He identifies five stages in the poem, which correspond to different states in Milton's anthropology, arguing that it is more complicated than simply professing the inseparability of body and soul.[109] He points to this passage as a particular stage in his schema, suggesting that with the creation of Eve, soul and body are 'differentiated from one another in terms of their properties and powers'. Charalampous argues that the introduction of 'superior', 'inferior', 'inward' and 'outward', point to a new anthropological condition, and that Satan's attempts to 'reach | The organs of [Eve's] fancy' makes Adam's fear of a discord between higher knowledge and Eve's presence, or his reason and his passions, a reality (4.802).[110] Whether or not we might best conceive of Adam's condition as moving from holistic monism into harmonious dualism, and then discordant dualism, is not the main point, and beyond the scope of this chapter. But Charalampous is certainly right to point out, as others have done, that reason and the passions, and body and soul, are not one undifferentiated entity.[111] Returning to the passage, Adam admits that he understands the superiority of his mind and reason, but loses this knowledge in Eve's moving presence.

Raphael's response is rather stern. With contracted brow he warns Adam against accusing nature, and 'attributing overmuch to things | Less excellent' (8.565-6). In Neoplatonic fashion, he also thoroughly devalues the sense of touch, equating it with propagation, alike in man or beast.[112] Raphael explains that 'true love' has its seat in reason, rather than passion, and it is through this kind of love that one might ascend to heavenly love (8.588-92). Adam is brilliantly only 'half abashed', and returns that he is not 'foiled', but 'free [to] | Approve the best, and follow what [he] approve[s]', although he experiences various objects and attendant appetites and sensations (8.610-

[109] See Phillip J. Donnelly, '"Matter" versus Body: The Character of Milton's Monism', *Milton Quarterly* 33 (1999), 79-85 for the monist view.
[110] Charalampous, 'One Plus One in *Paradise Lost*', *Essays in Criticism* 68/3 (2018), 283-307, esp. 283-9. In his enthusiasm to define Satan's dream visitation as the next 'stage' in the progress into dualism, Charalampous claims that 'Satan seduces Eve's organic faculties', ignoring the important qualifiers 'assaying' and 'if', which crucially render the success of his endeavour uncertain (288). The language of that passage, 4.801-9, is dualistic in isolating organs of fancy and animal spirits from the soul as the target of Satan's operations, but this might simply cast dualism as Satanic.
[111] See, for example, Sugimura (2009), xvi and Rachel Trubowitz, 'Body Politics in "Paradise Lost"', *PMLA* 121 (2006), 388-404.
[112] Joe Moshenska, '"Transported Touch": The Sense of Feeling in Milton's Eden', *ELH* 79/1 (2012), 1-31 observes that Raphael's account 'gives voice to a recognizable moral tradition'. Moshenska argues that Milton's position is irreducible to Raphael's, and that the ways in which Adam and Eve 'interact with each other through touch becomes an expression of nothing more or less than the coherence and integration of their form of life' (3).

11). We might reasonably read this exchange as anticipating the context in which Adam falls; overwhelmed by passion for Eve, he joins her in disobedience and death. Many critics point to the spontaneity of Adam's decision with approval. Lewis predictably finds Adam's sin 'less ignoble' than Eve's and asserts that he falls by impulsive uxuriousness in choosing a lower over a higher good.[113] Waldock observes that Adam's fall is more instantaneous than Eve's, which is sequential. He praises Adam's passion as selfless and argues that Adam makes the *right* moral choice; if we cannot see this, despite Milton's protestations to the contrary, we 'abdicate far too many of our critical rights'.[114] While it is true that passion plays a part in Adam's fall, I would argue that Adam is represented as falling at least as far, if not further than Eve.[115] His fall is not selfless. Furthermore, the immediacy of his decision that Lewis and Waldock praise, contributes to the poorness—or rather, as we will see, pretended erasure—of his choice.

I pause over the temptation of Eve, particularly the serpent's use of language, and the shift in Eve's language, before we turn to Adam, in order to establish the resemblance between Satan's deceptive speech and Adam's self-deception. We are told that Eve is unsurprised by the serpent disporting before her, for she is used to the responsiveness of beasts, 'more duteous at her call, | Than at Circean call' (9.520-2). While this comparison is not meant to demean her, or suggest her sorcery, it does suggest that seeming and mysterious language, rather than discursive reasoning, will characterize this encounter. The serpent licks the ground she stands on before he speaks, alerting us to his fawning, glozing method. As J. M. Evans has sharply observed, Milton outdoes his predecessors in cunning by having his serpent claim to have gained the power of human speech by eating of the tree of knowledge: 'it is upon this proof of the tree's efficacy that he builds his most persuasive arguments for eating of it'.

Evans notes a single precedent in Joseph Beaumont's *Psyche*, but observes that while Beaumont's snake makes it clear from the start as to which tree he means, Milton's does not. Rather, the serpent cloudily refers to some 'goodly tree far distant' laden with 'fruit of fairest colours mixed', which sounds like every other tree in Paradise (9.576-7). This allows the temptation

[113] Lewis (1942), 122.
[114] Waldock, 49.
[115] See Teskey (2015), 462: 'Eve falls first, but Adam falls furthest'. Teskey argues that this inversion of ideological hierarchy 'calls the entire system into question' (263). They were, however, both created sufficient to have stood.

to begin in a mood of 'frustrated anticipation', as Eve realizes that the tree is forbidden to her only after she is led to it.[116] Satan echoes Spenser's Braggadochio (speaking to Belphoebe) as he asks Eve what such a beautiful, 'sovereign mistress' is doing here, '[i]n this enclosure wild, these beasts among', when she should be '[a] goddess among gods, adored and served | By angels numberless' (9.532, 547-8).[117] Belpheobe is a true queen, raised by Phoebe herself, and so of the woods she reigns in; Eve, too, as we have seen, has a special relationship to the grounds of Paradise, to the earth she dwells on and cares for. The difference is that Braggadochio is a bad reader, and Satan, a deceiving one.

The eating of the apple causes both Adam and Eve to 'scorn the earth' and the corporeal realm, which is a disastrous effect of the Fall (9.1011). When the serpent explains that on eating the fruit he felt the growth of reason within himself, and the power of speech, he claims to have turned his thoughts to 'speculations high or deep' (9.600-3). His appetite for speculations should remind us of the warnings of *De Doctrina*: only those who mysteriously abstract transcendent meanings from objects are given to the 'vague subtleties of speculation', and this is to be avoided. We are alerted to the serpent's hermeneutic, which also characterized the speech of Sin. Soon after praising Eve for her celestial beauty, and merely *comparing* her to a goddess, he begins to *refer* to her as 'Empress', 'Queen of this universe' and 'Goddess humane' (9.626, 684, 732). On arrival, Eve rightly informs him that this particular tree is 'fruitless' to her, because God commands that it is forbidden. Furthermore, Eve rightly distinguishes between this prohibition, which is the 'sole daughter of [God's] voice', or His Law, and 'the rest', which is the law of individual reason (9.648-54). She implicitly acknowledges that the use of reason, right or otherwise, does not apply to this tree. She is therefore, 'yet sinless', and sufficient to have stood (9.659). In response, Satan employs the same deceptive style of abstraction that characterized the movement from 'beauty' (attribute) to 'Goddess humane' (being). The object, which he had vaguely described as a goodly 'tree', and full of fruit, is now addressed thus:

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[116] J. M. Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 275-77.
[117] See *FQ* II.iii.39.1-5:
But what are thou, O Lady, which doest raunge
In this wilde forest, where no pleasure is,
And doest not it for ioyous court exchaunge,
Emongst thine equall peres, where happy blis
And all delight does raigne, much more then this?

O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant,
Mother of science, now I feel thy power
Within me clear, not only to discern
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deemed however wise. (9.679-83)

Satan not only perverts Milton's poetic aim of justifying the ways of God to men, but also parodies the work of postlapsarian reparation. It is not some magical herb that will allow us to trace the path of God, but as *De Doctrina* has it, attending to the indwelling Spirit, and has Michael has it, answerable deeds (12.582). The tree of the knowledge of good and ill is here idolized as some mystical Paracelsian plant with magical properties.[118] This false interpretive reification presents a new object, which no longer sounds anything like the originally prohibited tree. Where Spenser's Archimago had created a false, airy imitation of Una to provoke the Redcrosse knight to abandon her, and choose wrongly, Milton's Satan produces an illusory object through speech. Indeed Satan is allusively presented as the literary son, but historical father, of Spenser's enchanter when he is described as 'smoothed with outward calm, | Artificer of fraud; and was the first | That practiced falsehood under saintly show' (4.120-2).[119]

His mode of apostrophe cunningly evokes the 'plant' more convincingly than mere description would. The image of the 'plant' is finally accepted by Eve, before she plucks, '[h]ere grows the cure of all, this fruit divine…Of virtue to make wise' (9.776-7). Her language echoes the serpent's mystical sentiments and the irony is bleak; it will not cure, but curse with distemper and death. The devious serpentine speculations have produced the opposite of what God cautioned to be true. Similarly in attempting to dismantle the prohibition, Satan begins by speaking of 'God', only to replace him with 'gods'.[120] Alike is his treatment of death and evil, acknowledged only to be dismissed as unknown, or perhaps unreal.[121] In asking 'if what is evil | Be real, why not known,

[118] See Karen Edwards, *Milton and the Natural World*: *Science and Poetry in 'Paradise Lost'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 29-33: Eve as a 'budding natural philosopher' should have argued against Satan's form of knowledge. See Lobis (2015), 149 on the occultism of the Fall. See also Poole, *Milton and the Idea of the Fall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), on Paracelsianism and natural magic 68-76.
[119] Think of Archimago in the lowly hermitage, with 'tongue as smooth as glas', strewing *aves* and holy words (*FQ* I.i.34-5)
[120] See *PL* 9.692, 700, 701, 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, 718.
[121] See Patterson (2008), 40 on Satan's evasions regarding death and evil as ' more profound than simply disingenuous'. He himself only knows Death as the allegorical 'shape', and in proclaiming 'Evil be thou my good' (4.110), can only define evil in relation to God's goodness.

since easier shunned', Satan wrongly applies the arguments of *Areopagitica*, intended for postlapsarian life, to the prelapsarian state (9.698-9).

When the fallen Eve, flushed with distemper relates her actions to Adam, he is 'amazed | Astonied…blank' (9.889-90). His amazement recalls Eve's reaction to the speaking serpent, although hers is of wonder, and his, horror. His blankness uncomfortably recalls the 'blank', untried virtue of *Areopagitica*, and the slackness of his hand, from which the wreathed roses fall, prepares us for the slackness of his response. Adam is expectedly shaken. He exclaims, '[h]ow art thou lost, how on a sudden lost', and answers accurately, '[s]ome cursèd fraud | Or enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown' (9.900, 904-5). Yet in the very same breath, he comes to a startling conclusion:

> And me with thee hath ruined, for with thee
> Certain my resolution is to die;
> How can I live without thee, how forgo
> Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
> To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
> Should God create another Eve, and I
> Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
> Would never from my heart; no no, I feel
> The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
> bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe. (9.906-16)

Adam makes his choice in a mere two lines. He then goes on to repeat himself:

> However I with thee have fixed my lot,
> Certain to undergo like doom, if death
> Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
> So forcible within my heart I feel
> The bond of nature draw me to my own,
> My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
> Our state cannot be severed, we are one,
> One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself. (9.52-59)

Adam's repetitions, his faltering ('no no'), and his appeal to the 'link' and 'bond' of nature relate his process of reasoning—if it might be called that—to Sin's vague discussion of the 'connection sweet', 'secret harmony' and 'fatal consequence' that she 'feels' between herself, Death and Satan.

Adam is passionate, but does not appear to be overcome by passion so much as presenting his choice as already determined. The repetition of 'certain' adds to the air of necessity, and 'death is to me as life' sounds much like Satan's interpretive tactics. He does not choose wrongly in a fit of passion, but acts as if he cannot choose at all. If reason is but choosing, Adam removes reason from

this encounter. However sincere he is, he fails his trial by speaking as if there isn't one at all, a blank upon which doom has been written. Adam does not here uphold his assurance to Raphael, that he freely approves what is best. His language of feeling and linking implies that if he feels the bond to Eve, he must also feel the bond to God, the maker of them both. These two bonds are at odds, and therein lies the choice. Adam's reference to 'flesh' and 'bone', conspicuously missing 'one soul' (c.f. 8.499), reminds us that his choice does not reflect the correspondence of minds and resultant spirit of concord that characterizes a true marriage; his choice although moving, is discordant. The oneness he asserts here is mysticized, rather than rightly inferred. Lobis diagnoses Adam's method as that of a 'fleshly literalist', but it is more accurate to say that he abstracts the seeming certainty of his own fall, from Eve's fall, which is hardly a literal reading.[122]

Eve supplies the missing term, 'one heart, one soul', but her perspective is now fallen, which only confirms the infirmity of Adam's reading. In describing Adam's decision as a 'glorious trial of exceeding love', Eve ironically acknowledges his uxuriousness (excessive love), and proclaims a 'trial' that has not so much taken place as been avoided. Her words foreshadow Adam's incensed accusation, after he has fallen, that she sought to 'find | Matter of glorious trial' (9.1177). Eve affirms that they are 'linked in love so dear…one guilt, one crime, | If any be'. In doing so, she clearly echoes Sin's language of magical sympathy and Satan's method of abstracting false equivalencies. The flimsiness of Eve's logic in this climactic moment is cemented as we catch the allusion to the Song of the Rose in the Bower of Bliss: 'Gather the Rose of love, whilest yet is time, | Whilest louing thou mayst loued be with equall crime' (II.xii.75.8-9). The holy doctrine of 'one flesh' does not necessitate one crime, and we have witnessed two.

My discussion of these passages does not allow for a 'fortunate Fall', and might seem too unwilling to appreciate the poignancy of Adam's role: 'to incur | Divine displeasure for her sake, or death' (9.992-3).[123] Burrow argues that Adam 'falls for subtly regenerate reasons, reasons which grow from the main sources of what is good in the poem. God is on the brink of becoming one flesh with man; and it is from a sense of the practical consequences of being one flesh with Eve that

[122] Lobis (2015), 151.
[123] See, for example, Quint (2014), 1: 'The Fall is fortunate not only because it allows the Son of God to offer himself to save humanity, but because it already anticipates the supersession of the Law by the Love and Liberty the Son will bring about by his example'.

Adam falls'.[124] I am hesitant about 'a sense of the practical consequences of being one flesh', but fully believe that much of Adam's fall grows from what is good in the poem, for example, his capacity for 'commotion strange', his half-abashed reluctance to blindly accept Raphael's austere Neo-Platonic hierarchy.

Yet we are told, after Adam's first resolution, that he submits 'to what seemed remediless' (9.919). The 'seemed' is surely deliberate, an invitation to think on the possibility of a remedy. Lewis perceptively reminds us that Adam 'does no good by becoming [Eve's] accomplice'; he does not die for her, but with her.[125] Lewis is also the first to observe that 'seemed remediless' hints that a remedy might have been possible, but concludes that we are not told anything further because 'Milton does not know'.[126] Fifteen years later, Irene Samuel acutely observed that the Son's offer to die for humankind might be seen as analogous to Adam's offer to die with Eve: Adam himself 'recounts to Raphael in Book VIII what independent assertion of his mind and will to his maker had won for him. What his making a like assertion in like confidence might have won for fallen Eve we cannot know since he does not make it. But it is worth observing that tragedies stem from alternatives ignored as well as choices made'.[127] While Samuel does not cite the phrase 'seemed remediless' as textual evidence to legitimate her analogy, Fish pounces on it, and uses it to analyse Adam's motives, suggesting that it is meant also as a challenge to the poem's readers. Milton does not give us the alternative, but provokes us to think of one ourselves.[128] I suggest that we might be able to recognize Adam's fall as ill judged, even as we are touched by his love for Eve, and chilled by his horror at the possibility of being alone.

The first couple's, and more particularly, Eve's special relationship with the garden and its abundant growth is vital to our understanding of the Fall. Eve's dream in Book Five anticipates the nature of the temptation in Book Nine. The winged creature in her dream apostrophizes the 'fruit divine', able 'to make gods of men' (5.67, 70). He urges Eve to partake, insisting that this will make her a goddess, 'not to earth confined, | But sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes | Ascend to

[124] Burrow (1993), 283.
[125] See Helen Gardner, *A Reading of 'Paradise Lost'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 90 'It is a sophistication to say that he dies *for* her; he decides to die *with* her. His motive is not the desire to share her punishment, to make it lighter'.
[126] Lewis (1942), 123.
[127] Irene Samuel, 'The Dialogue in Heaven: a Reconsideration of *Paradise Lost*, III.1-417', *PMLA* 72 (1957), 601–11.
[128] Fish (1967), 263-70.

heaven'; he holds the fruit to her lips and she flies up to the clouds with him, 'and underneath beheld | The earth outstretched immense…wondering at [her] flight and change |To this high exaltation' (5.78-80, 86-90). Fowler's notes observe that the 'savoury' smell of the fruit wafts towards Eve in both temptation scenes, which leads him to conclude that the 'ungoverned appetite' is an immediate cause of sin.[129] This is plausible enough, but we might remember that in Book Nine, it is not only the fragrant smell that wakes Eve's appetite, but the coming of noon, which also sees a hungry Raphael in Book Five. Secondly, it would be reductive to see the success of the temptation as a result of the sensual effects of the fruit; it is, crucially, the temptation to transcendence that takes centre stage. Rather than the possibility of the gradual ascent to heaven and airy form outlined by Raphael, Eve is tempted into a shortcut to empyreal life.

This is the delusion that captures the first couple when they are first fallen. They 'fancy that they feel | Divinity within them breeding wings | Wherewith to scorn the earth', the groaning, wounded earth that feels their sinful rejection (9.1009-11). It is only after Adam and Eve repair to the place where God judged them, and repent with 'sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek', that they return to the earth, with 'tears | Watering the ground' (10.1102-4). They soon discover that they cannot abide in Paradise, and are filled with anguish, 'unexpected stroke, worse than of death' (11.268). Eve now addresses their 'native soil…Fit haunt of gods', in a tender recognition of what will be lost (11.270-1). Put differently, Milton's representation of the Fall and its aftermath shows that Eve initiates it as she pulls *away* from the earth and the bodily realm. Consequently, Milton seems to suggest, as Spenser shows in *The Faerie Queene*, that reparation, or the attempt to counterbalance Original Sin cannot be through exclusively privileging the spiritual; this is what is seen to lead to Original Sin in the first place.[130]

At the poem's close, things look different, suggestive of the trials to come. As we observed in the first section, Michael perceives Adam's 'mortal sight to fail' (12.9). When the cherubim descend, 'gliding meteéorous', they appear for the first time as 'dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms', as if testifying to the change in sight of our first parents (12.628-9, 644). Adam finds Eve

[129] See Fowler, n.5.84-5 and n.9.739-40.
[130] See Hiltner (2003), 47 on Eve's connection to the earth, and the process of being 'duped by a dualistic theologian in devil's clothing'. See also, McColley, 'Eve's Dream', *Milton Studies* 12 (1978), 25-45 on 'the temptation to transcendence'.

awake in the bower, fully informed by a dream advised by God. Her declaration, '[i]n me there is no delay', recalls the 'sweet reluctant amorous delay' on our first glimpse of her, indicating the new demands of fallen existence (12.615, 4.311). She continues, 'with thee to go | Is to stay here; without thee here to stay, | Is to go hence unwilling' (12.615-617). Eve's loving words echo her serenade of Book Four, and they also strangely echo Satan's observation in his pained exclamation on seeing Adam and Eve, '[s]ight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two | Imparadised in one another's arms | The happier Eden' (4.505-7). This is a rare moment in which Satan expresses truth, rather than the hollow persuasions of a deceptive rhetorician. He is fallen, and he sees that Eden is not simply the land that they inhabit, but a condition they sustain through their reciprocal love. Eve in this moment is no longer sad, but willing, and aware of how they might repair to 'Eden'. A few lines earlier, Michael had reassured Adam that he will not be loath to leave this Paradise if, with answerable deeds, governed by charity, he might 'possess | A paradise within…happier far' (12.585-7).

In brief, repairing the ruins of the Fall is not presented as being easy. As Kevis Goodman remarks, 'Milton is distrustful of purely restitutive labor, of the impulse that says, "There has been a fall—let us work to repair it"'.[131] As we have seen with regards to Milton's interpretive methods, there is no readily applicable formula. The return to Paradise cannot be reduced to rebuilding in a new place. Indeed the impulse to rebuild appears in terribly suspicious contexts in *Paradise Lost*. In the first book, Satan frighteningly states that if God's Providence seeks to bring forth good out of the fallen angels' evil, '[o]ur labour must be to pervert that end' (1.164). Satan is a perverse labourer, but it does not therefore follow that labour is satanic. The building of Pandemonium is accomplished 'in an hour', which alerts us to its lack of spiritual worth, especially when compared to the life of trial and spirit of charity necessary to sustain that paradise within, or the endless work of *The Faerie Queene* (1.699).

At the devil's consult, Mammon claims that 'great things of small…[w]e can create…[t]hrough labour and endurance' (2.258-62). Adam sounds remarkably similar when he replies to Michael's long relation of history to come: 'Henceforth I learn…by small |

[131] Kevis Goodman, '"Wasted Labor"? Milton's Eve, the Poet's Work, and the Challenge of Sympathy', *ELH* 64/2 (1997), 415-46, 426.

Accomplishing great things' (12.561-7). But while Adam is speaking of obedience to, and love of, God, Mammon is counseling to seek '[o]ur own good from ourselves, and from our own | Live to ourselves' (2.253-4). The implied absolute division between the fallen angels ('ourselves') and God indicates that true reparation is here impossible. Michael's advice, to add faith, virtue, patience, temperance and love—which will come to be known as charity, 'the soul of all the rest'—to our knowledge, is an instruction of sorts, but it's specificities must be discovered and worked out, or transformed into answerable deeds, as we strive to live our fallen lives. The quest to repair is no more a doubling back to lost Paradise, than Redcrosse's quest is a journey to Cleopolis, or New Jerusalem, or Britomart's is a ride to wherever Artegall is.

Milton's preference for 'the upright heart and pure', before all temples, does not describe a heart that is free from the need for support, or labour, to sustain it. It is, as his great poem displays, prone to uncertainties, to precariousness, to too easily extracting metaphysical assurance from physical forms, or privileging the spiritual at the cost of the corporeal. The fallen world and condition that our first parents walk into is Spenserian in the thorny trials of choice it will entail. This is the continued allegory of postlapsarian life, neither mystifying, nor dualistic, but a continual working through the fallen world and all that it might mean, aspiring to charity without dismissing our own corporeality, or the corporeality we encounter. Perhaps this is why the poem's moving last lines, 'they hand in hand with wandering steps and slow, through Eden took their solitary way', remember the fallen first parents of faery kind. Spenser's *Elfe*, 'wandring through the world with wearie feet' finds *Fay* in the gardens of Adonis, and from them spring the faery people (*FQ* II.x.71). Before the Fall, Adam is 'taught to live, | The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts | To interrupt the sweet of life', nor 'wandering thoughts', which only produce anxieties (8.182-7). After the Fall, the first couple take wandering steps together, recalling both Satan's wandering quest and Spenser's wandering knights. Wandering through our world is the continued allegory of trial, without which, both poets seem to suggest, we will not be able to repair the ruins of the first disobedience.

Conclusion

In exploring what I have described as a 'poetics of corporeality', this thesis has attempted to approach Spenserian allegory from outside the critical paradigm of capture, or fixity. Rather than isolating moments of ordinariness, or pleasure, I have endeavoured to show in Spenser's avowedly fallen, but hesitantly and hopefully reformative poetic, a more widespread and deeper concern with care and community, with, in the words of Robert Frost, what to make of a diminished thing. The world of *The Faerie Queene* is insistently one of limits: limits to the relative success of a quest, limits to a character's awareness or ability, limits to the explanatory power of its many fictions. Even its narrator—often allowed more awareness than the characters—must frequently rely on rumour and uncertain report to support his assertions. The most powerful temptation its knights encounter is the temptation to rest, illusory forms of respite, and the poem's last and 'vnperfit' canto closes with a prayer for true rest. In this, it expresses a profound sympathy for its inhabitants, and for its readers, as if acknowledging the weight of its demands. I hope, in the course of this thesis, to have drawn out ways in which truly 'effective instruction', or the poem's provocation to learn and practice right reading, is not always reducible to abstraction as 'a kind of punishment'.[1]

The second part of this thesis turned to examples of Milton's early and late poetic works—*A Maske* and *Paradise Lost*—in conversation with much of his prose. In attempting to trace a new possible link between the poets, and illuminate another aspect of what might have been meant by Dryden's report of Milton's acknowledgment of Spenser, I hope to have shown how Spenserian investment in corporeal poetics influenced Milton's practice, at least in part. In particular, I focused on the implication that ideal forms of virtue in the Ludlow masque are but human defenses against the trials of worldly matter. In addition, this thesis more broadly demonstrates that the mode of dealing directly with our embodiment, and our embeddedness in the corporeal world that Spenserian allegory demands, is crucial to Milton's continuing project that seeks to 'repair the ruines of our first parents'. Finally, in distinguishing Spenserian allegory from 'normative' or dualist allegory, this thesis contributes to wider debates about Milton's relationship to allegory. While most readers see him as avoiding, or belittling, this rhetorical and hermeneutic form, I hope

[1] Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 215.

to have shown a newly suggestive consonance between Spenser's representations of the knights' increase in signifying power, and Milton's unusual participatory, or synecdochal, understanding of accommodation, and of repairing the ruined, inward image of God.

By way of conclusion, I am aware that the nature of the relationship I have traced between Spenser and Milton is at odds with alternative models that concentrate on the question of violence, and the very different attitudes to corporeal life that it implies. This thesis has not, for example, attended to many episodes of *The Faerie Queene*'s fifth book, and more specifically, to Talus. As Tullia Giersberg writes, 'Book V is infinitely more disturbing' in its recurring implication that to 'defend the "Common-weale" is to privilege the raison d'etat over the dictates of the individual conscience, even to destroy human beings in order to uphold an ideal or abstract version of humanity'.[2] Talus, 'made of yron mould, | Immoueable, resistlesse, without end', is what Angus Fletcher describes as a 'perfect allegorical agent' in his mechanistic behaviour (V.i.12).[3] The relentless movement of his iron flail renders his singular moment of inwardness rather frightening. When Talus delivers the news of Artegall's capture to Britomart, she asks where he is. The iron man is oddly silent in response: 'albe he wanted sence | And sorrowes feeling, yet with conscience | Of his ill newes, did inly chill and quake, | And stood still mute' (V.vi.9.4-7). The unexpected description recognizes its contradictoriness; he lacks feeling, and yet seems to 'inly chill and quake'. As chapter three has shown, Britomart's realization of the circumstances of Artegall's capture is a distressing moment indeed, and the possible coincidence of her and our feelings with those of Talus, is disquieting. At all other times—including his horrific mass slaughter of the Amazons—Talus is not recognizably human. Existing solely to 'execute [the] stedfast doome' of the goddess Irena, Talus suggests that the absconding goddess might only manifest as violence in the mutable world.

Cynthia Nazarian has recently remarked that violence—the 'ruthless policies of death dealing'—is the fundamental difficulty of Spenserian scholarship. In her view, reading Spenser along ethical lines occludes the political and formal stakes of violence in his poetry. Consequently, Nazarian's *Faerie Queene* consistently features pedagogical adventures which foreground a process

[2] Giersberg, '"The art of mightie words, that men can charme": Language, Reason, and Humanity in *The Faerie Queene*', *Spenser Studies* 30 (2015), 57-75, 70.
[3] Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), 55.

of overcoming 'vain pity' and moving towards 'something like invulnerability', or the progress from sympathy to allegory. While her readings of the inverse relationship between sympathy and justice in Book Five are insightful, there is something chilling in the insistence that the poem's capacity to signify must be restricted to the brutal production of order and meaning, as if it becomes the Tantalus to our Guyon. In arguing that the 'violence Teskey locates at the heart of allegory goes well beyond literary figuration' in having 'widespread implications' for politics and human rights, Nazarian nods to the material efficacy of Spenser's poetics.[4] Yet as I hope to have shown, its engagement with human fallenness and frustration, its reconstitutive aspirations, and its sensible claims on readers are far more creative and complex than mere reformatory, imperial violence. To think about *The Faerie Queene* as wholly subordinating fellow feeling to the needs of governance is to neglect the complexity of the poem as a whole.[5]

In emphasizing violence, one could draw an entirely different kind of literary relation between Spenser and Milton. In her essay against the automatic critical 'coupling' of 'Spenser-and-Milton', Annabel Patterson warns that such acts of canonization, particularly self-canonization, are not to be trusted. She points, for example, to Wordsworth's selective resurrection of a literary dynasty in *The Prelude*'s third book, which includes a laughing Chaucer, a sweet Spenser, and an 'awful', but improbably 'bounding' Milton.[6] Patterson is similarly 'skeptical' about Milton's error in describing Guyon's journey in *Areopagitica*, and argues that the broadly Christian Humanist, ethical and philosophical bond between the two poets needs to be reevaluated. Against the claims of the 'sage and serious' couple, Patterson asserts that a 'radical and reformist' couple is more verifiably true. She points to the two references to *A View* in Milton's commonplace book, the invocation of Talus in *Eikonoclastes*, the reproduction of a bloody Spenserian stanza (from the

[4] Cynthia Nazarian, 'Sympathy Wounds, Rivers of Blood: The Politics of Fellow Feeling in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and *A View of the State of Ireland*', *Modern Philology* 133/1 (2016), 331-52, 331-2, 335, 344, 351.
[5] See Namratha Rao, 'Fearful Symmetry in Spenser's *Muiopotmos*', forthcoming in *Essays in Criticism* 69/2 (2019) on the ways in which this curious small poem—published at roughly the same time as the 1590 *FQ*—rejects strategies with which to stomach slaughter and stall sympathy, and closes instead with a painful demand for care.
[6] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850*, eds. Jonathan Wordsworth et al. (New York: Norton, 1979), III.278-295. Patterson, 'Couples, Canons, and the Uncouth: Spenser-and-Milton in Educational Theory', *Critical Inquiry* 16/4 (1990), 773-93, 775-6.

British Chronicles of Book Two) in *The History of Britain*, and the copying of the 'Maye' eclogue from *The Shepheardes Calender* in *Animadversions*.[7]

These allusions are hardly sweet and temperate, but 'predominantly political, polemical, and full of hostilities…between [both poets] and their mutual opponents'. They emphasize Spenser as a 'harsh exponent of the problems in Ireland…of the need for drastic reforms in the Elizabethan church' and of 'the *lex talionis*'. Yet Patterson does not acknowledge the narrowness of her 'evidence'; she does not attend to the more subtle and wide-ranging use of echo, allusion, and more sophisticated forms of literary reflection. Accordingly, she suggests that the 'Christian Humanists' (in the tradition of Sirluck) have 'distorted' the structure of influence between Spenser and Milton, and argues that Milton's Spenser is more accurately thought of as 'an avatar for change and rough justice' (perhaps in the tradition of Norbrook).[8] Patterson is certainly right to insist that this is another link forged between the two poets, but her separation of the 'temperate' Spenser from the rough and 'radical' Spenser in Milton's use of him is not always accurate, and she doesn't at all acknowledge the importance of the *canon caritatis* to either.

A quick look at Milton's brief epic will demonstrate the connections between temperance and violence. In *Paradise Regained*, Jesus finds his temperance tested as he is subject to Satan's presentations of false transcendence. Against Belial's suggestion, Satan sees that Jesus will not be confounded by beauty, in the manner of Samson, or even Adam. Satan is quite right, but when he asserts that 'beauty stands | In the admiration only of weak minds | Led captive', there is a deflationary sense that this conclusion cannot fully account for the wonder of Adam's transportation at Eve's touch in *Paradise Lost* (*PR* 2.220-3). Satan suggests instead that 'manlier objects' will more effectively test the Son's constancy (2.225). In his emphasis on 'objects', Satanic reading invokes Augustine's differentiation of 'cupidity' from 'charity', or the soul's motion towards enjoying one's self, one's neighbour or any corporeal thing *for itself*, rather than for the sake of God. Satan thus seeks to tempt Jesus to read badly, or wrongly attribute value, and so disrupt his participation in divine will. The Son's exegesis, however, is defined by privileging the inner kingdom and exercising temperance as self-denial. Satan appears to Jesus disguised as a rustic—

[7] See *CPW* 1:465, 496; III:390; V part 1:20; I:722-3.
[8] Patterson (1990), 781, 784.

like Comus—and as a courtier, bearing banquets, arms, wealth and power, but in each case the Son is 'unmoved' by his appeals (4.109); he consistently 'temperately [replies]', that each offer might be 'plausible to the world, [but] to me worth naught' (2.378, 3.393).

The concluding lines of *A Maske*, we recall, counters its structure of comic resolution by reiterating unresolved choice in its presentation of virtue:

> Love Virtue, she alone is free,
> She can teach ye how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime;
> Or if Virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her. (1017-22)

Virtue, personified, is either puissant or weak, and is destined to rise to heaven either through climbing herself, or with divine aid. The relation between the virtue of the human creature and divine transcendence has yet to be worked out. In *Paradise Regained*, such uncertainties are subdued by faith, and virtue appears to precede or even remove the need for instruction, as interpretation is utterly shaped by ontology. Replying 'sagely' to Satan's offer of earthly learning, the Son explains, 'who reads | Incessantly, and to his reading brings not | A spirit and judgment equal or superior, | (And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek) | Uncertain and unsettled still remains…' (4.285, 322-6). Satan's response at this point—having failed on several counts—is both frustrated and fundamental: 'What dost thou in this world?' (4.372). In this poem, earthly goods, pleasure, knowledge and action are but temptations to false transcendence, to be rejected. The Son's 'sage' response recalls Milton's 'sage and serious' Spenser, and in particular, Guyon's brand of self-restraint, which as we have seen, brings with it an iconoclastic violence. Although Milton rewrites Guyon's aggressive response in his Lady of *A Maske*, the Son of *Paradise Regained* alludes to the link between temperance, virtuous violence and the charity of the eternal kingdom: 'when my season comes to sit | On David's throne, it shall be like a tree | Spreading and overshadowing all the earth, | Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash | All monarchies besides throughout the world' (4.147-150). The Miltonic 'Or' makes stone and tree two sides of the same coin. The brief epic ends as Jesus 'home to his mother's house private returned', emphasizing his kenotic withdrawal from the world and a different version of the paradise within (4.639).

While this 'perfect man, by merit called' the Son of God, may voice some of Milton's later reflections on the claims of erotic love and corporeal fulfillment, they are not necessarily his best.[9] As Kevis Goodman observes, in *A Maske* and *Samson Agonistes*, erotic relations (figured in Comus and Dalila) must be renounced. In *Paradise Regained*, the temptation of erotic sympathy is deemed too weak to be deployed, and the invitation to relate to Satan—'The Son of God I also am, or was | And if I was, I am; relation stands' (*PR* 4.518-19)—must be rejected 'if the Son is to stand'.[10] The success of earthly denial in *Paradise Regained* leads to an oddly flat reappraisal of Milton's Eve; she is merely Adam's 'facile consort' (*PR* 1.51). Yet in *Paradise Lost*, not only does Eve crucially initiate the repairing of erotic sympathy and love, she also expresses something like the Son's offer of self-sacrifice in heaven, which as chapter five shows, Adam fails to do. In Book Ten, Eve, suppliant and weeping, begs an 'immovable' Adam to let there be peace between them. She seeks with her cries to 'importune Heaven, that all | The sentence from thy head removed may light | On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe, | Me me only just object of his ire' (10.933-38). This scene succeeds Adam's turn away from Eve, as he names her false and hateful, but a crooked rib. Eve's resolve to move Adam, to stir him from his desolation, is as Goodman notes, Eve's assumption of responsibility.[11]

There is something of Una drawing Redcrosse out of despair, complicated of course, by the differences in guilt. If Adam, like Christ, were to remain 'unmoved' here, the effect would be disastrous. Furthermore, although the Son of *Paradise Regained* rejects poetry—among forms of earthly learning—Eve's desire to move Adam associates her, in Sidneyan terms, with particularly poetic power. Her dramatic offer to take all punishment ('On me…me me') echoes the Son in Book Three: 'Behold me then, me for him…on me let thine anger fall' (3.236-7). Having turned away, Adam's heart relents 'towards her', specifically touched by her sensuous particularity: her felt distress, her position at his feet, her fairness (10.940-4). His capacity for 'commotion strange' in relation to Eve—though in other things 'superior and unmoved'—is critical to his recognition that

[9] Bryan Adams Hampton disagrees, and argues that the Son's model of temperance is Milton's ideal, to be incarnated by believers, in keeping with his 'perfectionist' theology of virtue. See *Fleshly Tabernacles: Milton and the Incarnational Poetics of Revolutionary England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 210-23.
[10] Kevis Goodman, '"Wasted Labor"? Milton's Eve, the Poet's Work, and the Challenge of Sympathy', *ELH* 64/2 (1997), 415-46, 436.
[11] *Ibid*., 431. See also Leah Whittington, *Renaissance Suppliants: Poetry, Antiquity, Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 176-86 on the Homeric structure of Eve's petition and Adam's response.

they must jointly ‘strive | In offices of love’ to begin to repair the ruins of their lapse (8.531-2, 10.959-60). In this instance, the labour of restitution is not solitary, but collaborative, and unlike the Son’s retreat to ‘house private’, the two walk, hand in hand, *into* the fallen world. If Milton offers his second Adam—and the exegesis of self and worldly denial—as a model for perfectionist imitation in human life, he equally, and more powerfully, recognizes the significance of human love and worldly engagement in his first parents.

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