

COURTSHIP AND COURTLINESS
STUDIES IN
ELIZABETHAN COURTLY LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

Catherine Bates,
Balliol College.

Michaelmas Term, 1988.

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ABSTRACT

In its current sense, *courting* means 'wooing'; but its original meaning was 'residing at court'. The amorous sense of the word developed from a purely social sense in most major European languages around the turn of the sixteenth century, a time when, according to some historians, Western states were gradually moving toward the genesis of absolutism and the establishment of courts as symbols and agents of centralised monarchical power. This study examines the shift in meaning of the words *courtship* and *court*, seeking the origins of courtship in court society, with particular reference to the court and literature of the Elizabethan period.

Chapter 1 charts the traditional association between courts and love, first in the historiography of 'courtly love', and then in historical and sociological accounts of court society. Recent studies have questioned the quasi-Marxist notion that the amorous practices of the court and the 'bourgeois' ideals of harmonious, fruitful marriage were antithetical, and this thesis examines whether the development of 'romantic love' has a courtly as well as a bourgeois provenance. Chapter 2 conducts a lexical study of the semantic change of the verb *to court* in French, Italian, and English, with an extended synchronic analysis of the word in Elizabethan literature. Chapter 3 goes on to diversify the functional classification required by semantic analysis and considers the implications of courtship as a social, literary and rhetorical act in the works of Lyly and Sidney. It considers the 'humanist' dilemma of a language that was aimed primarily at seduction, and suggests that, in the largely discursive mode of the courtly *questione d'amore*, courtship could be condoned as a verbalisation of love, and a postponement of the satisfaction of desire. Chapter 4 then moves away from the distinction between humanist and courtly concerns, to examine the practice of courtship at the court of Elizabeth I. It focuses on allegorical representations of Desire in courtly pageants, and suggests that the ambiguities inherent in the 'legitimised' Desire of Elizabethan shows exemplify the situation of poets and courtiers who found themselves at the court of a female sovereign. In chapter 5 discussions of the equivocation inveterate to courtly texts leads to a study of *The Faerie Queene*, and specifically to Spenser's presentation of courtship and courtly society in the imperialist themes of Book II and their apparent subversion in Book VI. The study concludes with a brief appraisal of Spenser's *Amoretti* as a model for the kind of courtship that has been under review.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i.
Abbreviations	iii.
Foreword	v.
Chapter 1. Courtship and Courtliness	1.
Chapter 2. 'Courtship' and 'To Court'	71.
Chapter 3. "Courtly Courtesies": The Humanist Dilemma	155.
Chapter 4. "Vertuous Desire": Courtship at Court	231.
Chapter 5. Spenser: Prince of Poets, Poet of Princes	317.
Afterword	370.
Bibliography	374.

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Dictionaries consulted and other abbreviations:

- Alcover, *Diccionari Català-Valencià-Balear*, Antoni Alcover (Mallorca; 1930-1962) 10 vols.
- Alonso, *Diccionario Medieval Español*, Martin Alonso, (Salamanca; 1986) 2 vols.
- Battaglia, *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, Salvatore Battaglia (Torino; 1961-)
- Bloch and Wartburg, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Française*, Oscar Bloch and Walther von Wartburg (Presses Universitaires, Paris; 1932, 5th ed. 1968).
- CSP, *Calendar of State Papers*.
- du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, Domino du Cange (Didot, Paris; 1840-1850) 7 vols.
- EETS [ES], *Early English Text Society [extra series]*.
- Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'Ancienne Langue Française et tous ses dialectes du IX^e au XV^e siècle*, Frédéric Godefroy (Vieweg, Paris; 1883) 10 vols.
- HMC, *Historical Manuscripts Commission*.
- Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française du Seizième Siècle*, Edmund Huguet (Champion, Paris; 1925-1967) 7 vols.
- Larousse, *Grand Larousse de la Langue Française* (Larousse, Paris; 1971-1978) 6 vols.
- Littre, *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française*, E. Littré (Hachette, Paris; 1889) 4 vols.
- LP, *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*.

MED,

The Middle English Dictionary, ed. Hans Kurath
(University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor; 1956-)

MSC,

Malone Society Collections, ed. E. K. Chambers and
W. W. Greg.

OED,

The Oxford English Dictionary, ed. James A. H.
Murray et al. (Clarendon, Oxford; 1888-1927) 24
vols.

OLD,

The Oxford Latin Dictionary (Clarendon, Oxford;
1968-1982) 2 vols.

PMLA,

*Publications of the Modern Language Association of
America.*

TDMS,

Tentative Dictionary of Medieval Spanish, R. S.
Boggs, Lloyd Kasten, Hayward Keniston, and H. B.
Richardson (University of North Carolina, Chapel
Hill; 1946)

FOREWORD

The language we use for love-making changes all the time. To *make love* no longer means what it did fifty years ago, and *courtship* is now something of an anachronism, the formal act of wooing prior to marriage, or the witty prologue to a dull play, as Congreve put it.⁽¹⁾ But it is an earlier change in the meaning of this word that I wish to consider, and in particular, why the word for the residence of a prince, the court, should come to have anything to do with love. *Courting* and *courtship* used to mean being at court or behaving as a courtier. At some stage they adapted themselves to what we would generally understand them today, as elements in the formal procedure of wooing.

A glance at the dictionaries confirms this. Acting the courtier came to mean acting the lover not just in English but in all major European languages, and not randomly but at more or less the same time, the turn of the sixteenth century. This is a period which some historians have designated as marking the beginning of a great development toward nation states, a period in which the centralised court, as an agent and symbol of power, came to dominate the political scene. But while this might go far toward explaining a shift in court-related words, it fails to illuminate *courtship's* particular shift in meaning to the art of love.

1. Congreve, *The Old Bachelor*, V.i.387-388.

An analysis of the change in meaning in various European languages goes some way toward revealing this. The original social denomination of courtship - being at court - shared a common semantic ground with the secondary amorous denomination - love-making. Both were rhetorical procedures. Being at court implied a more serious function, controversially defined by Ottaviano Fregoso in Book IV of Castiglione's *Courtier* as being advisor to the prince. Offering such counsel, however, was recognised as being a delicate, often hazardous task, and one that required the utmost tact. It was a similarity of sense that enabled *courting* to be applied to wooing. Both senses had in common the tortuous rhetorical strategy of persuasion, which is what courtship was and, however old-fashioned now, still is.

So far the connection seems a simple one and one might ask why it should be singled out for attention. Social historians have long been interested in the implications of transforming a political language into an amorous one. The association between sex and power, though problematic, has also been regarded as axiomatic. But this study proposes a more specific inquiry, seeking a common ground where the social and amatory semantic fields of courtship overlap. The court of Elizabeth I is a case in point, for there the two fields almost physically conjoined. Acting the courtier and advising the prince automatically assumed amorous connotations when that prince was a woman, while

Elizabeth and her courtiers both exploited her self-made sexual myth. One need not labour the point. The semantic change was not entirely owing to Elizabeth's gender, for, as we shall see, it occurred elsewhere quite independently. But in the Elizabethan court it allowed courtiers and court writers a unique opportunity to exploit and examine the implications of a politicised language of love and an eroticised language of politics.

Courtship therefore becomes an intriguing rhetorical model. Both procedures, political advice and wooing, are seen to be fraught with difficulty. Both depend for their effectiveness on the appearance of sincerity, but neither can detach themselves from that whipping-boy, dissimulation. Capable of handling delicate situations, the language of love could be condoned if not sanctioned in a courtly environment,

For it of honor and all vertue is
The roote, and brings forth glorious flowres of
fame,
That crowne true louers with immortall blis,
The meed of them that loue, and do not liue
amisse. (2)

This language not only gave courtiers a means of getting their way. More importantly, for the purposes of this study, it allowed court writers to elevate love - as a subject worthy of inquiry and debate; and as a style, evaluative, strategic, tactical, that was, like the

2. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, IV.Pro.2.

"whisp'ring note" of the courtier, just as complex and subtle as the science of politics.(3)

The study falls into two parts. The first two chapters chart the origins of courtship in court society, tracing associations between the two first in the historiography of courtly love, and then in historical and sociological surveys of court society. It goes on to examine lexical evidence for the semantic change of the verb to court and related words, in French, Italian and English, considering its two senses - the social (to frequent the court) and the amorous (to make love) - and their areas of overlap.

The second part takes a different turn. The remaining three chapters consider courtship as a social, political, and literary act, diversifying the somewhat functional classification required by semantic analysis. They take as their starting point the conflict between courtship and the moral and teleological ideals of humanist rhetoric. Focusing first on the work of Ascham, Lyly, and Sidney, this section suggests that courtship might be condoned not as a language aimed at sexual favour, but as a postponing measure, as a symptom of the general *mis en discours* of sex identified elsewhere by Michel Foucault. The study then proceeds to a more specific inquiry, and examines the practice of courtship at the court of Elizabeth I, focusing

3. Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, First Eclogues.

on allegorical representations of Desire in courtly pageants and shows.

It is the aim of these two chapters to consider little-known or uncanonical texts. The same cannot be said of the final section, which explores Books II and VI of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. It develops motifs of courtship and courtly utterance within the poem, to consider how they exemplify broader themes of power-relations necessitated by a court society. It is hoped, therefore, that this chapter will provide not only a culmination to, but also a model of the study as a whole.

CHAPTER ONE

COURTSHIP and COURTLINESS

Between carrots and onions, I opt for a salad of both. Between secluded and narrow monodisciplinarianism and dilettantish and superficial multidisciplinarianism, I propose, for the study of the European courts, an interdisciplinary approach.(1)

Introduction

In its current sense the word *courtship* implies an affective and emotional commitment between two people with the particular end of marriage in view. The original meaning of the word, however, was quite different. It denoted the behaviour befitting those who belonged to a prince's residence or retinue, the court. The semantic development of the word came effectively to equate the behavioural peculiarities of court life with love-making: it therefore says something about courts and something about love. Moreover, the lexical development can be dated. The original and dominantly *social* sense of the word gave way to the specialised *amatory* sense around the sixteenth century. It should be emphasised that this lexical development was not a random occurrence. Together with the

1. William Melczer, "The War of the Carrots and the Onions or Concentration versus Dispersion: The Methodology of Interdisciplinary Studies Applied to the European Courts", in *The Expansion and Transformations of Courtly Literature*, ed. Nathaniel B. Smith and Joseph T. Snow (University of Georgia Press, Athens; 1980) pp.207-226, this quotation pp.210-211.

verb to court and gerund courting, it appears recurrently and consistently in Elizabethan literature. It is, moreover, by no means confined to English. The same semantic shift took place in all major European languages and at more or less the same time, forming the French verb *courtiser* in the fifteenth century, the Italian *corteggiare*, Hispanic languages *cortejar*, and German *hofieren* in the sixteenth. In almost all those languages under consideration, the specialised amatory sense of the transitive verb developed from an intransitive with a purely social designation, meaning simply to reside in or frequent the court. The simultaneous shift in application to the arts of love implies that, for whatever reasons, acting the courtier came to mean the same as acting the lover across Europe around the turn of the sixteenth century.

To say that such an element mysteriously and spontaneously 'appeared' in English and other European languages immediately risks anachronism. Semantic change is notoriously difficult to quantify and the evidence of literary texts, to which this study will largely confine itself, is open to interpretative variation. The subsequent chapter aims to make good these reservations, however, and to marshal the evidence for the semantic change. The present introduction explores the traditional association of courts and love and seeks to examine the relation between the two.

One should begin, perhaps, by saying that *courtship* is not the oldest word for love-making. It usurped the medieval word for wooing that in all Romance languages had its root in the name for the lady, the *donna*: *domneirer* in Provençal, *donoier* in French, *donneare* in Italian, and *doñear* in the Hispanic languages.(2) That *domneirer* is one of the oldest forms of the verb can be seen from the troubadours, where it is the commonest and most important verb for love-making. There are innumerable examples of the verb among the works of the troubadours but the following few may serve:

Joves se te, quan li plai *domneyar*
Et es joves, quan ben l'aman juglar.

Per vielh lo tenc, quan no-l plai *domneyar*
E vielh, si pot guandir ses baratar. (3)

Laig torn' en ufanaria
Dompneiar ist cornudel,
Mantenon la drudaria
E il tol' e l vesto l capel. (4)

2. Godefroy defines *donoier*: "faire la cour aux dames". His earliest example dates from the twelfth century *chanson de geste*, *Garin le Loheren*, ll.7383-7385:

Qui dont veïst Begon les renz cerchier
Et a l'espee guenchir et repairier,
Cui il ataint n'a soing de *dosnoier*.

in *Garin le Loheren* According to Manuscript A, ed. Josephine Vallerie (Michigan University Press, Ann Arbor; 1947) p.288. Battaglia defines Italian *donnear*: "conversare galantemente con donne; fare la corte". The verb was current from the thirteenth century. TDMS defines Spanish *doñear*: "pretender, cortejar, galantear".

3. Bertran de Born, song xxxviii, "Belh m'es quan vey camjar lo senhoratge", ll.31-32, 39-40, in *L'Amour et La Guerre: L'Oeuvre de Bertran de Born*, ed. Gérard Gouiran (Université de Provence, Aix en Provence; 1985) 2 vols. ii.752, 754.

4. Marcabru, song xlii, "Quan l'aura doussana bufa", ll.29-32, in *Poésies Complètes du Troubadour Marcabru*, ed. J. M. L. Dejeanne (Privat, Toulouse; 1909) p.206.

Chavalers si'aunitz
 Que s met en domneiar,
 Pos que tocha dels mas molts belans
 Ni que rauba gleizas ni viandans! (5)

The verb was similarly popular in the other Romance languages. One should stress its importance because it was the chief Romance verb for love-making before any of the court-related words became current. The common root is *donna*, the lady, the beloved, the object of the lover's attentions. It is she who dictates the rhetoric of his wooing.(6) The verb which Chrétien de Troyes, Dante or Petrarch, the great exponents of 'courtly love', used for love-making derived exclusively from, and was solely directed at the lady, the *donna*.(7) Not one of them uses *corteggiare* or its equivalents.

It could be argued that *donna*, from the Latin *domina*, conferred a degree of rank and was therefore a social title much like the court-related words. This consideration will

5. Giraut de Bornelh, song lxxv, "Per solatz revelhar", ll.27-30, in *Sämtliche Lieder des trobadors Giraut de Bornelh*, ed. Adolf Kolsen (Niemeyer, Halle a.S.; 1910) 2 vols. i.414.

6. One might compare the common noun for courtship and gallantry: Provençal *drudarie*, French *druerie*, Hispanic languages *drudaria*, Italian *druderia*, and Middle English *druery*, which derived from the word of Germanic root meaning lover: Provençal *druz*, French *dru*, Spanish *drudo* and Italian *drudo*.

7. See, for example, Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Enide*, ll.2433-2435: "N'avoit mes soing de tornoier: / a sa fame volt dosnoier, / si an fist s'amie et sa drue", in *Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes I. Erec et Enide*, gen. ed. Mario Roques (Champion, Paris; 1952) pp.74-75. See also Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, xxvii.88-90: "La mente innamorata, che donnea / con la mia donna sempre, di ridure / ad essa li occhi più che mai ardea", in *La Divina Commedia*, ed. Natalino Sapegno (Ricciardi, Milano; 1957) p.1116.

be examined further below, but the lady's traditionally elevated status counted only in part toward the poet's rapture, for she was also superlative in every other respect. A gradual shift in western political history from the fifteenth century changed this. *Domneirer* and its equivalents became obsolete and the institution of the court took over the vocabulary of love. *Courting* was a behavioural phenomenon. It denoted a performance, a complex interplay of accepted gesture and formality. The lady moved from the centre of affection and definition to a more peripheral place, a place from which she was the occasion, even justification for the essentially narcissistic behaviour of the lover. As a result the *donna* lost something of her idolised centrality. It is interesting that the new *courtship* produced no name for a court lady that was not pejorative. Castiglione, Ariosto and Spenser still resorted to *donne* and *dames* to avoid the meretricious connotations of *courtesan*.

i. Courtly Love?

This introduction examines the association between love and the court, and takes as its starting point the convenient but perhaps discredited term 'courtly love'. Gaston Paris first coined the phrase *amour courtois* in 1883 to describe Lancelot's submissive and adoring love for

Guinevere in Chrétien de Troyes' *Conte de la Charrette*.⁽⁸⁾ L. F. Mott's English translation - 'courtly love' - lost much of the ambiguity of Paris' definition, since *courtois* can as easily be rendered *courteous* as *courtly*, and this simplification has largely contributed to a growing unease with the term among scholars in recent years.⁽⁹⁾ In 1953 Father Denomy questioned the historical validity of the phrase on the basis that it virtually never appeared among the troubadour lyrics it was supposed to epitomise. *Amor* and *cortezia* are consistently associated with each other in these lyrics, but only once is the adjective *cortes* used to qualify love.⁽¹⁰⁾ Scandalised, philologists and scholars re-examined the terms *amour courtois* and *courtly love*, calling a symposium in 1968 on "The Meaning of Courtly Love".⁽¹¹⁾ While some remained conservative, retaining

8. Gaston Paris, "Lancelot du Lac: II. Le Conte de la Charrette", *Romania* 12 (1883) pp.459-534. Jean Frappier confirms Paris' coinage in "Notes Lexicologiques: I. Gole. II. *Amour courtois*", *Mélanges Jean Boutière* (Soledí, Liège; 1971) 2 vols. i.233-252.

9. See *OED Supplement*, s.v. *courtly*.

10. Alexander J. Denomy, "Courtly Love and Courtliness", *Speculum* 28 (1953) pp.44-63. The single occurrence of "*cortez'amors*" which Denomy quotes appears in Peire d'Auvergne's song xv, "Gent es, mentr'om n'a lezer", l.58, in *Die Lieder Peires von Auvergne*, ed. Rudolf Zenker (Junge, Erlangen; 1900) p.124.

11. Papers from this conference are gathered in *The Meaning of Courtly Love*, ed. F. X. Newman (State University of New York Press, Albany; 1968). See also F. L. Utley, "Must We Abandon the Concept of Courtly Love?" *Medievalia et Humanistica* ns.3 (1972) pp.299-324; William Calin, "Defense and Illustration of *Fin'Amor*: Some Polemical Comments on the Robertsonian Approach", in *Expansion and Transformations of Courtly Literature*, ed. Smith and Snow, pp.32-48. For a summary of views, see Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester University Press, Manchester; 1977).

courtly love as the best paraphrase of *fin'amors* but on the understanding that it is already invested with multiple and even contradictory meaning, others were more radical.(12) There were criticisms of the term as a "myth", a "scholar's hypothesis", an "impediment to the understanding of medieval texts" and even bids for outright exile in a "grand and purifying holocaust".(13)

This critique of the phrase 'courtly love', however, does have something positive to offer. In their analyses and justifications, the literary historians have probed the relation between court and love and therefore provide a starting point for this study. It should be pointed out, however, that in spite of the philological flurry occasioned by Denomy's article, the lexical development of the verb to court in a number of European languages, which seems to

12. For a defence of the phrase, see Jean Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'oc et d'oïl au XII^e siècle", *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 2 (1959) pp.135-156; Moshé Lazar, "Les Eléments Constitutifs de la "cortezia" dans la Lyrique des Troubadours", *Studi Mediolatini et Volgari* 6-7 (1959) pp.67-96; and John F. Benton, "Clio and Venus: An Historical View of Medieval Love", in *The Meaning of Courtly Love*, ed. Newman, pp.19-42.

13. E. T. Donaldson, "The Myth of Courtly Love", in *Speaking of Chaucer* (Athlone Press, London; 1970) pp.154-163, chapter heading; F. X. Newman, in *The Meaning of Courtly Love*, ed. Newman, preface pp.v-x, this quotation p.x; D. W. Robertson Jr., "The Concept of Courtly Love as an Impediment to the Understanding of Medieval Texts", *ibid.* pp.1-18, title; T. Silverstein, "Guenevere, or the Uses of Courtly Love", *ibid.* pp.77-90, this quotation p.87.

epitomise this association of ideas, has received only the most cursory attention.(14)

That *amour courtois* originated to some extent in the courts of princes has been denied by very few, but interpretations of the precise connection have varied.(15) The earliest historians of courtly love regarded the aristocratic connection as axiomatic. Gaston Paris ascribes the origins of *amour courtois* to "la création de la société courtoise par l'établissement dans l'aristocratie . . . des règles d'une étiquette subtile". The following year, Violet Paget claimed that "medieval love" evolved from a fundamentally castellar society in which the domestic centrality of castle, its fixed hierarchy and high sex-ratio were crucial factors. Love was strictly elitist, "an aristocratic privilege" derived exclusively from the castle.(16) The self-enclosed, secular court, its need for a strict and workable hierarchy within, and its relative independence from the world outside, remained for many scholars the ideal breeding-ground for civilised notions of play and love-making. Alfred Jeanroy and C. S. Lewis, two

14. The only query I have found appears in a footnote to Utley's review article, "Must We Abandon the Concept of Courtly Love?", p.323: "One wonders why nobody has brought into the discussion the English word "to court" for "to make love" or "to woo"".

15. Notably by Peter Dronke in *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1965-1966) 2 vols. i.2, who suggests that "the feelings and conceptions of *amour courtois* are universally possible, possible in any time or place and on any level of society".

16. Paris, "Lancelot du Lac: II. Le Conte de la Charrette", p.520; Violet Paget, pseud. Vernon Lee, *Euphorion: Being Studies of the Antique and the Mediaeval in the Renaissance* (Unwin, London; 1884) 2 vols. ii.129.

great theorists of courtly love, both supported this thesis and, however romanticised, it has formed for many a critical premise.(17) The etiquette, rules and hierarchy inherent in a court environment created a society in miniature in which poetry and the arts of love could flourish protected. Such focus on early medieval courts led some critics to particularise. The courts of Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter Marie de Champagne, for example, have been suggested as the source of courtly love as a romantic cult. Friedrich Heer portrays Eleanor's court at Poitiers as "the chief academy of Western Europe for teaching the arts of courtesy", with a somewhat fanciful description of love's apotheosis among the "honey-coloured stones of Provence". Amy Kelly envisages an equally romanticised Marie, who translated the scepticism of Ovid's *Ars amatoris* into "something more ideal, the woman's canon" through her chaplain Andreas.(18)

Other critics have warned of the dangers of using Capellanus' treatise *De Arte Honeste Amandi* as documentary

17. See Alfred Jeanroy, *La Poésie lyrique des Troubadours* (Privat, Toulouse and Didier, Paris; 1934) 2 vols. i.93-97; and C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1936) p.12. See also W. T. H. Jackson, *The Literature of the Middle Ages* (Columbia University Press, New York; 1960); Nathaniel B. Smith and Joseph T. Snow, "Courtly Love and Courtly Literature", in *Expansion and Transformations of Courtly Literature*, ed. Smith and Snow, pp.3-14; Elizabeth Salter, "Courts and Courtly Love", in *Literature and Western Civilization: The Mediaeval World*, gen. eds. David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (Aldus, London; 1973) pp.407-444.

18. Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World. Europe 1100-1350*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London; 1962) pp.134, 125; Amy Kelly, "Eleanor of Aquitaine and her Courts of Love" *Speculum* 12 (1937) pp.3-19.

evidence, and thereby provide a corrective to such idealised views.(19) More fundamentally, they have been challenged by social historians who reject on principle the notion that history can be studied in the discrete actions of certain isolated individuals. A model for their scepticism might be found in the work of Marc Bloch.(20) In his *Feudal Society*, Bloch overturns the notionally monolithic nature of that society. He shows its genesis and development to be a long and complex process. Far from being an immutable, static infrastructure, he argues, feudal society underwent a process of "re-integration". The tenth and eleventh centuries witnessed the gradual integration of a post-Carolingian *chevalier* class into the formerly exclusive higher nobility. A combination of petty wars, the formation of retinues and bands of fighting knights, and

19. W. T. H. Jackson, "The *De Amore* of Andreas Capellanus and the Practice of Love at Court", *Romanic Review* 49 (1958) pp.243-251; John F. Benton, "The Court of Champagne as a Literary Center", *Speculum* 36 (1961) pp.551-591, and "The Evidence for Andreas Capellanus Re-Examined Again", *Studies in Philology* 59 (1962) pp.471-478.

20. This section is based on the following: Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Manyon (Routledge, London; 1961); Herbert Moller, "The Social Causation of the Courtly Love Complex", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1 (1958-1959) pp.137-163, and "The Meaning of Courtly Love", *Journal of American Fiction* 73 (1960) pp.39-52; Eric Köhler, "Observations historiques et sociologiques sur la poésie des troubadours", *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 7 (1964) pp.27-51; Maurice Valency, *In Praise of Love: An Introduction to the Love-Poetry of the Renaissance* (Macmillan, New York; 1958); Jackson, *The Literature of the Middle Ages*; Georges Duby, "Dans la France du Nord-Ouest, Au XII^e siècle: les "Jeunes" dans la société aristocratique", *Annales. Economies - Sociétés - Civilisations* 19 (1964) pp.835-846; Jean Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises"; and Glyn S. Burgess, *Contribution à l'Etude du Vocabulaire Pré-Courtois* (Droz, Geneva; 1970).

rewarding their service with fiefs, all led inevitably to a second generation of territorial lords. These self-styled barons, however, still belonged to a middle stratum politically and juridically ill-defined. Families of superior strength created territorial enclaves, residences or courts with greater confluence of people whose numbers were swelled by opportunist, landless knights and other military and administrative personnel, the *ministeriales*. The *ministeriales* (whence *minstrels*), either castle guards or administrative personnel, were generally "persons of unfree origin who filled important positions and were entrusted with power over men, but who had not acquired noble status".(21) Petty courts proliferated in areas such as south-west France, and the creation of independent court retinues resulted in the gradual development of a decentralised, castellar society. Whether seen as a series of isolated events or as a continuous process, this created a three-tier society in which the top two levels interpenetrated each other.

Courtly-love historians use this to reject the old picture of medieval courts as well-adjusted, self-regulating institutions in which courtly love was "protected from sociological influences by the court civilization that had first produced it" or which "acted as oases of comparative

21. Moller, "The Social Causation of the Courtly Love Complex", p.147.

order and security".(22) They focus on this ill-defined but flexible "subsidiary aristocracy", a class characterised in their view by its *mobility*.(23) They are agreed that the majority of the lyric poets of courtly love derived from this class and that, as Köhler puts it, "La poésie des troubadours naît très précisément à l'instant où l'anoblissement de la chevalerie est *de facto* accompli".(24)

The aspirations of this class constantly underwrite lyrical poetry. One of the chief preoccupations of troubadour verse is the definition of true nobility - or *cortezia* - and of one of its components, the virtue of generosity or *largesse*. Troubadour *tenzos* and *jocz partitz* constantly debate the power of riches to raise one up to *fin'amors*, and generally conclude that wealth only buys sensual satisfaction, effectively barring the higher nobility from the esoteric doctrines of courtly love. Only the *largesse* of a poorer yet ennobled class could possess love's exclusive domain. The importance of this definition is its confirmation of inner virtue over hereditary title.

22. Salter, "Courts and Courtly Love", p.426; Jonathan Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy: Medieval Courtesy Books and the Gawain Poet* (Brewer, Cambridge; 1985) p.46.

23. Moller calls it "an open class" in "The Social Causation of the Courtly Love Complex", pp.147, 152; Frappier designates its members "mobiles individuels" in "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises", p.135; Valency believes the "troubadours founded their entire system on the social mobility of the individual", *In Praise of Love*, p.46.

24. Köhler, "Observations historiques", p.37; See also Duby, "les "Jeunes" dans la société aristocratique", p.845; Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises", p.138; and Moller, "The Social Causation of the Courtly Love Complex", pp. 152-154.

The feudal analogy is constantly identified in love lyrics. Feudal loyalty was an interdependent system of service and reward and could therefore be mimicked in the lover's obedient stance before his lady: "L'hommage amoureux imite les formules, les gestes, les rites de l'hommage féodal".(25) The social aspirations of the poets may also be seen to underwrite their language of love, by overlapping feudal and amatory vocabulary. In Provençal, for instance, the word *onor* meant both honour, and a fief, or a reward for service: "On demandait autrefois aux seigneurs de récompenser les services par un fief - en provençal: *onor*, - maintenant, c'est à la dame de récompenser le service d'amour par de l'honneur - *onor* également".(26) Similarly, the verb *sesir* (French *saisir*) meaning "mettre en possession d'un fief", and its related noun *sesine* (*saisine*), "prise de possession d'un fief", are used in the amatory context. In Bérout's *Tristan*, at the

25. Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises", p.141.

26. Köhler, "Observations historiques", p.33. Köhler's example comes from Dauphin d'Auvergne:

Be n'estai, cant pros cavaliers
 Conquier domna de gran valor,
 Mais chascus o fai per honor,
 E l'onors es coma logiers.

For further discussion of this word, see Burgess, *Contribution à l'Etude du Vocabulaire Pré-Courtois*, pp.72, 89: "il nous semble incontestable que le terme *honor* sert à désigner quelque chose de matériel . . . Ce passage de l'honneur-fief à l'honneur-gloire s'explique peut-être par la position de la basse noblesse qui ne recevait plus de la main des seigneurs la récompense qui lui était due". See also K. J. Hollyman, *Le Développement du Vocabulaire féodal en France pendant le Haut Moyen Age* (Droz, Geneva; 1957) pp.33-41.

point where the lovers exchange tokens prior to their separation, they take a final embrace:

Tristan en bese la roïne,
Et ele lui, par la saisine. (27)

The kiss is more than a mark of love. It solemnly confirms a contract. These two examples illustrate a characteristic trend in the vocabulary of love described by D. R. Sutherland as "the taking over of a term already given special meaning in the language of feudal society, and its restriction to an even more specialized meaning in the context of the convention of courtly love".(28)

Taking as their doctrine the upward mobility of the *ministeriales* class, these historians do not neglect other contingent social factors. They maintain that a high male to female sex-ratio persisted in medieval courts, exacerbated by selective immigration, and by the preponderantly military nature of castle retinues and personnel. In this situation they imagine the few women, including the lord's wife, to be the focus of male

27. Quoted by Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises", p.142.

28. D. R. Sutherland, "The Love Meditation in Courtly Literature", in *Studies in Medieval French presented to Alfred Ewert* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1961) pp.165-193, this quotation p.169. Lexical borrowing, of course, worked both ways and some words which long enjoyed a specialised place in the vocabulary of love came also to have generalised meanings. Raymond Southall regards the latter trend as typical of the sixteenth century: "Feudal idioms gradually die, although some terms of feudal love enter the more permanent vocabulary of the language: *to court* and *courtship* are no longer courtly; *enthrall*, *service*, and *duty* no longer have their feudal significance". "Love Poetry in the Sixteenth Century", *Essays in Criticism* 22 (1972) pp.362-380, this quotation p.369.

libidinous energy. In this they differ little from the early historians like Paris and Paget, but they add that the shortage of women fuelled the dream of hypergamy. The position of the *ministeriales*, a rising class but one whose dignity and privileges were yet poorly defined, was a precarious one. One way to ensure social elevation, in fantasy if not in fact, was by marriage to a woman of superior rank. Some historians of courtly love have seen the worldly pursuit of heiresses as the harsh reality behind the abstracted and adoring pose of the poet-lover.(29) Poetry made an amatory virtue of self-advancement and may, they argue, have given rise to the extraordinary exaltation of women in troubadour verse.

Other more fanciful notions have been attributed to the tensions and insecurities of this aspiring and competitive class. Psychoanalytical studies of courtly-love verse examine some of its more infantile preoccupations: voyeurism, sexual taboo, and the desire for attention, concluding that the most faithful adherents of *fin'amors* had never lost a primitive mother-fixation.(30)

The arguments of these literary historians are greatly amplified if one turns from the historiography of courtly love to the sociology of the court. The evidence is

29. Moller, "The Social Causation of the Courtly Love Complex", p.156: "the pursuit of heiresses was a major occupation of noblemen and a fantasy subject for indigent knights". See also Duby, "les "Jeunes" dans la société aristocratique", p.843.

30. See, for example, Moller, "The Meaning of Courtly Love", and Valency, *In Praise of Love*, chapter 1.

particularly diversified in the work of the great sociologist of the court, Norbert Elias, and no-one studying Renaissance courts can afford to be scant in acknowledging their debt to his pioneering studies.(31) Elias opens his earlier book, *The Court Society*, with a brief apology for sociology. The individual life-span has, until now, consistently and consciously been the yard-stick of historiography. Behind this, the longer term development of social figurations, say from feudal society to nation states, is regarded simply as a self-explanatory backdrop against which discrete actions and individual historical figures are sharply defined. In seeking to correct this model, sociological studies generally reject or probe figurations that have been regarded by historians as somehow static, immutable or fixed.(32)

Writing after the Second World War, Elias analyses the concept of *civilisation* (German *Kultur*) which had become a bourgeois catchword from the nineteenth century.(33) Civilisation implied a nation's superiority and justified its imperialism and colonialism. It also implied a finite process whose completion Western states had witnessed, and

31. Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Blackwell, Oxford; 1983), and *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Blackwell, Oxford; 1982) 2 vols. Elias agrees with the historians of courtly love that the troubadours belonged to a subsidiary aristocracy and that their inferior social status was precisely what transformed an otherwise aggressive, patriarchal language into a lyrical one, *The Civilizing Process*, ii.77-90.

32. See *The Court Society*, chapter 1.

33. See also Philippe Bénéton, *Histoire de mots: culture et civilisation* (Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris; 1975).

in whose name they could dominate 'backward', non-European states. The impulse of Elias' work is to examine this suspect assumption by probing its origins and, even more so, its development. It was this impulse that provided the motivation for his great work, *The Civilizing Process*.

Elias' search for the origins of "civilisation" takes him first to medieval society. He examines it not in isolation but as the beginning of an overreaching development in Western political and cultural history toward the foundation of nation states. For Elias the crucial stage in the transition from medieval society to the latter was the foundation of absolutism. Medieval courtly society was subject to a great decentralising impulse - creating small military and territorial courts almost at random. This led to a profusion of castles and territorial enclaves, each of varying strength, and perpetuated a two-tier nobility.(34) As Bloch suggested, two land-owning classes developed - the noble and the equestrian - which interpenetrated each other in a general ambition for greater power.

In the sixteenth century, however, this decentralised society gave way to a different figuration. It witnessed the gradual imposition of centralised royal power by Francis I and the Valois kings in France, and by the Tudors and the Hapsburgs elsewhere. This development did not obliterate medieval courtly customs, and Elias identifies

34. *The Civilizing Process*, ii.58-60.

the continuance of many traditions. But the importance of established, centralised royal power is the *sine qua non* of absolutism and cannot be emphasised enough. Medieval society witnessed the early stages of a development from warriors to courtiers, from a "loosely integrated secular upper class of warriors, with its symbol, the castle on its autarkic estate" to a "more tightly integrated secular upper class of courtiers assembled at the absolutist court, the central organ of the kingdom".(35) The early courts of the Middle Ages mark the beginnings of an all-encompassing development in western Europe, the sociogenesis of absolutism, which depends wholly upon a "monopoly of force".(36) Elias contrasts the medieval with the absolutist regime to establish his point:

societies without a stable monopoly of force are always societies in which the division of functions is relatively slight and the chains of action binding individuals together are comparatively short. Conversely, societies with more stable monopolies of force, always first embodied in a large princely or royal court, are societies in which the division of functions is more or less advanced, in which the chains of action binding individuals together are longer and the functional dependencies between people greater. Here the individual is largely protected from sudden attack, the irruption of physical violence into his life. But at the same time he is himself forced to suppress in himself any passionate impulse urging him to attack another physically.

This creates a society of individuals whose position, if not survival depends on the sublimation of spontaneous emotions

35. *ibid.* ii.90.

36. *ibid.* ii.235.

and affects. Such control marks the beginning of the civilising process:

Through the interdependence of larger groups of people and the exclusion of physical violence from them, a social apparatus is established in which the constraints between people are lastingly transformed into self-constraints.(37)

The centralisation of royal power, made visibly present by the court, transformed the nobility from an agrarian feudal class into a court aristocracy. Elias chooses to focus on the situation of this noble class and, in particular, on the French court between Henri IV's establishment of power after the religious wars to the apotheosis of absolutism under the *ancien régime*. The Valois and Bourbon kings built up a new titular nobility in which reward for military or administrative service took the form of a pension or office, not of a fief. A money economy boosted royal power and with it the king's military potential, fundamentally altering the fabric of quasi-feudal society. At the same time, the hereditary land-owning nobility found itself mixing with this new stratum, as the medieval nobility had done. Again, one encounters the need of a newly patronised class - obliged to recognise its secondary rank but anxious to define its privileges and relative status - to integrate with the highest nobility. It is this middle nobility that focuses Elias' attention: "elevated strata whose pride and desire for prestige went hand in hand with exclusion from the highest functions of

37. *ibid.* ii.235-236, 242-243.

rule and the political decisions linked to them . . . power went hand in hand with an overt and very accentuated role as obedient subjects which became second nature to the people concerned . . . each individual found himself in an intense, incessant and inescapable competitive struggle which, physical violence being disallowed, had to be waged with utmost circumspection, with permanent control of the affects".(38) This stratum of the French nobility found itself privileged and near the top of a social hierarchy yet without power and dependent for their pensions on the king. Courtiers were under strong pressure to compete for prestige while the king boosted his own power by manipulating their rivalries. The resulting tension between supremacy and servitude is epitomised for Elias in the establishment of elaborate codes of etiquette to regulate public behaviour, what he calls "the unwritten laws of court life".(39) Etiquette, the carefully calculated strategy in all one's dealings with equals and superiors, operated as an external mechanism of constraint, the necessary development of a social mask which Elias identifies as one of the chief characteristics of courtly society. The enforced pacification of behaviour minimises the potential threat to the crown's monopoly of force. Moreover it demands an especially complex self-control because "each member of this numerous society is constantly coming into contact with people of different rank and power and has to graduate his

38. *The Court Society*, p.224.

39. *ibid.* p.119.

behaviour accordingly". The masking of spontaneous impulses becomes for them of high personal value. This creates a society which recognises people as autonomous individuals, each within his civilised casing, the "armour-plating of self-constraint".(40)

Elias then questions how the experience of becoming courtiers manifested itself. He turns to that most courtly of genres, the bucolic pastoral with its ideals of escapism and rural retreat. For him the form dramatises the peripatetic yearnings of a once rural class that found itself centred on ^{the} court and therefore the town. The suppression of physical violence and control of sexual and affective appetites gives way to romance, in which social constraints are temporarily overcome. Elias develops this into a most interesting conclusion. He suggests that civilising detachment, the growth of individualism, nostalgia and a romantic yearning for a golden world free of constraints, all led to "the development of romantic love both as a real occurrence and perhaps still more as a cult and ideal".(41) A heavily constrained society sought

40. *ibid.* pp.240, 242. On the rhetorical strategies necessitated by such a courtly environment, see Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (University of California Press, Berkeley; 1984). Elias' model of repressive constraint derives at root from Freud, in particular *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929). See, for example, Freud's analogy between colonialism and sexual restraint: "civilization behaves towards sexuality as a people or a stratum of its population does which has subjected another one to its exploitation", in *Civilization, Society and Religion*, trans. James Strachey (Penguin, Harmondsworth; 1985) pp.293-294.

41. *The Court Society*, p.243.

psychological alleviation in two ways: in withdrawal into enclaves of simpler rural life, and in the forging of an individual character. Both impulses are illustrated for Elias by Honoré d'Urfé's romance *L'Astrée*. A courtly roman à clef, it is also a polemic in which simple pastoral ideals are contrasted favourably with the baroque variety of court. For Elias the shepherds and shepherdesses represent the middle nobility to which D'Urfé belonged, and whose values he contrasts with those of the higher nobility. The romance exalts the trial-and-error courtship by which two independent young lovers seek to know each other and themselves:

In an aristocratic articulation we find here a form of love relationship that is very closely related to the romantic love ideal of later bourgeois literature. It is a passionate reciprocal emotional bond between an unmarried young man and an unmarried young woman that can find fulfilment only in marriage and is to the highest degree exclusive . . . This ideal bond of love thus presupposes a high degree of individualization. It excludes any love relationship of one of the partners to a third person, however fleeting. But as it involves two people with strongly individualized self-control, with highly differentiated armour, the strategy of courtship is more arduous and protracted than previously . . . For this reason courtship is very difficult and full of peril. The two people must put each other to the test. Their amorous play is influenced not only by their half-involuntary, half-voluntary affect-masking itself, but also by awareness of the masks, by reflection on them . . . For this reason alone this kind of love bond can find fulfilment only after long personal trying out, after overcoming many misunderstandings and trials created partly by themselves and partly by others.(42)

42. *ibid.* p.257-8.

The love portrayed has a heightened capacity for affect-control, for individual detachment by people in their relations with each other, and, most important of all, self-detachment. It is an "amalgam of desire and conscience" in which spontaneity is held in check, but with a secondary gain in the postponement of pleasure.(43) This controlled love, Elias argues, the ideal love relationship in *L'Astrée*, is not that of the most powerful court elite but of an aristocratic middle stratum, one to which D'Urfé himself belonged. The middle stratum of the nobility, as Elias identifies it, advocates the same love ethic as the widely disseminated bourgeois ideal.

This lengthy summary of Elias is not intended to preclude the work of other social historians, least of all Lawrence Stone who shares Elias' essentially Freudian formulation of social constraint.(44) Stone concurs with Elias' basic premise that the centralisation of power was implicit in establishing a court, and shares his terminology in describing the Tudors' "royal monopoly of violence" and "monopoly powers of justice and punishment".(45) He sees the resulting decline in violence as a most profound influence on the new social figuration. As a stabilising political factor, the court contributed to a general

43. *ibid.* p.258.

44. See Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1965); *Family and Fortune: Studies in Aristocratic Finance in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1973); and *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London; 1977).

45. *Crisis*, p.200; *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p.133.

civilising process which transformed "haughty and independent magnates into a set of shameless mendicants", simply a more emotional account of Elias' shift from a class of warriors to one of courtiers.(46) Stone contrasts this with the violence of everyday life which in the Middle Ages had led to "much mutual suspicion and a low general level of emotional interaction and commitment". Instead, the civilised society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the rise of what Stone dubs "affective individualism", "a growing introspection and interest in the individual personality . . . a corresponding respect for the individual's right to privacy, to self-expression, and to the free exercise of his will".(47) While Stone leaps to conclusions Elias tortuously examines, his "affective individualism" belongs to the same family as the latter's "civilised detachment". The centralisation of power and the loyalty that a new royalist state demanded weakened feudal bonds of kinship, converting "an association of cousins in the kin into an association of subjects to the sovereign monarch, and of citizens of the commonwealth". This is the foundation for a fundamental sociological shift from a "lineage society" close to the open, broad-based medieval *familia*, towards a "civil society" based on the

46. *Crisis*, p.477.

47. *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp.95, 223. For a full account of "affective individualism", see chapter 6. For Elias' argument on sophisticated Renaissance thought patterns and the development of an increasingly solipsist self-consciousness, see *The Court Society*, pp.244-256.

nuclear, conjugal family unit.(48) Stone highlights similar problems as Elias within this civilised, court society including the dependent position of a titular nobility, its ambitions for power and struggles to maintain prestige. Like Elias he focuses on the early seventeenth century as a period of great social mobility.(49)

While Stone and Elias are concerned with very different outcomes, the English Civil War for one, the *ancien régime* for the other, both believe implicitly in the "rise of the bourgeoisie". That indeed forms the basis for Elias' search for the beginning of the civilising process. But here the two sociologists may fruitfully be compared. For in spite of their theoretical similarities there is a fundamental difference in perspective. For Stone the values of the "puritan bourgeoisie" are consistently held up as just and praiseworthy, against which court *mores*, if so defined, can only be antithetical. Basing his understanding on an ideological distinction between court and country, he judges the court against bourgeois standards. As a result he is obliged to see the court aristocracy in a state of fiscal and moral 'crisis' which

48. *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p.134. Stone derives the terms "lineage society" and "civil society" from Mervyn James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics, and Mentality in the Durham region, 1500-1640* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1974).

49. On social mobility, see Stone, *Crisis*, chapters 2-3. Elsewhere, Stone calls the period 1540-1640 the "century of mobility", "Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700", *Past and Present* 33 (1966) pp.16-55, this quotation p.48.

reaches its inexorable conclusion in the readjustment of values which was the Civil War.

Elias provides a critical corrective to this essentially whiggish reading. He begins *The Court Society* with the need to strip away the prejudices and preconceptions of a post-industrial society against the absolute regimes which courts represent. Later on he contrasts bourgeois and courtly attitudes to income and expenditure urging a non-critical analysis of courtly status-consumption. While bourgeois fiscal methods subordinated expense to income, the courtly ethic obliged nobles to spend on a scale befitting their rank. The "vicious circle of enforced ostentation" meant nobles relied on monopolies and pensions to maintain their prestige, but in so doing they became increasingly dependent upon the crown.(50) Stone also recognises the pattern but remains incapable of interpreting it without the pious, qualitative judgements of a Whig historian. Aristocratic expenditure is designated "abnormal", "extravagant", "stupendous", "ostentatious", "excessive" and a sigh of relief is heard when the seventeenth century heralds "a readjustment of values by which emphasis was laid less on publicity and display and numerical quantity and more on privacy and luxury and aesthetic quality".(51)

50. Elias, *The Court Society*, chapters 1 and 4, this quotation p.71.

51. Stone, *Crisis*, p.584. For an examination of status-consumption, see chapter 10.

Elias' corrective is not only important because it advocates unbiased interpretations of a society which is now unfamiliar. More fundamentally, it challenges the thesis that courtly and bourgeois ideals are antithetical. In seeking the origins of civilisation, that great bourgeois rallying-cry, Elias reaches a startling conclusion: that it is not to be found in the French Revolution but in the court society of the *ancien régime*.⁽⁵²⁾ This corrective is an enormously important one because it anticipates recent revisionist reappraisals of English court history. These seek to emancipate sixteenth-century English history from its slavery to the Civil War, and to see it in its own light, not as the prelude to an age of capitalism and change, a thesis laid down by Gardiner in the last century. They also criticise J. E. Neale's notion that the Elizabethan age was a golden haven of peace between the political upheavals of the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁽⁵³⁾ The revisionist perspective is generally a critique of 'progressive' history and the anachronistic liberalism that it implies. It remains sceptical of wholesale shifts, transformations or revolutions in human affairs, and instead stresses continuities.⁽⁵⁴⁾

52. *The Civilizing Process*, i.49.

53. S. R. Gardiner, *A History of England 1603-1642* (London; 1883-1884); J. E. Neale, "The Elizabethan Political Scene", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 24 (1948) pp.97-117.

54. For a brief summary of this position, see Christopher Haigh ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Macmillan, London; 1984) pp.1-25, 243-245.

I emphasise this because there is a sense in which revisionist historians have done more than re-interpret English court history. They have recovered it from the obscurity unsympathetic Whig historians had relegated it to in the past, and have indeed re-invented it. There is evidence for this suggestion in an important essay by G. R. Elton.(55) In 1975 he addressed the Royal Historical Society on the baffling subject of the Tudor court:

We all know that there was a Court, and we all use the term with frequent ease, but we seem to have taken it so much for granted that we have done almost nothing to investigate it seriously . . . At times it has all the appearance of a fully fledged institution; at others it seems to be no more than a convenient conceptual piece of shorthand, covering certain people, certain behaviour, certain attitudes.(56)

As Elton implies, there are certain things upon which everyone is agreed. These include the centralisation of monarchical power from the fifteenth century, in the Yorkist court of Edward IV and the Tudor court of Henry VII.(57) There is little disagreement about the infrastructure of the court, based on the ancient division of Chamber and Household in the medieval domestic system, and dealing with

55. While often a target for revisionist critiques, Elton's most recent studies have in fact shown revisionist tendencies themselves. See, in particular, his essay "Parliament", in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Haigh, pp.79-100.

56. Elton's presidential address is published in "Tudor Government: The Points of Contact; III: The Court", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series 26 (1976) pp.211-228, this quotation p.211.

57. *ibid.* p.212: "The true Court of our imagining could not exist until the Crown had destroyed all alternative centres of political loyalty".

the comfort and security of the lord. The distinction is made quite clear in Edward IV's Household Ordinances of 1471, in which the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* is operated by its chief officer, the Lord Chamberlain, the *Domus Providencie* by the Lord Steward. Throughout the sixteenth century, court structure elaborated this basic pattern, often taking its cue from foreign models. The chief development under the Tudors was the separation of the king's public and private worlds with the division of the medieval Chamber into Presence and Privy Chambers. Entry into the latter was much more strictly controlled than formerly, and strategies of access or exclusion immediately assumed political importance.(58)

Yet Elton insists that, studies of individual monarchs and courtiers aside, no demographic survey or political history of the court has yet been written. He calls specifically for a "proper study of Elizabeth's Court as a political centre" but fails to see the court as a power structure or centre of decision-making.(59) Indeed, paraphrasing the words of one of his revisionist critics, he admits that "the history of the monarch's immediate

58. For source documents, see The Society of Antiquaries, *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household* (London; 1790); and H. M. Colvin ed. *The History of the King's Works* (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London; 1963-1982) 6 vols. Of the many summaries of court infrastructure the most thorough is by David Loades, *The Tudor Court* (Batsford, London; 1986) pp.38-84.

59. Elton, "The Court", p.225.

entourage reflects nothing so much as the power politics of an elite".(60)

This statement identifies the root of Elton's anxiety. The prevailing Whig orthodoxy among historians is temperamentally antipathetic to any such notion of elitist power. On the contrary, it sought to minimise the role of the court aristocracy in government by envisaging it in a state of fiscal and moral 'crisis'.(61) The development of "professionalism" or "aristocratic puritanism" was called upon to counteract the invidious and degenerate powers of the court elite. As a corollary, Whig historians tried to drive a wedge between court and state, showing the incompatibility of foppish, sycophantic courtiers with the politicians and councillors who got on with the serious business of government. This focused historians' attention on the development of an efficient, 'modern' bureaucracy which effectively ran the country in the teeth of royal whim and courtly irresponsibility. In particular, it trained them to consider not the court but the bureaucratic powers of certain ministers: Thomas Cromwell in Elton's case; Cecil and Walsingham in Conyers Read's massive volumes; Cecil,

60. *ibid.* p.214. Elton paraphrases David Starkey.

61. He has substantially revised this opinion in *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1984).

Leicester and Hatton in MacCaffrey's studies.(62) The latter draws a sharp distinction between the select body of Elizabethan Privy Councillors who effectively "centralized the whole process of decision-making" and an amorphous multitude of courtiers. "In such a system", he goes on, "the political role of the courtiers was proportionally diminished; those who were excluded from the inner circle of the Privy Council were denied any major role in power-brokering or decision-making".(63)

The result of the distinction between court and government is to draw increasingly rigid lines of demarcation where they do not necessarily exist. Moreover, on closer inspection the statements of these historians themselves appear to harbour elements of doubt. In his *Tudor Revolution in Government*, for example, Elton anticipates his revisionist critics when he attempts to justify his ruthless division between the king's household and the government of the realm:

It might be objected that one cannot describe as freed from household influence a government in which treasurers and controllers of the household, lord stewards and lord chamberlains, even vice-chamberlains and masters of the horse, were as active as they were, for instance, in the

62. G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1953); Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and Queen Elizabeth* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1925) 3 vols., *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (Cape, London; 1955), and *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (Cape, London; 1960); Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* (Cape, London; 1969), and *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1981).

63. MacCaffrey, *ibid.* p.432.

Elizabethan privy council. And what after all is the significance of all that national bureaucracy of which so much has been made when all the major decisions depended on courtiers, and when the careers of such men as secretaries of state or masters of the wards turned on the vagaries, intrigues, and interests of the court?(64)

This is not a question that can be dismissed summarily, and indeed it returns to haunt Elton in his 1975 presidential address. Again, he attempts to define the place of the Elizabethan statesman, but the cherished distinction of court and government becomes increasingly difficult to maintain: "Some of them occupied an ambiguous place halfway between the Household officer and the politician or bureaucrat . . . an ambiguity which has continued to bewilder historians".(65) MacCaffrey admits to a similar sense of confusion.(66)

It is important to stress these hesitancies. For the greatest casualty of the whiggish approach to court history is the courtier. He is stripped of his influence and power, relegated to increasingly marginal positions and finally made to shrivel to nothing more than a "shameless mendicant", in Stone's phrase. But the historians' own

64. Elton, *Tudor Revolution in Government*, p.372.

65. Elton, "The Court", p.215.

66. "The practice of the Elizabethan administration mingled confusedly the notion of a professional, paid public service with that of personal service to the monarch . . . The very informality which pervaded all offices of government confuses and deceives the modern observer", Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics", in *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays presented to Sir John Neale*, ed. S. T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C. H. Williams (Athlone Press, London; 1961) pp.95-126, this quotation pp.104-105.

doubts suggest that the courtier cannot be killed off so easily. On the contrary, he has been thoroughly resuscitated and revived by the revisionist historians of the period.

Taking issue first with Elton's notional "Tudor revolution in government", they claim that the development of national bureaucratic methods in administration has been grossly overstated.⁽⁶⁷⁾ They suggest that several 'household' agencies, such as the Chamber and the Privy Purse, employed exactly the same systems as "bureaucratic" departments like the Exchequer. This restores the role of the household as a tool of government and elevates parts of it, in particular the Privy Chamber, to high political influence.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Most important of all, the new perspective obliterates the false distinction between courtier and statesman and revives the image of the court as a political power-base. Simon Adams takes a fresh look at the Elizabethan Privy Council and divides its members into three groups: "the major officers of the Household, the major officers of state, and a more amorphous body of men not holding office of importance". While for those in the first two categories appointment to the Council was practically *ex officio*, there remained many posts which did

67. See, in particular, the collection of essays in *Revolution Reassessed: Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration*, ed. Christopher Coleman and David Starkey (Clarendon, Oxford; 1986).

68. See the essays in *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey (Longman, London; 1987), in particular the articles by D. A. L. Morgan, David Starkey and Kevin Sharpe.

not entail automatic membership of the Council. These included the captaincy of the guard and the regional lord presidencies, for example. There was therefore, as Adams goes on to say, "always a group of men prominent at Court who were not members of the Council, while some councillors, particularly in the first decade, were hardly important men at Court".(69) The Council relied for its monopoly of influence if anything on an inner circle of councillors, Cecil and Leicester above all, who were also leading members of the Court. Williams asserts that the political elite must include, among others, the Privy Council and the upper levels of the royal household, and shows how closely the two intersect. He upholds the aristocratic nature of the Tudor court and, like Bernard, questions whether the nobility was in any way weakened by it.(70)

These new interpretations of court historiography call for new interpretations of court literature. The anti-whig bias of such reappraisals restores the court to the political and cultural centre and therefore demands a new interpretation of courtly writing. This was first anticipated, perhaps, in the work of the iconographic critics who presented Renaissance poets as the creatures of

69. Simon Adams, "Eliza Enthroned? The Court and its Politics", in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Haigh, pp.55-77, these quotations p.62. For similar approaches see David Starkey, "Intimacy and innovation: the rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547", in *The English Court*, ed. Starkey, pp.71-118.

70. Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1979) pp.421-456; G. W. Bernard, *The Power of the Early Tudor Nobility: A Study of the Fourth and Fifth Earls of Shrewsbury* (Harvester, Brighton; 1985).

the patronage system, as professional artificers engaged in promoting the image and ideas of courtly patrons. This vision implied the court's central role in determining symbolic meanings, and the artefacts commensurate with this, the emblem and the masque, were seen as arcane mysteries accessible only to an aesthetic elite.(71)

Others have examined the relation between court and poet more closely. Not content that the poet should simply be presented as an unreflecting mouthpiece of his patrons, they examine the implications of the patronage system and question how writers responded to the constraints of despotism. Some years ago G. K. Hunter considered the tension that arose between the demands of the Elizabethan courtly environment and a writer's individual voice.(72) Brought up with the humanist ideals of a civic education with its goal in state service, he argues, the second generation humanists of Elizabeth's court were bitterly frustrated with their exclusion from political power. The pedagogic goal of functional statecraft had in practice given way to the employment of scholars as state apologists

71. See Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (Routledge, London; 1975); Roy Strong, *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London; 1973), now substantially revised in *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge; 1984); see also his *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Thames and Hudson, London; 1977); Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1969); and Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.; 1965).

72. G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (Routledge, London; 1962).

and propagandists. Just as progressive, intellectual elements were politically marginalised at court into a tiny Puritan "opposition", so were humanist writers forced to compromise with the recreative demands of the courtly milieu. Hunter sees this as the foundation of wit, "that courtly virtue which stands midway between flattery and aggressiveness, an essential virtue if learning was to survive in the dangerous context of power".(73) Unable to use their rhetorical training to public effect they converted it into the mock-serious forms of courtly style. The laboured, ornamental wit of Lyly and Sidney was aimed at a coterie audience who recognised in its tortuous tropes the social and physical constraints of their own court life.

The synthesis between courtly wit and humanist wisdom may be a new articulation of the *serio ludere* tradition regarded by others as typical of late medieval courts.(74) Hunter envisages the ideological relation between humanist and courtier as one of debate. Other critics aim for

73. *ibid.* p.34.

74. See, for example, Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, trans. George Steiner (Paladin, London; 2nd ed. 1970); John Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (Methuen, London; 1961, repr. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979); and Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto; 1980).

synthesis.(75) They continue to acknowledge that humanist ideals are very different from courtly ones. The humanist orator thrives in the freer, republican environment where clarity of style is his chief tool in persuasion, and moving the audience his chief tool in politics. The courtier, on the other hand, aims primarily to please. He sacrifices the tenacity and aggressiveness required in oratory for the pleasing *mediocrità* that enables him to argue on both sides of a question, in *utramque partem*. "Where the humanistic rhetoric strives toward an ethical renewal of man by way of persuasion (*genus deliberativum*), the courtly seeks primarily a stabilization of the political régime through the praise (*genus demonstrativum*) of its leading representative, the ruler".(76) It has been suggested, however, that the two rhetorics might be reconciled. The courtier's recreative modes actually combine with serious oratorical skills. Indeed, presenting counsel in a palatable form might be seen as the courtier's only option in the despotic environment of a court.

A model for these competing roles can be found in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. While the first three books of the treatise delineate the recreative individual

75. See Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1978); Brian Vickers, "Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance", *New Literary History* 14 (1982-1983) pp.497-537; Heinrich F. Plett, "Aesthetic Constituents in the Courtly Culture of Renaissance England", *ibid.* pp.597-621; and Frank Whigham, "Interpretation at Court: Courtesy and the Performer-Audience Dialectic", *ibid.* pp.623-639.

76. Plett, "Aesthetic Constituents", p.599.

able to perform any game or sport with the required grace, Ottaviano's interjection in Book IV radically alters this celebration of *otium*. It presents the courtier as a political element, a princely counsellor, one on whose words great decisions depend. Aristotelian ethics combine with Bembo's Platonic metaphysics, and necessarily expand the vision of *homo rhetoricus* from a playful to a serious creature. In recent years, scholars have endeavoured to show that this apparent *volte face* is not an afterthought but the structural and thematic conclusion which elevates the book to the status of a moral treatise.(77)

Other recent critics concur with this but see the relation between poet and patron as more subversive. They re-examine the notion that order and harmony were the sole criteria of political well-being, and claim that the way Renaissance writers dealt with this did not preclude dissent. Rather, poets "developed elaborate strategies to try to preserve a degree of independence for their writing".(78) This reappraisal of the power structure

77. See Lawrence V. Ryan, "Book Four of Castiglione's *Courtier*: Climax or Afterthought?", *Studies in the Renaissance* 19 (1972) pp.156-179; Wayne A. Rebhorn, "Ottaviano's Interruption: Book IV and the Problem of Unity in *Il Libro Del Cortegiano*", *Modern Language Notes* 87 (1972) pp.37-59; and Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1976) pp.144-164.

78. David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (Routledge, London; 1984) p.6. For studies of other subversive tactics see Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison; 1984), and *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1988).

derives in part from Michel Foucault.(79) In his later work Foucault painstakingly deconstructs what he regards as the standard western conception and representation of power, the "juridical monarchy" in which law was "the monarchic system's mode of manifestation and the form of its acceptability". He discards what he calls the "repressive hypothesis" with its cycle of repression, struggle and liberation, arguing that the sovereignty of the state is simply one of the "terminal forms power takes". Instead he introduces the notion that "power must be understood as the multiplicity of force relations".(80) A dominating power structure is replaced by a relational one. In his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault extends this model to sexual relations, replacing Freudian repressive 'agents' - parents, pedagogues, institutions - with the notion that sexuality is conditioned by the individual and that, far from being a silenced pleasure, sex is itself a power system, "an especially dense transfer point for relations of power".(81) One of the characteristics of Foucault's redefined sexuality is its confessional mode, in which the discursive practices of sex become privileged as a source of truth.

Foucault's work has influenced literary historians to different degrees, but he provides a model for critical analyses of power that is becoming increasingly attractive

79. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (Penguin, Harmondsworth; 1978-1988) 4 vols., and *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (Harvester, Brighton; 1980).

80. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, i.87, 92.

81. *ibid.* p.103.

to students of court culture.(82) Orthodoxy and subversion cease to be seen as dialectical opposites but as elements within a single unit of power.(83) To put it another way, the monarchy was not an agent of repression but rather a collective fiction supported by complex networks of dependency and fear. Courtiers and poets were subjects of and therefore subject to authoritarian rule, but they also contributed to the monarch's stability, thus enacting Foucault's dictum that "Power must be analysed as something which circulates".(84) The cult of Elizabeth has provided scholars with a particularly rich prototype for these reciprocal 'negotiations'. It is in literary and artistic representations of the Queen that "the relations of power between sovereign and subject, between prince and poet, are inscribed and negotiated. In this sense, the various and

82. See for example Louis Adrian Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text", in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; 1986) pp.303-340; Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; 1981) and *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; 1983), both heavily influenced by Foucault. See also Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1988).

83. Greenblatt identifies "a powerful logic [which] governs the relation between orthodoxy and subversion", suggesting as a theory of reciprocity that power "may encounter and record in one of its functions materials that can threaten another of its functions . . . power thrives on vigilance, and human beings are vigilant if they sense a threat", *Shakespearean Negotiations*, pp.23, 37. For a similar formulation, see Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p.15: "orthodox exhortations about order and degree would not have been necessary had the principle of hierarchy not been coming under question".

84. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p.98.

ubiquitous royal representations may be construed as privileged instances of Elizabethan ideology at work".(85) In later chapters of this study Lyly, Sidney and Spenser are seen to problematise systems of meaning, something which itself constitutes a radical manoeuvre in the determinist environment of autocratic government.

Foucauldian theory has also influenced a recent study of the Caroline court which attempts to reconcile anti-court satire with surpassing loyalty to the notion of the court as a moral and cultural ideal.(86) Sharpe's thoroughgoing review of the court of the 1630s dismantles the old dichotomy of 'court and country' which he shows to have been a propagandist distinction laid down by critics of the Stuart regime. Instead of two distinct ideologies or political parties, Sharpe suggests that each interpenetrated the other.(87) He challenges the notion that 'cavalier'

85. Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text", p.303. Compare Greenblatt's "circulation of social energy", and Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature*, p.12: "The relations of power do not flow in a single direction, nor does the circuit easily come to an end".

86. Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The politics of literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1987).

87. Compare Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, i.88: "Political criticism availed itself, therefore, of all the juridical thinking that had accompanied the development of the monarchy, in order to condemn the latter; but it did not challenge the principle which held that law had to be the very form of power, and that power always had to be exercised in the form of law". Although writing in a different context, Sharpe concurs with Foucault that the "juridico-discursive" model of power persists, underwriting so-called revolutionary movements, and that in political analysis "we still have not cut off the head of the king", *ibid.* pp.88-89.

art was complacently partisan, and regards court culture as shot through with contending, competing forces. Court *mores* were attacked because they marked a decline from the moral prototype that the court was held ideally to be. Court and country, criticism and compliment share a common language of moral idealism. Critiques of court values in the pastoral mode, for instance, do not for Sharpe posit a revolutionary alternative, but aim to restore the court as a moral and lexical referent:

With the court, with 'courtliness', were associated manners of behaviour and personal qualities to which all men were to aspire. Just as the ideology of the country was an ideal for public life as opposed to a retreat from it, so from the court came the values and language which established models for the conduct of private life: in making requests or petitions (*to court*), in modes of love (*courtship*), and in civilized manners in society (*courteous*) . . . The language of the court in everyday use is the legacy of those centuries for which the business of government was still believed to be the rule of virtue. As the abode of the most virtuous man (the king) and the best men (the aristocracy), the court was the natural arbiter of human behaviour. (88)

That words of court provenance entered general usage is undeniable, and lexical studies below further substantiate this. But the argument does not end there. The court was a moral arbiter but not a *dictator* of public and private values. The general currency of such words in non-courtly circles allowed for redefinition, reinterpretation and criticism. As Sharpe points out, the rhetorics of praise and dispraise constantly and consistently overlapped with

88. Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment*, p.19.

each other. The following chapter examines the relation between the court and courtship more closely. The development of the words to *court* and *courtship* in the private, amorous sense was not a seventeenth-century phenomenon. It went back to the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in most major European languages. Moreover, the amorous language of courtship developed from a socio-political one. The specialised amatory sense of the words evolved from a purely social meaning which originally meant 'being at court' or 'behaving as courtiers behave'. They were largely rhetorical strategies, to do with the courtier's use of behaviour and language in order to maintain appearances and to persuade his prince or his superiors. It was precisely this rhetorical meaning of the words that, through similarity of sense, came to be applied to the language of love. Both the courtier and the lover had in common the art of persuasion.

Courtship in the sixteenth century had a mixed pedigree and it therefore provided Renaissance writers with an intriguing rhetorical model. From the fifteenth century the old Romance word for wooing, *donoier* and its variants, were supplanted by the court-related words. Love moved away from its object, the lady or *donna*, to the court and all that that entailed: centralised power, sanction, approval, censorship. Yet at the same time *courting* in all languages demonstrates wit, guile, deceit, variety, disorder, artfulness: all those things that militate

against autocratic determinism. The words to court and courtship did have complimentary senses, yet the majority of examples in the following chapter employ the words satirically, pillorying the double standard of court mores by referring to the domestic 'bourgeois' ideals of marriage. A language of potentially high emotional investment becomes as vulnerable to rhetorical play as any other dark conceit.

These paradoxes combine to exalt Love as a subject for inquiry and debate, endlessly satisfying a need for, alternately, stasis or sanction, and flux or variety. To some extent, this vision of synthesis is made possible by the arguments of Elias and the revisionists. They provide a unique perspective on the old arguments for associating courtliness and love that go back to the courtly-love scholars. The court has always been recognised as the place of a leisured class where men and women lived in closer social propinquity than elsewhere. But to these contingent facts the sociologists and historians have added psychological motives and stratagems. Elias sees the court as the birthplace of the modern individual self-consciousness, where courtly and bourgeois ideals coexist not as contradictions but as complementaries.

ii. Courtesy

The coexistence of these ideals leads neatly into the next section which considers the dubious ground between aristocratic and meritocratic aspiration. There is a case

for translating Gaston Paris' *amour courtois* as 'courteous love', for 'courtly' delimits love to a strictly social sphere while courtesy has a more general signification extending beyond the castle walls.(89) Our concern is to discover the point at which elements of the vocabulary of love became part of the language of courtesy, and vice versa.

Of Court it seemes, men Courtesie doe call,
For that it there most vseth to abound.(90)

When Spenser thus opens the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene*, the Legend of Courtesy, he makes an important qualification. Associating the words court and courtesie he presents Elizabeth's court as a paradigm, but he also implies a contrast which has satiric effect. In the Proem to Book VI, he laments the general decline of court *mores* from which

89. Many critics have deplored the confusion that arises from the automatic association of courtesy and love suggested by the term *amour courtois*: See Frappier, *La Poésie lyrique en France aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles* (Paris; 1949) p.93: "Il import tout d'abord de ne pas commettre de contresens sur les termes de *courtois* et de *courtoisie*; n'allons pas croire, chaque fois que nous les rencontrons dans un texte, qu'ils se rapportent nécessairement à la notion d'*amour courtois*". See also Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises", p.136: "L'*amour courtois* représente, si l'on veut, le raffinement extrême de la *courtoisie*, mais il n'est pas toute la *courtoisie*"; Moshé Lazar, *Amour Courtois et 'Fin'Amors' dans la littérature du XII^e siècle* (Klincksieck, Paris; 1964) p.23: "l'expression *amour courtois* est impropre pour qualifier l'idéologie amoureuse qui s'épanouit au XII^e siècle dans une grande diversité d'oeuvres littéraires"; and Denomy, "Courtly Love and Courtliness", p.47, who recognises the "vital distinction between courtliness and Courtly Love".

90. *The Faerie Queene*, VI.i.1. All references to Spenser's poetry are to *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles G. Osgood, Frederick M. Padelford, et al. (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; 1932-1938) 8 vols.

the court and courtiers of Elizabeth appear to prove happy exceptions. This ploy loads the word "seemes", however, making Spenser's formulaic association of court and courtesy point a moral and lexical decline. Not only is the "triall of true curtesie" in abeyance, but words have become divorced from their original meanings. When Spenser points to the etymological sense of courtesy he labours to restore not only a model of perfection, the Elizabethan court, but also lexical propriety. Elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*, his associations of court and courtesy serve to qualify the position of the court as the unquestioned home and nurse of courtesy. For all his gentlemanly pretensions, for instance, Malbecco is a "canced crabbed Carle . . . That has no skill of Court nor courtesie", while Belpheobe epitomises grace in spite of growing up in "saluage forests . . . So farre from court and royall Citadell, / The great schoolmistresse of all curtesy". The Hermit who entertains Arthur, Timias and Serena in Book VI does so "Not with such forged shoves, as fitter beene / For courting fooles, that curtesies would faine".(91)

In questioning the origin and nature of true courtesy Spenser aligns himself with a long and ancient tradition. The debate between inner virtue and inherited nobility went back to the classical philosophers, Aristotle, Seneca, Juvenal, Boethius, and was quoted by medieval thinkers like

91. *ibid.* III.ix.3, vi.1, VI.v.38.

Capellanus and Raymond Lull.(92) Dante is one of its greatest contributors. In the *Purgatorio* he compares the tournaments, "amore e cortesia" of the old Traversaro Court with the present degeneracy of the Romagna, thus anticipating Spenser's device at the beginning of Book VI. In the *Convivio* Dante suggests that *cortesia* originally derived from *corte* because once *virtù* and *belli costumi* were practised there, but now "it would mean nothing but baseness".(93) Debates between old courts and new, between noble rank and private virtue provide the staple of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, and by the late sixteenth century associations of court and courtesy were commonplace.

Twenty years before the second part of *The Faerie Queene* was published, Simon Robson wrote: "This Court, the which of Curtesie takes name, / Declares what port eche Gentill shall ensue", anticipating Spenser's "Of Court it seemes" with syntactic exactitude.(94) In his account of Elizabeth's progress to East Anglia in 1578, Thomas Churchyard describes with agreeable surprise the good behaviour of the common people "albeit it seemeth strange, that people nurtured farre from Courte, shoulde vse muche

92. For a brief résumé of the debate, see Sydney Anglo, "The Courtier: The Renaissance and changing ideals", in *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty. 1400-1800*, ed. A. G. Dickens (Thames and Hudson, London; 1977) pp.33-53.

93. Dante, *Purgatorio*, xiv.110, in *La Divina Commedia*, ed. Sapegno, p.558. *Convivio*, II.xi.64, in *Dante's Convivio*, trans. W. W. Jackson (Clarendon, Oxford; 1909) p.101.

94. S[imon] R[obson], *A newe yeeres gift. The courte of ciuill courtesie* (1577), sig. A3^v.

courtesie".(95) Other associations are less flattering. Richard Lanham describes a badly prepared and ill-served banquet at the 1575 Kenilworth entertainment, which was "disorderly wasted & coorsly consumed, more courtly methought then curteously".(96) Webster urges a more satiric interpretation when, in *The White Devil*, Flamineo says he "visited the Court, whence I return'd / More courteous, more letcherous by farre".(97) In Robert Greene's pastoral romance *Menaphon*, the protagonist woos the heroine Samela "with such courtesie, that shee finding such content in the cotage, began to despise the honors of the Court", and it is the same rustic but apparently honest virtue that the Lady distinguishes in Milton's masque, *Comus*:

Shepherd I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
With smoky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended.(98)

To return to Spenser, the etymological root he highlights in "Of Court it seemes, men Courtesie doe call" suggests that the word court came first and its related

95. Thomas Churchyard, *A discourse of the queenes maiesties entertainment in Suffolk and Norffolk* (1578), sig. B1.

96. R[ichard] L[anham], *A letter: whearin, part of the entertainment vntoo the Queenz maiesty, at Killingwoorth Castl, iz signified* (1575), sig.C5.

97. John Webster, *The White Devil*, I.ii.318-319, in *The Complete Works of John Webster*, ed. F. L. Lucas (Chatto and Windus, London; 1927) 4 vols. i.121.

98. Robert Greene, *Menaphon* (1589), ed. G. B. Harrison (Blackwell, Oxford; 1927) p.45; *A Masque presented at Ludlow Castle*, ll.321-326, in *John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (Longman, London; 1971) p.192.

virtue courtesy second. This would be the normal lexical development, and is indeed substantiated in the *MED* where the word *court* is being used for a "formal assembly held by the sovereign" in the mid-twelfth century, while the earliest quotation for *courtesy* is early thirteenth century. Yet in spite of this logical development, the literature of courtesy had a much older pedigree than the literature of courts. In epics, romances and courtesy books the literature of courtesy had been thriving since the thirteenth century at least, but, as D. A. L. Morgan points out, the literature of courts was a fifteenth-century phenomenon.⁽⁹⁹⁾ In that period the king's household is designated the court in household ordinances and the notion of a centralised unit of political power arrived. The Continental tradition of court literature, satire and pastoral was borrowed, adapted and translated to provide a new articulation for an old debate. Caxton, Barclay, Skelton and Wyatt each show how the literature of the court borrowed from courtesy literature, and it is precisely these two languages that Spenser attempts to reconcile. But the literature of courtesy brought with it a troublesome pedigree: the vast associative field of the word *courtesy* itself.

Courtesy's semantic history is a long and complex one, and many medieval scholars acknowledge the enormous breadth

99. D. A. L. Morgan, "The house of policy: the political role of the late Plantagenet household, 1422-1485", in *The English Court*, ed. Starkey, pp.25-70.

of its definition, writing of a "family" or "cluster" of meanings and of its great "semantic range".(100) The word and its multiple signification derived from the French *courtoisie* which is described by Henri Dupin as "quelque chose de trop complexe et de trop subtil pour se laisser enfermer dans une définition. . . . Quoi qu'il en soit, observation du salut, du baiser et du congé, pratique de l'accueil et de l'hospitalité, loyauté et fidélité, bonté et pitié, douceur, libéralité et largesse, joie, souci de la renommée, mesure, amour et, dans cet amour même, application des vertus courtoises".(101) Other French medievalists call the semantic field "compliqué" or "complexe".(102)

For all this, courtesy has long been recognised as a key term in the literature of the Middle Ages, if not its

100. D. S. Brewer, "Courtesy and the *Gawain*-Poet", in *Patterns of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Memory of C. S. Lewis*, ed. J. Lawlor (Arnold, London; 1966) pp.54-85, this quotation p.54; Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, p.7; W. O. Evans, "'Cortaysye' in Middle English", *Medieval Studies* 29 (1967) pp.143-157, this quotation p.143. In the following discussion I take the definition of an associative field from Stephen Ullmann: "the 'associative field' of a word is formed by an intricate network of associations, some based on similarity, others on contiguity, some arising between senses, others between names, others again between both", *Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning* (Blackwell, Oxford; 1972) p.240.

101. Henri Dupin, *La Courtoisie au Moyen Age* (Picard, Paris; 1931) p.128.

102. Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises", p.136; Georges Matoré, *Le vocabulaire et la société médiévale* (Presses Universitaires, Paris; 1985) p.178. See also Georges Duby, "La Féodalité? Une mentalité médiévale", *Annales. Economies - Sociétés - Civilisations* 13 (1958) pp.765-771, esp. pp.766-767; and Hollyman, *Le Développement du Vocabulaire féodale*.

"mot-témoin" in Matoré's definition.(103) Attempts have been made, particularly by French scholars, to make sense of the word's vast associative range and to define the breadth of its meanings. In a seminal essay, Frappier divides courtesy into two main semantic areas to which he gives a wide and a narrow signification respectively. The first comprises general social and behavioural propriety which relates in a general way to "la générosité chevaleresque, [et] les élégances de la politesse mondaine". The second, a narrower, more precise definition denotes the arts of love and courtship. Within these Frappier adds qualitative directives: "une valeur sociale" which makes courtesy primarily the characteristic of a social class, those at court, and "une valeur morale" which makes it an ensemble of virtues.(104)

It is now generally agreed among the medieval philol^ogists that in French the word *courtois* developed by association from a social designation to a moral one. That is to say, the courtly virtues of the *chevalier*, including largesse, courage and loyalty, were primarily social virtues. These came gradually to accumulate many complimentary meanings until *courtoisie* denoted a many-sided

103. "Le mot-témoin est le symbole matériel d'un fait spirituel important; c'est l'élément à la fois expressif et tangible qui concrétise un fait de civilisation . . . ; la mutation brusque qui lui donne naissance est le signe d'une nouvelle situation sociale, économique, esthétique, etc . . . : il marque un tournant", Georges Matoré, *La Méthode en Lexicologie: Domaine Français* (Didier, Paris; 1953) pp.65-66.

104. Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises", p.136.

virtue which could include such anti-social attributes as melancholia and adultery. This will be discussed shortly, but first it is necessary to deal with what Frappier identifies as an anomaly: the troubadour notion of *cortezia*. As he makes clear, this is not to be confused with the French *courtoisie*.(105)

Essentially there was no semantic development of the troubadour word *cortezia* from a social to a moral or amatory sense. The two senses evolved simultaneously.(106) The adjective *cortes* and the noun *cortezia* were not delimited to the social sphere of the court, but were concerned from the outset with a wider moral sense.(107) In the language of the troubadours *cortezia* is a meritocratic virtue capable, through love, of ennobling even the lowest-born to the pinnacle of human perfection. Love was not courtly in so

105. See, for example, the paradox that Sutherland identifies in courtly lyrics when she assumes that Provençal *cortezia* and French *courtoisie* mean the same: "*Cortezia* demands that the individual should be constantly aware of his obligations to the society in which he lives . . . the poet is bound by *courtoisie* to be social, while being impelled by *courtoisie* to be in love which will render him oblivious of his social duties", "The Love Meditation in Courtly Literature", in *Studies in Medieval French presented to Alfred Ewert*, pp.165, 167. As Frappier shows, *cortezia* rarely has this social meaning in troubadour verse.

106. This account is based on the following studies: Denomy, "Courtly Love and Courtliness"; Lazar, "Les Eléments Constitutifs de la *cortezia*" dans la Lyrique des Troubadours"; Stanley L. Galpin, *Cortois and Vilain: A Study of the Distinctions Made Between Them by the French and Provençal Poets of the 12th, 13th and 14th Centuries* (Ryder, New Haven; 1905); and Hollyman, *Le Développement du Vocabulaire féodale*.

107. See also Lazar, "Eléments Constitutifs", pp.72, 94: "lorsque les troubadours parlent de *cortezia*, celle-ci est toujours, ou presque, fonction d'une préoccupation morale ou d'une émotion esthétique . . . la *cortezia* des troubadours n'est pas la Courtoisie de la chevalerie".

far as it did not derive from the court *per se*. It was not the behavioural embellishment of a man already courtly, nor an additional virtue serving to round off the nearly perfect courtier. On the contrary, love was an active virtue which was the fount and source of *cortezia*. You could not have one without the other, for *cortezia* "denotes and particularizes that sort of love that is accounted the origin and font of man's natural excellence, the novel conception that sexual love is the ennobling force in man".(108) Troubadour love is an ideology, a course of action which renders its subjects *cortes*, the sum of all virtues. "E cortesia es d'amar" as Marcabru says, a point repeated by Cercamon and by Pierre d'Auvergne:

Cercamons ditz: greu er cortes
Hom qui d'amor se desesper.

Bernartz, greu er pros ni cortes
qui ab amor no·s sap tener. (109)

Love is the great social leveller, for the basest man who loves with *fin'amors* can be *cortes*. The adjective *cortes* is to be found among the lyrics of the first troubadour

108. Denomy, "Courtly Love and Courtliness", p.47. See also Lazar, "Eléments Constitutifs", p.72: "l'amour courtois n'est pas l'une des catégories de la courtoisie, l'un de ses éléments constitutifs. La *cortezia* des troubadours, au contraire, est essentiellement un produit de la *fin'amors*".

109. Marcabru, song xv, "Cortesamen vuoill comenssar", l.20, in *Poésies Complètes*, ed. Dejeanne, p.62; Cercamon, song i, "Quant l'aura doussa s'amarzis", ll.57-58, in *Les Poésies de Cercamon*, ed. Alfred Jeanroy (Champion, Paris; 1922) p.4; Peire d'Auvergne, in a debate with Bernart de Ventadorn, song ii, "Amics Bernartz de Ventadorn", ll.15-16, in *Bernart von Ventadorn: Seine Lieder*, ed. Carl Appel (Niemeyer, Halle a S.; 1915) p.11.

Guillaume IX, duke of Aquitaine, and he is also the first to use it with what became its traditional or formulaic opposite, *vilain*. (110) By contrasting *cortes* with *vilain* he is, of course, referring to the poles within the feudal social hierarchy. Yet his aim is to abolish social differentiation under the general banner of love. Although it derived etymologically from *cort*, *cortezia*'s semantic force was egalitarian in tendency. The "sens social" serves only to show that *cortes* does not belong to an exclusive social caste but to the joys and sorrows of love:

Per son joy pot malautz sanar,
 E per sa ira sas morir
 E savis hom enfolezir
 E belhs hom sa beutat mudar
 E l plus cortes vilanejar
 E totz vilas encortezir. (111)

In French, on the other hand, *courtoisie*'s evolution from a social to a moral sense was slow and complex. In its earliest use the adjective *corteis* (which preceded the noun by two decades or so) had a purely social meaning, denoting the characteristics of a good vassal, knight, or man of the court. It is in this sense that the word is used in the early *chansons de geste* of the late eleventh century. In the *Chanson de Roland*, for example, Oliver is

110. Hollyman, *Le Développement du Vocabulaire féodale*, p.163: "C'est chez Guillaume IX qu'on trouve les premiers témoignages de ces emplois où l'opposition s'explicite aussi au moyen de dérivés des deux mots". See also Galpin, *Cortois and Vilain*, *passim*.

111. Guillaume IX, song ix, "Mout jauzens me prenc en amar", ll.25-30, in *Les Chansons de Guillaume IX, Duc d'Aquitaine (1071-1127)*, ed. Alfred Jeanroy (Champion, Paris; 1913) p.23.

twice called "li proz et li curteis", and the barons of Auvergne are noted for being "li plus curteis".(112) This designates their social rather than their moral status, implying warrior virtues of loyalty, obedience and courage. In the *Chanson de Guillaume*, Girard's taunt to the vanquished Esturmi is called "un curteis mot".(113)

Courtoisie remained a chiefly military virtue until the romans of the mid-twelfth century broadened its definition. The description of Cariado in Thomas' *Tristan* combines the old social designation of the adjective *corteis* with other virtues:

En la curt ad molt demoré
Et pur cest'amor sujorné.
Il esteit molt bels chevaliers,
Corteis e orguillus e fiers,
Mès n'iert mie bien a loer
Endreit de ses armes porter.
Il ert molt bels e bons parleres,
Bels donoiere e bons gaberes. (114)

112. *La Chanson de Roland*, ll.576, 3755, 3796, ed. F. Whitehead (Blackwell, Oxford; 1947) pp. 17, 110, 111. See also the adverb *curteisement*, ll.1164, 3823, *ibid.* pp.35, 112.

113. *La Chanson de Guillaume*, l.422, ed. Duncan McMillan (Picard, Paris; 1949) 2 vols. i.20. For other examples of *courtoisie* in early *chansons de geste* see Hans Krings, "Die Stellung von *corteis* in den *Chansons de geste*", in *Die Geschichte des Wortschatzes der Höflichkeit im Französischen* (University of Bonn, Bonn; 1961) pp.41-46.

114. Thomas, *Le Roman de Tristan*, ll.861-868, ed. Joseph Bédier (Didot, Paris; 1902-1905) 2 vols. i.296. Unless otherwise stated, all italics are my own. Lazar comments that here *corteis* refers exclusively to the social sense because pride is a sin against *cortezia*, "Eléments Constitutifs", p.71. He not only confuses *cortezia* with *courtoisie*, but fails to read it in the context of Cariado's finesse in love-making.

Cariado's courtesy, alongside his arrogance, remains a feudal, warrior value. But neither is incompatible with other more gentle arts such as love-making or conversation.

Around the middle of the twelfth century the associative field of French *courtoisie* expanded enormously. In an interesting study Glyn Burgess identifies this period as the moment of transition from literary epic to romance.(115) He presents a diachronic study of a group of words from three romances, the *Romans de Thèbes*, *Eneas* and *Troie*, and provides remarkable insight into the semantic evolution of *courtoisie*.

In the *Roman de Thèbes*, for instance, courtesy is one of the warrior virtues of Drias but other qualitative associations are beginning to accrue.(116) In particular *courtoisie* comes to require an element of personal beauty. Jocasta finds Oedipus attractive and seductive; his personal charm and beauty are singled out and he is described "*Corteis le vit et sage et bel*". Similarly, king Archaide, who is "*Li proz, li sages, li corteis*", succeeds

115. Burgess, *Contribution à l'Étude du Vocabulaire Pré-Courtois*. The following discussion is largely based on Burgess' findings.

116. *Le Roman de Thèbes*, ed. Léopold Constans (Didot, Paris; 1890) 2 vols. Drias is described: "*Mout fu corteis et de bons gas; / Riches hon fu et de parage, / Et si ot mout grant vasselage; / Bien fu duéz de chevalerie: / Quant veit lou, ne s'en targe mie*", 11.9132-9136, *ibid.* i.449. See also Amphion, who "*D'armes porter fu mout corteis*", 1.5673, *ibid.* i.277. *Corteis* and related words occur some thirty times in this text.

in attracting women by his great beauty, and the companions of Polinices are called "Proz et corteis et assez bel".(117)

The *Roman de Thèbes* has a tendency to group *corteis* with other adjectives, *proz*, *bels* and so forth, in repeated formulae. This is even more manifest in the *Roman de Troie*, and indicates the burgeoning semantic field of *courtoisie*. The first *corteis* person in the poem is Jason, and it is clear that his worthy attributes refer to more than soldier-like ability:

De grant beauté et de grant pris
E de grant sen, si com jo truis.
Grant force aveit e grant vertu,
Par maint regne fu coneü;
Mout fu *corteis* e genz e proz
E mout esteit amez de toz;
Mout por demenot grant noblece
E mout amot gloire e largece. (118)

Jason's courtesy goes hand in hand with physical beauty, strength, charisma, nobility and generosity.

In the course of the twelfth century the associative field of French *courtoisie* had expanded so as to include almost every conceivable virtue, including the ability to be loved and to love in return. To illustrate this would demand too much space, but the works of Marie de France serve as a brief representative example. In the Prologue to the *Fables* she praises her king who "flurs est de chevalerie, / D'enseignement, de *curteisie*", preserving the

117. *Roman de Thèbes*, ll.364, 9164, 2974, *ibid.* i.20, 451, 148.

118. Benoit de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie*, ll.729-736, ed. Léopold Constans (Didot, Paris; 1904-1912) 6 vols. i.39. *Corteis* and related words occur forty-four times in the poem.

old social connotations of courtesy as the virtue of the good knight.(119) She repeats this sense in the *Lais*, as in this description of the lover Eliduc:

Eliduc fu curteis et sage,
Beau chevaler [et] pruz et large.

In *Equitan*, on the other hand, courtesy appears in another sense almost synonymous with love:

Si bele dame tant mar fust,
S'ele n'amast u dru eüst!
Que devendreit sa curteisie,
S'ele n'amast de drüerie?

At the same time Marie is anxious to distinguish between true love and the false, specious love practised at court by dissembling courtiers in *Guigemar*:

Plusurs le [amur] tiennent a gabeis,
Si cume li vilain curteis,
Ki jolivent par tut le mund,
Puis se avantent de ceo que funt;
N'est pas amur, einz est folie
E mauveisté e lecherie. (120)

Marie therefore uses the adjective *curteis* and noun *curteisie* to denote a social virtue, an amorous characteristic, and a moral vice.

Middle English began to evolve a vocabulary of courtesy in the thirteenth century. The different French significations came into the English language as it were ready-made and it is difficult to trace their chronology in

119. Prologue, ll.31-32, in *Marie de France: Fables*, ed. Alfred Ewert and R. C. Johnston (Blackwell, Oxford; 1942) p.1.

120. *Eliduc*, ll.271-272; *Equitan*, ll.79-82; *Guigemar*, ll.487-492, in *Marie de France: Lais*, ed. Alfred Ewert (Blackwell, Oxford; 1947) pp. 134, 28, 15.

the same way. Nonetheless, treated contextually Middle English *courteisie* has a breadth of reference at least as full as French. In many texts, particularly French-based epic romances, *courteisie* retains the original social sense of a warrior virtue it first had in the *Chanson de Roland*.⁽¹²¹⁾ The young Beves of Hampton is sent south to a "riche erl, þat schel þe gie / And teche þe of corteisie" in order to learn the art of arms and to return to fight for his heritage.⁽¹²²⁾ In *Sir Ferumbras*, Oliver is a "corveys kniȝt" for letting the eponymous hero retrieve his sword, and the king of Spain acts with similar "*kortesie*" in *William of Palerne*, disdaining to fight a disadvantaged man.⁽¹²³⁾ Sir Lancelot is noted for his great courtesy in *Le Morte Arthur*; it is the virtue that constantly reminds him of his feudal allegiance and keeps him from retaliating against his king:

The kyng was euyr nere be-Syde
And hewe on hym with All hys mayne,
And he [Lancelot] so corteise was that tyde

121. See *MED*. s.v. *courteisie* sb. 1) "The complex of courtly ideals; chivalry, chivalrous conduct".

122. *The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, ll.364-365, ed. E. Kölbing (*EETSES* 46; 1885) p.16.

123. *Sir Ferumbras*, l.682, in *The English Charlemagne Romances I*, ed. S. J. Herrtage (*EETSES* 34; 1879, repr. 1903, 1966) p.29. *The Romance of William of Palerne*, l.3926, ed. W. W. Skeat (*EETSES* 1; 1867) p.127. See also *The Sege of Melayne* (c.1450), ll.1066-1068:

The Saraȝene was curtays in þat fighte
And lawses owt a knyfe full righte,
His swerde he keste hym fro.

in *The English Charlemagne Romances II*, ed. S. J. Herrtage (*EETSES* 35; 1880) p.34.

O dynte that he nolde smyte a-gayne. (124)

Malory calls him "the curtest knyght that ever bare shelde". In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* it is specifically its reputation for "cortaysye" that brings the green interloper to Arthur's court. (125) Clearly, courtesy was a part of every knight's accomplishments:

Vor he wilneb corteysyes to done an largeliche
yeue and kny[3]thod to lyerny and guo to armes.
(126)

Often, courtesy is catalogued with other related virtues as if to emphasise its associative range. Gawain's *cortaysye* is enshrined in the Pentangle along with *fraunchyse*, *fela₃schyp*, *clannes* and *pit  *, and Chaucer's Knight loved "chivalrie, / Trouthe and honour, fredom and *curteisie*". (127) Like any polysemous word, courtesy's senses range from the most debased value to the most profound. It could be no more than what Evans calls a "purely conventional reference to acquired patterns - the

124. *Le Morte Arthur*, ll.2170-2173, ed. J. D. Bruce (*EETSES* 88; 1903, repr. 1959) p.65. See also ll.2198-2201:

Whan the kynge was horsyd there,
Launcelot lokys he vpon,
How corteise was in hym more
Then euyr was in Any man.

ibid. p.65.

125. "And here is kydde *cortaysye*, as I haf herd carp, / And pat hatz wayned me hider, iwyis, at þis tyme", *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ll.263-264, ed. Norman Davis (Clarendon, Oxford; 2nd. ed. 1967) p.8.

126. *Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. R. Morris, re-ed. Pamela Gradon (*EETS* 23; 1866, 2nd ed. 1965) p.162.

127. *Sir Gawain*, ll.652-654, ed. Davis, p.19. Chaucer, General Prologue, ll.45-46, in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Oxford University Press, Oxford; 2nd. ed. 1957) p.17.

right thing to do".(128) One instance might be found in
the exemplary table-manners of the hero in *Sir Degaré* :

Sire Degarre coupe of *curteisie*:
He set a chaier bifore þe leuedie,
And þerin himselue set,
And tok a knif and carf his met;

and of Chaucer's Squire who "*Curteis . . . was, lowely and
servysable, / And carf biforn his fader at the table*".(129)
Courtesy is central to Caxton's precepts for good behaviour:

But loke my child / to folkes that ye mete
Ye speke fayr / with wordes of plesaunce
Demure and curtoys / of your demenaunce. (130)

At the other end of the scale, courtesy was capable of
the most profound Christian signification. The earliest
recorded citation of the word in Middle English appears in
the *Ancrene Riwle* to distinguish the charity proper to
 anchoresses from that proper to housewives:

of ancre *kurteisie* and of ancre larges-se. is
ikumen ofte sunne & scheome: on ende. (131)

128. Evans, "'Cortaysye" in Middle English", p.145. See
also *MED* s.v. *courteisie* sb. 2) "Refinement of manners;
gentlemanly or courteous conduct; courtesy, politeness,
etiquette".

129. *Sir Degaré*, ll.819-822, in *Middle English Metrical
Romances*, ed. W. H. French and C. B. Hale (Russell and
Russell, New York; 1930, repr. 1964) 2 vols. i.312.
Chaucer, General Prologue ll.99-100, in *Chaucer*, ed.
Robinson, p.18.

130. Caxton's *Book of Curtesye*, ll.59-61, ed. F. J.
Furnivall (*EETSES* 3; 1868) p.9. See also *The Boke of
Keruynges*: "whan your souerayne [is] set, loke your towell
be aboute your necke / than make your souerayne curtesy", in
Early English Meals and Manners, ed. F. J. Furnivall (*EETS*
32; 1868, repr. 1931) p.156.

131. *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle*, ed. M. Day
(*EETS* 225; 1952) p.190.

But courtesy is not only active charity. It frequently qualifies the quality of mercy attributed to God himself. In Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*, Christ is "the curteis Lord" who "ne wole that no good werk be lost".(132) Christ's Incarnation is considered a "greate cortaysie" in the *Ayenbite of Inwyte*; in the *Cursor Mundi* not only do his miracles manifest "curtasi", but even the punitive vengeance on the Tower of Babel is called a "curtais wrak" since it was undertaken to reform the wrong-doers.(133) Christ actually personifies courtesy in *Purity*: "Alle called on þat Cortayse and claymed his grace", and in *Pearl* his mother is called "Quen of cortaysye" conjuring up all the theological implications of the *Regina Gratiae*.(134)

Love therefore remained only one of many senses incorporated by the quality courtesy. That is not to diminish its importance. In the early lay of *Havelok the Dane*, for example, courtesy is evidently synonymous with the art of love-making:

Til þat she [the princess] were tuelf winter hold,
And of speche were bold;
And þat she covþe of curteysye

132. *Parson's Tale*, l.245, in *Chaucer*, ed. Robinson, p.234.

133. *Ayenbite of Inwyte*, ed. Morris, p.97. *Cursor Mundi* (Cotton MS) l.13355, ed. R. Morris (*EETS* 62; 1876) p.766; and *ibid.* l.2256 (*EETS* 57; 1874, repr. 1961) p.136.

134. *Purity*, l.1097, ed. R. J. Menner (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1920, repr. Archon Books, 1970) p. 42. *Pearl*, l.432, ed. E. V. Gordon (Clarendon, Oxford; 1953) p.16. See also Brewer, "Courtesy and the Gawain-Poet" in *Patterns of Love and Courtesy*, ed. Lawlor, p.65: "cortaysye may be taken here [in *Pearl*] to imply all the network of relationships in heaven, the mutual love and respect that all individuals bear for each other; but since Mary is supreme, her courtesy is particularly the raining down of grace upon others".

Don, and speken of luue-drurye. (135)

It is just such an association that renders Gawain's *cortaysye* to the Lady—temptress so ambiguous in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The word is frequently associated with taboo or illicit love, as here in the fourteenth century lyric, *The Bird with Four Feathers*:

This fedir [Beauty] me bare ful ofte to synne,
And principally to leccherye;
Clipping and kessing cowth I not blynne,
me thought it craft of curteseye. (136)

In the sixteenth century could be used, somewhat archly, as a euphemism for sex. In a translation of one of Erasmus' *Colloquies*, Nicholas Leigh includes the following dialogue:

Pamphilus. In case the husband requireth of his wife the debt of marriage, euen so often as he shall do it, especially if he requireth it for the desire of generation.
Maria. But what if he be fleshfond and wanton, may she not lawfully denie it him?
Pam. She maye admonish him of his fault and rather gently perswade him to bridle hys affections, to giue him a flat nay when he straineth vpon her, she may not. Albeit I here verie fewe men complaine of their wyfes vncurtessie this way. (137)

Gascoigne uses the same device in his prose romance *The Adventures of Master F.J.* The paragon Frances warns F.J. of the inconstancy of his mistress Elinor, revealing the

135. *Havelok the Dane*, ll.192-195, in *Middle English Metrical Romances*, ed. French and Hale, i.82.

136. *The Bird with Four Feathers*, ll.93-96, in *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, ed. Carleton Brown (Clarendon, Oxford; 1924, 2nd ed. 1952) p.211.

137. Erasmus, *A modest meane to Mariage*, trans. N[icholas] L[eigh] (1568), in *Tudor Translations of the Colloquies of Erasmus (1536-1584)*, ed. Dickie A. Spurgeon (Scholars' Facsimiles, New York; 1972) pp.336-337.

latter's intercourse with the "Mynion Secretary" and with two other gentlemen by whom she was "entreated to like *curteousie*". F.J. remains unperturbed, however, and begs the same himself. Elinor submits to the first rough seduction on the floor because "of hir *curteouse* nature she was content to accept bords for a bead of downe". The irony is more pronounced on the occasion of the second, more violent rape, when Elinor "swoning for feare, was constreyned (for a time) to abandon hir body to the enimies *curtesie*". (138) One might compare Miletta in Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*: "I laugh at that you all call loue, and iudge it onely a worde called loue. Me thinks lyking, a *curtesie*, a smile, a beck, and such like, are the very Quintessence of loue". (139)

iii. *Curia Amoris*

Before proceeding to analyse the changing use of *courtship* and *to court* in sixteenth-century English, we should consider briefly the juridical sense of court. In

138. This version of the tale was published in 1573 in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers*, ed. C. T. Prouty (University of Missouri Press, Columbia; 1942) pp.66, 69, 92. The last two examples were expunged from the revised version in the *Posies* of 1575, of which, in the preface, Gascoigne admits he has purged "certaine wanton wordes". The second version of the tale is altogether more moralistic in tone, and in the added prologue and epilogue Gascoigne stresses the "curtesies" of Elinor's father, Lord Valasco, and of Frances. See Frank Fieler, "Gascoigne's Use of Courtly Love Conventions in 'The Adventures Passed by Master F. J.'", *Studies in Short Fiction* 1 (1963-1964) pp.26-32.

139. *Sapho and Phao*, I.iv.15-16, in *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Clarendon, Oxford; 1902) 3 vols. ii.379.

their *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Française*, Bloch and von Wartburg write that in classical Latin, *cohors* "avait déjà la signification de "suite d'un prince", de là "entourage royal", XII^e, ensuite "cour de justice", XII^e, le roi entouré des grands ayant formé longtemps le tribunal supérieur. Ce développement sémantique a été suivi par les langues voisines".(140) That the king's residence should come to mean the same as a court of law neatly illustrates Foucault's notion that in "Western societies since the Middle Ages, the exercise of power has always been formulated in terms of law".(141) The power of arbitration here provides another link between the court and the individual, already forged, however confusingly and controversially, in courtesy. The literary tradition of the *curia amoris*, or court of love, is deeply entrenched in medieval and Renaissance writing.(142) So much so that some scholars were led to believe the Middle Ages witnessed genuine courts of love as formal institutions which debated authentic marital and sexual disputes.(143) Evidence for this opinion was based largely on Capellanus, on Nostradamus' spurious *Lives of the Provençal Poets*, and on fragmentary accounts of the *Cour Amoureuse* held in Burgundy

140. Oscar Bloch and Walther von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Française*, s.v. cour.

141. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, i.87.

142. For a full study, see William Allan Neilson, *The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass.; 1899).

143. See, in particular, Henri Stendhal, *De L'Amour*, ed. Henri Martineau (Garnier, Paris; 1959) pp.306-310.

in 1401.(144) Called to form a distraction from a plague epidemic (and thus acting out the opening scenario of *The Decameron*), the latter was instituted by Duke Charles VI "à l'honneur des dames" and to cultivate poetry. Neilson long ago pointed out that the gathering was closer to pageantry than to any formal legislative body. As he wrote, the crux of any debate over authenticity eventually "comes down to a question of jest or earnest, and the line between these is no easy one to draw".(145) This point has had to be repeated several times since. Benton attacks Amy Kelly's highly imaginative reconstruction of Eleanor of Aquitaine's supposed "academy" because it was based on the dubious textual evidence of Capellanus.(146) Not only is Benton sceptical of the chaplain's precise role at the court; he warns that the multiple interpretations of *De Arte Honeste Amandi* - as a serious work, as a frothy tongue-in-cheek comedy, as a bitter satire on worldly love - necessarily make it "an unsure guide to the literary attitudes or

144. See Arthur Piaget, "La Cour Amoureuse Dite de Charles VI", *Romania* 20 (1891) pp.417-454; Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Penguin, Harmondsworth; 2nd. ed. 1955) pp.112-113; and Neilson, *The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love*, pp.250-251.

145. *ibid.* p.250.

146. Kelly, "Eleanor of Aquitaine and her Courts of Love"; see also Heer, *The Medieval World*, p.134; Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, p.26; and A. G. Dickens, "Monarchy and Cultural Revival: Courts in the Middle Ages", in *The Courts of Europe*, ed. Dickens, pp.8-31, esp. pp.20-22. Contrast Benton, "The Court of Champagne as a Literary Center", and "The Evidence for Andreas Capellanus Re-Examined Again"; and Alfred Karnein, "Amor est Passio - A Definition of Courtly Love?", in *Court and Poet*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess (Cairns, Liverpool; 1981) pp.215-221.

practices of feudal courts".(147) The 'game' theory received new emphasis in Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, which proposes, in a characteristic hypothesis, that the medieval mind was better equipped than ours at holding contradictory ideas at one and the same time. Jest and earnest could be fused *sub specie ludi*, and since courtship is conceived as play in all Indo-European languages, then ritualised love-lore is equally 'ludic'. The love courts, poetic or dramatic, belong to just this specious, playful world. He thought some critics went too far in dismissing the courts as literary fictions, and suggested that they were "a poetic playing at justice". In short, the love-court "is neither the lawsuit proper, nor a free poetical impulse, nor even social diversion pure and simple, but the age-old struggle for honour in matters of love".(148) Taking up from Huizinga, John Stevens' study of the Tudor court regards play as love's essential manifestation. While no concrete evidence exists for the Continental love-courts in England, he nevertheless gives his term "the game of love" to every form of amorous behaviour, from dancing and playing chess to rhetorical debates.(149)

The *curia amoris* was primarily a poetic convention denoting a specialised *locus* devoted to the works and protagonists of love. Ubiquitous in love lyrics and

147. Benton, "The Court of Champagne as a Literary Center", p.581.

148. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, pp.147-148.

149. Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*, pp.151, 154-202.

romances from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, it is usually an enclosed place, a garden, palace or temple, often of highly specific design, such as Calanso's five-portalled palace or the treacherous court of love in Capellanus' *De Arte Honeste Amandi*.(150) The court of love served as both a "courte ryall", residence of the king and queen of love, and as a legislative tribunal which debated and judged *questioni d'amore*.(151) These two functions were interdependent, as Capellanus showed by using the nouns *aula* and *curia* interchangeably throughout his treatise.(152) Capellanus was one of the earliest exponents of the legalistic tradition of love. Debate, appeal and judgement create the narrative framework of the first two books of the treatise, giving an allegorical structure to the old rhetorical love-games of the troubadours, the *jocz partits* and the *tenzos*. The dialogues turn into *altercationes* which demand arbitration by a number of named court ladies, including Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter Marie de

150. See Guiraut de Calanso, "A leis cui am de cor e de saber" ll.25-27:

En son palais, on ela vai jazer,
a-cinc portals, e quils dos pot obrir,
leu passals tres, mas non pot leu partir.

in *Die allegorische Canzone des Guirarut de Calanso*, ed. Otto Dammann (Koebner, Breslau; 1891) p.2; and *Andreas Capellanus on Love*, ed. P. G. Walsh (Duckworth, London; 1982) pp.100-102.

151. Stephen Hawes, *The Passetyme of Pleasure*, l.4085, ed. W. E. Mead (*EETS* 173; 1928) p.154.

152. *Capellanus on Love*, ed. Walsh: for *amoris aula*, see pp. 42, 86, 100, 124, 170; for *amoris curia*, see pp. 84, 100, 118, 122, 152. The terms are also interchangeable in different contexts: thus, the royal court to which Andreas is chaplain is the "aula regiae", p.152, while the court of the heavenly kingdom is called "coelestis curia regis", p.52.

Champagne. These supposed gatherings of ladies for the purposes of judgement, and their legalistic jargon (*consilium, iudicio, praecepta, regulae*) set the trend for a host of juridical love poems in the succeeding centuries. By the fifteenth century, the court of love appears as a fully-fledged allegorical device, its formulae reappearing in many poems with predictable regularity.⁽¹⁵³⁾ It possesses a number of formulaic attributes: its position on Mount Citherea, its spring-tide setting, and the pictures of classical lovers decorating the walls, for example, are all familiar from poems like the *Romaunt of the Rose*, *The Parlement of Foules*, Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*, *The Court of Love*, the pseudo-Chaucerian *Court of Venus*, and *The Faerie Queene*. Narratives often take a stereotyped form: the melancholic lover complains to Venus of the pains he suffers. He is either a member of the court of love already, like Gower's *Amans*, or he needs to be initiated like Philogenet in *The Court of Love*. There he seeks "redress" by presenting his complaint in proper form to a "courte of parlement" as a "bill", as the lovers do in *The Assembly of Ladies* and *The Court of Venus*. The suitor is usually surrounded by great crowds of lovers acting likewise. In Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*, the suitor dreams of a circular temple full of lovers "wip billis in hir honde",

153. For a discussion of different terminology, see Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*, p.114, on different types of court; and D. A. Pearsall ed., *The Floure and the Leafe* (Manchester University Press, Manchester; 1980) p.170, on the distinction between "assembly" and "parlement".

a formula which reappears in *The Kingis Quair* and *The Passetyme of Pleasure*.(154) The outcome of each appeal is felicitous, sometimes accompanied by the delivery of Love's statutes or rules, what Capellanus calls *praecepta* or *regulae*.(155)

The notion of the *curia amoris* retained its imaginative appeal well into the sixteenth century. Hawes' popular *Passetyme of Pleasure* and even the controversial *Court of Venus* testify to the tradition's continuing mythos, one that may even have caught the imagination of Spenser in the mysterious *Court of Cupid* which E. K. cryptically ascribes to him in the preface to *The Shepheardes Calender*. Even without the forensic nature of such courts, the generalised *débat* on matters of love remained current, to be enshrined in *The Book of the Courtier*, and adapted to the dramatic purpose of pageantry in Sidney's *Lady of May*.

154. See John Lydgate, "The Temple of Glas", l.50, in *John Lydgate: Poems*, ed. John Norton-Smith (Clarendon, Oxford; 1966) p.68; James I, *The Kingis Quair*, l.573, in *James I of Scotland: The Kingis Quair*, ed. John Norton-Smith (Clarendon, Oxford; 1971) p.21; and Hawes, *Passetyme of Pleasure*, l.3752, ed. Mead, p.142.

155. *Capellanus on Love*, ed. Walsh, pp.116, 280.

CHAPTER TWO

'COURTSHIP' and 'TO COURT'

Woordes are lyke leaues, as Horace reporteth:
leaues spring before Summer, and fall before
Winter; and the same inconstancy is in words.(1)

Introduction

Abraham Fraunce's words suggest that the evolution of language is a natural but endless subject. This chapter proposes only to examine a single element in sixteenth-century vocabulary, but it traces a semantic change which could be seen to have profound social and cultural implications. This needs no further preface than the following fact: in the sixteenth century, residing in or frequenting the royal court came to mean the same as wooing a member of the opposite sex. The same verb, to court, possessed both senses. This semantic development, which effectively equates the behaviour of courtiers with love-making, has several implications. It suggests that the structure and conduct of the court were transformed into a model of amorous role-play. Secondly, it implies that wooing required a courtly pedigree. A later section will attempt to deal with these questions more fully. At present it is necessary to define the method of analysis which will be used. I draw both method and terminology from Saussure, who first distinguished between synchronic

1. Abraham Fraunce, *The lawiers logike* (1588), sig.**2.

and diachronic linguistics as a means of studying respectively language *systems* and semantic *change*:

Synchronic linguistics will be concerned with logical and psychological connexions between coexisting items constituting a system, as perceived by the same collective consciousness. *Diachronic linguistics* on the other hand will be concerned with connexions between sequences of items not perceived by the same collective consciousness, which replace one another without themselves constituting a system.(2)

The same terminology can be applied to semantics. In Stephen Ullmann's definition

Synchronistic semantics is the science of meaning, diachronistic semantics the science of changes of meaning. The former revolves round the semantic relationship, simple or multiple; the latter is concerned with *semantic change* . . . If meaning is conceived as a reciprocal relationship obtaining between name and sense, then a *semantic change* will occur whenever a new name becomes attached to a sense and/or a new sense to a name.(3)

The following chapter aims to employ both methods. It begins with diachronic surveys of the verb *to court* in French, Italian and English, and then moves on to a synchronic analysis of the verb and related words in Elizabethan literature.

The causes of semantic change are rarely simple and any lexical history must take account of multiple and various factors. Semantic change may occur owing to altered

2. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Roy Harris (Duckworth, London; 1983) p.98, Saussure's italics.

3. Stephen Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics* (Jackson, Glasgow; 1951, 2nd. ed. Blackwell, Oxford; 1957) p.171, Ullmann's italics. For the sake of clarity and consistency I have (unless otherwise stated) suppressed all italics but my own for the remainder of this chapter.

historical circumstances, to ambiguity resulting from habitual collocation or polysemy, to taboo, and to the association and specialisation of different senses. A number of these forces are brought into play in the development of the verb to court and its related words. At this stage it may be instructive to construct a brief model of the word's semantic development, before proceeding to the evidence.

Most Romance languages, and all those under consideration here, had a name first for the residence and then for the retinue of the prince - the court. The word derived severally from the classical Latin *cohors* and *curia* via the medieval Latin *cortis*.⁽⁴⁾ In the Middle Ages, similarly, all the languages under discussion formed a verb whose root derived from the word for court - Provençal *cortejar*, Hispanic languages *cortejar*, French *cortoyer* (becoming *courtiser*), and Italian *corteare* (becoming *corteggiare*). In almost all cases the verb had a purely social sense, meaning 'to reside at the court'. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, the word expanded its semantic field considerably. This coincides with the period of 'courtisation', in Elias' phrase, of centralised royal power, a period when the phenomenon of 'being at court' came under a new scrutiny. The old sense

4. According to *OLD*, *cohors* had chiefly agricultural and military connotations; *curia* came to signify the Roman senate. Du Cange notes that medieval Latin fused the two, producing a variant spelling *cortis* / *curtis* with a range of meanings from "atrium rusticum" to "aula".

of the verb, 'to frequent the court', therefore widened its field of reference to include a whole range of courtly experience. Through contiguity of senses the verb came to specify the behaviour befitting those at court, in particular their *rhetorical* behaviour. As the verb shifted from intransitive to transitive use, it came to denote in particular a persuasive way of speaking: flattery and rhetoric. It is at this stage, through emotive similarity of senses, that the verb developed an amorous sense. It required only a simple shift in application from the flattery of a prince or senior, to that of a beloved.

According to Ullmann's functional classification, what I have described is a transfer of name due to similarity of sense.(5) Although a relatively straightforward development, it comprises historical change, association of semantic fields, and a process of specialisation, as the first simple sense splintered into a number of concurrent senses. Throughout the sixteenth century these senses coexisted, but by the end of the eighteenth the amorous specification of *to court* superseded the other social senses, and now remains the only current sense of the verb.

i. A diachronic analysis of 'to court' in the Romance languages

5. "Sense s_1 has some features in common with some other sense, s_2 , lying within its associative field. At a given moment, attention will be focused solely on the common denominator, on the overlap between their semantic ranges, and the name pertaining to s_1 , m_1 , will be felt as an adequate designation for s_2 ", Ullmann, *The Principles of Semantics*, p.223.

Characteristically, the one exception to these general rules is the language of the troubadours, and it would be as well to consider this anomaly before proceeding. It is true they had and used the verb *cortejar* / *corteyar*. But just as the substantive and adjective *cortezia* and *cortes* preserved from their inception a moral not a social sense, so the verb shared the somewhat egalitarian principles of *fin'amors*. Unlike its French and Italian counterparts, Provençal *cortejar* (and its related noun *cortejador*, meaning lover) referred to love from its earliest use and never seems to have denoted residence at court, as the following twelfth and thirteenth-century examples show:

Ben fort aventura ai
 Qu'om mais non l'es desplazens;
 Ni es belhs aculhimens
 Mas quan d'aquels qu'elha fai
 A quascun que la corteya,
 Segon los corteiadors:
 Mas mi non enten ni ve;
 Ni ieu, cum qu'elha m mal me,
 No m virarai ja alhors. (6)

De tals n'i ac que mout si dolgron
 de las dompnas, que ges non volgron
 c'om las vengues trop cortejar;
 lassas foron del cavalgar
 e de la calor c'an ahuda. (7)

E si tot yeu en los tractastz
 Sobieyras ay dig vanetastz,
 Et ay tractat d'aquest'amor
 Segon la mondana folhor,
 Et ay lauzat quez om domney

6. Giraud le Roux, "A la mia fe, amors", ll.46-54, in *Choix des Poésies Originales des Troubadours*, ed. F. J. M. Raynouard (Didot, Paris; 1816-1821) 6 vols. iii.6-7.

7. *Le Roman de Flamenca*, ll.451-455, ed. Ulrich Gschwind (Francke, Berne; 1976) 2 vols. i.34-35. Gschwind translates *cortejar* as "faire la cour aux dames", ii.278. See also *cortejador*, l.1131, which he translates "gens qui aiment à faire la cour aux dames", ii.278.

Monstran la via del cortei,
Totas vegadas cosselhan . . . (8)

In the language of the troubadours, *cortejar* and wooing were uniquely associated without the development of a social sense. This evidence suggests that the verb already had a propensity to denote love-making, one which other Romance languages were slower to assimilate. The verb *cortejar*, it must be said, is relatively rare among the writings of the troubadours. Far more common is its synonym *domneirer*, illustrated above by the *Breviari* and discussed earlier in the introduction.(9) Since it is the 'courtisation' of the vocabulary of love that is my concern, we should now consider the process of semantic change in French and Italian.

a. French

The French verb *courtiser* evolved in the fifteenth century. It derived from a much older intransitive verb *cortoyer* / *cortoier* which dates from the eleventh century and has the general sense "être à la cour du prince, du

8. Matre Ermengaud, *Le Breviari d'Amour*, ll.34494-34500, ed. Gabriel Azaïs (Franck, Paris; 1862-1881) 2 vols. ii.671. Azaïs translates *cortey* "action de courtiser les dames", ii.724.

9. See above pp.3-6.

seigneur".(10) The following twelfth and thirteenth-century examples may serve:

Sire Guillaume, alez-vos herbergier,
Vostre cheval fêtes bien aésier,
Puis revenez à la cort por mengier.
Trop pouremant venez or cortoyer:
Dont n'avez-vos serjant né escuier,
Qui vos servist à voste deschaucier? (11)

Quant repairâmes de Rome cortoyer,
Sous Yvorie le trovâmes couchié,
Où se dormoit enmi un pré plenier.

Por chou c'Ogier en vaut au roi plaidier,
Le fist li rois de sa tiere cachier
Et ses casteaus abatre et escillier,
Ne li laissa ki vausist un denier;
En autre tiere le convint cortoyer,
Passa les mons, si vint à Désier. (12)

En la moie foi, sire, par mortel encombrier
Jes envoiai [mes fils] en France, à Paris
cortoyer;
Charles en ot grant joie, tot furent
chevalier. (13)

In the fifteenth century, the intransitive cortoyer gave rise to the transitive courtiser. Its medial s derives either from courtisan (as Larousse suggests) or from

10. Godefroy, s.v. cortoyer. See also the Hispanic equivalent cortejar, meaning "Fer la cort, obsequiar qualcú en senyal de respecte o d'amor" [Alcover], which was current from the thirteenth century. For an example of Catalan cortejar see *Crònica d'en Ramon Muntaner*, ed. Joseph Coroleu (Barcelona; 1886) p.337: "E in Macina desarma e pensa de seguir la cort del senyor rey, axi com aquell quel dit senyor rey de Sicilia no feya res que ell nou sables. E vixqueren en gran alegre e en gran deport, vesitant e cortejant tota Calàbria e el Principat de Taranto".

11. Guillaume d'Orange, *La Battaile d'Aleschans*, ll.2723-2728, in *Guillaume d'Orange. Chansons de Geste*, ed. M. W. J. A. Jonckbloet (Nyhoff, La Haye; 1854) 2 vols. i.286-287.

12. Raimbert de Paris, *La Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarche*, ll.9400-9402, 9742-9747, ed. J. Barrois (Techener, Paris; 1842) pp.381, 395.

13. *La Chanson des Quatre Fils Aymon d'Après le Manuscrit de Vallière*, ll.3396-3398, ed. Ferdinand Castets (Coulet, Montpellier; 1909) pp.380-381.

courtois, although both of these produced transitive verbs of their own in the sixteenth century.(14)

Litttré quotes the earliest use of the verb *courtiser* in the lyrics of Olivier Basselin where the verb appears, interestingly, in the specialised amatory sense "*courtiser une femme, chercher à lui plaire*":

On va disant que j'ai fait une amie,
Mais je n'en ay point encore d'envie:
Je ne sçauray assez bien *courtiser*.
Moy, j'aime mieux boire un coup que baiser.

L'amour je laisseray faire
Et les dames *courtiser*,
Il ne me faut plus qu'à boire
D'autant, et me reposer.(15)

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14. *courtisaner*, "Avoir les manières d'un courtisan, d'une femme du cour" [Huguet]. See, for example, Nicholas de Cholières, *Après Dinées* (1587): "S'il fait pennader et *courtisanner* sa femme, voila de la proye qu'il met à l'hazard du premier Tiercelet qui aura la griffe forte pour l'enlever", in *Oeuvres de Seigneur de Cholières*, ed. E. Tricotel (Bibliophiles, Paris; 1879) 2 vols. ii.94. See also *cortoyisir* / *cortoyser*, used, for example, by Germain Colin Bucher, "A Monsieur de Saint Aubin" (1500-1522), 11.7-10: "Mais, si vous plaist ung peu vous *cortoyisir* / Et avec nous venir jouer et rire, / Vous trouverez commeres en desir / De faire rage, et merveilles de dire", in *Un Emule de Clément Marot: Les Poésies de Germain Colin Bucher*, ed. M. Joseph Denais (Techener, Paris; 1890) p.116. In the Glossary, Denais adds: "*Courtoysir* - Courtoisie étant employé, au XVI^e siècle, dans le sens de cadeau, ce verbe signifie probablement faire un présent; il ne paraît pas avoir été usité par d'autres écrivains", *ibid.* p.294.
15. "Le Vin L'Emporte sur l'Amour", 11.1-4, "Les Gales Bon-Temps", 11.1-4, in *Vaux-de-Vire d'Olivier Basselin et de Jean le Houx*, ed. P. L. Jacob (Delahays, Paris; 1858) pp.11-12, 92.

The complex publication-history of Basselin's lyrics makes precise dating problematic.(16) However, it is clear that by the sixteenth century the semantic field of *courtiser* had widened to specify courtly behaviour, and in particular rhetoric as well as love. Indeed, the following quotations from Olivier de Magny and Joachim du Bellay illustrate the similarity between these two semantic fields by using the same synonyms *caresser* and *baiser* in both senses. In the first examples *courtiser* and *caresser* seem to specify rhetorical behaviour:

Mon Compaignon [du Bellay] s'estime & se plaist de
se veoir,
Il est dispost, bragard & plein de gentillesse,
Il oste le bonnet, il courtise, il caresse,
Et fait quelque fois que ne veult le deuoir . . .

Qu'il ayt cet aiguillon qui tout le monde poingt
De vouloir estre grand, qu'il courtise & caresse,
Qu'il blasme ceulx qui ont en eulx quelque
finesse,
S'il te plaist en cela il ne me desplaist
point.(17)

In the following examples, however, *courtiser* and *baiser* are employed in a wholly amorous sense:

Bien heureux est celuy qui la [ma Maistresse]
peult courtiser,
Et plus heureux encor cil qui la peult baiser,
Mais plus heureux cent fois qui se voit aymé
d'elle.

16. External evidence places Basselin in the early to mid-fifteenth century, but the earliest surviving printed edition is that of Jean de Cesne in 1670. The situation is further confused by the fact that Jean le Houx published some *Vaux-de-Vire* in the 1570s (1576, according to Larousse) that were long ascribed to Basselin.

17. Olivier de Magny, sonnet 94, followed by du Bellay's reply, in *Les Souspirs d'Olivier de Magny*, ed. E. Courbet (Lemerre, Paris; 1874) pp.67-68.

N'emprunter que le moins que tu pourras d'aucun,
T'aquiter quand tu peulx à l'endroit d'un chacun,
Courtiser vn peu mieux que tu ne fais ton
maistre.(18)

The verb *courtiser*'s multiple signification - social, amorous, and figurative - is particularly evident in the works of Ronsard. In the citations below, for example, he appears use the verb in a rhetorical context which generally denotes flattery:

Si ce gentil pipeur se trouve en compagnie,
Il a de mots dorez la parolle garnie,
De loüanges, d'honneurs, à tout propos loüant
Le seigneur courtizé dont il se va joüant.(19)

Pour le penser gagner j'ay courtizé les Princes,
Et les grands gouverneurs des royales
provinces.(20)

Il fault les grans Seigneurs courtizer & chercher,
Venir à leur lever, venir à leur coucher.(21)

Il faut mentir, flater et courtizer,
Rire sans ris, sa face deguiser
Au front d'autrui, & je ne le veux faire,
Car telle vie à la mienne est contraire.(22)

But equally, he employs the verb to designate love-making. In the following examples *courtiser* is parallel with *caresser*, *baiser*, and so forth, hinting at its overwhelmingly physical signification:

18. Sonnets 104, 162, *ibid.* pp.75, 114.

19. "Elegie à Monseigneur le Reverendissime Cardinal de Chatillon", ll.19-22, *Le Second Livre des Meslanges* (1559), in *Pierre de Ronsard: Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Paul Laumonier (Droz, Paris; 1914-1967) 20 vols. x.6.

20. "Elegie au Seigneur Baillon", ll.89-90, *Les Trois Livres de Recueil des nouvelles poésies* (1564), *ibid.* xii.91.

21. *La Promesse . . . de la Royne* (1564), ll.237-240, *ibid.* xiii.12.

22. "La Salade", ll.47-50, *Le Sixième Livre des Poemes* (1569), *ibid.* xv.78.

Je vous caresse & courtize & supplie,
Et par escrit je vous honore & prie.(23)

Pour vous baiser les mains, embrasser les genoux,
Cortizer, adorer, il ne le sauroit faire.(24)

Courtiser & chercher les Dames amoureuses,
Estre tousjours assise au milieu des plus beaux,
Et ne sentir d'Amour ny fleches ny flambeaux,
Ma Dame, croyez moy, sont choses monstrueuses.(25)

Finally, Ronsard is known to employ the verb in its figurative sense, stripped of the somewhat pejorative meanings used above:

Maintenant je veux estre importun amoureux
Du bon pere Aristote, & d'un soin genereux
Courtiser & servir la beauté de sa fille.(26)

b. Italian

The Italian verb *cortigiare* / *corteggiare* developed in the fourteenth century alongside the French *cortoyer*. Its semantic development was broadly similar to that of its French counterpart and there has been some debate as to

23. "Elegie à Mademoiselle de Chasteaubrun", ll.59-60, *Elegies, Mascarades et Bergerie* (1565), *ibid.* xiii.179-180.

24. *Discours au Roy, après son retour de Pologne* (1575), ll.262-263, *ibid.* xvii.31.

25. "Les Amours Diverses", sonnet 28, *Les Oeuvres* (1578), *ibid.* xvii.310.

26. *ibid.* sonnet 36, *ibid.* xvii.316. Ronsard uses the verb some twenty-five times in all. Other citations may be found at x.301 (1560); xi.166 (1563); xii.64, 187, xiii.7 (1564); xiv.178 (1567); xv.169, 186 (1569); xv.332 (1571); xvi.143, 185, 232 (1572); xvi.175 (variant) (1573); xvii.53 (1575); vii.243 (variant), xv.187 (variant), and xvii.382 (1578). See *A Word-Index to the Poetic Works of Ronsard*, A. E. Creore (Maney, Leeds; 1972) 2 vols. i.320-321.

which language borrowed from the other.(27) In the thirteenth century, Italian writers were using the intransitives *corteare* meaning "Fare corteo agli sposi; fare dimostrazione di cortesia, di affetto", and *corteseggiare* meaning "Dimostrarsi cortese, compiacere, favorire" which are very close to the French *courtoyer* and *cortoisier* respectively [Battaglia]. But while the French courtiser could from its inception be used both of wooing and of general courtly conduct, the Italian *corteggiare* evolved more slowly, and in this respect is much closer to the English. For over a century it maintained a general sense, defined by Battaglia as follows: "1) Accompagnare, far corteggio a un principe o a un personaggio molto importante . . . 2) Accompagnare, seguire. . . 3) Stare intorno a una persona". It was this specifically social reference which produced the substantive *corteggio*, assimilated by the French as *cortège*.(28) Like the English verb *to court* it / *to court*, the Italian *corteggiare* only gradually developed a specialised amatory sense in the sixteenth century.

27. See, for example, T. E. Hope, *Lexical Borrowing in the Romance Languages* (Blackwell, Oxford; 1971) 2 vols. i.184-185: "*courtiser* . . . Although some sources see here a remodelling of OFr. *corteier*, *courtoyer* by analogy with *courtisan* I prefer a direct derivation from It. *corteggiare* (via a northern form)".

28. *corteggio*, "Seguito più meno numeroso di persone che, come prescrivono le consuetudini o l'etichetta, accompagnano o stanno intorno a un personaggio particolarmente importante", [Battaglia]. See, for example, Giovan Battista Marino, *L'Adone* (1623), xix.386: "Passò poi de la Dea, che 'n Cipro impera, / tutto il corteggio, e con diversi incarchi", in *Adone*, ed. Marizio Pieri (Laterza, Roma; 1975-1977) 2 vols. ii.608. According to Larousse, *corteggio* entered French vocabulary as *cortège* in 1622.

As an example of *corteggiare* sense 1, Battaglia quotes the fourteenth-century *Libro di viaggi*: "Li giocolari cominciavano a *corteggiare*". Early in the sixteenth century, Pietro Bembo was still using the verb in this sense:

Perchè gran senno faranno i tuoi compagni, se essi questo prence *corteggieranno* per lo innanzi, si come essi fatto hanno le loro donne per lo adietro . . . (29)

and the general social meaning persisted throughout the sixteenth century, as the following examples from Gianfrancesco Straparòla, Savonarola, and Machiavelli suggest:

Ora essendo il giovane Nerino in Padova, ed avendo presa amicizia di molti scolari che quotidianamente il *corteggiavano*, avvenne che tra questi v'era un medico che maestro Raimondo Brunello fisqio si nominava. (30)

Chi non lo *corteggia* [il tiranno], e chi non si presenta alla casa sua, o quando è in piazza, è notato per inimico. (31)

Lo'mbasciadore viniziano è in sul placare el Papa, e per ancora non ci ha trovato stiva. *Corteggia* continuamente San Giorgio: e qui è chi dubita che non cerchi per suo mezzo fare contento el Papa che li acquiesca ad Favenzia e ad Rimini . . . (32)

29. Pietro Bembo, *Gli Asolani* (1505), Terzo Libro, in *Gli Asolani et Le Rime*, ed. Carlo Dionisotti-Casalone (Torino; 1932) pp.156-157.

30. Giovan Francesco Straparòla, *Le Piacevoli Notti*, (1550-1553) Notte Quarta, favola 4, in *Le Piacevoli Notti*, ed. Guiseppe Rua (Laterza, Bari; 1927) 2 vols. i.189.

31. Girolanno Savonarola, *Trattato Secondo* (1494), cap.2, in *Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*, ed. Audin de Rians (Barachi, Firenze; 6th ed. 1847) p.29.

32. Niccolò Machiavelli, Letter dated 16 December, 1503, in *Legazione xiii, Le Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. P. Fanfani and L. Passerini (Firenze; 1873-1877) 6 vols. iv.463.

The specialised amorous sense of *corteggiare* seems to have appeared early in the sixteenth century. Ariosto uses it in what Battaglia defines as sense 4: "Cercare di ottenere le grazie; favori di una donna, di piacerle, mettendo in atto tutte le più ardite gentilezza":

Non altro che amicizia
onesta e buona. Ma in quali case essere
sentite donne voi, ch'abbiamo grazia,
che tutto il dì non vi vadino i gioveni
(essendo o non essendovi i lor uomini)
a *corteggiar*? (33)

This sense was assimilated throughout the sixteenth century, existing alongside the primary social designation, as the following quotations from Ludovico Dolce and Matteo Bandello show:

Io dico, padrone, che egli ha una sorella che lo avanza di signoria e ha maggior copia di cavalieri che la *cortégiano*. (34)

Erano stati alcuni che, non conoscendo intieramente la qualità de la donna, s'erano messi a *corteggiarla* e far seco a l'amore, i quali ella, poi che di dolci sguardi aveva un tempo pascuiti, or con una or con un'altra beffa in modo si gli levava d'intorno, che gli incauti amanti restavano miseramente scherniti. (35)

33. Ludovico Ariosto, *Il Negromante* (1509-1520), I.iv.503-508, in *Opere Minori*, ed. Cesare Segre (Ricciardi, Milano; 1954) p.437.

34. Ludovico Dolce, *Il Ragazzo* (1541), I.i.5-6, in *Commedie del Cinquecento*, ed. Ireneo Sanesi (Laterza, Bari; 1912) 2 vols. ii.209.

35. Matteo Bandello, *La Prima Parte de le Novelle* (1554) novella 3, in *Tutte le Opere di Matteo Bandello*, ed. Francesco Flora (Mondadori, Verona; 2nd. ed. 1942-1943) 2 vols. i.45.

As I suggested earlier, the development of the amorous sense from a social one in Italian, and the coexistence of the two senses throughout the sixteenth century, is very similar to what happened in English. John Florio demonstrates this in his seventeenth-century Italian / English Dictionary. Not only do *corteggiare* and *corteseaggiare* seem very close in meaning, but his English translations also demonstrate the proximity of social and amorous senses in this language:

Corteggiare, to court one with attendance and obsequiousnesse.
Corteseaggiare, to shew curtesie, louingnesse or kindnesse, to fawne vpon one. (36)

ii. *A diachronic survey of the verb 'to court' in English to 1580*

If Italian provides a model for the semantic development of *to court* in English, it seems appropriate to turn to that now. In contrast to its European equivalents, however, the English verb evolved relatively late. It does not appear in Middle English where *to woo*, from the Old English *wo₃ian*, remained the chief verb for love-making. There is no Middle English equivalent of the French *cortoyer* or Italian *cortear* meaning 'to reside in or frequent the court', and it is not until the mid-fifteenth century that one finds even the noun *court* being used as the accepted

36. John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (1611), ed. R. C. Alston (Scolar Press, Menston; 1968).

term for the royal residence.(37) The verb to court first occurs in English early in the sixteenth century where it appears as the gerund *courting*, meaning 'being or residing at court'. In 1513 Alexander Barclay published a paraphrase of Aeneas Silvius' *Miserae Curialem* which, in the Continental tradition of anti-court satire, castigates the vain follies of court life. In Barclay's *Certayne Egloges* Cornix attempts to dissuade the young shepherd Coridon from going to court:

Thus all those wretches which do the court
frequent,
Bring not to purpose their mindes nor intent.
But if their mindes and will were saciate,
They are not better thereby nor fortunate.
Then all be fooles (concluding with this clause)
Which with glad mindes vse *courting* for such
cause.(38)

Barclay employs the same gerund elsewhere in the *Egloges*, in each case designating simply 'residence at court'. The chastened Coridon bids farewell to "*courting*, I see thou countest best / Here to remayne in simple welth and rest", and again to "*courting* in the deuils date". In

37. "[In] the regulations of 1445, the word 'court' does occur, but only glancingly; significantly, in the earliest English-Latin dictionary, the *Promptorium Parvulorum* of c.1440, 'court' figures only as the term equivalent to the much less specific 'curia' . . . [But] By the time we reach the Black Book in the 1470s, its increasing currency is noticeable", Morgan, "The house of policy: the political role of the late Plantagenet household 1422-1485", in *The English Court*, ed. Starkey, p.68.

38. Alexander Barclay, *Certayne Egloges*, Second Egloge, ll.1057-1062, in *The Eclogues of Alexander Barclay*, ed. Beatrice White (*EETS* 175; 1928) p.93. The passage translates Aeneas Silvius' Latin: "Sunt igitur omnes stulti, qui ob has causas in regium famulatum sese recipiunt", *ibid.* pp.93-94.

the Second Egloge, he defies "all courting . . . More clennes is kept within some hogges sty".(39) There is no lexical equivalent to Barclay's *courting* in Silvius' Latin text, but the word and its satiric overtones are culled from the Continent, and correspond to the French and Italian intransitive verbs *cortoyer* and *corteare*.(40)

In the next few decades, as Tudor government became increasingly centralised and life at court, as a profession or occupation, came under new scrutiny, the verb expanded its semantic parameters. A model for this development can be seen in the French and Italian examples above, and although the verb was still relatively rare in English in the first half of the sixteenth century, evidence suggests that it was evolving along the Continental pattern.(41)

39. First Egloge, ll.397-398, 1210; Second Egloge, ll.717-718, *ibid.* pp.12, 45, 79. The first two quotations have no equivalent in the Latin source; the third paraphrases Silvius' lines: "Hinc est illud abdomen, quod in pectoralibus Curialium cernis, vt satius sit, in stabulis porcorum, quam in Curijs comedere dominorum", *ibid.* p.79.

40. For a brief résumé of anti-court satire in England and on the Continent, see Anglo, "The Courtier: The Renaissance and changing ideals", in *The Courts of Europe*, ed. Dickens, pp.33-53.

41. Translations of diplomatic letters from foreign ambassadors at the Tudor court suggest that the word was being used in wider social contexts. The French Ambassador du Bellay, for example, wrote to Montmorency: "Greater court is now paid to her [*Anne Boleyn*] every day than has been to the Queen for a long time", 9th December, 1528, in *LP*, 1526-1528, p.2177. See also the account of Sir William Pickering, one of Elizabeth's early suitors, by the Venetian ambassador, Il Schafanoya: "He remains at home (in casa), courted by many Lords of the Council", in *CSP: Venetian*, 1558-1580, p.85. I have not, however, been able to consult the original documents.

In *The Arte of Rhetorique*, Thomas Wilson introduces an intransitive verb phrase - to court it - to designate a particular type of behaviour evinced at court:

when we see one gaye and galaunte, we vse to saye,
he courtes it.(42)

A verb signifying courtly behaviour is thus used by extension from the word for the environment of that behaviour - the court. Wilson uses the example to demonstrate the contiguity of senses, or rather, what he calls "worde makinge . . . when we make wordes of oure owne mynde, suche as be deriued from the nature of thinges". This suggests that by the middle of the century, the verb was seen to be expandable, and, like its European counterparts, capable of denoting particular areas of courtly experience. This becomes clear when comparing Sir Thomas Hoby's use of the gerund *courting* in his translation of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. The noun used in the most general sense by Barclay at the beginning of the century, now reappears invested with quite new significance. Together with a coinage of his own - *courtiership* - Hoby uses *courting* to translate Castiglione's *cortegiania*, a key-word of the courtly treatise:

The Ladie Constance Fregosa laughed at this and saide: you should doe much better to goe forwarde in your communication, and declare how a man may attaine a good grace, and speak of *Courting*, than to discover the faultes of women without purpose.

42. Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), ed. Robert Hood Bowers (Scholars' Facsimiles, Gainesville; 1962) p.196.

On another occasion Francesco della Rovere is informed "howe the charge was committed to Count Lewis, to entreat of *courting*", while in Book II Emilia pleads with Frederico: "doth not your hart serve you to finde out somewhat to say for one night of *Courting*?" (43) Like Barclay's, Hoby's *courting* naturally implies 'being at or frequenting the court'. But Castiglione's treatise sets itself the task of defining the behaviour proper to such an environment and as such quite explicitly expands the semantic field.

Once a larger associative range for the word had been established, provision was made for its developing specialised senses, including the amorous one. In English this evolved in the 1560s, at a time when French and Italian had already fully developed this specialised sense. It entered the English language by two principal routes, translation and association. As a literary paradigm of this semantic development there is one text which deserves particularly close examination. This is Geoffrey Fenton's collection of tales, *Certaine tragicall discourses*,

43. Sir Thomas Hoby trans., *The Book of the Courtier* (1561), ed. W. H. D. Rouse (Dent, London; 1928, repr. 1966) pp. 66, 83, 105, from the Italian: "Rise quivi madonna Costanza Fregosa, e disse:- Voi fareste assai più cortesemente seguitar il ragionamento vostro, e dir onde nasca la bona grazia e parlar della *cortegiania* che voler scoprir i diffetti delle donne senza proposito"; ". . . e'l carico imposto al conte Ludovico di parlar della *cortegiania*"; "non dà il core a voi ancor di saper trovar che dire per una sera sopra la *cortegiania*?", *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, in *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione*, Giovanni della Casa, Benvenuto Cellini, ed. Carlo Cordié (Ricciardi, Milano; 1960) pp. 69, 88, 112.

published in 1567.(44) The *Discourses* translate, somewhat loosely, a number of François de Belleforest's stories in his *Histoires Tragiques* and, like them, claim to portray love in all its multifarious forms. Belleforest's *Histoires*, in turn, are a translation, or rather a paraphrase, of Matteo Bandello's popular collection of *novelle*. Fenton uses the transitive verb to court in its modern amorous sense some twenty-one times within the *Discourses*, significantly more often than any other writer of the period. This qualifies him, perhaps, as the father of English 'courtship' in its modern sense.

On several occasions Fenton translates the verb directly from the French text:

. . . besides what example of vertue is it, to see one of our reuerend religious fathers and gouernou[r]s of conuentes, more geuen to courte the dames with requestes of sensualitie, then to torne ouer the leaues of the new testament.

from Belleforest:

C'est un exemple notable pour la peuple de voir ces reuerends s'amuser plus a courtiser les Dames, qu'a feuilleter les saintes lettres.

In his seventh tale, Fenton describes the Spaniard Don Piero de Cardonne, who appeared "so ignoraunt in the pursute of this queste [for a lady], as if he had neuer *made courte* to any Lady of reputacion or honor", using the verb phrase to translate Belleforest's "comme iamais il n'auoit courtisé

44. For Fenton's coinages, see Jeannette Fellheimer, "Some Words in Geoffrey Fenton's *Certaine Tragical Discourses*", *Modern Language Notes* 61 (1946) pp.538-540. The verb to court, however, is not mentioned.

ny serui dame qui fust de grand maison". The Argument to the tenth tale exalts the virtues of a gentleman who, "hauing longe courted a young and faire damesell" finally preserves her honour, translating from the French source, "ayant courtisé une ieune & belle femme".(45)

Far more often, however, Fenton employs the verb when there is no *courtiser* in the French original. This suggests that he had fully assimilated the word and was able to use it freely where context and association made it possible. In other words, he was able to identify certain types of courtly behaviour as analogous to the love situation. One curious peculiarity of Fenton's usage is that the word frequently appears with a set cluster of other words, as if his associative field was very closely defined:

. . . he Imployed his time to court her continually with his *company*.

So being the chiefe courtier that *hawnted* the *companie* of Ladyes . . . he failed not to court wyth a contynual proffer of his seruice.

. . . so was she more courted wyth the contin[u]all *haunte* and *companie* of the Gentlemen and Princes of ITALY. . .

. . . some tyme he visited the *hauntes* and assemblies of ladies, *courtyng* suche of theym as

45. Sir Geoffrey Fenton, *Certaine tragicall discourses* (1567), fols.123^v, 161, 207. François de Belleforest, *Le Second Tome des Histoires Tragiques* (Paris; 1565) pp.196, 50, 262^v. Four of Belleforest's *Histoires* (13^e, 18^e in *Tome I*, and 20^e, 21^e in *Tome II*) have been edited separately by Frank S. Hook in *The French Bandello* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia; 1948). These correspond to Fenton's 11th, 13th, 7th and 1st tales respectively. References to Belleforest's 13^e, 18^e, 20^e and 21^e *Histoires* will be to Hook's edition; all others to the first editions of *Tome I* (1564) and *Tome II* (1565).

he founde to giue moste eare to hys ydle
talke.(46)

While the verbs *fréquenter* and *hanter* are to be found in Belleforest's text, they do not cluster round *courtiser* with such formulaic regularity. This implies that Fenton had a very clear idea of what *courting* entailed, and that primarily this was the proximity of members of the opposite sex in society at large. Elsewhere it is possible to see the range of Fenton's associative field, as he frequently uses the verb to court to translate a different word in the source. Twice, for example, to court substitutes for the French *amouraicher*, and on another occasion *caresser*, indicating the physical nature of courtship.(47) It replaces the synonymous *faire l'amour*, together with the more elaborate *offrir service*.(48) Often Fenton expands Belleforest's text, the latter's simple "langage" being rendered "courtlike wooing", for instance, his "services"

46. *Certaine tragicall discourses*, fols.68^v, 95^v, 113, 126. See also: "in courtinge the gestes that hawnte youre howse"; "he fayled not to courte her with a contynuall haunte of his companye"; "he forgat not to court & embrace her with a more continual haunte of his company"; *ibid.* fols.46, 63^v, 139^v.

47. *ibid.* "courted by a crew of veneryan & carpet knights", fol.39^v, from the French: "*amouraischees par une bonne troupe de Gentils-hommes*", 22^e *Histoire*, Tome II, p.88; "such as cold make best court to Ladies", fol. 141^v, from: "*cherie & amourachée de plusieurs*", 20^e *Histoire*, ed. Hook, p.132; "he forgat not to court & embrace her", fol.139^v, from: "[il] la caressoit", 20^e *Histoire*, ed. Hook p.131.

48. "when he made court to her", *Discourses*, fol.246, from Belleforest: "*il luy faisoit l'amour*", 13^e *Histoire*, ed. Hook, p.77; "suche as vse to court vs simple Ladyes", fol.162^v, from: "*qu'ils offrent leur service seigneurial aux dames*", 20^e *Histoire*, ed. Hook, p.151.

being transformed to "seruices of court", and his "estant recueilly" to "proffers of court", in each example expanding the semantic range of his source.(49)

Fenton not only introduced the amorous sense of the verb to court by means of translation, therefore, but also by grasping its associative possibilites. Together with the proximity and familiarity of parties presumed by *haunt* and *company*, *courting* also denoted an elaborate, highly formalised type of behaviour:

. . . his often gretynge her wyth salutations in amorous order, courtyng her now & then wyth letters, dyttyes, and presentes of great pryce, wyth a thousande other vayne importunityes whych loue dothe ymagine to animate hys Soldiours.

. . . there were fewe dayes in y^e weke wherin he performed not his pale walke afore the lodging of his faire Ianiquette, whom . . . he forgatt not to salute . . . courting her besides with a low reuerence & other offices of dutiful ciuilitue.(50)

In the overtly moralised context of Fenton's narrative, to court is frequently used in a satiric sense, scorning the predatory behaviour of certain lovers:

. . . the pomppe of wanton delytes wherewith princes and other great Ladies are respected, serued & honored, and some time courted by a crew of veneryan & carpet knights with diuers ymportunyties and vnseamely requests of loue.

But now to our BLANCHEMARIA, who resolved whollie in the studie and ex^{er}cises of loue . . . to make solemne banquettes, wher the presence of her

49. "langage", 20^e *Histoire*, ed. Hook, p.142, "courtlike wooing", *Discourses*, fol.153^v; "services", 13^e *Histoire*, ed. Hook, p.126, "seruices of court", fol.304; "estant recueilly", 21^e *Histoire*, ed. Hook, p.181, "proffers of court", fol.31.

50. *Certaine tragicall discourses*, fols.82, 209^v-210.

parentes and frendes, and states of grauitie was not tollerable, but only the companie of the carpet sect, and such as cold make best court to Ladies.(51)

More often than not, courting is uncompromisingly equated with lust. In the Argument to his sixth tale, Fenton attacks the worldly friar who is more given "to courte the dames with requestes of sensualitie" than to reading the Bible. Later in the same tale, the friar recalls that women generally yield "to him that courts them with the offer of loue" and attempts to assail the innocent Parolyna with "thuttermost of his forces". One of the wicked Pandora's many lovers, finding her not to be a virgin, "fayled not to courte her with a contynuall haunte of his companie, in suche sorte, that his chiefe exercise and tyme was employed in the supplie of her gredy desyre".(52) Nevertheless, Fenton's aim is to portray the diversity of love in all its aspects, not just the sensual. On occasion he holds up the virtue of those who resist in spite of the fatal persuasions of love, in particular the noble Julia "who the more shee was pressed & courted with the pepered alurements of y^e valiant souldior of loue, the more did she rampire her selfe in assurance of vertue". The cruel widow Zilya, on receiving love-letters, disdains "to be courted wyth requestes of the like courtesie", and begins to destroy them. In the tenth tale Fenton bestows added praise on the lover who retreats from his pursuit

51. *ibid.* fols.39^v, 141^v.

52. *ibid.* fols.123^v, 131^v, 63^v.

after having "longe courted a young and faire damesell, [and] tasted of euery passion".(53)

The *Certaine tragicall discourses* reveal an important moment in the development of English courtship. Henceforth writers use the verb, noun phrases and participial adjectives with a new degree of familiarity, and the incidence of the word increases dramatically. But Fenton's thorough assimilation of to court in the amorous sense within his own prose, was the beginning not the end of a lexical process. It was some years before it became established in the language as the chief meaning of to court. The 1560s and 1570s were a period of experiment and gradual assimilation in which writers defined the semantic parameters of the sense by using it in contradistinction to the older social sense. This had expanded to specify kinds of rhetoric and behaviour at court earlier in the century. It is from this context that, by analogy, to court entered the vocabulary of love.

The work of William Painter is a case in point. In 1566 and 1567 he published a collection of tales, *The Palace of Pleasure*, in two volumes. These translate stories from a number of sources including the classics, Bandello's *novelle*, Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, and Margaret of Navarre's *Heptaméron*. Much of his source-material is

53. *ibid.* fols.176, 236, 207. Julia also resists the persuasions of a bawd who urges her that "you are not only bounde to appeare reciprocal in affection" but that she should not "refuse to be courted wyth younge men", *ibid.* fols.178-178^v.

identical with Fenton's, and the second volume of the *Palace* was published after the latter's *Discourses*. Painter, however, uses the verb to court only once:

His first talke was but a Bon iour: and simple salutation, sutch as gentlemen commonly vse in company of Ladies . . . he became so famyliar with the Lady, and talked with hir so secretly, as vpon a day being with hir alone, hee courted in this wise.(54)

Elsewhere, on the other hand, Painter employs the participial adjective *courting* with a series of different meanings. At the beginning of his second volume he outlines the stories that are to follow, including that of Ariobarzanes which treats among other things of "the condition of *courting* flatterers".(55) This older social usage denotes the behaviour of courtiers or residents of the court. In another tale, Ulrico, an impoverished gentleman debates the wisdom of taking his cherished wife with him to the court, in view of the "further Charges incydente to *Courtyng* Ladyes, whose Delight and Pleasure resteth in the toyes and trycks of the same, that cannot be wel auoyded in poore Gentlemen, without theyr Names in the Mercer's or

54. William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure*, ed. Joseph Jacobs (Nutt, London; 1890) 3 vols. iii.57. This tale appears in Painter's second volume, and paraphrases Belleforest's 20^e *Histoire*. This quotation comes from the French: "Il se familiarisa donc si bien avec la Dame, & luy parloit si privément, qu'un jour estant seul avec elle, il luy usa ceste façon de parler". Painter would have found four instances of the verb in Fenton's rendering of the same tale in the *Discourses* (fols.139^v, 141^v, 161, 162^v), published a few months before.

55. Painter, *Palace of Pleasure*, ed. Jacobs, ii.155.

Draper's Iornals".(56) The adjective is more ambiguous here since it could either simply mean 'those ladies resident at court', or specify a particular kind of female courtly behaviour. These social senses contrast with the following example, which appears to use it in an amorous context: a sick lover recalls his mistress, "that Nymphé, and earthie Goddesse, who with courtinge countenance imbraced the place where I did stande".(57)

George Gascoigne makes a similar analogy. In "The Complaynt of Philomene", he attacks

You princes peeres, you comely courting knights,
Which use al arte to marre the maidens mindes,
Which win al dames with baite of fonde delights,
Which bewtie force, to loose what bountie
bindes.(58)

The courting knights are guilty of the same philandering rhetoric as many of Geoffrey Fenton's dishonourable lovers. The social act of persuading and, by extension, flattering someone becomes, by analogy, a term in the language of love. In another poem, "Pride of Court", Gascoigne aligns the social and amatory senses more ambiguously. The poet bewails his lost love who has gone to the court:

In country first I knew hir, in countrie first I
caught hir,

56. *ibid.* iii.197, from Bandello's novelle I.21: "Ché di condurla seco e tenerla ove la corte facesse dimora non gli piaceva", in *Opere*, ed. Flora, i.244.

57. Painter, *Palace of Pleasure*, ed. Jacobs, ii.110, from the ninth tale of Margaret of Navarre's *Heptaméron*, although there is no parallel for the lover's interjection in the source.

58. *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. J. W. Cunliffe (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1907-1910) 2 vols. ii.205.

And out of country now in court, to my cost have I
 sought hir.
 In court where Princes reign, hir place is now
 assignd,
 And well were worthy for the roome, if she were
 not unkind.
 There I (in wonted wise) did shew my self of late,
 And found y^t as the soile was chang'd, so love was
 turn'd to hate.
 But why? God knowes, not I: save as I said
 before,
 Pitie is put from porters place, & daunger keepes
 the dore.
 If courting then have skill, to chaunge good
 Ladies so,
 God send ech wilful dame in court, som wound of my
 like wo.(59)

The poet's bewilderment centres on the gerund *courting* which
 could be understood in its oldest, most general sense
 meaning residence at court, as used by Barclay and by
 Gascoigne himself elsewhere.(60) Gascoigne also implies,
 however, that women's *courting* is a distracting and
 destructive phenomenon, and an enemy to constant or chaste
 love, and that the princely court has taken on the
 allegorical attributes of the *curia amoris*. The same
 semantic vagueness surrounds *courting* in Stephen Gosson's
 prose romance, *The ephemerides of Phialo*. The young
 courtier Philotimo is warned against flatterers:

they which giue so much credit to flatterers, make
 them selues no better than brasen pottes . . . It
 were better for thee, Philotimo, in thy *courting*,

59. "Pride of Court", ll.15-24, in *A Hundreth Sundrie
 Flowers*, ed. Prouty, p.116.

60. Gascoigne, *The Steele Glass* (1579): the poet sees his
 reflection in Satire's mirror "Wherein I see, a corps of
 comely shape / (And such as might beseeme the courte full
 wel) / Is cast at heele, by *courting* al to soone", in
Gascoigne, ed. Cunliffe, ii.149.

to ryde a rough Colte without a bridle, than
sweete lippes with a soft saddle.(61)

But he is also urged to avoid the perilous trap of female charms with their enticing "sweete lippes".

Courtship, in its predatory, opportunist mode, is primarily a language of persuasion although often a rhetoric of the least eloquent kind. In 1578 Henry Wotton described contemporary courtship in the following terms:

But now adays women are no sooner seene in y^e
streets but by one or other they ar courted for
marriage, w^tout any enquirie but for welth, & as y^e
match is made for What haue you? so al other
things depend vpon What will you giue me? in such
wise, as vertue is despised & amitie vtterly
decaied.(62)

Perhaps the best description of courtship as a rhetorical pursuit in this period lies in the autobiography of the Tudor madrigalist, Thomas Whythorne. With ingenuous charm Whythorne introduces the gerund *courting* as something of a neologism, and in his attempt to come to terms with the semantic range of the word he provides a fascinating associative field around it:

. . . an oper thing waz þen in mee which hindered
such aksions very much, þe which waz bashfulnes
towardz women, and cheefly in þe affairz of woiing

61. Stephen Gosson, *The ephemerides of Phialo* (1579), sig.F2^v.

62. Henry Wotton, *A courtlie controuersie of Cupids cautels* (1578), sig.E4. See also: "aboue all things you make singular account . . . to court the mother, and carefully to practise hir"; "he studyed so diligentllye to court the Mother, as the daughter esteemed thys fyne deuise very foolishnesse"; "During these sportes, there came in another company of maskers, among the whiche one at the firste dashe courted Virginia, shouldering aside the knight in despight", *ibid.* sigs.T4^v, U2^v, 2F1.

of <þem>, þe which fawt hath kontinewed in mee ever sins, and yet when tym served to bee in company with women, to talk with þem, to toy with þem, to 3yb and to 3est with þem, to discoors with þem, and to be mery with þem (all þe which sum do kawll koorting) I kowld yvz þe tym with þem sumwhat aptly and fitly, but and if it kam to making of loov, by word sign or deed, espesially in deed . . . I had nomor fas to do þat, þen had A sheep.

As far as love remained a courtly performance Whythorne could evidently play his part with satisfaction. A little later in the autobiography he recounts a conversation with a lady of the court:

sumtym shee wold talk of þe koort, with þe bravery, and vanities þerof, and of þe krowching and dissimulacion with þe bazzios las manos þat þar iz ywzed b<y> on koortier to an oþer. and sumtym shee wold minister talk of þe koor<ting> of ladies and 3entilwomen by þe gallants, and kavallierz, and sumtym <shee> wold talk pleazantly of þe loov þat iz mad and ywzed in all plases b<e>tween men and women, az of such who do woo mor for þe loov of þe party þen þe riches. also of such who do woo mor for þe loov of þe goodz & riches þen þe ownerz of þem.(63)

Courting is closely identified here with the peculiarities of courtly behaviour. In his translation of Philibert de Vienne's satiric tract *Le Philosophe du Cour*, George North sees a similar association of ideas. "Walke one night through Paris", he writes, "and you shall finde a companie of yong gallants, some braue and in good order, and others smothly combed for the purpose, *courting* and woing their

63. *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne* (c.1576), ed. James M. Osborn (Clarendon, Oxford; 1961) pp.33, 93-94.

Ladies".(64) George Pettie suggests that simply being at court required a young man to make love to a particular lady. In the ninth tale of *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure*, he describes Cephalus, who though frequenting "the Dukes Courte of Venice . . . made no speciall or curious court to any one" as if this behaviour contrasted with the norm. Elsewhere in his collection of tales, he implies that courtship is an expensive business that only some are equipped to perform properly:

After this, hee [Minos] sought all meanes possible to insinuate himselfe into her familiaritie, & courted her continually with dutiful service and secret signes of sincere affection: hee so bribed her maides with benefits, & corrupted them with coyne, that they made him a God unto their misteris: she could not looke out at her chamber window, but that she saw him walke solitarily underneath.(65)

By the end of the 1570s the word to court was in general use, with two concurrent senses, the social and the amorous. The relationship between the two senses, and the areas where their associative fields of reference overlap, were extensively explored by John Lyly in his prose romance

64. George North trans., *The philosopher of the court* (1575), p.32. See also: "None therefore can be a good Courtier, onlesse he vnderstand what pleaseth best & is most liked at y^e Court . . . as I may aptlie applie for example, oure maysters of Artes, who haue mouths to kisse, armes to embrace, and faces to countenance, & can do all this well: yet were it straunge to see one of them in his old girded gowne . . . to fall on dauncing & sporting among fayre Ladies. How he would courte it with them, how hee would please and entertaine them, & how he would rauish their hartes or allure them?", *ibid.* p.14.

65. George Pettie, *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure* (1576), ed. Herbert Hartman (Oxford University Press, New York; 1938) pp.186, 219-220.

Euphues and its sequel *Euphues and his England*. The verb occurs ^{eighteen} times within these two romances, a frequency comparable only with Fenton. (66) With lexical dexterity and delight, Lyly examines variety within the word itself and also within each sense. *Euphues* begins with the entry of its protagonist into Neapolitan court life. In the tradition of Fenton, Painter and Pettie, Lyly's narrator rails in fully didactic fashion. It is such a voice that, in the traditional pose of the satirist, introduces the court as the seat of all vice: "a courte more meete for an Atheyst, then for one of Athens, for Ouid then for Aristotle, for a gracelesse louer then for a godly lyuer". (67) Yet the didactic tone becomes increasingly suspect. The narrator's subsequent picture of court life is characterised not by its sinfulness, but by its variety:

Heere hee wanted no companions whiche courted hym continuallye with sundrye kindes of deuises, whereby they myght eyther soake his purse to reape commoditie, or sooth hys person to wyne credite, for hee had gwestes and companions of all sortes.

There frequented to his lodging and mancion house as well the Spider to sucke poyson, of his fine wyt, as the Bee to gather hunny . . as well Damocles to betraye hym, as Damon to bee true to hym. (68)

This time the narrator's description involves as much that is praiseworthy as is evil. This is an important point. In the course of its lexical development courting was

66. The verb occurs on the following pages: *Euphues* (1578), in Lyly, ed. Bond, i.186 (two examples), 242; *Euphues and his England* (1580), *ibid.* ii.24, 49, 68, 88, 93, 105, 107, 119, 121, 138, 156, 181, 184, 221, 227.

67. *ibid.* i.185.

68. *ibid.* i.186.

applied both in derogatory and in approbatory contexts: both in Barclay's satiric *Egloges* and in Hoby's complimentary *Book of the Courtier*, for example. Sensitive to the semantic vagueness of the word, Lyly is at pains to emphasise the multi-faceted nature of *courting*. In the second edition he added a further thirteen lines to this passage, in which Euphues is praised for "singl[ing] his game wiselye", and for being able to distinguish friends from flatterers.

who being demaunded of one what countryman he was, he answered, what countryman am I not? if I be in Crete, I can lye, if in Greece I can shift, if in Italy I can court it.(69)

The very protean character of Euphues' *courting* is repeated in *Euphues and his England*, where Cassander recalls his wicked youth: "If with a Grecian, I could dissemble with Synon. I could court it with the Italian, carous it with the Dutch-man". *Courting* is presented primarily as a social performance involving costume, disguise, and a general concealment of the truth. In his inset cautionary tale, the ex-courtier Fidus recalls how "I endeauoured to courte it with a grace, (almost past grace,) laying more on my backe then my friendes could wel beare, hauing many times a braue cloke and a thredbare purse".(70)

Anxious to explore the semantic possibilities of the word, Lyly adopts a method of juxtaposition. His other uses of the intransitive verb phrase in a social context

69. *ibid.*

70. *ibid.* ii.24, 49.

align themselves with the amorous sense. That is to say, to court it still means behaving as befitting a courtier, but this in turn is taken to include wooing ladies. The chastened Euphues, for example, chooses rather "to dye in my studye amidst my bookes, then to courte it in Italy, in the company of Ladyes". In Fidus' recounted history, Iffida offers advice to the young lover: "He that will sell lawne must learne to folde it, and he that will make loue, must learne first to courte it".(71) Equating the intransitive verb phrase (used above in the social sense, to play or act the courtier) with love-making, Lyly aligns the two concurrent senses within one associative field.

It should be emphasised that he employs the same technique lexically. Lyly hones down the definition of words by differentiation, usually by means of alliterative contrast and the fundamentally bipartite structure of euphuistic syntax. Love is constantly contrasted with lust, wit with wisdom, and court with courtesy, coyness, and so forth:

Thou sayest that I am fallen from beautie to my beades, and I see thou art come from thy booke to beastlines, from coting of y^e scriptures, to courting with Ladies.

This causeth you Gentlewomen, to picke out those that can court you, not those that loue you, and hee is accompted the best in your conceits, that

71. *ibid.* i.242, ii.68.

vseth most colours, not that sheweth greatest
courtesie.(72)

This is the same as the boldness of young gentlemen who
"where they haue bene once welcome for curtesie, they thinke
themselves worthie to court any Lady". Philautus produces
another word-pair:

for I ceased not continuallye to courte my
violette, whome I neuer found so coye as I
thought.(73)

By constant use of isocolon, Lyly begins to draw a series of
antitheses around the key-word, and to define the new
semantic parameters of its amatory sense:

lust I must tearme that which is begunne in an
houre and ended in a minuit, the common loue in
this our age, where Ladyes are courted for
beautye, not for vertue.(74)

This passage is typical not only in its structure, but in
the almost formulaic cluster of antitheses: "Ah beautie,
such is thy force, that Vulcan courteth Venus". *Courting*,
moreover, denotes not only fleeting sexual encounters, but
artful seduction by means of flattery and guile: "woemen

72. *ibid.* ii.93, 121. See also Pettie: "if you crave to
conquer the goodwilles, and to be courted with the service
of suters, you must with modestie make much of them, with
curtesie countervaile their kindnesse, with gratefulnesse
accept their good wil, with liberalitie requight their
love"; "knowing it the fashion of women at first to refuse,
& that what angry face soever they set on the matter yet it
doth them good to bee courted with offers of curtesy", *A
Petite Pallace*, ed. Hartman, pp.102, 200.

73. *Lyly*, ed. Bond, ii.221. See also *Sapho and Phao*,
II.i.106: "Bee not coy when you are courted". *ibid.* ii.383.
Compare Pettie: "Ah the bravery of these fine girles, the
more they are courted the more they are coy", *A Petite
Pallace*, ed. Hartman, p.170.

74. *Lyly*, ed. Bond, ii.181.

that delight in courting, are willing to yeelde", "woemen yeelde when they are courted", "seeing his Camilla to be courted with so gallant a youth", "Lucilla was too badde, yet diddest thou court hir". Camilla, lamenting her love for the noble Surlus, argues for and against its success: "I but he is not willing to loue, nor thou worthy to bee wooed, I but loue maketh the proudest to stoupe, and to court the poorest".(75)

iii. *A synchronic analysis of 'courtship' and 'to court' from 1580*

It will be clear from the diachronic survey above, that by 1580 the semantic range of the verb to court had expanded enormously to include the rhetoric and behaviour expected at court, and, by association, the rhetoric and behaviour expected of lovers. Comparison with similar lexical developments abroad suggests that this semantic expansion was closely related to the particular socio-historical circumstances of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. That is to say, the period of 'courtisation' identified by Elias, brought residence at court under a new scrutiny, and the old, simple intransitive verb proved inadequate for the range of human experience that courting was then seen to cover.

By 1580 the social and amorous senses of to court had become established currency, and after this date the use

75. *ibid.* ii.88, 105, 119, 107, 156, 184. For a full discussion of Lyly's courting language, see below chapter 3.

increases so dramatically that a strictly chronological approach ceases to be practical. Taking advantage of this, the following section examines the evidence *synchronically*. Moving away from the notation of semantic change, it will consider the language of courtship as a system in which the elements (in this case the senses) are to be seen simultaneously. Saussure describes this system as a linguistic state which "occupies not a point in time, but a period of time of varying length, during which the sum total of changes occurring is minimal. It may be ten years, a generation, a century, or even longer".(76) Within this state what concerns us is the word's usage, what it meant to the language users at that time, and what can be determined about its meaning. The method moves, therefore, from that of historical to that of *descriptive* semantics.(77)

In the following section the close alignment of the social and amorous senses of the verb to *court* and the noun *courtship* are examined across the board and in context.(78)

76. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p.99.

77. While the verb to *court* neatly demonstrates the Saussurean categories, it should be pointed out that diachronic and synchronic linguistics are not always so distinct or separable. One fundamental weakness of the Saussurean model is that there is nothing to prevent *synchronic* elements being simply arrested moments in a given period of diachronic change.

78. One might cite the Romance philologist A. H. Schutz on his working method for establishing the meaning of Provençal words: "It is difficult to be succinct in the rendition of an idea centuries old, conceived in an environment completely different from our own . . . What we can do and expect to do here, since words do occur in context, is to delineate the scope within that context, to identify a word by the company it keeps", "Some Provençal Words Indicative of Knowledge", *Speculum* 33 (1958) pp.508-514, this quotation p.508.

The synchronic method will allow us to specify exactly what the characteristics of sixteenth century courtship were, and to ask the following questions: if being at court, and acting accordingly, came to be equated with making love to a member of the opposite sex, what does that say about the nature of Tudor courts, and the changing patterns of court life? Secondly, what does the same evidence say about sixteenth-century love-making?

a. *Courtship*

By way of introduction this section begins with the noun *courtship*. This sixteenth-century coinage was less common than the verb *to court*, but it developed semantically along similar if not identical lines. The smaller number of examples may therefore help in drawing up an outline of the synchronic method to be employed.

In its earliest use, *courtship*, like *courting*, retained a general social sense. The noun denoted residence at court and the state befitting a courtier. It is in this sense that the banished Romeo laments:

More validity,
More honorable state, more *courtship* lives
In carrion flies than Romeo.(79)

The flies that settle on Juliet's hand will enjoy the privilege of his courtly state. Other uses of the noun suggest that it could apply, through contiguity, to certain

79. *Romeo and Juliet* (c.1594), III.iii.33-35. All references to Shakespeare are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Houghton Mifflin, Boston; 1974).

specific courtly activities. In his poetic account of the 1590 Accession Day Tilt, for instance, George Peele praises Anthony Cooke who was "For Armes and Courtship equall to the best", while in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the Princess refers to the disguised courtiers as "Trim gallants, full of courtship and of state".(80) The connection between courtly behaviour and military prowess recurs in Sir Robert Naunton's description of the Earl of Leicester: "hitherto I have only touched him in his courtship, I conclude him in his lance. He was sent governor by the Queen to the revolted states of Holland".(81)

The most important specialisation of the sense of courtship, however, was its association with courtly speaking, flattery, and the art of rhetoric. In "The Will", Donne ironically bequeaths his "best civility / And Courtship, to an Universitie" where he presumes the art of rhetoric is wanting.(82) Richard II observes Bolingbroke's "courtship to the common people", his "familiar courtesy" and "craft of smiles", which may be compared with the

80. George Peele, *Polyhymnia* (1590), 1.186, in *The Life and Works of George Peele*, gen. ed. C. T. Prouty (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1952-1970) 3 vols. i.238. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.363.

81. Sir Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia, or Observations on Queen Elizabeth, Her Times & Favorites*, ed. John S. Cerovski (Folger, Washington; 1985) pp.51-52. See also: "So that the Queen had then a new task and work in hand that might well awake her best providence and required a muster of men of arms, as well as courtships and councils", *ibid.* p.56.

82. "The Will", 11.21-22, in *John Donne: The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Helen Gardner (Clarendon, Oxford; 1965) p.54. He also bequeaths truth "to them, who at the Court doe live", 1.11, *ibid.*

"noble, and subtile science of courtship" understood by the traveller Amorphous in Jonson's play, *Cynthia's Revels*.(83) Thomas Nashe almost invariably associates the word with deception, summarising "The Frenchman (not altered from his owne nature) is wholly compact of deceiuable *Courtship*". In *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Jack Wilton is warned against seemingly hospitable Italians "when in kindnes and courtship thy throat shall be cut".(84)

It is specifically from this expanded associative field of the noun that its amorous sense developed. If courtship particularised a certain aspect of courtly experience, the rhetorical, then it was by similarity of sense that it came to denote an aspect of love. The ladies in *Love's Labour's Lost* justly account the courtiers' love-letters for what they are, "*courtship*, pleasant jest, and courtesy". In Chapman's translation of the *Odyssey*, Penelope's suitors clearly regard their wooing as an oratorical feat: "Their speeches given this end, Eurymachus / Began his *Court-ship*,

83. *Richard II* (c.1595), I.iv.24, 26, 28. *Cynthia's Revels* (1601), V.iii.93, in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Clarendon, Oxford; 1925-1952, repr. 1954) 11 vols. iv.138. For other examples of courtship in this play see *ibid.* pp.71, 91, 127, 128, 134, 137, 142, 156.

84. Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592), and *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. R. B. McKerrow (Blackwell, Oxford; 1904-1910, repr. 1966) 5 vols. i.177, ii.298.

and exprest it thus".(85) Here the word is clearly being used in its amorous, and indeed its current modern sense. Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi* warns his sister against the

varietie of *Courtship*;
What cannot a neate knave with a smooth tale,
Make a woman beleieve? (86)

As Ferdinand implies, *courtship* was more often a prelude to sexual favours than to marriage, and indeed Philip Massinger equates "boystrous *courtship*" with "loose language and forced kisse". Thomas Heywood uses the noun to describe the classic adultery of Paris and Helen. In the *Troia Britanica* Helen complains to her lover:

You will forsake the sweets my bed affoord,
T'exchange for Cabins, Hatches, and pitcht boords,
Then what a fickle *Courtship* you commence,
When, with the first wind, all your Loue blowes
hence.(87)

85. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.780. *Homer's Odysses* (1614-1616), Book xviii, ll.349-350, in *Chapman's Homer*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Routledge, London; 1957) 2 vols. ii.320. There is an interesting parallel here with Sir John Davies's *Orchestra* (c.1595), stanza 5, in which the poet describes Antinous' courtship of Penelope as "The Courtly love he made unto the Queene, / Homer forgot as if it had not beene". The phrase *courtly love*, used twice in this stanza and again in stanza 50, here seems to make its earliest appearance in English. See *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. Robert Kreuger (Clarendon, Oxford; 1975) pp.91, 103.

86. *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), I.i.379-381. See also Julia: "Why, ignorance in *court-ship* cannot make you do amisse, / If you have a heart to do well", *ibid.* V.ii.183-184, in *Webster*, ed. Lucas, ii.46, 111.

87. Philip Massinger, *The Parliament of Love* (c.1624), III.iii.38-39, in *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson (Clarendon, Oxford; 1976) 5 vols. ii.139. Thomas Heywood, *Troia Britanica, or Great Britaines Troy* (1609), p. 224.

On rare occasions, however, courtship could denote sincere affection. In Drayton's *England's Heroicall Epistles*, Queen Katherine writes to her lover Owen Tudor of their "Courtship and Discourse" and later of their "perfect Court-ship".(88) Similarly, in *The Lords' Masque* Thomas Campion maintains that courtship is a rhetorical act, but he sets it in an idealised, loving context:

Courtship and music suit with love,
They both are works of passion;
Happy is he whose words can move,
Yet sweet notes help persuasion.(89)

This lexical analysis, however brief, provides a model for the account of the verb to court which follows. Both words widened the semantic range of their first, social sense, to incorporate a range of courtly experience. One of the most significant specialisations of each word was its coming to signify rhetoric or flattery. At this point the expanded semantic range begins to overlap with another associative field, love-making, and so the amorous sense of each word developed.

88. Michael Drayton, *England's Heroicall Epistles* (1599), "Queene Katherine to Owen Tudor" ll.30, 122, in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. J. Hebel, K. Tillotson and B. Newdigate (Blackwell, Oxford; 1931-1941) 5 vols. ii.202, 204.

89. Thomas Campion, *The Lords' Masque* (1613), ll.270-273, in *A Book of Masques*, ed. T. J. B. Spencer and S. W. Wells (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1967) p. 113. George Chapman makes a similar association between courtship and music in *Hero and Leander* (1598), Book V, ll.468-471: "Now love in night, and night in love exhorts / Courtship and Dances: All your parts employ, / And suite nights rich expansure with your joy, / Love paints his longings in sweet virgins eyes", in *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1973, 2nd. ed. 1981) 2 vols. ii.492.

b. To court

In order to classify the large number of examples in this section it has been necessary to divide them under sub-headings. Dealing first with the social sense of *to court* (which remained current throughout the sixteenth century) and then with the amorous sense, it should be possible to trace the exact area of overlap.

Social sense

In one of his letters to Sir Dudley Carleton, John Chamberlain uses the gerund *courting* to mean 'that which princes do':

Our frend the sherriffe of Barkeshire was almost out of hart at the first newes of the Quenes comming into the country, because he was altogether unacquainted with *courting*, but yet he performed yt very well and sufficiently, being exceedingly well horsed and attended.(90)

Chamberlain's usage is scarcely different from that used by Barclay at the beginning of the century, and evidence suggests that the gerund could still have this broadly general definition. In an undated letter to Sir Christopher Hatton, a court lady laments "how unjustly I am

90. From a letter dated 19 September, 1601, in *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman E. McClure (American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia; 1939) 2 vols. i. 130. Conversely, the noun *discourting* signified a removal from court. See, for example, the Argument to Book I, chapter iv of Sidney's revised *Arcadia*: "The cause of Basilius his *discourting*", in *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1912-1926) 4 vols., reissued as *The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1962-1969) 4 vols., the latter used here, i.23.

afflicted with her [the Queen's] disgrace and indignation. It shall make me less careful than I have been (but only for duty sake) for that life of courting".(91)

After 1580, however, the verb generally comes to specify particular areas of princely activity. A passage from *Tamburlaine II*, for example, suggests that courting exemplified royal entertainments:

Infernall Dis is courting of my Love,
Inventing maskes & stately showes for her,
Opening the doores of his rich treasurie,
To entertaine this Queene of chastitie.(92)

As indicated above, a more significant specialisation of sense associates courting with courtly speech, as in Jonson's *Sejanus* where Tiberius finally dismisses debate and speculation with the words: "Leaue our courtings".(93) More often, however, to court denoted flattery, and Spenser uses it to warn against the dangers of false-seeming:

When painted faces with smooth flattering
Doo fawne on you, and your wide praises sing,
And when the courting masker louteth lowe,
Him true in heart and trustie to you trow.(94)

91. Quoted in *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, ed. Harris Nicolas (Bentley, London; 1847) p.357.

92. *Tamburlaine II*, IV.ii.93-96, in *Marlowe*, ed. Bowers, i.200.

93. *Sejanus*, III.i.668, in *Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, iv.415.

94. Spenser, *The Ruines of Time*, ll.200-203. In *The Faerie Queene*, VI.v.38, the Hermit's plain speech contrasts with "such forged showes, as fitter beene / For courting fooles, that curtesies would faine". See also *ibid.* I.x.7: Reverence, in the House of Holiness "them with speeches meet / Does faire entreat; no courting nicetie, / But simple true, and eke vnfaigned sweet".

Translating della Casa's courtesy book *Galateo*, Robert Peterson makes the association of courting with flattery quite plain. He writes that when men "find themselves cunningly courted, they be soone weary of it, and also disdaine it", while the flatterers themselves "doe plainly shewe, they count him, whom they court in this sorte, but a vaine, and arrogant bodie".(95) In Sidney's revised *Arcadia*, the evil queen Cecropia recalls the tribute once offered her: "I came into this cuntrye as apparant Princesse therof, and accordingly was courted, and followed of all the Ladies of this cuntrye".(96) As such, courting epitomises falseness and dissimulation. It is designed, moreover, to persuade for selfish or immoral ends, as Donne suggests in one of his satires:

Nor come a velvet Justice with a long
Great traine of blew coats, twelve, or fourteen
strong,
Wilt thou grin or fawne on him, or prepare

95. Robert Peterson trans., *Galateo* (1576), in *A Renaissance Courtesy Book: Galateo of Manners and Behaviours by Giovanni della Casa*, ed. J. E. Spingarn (Grant Richards, London; 1914) pp.58-59, from the Italian: "quando si accorgono di essere onorati artatamente lo prendono a tedio, e, più oltre, lo hanno anco a dispetto . . . che i lusinghieri mostrano aperto segno di stimare che colui cui essi carezzano sia vano e arrogante", *Galateo Overre de'Costumi*, in *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione, Giovanni della Casa, Benvenuto Cellini*, ed. Cordiè, p.400.

96. Sidney, ed. Feuillerat, i.364.

A speech to court his beautious sonne and
heire.(97)

On occasion courting was evidently not persuasive enough.

In Marlowe's *Edward II* it is given a violent postscript:

Then Balduck, you must cast the scholler off,
And learne to court it like a Gentleman. . .
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,
And now and then, stab as occasion serves.(98)

What is remarkable about Mortimer's words is the glaring contrast between a seemly exterior, "pleasant, resolute" and the bloody intention. This recalls Elias' notion that Renaissance court society was witness to a dichotomous process of internalisation and externalisation. On the one hand physical behaviour, emotive and violent, became increasingly restrained on account of the social structure of the new monarchical monopoly of force. Individual aggression could not be tolerated in a context where social relationships were paramount, and therefore became internalised. On the other hand, the stress on formalised etiquette - the dramatisation of these relationships through elaborate

97. John Donne, *Satyre I*, ll.21-24, in *John Donne: The Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters*, ed. W. Milgate (Clarendon, Oxford; 1967) p.3. See also Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, IV.i.210-211: "with this lord to smile, and that lord to court, and the t'other lord to dote", in Jonson, ed. Herford and Simpson, iv.105. Compare Florio's translation of the Italian words *corteggiare* and *corteggio* in *Queen Anna's New World of Words*: "*Corteggiare*, to court one with attendance and obsequiousnesse . . . *Cortéggio*, a traine of followers that attend one as it were to court him or fawne on him".

98. *Edward II* (1592), II.i.31-32, 42-43, in Marlowe, ed. Bowers, ii.37.

ceremony and gesture - of necessity externalised social intercourse. This dual phenomenon gave the sixteenth century a unique consciousness of inner and outer, of truth and seeming. "Aboue all things it importeth a Courtier, to be gracefull & louelie in countenance & behauour", wrote Gabriel Harvey in his copy of *The Book of the Courtier*, adding: "Both inside, & outside, must be a faire paterne of worthie, fine & Loouelie Vertu".(99) This dichotomy engendered a fascination for show and representation, as George Puttenham implied in *The Arte of English Poesie* by calling *allegoria* the "Courtly figure". In another passage he describes the court as nursery for the art of dissimulation:

And because our chiefe purpose herein is for the learning of Ladies and young Gentlewomen, or idle Courtiers, desirous to become skilful in their owne mother tongue, and for their priuate recreation to make now & then ditties of pleasure, thinking for our parte none other science so fit for them & the place as that which teacheth beau semblant, the chief profession aswell of Courting as of poesie . . . we haue in our owne conceit deuised a new and strange modell of this arte, fitter to please the Court then the schoole.(100)

It is not clear whether Puttenham's *courting* means 'being at court' or 'love-making'. While he seems to be writing about courtly behaviour he also invokes "ditties of pleasure", and as well as being a rhetorical hand-book the

99. Quoted by Caroline Ruutz-Rees, in "Some Notes of Gabriel Harvey's in Hoby's Translation of Castiglione's *Courtier* (1561)", *PMLA* 25 (1910) pp.608-639, this quotation pp.634-635.

100. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), ed. G. D. Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1936, repr. 1970) pp.158-159.

Arte is full of courtly anecdotes and injunctions as to behaviour. In fact the social and amorous senses of courting are here seen to coincide very precisely with the art of rhetoric, and make this an appropriate place to introduce the following subject: the amorous sense of *courtship* and to court.

Amorous sense

The quotations in this section show courtship as a rhetorical mode, for some writers conceived the language of love as setting a rhetorical standard. Whetstone opens his *Heptameron of ciuill discourses* with a courteous gathering of "sundrie well-Courted Gentlemen and Gentlewomen" who make it a proviso of their entertainment that "euery Gentleman was bounde to Court his misterisse with *Ciuill speaches*".(101) In the same style, one of Barnaby Rich's inamoratos, Flavius, makes love "with suche nice termes as woers be accustomed: He so *Courted*, and followed Emelia".(102) One sonneteer "thought with *amorous speeches* to haue firde"

101. George Whetstone, *An heptameron of ciuill discourses* (1582), title page, sig.B4^v. Each lady was expected to have a lover and she who "had not a Seruant, was iudged vnworthye, to bee *courted* for one weeke", *ibid.* In a later passage it is suggested that "there is no woman, but wil indure the demaund: she is contented with seruice to be *courted*: & in recompence, rewardeth with good countenance", *ibid.* sig.Q2.

102. Barnaby Rich, in *Rich's Farewell to Military Profession* (1581), ed. Thomas Mabry Cranfill (University of Texas Press, Austin; 1959) p.186. Compare Hedon in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, II.i.63-65: "He courts ladies with how many great horse he hath rid that morning, or how oft he hath done the whole, or the halfe pommado in a seuen-night before", in *Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, iv.65.

his mistress' heart, "but her in vaine he courted".(103)
 In his romance *Ciceronis Amor*, Robert Greene depicts the great orator unwittingly using his model rhetoric to woo the Roman beauty Terentia. She "feeding hir eyes on the sweete of Tullies face, and swilling downe the nectar of his diuine eloquence" blushes "as did the fayre queene of Carthage courted by Aeneas".(104) Such terms might be illustrated by a song from the Cowdray entertainment in 1591:

And when to us our loves seeme faire to bee,
 We court them thus, Love me and Ile love thee.(105)

The language of courtship was not, however, limited to oratory. In Drayton's *England's Heroicall Epistles*, Edward the Black Prince sues Alice and "Courts her by Letters". Greene describes the contemporary lover who will "court a Lady with amortrs [sic]" and cause "Poets to write them wanton *Eligies of loue*"; and it was to aid personal composition that Nicholas Breton introduced his *Arbor of amorous Deuises*: "Wherin, young Gentlemen may reade many

103. E. C., *Emaricdulfe* (1595), sonnet xviii, in *English and Scottish Sonnet Sequences of the Renaissance*, ed. Holger M. Klein (George Olms, Hildesheim; 1984) 2 vols. i.246.

104. Robert Greene, *Ciceronis Amor: Tullies Loue* (1589), in *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene*, ed. A. B. Grosart (private publication; 1881-1886) 15 vols. vii. 170. For other instances of the verb in this tale see *ibid.* pp. 192, 203, 214.

105. From "The Song of the Fisherman", in the Cowdray Entertainment (1591), printed in *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, ed. Jean Wilson (Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge; 1980) p.94. Compare Marlowe in *Hero and Leander* I, ll.419-423: "Maids are not woon by brutish force and might, / But speeches full of pleasure and delight. / And knowing Hermes courted her, was glad / That she such lovelinesse and beautie had / As could provoke his liking", in *Marlowe*, ed. Bowers, ii.442.

plesant fancies, and fine deuises: And theron, meditate diuers sweete Conceites, to court the loue of faire Ladies and Gentlewomen".(106)

As a corollary of its idealised rhetorical standard, the language of love was required to be learned or eloquent, for the proper gentleman should be able to "court / His mistris, out of OVID".(107) In Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, for example, the Earl of Surrey exhibits a sense of poetic decorum:

sometimes he would imagine her in a melancholy humour to bee his Geraldine, and court her in tearmes correspondent,

which contrasts with Juliana later in the tale: "with what immodest and vncomely wordes she courted me, if I should take vpon me to inlarge, all modest eares would abhorre

106. Drayton, *Englands Heroicall Epistles*, "Edward the Black Prince to Alice Countesse of Salisburie", the Argument, in Drayton, ed. Hebel, Tillotson and Newdigate, ii.175. Robert Greene, *A Quip for an Vpstart Courtier* (1592), in Greene, ed. Grosart, xi.235. Nicholas Breton, *The Arbor of amorous Deuises* (1597), ed. H. E. Rollins (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; 1936) p.2. On some occasions rhetoric had to be supplemented with gifts: See *The First Part of Ieronimo* (1600 - 1605), I.iii.41-44: "Him in her priuate gallery you shall place, / To court her; let his protestations be / Fashioned with rich Iewels, for in loue / Great gifts and gold haue the best toong to moue", anon. in *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, ed. F. S. Boas (Clarendon, Oxford; 1901, rev. 1955) p.305. Compare *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III.i.85-86, 89-91: Duke: "(For long agoe I have forgot to court; / Besides, the fashion of the time is chang'd)" Valentine: "Win her with gifts, if she respect not words: / Dumb jewels often in their silent kind / More than quick words do move a woman's mind".

107. Jonson, *The Alchemist* (1610), I.ii.57-58, in Jonson, ed. Herford and Simpson, v.304.

me".(108) But eloquence was not invariably directed to virtuous ends, and often the lover's learned rhetoric is simply a disguise for cunning. Spenser describes Paridell as Hellenore's "learned loue" who

When so in open place, and commune bord,
Her fortun'd her to meet, with commune speach
He courted her, yet bayted euery word.(109)

Sixteenth century authors frequently refer to the liaison between Paris and Helen in these terms. The Argument to canto ix of Thomas Heywood's *Troia Britanica* summarises the story as follows:

Bright Hellen courted, Paris birth and Fate,
With his Loue-trickes, Iota shall relate.

In the course of his wooing Paris addresses Helen: "There is not left me any meanes (most faire) / To Court you now, but by intreats and praire", while in George Peele's version

108. Nashe, ed. McKerrow, ii.262, 314. Nashe commonly associates courting with bombastic rhetoric. See, for example: "after hee had courted mee and all, -and giuen me the earnest-penie of impietie, some sixe Crownes . . . I fained an impregnable excuse to be gone"; "One amongst the rest thinking to bee more conceited than his fellowes, seeing the Duke haue a dog he loued well, which sate by him on the tarras, conuerted al his oration to him, and not a haire of his tayle but he kembd out with comparisons: so to haue courted him if he were a bitch had bin verie suspitious", *ibid.* pp.225, 251. In *Have With Yow to Saffron Walden* (1596), he mocks the affected rhetoric of Gabriel Harvey: "I haue perused verses of his, written vnder his owne hand to Sir Philip Sidney, wherein he courted him as he were another Cyparissus or Ganimede", *ibid.* iii.92.

109. *The Faerie Queene*, III.x.6.

of the story Paris "strives to court his Mistres cunninglie".(110)

If courting is simply a rhetorical performance that can be used to persuade any one or any number of women, it can as equally be performed on another's behalf. This indeed provides one of the staple devices of drama. It is the main structural theme of Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*:

Bacon: And Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, hast thou left
To treat fair Margaret to allow thy loves;
But friends are men, and love can baffle lords.
The earl both woos and courts her for himself.

Similarly, in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* Balthazar quizzes Heironimo: "what, courting Bel-imperia?". "I, my Lord", he answers, "such courting as, I promise you, / She hath my hart, but you, my Lord, haue hers".(111)

Alongside the rhetorical aspect of courtship, and indeed inseparable from it, is the behavioural. This embodies a whole canon of gesture and convention including dress, physical appearance, the exchange of tokens, and general social behaviour. It would be wrong to draw too

110. Heywood, *Troia Britanica, or Great Brittaines Troy*, pp.194, 207. A few lines earlier Paris complains to her of Menelaus' uxoriousness: "For still his arme about thy necke he throwes, / Which I no sooner spy but I grow mad, / And hate the man whose courting makes me sad", *ibid.* p.205. George Peele, *The Tale of Troy* (1589), l.157, in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.189.

111. Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (?1588-1594), scene v, ll.74-77, ed. J. A. Lanvin (Benn, London; 1969) p.31. Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedie* (1585-1587), IV.i.53-55, in Kyd, ed. Boas p.83. See also *Soliman and Perseda* (1592), I.iv.196: Basilico: "Now comes in the infant that courts my mistresse", *ibid.* p.174.

sharp a distinction between behaviour and rhetoric since their decorous conjunction was one of the staples of Renaissance oratorical theory. In his translation of Guazzo's *Civile Conversation*, George Pettie writes that he "might in a certaine manner reduce al conversation, to that point of manners and behaviour, wherein are likewise comprysed our woordes and speech".(112) For Puttenham the rhetoric of courtship must be seen to mimic the extraordinary behaviour of the lover:

[Love poetry] requireth a forme of Poesie variable, inconstant, affected, curious and most witty of any others, whereof the ioyes were to be vttered in one sorte, the sorrowes in an other, and by the many formes of Poesie, the many moods and pangs of louers, throughly to be discovered.(113)

Earlier quotations from Fenton and Whythorne indicated the behavioural peculiarities of sixteenth — century courtship, which was frequently performed for the benefit of an audience over and above the beloved. In Thomas Lodge's prose romance *A Margarite of America*, Arsadachus is allowed "to court" the heroine and "so behaued himselfe with his Mistresse, that neither Tiberius for his eie, neither Alexander for his scarre, nor Cicero for his mole, were so

112. George Pettie trans., *The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo*, gen. ed. Charles Whibley (Constable, London; 1925) 2 vols. i.119. Compare the strict injunctions Abraham Fraunce gives the orator in *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588), for example: "Stand vpright & straight as nature hath appoynted: much wauering and ouercurious and nice motion is verie ridiculous", ed. Ethel Seaton (Blackwell, Oxford; 1950) p.120.

113. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Willcock and Walker, p.45.

much commended, and noted, as the yong Cuscan was for his behauour".(114) One might compare Pharicles, the deceitful lover in Greene's *Mamillia*, who, "framing a sheepes skin for his woolues backe, and putting on a smooth hide ouer his Panthers paunch, vsed first a great grauitie in his apparell, and no lesse demurenes in his countenaunce and gesture, with such a ciuil gouernment of his affection, as y^t he seemed rather to court vnto Diana, then vow his seruice vnto Venus".(115) This contrasts with the soldier-lover in one of Barnaby Rich's tales who was "so blunt and plaine, aswell in his gesture, as in his tearmes" he clearly had "little skill in the courting of Gentlewomen".(116)

Such courting behaviour effected the dress and appearance of the lover as well as his physical posture. In Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*, Venus charges Cupid to direct one of his mischievous arrows at women to cause their "secrete laughing at mens pale lookes and neate attire, open reioycinge at their owne comlinesse and mens courtinge", while Lucy Hutchinson describes "an insignificant gallant, that could only make his legs and prune himself, and court a

114. Thomas Lodge, *A Margarite of America* (1595), ed. G. B. Harrison (Blackwell, Oxford; 1927) p.140.

115. Greene, *Mamillia*, Part I (1583), in Greene, ed. Grosart, ii.20-21.

116. Rich, *Rich's Farewell to Military Profession*, ed. Cranfill, p.130.

lady".(117) But amorous behaviour was not limited to physical appearance. Ideally, it took the form of a recognised sequence of events, in which the lover and beloved followed a rigorously set pattern:

Felice would manie times walke, vnto the Piatso Richio, a place where the brauest Gentlemen assembled, & where the fynest deuices were sould: she taking this liberty to walke, bound the gallant yong Gentlemen, in curtesie to Court her: curtuous seruice, is to be accepted with thanks: acceptance of seruice, inlargeth acquaintance: acquaintance ingendreth familiartytie: and famyliaritie, setteth al Folies abroach.(118)

The attributes of courtship gradually unfold. Unless removed from the courtly environment, it is in danger of being a performance, a mere rhetorical display, a narcissistic game on behalf of the lover, and at worst an end in itself. The object of affection could, with little compunction, be dispensable. In the revised *Arcadia*, Sidney employs one of his rare uses of the verb to court to describe the dubious courtship offered by Phalanthus to the vain Artesia:

117. Lyly, *Sapho and Phao* (1584), V.i.27-28, in Lyly, ed. Bond, ii.410. Compare Demetrius in *Titus Andronicus*, II.i.91-92: "Then why should he despair that knows to court it, / With words, fair looks, and liberality?". Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonell Hutchinson* (1664), Preface, ed. Julius Hutchinson (Dent, London; 1908, repr. 1968) p.11.

118. Whetstone, *An heptameron of ciuill discourses*, sig.K3. Whetstone's account implies an element of mobility which suggests that courting primarily needs a public setting. Compare Lyly's description of contemporary lovers in *Campaspe* (1584), IV.ii.14-16: "they that were accustomed on trotting horses to charge the enemy with a launce, now in easie coches ride vp & downe to court Ladies", Lyly, ed. Bond, ii.347.

So therfore taking love uppon him like a fashion,
he courted this Ladie Artesia, who was as fit to
paie him in his owne monie as might be.(119)

Artesia makes Phalanthus pledge to defend her beauty over all other women, although he has little faith in the enterprise and eventually the 'courtship' is called off for mutual convenience. In one of her letters to Sir William Temple, Dorothy Osborne laughs at a gentleman whose antics recall one of Spenser's characters in *The Faerie Queene*: "Mr. Fish is the Squire of Dames, and has soe many Mistresses that any body may prettend a Share in him and bee beleev'd; but though I have the honour to bee his neer neighbour, to speak freely I cannot bragge much that hee makes any Court to mee".(120)

The fundamentally discontinuous nature of this kind of courtship contrasts strongly with all the Protestant domestic ideals of constancy, continency and marriage. Greene makes this plain in his account of the impressionable young lover of the day, who believed "that it is a Courtiers profession to court to euerie dame but to bee constant to none".(121) In Melbancke's *Philotimus*, a father asks his son to dedicate his life to one of three mutually exclusive

119. Sidney, ed. Feuillerat, i.98. Sidney uses the verb only three times in his works, all in the revised *Arcadia*. See i.364 (quoted above) and *ibid.* p.511 where the evil Anaxius and his brothers "courted" Zelmane and the princesses to no avail, resolving "to dally no longer in delays, but to make violence his Oratour" to rape.

120. From a letter dated 18 June, 1653, in *The Letters of Dorothy Osborne to William Temple*, ed. G. C. Moore-Smith (Clarendon, Oxford; 1928), p.57.

121. Greene, *Mamillia*, Part II (1583), in Greene, ed. Grosart, ii.180.

alternatives: "Whether the firste of all to Pallas, and to liue at the Vniuersity, there to attaine the profound and sound knowledge of the liberall artes. Or honour sacred Iuno with solemnizing her mariage . . . Or if none of these will fit thy fancie, wilt thou vow thy self to Venus, and court it awhile?".(122)

In these terms, courtship becomes an irresponsible pursuit and is most commonly synonymous with lust or fleeting sexual encounters, described by Lyly's *Euphues* as "begunne in an houre and ended in a minuit". Indeed, the association is a persistent one. Florio defines the Italian verb *Amoreggiare* as "to court with lust, to make loue, to play the louer", as if the rhetorical role-play and the sexual outcome are synonymous.(123) Sir John Harington makes a similar association in his translation of the *Orlando Furioso*:

If so I may a paradise it name
Where love and lust have built their habitation,
Where time well spent is counted as a shame,
No wise staide thought, no care of estimation,
Nor nought but courting, dauncing, play, and game,
Disguised clothes, ech day a sundrie fashion,
No vertuous labour doth this people please,

122. Brian Melbancke, *Philotimus. The warre betwixt nature and fortune* (1583), sig.C1^v.

123. Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words*. Compare Thomas Dekker's entry pageant, *The wonderfull yeare* (1603), in which a figurative London is "courted by amorous and lustie suiters", ed. G. B. Harrison (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh; 1966) pp.34-35.

But nice apparell, belly cheare, and ease.(124)

The social and behavioural elements surrounding Harington's courting, dancing, play, and so forth, suggest that courtship is simply the prelude to sexual encounters. Dance remained one of the most important occasions and metaphors for courtship in the period. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the disguised king and courtiers enter with purpose "to parley, to court, and dance", and Thomas Lodge satirises a lover who "walks y^e streets & the Exchange, to spy out faire women; by night he courts them with maskes, consorts, and musicke".(125) In his *Epithalamion* on the marriage of Princess Elizabeth with Frederick of Germany in 1613, George Wither implies that courting will delay their sexual consummation:

Revellers, then now forbear yee,
And unto your rests prepare yee:
Let's a while your absence borrow,
Sleep to night, and dance tomorrow.
We could well allow your Courting:

124. Sir John Harington trans., *Orlando Furioso* (1591), vi.73, in *Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso translated into English Heroical Verse by Sir John Harington*, ed. Robert McNulty (Clarendon, Oxford; 1972) p.78. "Courting" is an addition of Harington's. Compare Ariosto's text of the appropriate passage: "Non vi si sta non in danza e in giuoco, / e tutte in festa vi si spendon l'ore:", canto vi.73, in *Orlando Furioso*, ed. Lanfranco Caretti (Ricciardi, Milano; 1966) p.125.

125. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.122. Thomas Lodge, *Wits miserie, and the worlds madnesse* (1596), sig.G3^v. Compare Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, III.i.130: "And wanton Mermaides court thee with sweete songs", in Marlowe, ed. Bowers, i.29. See also the Cardinal in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, who "Will play his five thousand crownes, at Tennis, Daunce, / Court Ladies", I.i.155-156, in Webster, ed. Lucas, ii.41.

But 'twill hinder better sporting.(126)

Some writers simply equate courting with "lascivious sport" and "lascivious rimes"; for others it is synonymous with physical displays of affection.(127) Those who lie "lulde in Ladies lappes . . . that plaie with womens paps" are said to be "courtyng mistres mince".(128) One of the characters in Wilkins' play, *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage*, lists all the "degrees of loue" as "either to Court, kisse, giue priuate fauours, or vse priuate meanes".(129) Peele catalogues courting in a similar way:

To wish, to dallie, and to offer game,
To coy, to court, and caetera to doe:

126. George Wither, *Epithalamion* (1613), ll.459-464, in *The English Spenserians*, ed. William B. Hunter Jr. (University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City; 1977) p.132. See also: "Ladies, 'tis their Highnesse pleasures, / To behold you foot the Measures . . . Time was, that you loved sporting, / Have you quite forgot your Courting?", ll.387-388, 395-396, *ibid.* p.129. Compare Thomas Campion in *The Lords' Masque*, ll.259-260: "Court them fair: / When words and music speak, let none despair", in *A Book of Masques*, ed. Spencer and Wells, p.112.

127. Drayton, *Endimion and Phoebe. Ideas Latmus* (1595), ll.93-96: "And Jove oft-times bent to lascivious sport, / And comming where Endimion did resort, / Hath courted him, inflamed with desire, / Thinking some Nymph was cloth'd in boyes attire", in *Drayton*, ed. Hebel, Tillotson and Newdigate, i:131. Sir John Davies, "A Lover out of Fashion", ll.1-2, 7-8: "Faith (wench) I cannot court thy sprightly eyes, / With the base Viall placed betweene my Thighes . . . I am not fashioned for these amorous times, / To court thy beutie with lascivious rimes", in *Poems*, ed. Kreuger, p.180. See also Peele, *The Araygnement of Paris* (1584), II.i.329, where Juno castigates Echo who "held me chat, while he [Jove] might court his love", Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, iii.76.

128. Barnaby Rich, *The straunge and wonderfull aduentures of Don Simonides* (1581), sig.Q2^v.

129. George Wilkins, *The Miseries of Inforst Mariage* (1607), ed. Glenn H. Blayney (Malone Society, Oxford; 1963, repr. 1964) sig.G3^v. See also: "euen as you had new kist, and were about to court her", *ibid.* sig.G2^v.

(Forgive me Chastnes if in termes of shame,
To thy renowne, I paint what longs thereto).(130)

iv. *Courting condoned*

In certain contexts, however, the inherently dissembling nature of courting could be condoned. This almost always depended on a transfer away from the court, most often to a pastoral locus. In Greene's pastoral *Menaphon*, for example, the disguised hero entertains Samela "with such courtesie, that shee finding such content in the cotage, began to despise the honors of the Court". In time-honoured fashion, the pastoral provides a poetic antithesis to the dissimulation of court life. This makes all the more pertinent the language *Menaphon* uses to woo Samela:

As soone as Menaphon had ended this roundelay,
turning to Samela, after a countrey blush, he
began to court her in this homely fashion . . .

Courting here is redeemed precisely because it takes place away from the court, and because it is couched in homely shepherds' terms not in courtly eloquence. Greene repeats the point:

130. Peele, "The Praise of Chastity", ll.81-84, in *The Phoenix Nest* (1593), in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.263. To coy means to fondle or caress. For further examples see Thomas Lodge, *Glaucus and Scilla*: "Let wanton Scilla coy her where she will", in *The Complete Works of Thomas Lodge*, ed. E. Gosse (Glasgow; 1883, repr. New York; 1963) 4 vols. i.19. See also Peele, *The Araygnement of Paris*, III.ii.576: "Playes with Amintas lustie boie, and coyces him in the dales", in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, iii.87. Norbert Greiner gives a brief lexical analysis of coy, verb and adjective, in "Gascoigne's *The Lullaby of a Lover*", *Explicator* 38.iv (1980) pp.37-39.

Melicertus . . . vsed euerie day to visite her without dread, and courte her in such shepheards tearmes as he had; which howe they pleased her I leaue to you to imagine, when as not long after she vowed mariage to him solemnly.(131)

A year later, Thomas Lodge uses precisely the same technique in the pastoral romance *Rosalynde*:

But sir our countrey amours are not like your courtly fancies, nor is our wooing like your suing: for poore shepheards neuer plaine them till Loue paine them, where the Courtiers eyes is full of passions when his heart is most free from affection: they court to discouer their eloquence, we wooe to ease our sorrowes.(132)

Using the isocolon and bipartite syntax of the euphuistic register, Lodge makes a crucial and fascinating distinction. The native Anglo-Saxon woo is held up against the Romance-derived Continental court and proves the worthier of the two. It exonerates the lover at once from the implied dissimulation of courting, and allows him to be judged as sincere.

131. Greene, *Menaphon*, ed. Harrison, pp.45, 42, 83. For other examples of the verb in this text see: "Neptunus, as if he had meant to haue courted Thetis"; "I thought I had seene Venus with Cupide on her knee courted by Anchises of Troy"; "I attempted and courted her"; "if they court thee with hyacinth, interteine them with roses"; "Melicertus esteeming her to bee some Farmers daughter at the most, could not tell how to court her"; "ceasing off to court any further at this time", *ibid.* pp.23, 35, 47, 57, 58, 62.

132. Thomas Lodge, *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacy* (1590), in *Lodge*, ed. Gosse, i.108. For other examples in this text see: "it is ROSADER that courts thee; one, who as hee is beautifull, so he is vertuous"; "When thus they had finished their courting Eglogue in such a familiar clause", *ibid.* pp.68, 80. Compare Lodge's use of the gerund in *Euphues Shadow, the Battaille of the Sences* (1592): "It is vnspeakable to declare the many courtings, the often courtings, the kinde pleas, the courteous replies, which past betwixt PHILAMIS and PHILAMOUR", *ibid.* ii.83.

Spenser is particularly sensitive to the dichotomous nature of courting language. His portrait of the "rightfull Courtier" in *Mother Hubberds Tale* emphasises the central role of courtly speech in statesmanship:

For he is practiz'd well in policie,
 And thereto doth his Courting most applie:
 To learne the enterdeale of Princes strange,
 To marke th'intent of Counsells, and the change
 Of states . . .
 T'enrich the storehouse of his powerfull wit,
 Which through wise speaches, and graue conference
 He daylie eekes, and brings to excellence.(133)

Spenser here uses the gerund in an idealised sense, for in the humanist definition *courting* demonstrates the perfect political use of language. In *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, he collates the pastoral and the courtly modes by placing his pastoral persona, Colin, within a fraternity of courtly poets. He ⁿevisages his unity with Walter Raleigh, the "shepheard of the Ocean", as a continuous, contrapuntal verse: "He pip'd, I sung; and when he sung, I piped". While Colin aligns himself with the courtier poets, he has difficulty in adapting their style to his natural idiom. He has been away from the pastoral world and now "comes home againe" to describe it to his fellow shepherds. When Cuddy declares his flights of poetic rapture are inappropriate to a "base shepheard", Colin replies that the Queen's excellence "Lifts me aboue the measure of my might".

Having apparently adopted the high-flown courtly style, however, he finds that he must defend it against misuse;

133. Spenser, *Mother Hubberds Tale*, ll.783-792.

and the critique of court implicit in the pastoral genre finds itself strangely at variance with Colin's praise for the place. Having said that in Cynthia's court "Poets wits are had in peerlesse price", he then finds he has to distinguish these from those other courtiers "Masked with faire dissembling curtesie, / A filed tounge furnisht with tearmes of art".(134) These are the courtiers of whom Erato, muse of love-poetry, complains in *The Teares of the Muses* because they "But rime at riot, and doo rage in loue".(135) Colin's attack on the narcissistic game of love as a means of sheer self-display contrasts curiously with the worshipful vein that precedes it:

Ne any there doth braue or valiant seeme,
Vnlesse that some gay Mistresse badge he beares:
Ne any one himselfe doth ought esteeme,
Vnlesse he swim in loue vp to the eares.
But they of loue and of his sacred lere,
(As it should be) all otherwise deuise,
Then we poore shepheards are accustomed here,
And him do sue and serue all otherwise.
For with lewd speeches and licentious deeds,
His mightie mysteries they do prophane,
And vse his ydle name to other needs,
But as a complement for courting vaine.(136)

Like Lodge with court and woo, Spenser is anxious to differentiate courting from love as Colin defines it with all its religious connotations.(137) The court is a place where the "talke and studie" of sex proliferate, while in

134. *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, ll.66, 76, 618, 621, 321, 700-701.

135. *The Teares of the Muses*, l.395.

136. *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, ll.779-790.

137. Compare the priest of Love in Jonson's masque *Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly* (1610), ll.316-317: "We court, we praise, we more than love, / We are not griev'd to serve", in *A Book of Masques*, ed. Spencer and Wells, p.87.

the pastoral setting love is privileged as a source of truth. But the problem is a circular one. For having upheld 'true love' against courtly pretensions, Colin lapses back into that idiom, praising his own lady Rosalind in exactly the same terms as Cynthia and her "Right noble Nymphs". She too is "celestiall", "of diuine regard and heauenly hew", and of so exalted a nature that the "simple swaine" may not imagine or woo her realistically. Having begun the poem in the courtly phrase, and then defended true love against "courting vaine", Colin finally reiterates that language, attacking his fellow shepherds for speaking of Rosalind with "words vnmeet".(138) The discursive strategies of court and pastoral prove to be almost the same.

Spenser generally uses the verb to court in its pejorative sense. In *The Faerie Queene*, Duessa entertains Sansfoy with "courting dalliaunce" while Sansloy woos Una "With fawning wordes he courted her a while". Paridell "courted" Hellenore and "did court, did serue, did wooe" the false Florimell. In Book II, Phedon attacks his treacherous friend Philemon who "Did court the handmayd of my Lady deare".(139)

138. *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, ll.778, 577, 930, 933, 940, 790, 929.

139. *The Faerie Queene*, I.ii.14, I.vi.4; III.x.6, IV.ii.8; II.iv.25. Sansfoy and Sansloy are also found "Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall", I.iv.43; while Perissa and Elissa, the extreme sisters of Medina, are found "Accourting each her friend with lauish fest", II.ii.16.

At the same time, however, Spenser can redeem the verb from its lascivious connotations by qualifying it with appropriate epithets. This differs slightly from the juxtaposition of courtly and pastoral modes in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. By reversing the parodic strains inherent in descriptions of false love, Spenser reveals the rhetorically flexible nature of the word. In I.vii, for example, Redcrosse mistakenly entertains Duessa: "Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame". A few stanzas later Arthur emerges as the virtuous archetype who correctly recognises Una and "With louely court he gan her entertaine", while in Book II he questions Guyon with "gentle court".(140) In each case an approbatory epithet condones the noun phrase. Similarly, Medina welcomes Guyon and "comely courted with meet modestie", just as Alma makes "gentle court and gracious delight" to him.(141) In the House of Alma *courting* is invariably used in this favourable sense:

A louely beuy of faire Ladies sate,
Courtied of many a iolly Paramoure . . .

Whom when the knights beheld, they gan dispose
Themselves to court, and each a Damsell chose:

Thus they awhile with court and goodly game,
Themselves did solace each one with his Dame.(142)

140. *ibid.* I.vii.7, 38; II.ix.2.

141. *ibid.* II.ii.15; II.ix.20. Medina's sister, the severe Elissa, on the other hand, "did deeme / Such entertainment base . . . No solace could her Paramour intreat / Her once to show, ne court, nor dalliance", II.ii.35.

142. *ibid.* II.ix.34, 36, 44. For a further discussion of Spenser's courting language, see below chapter 5.

Finally, there remains a third way in which the lascivious connotations of courting could be played down. Most of the evidence so far has specified courtship as a masculine preoccupation, in so far as the majority of the lovers considered here have been men. However, with notable exceptions like Shakespeare's Katherine, female courting is altogether a more gentle, honourable thing.⁽¹⁴³⁾ The besotted Phoebe in Drayton's *Idea's Latmus*, discovers Endimion beside a river "Where merrily to court him she begun", contrasting with her rival Jove who "courted him, inflamed with desire, / Thinking some Nymph was cloth'd in boyes attire".⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Lodge draws a similar contrast in his prose romance *A Margarite of America*, in which the virtuous heroine suffers the philandering of her professed lover Arsadachus: "The enterchange of which affections was so conformable to the fancies of the princesse, that she, who was ordained to be the miracle of loue, learnd by them and their maners the true methode of the same: for when Minecius courted his Philenia, Margarita conceited her Arsadachus."⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ In Marvell's poem "Mourning", courting

143. *The Taming of the Shrew*, I.i.54-55: Baptista offers the suitors leave "to court her at your pleasure", upon which Gremio puns, "To cart her rather; she's too rough for me". See also the courtesan Julia, in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, V.ii.205-207, who woos Bosola: "had you bin i'th'streete, / Under my chamber window, even there / I should have courted you", in Webster, ed. Lucas, ii.111.

144. Drayton, *Endimion and Phoebe*, ll.174, 95-96, in Drayton, ed. Hebel, Tillotson and Newdigate, i.133, 131.

145. Lodge, *A Margarite of America*, ed. Harrison, p.124. For other examples of the verb to court in this text see: "Minicius courted Margarita"; "Why hath he not courted me these fiue moneths?"; "When Arsinous saw her and himselfe in saftie, he courted her thus", *ibid.* pp.135, 170, 212.

becomes a self-reflexive phenomenon in which all predatory aspects disappear. Clora weeps for her lost lover and with these tears:

She courts herself in am'rous rain;
Herself both Danaë and the show'r.(146)

Women rarely took the active role in courtship and as a result the word for a female wooer is rare. In his *Golden Aphroditis*, John Grange diagrammatises the love situation so as properly to "declare the order of wowyng". In order to present the parts of paramour and paragon in lively fashion, he writes, "lette (F) stande for the Courtyer, and (G) for the Courtresse".(147) A courtress is specifically a virtuous lady and to be distinguished from the meretricious courtesan. Greene makes this point clear in part II of his *Mamillia*, where he contrasts the common "stale slut" of the day with the virtuous "courtresse".(148)

At times courtship is presented as the ultimate temptation for women to resist. In his translation of Guazzo's *Civile Conversation*, George Pettie labours this point. Guazzo begins by declaring that a woman enjoys "to

146. Andrew Marvell, "Mourning", ll.19-20, in Andrew Marvell: *The Complete Poems*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Penguin, Harmondsworth; 1972) p.38.

147. John Grange, *The golden Aphroditis* (1577), sig.M3. For other examples of the male equivalent see E. C., *Emaricdulfe*, sonnet xxiv: "Oft haue I heard hony-tong'd Ladies speake, / Striuing their amerous courtiers to inchant", in *English and Scottish Sonnet Sequences of the Renaissance*, ed. Klein, i.252; see also Sir Robert Naunton's account of Fulke Greville: "a single life, wherein he lived and died a constant courtier and of the ladies", *Fragmenta Regalia*, ed. Cerovski, p.74.

148. Greene, *Mamillia*, Part II, in Greene, ed. Grosart, ii.219.

be courted, and to be taken for bewtifull" but that she allows it in order "to increase her reputation". Anniball, puzzled, asks "wherefore thinke you women are so glad to bee courted and sued unto, meaning not to yeelde, but to stand to their honesty?" to which Guazzo replies:

as I am not content to know my self to be an honest man, but I would have the world know it, and trie it to be so: so women mooved by the same ambition, love to be courted and tried, that by their honest aunsweres, they may be knowne to the world to be honest women.(149)

Such is the virtue of Don Simonides' Clarinda whom he "had oft courted, yet neuer conquered", or of Perseda in Kyd's play *Soliman and Perseda*. Overcome by her constancy and virtue, the Soliman refrains from raping her and begs leave only "in honest sort to court thee, / To ease, though not to cure, my maladie".(150)

v. *Figurative use*

It should be emphasised that the morally condoned sense of to court was not a simple aberration from a standard satirical usage. It was a crucial part of the word's associative field. One may illustrate this by the fact

149. Pettie trans., *The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo*, ed. Whibley, ii. 32. In Book II, Anniball attacks the folly of those men who "if a woman shewe but a merry countenance, make some signe by chaunce, or use any other jesture, they apply it all to themselves, as done in their favour, and filled with a thousande vaine pleasures, and oftentimes make court to suche a one, whose minde is farre of both from them, and their purpose", *ibid.* i.233.

150. Barnaby Rich, *The second tome of the trauailes and aduentures of Don Simonides* (1584), sig.H2. Thomas Kyd, *Soliman and Perseda* (?1592), IV.i.147-148, in Kyd, ed. Boas, p.209.

that its figurative use frequently employs the word in its favourable sense, associated with pleasure, happiness or opportunity. Thomas Dekker recalls a moment in James I's triumphant entry into London when "a sweete pleasure likewise courted his eare in the shape of Musicke".(151) Friar Lawrence tries to calm Romeo with the observation that "Happiness courts thee in her best array".(152) In the second eclogue of Lodge's *Phyllis*, the lover is "Courtied once by fortunes fauour", and Shakespeare's use of the verb in its figurative mode frequently makes a similar association: "I'll court his favors"; "whose influence / If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes / Will ever after droop"; "I am courted now with a double occasion".(153)

On occasion to court could be used of the most exalted subject. Chapman prefaces *Ouids banquet of sence* with the claim that "you haue actual meanes to sound the philosophical conceits, that my new pen so seriously courteth".(154) More significantly, perhaps, Donne uses

151. *The Magnificent Entertainment* (1604), in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1953-1961) 4 vols. ii.284. Compare *Pericles*, I.ii.6: "Here pleasures court mine eyes, and mine eyes shun them".

152. *Romeo and Juliet*, III.iii.142. Compare Marlowe's Dido who urges the stormy sea to abate "And court Aeneas with your calmie cheere", *Dido Queen of Carthage*, I.i.123, in Marlowe, ed. Bowers, i.10.

153. Lodge, *Phyllis* (1593), Second Eclogue, l.21, in Lodge, ed. Gosse, ii.35. *Hamlet*, V.ii.78 (First Folio reads count for court); *The Tempest*, I.ii.182-184; *The Winter's Tale*, IV.iv.833. Courting favour was the *sine qua non* of patronage. See Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, I.i.237-238: Cardinal: "many times I have slighted him [Bosola], / When he did court our furtherance", in Webster, ed. Lucas, ii.43.

154. George Chapman, *Ouids banquet of sence* (1595), sig.A2^v.

the verb in a wholly religious context in two of his Holy Sonnets:

Betray kind husband thy spouse to our sights,
And let myne amorous soule court thy mild Dove,
Who is most trew, and pleasing to thee, then
When she's embrac'd and open to most men.

I durst not view heaven yesterday; and to day
In prayers, and flattering speeches I court
God. (155)

Elsewhere Donne is fully aware of the word's erotic or satiric overtones, but here he specifically removes it from all baseness, and approaches God as a suppliant.

vi. Conclusion

One important fact remains to be considered. The lexical development which equated 'being at court' with 'wooing' occurred during the reign of Elizabeth. Indeed, it becomes richly significant that being at court and behaving as befitted a courtier came to mean the same as love-making during Elizabeth's reign, for she, if anyone, presumed on her courtiers to behave as lovers. This lexical coincidence, already hinted at by at least one historian, therefore demands closer examination. (156)

155. Holy Sonnets (from the Westmoreland MS.) 2 and 3, in *John Donne: The Divine Poems*, ed. Helen Gardner (Clarendon, Oxford; 1978) pp.15, 16. See also "The Expostulation", ll.55-57: "I could beginne againe to court and praise, / And in that pleasure lengthen the short dayes / Of my lifes lease", in *Donne: Elegies, Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Gardner, p.96.

156. "Court, as she [Elizabeth] intended it, was the place where subjects paid court to her, not the place where the young indulged in easy courtships", Neville Williams, *All The Queen's Men: Elizabeth I and Her Courtiers* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London; 1972) p.21, Williams' italics.

Elizabeth's celebrated use of courting conventions has been a subject of speculation, both romantic and historical, since before her coronation.(157) The virgin queen, a translator of Petrarch, self-consciously modelled herself, it has been suggested, on the distant, wilful donna of courtly-love convention.(158) She is said to have elevated men such as Hatton on the strength of their dancing ability, and received letters from them that swore undying devotion: "I love yourself. I cannot lack you . . . Believe it, most gracious Lady, there is no illud mitius, you are the true felicity that in this world I know or find".(159) She was in a position to dictate the courtships of her courtiers and wards, and, as Sir John Harington reported, was often felt to extend her own sexual jealousy too far.(160) In both popular and courtly culture she was presented persistently^t_k as lover and beloved, called by some "Pandora: some Gloriana, some Cynthia: some Belpheobe, some Astraea: all by

157. The best historical account of her own courtships is Martin Hume, *The Courtships of Queen Elizabeth: A History of the Various Negotiations for Her Marriage* (Nash, London; 1906). For more fanciful accounts, see Alison Plowden, *Marriage With My Kingdom: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (Macmillan, London; 1977); and Elizabeth Jenkins, *Elizabeth and Leicester* (Gollancz, London; 1961).

158. See Leonard Forster, *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1969) pp.122-147.

159. From an undated letter from Hatton to the Queen, in *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, ed. Nicolas, p.28.

160. "She did oft aske the Ladies around hir chamber, If they lovede to thinke of marriage? And the wise ones did conceal well their liking hereto, as knowing the Queenes judgement in this matter", Sir John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae* (Georg Olms, Hildesheim; 1968) 3 vols. ii.137.

seuerall names to expresse seuerall loues".(161) Such mythologising tendencies embodied the epideictic imperative of courtly writing, but they were more than simple flattery or bids for favour. The image of the distant, spectacular female, with its mixture of Christian and pagan overtones, gave scope, it has been argued, to the lyric imagination of the age.(162)

In a system of clientage, courtship was, of course, a two-way process. In his account of the absolutist regime of Louis XIV, Elias shows that the court society was one of mutual dependence, and, under the aegis of Foucault, many historians tend now to regard power relations in terms of their reciprocity.(163) Elizabeth had no standing army and a shaky claim to the throne. The great mythologising of her person in art and poetry was therefore a political expedient as much as anything else. In his *Legend of Courtesy*, Spenser envisages Elizabeth's court as a model of this mutual dependence:

Then pardon me, most dreaded Soueraine,
That from your selfe I doe this vertue bring,
And to your selfe doe it returne againe:
So from the Ocean all riuers spring,
And tribute backe repay as to their King.(164)

161. Thomas Dekker, *Old Fortunatus* (1599), Prologue, 11.3-4, in Dekker, ed. Bowers, i.113.

162. See E. C. Wilson, *England's Eliza* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; 1939, repr. Octagon, New York; 1966); and Yates, *Astraea*.

163. See Elias, *The Court Society*, p.206; and Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, and *History of Sexuality*, i.81-131. For an example of the application of these theories to English Renaissance literature, see Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature*, *passim*.

164. *The Faerie Queene*, VI.Pro.7.

Drawing on the Neo-Platonic theory of the Three Graces, he suggests that whatever is taken from the Queen should be returned two-fold, just as he presents her with *The Faerie Queene* with a tentative anticipation of reward.(165) The court represents a single, metaphysical unit of giving and receiving. It is certainly true that Elizabeth courted individuals as assiduously as they her. Naunton recalls her behaviour to Sir Francis Vere: "They report of the Queen as she loved martial men yet would court this gentleman as soon as he appeared in her presence".(166) Moreover, the favour she showed individuals reflected her wooing of the nation at large. Nothing illustrates better the translation of mutual dependence into a language of love than Elizabeth's coronation pageant. On her first entering the city of London, the people welcomed her with "tender woordes, and all other signes, whiche argue a wonderfull earnest loue of most obedient subiectes towarde theyr soueraygne. And on thother syde her grace by holding vp her handes . . . and most tender & gentle language to those that stode nigh to her grace, did declare her selfe nolesse thankefullye to receiue her peoples good wille, than they louingly offred it vnto her". The populace remain

165. See Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Faber, London; 1958, 2nd. ed. Penguin, Harmondsworth; 1967).

166. Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia*, ed. Cerovski, p.84.

"wonderfully rauished with the louing answers and gestures of their princesse".(167)

In his essay on the Elizabethan patronage system, MacCaffrey insists that the monarchy maintained its monopoly of power through political persuasion: "The stability of the system demanded the arduous and constant wooing of the body politic".(168) By the body politic MacCaffrey refers to the state, but, as Axton points out, the phrase has a dual meaning. From early in Elizabeth's reign it also had a technical, legal sense differentiating her natural body, subject to age and disease, from the "corporate perpetuity" represented by her politic body.(169) As historicist critics have pointed out, this myth of the Queen's two bodies immediately politicised the language of courtship. All the Petrarchan conventions were directed at the Queen's political self, as she herself was aware: "In the past I have been courted by some who would rather marry the kingdom than marry the Queen, as generally happens with the great".(170) The clientage system of mutual dependence

167. *The Quenes Maiesties Passage through the Citie of London to Westminster the Day before her Coronacion* (1558), ed. James M. Osborn (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1960) pp.27-28.

168. MacCaffrey, "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics", in *Elizabethan Government and Society*, ed. Bindoff, Hurstfield and Williams, p.97.

169. Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (Royal Historical Society, London; 1977) p.12. See also Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (Methuen, London; 1986); and Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago; 1980) pp.157-192.

170. Quoted by Williams, *All the Queen's Men*, p.138.

naturally translated into the ready-made language of Petrarchism. As one critic puts it, "Elizabeth's cult of courtly love actualised a metaphor that was always latent in monarchical systems of government: relations between individual and authority were not those of citizen and state but those of a subject, a dependent, to a single individual whose favour had to be 'courted'".(171) The pervasive Petrarchan conventions which made courtiers parade in tournament costume or write love lyrics to Elizabeth were a means of making acceptable their subordination to a woman: obedience was translated into service in which the individual might excel and be duly rewarded above his peers. To quote Goldberg, "Courting was a metaphor for the desire for power and authority".(172) Erotic energy was thus transformed into an elaborate art of service, although the relation between private affection and a public show of devotion was a problematic one, and one rigorously examined by Elizabethan court poets.(173) It acted out what one critic has identified as the perennial "inner self-contradiction" of the courtly-love ethic, which desires but

171. Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, p.117. See also Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display*, pp.30-36, and "Sir Walter Raleigh and the Literature of Clientage" in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1981) pp.235-258.

172. Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke*, p.152.

173. See, for example, Louis Adrian Montrose, "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship", *Renaissance Drama* 8 (1977) pp.3-35, and "'The perfecte paterne of a Poete': The Poetics of Courtship in *The Shepheardes Calender*", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 21 (1979) pp.34-67.

which also abominates desire.(174) For the polite fiction that favourites and prospective courtiers only courted the Queen's body politic was open to abuse, as the many slanders of the reign testify. All the Court's enemies had to do was to refuse to distinguish the Queen's two bodies. If courtship was directed toward her natural body it was improper and worthy to be chastised. In the scurrilous pamphlet *Leicester's Ghost*, for instance, the Earl of Leicester is accused of gross familiarity with his royal mistress. He boasts that "First I assaid Queene Elisabeth to wedd, / Whome diuers princes courted but in vaine", and elsewhere in the poem his courtings are his greatest reproach.(175)

In a famous passage Francis Bacon illustrates the fine line drawn between genuine erotic gamesmanship and sanctioned desire. He records Elizabeth's strategy of courtship:

As for those lighter points of character, - as that she allowed herself to be wooed and courted,

174. A. J. Smith, *The Metaphysics of Love: Studies in Renaissance love poetry from Dante to Milton* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1985) p.37: "This inner self-contradiction continued to characterise courtly poetry in Europe down to the late sixteenth century . . . Court poets as far removed in every way as Serafino and Sidney took it as faith that a noble love is agonisingly irreconcilable with the desire to gratify sense".

175. T[homas] R[ogers], *Leicester's Ghost* (1602-1604), ll.1065-1066, ed. Franklin B. Williams Jr. (University of Chicago Press, Chicago; 1972) p.45. See also ll.1352-1355, 1465-1467: "To me Count Egmonds daughters did resort, / And such braue Dames as Flanders then did yeald, / That it did seeme I rather came to court / A gallant Ladie, then to pitch a fielde"; "This priuate life doth much obscure his fame, / More fitt to beare great Ajax seaven-fold shield, / Than like Sardanapale, to court a Dame", *ibid.* pp.55, 59.

and even to have love made to her; and liked it; and continued it beyond the natural age for such vanities; - if any of the sadder sort of persons [tristibus] be disposed to make a great matter of this, it may be observed that there is something to admire in these very things, which ever way you take them. For if viewed indulgently [mollius], they are much like the accounts we find in romances, of the Queen in the blessed islands, and her court and institutions, who allows of amorous admiration but prohibits desire . . . for certain it is that these dalliances detracted but little from her fame and nothing at all from her majesty.(176)

As Patterson points out, Bacon provides an interpretative choice between a romantic (*mollius*) and a serious (*tristibus*) reading of Elizabeth's behaviour.(177) The former is problematic and open to question but, Bacon insists, it retains a capacity for seriousness. In practice Elizabeth's coquetry actually enhanced her political independence. Like Spenser in the Proem to Book IV, Bacon reproves those whose "graue foresight" ruthlessly dissociates romance and power, and he therefore points the way to the fusion of the two in the post-Restoration genre of the 'royal romance'.(178)

Against these arguments have to be weighed one or two salient facts. Considering the intimate correspondence between courtly behaviour and a language of love in Elizabeth's court, one fact above all is remarkable. That

176. Bacon, *In Felicem Memoriam* (1608), Bacon's translation, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis and D. D. Heath (Longman et al., London; 1857-1874, repr. New York; 1968) 14 vols. vi.317.

177. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, pp.159-160. See also Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p.166.

178. *The Faerie Queene*, IV.Pro.1.

is that the words *to court* and *courtship* are, with the few exceptions quoted above, very rarely used specifically by or about the Queen. Perhaps the cult of her person was so entrenched in the national imagination that no logical connection needed to be made. In addition, as the early sections of this chapter showed, the same lexical development occurred in other European languages quite independently of any female rule: in troubadour verse, in fifteenth-century France and in early sixteenth-century Italy. This suggests that the equivalent development in English is only partially attributable to the historical accident of Elizabeth's sex.

At this point one has to ask to what extent the lexical evolution would have occurred anyway as a result of developments on the Continent. The vocabulary of English expanded greatly in this period as a result of the adoption and assimilation of foreign words, despite the opprobrium of E. K. and the like. It has been shown that the verb *to court* entered the language primarily through translation, and given this it was almost inevitable that a similar semantic change should occur in English. Only the word's ready assimilation and its development of the native offshoot *courtship*, can really be attributed to the influence of contingent political factors. For if the amorous specialisation of the verb *to court* had little strictly to do with Elizabeth, it clearly had a great deal to do with the court. The previous chapter considered some of the

sociological circumstances which made such semantic development possible. It could be argued that the new sense did not develop in English through simple imitation of other languages, but that the nation as a whole participated in a far-reaching socio-historical change. The development of *courtiser*, *corteggiare* and *to court* was less an effect than a symptom of great political upheavals in European history, identified by Elias as the first steps toward the absolutism of nation states. The new political significance of the court as a major symbol of centralised, monarchical power focused attention on the phenomena of court life and necessarily expanded its semantic field. At the same time, as others have argued, the civilising process undergone by court society at large sponsored a kind of "affective individualism". Through the internalisation of physical passions and civilising detachment, the individual became an isolated being. In a society increasingly constrained by formality and etiquette the individual sought emotional relief in nostalgia for a golden world free from constraints, and in "the development of romantic love both as a real occurrence and perhaps still more as a cult and ideal". (179)

Moreover, with patterns of love-making changing, love itself was being re-examined. This becomes particularly clear if one compares *to court* with the simultaneous development of the synonymous verb phrase *to make love*,

179. Elias, *The Court Society*, p.243.

which also entered the English language from Italian and French. In *The Schoolmaster*, Roger Ascham refers to travellers recently returned from Italy as "the greatest makers of love", evidently associating the fashion with Italianate customs, while the verb was already being used by Geoffrey Fenton.(180) In the seventh tale of his *Certaine tragicall discourses*, for instance, he uses the phrase three times, in each case translating *faire l'amour* directly from Belleforest.(181) The phrase evolved in precisely the same way as *to court*, becoming gradually assimilated into the language by translation and association. By 1580 Lyly could equate the two in *Euphues and his England*:

A Phrase now there is which belongeth to your Shoppe boorde, that is, to *make loue*, and when I shall heare of what fashion it is made, if I like the pattorn, you shall cut me a partlet . . . He that will sell lawne must learne to folde it, and

180. Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster* (1570), ed. Lawrence V. Ryan (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; 1967) p.74.

181. Belleforest's "*femme qui fait l'amour*" appears as "*a Cortisan, or woman makynge loue*"; "*il vous livreroit un tel assault, que de vostre vie ne seriez en peine de faire l'Amour aux Dames*", becomes "*you shoulde not neede anye longer, to bee carefull of the worlde, nor myndefull to make loue to ladyes*"; and "*comme s'il eust fait l'amour à quelqu'une des Infantes d'Espagne*" becomes "*or that he had made loue to one of the blood royall in spaine*"; from Belleforest's 20^e *Histoire* in *The French Bandello*, ed. Hook, pp.143, 146, 149, and Fenton, *Certaine tragicall discourses*, fols.155^v, 158, 161^v.

he that will make loue, must learne first to
courte it. (182)

This immediately delimits love to the stratum of the artisan, the tailor's shop, with a subsumed pun on "suit" perhaps. (183) This compares with the satiric use of to court which contrasted court amours with the Protestant ideals of constancy and marriage. Love as a traditionally aristocratic preserve appears to be changing. The elitist metaphysical ideal of Dante and the Florentine humanists gives way to competing pressures which they would have regarded as bourgeois vulgarisations. If, as A. J. Smith argues, the metaphysical notion of love was in a state of gradual decline from Dante to Milton, this might mark the mid-point. On the one hand stood the courtly tradition which scrupulously controlled desire and sexual affects; on the other, the outright celebration of desire in the lyrics

182. *Lyly*, ed. Bond, ii.68. In his edition of George Pettie's *Petite Pallace*, Herbert Hartman draws attention to the author's use of the phrase to *make love*, concluding that "Pettie seems to have assisted in introducing the idiom into English", p.296. For examples of Pettie's usage see the following quotations: "if I *make love* in way of mariage, her estate and ritches refuseth it"; "though I should first bewray my affection and *make love* to kinge Minos, the offence is rather to bee pitied then punished . . . whereof springeth this errour that women may not first *make love*? . . . if it were lawfull for us to *make love* where we lyked best, we woulde never marry"; "Adalesia by her governesse *made love* to Alerane . . . why is it not lawfull for me to do the lyke, and *make love* to king Minos?"; "Why Gentleman, doe you thinke it cruelty not to condescend to the requestes of every one that *maketh love*?", *ibid.* pp.107, 154, 155, 175.

183. See also Sidney's account of the courtship between Phalanthus and Artesia: "So therefore taking love uppon him like a fashion, he courted this Ladie Artesia, who was as fit to paie him in his owne monie as might be", *Sidney*, ed. Feuillerat, i.98.

of Rochester and, ultimately, in the 'rake's creed' and Cleland's *Fanny Hill*. (184)

Finally, one last explanation may be attributed to the lexical histories we have been following. This is the sixteenth-century tendency to examine the mind and inner self by means of architectural metaphor. Anne Ferry considers this phenomenon of psychological enquiry in depth: "Sixteenth-century descriptions of examining one's internal state were most commonly based on metaphorical comparisons to entering a room in a house: a chamber, closet, or cabinet . . . Social and architectural historians have collected evidence that the existence and use of such rooms was increasing in the sixteenth century, which in turn they interpret as a sign of growing interest among Englishmen in their own individuality, to be enjoyed in privacy and explored by introspection". (185) This tendency derived in part from the Pauline concept of the body as a temple, and in part from the neo-Platonic model of the memory theatre in which recollections and knowledge are stored, as it were, compartmentally. One recalls the House of Alma in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* in which the human body is figured as a court, and where the verb to court only ever occurs in its positive sense. By analogy love itself might be compared

184. See Smith, *The Metaphysics of Love*.

185. Anne Ferry, *The "Inward" Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago; 1983), pp.46, 47.

with a court or "palace of pleasure", and is so described by Geoffrey Fenton:

I haue in presente intente to discouer vnto you the meruellous effects of loue, which excedinge the opynion of common thynges, seames more straunge, then the curious construction and frame of any Pallais for necessitie or pleasure, threatrie or place of solace buylded by art or industrie of man, or other stately Court what square, quadrante, or triangle forme soeuer it conteines, or other misticall worke yeldinge cause of wonder to the vniuersitie of the earthe.(186)

Love has traditionally been an emblem of and opportunity for self-examination. As the evidence of this chapter has shown, it proves an endless subject for inquiry, debate and for the seriousness claimed by Spenser in the Proem to Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*. As a discourse invested with peculiar emotional significance, the language of love aims to establish a rhetorical standard. But that standard is a various one, as Puttenham said, requiring a "forme of Poesie variable, inconstant, affected, curious and most witty of any others".(187) From its earliest use the verb to court could be used in approbatory or derogatory contexts, from Barclay's satiric courting, Euphues' deceitful courting it, to the courting of Hoby and all the "Castiglionean chorus".(188) Such variety and multiple signification imply that the language of love is in fact as

186. Fenton, *Certaine tragicall discourses*, fol.1.

187. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Willcock and Walker, p.45.

188. So called by Gabriel Harvey. See George L. Barnett, "Gabriel Harvey's *Castilio*, *Sive Aulicus* and *De Aulica*: A Study of Their Place in the Literature of Courtesy", *Studies in Philology* 42 (1945) pp.146-163, this quotation p.148.

readily corruptible as any discourse, and the examples of cunning and dissimulation in the preceding quotations would not contradict this. Courtship therefore provided sixteenth-century writers with an intriguing rhetorical model which dramatises a constant dichotomy between sincerity and performance. This is exactly where *Astrophil and Stella* begins, although Sidney does not employ the verb to court in the sequence. In fact, the word scarcely occurs in any sonnet-sequences of the period, perhaps because of its inherently dichotomous implications.

CHAPTER THREE

"COURTLY COURTESIES": THE HUMANIST DILEMMA

Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,
 Brags of his substance, not of ornament;
 They are but beggars that can count their worth,
 But my true love is grown to such excess
 I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.(1)

Introduction

If two facts are made clear by the examples of the previous chapter they are these: first, that courtship is an act of persuasion moving the hearer or lover to a particular end; and second, that this end is almost invariably improper - the yielding of sexual favours. Not until the eighteenth century did courtship develop its modern sense of a prelude to marriage, and in the course of the preceding inquiry it has been necessary to abandon this otherwise automatic association. The overwhelming majority of examples indicate sixteenth-century usage to have had a quite different meaning. There are, of course, exceptions to this general rule and later chapters will consider the attempts of Renaissance poets to redeem courtship from its lascivious associations. But this section investigates the anxieties provoked by a rhetoric that was aimed, for the most part, at seduction.

1. *Romeo and Juliet*, II.vi.30-34.

As a rhetorical act courtship poses many questions. It is a discourse which claims sincerity and truthfulness as its justification, but, as Astrophil laments, the act of wooing problematises the relation between sincerity and utterance, between intention and performance. As Juliet says, true love approximates to silence not utterance. But courtship also invites speculation on a second front. As an art of rhetoric which seeks dubious if not immoral and anti-social ends, it poses a peculiar rhetorical conundrum. It puts all the deliberative and persuasive powers of oratory to dubious effect. In particular, it conflicts with the teleological bias of humanist hermeneutics, which insists on the moral purposiveness of discourse: "the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only . . . the ending end of all earthly learning being virtuous action".(2)

This particular confrontation between idealist rhetoric and texts of libidinous content was not a new one. The presentation of bawdy material on the stage had posed a perennial problem for literary theorists from classical

2. Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester University Press, Manchester; 1973) p.104. Compare Spenser's proposed intention "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline", Letter to Raleigh, in *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Longman, London; 1977) p.737. This logico-rhetorical function was frequently associated with the Protestant ethic, perhaps most clearly in Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*. In the preface, Wilson suggests that the art of persuasion is a God-given talent granted specifically to move men to godliness. He envisages rhetoric at its least problematic when "these appoynted of God called them together by vtteraunce of speache, and perswaded with them what was good, what was badde", ed. Bowers, p.10.

times.(3) In the sixteenth century the old arguments were fuelled by Puritan critiques which attacked plays as "a generall Market of Bawdrie".(4) Explicitly bawdy texts, especially translations, presented a similar interpretative problem. Needing to bridge the gap between lascivious material and morally improving interpretations, translators resorted to stratagem and found themselves obliged to claim the dubious force of negative example:

As Bees out of the bitterest flowers, and sharpest thornes, doe gather the sweetest hony: so out of obscene and wicked fables some profit may be extracted.(5)

3. For a brief summary of the classical, medieval and Elizabethan arguments against stage-plays, see E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1903, repr. 1963) 2 vols. i.9-18, 31-41; and *The Elizabethan Stage* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1923, repr. 1965) 4 vols. i.236-268. There is a fuller account of Puritan arguments in Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (University of California Press, Berkeley; 1981) pp.80-190.

4. Stephen Gosson, *The schoole of abuse* (1579), in *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (University of Salzburg^{Pres}, Salzburg; 1974) p.92. For other attacks see John Northbrooke, *Spiritus est . . . A treatise wherein dicing, dauncing, vaine playes or enterluds are reprovved* (1577); Philip Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses* (1583); and Anthony Munday, contributor to the composite pamphlet, *A second and third blast of retrait from plaies and theaters* (1580).

5. Francis Meres, *Palladis tamia* (1598), fol. 267^v. Compare Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589): "as the Bee out of the bitterest flowers and sharpest thistles gathers honey, so out of the filthiest Fables, may profitable knowledge be sucked and selected", in Nashe, ed. McKerrow, i.30. On the necessity for such apologies, see Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (North Carolina University Press, Chapel Hill; 1935, reissued Cornell University Press, Ithaca; 1958) chapter 11; and Lawrence A. Sasek, *The Literary Temper of the English Puritans* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge; 1961) chapter 4.

Arthur Golding prefaces his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with the hint that readers should ignore "any wanton woord / Or matter lewd" and rather take them as negative examples of the virtue really upheld. In his version of Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, William Adlington likewise insists that "although the matter therein seeme very light and merry, yet the effect thereof tendeth to a good and vertuous moral", and in their translations of various Continental *novelle*, both William Painter and Geoffrey Fenton include standard disclaimers of the bawdy content.(6) Texts of this kind commonly presented the reader with the image of a mirror or "Glasse, for imitation, of ordering, and institution of mannes life".(7)

Anxiety over licentiousness was not limited to literary content. Stylistic vagaries were similarly attacked, above all in the literary convention which distinguished between "courtesan-like painted affectation" and the "honey-flowing

6. Arthur Golding trans., *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, ed. John Frederick Nims (Macmillan, New York; 1965) p.420. William Adlington trans., *The Golden Ass of Apuleius*, gen. ed. Charles Whibley (Nutt, London; 1893) p.4. See also Painter, *Palace of Pleasure*, ed. Jacobs, i.5: "although by the first face and view, some of these may seeme to intreat of vnlawfull Loue, and the foule practises of the same, yet being thoroughly reade and well considered, both old and yonge may learne how to auoyde the ruine, ouerthrow, inconuenience and displeasure, that lasciuious desire and wanton wil doth bring to their suters and pursuers".

7. T. C. trans., *A pleasant and delightfull history of Galesus, Cymon and Iphigenia* (?1560), sigs. A2-A2^v. See also C. T. trans., *A notable historye of Nastagio* (1569), sig. A2^v: "mirror of prodigalitie"; and Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named The Gouvernour*, ed. Henry H. S. Croft (Kegan Paul, London; 1880) 2 vols. i.124, who calls comedy the "mirrour of man's life".

matron eloquence".(8) Erasmus includes the commonplace as one of his similitudes in the *Parabolae*: "As an orator who abandons all tricks and theatrical ornament moves his hearers more powerfully by unvarnished fact, so does a wife endear herself more to her husband by her character than by the time she spends, like a woman of the town, on her toilette".(9) Stephen Gosson lambasts poetry for putting "chaste Matrons apparel on common Curtesans", while Fulke Greville laments that rhetoric is like a siren with "painted skinne" and that it "staines the Matrone with the Harlots weed".(10) Shakespeare and Milton evince disgust at "swelling epithets thick-laid / As varnish on a harlot's cheek".(11) In the *Discoveries*, Jonson associates sexual with linguistic corruption: "The excesse of Feasts, and apparell, are the notes of a sick State; and the wantonnesse of language, of a sick mind".(12) Such

8. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, p.138. See also Gabriel Harvey, *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia*, ed. G. C. Moore-Smith (Shakespeare Head, Stratford-on-Avon; 1913) p.189: "A curtizan Tongue". For a Freudian analysis of poetic desire and its defence, see Margaret Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1983).

9. Desiderius Erasmus, *Parabolae* (1516), in *The Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings*, ed. Craig R. Thompson (University of Toronto Press, Toronto; 1978) 2 vols. i.168.

10. Gosson, *The schoole of abuse*, ed. Kinney, p.77; Greville, *A Treatie of Humane Learning*, in *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; 1938) 2 vols. i.180-181.

11. Milton, *Paradise Regained*, iv.343-344, in *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey, p.507; *Hamlet*, III.i.50-52: "The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art, / Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it / Than is my deed to my most painted word".

12. *Discoveries* (pub.1641), in *Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, viii.593.

stylistic affectation is dressed, like a harlot, in "Taffata phrases, silken terms precise".(13)

There are several responses to the problems posed by such language. Translators like Golding attempt to circumscribe the reader's proper interpretation of explicitly erotic texts and to "reduce their sense to ryght of Christian law".(14) This strategy of interpretative constraint reappears in the works of humanist educationalists who, while not condemning poetry, remain sensitive to the dangers of its licentious content. Vives and Elyot both advise selectivity and insist that if "wanton poetes" are to be studied at all, the reader's interpretation must be directed to wholesome precept.(15)

Roger Ascham takes a somewhat severer line. In *The Schoolmaster* he turns his long diatribe against Italy into a wholesale attack on "merry books" and "bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue", which waylay youth and draw them from the proper study of "severe books . . . books of godly learning".(16) He juxtaposes the two

13. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.406. See also John Hoskins' "Tufftafity speech" at the Inner Temple Revels 1597-8, and his reference to the "tuff taffata Orator" in *Direccions For Speech and Style*, both in *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns 1566-1638*, ed. Louise Brown Osborn (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1937) pp.100, 130.

14. Golding trans., *Metamorphoses*, p.414.

15. Vives, *De tradendis disciplinis* (1531), in *Vives on Education*, trans. Foster Watson (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1931) p.126 ff; Elyot, *The Governor*, ed. Croft, i.123. See also Nashe, *Anatomie of Absurditie*: "tender youth ought to bee restrained for a time from the reading of such ribauldrie, least chewing ouer wantonlie the eares of this Summer Corne, they be choaked with the haune before they can come at the karnell", Nashe, ed. McKerrow, i.30.

16. Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, ed. Ryan, pp.68-69.

rhetorics, courtly and humanist, in apparently dichotomous opposition: "I know when God's Bible was banished the court and *Morte Darthur* received into the prince's chamber", the latter redolent, as he saw it, of "open manslaughter and bold bawdry". He calls upon the state, or rather "those which have authority and charge to allow and disallow books to be printed", to exert their powers of censorship in order to suppress such dangerous texts.(17) In his prognostication the state becomes the proper arbiter of literary standards.

The same impulse toward censorship can be seen in Ascham's strictures against the language of love. While his general association of pornographic literature with moral depravity is axiomatic, the "pleasant words" of the Italianate "makers of love" are singled out as particularly dangerous. Not contained within any fiction, such courtships are liable to lead to lust in action at society's expense. Persuasion, he hints, should reach a proper end in marriage, but what he fears is precisely courtship's power to procure other ends. His call for the censorship of "bawdy books" therefore leads naturally to another attempt to delimit speech - the whole rhetorical procedure of courtship, with its "signs, tokens, wagers" which "breed occasion for after meeting of him and her and bolder talking of this and that".(18)

17. *ibid.* pp.69, 67.

18. *ibid.* p.74.

Ascham defends the suppression of lascivious and incipiently lascivious language by adding an important political dimension. He contrasts the political make-up of Italy - with its allegedly "free" city-states - with the centralised, monarchical government of England. The first, by its very "free" nature, encourages the proliferation of rhetoric and, as a corollary, the creation of faction, political fragmentation:

And being brought up in Italy, in some free city, as all cities be there, where a man may freely discourse against what he will, against whom he lust - against any prince, against any government, yea, against God himself and his whole religion - where he must be either Guelf or Ghibelline, either French or Spanish, and always compelled to be of some party, of some faction . . . he shall have free liberty to embrace all religions and become, if he lust, at once, without any let or punishment, Jewish, Turkish, papish, and devilish. (19)

Ascham's appalled vision of religious and political atomism derives directly from his notion of liberty, which, in his eyes, allowed men to become "common discourses of all matters" with "a factious heart, a discoursing head" and "a talkative tongue, fed with discoursing of factions". (20) In contrast to this vista of rife factionalism, Ascham hints that political security consists in the centralised monopoly of force represented by the monarchical system. This monopoly includes a strict control, and if necessary circumscription of "talkative tongues" in order to maintain

19. *ibid.* pp.74-75.

20. *ibid.* pp.74, 67, 75.

the stability of the regime.(21) This was not a new idea. Although approaching the question from different angles, Montaigne, Bacon and Milton each associate republicanism with free speech and monarchy with its restraint.(22)

Ascham's pedagogic demand for the suppression of "bawdy books" and lovers' "pleasant words", therefore, seems to demonstrate the same impulse to constrain rhetoric as his apology for state censorship. Yet the consistency is only apparent. He is obliged to admit that although the curtailment of seditious speech is the right of a centralised monopoly of force, the superfluous and profligate rhetoric of the "makers of love" is a wholly courtly phenomenon. His call for its suppression can only be couched in the most tentative way:

although I have seen some, innocent of all ill and staid in all honesty, that have used these things

21. For studies of state censorship in England see F. S. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana; 1952); Charles R. Gillett, *Burned Books: Neglected Chapters in British History and Literature* (Columbia University Press, New York; 1932) 2 vols.; Laurence Hanson, *Government and the Press 1695-1763* (Oxford University Press, London; 1936); Donald Thomas, *A Long Time Burning: The History of Literary Censorship in England* (Routledge, London; 1969); Leona Rostenberg, *The Minority Press and The English Crown: A Study in Repression 1558-1625* (Graaf, Nieuwkoop; 1971); and Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*.

22. Montaigne suggests that eloquence flourished in Rome as the Republic began to decay while "those common-weales, which depend of an absolute Monarch, have lesse need of it than others", *Of the Vanitie of Words*, in *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne*, trans. John Florio (1598), ed. Desmond MacCarthy (Dent, London; 1928) 3 vols. i.346. Bacon expresses the fear that "Libels and licentious discourses against the state" are the chief source of sedition, *Of Seditious and Troubles*, in *Bacon*, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, vi.407. Contrast Milton's plea for freedom of the press in *Areopagitica*.

without all harm, without all suspicion of harm, yet these knacks were brought first into England by them that learned them before in Italy in Circe's court, and how courtly courtesies soever they be counted now, yet if the meaning and manners of some that do use them were somewhat amended, it were no great hurt neither to themselves nor to others.(23)

Ascham's problem lies with a language, in this case "bawdy books" and "pleasant words", which defies humanist precepts of authority but which is sanctioned if not encouraged in a courtly milieu. The ensuing dilemma between humanist and courtier (to use G. K. Hunter's useful labels) is central to the consideration of this chapter.(24)

For the circumscription of rhetoric, whether seditious or lascivious, was a theoretical rather than a practical issue. That is not to deny the power of the Tudor censorship machine or the success in banning lewd poetry, but the arguments on one side simply fuelled a far more general debate about the status of poetry itself. Richard Wills, for example, catalogued all the standard charges against poetry including that of licentious content, in

23. Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, ed. Ryan, p.74, my italics.

24. As tutor to Queen Elizabeth Ascham epitomises the humanist-courtly dilemma delineated by Hunter in *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier*, chapter 1. *The Schoolmaster* is full of contradictions: Ascham's attack on translations of Italian texts ignores Elizabeth's own version of Petrarch's *I Trionfi* or Hoby's translation of Castiglione; his vision of free city-states is somewhat at odds with that of the Castiglian court of Urbino, the emulation of which he strenuously supports; in his attack on Italy he admits that Rome itself presents a paradox as the home of the rhetorical genius Cicero, but also of the abominated pope. These internal inconsistencies neatly demonstrate the paradox of the humanist at court.

order to refute them in a classic defence of poetry.(25) In their educational programmes, the humanist pedagogues did not dismiss poetry out of hand and would have concurred with Nashe that "I commend their witte, not their wantonnes, their learning, not their lust".(26) Those who appeared to reject poetry were quickly refuted. Thomas Lodge, Richard Wills, John Harington and Philip Sidney all defended the art against Gosson's proscriptions. More specifically, however, Sidney and Harington both felt obliged as courtly writers to defend the "Heroical Cupid", holding that "where any scurrilitie or lewdnesse is founde there Poetry doth not abuse us but writers have abused Poetrie".(27) Sidney's defence of "that lovely name of Love" leads into a surprisingly long explanation of the mechanics of such "abuse".(28) In the preface to his translation of *Orlando Furioso*, Harington articulates the usual disclaimer of lasciviousness, but he asks the reader to pardon not censure this "one fault" of the author's:

I doubt too many of you (gentle readers) will be to exorable in this point, yea me thinks I see some of your searching already for these places of the

25. Richard Wills, *De re poetica* (1573), ed. A. D. S. Fowler (Luttrell Society, Oxford; 1958). Wills draws on Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem* (1561) and Vives' *De causis corruptarum artium* (a.1555), and closely anticipates Sidney's neoclassical tenets in the *Apology for Poetry*.

26. *Anatomie of Absurditie*, in Nashe, ed. McKerrow, i.30. Elyot, for example, defends poetry against the charge that it contains "nothyng but baudry", *The Governor*, ed. Croft, i.123.

27. Harington trans., *Orlando Furioso*, Preface, ed. McNulty, p.8, paraphrasing Sidney's "they will . . . not say that Poetry abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth Poetry", Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, p.125.

28. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, pp.125-126.

booke and you are halfe offended that I have not made some directions that you might finde out and read them immediatly. But I beseech you stay a while and as the Italian saith *Pian piano*, fayre and softly, and take this caveat with you, to read them as my author ment them, to breed detestation and not delectation.(29)

Attempts to confine authorial intention and the reader's interpretation conflict with Harington's experience of human curiosity, and presumably with the courtly taste for titillating literature. In a courtly context humanist proscriptions of bawdy language count for little, and, as Puttenham declares, even the honey-flowing matron eloquence can be dressed in finery and still retain her honour.(30)

i. Euphues and Euphues and his England

If Ascham inadvertently pinpoints the difficulties inherent in morally dubious texts that a courtly society sanctioned, John Lyly makes it into an issue. In his hugely popular prose romances, *Euphues* and its sequel *Euphues and his England*, Lyly explores the avenues presented by a language of love which courtship-rituals made both

29. Harington trans., *Orlando Furioso*, ed. McNulty, p.11.

30. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Willcock and Walker, p.137: "And as we see in these great Madames of honour, be they for personage or otherwise neuer so comely and bewtifull, yet if they want their courtly habillements or at leastwise such other apparell as custome and ciuilitie haue ordained to couer their naked bodies, would be halfe ashamed or greatly out of countenance to be seen in that sort, and perchance do then thinke themselues more amiable in euery mans eye, when they be in their richest attire, suppose of silkes or tyssewes & costly embroderies, then when they go in cloth or in any other plaine and simple apparell. Euen so cannot our vulgar Poesie shew it selfe either gallant or gorgious, if any lymme be left naked and bare and not clad in his kindly clothes and coulours".

strategic and tactical. His definition of and preoccupation with courting have been traced already. What the following section aims to do is to consider Lyly's portraits of courtship in action, focusing in particular on his attention to their rhetorical nature.

The contrast between humanist and courtly styles has long been a staple of Lyly criticism.⁽³¹⁾ Early accounts of Lyly's strong familial ties with humanism and his debt to classic pedagogic sources have recently given way to more ironic readings.⁽³²⁾ These see as much specious reasoning as improving material in Lyly's tales, and suggest that they

31. See Hunter, *Lyly*, chapter 1; and Arthur F. Kinney, *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric, and Fiction in Sixteenth-Century England* (University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst; 1986) chapter 4.

32. See Albert Feuillerat, *John Lyly: Contribution à l'Histoire de la Renaissance en Angleterre* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1910); J. Dover Wilson, "Euphues and the Prodigal Son", *The Library* 2nd series 10 (1909) pp.337-361; Samuel Lee Wolff, "The Humanist as Man of Letters: John Lyly", *Sewanee Review* 31 (1923) pp.8-35; William Ringler, "The Immediate Source of Euphuism", *PMLA* 53 (1938) pp.678-686; and Shimon Sandbank, "Euphuistic Symmetry and the Image", *Studies in English Literature* 11 (1971) pp.1-13.

indicate a more satiric handling of humanist precept.(33)
 Alternatively, humanist and courtly styles could be seen to interplay, to balance each other in a mixed style that then becomes an investigative mode, a means of testing each discourse against the conventions of the other.(34)

Lyly seems to establish the humanist and courtly polarities from the outset. In the prefatory letter to Lord Delaware at the beginning of *Euphues*, he admits that "a naked tale doth most truely set foorth the naked truth" and apologises in advance for the "superfluous eloquence" that he feels constrained to use: "Though the stile nothing delight the dayntie eare of the curious sifter, yet wil the matter recreate the minde of the courteous Reader. The

33. P. Albert Duhamel offers a critique of *Euphues*' rhetoric in "Sidney's *Arcadia* and Elizabethan Rhetoric", *Studies in Philology* 45 (1948) pp.134-150; he is answered by Walter N. King, "John Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric", *ibid.* 52 (1955) pp.149-161. That Lyly's patent illogicality in parts of *Euphues* is a playful rendering of humanist precepts has been suggested by the following: Jocelyn Powell, "John Lyly and the Language of Play", *Stratford-upon-Avon Studies* 9 (1966) pp.146-167; Theodore L. Steinberg, "The Anatomy of *Euphues*", *Studies in English Literature* 17 (1977) pp.27-38; Raymond Stephanson, "John Lyly's Prose Fiction: Irony, Humour and Anti-humanism", *English Literary Renaissance* 11 (1981) pp.3-21, and by Judith Rice Henderson, "Euphues and his Erasmus", *ibid.* 12 (1982) pp.135-161. See also Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (University of California Press, Berkeley; 1976); Walter R. Davis, *Idea and Act in Elizabethan Fiction* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1969) chapter 4; and Paul Salzman, *English Prose Fiction 1558-1700: A Critical History* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1985).

34. Davis, *Idea and Act*, p.96: "Elizabethan courtly fiction [Gascoigne, Lyly] . . . does not construct ideals but rather tests them by acting them out in reality". Kinney describes *Euphues* and its sequel as an "audacious examination of humanism . . . humanist ideas as well as humanist rhetoric are seen from multiple view and become the total matter and manner of his [Lyly's] fiction", *Humanist Poetics*, p.136.

varietie of the one wil abate the harshnes of the other". Playing the part of the 'humanist-as-courtier', he claims to be under a compulsion to write in a curious style because his courtly audience "desire to heare finer speach then the language will allow".(35) The pose of the unwilling stylist is a clever stratagem, enabling Lyly to mimic roles of both humanist moral critic and courtly entertainer at the same time. The narrator's perplexing ambivalence in *Euphues* could tentatively be explained by this dual ventriloquism: he voices moral critique and courtly ambivalence alternately.(36)

Lyly focuses attention on the particular characteristics of the courtly and humanist styles. The latter is represented by what Thomas Wilson defined as an "Oration deliberatiue . . . a meane, wherby we do perswade, or disswade, entreate, or rebuke, exhorte, or dehorte, commende, or comforte any man".(37) That is, it represents

35. Lyly, ed. Bond, i.180-181. All inset page references are to this edition.

36. For example, the narrator appears in the guise of the strict moralist when castigating Naples: "a courte more meete for an Atheyst, then for one of Athens, for Ouid then for Aristotle, for a gracelesse loue then for a godly lyuer", [p.185]. Later, however, he remains non-committal as to "whether of them was most to be blamed" in the failure of *Euphues* and Philautus' friendship [p.198]. Steinberg remains puzzled by the narrator's inconsistency and illogic, in "The Anatomy of *Euphues*", *passim*.

37. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Bowers, p.43. As an example Wilson includes a long letter by Erasmus urging a young man to marry. Davis calls Eubulus' speech a "formal oration", *Idea and Act*, p.114, and Steinberg refers to his "solid, logical arguments", "The Anatomy of *Euphues*", p.30. Henderson claims it "contains all the essential parts of the deliberative oration" including *exordium*, *confirmatio* and *propositio*, "Euphues and his Erasmus", p.152.

the kind of academic disputation which seeks to persuade a contrary disputer. The style that Lyly contrasts with this is the courtly debate, especially the *questione d'amore*. As Hunter notes, the structure of academic disputation was not dissimilar to the courtly debate, but its end was different: persuasion.(38) The open-ended courtly discussion, on the other hand, was virtually never resolved and was, by definition, brought to conclusion by purely contingent factors (nightfall, or dawn as in Book IV of *The Courtier*) rather than by decision. Thomas Hoby drew this distinction between pedagogic instruction and courtly speculation in his translation of *The Book of the Courtier*:

Both Cicero and Castilio professe, they folow not any certaine appointed order of precepts or rules, as is used in the instruction of youth, but call to rehearsall, matters debated in their times too and fro in the disputation of most eloquent men and excellent wittes.(39)

Teleological rhetoric seeks closure or resolution. Its outcome or purpose is very different from a discourse that endlessly debates "too and fro", discovering a multiple, composite truth. The structure of the latter militates against resolution and has, in Lyly's case, even been seen

38. Hunter, *Lyly*, pp.44-45.

39. Hoby trans., in the dedicatory epistle to Lord Henry Hastings, *Book of the Courtier*, ed. Rouse, p.3. See also Wayne A. Rebhorn, *Courtly Performances: Masking and Festivity in Castiglione's Book of the Courtier* (Wayne State University Press, Detroit; 1978) p. 155.

to have a debilitating effect on style.(40) But Lyly investigates the probative and the equivocal methods as alternative rhetorical strategies, and seems to show that both are somewhat limited. Humanist precept simplifies the courtly experience of composite truth.(41) Courtly entertainment manipulates words for improper ends and seems to be incapable of resolving the dilemmas it creates.(42)

40. The paradoxical nature of love and its expression in euphuistic prose is examined by G. Wilson Knight, "Lyly", *Review of English Studies* 15 (1939) pp.146-163, and Bernard F. Huppé, "Allegory of Love in Lyly's Court Comedies", *English Literary History* 14 (1947) pp.93-113. In "The Prose Style of John Lyly", *ibid.* 23 (1956) pp.14-35, Jonas A. Barish writes that "Lyly turns the well-worn Petrarchan paradox into the capstone of a whole view of life", p.24; and Robert Y. Turner, in "Some Dialogues of Love in Lyly's Comedies", *ibid.* 29 (1962) pp.276-288, suggests that "Lyly's sense of language rather than his insight into love influenced his technique of composing dialogue", p.284. Nancy R. Lindheim, "Lyly's Golden Legacy: *Rosalynde* and *Pandosto*", *Studies in English Literature* 15 (1975) pp.3-20, contrasts euphuism with romance as a mode incompatible with "the triumph of absolutes", p.10.

41. See *Sapho and Phao*, I.ii.12-14: "In vniuersities vertues and vices are but shadowed in colours, white and blacke, in courtes shewed to life, good and bad", in *Lyly*, ed. Bond, ii.375.

42. The same concerns could be seen to reappear in *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao*. Humanist and courtly issues are held up for impartial criticism in both plays, where the collision of courtiers and scholars provides occasion for discreet satire. In *Campaspe*, Alexander - like Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost* - determines that "My court shalbe a schole", and yet the philosophers are there relegated to the position of entertainers. Alexander visits Diogenes "to recreate my spirits", and quizzes him on courtly questions of love. But if classical learning is shown to be debased by the courtly setting, love, endemic to court life, is a distracting passion, and in neither play is it allowed to triumph. See *Campaspe*, I.iii.62, II.ii.118, in *Lyly*, ed. Bond, ii.324, 332.

Euphues begins with the straightforward confrontation of the two styles.(43) Euphues' first interlocutor, Eubulus (or "good counsaile"), with his care for the *sensus germanus* of words, and his educational precepts culled from Ascham and Elyot, personifies the humanist pedagogic tradition. Euphues, on the other hand, exemplifies discourse of a wholly different kind.(44) His reply to Eubulus begins by repudiating the persuasive function of oratory altogether, and presents itself instead as a display of his "fine phrases, smoth quipping" [p.184]. Euphues approximates to Ascham's quick wit, "ready of tongue to speak boldly, not deep of judgement either for good counsel or wise writing".(45) For Euphues makes no effort to refute his adversary logically but, on the contrary, repeatedly dismisses the power of words to persuade at all: "Infinite and innumerable were the examples I coulde alleadge and declare to confirme the force of Nature, and confute these your vayne and false forgeries, were not the repetition of them needelesse hauing shewed sufficient, or bootelesse seeinge those alleadged will not perswade you"

43. Salzman shows that the initial debate between Euphues and Eubulus reflects language being used "as a weapon of persuasion and as resistance to persuasion", *English Prose Fiction*, p.37.

44. Stephanson refers to Euphues' "classically bad mode of argument", "Lyly's Prose Fiction", p.19. See also Henderson, "Euphues and his Erasmus", pp.153-155. These counter the suggestion of King, "Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric", pp.156-159, and William G. Crane, *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance: The Formal Basis of Elizabethan Prose Style* (Columbia University Press, New York; 1937) pp.201-202, that Euphues' reply is a model oration.

45. Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, ed. Ryan, p.21.

[p.191]. Euphues presents nothing but *sententiae* and unproven truisms, "most eident and infallyble argumentes": "But lette these sayings passe, as knowne eidently and graunted to be true, which none can or may deny vnlesse he be false" [p.191, 192]. He concludes that "it is labour lost for mee to perswade you, and winde vaynely wasted for you to exhort me" [p.194]. Eubulus received as "lyttle pleasure" from Euphues' reply as the latter gained "lesse profit", thus denying the two classic imperatives of humanist rhetoric - instruction and delight [p.194].

Eubulus and Euphues not only fail to persuade each other because age and youth cannot live together. They fail because their two discursive strategies prove incompatible. Eubulus' "Oration deliberatiue" counts for nothing in the ornamental indeterminacy of Euphues' discourse; while the latter's style simply does not engage in argument. The first rhetorical encounter of Lyly's narrative, therefore, can only resolve itself in "quandarie", a reaction to speechifying that is to prove increasingly typical as the tale progresses.(46)

Lyly judges each discourse by the other's rules. Both employ the euphuistic trope of similitude, it is true, but their applications are tellingly different. Rhetorical handbooks of the period such as Erasmus' *De Copia*, Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, or Hoskins' *Direccions for Speech and Style*, list similitude among the techniques for amplifying a

46. p.194. For other examples of quandary, see *ibid.* pp.204, 224, 240.

speech. Indeed, W. N. King uses this as the basis for his argument that Lyly was as scrupulous a rhetorician as Sidney, and that euphuism obeyed Elizabethan rhetorical principles.(47) This, on the other hand, is countered by Sidney's own devastating attack on the euphuistic simile:

Now for similitudes in certain printed discourses, I think all herbarists, all stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits; which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible: *for the force of a similitude not being to prove anything to a contrary disputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer; when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prattling.*(48)

For Sidney similitude is an ornamental device that has no demonstrative weight, although he seems to agree with the other theorists on its ornamental, illustrative quality. What Lyly does is to give, in Eubulus' speech, a picture of similitudes used as argumentative *amplificatio*, and in Euphues' reply similitudes as specious reasoning in their own right. No qualitative judgement is necessarily intended. Erasmus prefaced the *Parabolae*, an ostensible source for euphuism, with the observation that similitudes

47. King, "Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric", *passim*. Contrast Stephanson who suggests that Lyly's characters "are confusing rhetorical amplification (analogy, simile, comparison) with logical proof", "Lyly's Prose Fiction", p.19; and Duhamel, who writes that "the probative value of this material . . . is almost nil", "Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Rhetoric", p.142.

48. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, p.139, my italics.

could both persuade and entertain.(49) Lyly simply separates and distinguishes the two functions.

In the next section, as we move with Euphues away from pedagogy toward Neapolitan court life, Lyly amplifies and complicates his notion of courtly rhetoric. Euphues and his new-found friend, Philautus, spend an evening with the latter's mistress, Lucilla, and "a courtly crewe of gentlewomen" [p.199]. After a banquet, Lucilla calls for "some discourse, either concerning loue or learning", a proposition that initiates the time-honoured courtly scenario of love-debate and its arbitration by women.(50)

49. See *Parabolae*, in *Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings*, ed. Thompson, i.130. Erasmus is possibly alluding to Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, VIII.iii.72, 74: "The invention of *similes* has also provided an admirable means of illuminating our descriptions. Some . . . are designed for insertion among our arguments to help our proof, while others . . . make our pictures yet more vivid". The simile as an ornament serves to make oratory "sublime, rich, attractive or striking", in *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. H. E. Butler (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; 1920-1922) 4 vols. iii.251, 253.

50. p.201. For other models of the *questioni d'amore* see Boccaccio's *Filocolo* and *Decameron*, Bembo's *Asolani*, Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, Guazzo's *Converzatione*, together with their translations and imitations in English: *Thirtene most plesant and delectable questions*, trans. from Boccaccio by H[enry] G[rantham] (1566); Hoby trans., *Book of the Courtier* (1567); Edmund Tilney, *A briefe and pleasant discourse of duties in mariage, called the Flower of friendshippe* (1568); S[imon] R[obson], *A new yeeres gift. The court of ciuill courtesie* (1577); George Pettie and Bartholomew Young trans., *The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo* (1581-1586); Henry W[otton] trans., *A courtlie controuersie of Cupids cautels*; and George Whetstone, *An heptameron of ciuill discourses* (1582). For a full account of Lyly's debt to this tradition, see Violet M. Jeffery, *John Lyly and the Italian Renaissance* (Champion, Paris; 1929) chapters 1-2; and Thomas F. Crane, *Italian Social Customs of the Sixteenth Century* (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1920).

Although both inexperienced in love and a truant from learning, Euphues bows to the decorum of the situation and chooses to speak of the former. He begins with a double proposition: whether women should prefer men's minds before their bodies, and whether men should be attracted by female wit or female beauty. In both cases, he declares, intellect is to be preferred before transient charms of beauty, but as in his earlier discourse, Euphues does not argue. Again, he summons *sententiae* as ready-made truths and simply reiterates them.(51) His attack on beauty leads him to criticise haughty ladies who abuse their lovers. The object of his censure seems to be Lucilla, whose cold welcome he obliquely criticises: "If you will be cherished when you be olde, be curteous while you be young, if you looke for comfort in your hoary haires, be not coye when you haue your golden lockes" [p.203]. This quickly degenerates into a *carpe diem* theme. Using the veil of courtly debate for his own ends - the treacherous passion he has developed for Lucilla - Euphues abruptly changes the subject, and proposes a new question: whether men or women prove most constant. He tacitly manipulates the discussion by taking the position that women are most inconstant, hinting that Lucilla's three-year attachment to Philautus should make her disagree. He then "would take the contrary" by arguing his

51. Duhamel, in "Sidney's Arcadia", pp.141-142, and King, "Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric", p.153, are both agreed on the illogicality of Euphues' speech. See also Henderson, "Euphues and his Erasmus", pp.156-158; and Kinney, *Humanist Poetics*, p.139.

point that women in general (and Lucilla in particular) are fickle [p.203]. For all his efforts, however, Lucilla spots his device, and agrees with his proposition, instead of opposing it by defending female constancy. This not only demonstrates her own lightness but also serves to discountenance Euphues.⁽⁵²⁾ Trapped by the rules of the debate and by his own manipulative rhetoric, Euphues is forced to "take the contrary" and defend women's fidelity himself. While flattering Lucilla by giving her the right of veto, Euphues fears that his own praise will be deemed flattery and therefore discounted: "if you cause me to commend women, my tale wil be accompted a meere trifle, & your words y^e plain truth" [p.204]. But finding himself obliged to defend female constancy, Euphues argues against his own desired and treacherous end, the seduction of Lucilla. Again, a rhetorical encounter is forced to a premature and unsatisfactory conclusion. Euphues breaks off in silence, "Ah *Euphues*, *Euphues* . . .", and the gentlewomen respond exactly as Eubulus did, with a "quandarie" [p.204].

The *questione d'amore* at Lucilla's house can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, Lyly stresses that as a style of discourse the courtly debate is generically open-ended. Euphues' opening proposition, for instance, is "a question often disputed, but neuer

52. We have already been told that Lucilla is "more faire then fortunate, and yet more fortunate then faithfull" [p.199].

determined" [p.201]. The debate that follows does not attempt to resolve the questions it raises, but merely to reiterate propositions *in utramque partem*.⁽⁵³⁾ A model might be found in the discussion of the ideal courtly lady which takes place in the third book of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. Gasparo and the Magnifico take up opposing positions as devil's advocate and flatterer. In the course of their debate, however, Gasparo admits that both positions are necessarily complementary in giving women their *due* praise: "But they are so wise above other, that they love truth better (although it make not so much with them) than false prayes".⁽⁵⁴⁾ By playing a similar game of dispute and counter-dispute in *Euphues*, Lyly constructs a contradictory yet composite view of women that is symptomatic of this kind of courtly debate.

Such discourse, however, is very different from that of teleological humanist inquiry, and it is against those precepts that the *questione d'amore* may also be judged.⁽⁵⁵⁾

53. See Kinney, *Humanist Poetics*, p.142: "Like Castiglione, then, Lyly establishes a sequence of voices that comment on each other . . . none of these voices alone constitutes the story or embodies its meaning, for the signification lies in our response to judge their effect by comparisons and in the aggregate".

54. Hoby trans., *Book of the Courtier*, ed. Rouse, p.196. See also Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana; 1956), on the traditional two-sidedness of the *querelle des femmes*.

55. Contrast Steinberg: "In spite of the fact that the narrator already knows the story, and consequently knows Lucilla's character and fate, he makes no real judgment but condemns and praises her for the same action, a rather odd stance for a reputed courtesy book", "The Anatomy of *Euphues*", p.31. Steinberg confuses the ambivalent, investigative mode of the courtesy book with the rigorous moralism of the humanist treatise.

In innumerable accounts of such courtly debates the questions proposed are simply pretexts for discussion. Lyly, on the other hand, *contextualises* the courtly debate in so far as the characters use the conventions as a vehicle for discourse of another kind. Under the guise of open-ended, entertaining discussion, Euphues and Lucilla bid to out-manoeuvre each other in what transpire to be the beginnings of an improper courtship.⁽⁵⁶⁾ They are guilty of using 'end-less' discourse to achieve a treacherous end.

By means of this apparently simple stratagem, Lyly associates indeterminate courtly discourse with sexual impropriety, and it was with this critical perspective in mind, perhaps, that he added a long conclusion to the *questione d'amore* speech in the second edition. On Euphues' second visit to Lucilla, she insists on his "ending your former discourse", and he duly addresses himself to "a farther conclusion" [p.216]. He undertakes to give the "iust prooffe" of women's excellence, left unfinished by his former speech, but fails to fulfil his promise, claiming that on the subject of female virtue "I am entred into so large a fielde, that I shall sooner want time then prooffe" [pp.216, 217]. Euphues' apparent wordlessness is, as Lyly has shown before, suspect. It is a simple ruse which seeks first to flatter Lucilla under pretence of sincerity, and

56. See also Turner: "Under these generalities the conversation becomes weighty with personal applications", "Some Dialogues of Love", p.287. See also Kinney, *Humanist Poetics*, p.141; and Madelon Gohlke, "Reading *Euphues*", *Criticism* 19 (1977) pp.103-117.

second to absolve him from praising her constancy which would defeat his designs. By associating 'end-less' discourse with the quite improper end Euphues and Lucilla have in mind, Lyly suggests, as Ascham does, that rhetorical and sexual impropriety go together. To emphasise this still further, again in a 1579 addition, Lyly makes Euphues compare his course of wooing with the structure of an oration:

In battayles there ought to be a doubtfull fight, and a desperat ende, *in pleadinge a diffyculte enteraunce, and a defused determination*, in loue a lyfe wythout hope, and a death without feare. [p.211, my italics]

Euphues' similitude implies that the outcome of his courtship should be like the outcome of a formally structured "Oration deliberatiue". His confusion of that oratorical "determination" with his own devious purpose neatly demonstrates the teleological impropriety of his speech. Lucilla later admits that she was won by Euphues' "late discourse" from its "first entraunce", the first part of a classical oration. When they encounter each other alone, Euphues and Lucilla again use argument for their own ends: "in the ende arguing wittilly vpon certeine questions, they fell to suche agreement as poore *Philautus* woulde not haue agreed vnto" [p.220]. The nature of the courtly debate is its inconclusiveness, but when contextualised such language can only be used for immoral ends. The "agreement" of Euphues' dispute with Lucilla spells out treachery, disobedience and self-gratification.

Euphues appears to end with the protagonist's prodigal return to the humanist fold, and with the reiteration of the "good counsaile" with which it began.(57) In his "cooling card" and exhortation to Ephoebus, *Euphues* articulates the humanist pedagogic tradition of Erasmus, Vives, Elyot and Ascham. He comes to redefine Nature, "the expresse image of morall vertues", and wit: "If witte be employed in the honest study of learning what thing so pretious as witte? if in the idle trade of loue what thing more pestilent then witte?".(58) Yet the structural circularity is deceptive, for like *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Euphues* "doth not end like an old play".(59) Closure is only apparent. For the scholastic misogyny of *Euphues*' "cooling card" is balanced in true courtly fashion by his epistle to the "graue Matrones", and for the second time since the *questione d'amore*, dispraise combines with flattery in the delineation of women. As Chaucer ostensibly wrote the *Legend of Good Women* to balance his critique of *Criseyde*, and Elyot a tract of the same name to show how some women could be moral

57. Thus enacting Nashe's provision in the *Anatomie of Absurditie*: "Good counsaile is neuer remembred nor respected, till men haue giuen their farewell to felicitie, and haue beene ouerwhelmed in the extremitie of aduersitie", in Nashe, ed. McKerrow, i.33. In "Euphues and his Ephoebus", *Euphues* appeals to Eubulus' precepts *verbatim*: "the greate difference betweene staringe and starke blinde, wit and wisdom, loue and lust" [pp.189, 286]. Compare also their accounts of husbanding youth [pp.187, 263], and of the commonweal [pp.186, 195, 276].

58. p.241. Contrast *Euphues* and Lucilla's earlier understanding of Nature as inclination: "euery thing will dispose it selfe according to Nature", "I ought by Nature to lyke him better" [pp.191, 206].

59. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii.874.

exempla, so Lyly combines his critique of "lightnesse" with praise for "honest Maydens" in order that closure might be forestalled.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Moreover, Lucilla herself is an emblem of 'endlessness'. Defending her treacherous love for Euphues to her father, she was interrupted "in the middle of hyr discourse" and we never hear its conclusion [p.231]. Her passion for Euphues quickly gives way to another, even more unsuitable, and the narrator concludes the tale refusing to recount her end: "but what ende came of hir, seeing it is nothing incident to the history of *Euphues*, it were superfluous to insert it, and so incredible that all women would rather wonder at it then beleue it, which euent beeing so straunge, I had rather leaue them in a muse what it should bee, then in a maze in telling what it was" [p.245]. Only in the correspondence between Euphues and Philautus that follows, do we learn that she died miserably. The narrator's postponed ending epitomises the courtly mode of inconclusiveness, aiming to leave its female readers in a

60. pp.257-259. See Henderson: "The pair of letters forms a palinode or argument on opposite sides of the same question, an exercise highly recommended by Erasmus in the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*", "Euphues and his Erasmus", p.146. See also Jeffery, *Lyly and the Italian Renaissance*, p.41.

state of curiosity rather than moral outrage, what Thomas Hoby calls "the beholding and musing of the mind".(61)

In 1584 Barnaby Rich paid tribute to *Euphues*, whose protagonist he describes as one "who can Court it with the best, and Scholler it with the most, in whom I know not whether I should more commend his maners or his learnyng, the one is so exquisite, the other so generall".(62) Clearly, for one reader of Lyly's tale the distinctions between courtly and humanist priorities could be seen to overlap. This leads straight into *Euphues and his England*. As Lyly advertises in the prefatory epistle to the Earl of Oxford, this tale is somewhat different from its predecessor. It presents itself from the start as a more courtly treatise in which humanist preoccupations are underplayed.(63) While *Euphues* examined humanist and courtly discourse in tandem, *Euphues and his England* seems rather to exemplify competing modes of courtly speech: allegory, conceit, debate, romance and fable. *Euphues* was addressed mainly to gentlemen, but its sequel takes a

61. Hoby trans., *Book of the Courtier*, ed. Rouse, p.3. Barish analyses the inconclusiveness of *Euphues*: "The analytic imagination leads to successes of exposition; it enables Lyly to pit character against character and motive against motive with great skill, but it leaves him helpless to cope with the very different requirements of denouement. The force that has disjoined character and analyzed feeling to create dramatic conflict can do little to fuse or recombine them", "The Prose Style of John Lyly", p.34.

62. Barnaby Rich, *The second tome of the trauailes and aduentures of Don Simonides*, sig.I3.

63. On the courtly nature of *Euphues and his England*, see Feuillerat, *John Lyly*, pp.83-84, 90; Hunter, *Lyly*, pp.62-66; Davis, *Idea and Act*, p.131; Kinney, *Humanist Poetics*, p.173; and Turner, "Some Dialogues of Love", p.285.

different gambit and, like Pettie's *Petite Pallace*, is addressed throughout to a female audience.(64) Their arbitration of his "diuers questions and quirkes of loue" epitomises the courtly scenario, while the narrator's trivialising pose (a standard courtly disclaimer to be echoed by Sidney prefacing the *Arcadia*) presents the tale as a "toy" best to "lye shut in a Ladyes casket, then open in a Schollers studie".(65) Lyly's pitch at a female audience does not exclude gentlemen, but he insists on the multiple interpretation his tale will afford: "Louers when they come into a Gardeine, some gather Nettles, some Roses, one Tyme, an other Sage, and euerye one, that, for his Ladyes fauour, that shee fauoureth. . . If you Gentlemen, doe the lyke in reading, I shall bee sure all my discourses shall be regarded, some for the smell, some for the smart, all for a kinde of a louing smacke" [p.12]. This alerts the reader to the tale's confessedly non-teleological impulse from the start.

Euphues and Philautus' first host during their sojourn in England is the retired ex-courtier Fidus, the first model of rhetorical and behavioural decorum yet to be encountered in either of Lyly's tales. Like the Hermit in Book VI of

64. See Pettie: "I care not to displease twentie men, to please one woman", in *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure*, ed. Hartman, p.3. Pettie imitates the pose of Painter and Fenton in their collections of love-tales.

65. *Euphues and his England*, in *Lyly*, ed. Bond, ii.8, 10, 9. All inset page references are to this edition. Compare Sidney's "this ink-wasting toy of mine", *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, p.141, and "this idle work of mine", *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. Jean Robertson (Clarendon, Oxford; 1973) p.3.

The Faerie Queene, he is courteous in welcoming strangers even though his cottage is "nothing courtly: for that wisdom prouideth things necessarie, not superfluous".(66) Euphues and Philautus notice in him "no lesse inwarde courtesie, then outward comelynesse" and "a kinde of courtly Maiestie" [pp.36, 47]. In the course of his conversation, they recognise that he speaks both his mind and the truth, and they temper their own language accordingly. They both claim to derive profit and pleasure from his discourse, which is an unusual event in Lyly and one that singles Fidus out as a rhetorical exemplar.(67)

Euphues announces that "the onely ende of our comming" to England was to substantiate the reports they had heard of Queen Elizabeth's virtues [p.37], and in the next few pages Lyly demonstrates some courtly strategies designed to deal with the epideictic mode. Epitomising decorum, Fidus refuses to speak directly of the queen on account of his own unworthiness. Elizabeth, he argues, is only to be praised by the fittest "so furre hath nature ouercome arte, and grace eloquence" [p.38]. True eulogy extends beyond the traditional powers of rhetoric and "the Orator holdeth a paper in his hand, for that he cannot vtter" [p.38]. As an alternative to the eulogistic form, Fidus offers his guests a fable. Since Aesop, the form had been a suitable mode

66. p.36. Compare *The Faerie Queene*, VI.v.35-39.

67. Euphues claims to have been persuaded by Fidus' bee-fable and that it "did so delight me" [p.46]. At the end of the latter's romance-narrative, Philautus thanks Fidus "no lesse for your talke which I found pleasaunt, then for your counsell, which I accompt profitable" [p.80].

for political discourse because, as Sidney said, one may include "under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep . . . whole considerations of wrong-doing and patience".(68) Fidus' first fable is a classic tale of wolf, fox and lion. His second, a Virgilian interlude based on Book IV of the *Georgics*, concerns "the common wealth of my bees" figuring a perfect government under their example. They "lyue vnder a lawe . . . chuse a King . . . whom they tender with such fayth and fauour . . . They call a Parliament . . . creating their king, not by affection but reason, not by the greater part, but y^e better" [pp.44-45]. Fidus commends his ideal commonwealth as "aboue any that either I haue heard or read of" [p.46]. This is an interesting admission. It implies that the bees excel even Elizabeth's government. Allegory, Puttenham's "Courtly figure", is promoted by the imperatives of courtly praise, for there "our wordes and our meanings meete not . . . not onely euery common Courtier, but also the grauest Counsellour, yea and the most noble and wisest Prince of them all are many times enforced to vse it".(69) For Fidus (as for Francis Bacon) the "secretes . . . counsells . . . dealings" of the prince should not be common discourses but closed matter [p.43]. The advantage of allegory as a courtly mode immediately becomes apparent: it is a means of extolling truth while avoiding criticism of the existing regime. In Castiglione's *Book of the*

68. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, p.116.

69. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Willcock and Walker, p.186.

Courtier, the men and women are all said to speak to each other under the veil of allegory (*allegoricamente*), and Thomas Wilson advocates allegory as the best mode for courtly critique: "similitudes, examples, comparisons from one thyng to another, apte translacions, and heaping of allegories and all suche figures as serue for amplifying, do muche commende the liuely setting forth of any matter. The miseries of the Courtiers lyfe might well be described by this kind of figure".(70) Spenser echoes this in his defence of the "continued Allegory" of *The Faerie Queene*.(71)

His decorum in political discourse established, Fidus turns next to deliver a narrative of a different kind: a romantic tale based on his own experience in love with a lady of the court. This inset narrative deserves attention for a number of reasons. It is very long, comprising more than a fifth of the narrative as a whole, and, like the bee-fable, it is the only discourse in the tale (certainly the only romantic discourse) which produces profit and delight.(72) Moreover, it too presents itself as a model of rhetorical decorum. Near the beginning of the tale the

70. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Bowers, p.201.

71. "To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasunt, which had rather haue good discipline deliuered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they vse, then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall deuises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfide with the vse of these dayes, seeing all things accounted by their showes, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence", Spenser, Letter to Raleigh, in *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Hamilton, p.737.

72. See above note 67.

narrator apologises that "in the discourse of this loue, it maye seeme I haue taken a newe course", which might seem a retrogressive step after the didacticism of the bee-fable [p.57]. But he takes this opportunity to insist that the courtship between Fidus and his mistress Iffida is an *exemplary* one. He uses it to demonstrate that love could once have been a model of decorum by contrasting it with the use of present days:

such was the tyme then, that it was straunge to loue, as it is nowe common, and then lesse vsed in the Courte, then it is now in the countrey: But hauing respecte to the tyme past, I trust you will not condempne my present tyme, who am enforced to singe after their plaine-songe, that was then vsed, and will followe heare-after the Crotchetts that are in these dayes cunninglye handled. [p.57]

While a model for amorous and rhetorical decorum did exist (in the past, as it were), the narrator appears "enforced" to sing in the corrupt modern terms of the courtly register. Coming from an age in which the model of plainness is irretrievably lost, he claims he can only present the courtship of Fidus and Iffida in courtly terms: "we accompt their olde wooing and singing to haue so little cunning, that we esteeme it barbarous, and were they liuing to heare our newe quoyings, they woulde iudge it to haue so much curiositie, that they would tearme it foolish" [p.57]. He diametrically contrasts the two strategies of courtship: "in tymes past they vsed to wooe in playne tearmes, now in piked sentences" [p.57].

The strategy of the constrained stylist recalls Lyly's dedicatory epistle to Lord Delaware in *Euphues*. There he feigned a compulsion to suppress the humanist style of the "naked tale" in deference to his courtly audience and their taste for "superfluous eloquence". In effect, the device enabled him to mimic both registers and to examine each against the conventions of the other. The narrator's interruption of Fidus' narrative here represents a similar ploy. It allows him to criticise the "piked sentences" of the courtly register while exemplifying them, as Colin Clout criticises the "courting vaine" of Cynthia's courtiers but employs exactly the same tropes in his professed love for Rosalind.(73) The narrator ends his interjection with a typically courtly question on the subject, which, being "not yet determyned", allows him to experiment endlessly with the various effects of love on language [p.57].

The tale Fidus delivers concerns his abortive courtship of a court lady, Iffida. The long and complex rhetorical procedure of his wooing centres upon a number of courtly debates, and is figured almost entirely in terms of rhetorical competition. After an initial exchange over the wine at a courtly banquet, Fidus and Iffida present each other with *questioni d'amore*.(74) Each occasion poses a choice between beauty, wit and wealth in love, and the

73. Spenser, *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, l.790.

74. See Jeffery, *Lyly and the Italian Renaissance*, p.20 ff., on possible Italian sources for these *trattati*.

interlocutor is asked either to choose or to debate the issues: "you are to determine this *Spanish* bargaine, or if you please, we wil make it an *English* controuersie" [p.71].

Lyly defends these courtly strategies by making it increasingly clear that Iffida's rhetorical technique is exemplary. At their next meeting, Fidus debates two courtly options open to him: addressing her with few words or many words.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Iffida dismisses both as courtly ruses and criticises his elaborate preamble: "vse not tedious discourses or colours of retorick, which though they be thought courtly, yet are they not esteemed necessary" [p.64]. In their subsequent dialogue, Iffida shows an equal distrust of Fidus' schemes by accusing him of divorcing words from their true meanings: "You tearme me fayre, and ther-in you flatter, wise and there-in you meane wittie, curteous which in other playne words, if you durst haue vttered it, you would haue named wanton" [p.64]. She also reproaches him for using flattering speech for evil ends, "to tell a faire tale, to a foule Lady" [p.65]. Finally, like Stella, she rejects his vows "for that it is a practise in Loue, to haue as little care of their owne oathes, as they haue of others honors" [p.65].

Iffida is willing enough to play the courtly games of question and flirtation but loth to put sport aside for serious wooing. She compares Fidus to children and

75. Philautus' preamble bears a striking resemblance to Lyly's first letter of petition to the Queen: "I dare not pester your Highness with many words, and want wit to wrap up much matter in few", quoted by Hunter, *Lyly*, p.85.

"gamesters" who lose their tempers when "they cannot get what they would haue by playe". So Fidus, unable to win her love "in sport", tries to force it "by spite" and is guilty of overstepping the mark by turning a game into a demand [pp.66-67]. This is what she means when she reprimands him for "seeking to enter by force, when your next way lyeth by fauor" [p.66]. Desire can be ratified only when restricted to the rhetorical world of entertainment, conversation and debate.

I dwell on this episode because it seems to exemplify a trend which social historians have identified in Renaissance society, and which we have already touched on in preceding chapters. The internalisation of the emotions in civilised society is argued to have had a broadly distancing effect on human and social intercourse. Elaborate systems of etiquette and conversation intervened between members of the opposite sex, and courtship thus became a largely *discursive* phenomenon. According to Foucault's periodisation, sex developed into a *confessional* mode from the sixteenth century, and became a means of individual self-recognition. Endless debates on love in Castiglione and elsewhere demonstrate a general *mis en discours* of sex, the "talke and studie" Colin Clout attributed to courtiers in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*.⁽⁷⁶⁾ What Lyly seems to do here is to turn the model round: not only does sex cause a proliferation of discourse; discourse itself approximates

76. Spenser, *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, 1.778.

to desire. Iffida, for example, admits that her attraction to Fidus formerly made her "by questions moue thee to talke, or by quarrels incense thee to choller, perceiuing in thee a wit aunswerable to my desire, which I thought throughly to whet by some *discourse*" [p.76, my italics]. The purpose of her taunts and gambits was to make him demonstrate his wit in conversation and so to gratify her "desire". In other words, desire translates into discourse and only there can it be socially sanctioned.(77) Once the playful parameters of their relationship are established, they continue in the model of Ascham's "courtly courtesies": "Euery euening she wold put forth either some pretie question, or vtter some mery conceit, to driue me from melancholy" [p.78]. Desire-as-discourse is both restorative and recuperative. Not only does Fidus recover his health, but as Camilla says on another occasion, "a pleasant and quicke witted Phisitian, hath remoued that from my heart with talke, that he could not with all his Triacle".(78)

Philautus' reponse to Fidus' tale also manifests the association of desire and discourse, in so far as it is figured in highly sexual terms. He is "burning as it were, in desire of this discourse" which eventually brings him "a

77. See Turner, "Some Dialogues of Love", p.286: "In this world of courtship social pressures, the code of love, and the delicacy of sentiment work together to force language to express the intimacies of love indirectly".

78. p.126. On the restorative nature of story-telling, see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Temple Smith, London; 1978) chapter 5; Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Methuen, London; 1981); and T. F. Crane, *Italian Social Customs*.

bedde" [p.49]. Fidus inflames Philautus' mind, wishing "you could feel the like impressions in your myndes at the rehersall of my mishappe, as I did passions at the entring into it" [p.51], while the latter remains "tyckled in euerye vaine with delyght" [p.56]. Philautus is loth to countenance any *interruptus* in his satisfaction: "But he so eger of an end, as one leaping ouer a stile before hee come to it, desired few parentheses or digressions or gloses, but the text, wher he him-self, was coting in the margant" [p.51].

Lyly goes on to consider the discursive economies of courtship more closely. Euphues and Philautus leave Fidus for the English court and within a short time both are won over by the virtue and beauty of the English gentlewomen. Euphues recants both his former "cooling card" and his anti-court strictures to Livia, and Philautus promptly falls in love. His beloved, Camilla, like Iffida embodies a model of rhetorical decorum. In particular, she "oftentimes delighted to heare discourses of loue, but euer desirous to be instructed in learning", and thus combines pedagogic with courtly ideals [p.85].

Philautus confronts this paragon for the first time at a masque. He appears disguised (an emblem of deceitfulness), approaches Camilla and woos her in his Italian fashion. In the course of their dialogue they discuss the question of propriety in love-talk while between them demonstrating its various competing styles. Philautus

begins by asking whether lovers should be allowed to "discouer their whole desires" under the cover of a mask [p.103]. Having broached the subject of propriety, he then admits that he desires only to initiate conversation: "I meane only with questions to trye your wit, which shall neither touch your honour to aunswere, nor my honestie to aske". (79)

To external appearances Philautus is simply experimenting with the kind of love-discourse which Fidus' tale seemed to condone, but Lyly uses the opportunity to scrutinise its limitations. Camilla first objects to the suitability of his "questions": "I had rather you should accompt me a foole by silence, then wise by aunswering? For such questions in these assemblyes, moue suspition where there is no cause, and therefore are not to be resolved least there be cause" [p.104]. She recognises that courtly discourse, even of the most apparently innocuous kind, has its dangers, although her subsequent replies indicate that silence is not necessarily the best strategy for dealing with such situations. Having refused to answer Philautus' question, desiring rather to be considered foolish "by silence", Camilla proceeds to evaluate silence itself. She admits that "if I should say nothing then would you vaunt that I am wonne: for that they that are silent seeme to consent". On the other hand, participation is equally

79. p.104. In a later letter to Camilla he begs only to be allowed "to talke with thee, or by writing . . . to discourse w^t thee" [p.124].

compromising, for "then would you boast that I would be wooed, for that castles that come to parlue, and woemen that delight in courting, are willing to yeelde" [p.105]. Camilla therefore articulates a dilemma that did not appear in the Fidus-Iffida narrative. She must either remain silent and appear to be coy or consenting, or she must engage in courtly dialogue and "moue suspition where there is no cause".

If silence comes under censure, so too does Philautus' "disordered discourse" [p.105]. Camilla accuses him of "vsing no decorum" in that "you study to haue your discourse as farre voyde of sence, as your face is of fauor, to the ende, that your disfigured countenaunce might supplie the disorder of your ill couched sentences".(80) Her recriminations, a textbook rebuke of disordered rhetoric, are taken up by another character as the tale unfolds.(81) Still wretchedly in love, Philautus consults an alchemist, Psellus, in an unsuccessful attempt to procure from him love-inducing drugs. Psellus humours Philautus with a list of bizarre spells, but insists that while potions might poison Camilla they will "neuer perswade hir" [p.117]. As an alternative, he urges writing and concludes with the

80. p.106. See also her later letter to Philautus where she rejects his "coyned & counterfait conceipts" and asserts that "thy minde is as ful of deceit, as thy words are of flatterie" [p.138].

81. See, for example, John Hoskins' dedicatory epistle to his *Direccions for Speech and Style*: "disordered speech is not soe much iniury to the lipps w^ch giue it forth, or the thoughts w^ch put it forth, as to the right pporcôn & Coherence of things in themselues soe wrongfully expressed", in *Life, Letters, and Writings*, ed. Osborn, p.116.

following advice: "Frame letters, ditties, Musicke, and all meanes that honestie may allowe: For he wooeth well, that meaneth no yll, and hee speedeth sooner that speaketh what he should, then he that vttereth what he will" [p.119]. This echoes Camilla's objection to lovers that "speake what they should not" [p.105]. Psellus reiterates her strictures further by enjoining Philautus to use decorum: "temper thy wordes so well, and place euerye sentence so wiselye, as it maye bee harde for hir to iudge, whether thy loue be more faythfull, or hir beautie amiable" [p.119]. Successful courtship approximates to rhetorical flair.

In the long letter exchange that follows, the epistles between Philautus and Camilla prove singularly abortive. Their individual determinations, he for love and she for silence, are both denied. Lyly goes some way to explaining why in an authorial interjection which appears at the beginning of their correspondence. In his earlier interruption of Fidus' tale, Lyly's narrator had lamented the "piked sentences" of modern love which, though he rejected, he could not avoid. Here, too, he claims to abhor the strategies employed by Philautus to win Camilla, but pretends to show why they are inexorable. Men are "iustly" forced to devise stratagems on account of women's scorn [p.120]. He recalls a Golden Age of Edenic simplicity when Adam used "no pollycie, but playne dealyng" and when affection was measured "by faith, not fancie" [p.121]. Henceforth, he envisages a steady decline in

which manner is counted for more than matter, and where "varietie in shew" is more admired than "substaunce", as Spenser would complain in his prefatory letter to Raleigh [p.121]. What Lyly's narrator singles out for attack is the proliferation of styles: "some vse discourses of Loue to kindle affection, some ditties to allure the minde, some letters to stirre the appetite" [p.121]. All this is very far from Thomas Wilson's ideal "one maner of language".(82) It is precisely this variety, demanded by female precosity and exacerbated by a craze for show, that so debases true love. Lyly draws a crucial distinction:

This causeth you Gentlewomen, to picke out those that can court you, not those that loue you, and hee is accompted the best in your conceits, that vseth most colours, not that sheweth greatest courtesie. [p.121]

In distinguishing courting from love so radically, he associates it with every kind of rhetorical superfluity.(83) "A playne tale of faith you laugh at", he goes on, "a picked discourse of fancie, you meruayle at, condemning the simplicitie of truth, and preferring the singularitie of deceit" [p.121]. In such a world the values of simplicity and plainness count for nothing and even "true louers" are obliged to use stratagems when honesty is scorned.(84) The narrator's ideal of plainness, the "naked tale", is

82. Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Bowers, p.185.

83. See another later interjection where he addresses women again: "Let not them that speake fairest be beleueed soonest, for true loue lacketh a tongue" [p.155].

84. See also *King Lear*, I.i.147-148: "Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak / When power to flattery bows?".

therefore somewhat different from that of Iffida, Camilla and Psellus. He suggests that decorum is the only compromise in a fallen world of rhetorical variety and sexual depravity.(85)

Again, the bifurcation of humanist and courtly tendencies manifests itself. The proliferation of sexual discourse at court contrasts with the aims of humanist purposive rhetoric. As Ascham pointed out, in the courtship situation purposive rhetoric generally led to one thing and one thing only: sex. The "makers of love" are often "common contemners of marriage and ready persuaders of all other to the same".(86) This dilemma forms the subject of a central exchange that takes place between Euphues and Philautus on the use of rhetoric in courtship. Euphues argues that the translation of desire into discourse is the only chaste and courtly alternative in maintaining civilised decorum: "the effect of loue is faith, not lust, *delightfull conference*, not detestable concupiscence". All he desires is "the company of hir in common *conference* that I best loued, to heare hir *sober talke*, hir *wise aunsweres*, to behold hir sharpe capacitie, and to bee perswaded of hir

85. See Kinney, *Humanist Poetics*, p.178: "While struggling toward a language that can embody a reliable statement of virtue, the tentative conclusion of *Euphues and his England* searches for a humanist rhetoric to replace that which is fallen".

86. Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, ed. Ryan, pp.74, 73.

constancie".(87) For Euphues the discursive practices of courtship are a civilising phenomenon because they alone can restrain concupiscent desires. Philautus, on the other hand, objects that such indeterminate courtly rhetoric never achieves an end and is therefore fruitless: "An idle loue is that, and fit for him that hath nothing but eares, that is satisfied to heare hir speak, not desirous to haue himselfe speede . . . thou makest Loue nothing but a continual wooing, if thou barre it of the effect, and then is it infinite, or if thou allow it, and yet forbid it, a perpetuall warfare, and then is it intollerable" [pp.158-159]. For Philautus the open-ended, inconclusive courtly debate is not an effective means to persuasion, and the "continual wooing" of Euphues' prognostication is equally opposed to the purposiveness of humanist rhetoric.

But a courtly structure predominates. While the narrator concurs with Philautus that "the ende of loue is the full fruition of the partie beloued", the debate is not allowed to resolve itself [p.160]. According to the courtly tradition of such confrontations, it peters out as undecided as it began. Euphues admits that he has already been "disputing w^t my selfe" of his friend's situation, "yet can I resolute my selfe in nothing that either may content

87. p.158, my italics. Compare Pettie, who opens his seventh tale with the statement that love can "reduce us from savagenesse to civilnesse, from folly to wit, from covetousnesse to liberalitie, from clownishnesse to courtlinesse". His conclusion is less optimistic, however, tracing a development "from modesty to impudencie, from learynge to lewdnesse", *A Petite Pallace*, ed. Hartman, p.147.

mee, or quiet thee" [p.155]. The dispute ends likewise, with the narrator interrupting and addressing the reader: "I will not craue herein your resolute aunswere, bicause betweene them it was not determined, but euery one as he lyketh".(88) The self-perpetuating courtly debate militates against closure, and typifies its indeterminate nature by failing to resolve the very dilemmas it creates.

As if to emphasise this, *Euphues and his England* concludes with another Castiglian^{oni} scenario, a *convivium* at the house of Flavia at which Euphues, Philautus, Camilla, Frauncis and a number of other characters gather. As hostess, Flavia introduces the occasion by asking for "some pastime that might be pleasaunt, but not vnprofitable", and Surius, another guest, proposes that they "vse some discourse, aswell to renue old traditions, which haue bene heetofore vsed, as to encrease friendship" [p.163]. The questions debated are wholly courtly in orientation: how to respond to a true lover? should the social intercourse between men and women be permitted?(89) The third question is raised by Philautus who, having been "debating with my selfe" for some time, asks whether it were better to be "a blab though constant" in love, or "secreate though fickle"

88. p.161. This returns to the subjective universe of "so many men so many mindes", already articulated in *Euphues*, p.190, and by Iffida in *Euphues and his England*, p.72.

89. Hunter considers that the debates at Flavia's are "arranged as an academic disputation", *Lyly*, p.45; and King concurs that "logic is paramount", "Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric", p.155. Contrast Jeffery, *Lyly and the Italian Renaissance*, pp.25-26, who stresses the courtly nature of the discussions.

[pp.175, 176]. He admits he has been unable to resolve the question in his own mind: "so many reasons came to confirme either, that I coulde not be resolved of any" [p.175].

In her reply his interlocutrix, Frauncis, tells him that he is wholly wrong-headed in assuming that secrecy in love is antipathetic to constancy. The feminine virtues exemplifying bodily closure - silence and chastity - are intimately related, and Frauncis concludes that both are also requisite in the lover. She demonstrates her point with a striking similitude:

if I shoulde be so curious to demaunde whether in a tale tolde to your Ladyes, disposition or inuention be most conuenient, I cannot thinke but you woulde iudge them both expedient, for as one mettall is to be tempored with another in fashioning a good blade . . . so fareth it in speach, which if it be not seasoned as well with witte to moue delight, as with art, to manifest cunning, there is no eloquence, and in no other matter standeth it with loue, for to be secrete and not constant, or constant and not secret, were to builde a house of mortar without stones, or a wall of stones without mortar. [pp.176-177, my italics]

In comparing proper conduct in love with the classic constituents of oratory, Frauncis suggests that humanist precepts can provide a model or referent for courtship after all. Compromise between humanist and courtly aims seems to have been reached.

Frauncis, like her namesake in Gascoigne's *Aduentures of Master F. J.*, is an exemplary lover. Her name signifies honesty, frankness and truth. She is like Camilla in that she positively approves the translation of desire into

discourse, taking "no little pleasure to heare *Philautus* talke" [p.179]. Later, after he has transferred his amorous designs from Camilla to Frauncis, Philautus writes to Euphues of their courtship: "Thus would she dally, a wench euer-more giuen to such disporte . . . Thus oftentimes had we conference, but no conclusion", until Surius intervened on his behalf and brought about their wedding [p.221]. Camilla and Frauncis both take delight in discoursing with their lovers, and both succeed in marrying them. Both Euphues' courtly and Philautus' humanist prescriptions are therefore enacted, and decorum and purposiveness are maintained.

This happy resolution is Lyly's closest approximation to romantic comedy in prose. Yet closure is not entirely complete. Asked to arbitrate the three questions at Flavia's banquet, Euphues replies "better it were in my opinion not to haue your reasons concluded, then to haue them confuted" [p.180]. Although he does posit a definition of "honest affection", Euphues recognises that any discourse on love is necessarily inconclusive on account of its paradoxical nature. The narrator himself also evades conclusion. *Euphues and his England* ends with an open question addressed to the female readers:

whether *Philautus* were a better wooer, or a husband, whether *Euphues* were a better loue, or a scholler [p.228].

The *questioni d'amore* presumably begin all over again, to be endlessly debated outside the confines of the narrative by

Lyly's female audience, while his story lies "shut in a Ladyes casket" [p.9].

ii. The Lady of May

In *The Schoolmaster* Ascham had left unresolved the problem of texts whose lascivious content serious humanists deplored but courtly audiences condoned. Lyly takes up the challenge in *Euphues and his England* where he considers how courtship *might* be presented as a rhetorical exemplum. In the course of the tale he shows that if it cannot approximate to an ideal of plainness, it can at least aspire to decorum. The proper translation of desire into discourse, Ascham's "courtly courtesies", is a better compromise than the satisfaction of that desire.

But Ascham had made a second point too. It was not only lovers' "pleasant words" which posed a problem for the humanist-as-courtier. There was also the question of the "talkative tongues" and their dangerous interference in affairs of state. In drawing attention to the hazards posed by such "common discourses", Ascham urges their suppression, yet this conflicts flatly with the courtier's serious role outlined by Ottaviano in the last book of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. This centres on the courtier's moral and political duty to counsel his prince, yet Ascham lambasts those who are "so singular in wisdom (in their own opinion) as scarce they count the best counselor

the prince hath comparable with them".(90) This is where Sidney's dramatic interlude, *The Lady of May*, comes in.(91) For if *Euphues and his England* is about courtship, Sidney's play adds another dimension. *The Lady of May* is about courtship too, the choice of a worthy suitor for the May Lady. But it is also an act of courtship, a courtier's attempted persuasion of his prince. It represents one of Sidney's attempts to draw Elizabeth's attention to the hostility of Leicester's faction to the proposed match with the French duke, Alençon.(92) The following year, evidence suggests that Sidney was virtually rusticated from court for stating the same thing less obliquely in an open letter to the Queen. A "talkative tongue" was indeed suppressed. Sidney cannot have been unaware of the hazards of such an endeavour, and one of the ways in which he seems to obviate the difficulties in *The Lady of May* is to contain the serious within the playful. He makes every effort to

90. Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, ed. Ryan, p.74.

91. Sidney, *The Lady of May* (1578-1579), in *The Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan van Dorsten (Clarendon, Oxford; 1973) pp.21-32. All inset page references are to this edition. There is still controversy over the dating of the play, although most critics opt for the earlier date, and parallels with pageants at Norwich on the summer progress of 1578, to be discussed below, seem tentatively to confirm it.

92. The match, for which earlier negotiations had foundered after the Saint Bartholomew Massacre in 1572, had been revived with new seriousness from 1578. It was a controversial issue destined to dominate the court and its entertainments for the next five years. See Eleanor Rosenberg, *Leicester, Patron of Letters* (Columbia University Press, New York; 1955) pp.232-233, who notes a hardening of Leicester's anti-Catholic views around 1579.

ensure its courtliness by, among other things, parodying the serious humanist so successfully in *Rombus*.

If Lyly has been figured as the 'humanist-as-courtier' "enforced" to substitute humanist plainness for the "superfluous eloquence" of a coterie audience, Sidney might be figured as the 'courtier-as-humanist'. In his life and writings he was constrained to combine the courtier's serious function with his playful one, or, to put it differently, to enact both roles of advisor and entertainer presented by Castiglione. Comparisons between Lyly and Sidney should not be over-laboured, but the two writers do seem to share the same preoccupations, namely those rhetorical strategies that were available to them in the courtly milieu. *The Lady of May* has justifiably been seen as a highly complex, generically hybrid work, and as a meditation on the various rhetorical strategies available to its author.(93) Admittedly with different emphasis, Sidney nonetheless considers the same alternatives as Lyly: humanist rhetoric, the courtly debate, and allegory.

The interlude opens abruptly. A lady suitor begs the Queen to adjudicate a private quarrel between the respective worthiness of two lovers. One, Therion, is a forester and wild character, with as many rash faults as virtues; the other, Espilus, is a shepherd and melancholic who writes verses but very little else. After a series of debates on the respective merits of each, both general and particular,

93. Montrose, "Celebration and Insinuation".

the Queen is asked to choose and opts for Espilus.(94) The situation, stated thus baldly, bears all the hallmarks of a classic *questione d'amore*. The choice of lovers and debate on their virtues was a familiar theme, as is the call for female, especially royal, arbitration.(95) The apparent spontaneity of the piece, which opens abruptly with no title or running head in the 1598 folio, envisages an extempore scene like that of almost all informal debates. One critic has commented on the appropriateness of the garden setting for a Ciceronian disputation, to be argued, as Thomas Hoby put it, "too and fro".(96)

The Lady of May is couched in the pastoral mode of the eclogue which, as Puttenham says, is apparently the oldest form for "disputation and contentious reasoning".(97) A

94. Elizabeth had been presented with a similar contrast before. In a letter to the Queen in 1573, Sir Christopher Hatton thanks her for a gift and alludes to a rivalry for her favour between himself, her "mutton", and the Earl of Oxford, whose crest was a boar: "It is a gracious favour, most dear and welcome unto me. Reserve it to the Sheep, he hath no tooth to bite; where[as] the Boar's tusk may both rase and tear", in *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, ed. Nicolas, p.28.

95. See Dorothy Connell, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1977) pp.81-82.

96. Hoby trans., *The Book of the Courtier*, ed. Rouse, p.3. See Bruce R. Smith, "Landscape with Figures: The Three Realms of Queen Elizabeth's Country-house Revels", *Renaissance Drama* ns.8 (1977) pp.57-115. An heroic poem of the early eighteenth century survives describing Wanstead garden, although this was after the old house had been pulled down and the park redesigned and landscaped. Nevertheless, the poet casts a nostalgic eye back to the Elizabethan entertainment: "View here an Antique Portico of State, / Where once the Great Retir'd ELIZA sate. / Here happily in some sweet Vernal Morn, / When Day's bright GOD set out his World t'adorn, / The Honour'd LEIC'STER saw the fair CROWN'D HEAD", *Flora Truimphans* (1712), p.15.

97. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Willcock and Walker, p.38.

debate structure is established from the outset in the quasi-euphuistic register of the Suitor's opening words. She confesses herself to be "as deeply plunged in misery, as I wish to you the highest point of happiness" [p.21]. Her use of *compar* and *contentio* introduces a rhetoric of antithesis which is to be typical of the interlude as a whole, as does her wordplay, punning on word-pairs like *hopes* and *hap*, *parts* and *pain*, *matter* and *matrimony* [p.21]. This use of *paronomasia*, particularly apt and "prettie to play wth amonge gentlewomen", as Hoskins says, echoes the mild stylistic dualism of Lyly.(98) As the play proceeds this crescendoes to be reiterated in structure and form, to the extent that Feuillerat's description of *Euphues* as an "antithèse longuement prolongée" would not be entirely inappropriate.(99) Antithesis is most elegantly contained within the Suitor's Supplication to Elizabeth. This is a highly formal poem, and, comprising two sestets in perfect balance, it forms a vignette of the debate structure, disputing two issues equally *in utramque partem*. Thesis balances antithesis by means of repetition and caesura. In the first sestet Elizabeth is presented in her basilisk mode, "Where ears be burnt, eyes dazzled, hearts oppressed"

98. Hoskins, *Direccions for Speech and Style*, in *Life, Letters, and Writings*, ed. Osborn, p.130. He also defines *comparison* and *contentio*, noting that, according to Ascham, Queen Elizabeth herself "excells in practize" of the latter, "& indeed it is a figure, fitt to set forth a copious style". He associates *paronomasia* explicitly with Lyly's *Euphues*, where "sometimes the first word & the myddle harped one vppon another, sometymes the first & last, sometimes in severall sentences", *ibid.* pp.151, 129.

99. Feuillerat, *John Lyly*, p.412.

but her merciful nature counter-balances this. The suppliant hopes to "feed mine ears, mine eyes, mine heart in you". In the same way images of her face, state and mind in the first sestet are redefined in the second, the rhetorical question of the first, "How dare I?" becoming "So dare I" in the second [p.22]. The poem is a meditation on the Queen's two bodies, a legal distinction often poeticised as the tyrannical Queen versus the merciful lady, and so described by Spenser: "she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautifull Lady".(100)

The dualism of antithetical structure persists as poetry explodes into drama in the next section. The Suitor's balanced hypothesis suddenly breaks up into gesture as two 'sestets' of foresters and shepherds enter quarrelling, and "antithesis appears dramatically before us".(101) The physical representation of "controversy" recalls the beautifully-balanced dance between seven "reasonable shepherds" and seven "appassionate shepherds" who debate Passion and Reason in the Second Eclogues of the old *Arcadia*.(102) In that eclogue, forty couplets spoken alternately by the disputants end with a final couplet in

100. Spenser, Letter to Raleigh, in *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Hamilton, p.737. See Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies*; and Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque*, p.46: "both sets of tropes, the initial descriptions and what subsequently qualifies them, represent traditional attitudes toward the sovereign".

101. Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, p.47. See also Montrose, who suggests that this interruption comprises a "dramatized debate", "Celebration and Insinuation", p.12.

102. Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, ed. Robertson, p.135.

unison and harmony. This stage has not yet been reached by the debaters in the play, however, and the centre of the controversy, the May Lady, remains undecided: "who seemed to incline neither to the one nor other side" [p.22]. It is possible the Lady's stillness is a poetic version of Elizabeth's own motto, *semper eadem*.(103) Like Elizabeth, she is "absolute Lady", but her stasis is the result of dilemma rather than decision [p.24]. She presents her *questione d'amore* in terms of perfectly balanced opposites:

Now the question I am to ask you, fair lady, is whether the many deserts and many faults of Therion, or the very small deserts and no faults of Espilus be to be preferred. [p.25]

Rhetorically, the May Lady's question corresponds to the "comparison of contraries" defined by Hoskins as follows: "Contraries are sometymes arranged together by payres one to one, as compare the ones impatience to the others myldnes, the ones impenitency wth the others submission, the ones humillity wth the others indignacon".(104) Hoskins suggests the device as a means of amplifying speech, but Sidney implies that comparative rhetoric has reached stalemate. One lover appears no better or worse than the other so, although using the comparative form, the power of comparison is invalid: "Espilus is the richer, but Therion

103. In an entertainment at Woodstock in 1592, Elizabeth enters an allegorical forest of "Inconstancy" populated by faithless lovers metamorphosed into trees. Her own constancy, symbolised by her motto *semper eadem*, miraculously frees the lovers from their leafy prison. See Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, pp.119-142.

104. Hoskins, *Direccions for Speech and Style*, in *Life, Letters, and Writings*, ed. Osborn, p.135.

the *livelier*" [p.25, my italics]. The moral issue between the lovers is also a rhetorical one. Elizabeth's decision will restore the power and purpose of comparison specifically because, as "the *beautifullest* lady these woods have ever received" she reintroduces the superlative, and with it a hierarchy of values [p.24, my italics].

Elizabeth's intervention is postponed, however, by a singing competition between the two rivals. The debate looks like becoming Euphues' "question often disputed, but neuer determined".(105) This "formal debate" between the lovers continues the debate-structure of the play, initiated at the outset by the Suitor.(106) Rival sestets (the established form of the piece) interweave with each other, three by Therion and two by Espilus, demonstrating again the debate structure rehearsed in miniature by the Supplication. The whole concludes with a single couplet in which one line is sung by each, petitioning Elizabeth to act as judge.

Yet Sidney shows that there are problems inherent in the courtly debate as presented so far. The ramifications of the argument cannot be "very formally contained" as the Supplication was [p.21]. As that poem broke up into a violent "controversy", so here the competition results in further "contention" [p.26]. The foresters and shepherds remain adamant in their opposition as the play proceeds to

105. Lyly, ed. Bond, i.201.

106. See Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, p.50: "Rhetorically, this duet is set up in the same way as the earlier supplication".

consider the virtues of their respective 'professions'. Poetry reverts to prose and debate to allegory.(107)

The debate between Dorcas and Rixus has traditionally been read as a straightforward confrontation of the relative virtues of the active and the contemplative life.(108) Yet the simple identification of themes conflicts with a basic critical commonplace in the Renaissance, that the simplicity of pastoral veils complexity. In the *Apology* Sidney defends pastoral which "under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep, can include the whole considerations of wrong-doing and patience", and the shepherds in the old *Arcadia* "under hidden forms utter such matters as otherwise were not fit for their delivery".(109) Puttenham suggests that the purpose of pastoral is "vnder the vaile of homely persons, and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters", and it is just this quality that William Webbe praises in *The Shepheardes Calender*: "There is also much matter vttered somewhat couertly, especially the abuses of some whom he [the author] would not be too playne

107. The debate that follows has been called a "prose parallel to the singing match", Orgel, *ibid.* p.51.

108. See Orgel, *ibid.* pp.51-53; David Kalstone, *Sidney's Poetry: Contexts and Interpretations* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; 1965) pp.45-47; and Richard McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick; 1979) p.21.

109. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, p.116; *The Old Arcadia*, ed. Robertson, p.56. The revised *Arcadia* reads "under hidden formes uttering such matters, as otherwise they durst not deale with", Sidney, ed. Feuillerat, i.28.

withall".(110) Instead, therefore, of reading *The Lady of May* as "concerned with only a single aspect of the pastoral mode" I suggest one apply to it Annabel Patterson's notion of "functional ambiguity, in which the indeterminacy inveterate to language was fully and knowingly exploited".(111) As a veiled critique of aspects of courtly experience, the debate between Dorcas and Rixus demands closer attention.

Dorcas begins and ends his speech with what Rombus calls a "rhetorical invasion" [p.29]. Apostrophising his lambs, he presents the animals as emblems of loyalty, "among whom there is no envy, but all obedience". They represent the truth-telling that is problematised in a courtly setting by "violent oppression" and "servile flattery". Their enemy, in life as in allegory, is the "filthy fox", the Aesopian archetype for the deceiving rhetorician [p.28]. In the midst of this fabular representation, however, Dorcas proposes a different though related idea. As the pastoral

110. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Willcock and Walker, p.38; William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith (Clarendon, Oxford; 1904, repr. 1964) 2 vols. i.264.

111. Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, p.46. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, p.18. See also Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, chapter 4. For a general discussion of the Renaissance pastoral mode see Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of shepheardes', and the Pastoral of Power", *English Literary Renaissance* 10 (1980) pp.153-182, and "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form", *English Literary History* 50 (1983) pp.415-459; Helen Cooper, *Pastoral: Mediaeval into Renaissance* (Brewer, Cambridge; 1977, repr. 1978); Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England*, pp.79-82, 154-155; and Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*.

presents an alternative to courtly rhetoric, so it also provides a classic locus for the disaffected, disaffiliated courtier.⁽¹¹²⁾ The "courtiers" whom Dorcas describes withdrawing from court into pastoral retreat, all suffer Elizabeth's "cruelty". He makes the identification of their "mistress" with the Queen clear by referring back to exactly those characteristics described in the first part of the Suitor's Supplication. The lover-courtiers complain of "the greatness of their mistress' estate" ("whose state is raised over all", Supplication 1.1), "which dazzled their eyes and yet burned their hearts" ("ears be burnt, eyes dazzled, hearts oppressed", *ibid.* 1.6), overcome by her "beauty" ("face", 1.2) and "wit" ("mind", 1.3):

O how often have I heard one name sound in many mouths, making our vales witnesses of their doleful agonies! So that with long lost labour, finding their thoughts bare no other wool but despair, of young courtiers they grew old shepherds. [p.28]

Criticism could be seen to masquerade under a courtly veil of compliment. Rombus is to some extent right in disputing the deliberative nature of Dorcas' speech. It does not simply argue that the shepherd's life excels, but includes within it shifting layers of allegory. Dorcas begins with a quasi-Christian vision of sheep as loyal subjects to the good pastor, but he moves on to present a model of the withdrawn, disaffected, rusticated courtier, exiled by

112. Compare Dorus' praise for the pastoral life in the First Eclogues: "Better yet do I live . . . Not limited to a whisp'ring note, the lament of a courtier", *The Old Arcadia*, ed. Robertson, p.86.

Elizabeth's magisterial role and not welcomed back by her merciful, feminine self. He uses the same language for both, implying, perhaps, that pastoral allegory can include images of both loyalty and disloyalty.

Rixus is generally thought to have a "rhetorical advantage" over Dorcas, although both employ similar strategies.⁽¹¹³⁾ Like his disputant, Rixus uses the properties of the hunt as allegorical signifiers: "the very growing things are ensamples of goodness" [p.29]. The properties themselves differ - he uses trees, Dorcas sheep - but the referent is the same for both - goodness. While Dorcas presents his courtly audience with images of the disaffection, Rixus by contrast represents the ambitiously successful courtier, who aspires, like the trees, "never so high" [p.29]. Rixus speaks for the courtier whose suit has been heard and favoured:

We have no hopes, but we may quickly go about them, and going about them, we soon obtain them.
[p.29]

Rixus' optimism has led most critics into identifying him and the foresters with Sidney and his uncle's faction: "the singing match between the two suitors and the debate between their followers are clearly weighted in favor of Therion-

113. Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, p.52.

Leicester".(114) This is true to some extent. Sidney's courtly audience would already have been familiar with the Petrarchan use of the hunt as a metaphor for courtship. They would have been equally acquainted with the figure of a forester for the "joly foster" was one of Henry VIII's favourite masquing roles, and the properties and delights of the hunt had long been a staple in courtly entertainments.(115) *The Lady of May* does, after all, take place in a wood - "the grove" - which is not only Therion's locus, but a place which had, incidentally, long associations with Tudor hunting. Wanstead Forest had been

114. Robert Kimbrough and Philip Murphy, "The Helmingham Hall Manuscript of Sidney's *The Lady of May*: A Commentary and Transcription", *Renaissance Drama* ns. 1 (1968) pp.103-119, this quotation p.105. For a critical consensus see also A. C. Hamilton, *Sir Philip Sidney: A Study of his Life and Works* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1977) p.24; William A. Ringler Jr. ed., *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1962) pp.361-363; Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, pp.53-55; Kalstone, *Sidney's Poetry*, p.46; Robert Kimbrough, *Sir Philip Sidney* (Twayne, New York; 1971) pp.67-68; Smith, "Landscape with Figures", p.75; and Montrose, "Celebration and Insinuation", p.18.

115. Quoted from one of several 'foster' songs in the Henry VIII MS., printed by Stevens in *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*, p.410. For the popularity of foresting / hunting scenes in Tudor masques see: Henry VIII's coronation tilt (1509), described by Edward Hall, *The Vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre and Yorke*, ed. Henry Ellis (London; 1809) [hereafter *Chronicle*] p.512; the hunting scene in Richard Edwardes' play, *Palemon and Arcyte*, performed at Oxford in 1564, described by J. Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (Society of Antiquaries, London; 2nd. ed. 1823) 3 vols. i.212-213; a play called *Narcissus*, performed at Court by the Chapel Royal in 1572, and which included a hunting scene; a show of "fforesters or hunters", performed in 1574; and a similar performance at Richmond in 1575, referred to in Albert Feuillerat ed., *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the time of Queen Elizabeth* (*Materialen* 21, Louvain; 1908) pp.141, 193, 244.

used as a royal hunting park from the days of Elizabeth's grandfather. (116)

Therion and Rixus play on the courtly audience's familiarity by urging the nobility of their profession. In contrast, the dramatised pastoral elements of the interlude would have appeared fairly novel if not innovatory. For *The Lady of May* was, with one or two minor exceptions, the first dramatic pastoral in English. While foresters and the hunt were fairly commonplace in courtly shows, shepherds, with their very different life-style symbolising retreat and contemplation, were virtually unknown. In July 1574 a group of Italian players had entertained Elizabeth at Reading, and there are accounts for "shepherdes hookes" and "Lamskynnes". But the fact that it was put on by a troupe of Italian players suggests that the *commedia rusticale* would still have been thought of as a foreign, Continental genre. *The Lady of May's* only other generic contemporary seems to have been the "pastorell or historie of A Greeke

116. See *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Essex* (Oxford University Press, London; 1903-1983) 8 vols. vi.323-324. Henry VIII placed the manor and park of Wanstead under a succession of keepers chosen from close associates. His last keeper was Sir Richard Rich, and the freehold remained with that family until bought by Leicester in 1578. By a sheer accident of fate, Wanstead was eventually to pass to Penelope Rich, Sidney's "Stella", and her lover, Charles Blount.

maide", performed at court by Leicester's Men at New Year, 1578.(117)

The comparative novelty of Sidney's device may indeed have weighed in favour of the more familiar Therion. But the allegorical debate between Dorcas and Rixus considered two aspects of courtly existence: the successful and the unsuccessful. If Rixus' ambitious courtiers represent the fate of some, one must also remember the role that, in courtly circles, Sidney was later to be best remembered for. Philisides, the Shepherd Knight, was Sidney's adopted guise in the Iberian tournaments described in the revised *Arcadia*, and possibly in a real occasion when he tilted with Sir Henry Lee, in honour of Elizabeth's Accession Day in November 1581.(118) In the *Arcadia*, the knight whose name

117. Feuillerat ed., *Documents of the Revels: Elizabeth*, pp.227, 286. Smith, "Landscape with Figures", suggests that previous court shows, in particular the 1575 Kenilworth entertainment, were examples of the *commedia rusticale*, although no shepherds as such appear. Although novel in 1578, however, *The Lady of May* set a trend for the dramatic pastoral in subsequent courtly shows. See the "pastorall of phillyda & Choryn" mentioned in Feuillerat ed., *Documents of the Revels: Elizabeth*, p.365, and the pastoral shows performed at Elvetham, Bisham and Sudeley in the 1590s, in Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, pp.99-118, and Lyly, ed. Bond, i.471-484.

118. The score cheque for this tilt is in Bodleian MS Ashmole 845, fol.165. The identification of Lee with Lelius, Philisides' challenger at the tilt, was first made by J. H. Hanford and S. R. Watson, in "Personal Allegory in the *Arcadia*: Philisides and Lelius", *Modern Philology* 32 (1934) pp.1-10. On Sidney's appearance as the Shepherd Knight see: Frances A. Yates, "Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957) pp.4-25, esp. pp.4-9, now reprinted in *Astraea*, pp.88-94; Alan Hager, "The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney's Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader", *English Literary History* 48 (1981) pp.1-16; and Roger Howell, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Shepherd Knight* (Hutchinson, London; 1968).

plays on his own, enters with "a dosen apparelled like shepherds" who sing an eclogue "one of them answering another" to the sound of their recorders. These shepherds have clear affinities with those in *The Lady of May*. Philisides' armour or "furniture" is "drest over with wooll", perhaps as one would have expected Espilus (meaning 'woolly' or 'hairy one') to appear. His *imprese* continues the pastoral theme figuring "a sheepe marked with pitch, with this word *Spotted to be knowne*".(119) There is evidence of another pastoral entertainment, also associated with the Accession Day Tilts, in which Sidney may again have appeared as "Philisides, the shepherd good and true" with a group of ploughmen and an accompaniment of "rusticall musick".(120) There was no doubt of the identification after his death. Both Spenser and Essex mourned him as the Shepherd Knight, the latter appearing at the 1590 Accession

119. Sidney, ed. Feuillerat, i.284-285. Scholars have also remarked on the similarity of Philisides' device with a description of another of Sidney's *imprese* by Abraham Fraunce in a manuscript at Penshurst, of "A sheep marked with the planet Saturn". See D. Coulman, "Spotted to be known", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957) pp.179-180; K. Duncan-Jones, "Sidney's Personal *Imprese*", *ibid.* 33 (1970) pp.321-324; and Hager, "The Exemplary Mirage", pp.13-14.

120. On the evidence and sources for this apparently lost entertainment, see Bernard M. Wagner, "New Poems by Sir Philip Sidney", *PMLA* 53 (1938) pp.118-124; Peter Beal, "Poems by Sir Philip Sidney: The Ottley Manuscript", *The Library* 5th series 33 (1978) pp.284-295; and Alan Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (George Philip, London; 1987) pp.127-128. Two of the poems are printed by Ringler ed., *Poems*, pp.356-358.

Day Tilt in mourning for "Sweete Sydney, fairest shepheard of our greene".(121)

If critics have identified Sidney and his uncle's faction with the forester on the grounds of his 'impetuosity', these associations with shepherds, far better documented, should also be considered. The shepherd, according to Dorcas' allegory and to the whole tradition of melancholia, could also figure the disaffected and withdrawn courtier which, it could be argued, Sidney also wanted to hint at. Moreover, the simple identification of the forest and the hunter's *métier* with the active life also deserves closer scrutiny. In the old *Arcadia* Sidney suggests that woods may also be the *locus* for withdrawal and retreat:

O sweet woods, the delight of solitariness!. . .
 Here no treason is hid, veiled in innocence,
 Nor envy's snaky eye finds any harbour here,
 Nor flatterers' venomous insinuations.(122)

Here the woods provide retreat from exactly the same courtly vices that, in *The Lady of May*, the pastoral provides for Dorcas: envy and "servile flattery". Sharp distinctions between shepherds and foresters begin to fade, for on closer examination Sidney's interlude defies simple identification. Indeed it would be mistaken to think that Sidney ever intended anything simple. Neither Therion nor Espilus,

121. George Peele, *Polyhymnia*, l.112, in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.236. See also Peele, *An Eclogue Gratulatorie*, *ibid.* pp.224-230, in which Essex is seen to assume a pastoral persona himself. See also Spenser's *Pastorall Aeglogue*, ll.51-52: "When shalt thou see among thy shepheards all, / Any so sage, so perfect?" in *Astrophell*.
 122. Second Eclogues, *The Old Arcadia*, ed. Robertson, p.166.

neither forester nor shepherd is the obvious choice. The structure of *The Lady of May* insists on dualism, on the exact equality of the two lovers throughout. The decision would never have been so difficult had this not been the case. Sidney does not present Elizabeth with an obvious choice because that would have undermined his compliment to her powers of judgement. He tactfully, and perhaps ruefully, presents two equally viable propositions. As one critic writes, "Sidney's main purpose . . . is to emphasize the broader theme of choice itself, more than to suggest . . . a certain way of choosing".(123) Traditionally, the playful courtly *questione d'amore* resists decision and like the pastoral eclogue, concludes with the characters breaking up and going home. The decision that Sidney asks Elizabeth to give literally enacts her power of veto and compliments her on her unique powers of judgement. But ultimately *The Lady of May* is an interlude, a jest, a toyful piece which deliberately makes a joke of seriousness in the person of Rombus. It does not really matter which Elizabeth chooses, and I find it hard to believe that her decision had any great bearing on the ultimate outcome of the Alençon negotiations.

By making his play revolve around a courtly *questione d'amore* that Elizabeth would eventually arbitrate, Sidney hints at the possibility of a courtly resolution to a courtly problem. To emphasise this, he spares nothing to

123. Connell, *Sidney: The Maker's Mind*, p.84

expose the apparent impotence of humanist rhetoric in the courtly setting. Rombus, a burlesque parody of the humanist pedagogue, is a prototype of the "many scholars" Sidney attacked in the *Apology*. (124) His Latinisms make him a walking example of the ink-horn controversy, and his alliterative style - "delivered his dire doleful digging dignifying dart" - exemplifies Astrophil's despised "Dictionarie's methode". (125)

Rombus' "learned oration" presents a humanist alternative to the courtly fashion of discourse, but as such it proves hopelessly inadequate. He "moderates" two debates, but his fussy Ramism is both misplaced and misinformed. He informs Dorcas, for example, that "First you must divisionate your point, *quasi* you should cut a cheese into two particles - for thus I must uniform my speech to your obtuse conceptions; for *prius dividendum oratio antequam definiendum*" [p.27]. Yet in doing so he makes an elementary mistake, for in rhetorical argument the definition always comes first:

124. Sidney, *Apology*, ed. Shepherd, p.138. One suggested source for Rombus is Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* which includes an extravagant parody of pedantry in a joke letter from a "Lincolneshire man": "Ponderying, expending, and reuolutyng with my self your ingent affabilitee, and ingenious capacitee, for mundane affaires: I cannot but celebrate and extolle your magnificall dexteritee, aboue all other", ed. Bowers, p.184. For other prototypes, see Sir Thopas in Lyly's *Endimion*, Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Crispinus in Jonson's *The Poetaster*, and Hoskins' "tuff taffata Orator", in *Life, Letters, and Writings*, ed. Osborn, p.130.

125. *Astrophil and Stella*, 15, in *Poems*, ed. Ringler, p.172. For a detailed summary of the ink-horn debate, see Gregory Smith ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, i.lv-lx.

When we go about to expounde any matter, first we must beginne with the definicion As a definition therefore doeth declare, what a thing is, so the diuision sheweth, how many thinges are contained in the same. (126)

This is not Rombus' only error. He remembers (and misquotes) the adage "*Verbum sapienti satis est*", but fails to apply it to his own prolixity [p.23]. He is confused about "species" which are technically "the kinde, or sorte of any thyng (comprehended vnder a worde more vniuersall)". (127) Rombus mistakes them for simple divisions: the debate, he says, should be "subdivisionated into three equal species, either according to the penetrancy of their singing, or the meliority of their functions, or lastly the superancy of their merits" [p.27].

Most seriously of all, however, he gets the order of the oration wrong. In this he might be seen to anticipate Astrophil. (128) At the end of Rixus' speech Rombus quotes the May Lady's proposition again, going backwards in the argument, instead of giving the conclusion as technically required: "now of the proposed question, that was, whether the many great services and many great faults of Therion, or the few small services and no faults of Espilus, be to be

126. Thomas Wilson, *The rule of reason* (1567), fols.3^v, 14^v-15.

127. *ibid.* fol.4^v.

128. Astrophil puts *elocutio* before *inventio*. See Ringler ed., *Poems*, pp.458-459; and Thomas P. Roche Jr., "Astrophil and Stella: A Radical Reading", *Spenser Studies* 3 (1982) pp.139-191.

preferred".(129) He takes us back to the same point before the singing competition, demonstrating the impotence and circularity of his argument. This contrasts with Thomas Wilson's great encomium of rhetorical order:

I thinke meete to speake of framynge and placynge an Oration in order, that the matter beeyng aptely sattelde, and couched together: might better please the hearers, and with more ease be learned of all men. And the rather I am earnest in this behaulfe, because I knowe that al thynges stande by order, and without order nothyng can be. For by an order wee are borne, by an order wee lyue, and by an order wee make our end.(130)

Rombus does serve one useful purpose, however. He provides Elizabeth with an antitype. He takes upon himself what is essentially her role as judge, making his incompetence an even greater travesty of justice. As "the beautifullest lady", Elizabeth appears to restore the power of comparison in an act of interpretative choice. One critic regards her intervention at the end of the play as an act of rhetorical restoration. The play is full of characters who get this relation wrong, especially Rombus,

129. pp.29-30. The interlude opens with the *Entrance* (into the argument and the garden) and is followed by the Suitor's speech which corresponds to the *Narration*, "a plain and manifest poyntyng of the matter", demonstrated in her apparently plain style. The *Supplication* corresponds to the *Proposition*, "a pithie sentence, comprehendynge in a smale rume the some of the whole matter", which is followed by the fight between the parties, and the singing competition. This is the *Division*, "shewyng what we haue to saie, in our awne behalfe". See Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Bowers, pp.19-20.
 130. *ibid.* pp.177-178.

but Elizabeth's "act of balancing the right verba with the right res is justice".(131)

At the end of the debate Elizabeth opts for Espilus. The two rivals then join in a song made up, like all the other poems in the piece, of sestets. The triumphant shepherd compares his success with the god of his forester-rival, Sylvanus. Therion invokes the shepherds' god Pan who mistook Hercules for his bedfellow. Each takes his rival's god as his *exemplum*. The final stanza is divided into a quatrain and a couplet which the two share.(132)

The song can be interpreted in several ways. Critics have largely regarded it as a fiasco, Espilus and Therion palpably singing words prepared for each other in anticipation of a different result. Indeed, some have used this as evidence that *The Lady of May* was a catastrophic débâcle which Elizabeth, either wittingly or otherwise, got wrong.(133) But there is an alternative reading. The three stanzas could be designed to express reconciliation, just as the resolution of the Passion and Reason eclogue in the old *Arcadia* ended with a final couplet sung in unison by the disputing parties. It strikes me as odd that Orgel, in writing of *The Lady of May* as a masque, should not see its

131. Robert E. Stillman, "Justice and the "Good Word" in Sidney's *The Lady of May*", *Studies in English Literature* 24 (1984) pp.23-38, this quotation p.28.

132. The Helmingham Hall MS. version of the play ends with a prose Epilogue spoken by Rombus, reprinted in *Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Duncan-Jones and van Dorsten, pp.31-32.

133. See Hamilton, *Sidney*, p.24; Ringler ed., *Poems*, pp.361-363; Orgel, *Jonsonian Masque*, pp.53-55; Kalstone, *Sidney's Poetry*, p.46; Kimbrough, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp.67-68; and Smith, "Landscape with Figures", p.75.

outcome as a still moment of wonder, harmony, fusion and reconciliation, brought about by Elizabeth's intervention. This reading would elevate the piece to the status of the 'true' masque which by definition ends with an expression of wonder at the prince's autonomy, as it moves from *discordia* toward *concordia*.

Such an interpretation of Sidney's piece seems to promote courtly over humanist concerns. It suggests that *The Lady of May* represents his attempt to contain a "talkative tongue" within a rhetoric strictly controlled by the court. It is interesting to compare it with a pair of shows also presented to Elizabeth that year, when she visited Norwich on the royal progress in August.(134) These bear striking structural and thematic resemblances to *The Lady of May*. They are explicitly related to the Alençon match, and were directed at the group of French Ambassadors who were conducting the negotiations for the marriage, and who were present at Norwich for the occasion. Bernard Garter, one of the devisers of the entertainment, mentions "the Frenche Embassadors, whereof there werē iij".(135) We know for certain that two of these were Rambouillet and L'Aubespine, ambassadors of Henry III.(136)

134. There are two accounts of the visit: Ber[nard] Gar[ter], *The ioyfull receyuing of the Queenes maiestie into Norwich* (1578); and Thomas Churchyard, *A discourse of the queenes maiesties entertainement in Suffolk and Norffolk* (1578). Thomas Nashe later wrote slightly of the craftsmen's efforts as "a shew of knitters on a high stage placed for the nonce", *Nashe*, ed. McKerrow, iii.169.

135. Garter, *ioyfull receyuing*, sig.E1.

136. See *CSP: Spanish, 1568-1579*, pp.611-612.

The third may have been Mauvissière, the resident ambassador, or Bacqueville, one of Alençon's agents.

Both the entertainments to be discussed were devised by Thomas Churchyard. The first, a *Shew of Chastitie*, takes up the old controversy between courtly love and humanist learning which had preoccupied Lyly and Sidney.⁽¹³⁷⁾ The entertainment revolves around a traditional encomium of chastity, now infused with political significance as it represents Elizabeth unencumbered with a French husband. It begins with Venus and Cupid who, exiled from heaven for their lasciviousness, encounter a similarly cold reception on the earth. They are met by a Philosopher who spurns them on the grounds that they are merely a poetic chimera, "An ydle ground, whereon vayne Poets walke" [sig.D2]. Cupid flees to the Court for succour but, surprisingly, finds "neyther aunswere nor ayde" there, and he falls in with Wantoness and Riot instead [sig.D1]. In a dumbshow that follows, Dame Chasititie and her nymphs enter and despoil Cupid of his mischievous bow, handing it over to Elizabeth for safe-keeping. Chastitie is an aggressive, martial character, an upholder of wisdom and learning who is closer to Pallas or Astraea than Diana:

Dame Chastitie is she that winnes the field,
Whose breast is armd with thoughtes of vertues
rare,
Who to the fight doth bring no glittering shield,
But cleane conceytes, which pure and blessed are,
That strikes downe lust, and tames the wilfull
mind,

137. Churchyard, *A discourse*, sigs.D1-E2^v. All inset signature marks refer to this edition.

Maynteynes the iust, and holds vp learning both:
 And wisdom great, through me the Sages find,
 Philosophers, the louers of the troth . . .
 It quickes the wittes, and helps the art of
 penne,
 Yea all good giftes from Chastitie doth rise.
 [sigs.D2-D2^v]

Reinforcing the notion that wisdom and Chastity go hand in hand, the Philosopher reappears and gives Cupid a cross-examination. Divested of his paraphernalia, Cupid is no longer a god but only a boy. The Philosopher quizzes the child, teasingly asking him to prove his deity, but in the moralised framework of the masque, guarded by Chastity, Cupid is doomed to fail. He claims that his fame lies in story, but books are also part of the Philosopher's canon and he can apparently defeat Cupid at his own game. For the Philosopher Cupid represents not only lasciviousness, but bad art and indecorum:

And though fond men in Fables shew on you a
 flourish fine,
 Such geegawes grees not with good rules, nor holds
 on gifts deuine. [sig.D3^v]

The defeated Cupid is spirited away by Wantoness and Riot, leaving the Philosopher to address the Queen, while Chastitie and her nymphs re-enter softly to the sound of music. The Philosopher presents Venus and her son as a vignette of folly and vice, but his deconstruction turns into a blanket attack on metaphor:

Now world may iudge what fables are, & what vain
 gods ther be,
 What names and titles fondlings giue, to them,
 likewise you see,

And that one God alone doth rule, the rest no
 vertue showe,
 Vayne Venus and blind Cupid both, and all the
 ragment rowe
 And rabble of Gods, are fayned things . . .
 [sig.E1]

Good reading, proper understanding and the correct interpretation of allegory are the humanist solutions to "bawdy books", already seen in the attempts of pedagogues and translators to circumscribe their readers' interpretation of such material.

Churchyard revives this question of rhetorical propriety in a second masque, *Manhode and Dezarte*. (138) In the end it was cancelled on account of rain and the courtly audience were spared a degree of repetitiveness. But had it been performed, they would have recognised at once its parallels with *The Lady of May*:

And first and formest you must conceiue, that the
 Shew of MANHODE was inuented to be playde in a
 Garden, or wheresoeuer had bene found a
 conueniente place, the Prince then being in
 presence. And vnto hir Highnesse shoulde there
 haue come a Lady called *Beautie*, humbly on knees,
 requiring ayde and succoure, or else iudgemente,
 in a matter disputable, and in greate
 controuersie, vpon whose sute and humble
 intercession, the disputation was to beginne.
 [sig.F1]

The debate revolves around the suits of three rivals for Lady Beauty's hand: Manhode, Dezarte and Good Fauour. She, however, remains loyal to Good Fortune, who, having defeated the other three in argument and battle, finally claims her as his.

138. *ibid.* sigs.E3^v-G2.

The rivals make their case to Beauty in a series of orations. Manhode offers martial valour: a woman should choose someone who can protect her; Good Fauour gives a Platonic set-piece on beauty being Nature's greatest achievement and gift; Dezarte, in the guise of a melancholy lover, is rather like Espilus in *The Lady of May*, and can only offer his penned verses. Their somewhat feeble arguments are vigorously deconstructed by Good Fortune, who dismisses Manhode, for example, in terms that recall Sidney's Rombus:

Another tels a penned tale by rote,
Bedeckt and fylde with ynckhorne tearmes ynow.
[sig.F4^v]

Above all, Good Fortune proposes a new rhetorical rigour. Dismissing their time-wasting dispute, he offers instead the power of Reason, "Vnto whose troth, your weake discourse shall yeeld" [sig.F4^v]. Exactly as the Philosopher attacked Love as a feigned thing in Churchyard's previous masque, Good Fortune here designates his rivals as meaningless fictions: "And each of them are seene in Storyes throw".(139)

139. sig.F4^v. The debate between love and learning was central to the Protestant cause. In 1581 Anthony Munday, one of Leicester's protégés, produced a pamphlet called *A courtly controuersie, betweene looue and learning*, in which a Lady and a Scholar argue the respective merits of each. The lady wins the case for love, but only by proving that the origin and source of all love is God alone. This tract heralded a particularly intense campaign of anti-Catholic propaganda by Munday on Leicester's behalf. See Rosenberg, *Leicester, Patron of Letters*, p.233 ff.

The shows by Sidney and Churchyard, for all their differences, seem agreed on one thing: Elizabeth's freedom of choice, her ability to exercise judgement, her power to wield Cupid's bow herself. But they reflect different approaches to the same problem. Churchyard presents the humanist ideals of rhetorical decorum by hinting that Elizabeth (as Chastity or Beauty) is herself a paradigm of such virtuosity. Sidney, on the other hand, remains within the circuit of Ascham's "courtly courtesies"; "limited to a whisp'ring note, the lament of a courtier", he asks her to decide an issue that presents itself, at first sight, as a purely courtly debate.(140)

140. *The Old Arcadia*, ed. Robertson, p.86.

CHAPTER FOUR

"VERTUOUS DESIRE": COURTSHIP at COURT

Desire, though thou my old companion art,
 And oft so clings to my pure Love, that I
 One from the other scarcely can descrie,
 While each doth blow the fier of my hart;
 Now from thy fellowship I needs must part.(1)

Introduction

The previous chapter considered various stratagems that were open to Renaissance writers to legitimise sexual desire. It was suggested that a general *mis en discours* of sex - exemplified by the courtly *questione d'amore* - was symptomatic of what has been seen as a civilised internalisation of the affects. Open-ended, generically inconclusive debates conflicted with humanist rhetorical ideals - the persuasion of a "contrary disputer" - but they could be used to contain desire, as some of Lyly's heroines showed. The "bolder talking of this and that" which Ascham predicted would end in lust could also be shown to forestall it, with a secondary gain in the pleasure of postponed delight.

The present chapter proposes a much more specific inquiry. It considers the means by which poets and courtiers at the court of Elizabeth I used a vocabulary of sexual desire to achieve non-sexual ends. That is, how

1. *Astrophil and Stella*, 72, in *Poems*, ed. Ringler, p.202.

courtship's strategically rhetorical nature manifested itself in practice. This has already been touched on, to some extent, by looking at Sidney's *Lady of May*. But the present section shifts away from humanist concerns to a subject more exclusively courtly: pageants presented at court by courtiers or foreign princes, and in which royalty itself was known to take part.⁽²⁾ Indeed, it limits itself even more strictly by focusing narrowly on allegorical representations of Desire within such shows. This may smack of undue specialisation, but the figure of Desire appears recurrently in pageants throughout the period, and seems, for the purposes of this study, to epitomise the situation of courtship at court. In earlier Henrician shows, Desire was an overtly sexual figure, and a masque-persona often adopted by Henry VIII himself. But at the court of Elizabeth Desire became a more problematic individual. Joyous celebrations of Henry's libido gave way to more restrained representations in which Desire was stripped of his erotic stirrings and made a legitimate, even respectable individual. In the course of her reign, Elizabeth was confronted with figures of Desire which claimed her approval if not sanction. "Vertuous desire"

2. For general studies of court pageants, see Jean Jacquot ed., *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance* (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris; 1959-1975) 3 vols.; Frances A. Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (Warburg Institute, London; 1959) and *Astraea; Strong, Splendour at Court, Art and Power, and The Cult of Elizabeth*; Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*; and David M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry 1558-1642* (Edward Arnold, London; 1971). For reference, see Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*.

advises Apollo in a pageant at Norwich in 1578, "vertuous Desire" and "honourable Desire" make an appearance in *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, a tournament held in 1581, and the oxymoronic "chast desires" appear in an entertainment at Cowdray in 1591.⁽³⁾ This emasculation of Desire served to transform a sexual vocabulary into a language of loyalty, honour and reverence that was not only more appropriate in addressing a queen. It was also coincident in upholding the reversed power-relations which a female sovereignty occasioned.

Thus legitimised, Desire becomes an archetype for the kind of process I hope to describe. Cupid, a frivolous courtly figure found in those otiose texts beloved of court readers and presented with all the playful ephemerality of court shows, becomes a vehicle for saying something much more serious. He becomes a means of expressing loyalty, obedience, and sometimes criticism to the crown, but more, he provides the courtiers with a means of analysing the very expression open to them and the reasons for its constraint. It becomes a way not only of advising the prince, but also of exploring the extents and limits of such delicate rhetorical transactions.

i. Early Shows

3. Garter, *The ioyfull receyuing of the Queenes maiestie into Norwich*, sig.E2^v. Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, pp.67, 89.

This account takes as its starting point a hymeneal masque presented by Henry VII at Westminster Hall on Friday 19 November 1501, to celebrate the marriage of Prince Arthur to Katherine of Aragon.(4) The show was the culmination of the civic splendours mounted in London to welcome the bride into the city. It comprised a series of three pageants, the first being a castle drawn on wheels by heraldic beasts to the accompaniment of four singing children. In addition "There were w^tin this Castell, disguysid, viii goodly and fresshe ladies, lokyng owt of the wyndowes of the same", four dressed in the English fashion, four in the Spanish, evoking the heraldic castle of Castile. This pageant car was immediately followed by the second device of a ship "havyng her mastys, toppys, saylys, her taclyng, and all other app^{<ur>}ten^{<au>}ns necessary unto a semely vessell". The ship carried a figure representing the "P^{<ri>}ncess of Hispayne" and her two emissaries, Hope and Desire:

Owte and from the seid shippe descendid down by a ledder two weelbeseen and goodly p^{<er>}sons, callyng themself Hope and Desire, passyng toward the rehersid castell, w^t their baners in maner and forme as ambassadours from Knights of the Mownte of Love unto the ladies w^tin the castell.(5)

As emissaries of the Princess, Hope and Desire woo the castle-bound ladies but the latter "gave their final answeare

4. College of Arms MS 1st M. 13, fols. 52^v-53^v. For summaries and accounts of the pageant, see Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300 to 1660* (Routledge, London; 1959-1972, 2nd ed. 1980-1981) 3 vols. i.208-209; Anglo, *Spectacle*, pp.102-103; and Gordon Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (Leiden University Press, The Hague; 1977) pp.102-105.
5. See Wickham, *Early English Stages*, i.208-209.

of utterly refuse knowledge of any such company". Thereupon the ambassadors threaten assault and this heralds the entry of a third pageant "in liknes of a great hill", from which eight Knights of Love alight "with moch malés and curvagyous myend", to lay siege to the castle. Their assault is speedily accomplished "in such wise that the ladies, yeldyng themselvys, descendid from the seid castell" and the whole concluded with a dance, which, as Thomas Elyot wrote, commonly "signified matrimonie".(6)

Desire's appearance in this masque draws on a rich, medieval tradition. The motif of the castle-of-love under siege is mixed, combining the erotic overtones of lust's triumph over chastity, with religious readings, such as those explored by Grosseteste or by the *Ancrene Riwe*.(7) The deviser of this early sixteenth century masque exploits this tradition to the full, combining the erotic associations of Desire with political significance.(8) The spectacle may well have harked back to previous Franco-Burgundian extravaganzas, but it also served an allegorical purpose. As one critic puts it, the ship of England portrayed "the prosaic, business-like ambassadors who had travelled ceaselessly between England and Spain to negotiate

6. See Wickham, *ibid.* i.209; Anglo, *Spectacle*, p.103; and Elyot, *The Governor*, ed. Croft, i.233.

7. See R. S. Loomis, "The Allegorical Siege in the Art of the Middle Ages", *American Journal of Archaeology* 2nd series 23 (1919) pp.255-269.

8. On William Cornish as the probable deviser of the show, see Anglo, "William Cornish in a Play, Pageants, Prison, and Politics", *Review of English Studies* ns.10 (1959) pp.347-360, esp. pp.350-353; and Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, pp.175-177.

the marriage" in a kind of romantic transformation.(9)
Desire becomes an *ambassador* for love.

A decade later Arthur was dead and Katherine the wife of her brother-in-law, Henry. In 1511 a series of lavish tournaments were mounted to celebrate the birth of a son to the King and Queen.(10) The reappearance of Desire in this show not only differs from his relatively polite figuration in 1501, but signals an identification that Henry himself was to adopt intermittently throughout the reign.

A series of tournaments were involved, taking place at Westminster on the 12 and 13 February, 1511. The theme for the combat was first stated in an allegorical challenge from a Queen, *Noble Renome*, of a kingdom named *Ceure noble*. Hearing the joyful news of the prince's birth, she sends four knights to perform feats of arms, all men of the court in allegorical disguise. *Ceure loyall* was Henry himself, *Valliaunt desyre* Sir Thomas Knyvet, *Bone voloyr* Sir William Courtenay, and *Joyous panser* Sir Edward Neville. On the first day the challengers entered with a pageant car disguised as a forest "with rockes, hilles and dales, with diuers sundrie trees, floures, hathornes, ferne and grasse"

9. Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, p.102. Kipling also notes that while the amorous siege of medieval tradition concerns the relation of lust and chastity, the 1501 show has a different emphasis: "Cornish's disguising represents moral victory rather than erotic surrender . . . and the matrimonial dance . . . symbolizes the harmony of international peace as well as the concord of fulfilled romantic love", *ibid.* p.105.

10. See Wickham, *Early English Stages*, i.217-218; Anglo, *Spectacle*, pp.111-112, and Anglo ed., *The Great Tournament Roll of Westminster* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1968).

together with foresters and wild men. The Answerers' "Sundry pagentis and goodly devycis" are not recorded, but spectacular tilting followed in which Thomas Knyvet, as *Valliaunt desyre*, seems to have excelled.(11) The second day continued the tilting, and later that evening the King and Queen entertained resident ambassadors at the White Hall. This show consisted of a huge device representing "the golldyn arber in the arche yerd of plesyr" within which sat six ladies, patriotically dressed in white and green, the Tudor colours, and decorated with the letters H and K in gold. Accompanying them were six knights three of whom had been challengers in the tournament, Henry, Knyvet and Neville. All were dazzlingly arrayed and "every persone had his name in letters of massy gold". Knyvet therefore appeared with images of his name *VALLANT DESYR* distributed freely all over his garments, although, as Anglo points out, it was probably no accident that his cod-piece was adorned with the single word *DESYR*.(12)

The frankly sexual meaning of desire is given a prominence in this pageant unusual elsewhere, presumably to celebrate Henry's prowess in fathering an heir. The prince who was the joyful subject of these festivities proved tragically short-lived, but the same was not true of Desire. In a manuscript song-book record remains of another possible disguising in which that allegorical persona appeared. It

11. "and for this day by the quene to valliant desir for challenger and best doer had the price", *ibid.* p.53.

12. *ibid.* p.56.

describes how a "knyght knokett at the castell gate" but is refused entry by the portress, called Strangeness. The Knight, who is "Desyre", is counselled to write a petition to his lady, which "Kyndnes" and "Pyte" promise to deliver. The outcome of the encounter remains unknown - "Thus how thay dyd we cannot say - / We left them ther and went ower way" - but Stevens suggests that the verses "read like the 'story' of a disguising", and he dates the manuscript around 1515.(13) The fiction was clearly a popular one in court circles. In June 1512, Henry entered the lists as a "knight armed at all peces" within a fountain, accompanied by "ladies all in White and Red silke, set vpon Coursers trapped in thesame suite".(14) Red and white were the traditional colours of desire.

Desire made another appearance at an intriguing show, mounted by Cardinal Wolsey on Shrove Tuesday 1522, and presented to the Imperial ambassadors. It involved another pageant assault, this time of the "Schatew Vert", a timber castle with three green towers. Each of these flew a banner "one . . . was of iii. rent hartes, the other was a ladies hand gripyng a mans harte, the third banner was a ladies hand turnyng a mannes hart". Imprisoned within the castle were eight women, *Beautie*, *Honor*, *Perseueraunce*, *Kyndnes*, *Constance*, *Bountie*, *Mercie* and *Pitie*, played by eight court ladies including Princess Mary, the French Queen

13. Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*, text p.402, dating p.4.

14. See Anglo, *Spectacle*, pp.112-113.

and Anne Boleyn. They are guarded by a further eight women who represent Love's other nature: *Dangier*, *Disdain*, *Gelousie*, *Vnkyndenes*, *Scorne*, *Malebouche*, *Straungenes*, and one other, unnamed. To secure the release of the imprisoned ladies, eight knights enter as *Amorus*, *Noblenes*, *Youth*, *Attendaunce*, *Loyaltie*, *Pleasure*, *Gentlenes*, and *Libertie*. Predictably, the company was led by Henry, disguised as *Ardent Desire*, and dressed "all in crimosin sattin with burnyng flames of gold".(15)

Meeting with the recalcitrance of *Scorne* and *Disdain*, "*Desire* saied the ladies should be wonne and came and encoraged the knightes". A mock siege follows in which *Scorne* and *Disdain* "stubbernely defended them with boows and balles". They are eventually routed by the knights, but the device is not as simple as it first seems. For two sieges are happening simultaneously. The deviser of the masque figures both the desirable and the scornful aspects of love. While *Scorne* and *Disdain* fight with weapons, *Beautie* and the other ladies also "defended the castle". Their rose-water and comfits are met with dates, oranges "and other fruites made for pleasure".(16) What appears to be a simple and conventional allegorical siege therefore reveals a devious stratagem. The knights assault the recalcitrant coyness of *Scorne*, but they also challenge chastity (*Beautie* and her companions are symbolically dressed in white). The momentum of the pageant suggests

15. Hall, *Chronicle*, p.631; Anglo, *Spectacle*, pp.120-121.

16. Hall, *Chronicle*, p.631.

that Ardent Desire's defeat of Scorne is just and entirely praiseworthy. But it also seems to sanction his conquest of Beautie, representing as it does, lust's dominion over chastity, and, perhaps, Henry's promised triumph over Anne.

To illustrate the immediate transformation of Desire in the court of a female monarch one might turn to a series of pageants - prepared but not performed - for a projected meeting between Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots at Nottingham Castle in 1562.(17) The show as planned presents an allegory of Peace in a series of three masques, to extend over three days.(18) On the first day two ladies enter, as Prudentia and Temperantia, mounted upon heraldic beasts, the golden and red lions of England and Scotland. They are preceded by the goddess Pallas, who enters on a unicorn bearing a banner of two clasped hands, a symbol of *concordia*. Together, Prudentia (Elizabeth) and Temperantia

17. Allegorical representations of desire were not abundant during the reign of the boy-king, Edward VI. The only possible exception lies in the confusing record of a "Tryvmph of Cupide" on Twelfth Night 1552. This was to include Venus on a "chaire trivmfall" and Cupid with "a payre of winges of gold / with bow and arowes / his eyes bended". The sketchy account suggests a *débat* in which Cupid is defended by his mother, and which features characters who might have been straight out of a Henrician disguising: two ladies, Ydelnes and Dalyance, and a herald, "cucœur ardent", dressed in "a fayre short garment and a cote armour painted with burning hartes persed with dartes", also perhaps, in red and white. See Albert Feuillerat ed., *Documents Relating to the Revels at Court in the Time of King Edward VI and Queen Mary* (Materialen 44, Louvain; 1914) pp.93-95, 122; and Anglo, *Spectacle*, pp.312-314.

18. The meeting between the Queens, which was to have taken place in May - July, was indefinitely postponed. The text of the masques is preserved in one of the Landsdowne MSS., and is reprinted in MSC, I.ii., pp.144-148.

(Mary) imprison Discord and False Report. These evil figures are to be guarded by the jealous gaoler, Argus, while the two ladies are rewarded with the promise of life in the Court of Plenty, with its guardian, Lady Peace. This Court boasts two porters, Ardent desire and Perpetuitie:

Signifyinge that by ardent desyer, and perpetuitie, perpetuall peace and tranquillitie maye be hadd & kept throughe the hole worlde.(19)

On the third day, the peace is shattered by the intrusion of Disdain and Malice, servants of Pluto. They challenge the ladies' action and demand either the release of Discord and False Report or the ransom of lady Peace. The two evil spirits are eventually defeated by Hercules, or Valiant Courage, who depends for his success on the allegorical armour which the Queens give him: a grand-garde inscribed "Ever", and a sword engraved "Never", signifying "that those ij Ladies haue professed that peace shall ever dwell wth them, and Never departe from them".(20)

The Desire who appears in this show is a marginalised and emasculated figure very different from his counterpart in Henrician disguisings. It is Valiant Courage, not Desire, who overcomes the forces of evil, while the latter is stripped of all erotic stirrings, and relegated to a

19. *ibid.* p.146.

20. *ibid.* p.147. Several elements from these abortive masques reappear in a show performed before Elizabeth and the duc de Montmorency in 1572, which also included the figures of Argus, Discord and lady Peace. See Feuillerat ed., *Documents of the Revels: Elizabeth*, pp.153, 157-159.

porter's job, albeit as a loyal and faithful servant. As such, Desire sets the trend for iconographic representations throughout Elizabeth's reign, although his erotic attributes were never wholly suppressed. For, as a mixture of sexual fervour and loyal service, he enabled courtiers to deal with one of the paradoxes of court life: the need to flatter the Queen as a woman, but not desire her as a sexual object.

ii. Robert Dudley's Shows

Allegories of desire were to prove particularly relevant at the beginning of the reign as a means of articulating national anxiety over the question of Elizabeth's marriage and the succession. At the forefront of these sensitive probings was Robert Dudley, the Queen's long-time favourite. The following section considers two such allegories which he presented to Elizabeth in 1562 and 1575. It is difficult to gauge how far the matrimonial ambitions of an individual courtier could express themselves openly in such devices. On another occasion, for example, Dudley presented Elizabeth with what seems to have been a fairly transparent masque, "founded on the question of marriage, discussed between Juno and Diana".⁽²¹⁾ Elizabeth's reponse, a critical one according to the Spanish ambassador, was perhaps predictable, although it is impossible to draw any conclusions from the largely subjective interpretation of ambassadorial despatches. In

21. *CSP: Spanish, 1558-1567*, p.404.

the shows under discussion, on the other hand, Dudley seems to have exploited the ambiguities already inherent in the figure of Desire, to make a proposal far more subtle than a mere declaration of love. He used it to court Elizabeth in a way more appropriate and acceptable to her.

a. The Inner Temple Revels

In 1562 Robert Dudley, then Master of the Horse, took part in a dramatised allegory of Desire and Beauty. This formed part of a series of dramatic pieces which had an urgent bearing on the issue of the succession. The first was *Gorboduc*, a play which explores the dangers of a divided kingdom. The second, presented by the men of the Inner Temple, was a masque in which Dudley appeared as the Templars' Christmas Prince.⁽²²⁾ The allegory of Desire is embedded in the text of this masque, both of which survive only as a reported narrative in Gerard Legh's popular *Accedens of armory*.⁽²³⁾

Legh's account takes the form of a dialogue between G, a "Herehaught" and L, a "Caligat knight". The former recounts events at the Inner Temple as he witnessed them. The Temple's patroness is Pallas, goddess of learning and of

22. See Marie Axton, "Robert Dudley and the Inner Temple Revels", *Historical Journal* 13 (1970) pp.365-378; "The Tudor mask and Elizabethan court drama" in *English Drama: Forms and Development: Essays in Honour of Muriel Clara Bradbrook*, ed. M. Axton and R. Williams (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1977) pp.24-47; and *The Queen's Two Bodies*, pp.39-48.

23. Gerard Legh, *The accedens of armory* (1562), fols.202^v -

225. All inset folio numbers refer to this edition.

warfare, and symbol, as Bacon was later to show, of "how kings are to make use of their counsel of state".(24) His curiosity whetted, G visits the Temple, and is welcomed there by the king of arms, Prince Pallaphilos - Dudley's role. In the masque, Pallaphilos shows G the office of arms supervised by a "Caligate knight named diligence" and guarded by the pursuevant "Trustye" and a messenger "Swifte" [fols.206-206^v].

It is at this point that the allegory of Desire begins. Walking from the Temple to the palace, Pallaphilos regales G with a tale closely based on Stephen Hawes' *Passeytyme of Pleasure*, a long narrative poem in which "graunde Amoure", our Desire, falls in love with, and wins, "la belle pucelle", our Beauty. In the Revels allegory, Desire is informed of Beauty by Eolus, "ye breth of fame" [fol.207]. He seeks to win her, and, together with his companions Governance and Grace, he enters the Tower of Doctrine where he is prepared for the amorous siege by learning the arts and sciences. While getting wisdom in the Tower of Solace, he sees and falls in love with Dame Beauty, but his courtship is hampered by Danger, a coy lady who repulses him. The figure of Counsel appears at this juncture, to comfort him with the *ars amandi*, drawing on a literary tradition of "Exaumples, a thousande" [fol.209]. Further initiation is called for, however, if Desire is to gain his lady. At the House of Chivalry he is dubbed a knight by

24. Bacon, "Of Counsel", in Bacon, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, vi.424.

Honour, with an elaborate ceremonial arming and allegorical armour: "Awdacitee bare his helme, Curraige the brestplate, Speede helde his spurres. And Trouth gaue him y^e charge" [fol.210]. Thus armed, he kills the pseudo-Gorgon, a nine-headed monster representing ^{the} courtly vices of dissimulation, misreport, envy, detraction, and so forth. Desire is finally rewarded with his lady, but his greatest achievement is not the success of his love. It is his epitaph, written in heaven by Memory and Fame and triumphantly preserved by Eternity.

By the end of the tale, Pallaphilos and G have arrived at the palace and there ^{they} witness the prince's banquet, an exercise in chivalric protocol which was "serued after moste auncient order of the Iland" [fol.213^v]. At its end, Pallaphilos introduces to his prince a caligate knight (possibly Diligence, keeper of the library, although Legh does not specify this) to be initiated into the chivalric order of Pegasus, a romantic version of the Garter. His request is granted by the prince, and Pallaphilos fetches a further twenty-four knights to be dubbed in what is clearly a romantic rendering of the Garter ceremony. Pallaphilos then delivers a long speech on "thonour of thorder", the sanctity of the knights' loyalty to each other and obedience to their prince [fol.215]. He explains the order's paraphernalia, including the "targe" of Pallas, depicting the Gorgon's head, which is to be given to each knight. He presents the knights to the prince in an allegorical arming

ceremony, and the newly-dubbed knights proceed to offer a sacrifice to Pallas.

The intimate relation between the two parts of the masque, the allegory of Desire and the knighting ceremony that follows, makes it impossible to judge them in isolation. Points of comparison between Desire and the initiate knights effectively recast the former, and complicate an otherwise simple reading of his conquest of Beauty. Perhaps the first of these parallels lies in the concept of Fame. Desire is inspired by Fame at the outset and is rewarded with Fame's epitaph at the end. Similarly, the twenty-five initiate knights are welcomed into the order of Pegasus and are reminded of their duty to "auncient Fame" and are enjoined to preserve their "liuing fame" [fols.217, 223^v]. Pallaphilos declares that fame alone is eternal, and the only honourable motive in dynastic or epic ambition. In his account, Legh takes his representation of Fame from Book III of Chaucer's *House of Fame*, although in Hawes' *Passetyme of Pleasure* she appears at beginning and end as a "lady / with fyry flame / Of brennyng tongues", and a woodcut in the 1555 edition gives a vivid illustration.⁽²⁵⁾ One should not be misled by multiple different iconographic representations of Fame which already had a long tradition in Renaissance texts. In Petrarch's *I Trionfi*, for instance, Fame's chariot is drawn by Pegasus, and Elizabeth is herself so framed in *A Revelation of the True Minerva*:

25. Hawes, *Passetyme of Pleasure*, ll.176-177, ed. Mead, p.11. The woodcut is reproduced p.7.

"There in on stately throne a royall Queene, / A pransing Pegasus stood by the dame, / And on his backe sat euerlasting fame".(26) In Legh's account, Fame is not only the breath of wind, Eolus, but a writer of epitaphs who, with her servant Memory, anticipates "Fames eternall beadroll" in *The Faerie Queene*.(27)

A second point of comparison between Desire and the twenty-five knights is their mutual attainment of wisdom. Desire is encouraged to by Congruity (dame Grammar in the source-text) who instructs him "in all thorders of their house" [fols.207^v-208], and by Counsel, who tells him that

wisdome, whose swaye is suche in thys courte, that deynty Danger, with her pewmate Fortune, dare not appeare in hys presence, For he lyfteth aloft, suche as to hym seemeth good, and treadeth downe theyr darlynges like weakelinges, voyde of any refuge. Therefore, whoso will pleasure winne, let him with wisdom first beginne. [fols.208-208^v]

26. Thomas Blennerhasset, *A Revelation of the True Minerva* (1582), ed. Josephine Waters Bennett (Scholars' Facsimiles, New York; 1941) sig.A4.

27. *The Faerie Queene*, IV.ii.32. See also an illuminated "palace of Fame" in the Burgundian style, at the 1501 wedding pageant for Arthur and Katherine of Aragon, Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, pp.106-108; at a tournament in Kennington, May 1507, a "noble howse of fame" made an appearance, while a "shippe vnder sayle" called Fame appeared in a joust at Greenwich four years later, see Kipling, "The Queen of May's Joust at Kennington and the Justes of the Moneths of May and June", *Notes and Queries* 229 (1984) pp.158-162, and Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, p.107; at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, a speaking Pegasus entered as a harbinger of universal peace, see Anglo, *Spectacle*, p.134; and at the royal progress to Bristol in 1574, Elizabeth was met by the mercurial figure of "Flying Faem", see Thomas Churchyard, *The Whole Order howe oure Soueraigne Ladye Queene Elizabeth, was receyued into the Citie of Bristow*, in *The firste parte of Churchyardes chippes* (1575), fol.100^v.

Honour allows him to be dubbed a knight only after "enquirie . . . of his . . . wisdom" [fol.210]. If Desire is exhorted to wisdom, so too are the twenty-five kinghts of the Order of Pegasus. The Temple has already been introduced as the seat of learning, a latterday Helicon fit for "Pallas Muses" [fol.203]. The "liberall Sciences flowing so abundantlye" there compare with the "artes liberall" taught to Desire by Congruity in the Tower of Doctrine [fols.204, 207^v].

The third and perhaps most obvious parallel between the two parts of the masque lies in chivalry. Desire's abasement before Honour at the House of Chivalry closely resembles the caligate knight's presentation to the prince. Desire is welcomed into a "felowshippe of Knighthoode" and the twenty-five initiates into "so honorable a felowship" [fols.210, 216^v]. There are obvious parallels between the two ceremonial arming passages. Desire is dubbed by Due Desart, "Curraige the brestplate, Speede helde his spurres" [fol.210]. One might compare the individual arming of the knights:

Then was he lykewyse Armed wyth the brest plate of Currage. That willingly he should pursue vice, fearing no perill, being armed with vertue. After to him was deliuered the Targe of Pallas, for his defence . . . Then was he gyrt with y^e sword of Iustice, to measure by deserte, and cutte short the monstrous head of growing Pride. Then were deliuered to him, the Spurres of spede, to pricke therewith the horse of fame. [fol.224]

This closely repeats the formulaic arming of Desire. His defeat of the nine-headed monster is echoed in the knights'

exhortation to defeat "the monstrous head of growing Pride", while both end by making sacrifice to Pallas.

Axton suggests that the two halves of the Inner Temple Revels conflate two parts of the Perseus myth, his conquest of the Gorgon and his marriage to Andromeda.⁽²⁸⁾ Pallas punishes the lust of Medusa but rewards Perseus with Andromeda. This dual role, she suggests, reflects the idea of the Queen's two bodies: Pallas represents Elizabeth in her political role, Dame Beauty in her capacity as a woman to be wooed and won. Legh's narrative begins with Medusa's blasphemous adultery with Neptune in Pallas' temple and her subsequent metamorphosis into the Gorgon. It ends with the twenty-five knights' consecration to Pallas and their dedication to her cause. Yet the middle is interrupted by the Ovidian 'ending' of the Andromeda story, in Desire's successful conquest of Beauty.

Yet the conflation is not a simple one. Although his conquest of Beauty is assured, Desire's status as a courtly lover is severely compromised by the other half of the myth. Like Hawes, Pallaphilos cuts short Desire's "ioyfull lyfe" as Beauty's lover with unseemly haste, in order to move on to his apotheosis in the Chamber of Felicity [fol.210^v]. Indeed, Desire ends transmuted from a courtly lover intent on winning Beauty into a courtly version of the Pauline *miles Christi*: "a knight vanquishing, the deuill, the worlde, and the Fleshe. whose vertue, shall liue w^t me

28. Axton, "Dudley and the Inner Temple Revels", pp.370-372.

Eternitie, in sight of the hyghest".(29) Moreover, there are echoes of dame Beauty to be found in Legh's account of the monstrous Gorgon, as depicted on the "targe" of Pallas. The lexical parallels cannot be ignored. Desire begins, for example, with a survey of "dame natures deckinges" and praises Beauty as "all ornamentes of Nature" [fols.207, 209]. Legh later describes the shamed and metamorphosed Medusa in terms too similar for comfort: "she was by y^e goddes decree for her so foul a faut, berefte of all dame Bewties shape, with euerye comely ornament of Natures deckinge" [fols.221-221^v]. Counsel tells Desire that when his suit succeeds, "Then shall ye see the glyding lokes steale foorth, and shewe themselues the Messengers of loue", yet it is precisely Medusa's "gliding eye framed to fansy amorse luste, [that] turned was to wan and deadly beholding" [fols.209, 221^v]. Her image on Pallas' shield serves to defeat such "monstres of nature" but it remains unclear whether Desire himself should be included amongst such monstrosities for winning Beauty himself [fol.222].

Beauty's precarious similarity to the Gorgon would be somewhat out of place in a straightforward tale of successful courtship, and this suggests that the allegory of Desire cannot be read as a simple tale of this kind. This

29. fol.211^v. On this triadic temptation, which possibly derives from I John 2.16, see Donald R. Howard, *The Three Temptations: Medieval Man in Search of the World* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1966); and Patrick Cullen, *Infernal triad: the flesh, the world, and the Devil in Spenser and Milton* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1974).

is confirmed by the incongruity of Counsel's *ars amandi*. Having urged Desire to attain wisdom, Counsel seems to slip unwittingly into a panderous mode, and it is here that Legh is closest to his source-text. Counsel's siege metaphor - "for suerlye Oportunitie, and tyme, ouerthroweth strongest Towers" - comes straight from Hawes - "No castell can be / of so grete a strength / Yf that there be / a sure syege to it layde". Legh quotes *verbatim* from Hawes the line "A womans guyse / is euermore to delaye".(30) Of his "Examples a thousande", Counsel takes both Troilus and Ponthus from Hawes, where both are presented as *exempla* of long-suffering, finally rewarded lovers. Here Counsel makes an interesting deviation from the source: "Let Troylus bee to you herein a Myrrour, how oft he languished wrapt in Venus bandes, yet Time obtained loue of *thuntrue Creside*" [fol.208^v, my italics]. This more sophisticated interpretation of Chaucer's poem strikes a somewhat discordant note. If Criseyde is "untrue" it necessarily detracts from Troilus' achievement, and reflects equally badly on Desire's proposed conquest of Beauty. The narrator preempts a simple reading. Perhaps he had in mind Troilus' own apotheosis among the stars, as Desire in the Chamber of Felicity and the knights in their "liuing fame".

The purpose of these aspersions on Beauty, liable to turn into the Gorgon at any time, is to underplay Desire's

30. Hawes, *Passetyme of Pleasure*, ll.1940-1941, 1939, ed. Mead, pp.76, 75. Contrast Legh, *Accedens*, fol.209^v: "The womanly gwise is euermore, to delaye".

role as a courtly lover (although his success is assured) and to promote his role as a loyal knight. In Hawes, Amour is given a twenty-page lecture on the function of rhetoric. In the Revels, one of the problems explored seems to be how desire might most properly and most politically be expressed. Desire triumphs in love, but has still to find a suitable mode of expression. It remains a matter for doubt whether Desire can be rendered respectable so easily. It is difficult even to define Desire precisely - the Platonic desire for beauty, "desirous tacquaynt himself with her qualities", whose marriage "satisfied his desire"; or the desire for honour as "this desirous gentleman", "shewinge hys long desyer to see hys maiestye", Honour [fols.208, 210^v, 210]. Perhaps the closest the masque gets to a decorous language of desire is in the metaphysical union of the twenty-five knights with their prince, with its echoes of the marriage service:

That he of you, and you of hym, being seuerall members, maye create and conioyne, one vnseparable body, as the whole may support the partes, eche part seruyng hys place to vpholde the whole. For thinges deuyded, cary theyr onely strength, which being together, double theyr enduring. This vnion a knot indissoluble, lynked with your consentes in so honorable a felowship, is a sure shielde to this estate, agaynst all throwes of Fortune. [fol.216^v]

The Inner Temple Revels seem designed to show Elizabeth that love and loyalty were not incompatible, but that, indeed, they shared a vocabulary of desire. The show's two female figures - Beauty and Pallas - combined, it has been

suggested, the political and private bodies of the Queen. But the presentation of Desire as a successful courtly lover and as a loyal, obedient knight dedicated to the patron-goddess Pallas, also fused the two 'bodies' of Dudley: the humble subject and the prospective lover.

The figure of Pallas, as a force counter to the demands of courtly love and a representative of honour, learning and chastity, would already have been familiar to Dudley's courtly audience. The goddess appeared in one of the tournaments mounted to celebrate the coronation of Henry VIII in 1509.⁽³¹⁾ This masque, which began with the entry of Pallas with her crystalline shield, figured the triumph of her knights over the forces of courtly love. She presented Henry with a group of six challenging knights called "her scholars, who wer desirous to serue hym, to the encrease of their honors". Henry gave permission for them to tilt against the answerers, who entered "to doo feactes of armes, for the loue of Ladies". All were accoutred "in his best maner, aswell for their Ladies, as also for laude or praise to bee geuen them". Should the answerers lose to Pallas' knights, they offer to surrender their golden spear; otherwise the challengers must forfeit the crystalline shield. Hall, who describes the occasion at length, does not record the outcome of the tilting, but the next day Pallas' knights re-enter again as challengers, and this time patriotically dressed in green and white, the Tudor colours.

31. See Hall, *Chronicle*, pp.511-512; and Anglo ed., *Great Tournament Roll*, pp.46-49.

This would suggest that they were meant to succeed. On the second day, they are answered by a group dressed as foresters or keepers who are "seruauntes to Diana". They too fight, though in this case paradoxically, perhaps, "for the loue of ladies". This part of the show seems to have deteriorated into a violent mêlée which the guard had to quell. But in both cases Pallas' knights are answered by the forces of love, and internal evidence seems to suggest that they won at least the first tournament and secured the golden spear.

The same may be true of another masque written by Thomas Pound and performed at Lincoln's Inn in 1566.(32). This was devised to celebrate the wedding of Sir Thomas Mildmay to Frances Radcliffe, daughter of the Earl of Sussex. Although it was a private occasion, it appears that Elizabeth herself was present. The masque alludes overtly to the the Templars' Christmas Revels in 1562: "And you quoth pallas, namynge me / must serve vs nowe againe / once more to stand vs yet in stede / and take a lyttel payne / For pallas sake whose knight you were / yf you remembre well / when cownte phylos was your name / the templers yet could tell" [fol. 30^v]. Like the Revels, Pound's masque also takes the form of the dream-vision. The speaker recounts a dream in which the four goddesses Venus, Diana,

32. The masques consist of two orations written and spoken by the author. They survive in a Bodleian manuscript Rawl. poet. 108, fols.24-37. There is a description of the manuscript by Sir Egerton Brydges, in *The British Bibliographer* 2 (1812) pp.609-618.

Pallas and Juno appear to him. They remind him of his former oath to Pallas and charge him to deliver their message to the betrothed couple. The gift-giving ceremony that follows is entirely under the auspices of Pallas, and the divine presents include the cherished golden apple of Venus (figured here as "dame bewtye" [fol.33]) now more worthily bestowed on the bride, and Pallas' "sheld of force" bearing the Gorgon's head, which is dedicated in "honour of all vertues dedes" [fol.35]. The masquers enter as Pallas' knights, "felowes of A bande", *exempla* of virtue [fol.36^v]. They conclude the show with a dedication to Pallas which paraphrases the oath sworn by the initiates in the Inner Temple Revels a few years before [fols.36^v-37].

b. Kenilworth

Dudley entertained the Queen on numerous occasions, but in some ways the "Princely Pleasures" mounted for her at Kenilworth in 1575 were quite exceptional.⁽³³⁾ No individual courtier had ever entertained Elizabeth so lavishly before. By this time the Earl of Leicester, Dudley employed some of the best poets of the period, including George Gascoigne, George Ferrers, former Lord of

33. There are two accounts of the entertainment: the first is George Gascoigne's *The Princely Pleasures at Kenelworth Castle* (1576). The only copy of the first edition was lost in the nineteenth century but had previously been printed in *Kenilworth Illustrated* (Chiswick; 1812). This is collated against the version in the 1587 collection of Gascoigne's poems by Cunliffe, in *Gascoigne*, ii.91-131. The second account is Lanham's *A letter: whearin, part of the entertainment vntoo the Queenz maiesty, at Killingwoorth Castl, iz signified* (1575), [hereafter *Letter*].

Misrule at Edward VI's court, and William Hunnis, Master of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel. Together with their host, these writers endeavoured to create a nostalgic vision where Elizabeth might be content to "fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world".(34)

When Elizabeth arrived at Kenilworth on Saturday 9th of July she entered the castle by the newly built tilt-yard (still the entrance for modern visitors) and passed under Mortimer's Tower, "whereupon the Arms of Mortimer were cut in stone", as the antiquarian Dugdale notes.(35) This architectural decoration, an addition of Leicester's, had a highly specific meaning. It alluded to Roger Mortimer, Earl of Wigmore, a former owner of Kenilworth and patriot in the Barons' Wars. In 1279 Mortimer had held a grand and historic tournament at the castle, which Dugdale describes as follows:

The same year I find, that there was a great and famous concourse of noble persons here at Kenilworth, called the Round table, consisting of an hundred Knights, and as many Ladies; whereunto divers repaired from forreign parts for the exercise of Arms, viz Tilting, and martial Tournaments; and the Ladies, Dancing; who were clad in silken Mantles.(36)

Stow calls the tournament "a knightly game", and Drayton was frequently to recall it as one of the greatest achievements

34. *As You Like It*, I.i.118-119.

35. Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire*, ed. William Thomas (London; 1730) 2 vols. i.249^a.

36. *ibid.* p.247^b.

of the Mortimer family.(37) By aligning himself with the Mortimers, Leicester appealed to a sense of historical continuity of which Elizabeth's visit was presented as the climax and culmination. But he also hinted at his own position. The Earl of Wigmore had been a great loyalist and supporter of the crown. So had Leicester, but he also refers implicitly to Wigmore's grand-son, the Mortimer who had loved a queen, Edward II's wife, Queen Isabel. Dugdale makes the implication explicit by confusing Mortimer senior with the Earl of March, the grandson's title.(38) Perhaps the historical allusion is another example of "functional ambiguity" designed, like Desire in the Temple Revels, to fuse Leicester's two 'bodies', the loyalist and the lover.(39)

A degree of ambiguity also exists in the allegory of Desire that was kept for the parting pageant, and which was both written and delivered by George Gascoigne. Here Desire appeared as a lover of the Queen, cruelly metamorphosed into a holly-bush. The interlude was preceded by Gascoigne's own appearance as the forest-god

37. Dugdale gives another account of the tournament in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. John Caley, Henry Ellis and B. Bandinel (London; 1830) 6 vols. vi.350-351. See also John Stow, *Annales of England* (1592), p.299; and Michael Drayton, *Mortimeriados*, ll.78-83, *The Barons Wars*, i.177-184, and *England's Heroicall Epistles*, "Mortimer to Queene Isabel", ll.53-58, in *Drayton*, ed. Hebel, Tillotson and Newdigate, i.311, ii.15, 169.

38. Dugdale, *Antiquities*, i.247^b, and noted by his editor, Thomas.

39. Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies*, p.63, and Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry*, p.35, note the Arthurian background of the entertainment, but neither mentions Mortimer's Tower or its historical implications.

Sylvanus. Some critics have seen Gascoigne's identification with "the green knight" as a bid of his own for royal favour.(40) But Sylvanus, god of woods and of satyrs, was traditionally associated with sexual passion, and indeed here proves to be a spokesman for desire. Moving the Queen to "have good regard to the general desire of the Gods", Gascoigne/Sylvanus sets the tone for the allegory of Desire that follows. He speaks for the Olympian gods as ambassador, entreating Elizabeth to stay longer for "the whole earth earnestly desireth to keepe you" and because he himself is "thorowly tickled with a restlesse desire".(41) A few days earlier, Gascoigne had appeared as an *Hombre Salvagio*, in another device also written and performed by himself. This creature also speaks in terms of Beauty and Desire: "Had I the bewties blase? / which shines in you so bright", "But comely peerelesse Prince, / since my desires be great: / Walke here sometimes in pleasant shade, / to fende the parching heate". "Can no colde answers quench desire?" he asks, alluding to the aquatic fireworks of "Jupiter" (associated with Leicester

40. From "The Tale of Hermetes the Heremyte", Gascoigne, ed. Cunliffe, ii.477. This is the interpretation given by C. T. Prouty, *George Gascoigne: Elizabethan Courtier, Soldier, and Poet* (Columbia University Press, New York; 1942) pp.88-89; Rosenberg, *Leicester, Patron of Letters*, pp.168-171; and M. C. Bradbrook, *The Rise of the Common Player: A Study of Actor and Society in Shakespeare's England* (Chatto and Windus, London; 1964) pp.247-253.

41. Gascoigne, ed. Cunliffe, ii.124, 123, my italics.

throughout^{the} Kenilworth visit) and perhaps also to Leicester's own matrimonial hopes.(42)

The Salvage Man and Sylvanus are both wild, uncouth figures, long familiar from civic and courtly pageants.(43) The Salvage Man held "an Oken plant pluct vp by the roots in hiz hande", which he "brake . . . a sunder" at end of a dialogue with Echo, startling Elizabeth's horse, an accident reminiscent of Orlando's violence in *Orlando Furioso*.(44) In Renaissance iconography, the wild man could have a less violent aspect, like Timias, the melancholy and rejected lover in *The Faerie Queene*. But in courtly shows he was

42. *ibid.* pp.100, 101, 99, my italics. Lanham mentions magnificent fireworks and "lightninges of wildfier a water and lond" which travelled under water only to burst forth and burn, *Letter*, p.16. Even more spectacular fireworks were planned though not used. See Alan Kendall, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester* (Cassell, London; 1980) p.153. Similar aquatic fireworks seem to have been employed at a royal visit to Warwick in August 1572, where "the wild fyre falling into the Ryver Aven wold for a tyme lye still, and than agayn rise and flye abroad casting furth many flasshes and flambes whereat the quene Majesty tok great pleasure", quoted in Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry*, p.26.

43. Henry Machyn mentions "ij grett wodyn [armed] with ij grett clubes all in grene" and "iiiij talle men lyke wodys alle in gren" in Lord Mayors' pageants of 1553 and 1555; see *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Society, London; 1848) pp.47, 96. At the Westminster tournament in 1511, a forest-like pageant car was drawn by beasts led by "wilde men or woodhouses, their bodies, heddes, faces, handes, and legges, couered with grene Sylke flosshed", see Anglo, *Spectacle*, p.111, while at Greenwich in 1515, eight wild men dressed in green moss "came out of a place lyke a wood". Such devices set a trend for later pageants. In an entertainment at Cowdray in 1591, Elizabeth was accosted by "a wilde man cladde in Ivie", see Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, p.91, and by another at Bisham in 1592, see *Lyly*, ed. Bond, i.472. See also Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; 1952).

44. Lanham, *Letter*, pp.18, 20.

more commonly presented as an overtly sexual figure. In surviving Henrician songs the "grenewood" is a recognised locus for dalliance, and the "joly foster" ditties were occasions for erotic *doubles entendres*.(45) At the Elvetham entertainment in 1591, the figure of Sylvanus reappears to pledge himself to Elizabeth as "Beauties Quene", but a nymph sees fit to quench his improper desire by ducking him in a pond, for "water will extinguish wanton fire".(46)

These associations prepared the audience for the appearance of Desire *in propria persona* in the second part of the masque. Gascoigne recounts the "strange and pitifull adventures" occasioned by Zabeta, a nymph of Diana's train and clearly an allusion to Elizabeth herself. Her "rare giftes have drawne the most noble and worthy personages" to woo her only to be "rigorously repulsed . . . and cruelly rejected".(47) Sylvanus weeps at the fate of the lovers, transformed by Zabeta's coyness into trees. He reveals to Elizabeth an allegorical grove in which her devotees exist in tree-form. He points out an oak tree which was once "a faithfull follower and trustie servant of hyrs, named Constance", an allusion to Dudley whose

45. "My love is to the grenewode gone, / Now after wyll I go", from "Trolly lolly loly lo" in *Henry VIII's MS.*, quoted by Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*, p.401. See also "Y have ben a foster", "Blow thi horne, hunter", "I have bene a foster" and "I am a joly foster" *ibid.* pp.338, 400, 408, 410.

46. Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, p.112.

47. Gascoigne, ed. Cunliffe, ii.124.

Christian name is echoed in the Latin for oak, *robur*.(48) But if Constancy's metamorphosis is a direct result of Zabeta's cruelty, another of the trees in the grove, a poplar representing Inconstancy, is punished justly. Similarly, the courtly vices of Vain-glory, Contention, and Ambition are appropriately metamorphosed as an ash, a briar and ivy. In other words, the allegorical forest diplomatically contains lovers who have been both justly and unjustly punished. The mixture results directly from Zabeta's own paradoxical nature, both cruel and just: "to countervaille this cruelty with a shewe of justice".

In medieval and Renaissance convention, the allegorical forest traditionally had a mixed pedigree. It could represent the *locus amoenus* or garden of love, as in the *Romaunt of the Rose* or *The Parlement of Foules*, but it could equally be a place of suffering, like Dante's wood of suicides in the *Inferno*, or the "selva oscura" where the *Divine Comedy* begins, or like Spenser's Wood of Errour.(49)

48. *ibid.* p.125. At the close of an entertainment at Woodstock in 1575, Elizabeth "closelie in an Oke . . . hearde y^e sound both of voice and instrument". The voice purports to be that of Despair, Desire's opposite. See J. W. Cunliffe, "The Queenes Majesties Entertainment at Woodstocke", *PMLA* 26 (1911) pp.92-141, this quotation p.101.
 49. See Chaucer, *The Parlement of Foules*, ll.176-182, and the *Romaunt of the Rose*, ll.1349-1386, in Chaucer, ed. Robinson, pp.312, 578; Dante, *Inferno*, i.2, in *La Divina Commedia*, ed. Sapegno, p.3; Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, I.i.8-9. Like the allegorical forest, the sources for arboreal metamorphosis are also various. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, transformation is generally a sign of chastity, but in the *Aeneid*, iii.20-42, *Orlando Furioso*, vi.26-53, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, xiii.41-44, and *The Faerie Queene*, I.ii.30-42, it is the result of sorcery, and of the body's surrender to passion.

It remained a popular motif in courtly entertainments. At Ditchley in 1592, two decades after Kenilworth, Sir Henry Lee included the device of a forest of metamorphosed lovers that was very similar to Gascoigne's. The forest not only comprised figures of Constancy and Inconstancy, but contained the paradox within a single tree: "we knights are trees whome roots of faith doe bynd / our ladies [leaves] who sometye give us grace, / but fall awaie with everie blast of wynd".(50)

I emphasise the equivocal nature inherent in the tradition of the allegorical forest because Gascoigne seems to exploit its ambiguity to the full. He uses it to beg the question of the next pair of trees that he points out to Elizabeth:

There were two sworne brethren which long time
served hyr, called *Deepe desire*, and *Dewe
desert*.(51)

Desire is a holly-bush - the evergreen also traditionally associated with constancy - and Desert is a laurel.(52) But the euphuistic register of antithesis and *antimetabole* that is used to introduce these tree-brothers promotes ambiguity and equivocation: "*Deepe desire* (that wretch of worthies, and yet the worthiest that ever was condemned to wretched estate)". Zabeta is similarly described, "this

50. See Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, p.127.

51. Gascoigne, ed. Cunliffe, ii.126.

52. On holly as a symbol of constancy see: "As the holy grouth grene / And never chaungyth hew, / So I am, ever hath bene, / Unto my lady trew". From "Greene growith the holy", in Henry VIII's MS., quoted by Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*, p.399.

courteous cruell, and yet the cruellest courteous that ever was".(53)

Sylvanus' long introduction to this part of the masque, was aimed, as I have suggested, to highlight the sexual connotations of Desire. Here they seem, on first sight, to be vindicated. Desire was "such an one as neither any delay could daunt him: no disgrace could abate his passions, no tyme coulde tyre him, no water quench his flames", another allusion to aquatic fireworks perhaps. He refers familiarly to Elizabeth as "dame pleasure" and "my deere delight", and, as a holly-bush, he is "furnished on every side with sharpe pricking leaves, to prove the restlesse prickles of his privie thoughts". This gives rise to a Mercutian bawdy aside - "some will say that the she *Holly* hath no prickles".(54)

But critics who identify the figure of Desire with Leicester as a symbol of his matrimonial hopes, seem to forget both his other association (as *robur*) with Constance, and the significance of the constant, undeciduous holly.(55) The question remains whether Desire is subject to improper sexual passions and therefore justly punished, or whether his constancy, like that of the Oak, is cruelly and unjustly metamorphosed. My contention is that the dual identification and its attendant ambiguity, are quite

53. *Gascoigne*, ed. Cunliffe, ii.126.

54. *ibid.* pp.126, 130, 126-127.

55. Smith, "Landscape with Figures", p.58, and Bradbrook, *Rise of the Common Player*, p.250, both associate Desire with Dudley.

deliberate. Dudley's designs on the Queen's private body may be figured as improper and therefore properly punished; but his bid for serious consideration as a loyal servant is just. Like the deviser of the Inner Temple Revels, Gascoigne makes use of the traditional ambiguities already inherent in his source materials to articulate Dudley's courtship in a way that might be acceptable at the court of Elizabeth.

iii. The Four Foster Children of Desire

Six years after Kenilworth, the English court was treated to a full-blown allegory of Beauty and Desire. This pageant, tentatively entitled *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, took place at Whitehall on the 15 and 16 May, 1581.⁽⁵⁶⁾ It was a splendid show in comparison with which even Kenilworth might have seemed somewhat parochial. Robert Carey describes pageants that were mounted for the Duke of Alençon later that year, as "such as the best wits and inventions in those days could devise to make the court

56. There are two main accounts of the show. The first is a prose description by Henry Goldwell, *A briefe declaration of the shews, devices, speeches, and inventions, done & performed before the Queene's Majestie, & the French Ambassadors* (1581), in Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, pp.63-85. All inset page references are to this edition. The second is a manuscript eye-witness account by a M. Nallot, in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Dupuy MS 33, fols.77-81. An English paraphrase of the letter can be found in Frederick von Raumer, *History of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Murray, London; 1835) 2 vols. ii.431-434.

glorious, and to entertain so great a guest".(57) There is no evidence to suggest that the courtiers scanted courtesy in May: they are described as "desirous to shew them al courtesie . . . and to sporte them with all courtly pleasure" [p.66].

The show takes the form of a tournament, and begins with a challenge issued, some weeks earlier, by a boy-herald representing the figure of Desire and dressed in his symbolic colours, red and white. The challenge describes how four foster children of Desire lay claim to Beauty as their "desired patrimonie", and announces their intention to besiege her fortress (Elizabeth's gallery overlooking the Whitehall tilt-yard) if she does not yield [p.66]. The foster children also pledge to fight at tilt and tourney with any of Beauty's knights who enter in her defence.

A two-day encounter ensues. The four foster-children and named challengers of the tournament are the Earl of Arundel, Lord Windsor, Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville. They enter the tilt-yard in magnificent armour, adorned with emblems and *imprese*.(58) Their trains are accompanied by a pageant car called the "Rowling trench", which conceals a

57. *The Memoirs of Robert Carey*, ed. F. H. Mares (Clarendon, Oxford; 1972) p.4. Contrast Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship between Poetry and the Revels* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1927) p.160, who suggests that the show "must have seemed a very crude performance to the foreign ambassadors".

58. See Norman Council, "O Dea Certe: The Allegory of *The Fortress of Perfect Beauty*", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 39 (1975-1976) pp.329-342, for the allegorical significance of Sidney's device, "Sic nos non nobis".

hidden consort of musicians.(59) On their entry, the boy-herald reappraises Beauty of Desire's claim. A pair of sonnets, possibly written by Sidney, lead to the "affectionate Allarme" and "desirous Assaulte", and a mock siege follows, in which the fortress of Beauty is bombarded, in time-honoured fashion, with perfume, flowers and "such devices as might seeme fit shot for Desire" [pp.71, 73].

At this point the defendants enter, in a medley of public and private symbolism. Sir Thomas Perrott and Anthony Cooke are announced by an angel who introduces them with a narrative of the Frozen knight, melted by the sun-like favour of the Queen.(60) Thomas Radcliffe enters as a "desolate Knight" who had retired to a meditative and "enchanted" life in a mossy cave, by "a Cliffe adjoining to the maine Sea" (presumably a punning clue as to his real identity) [p.77]. He presents Elizabeth with an *impresa* shield hewn "out of the hard cliffe enriched onely with soft mosse" [p.78]. The next set of defendants are the four Knollys brothers who present themselves as the legitimate sons of Despair, Desire's antithesis. In his manuscript account, Nallot also mentions a chained knight led by the

59. p.68. Nallot suggests that the rolling trench entered with Arundel's train, von Raumer, *History*, ii.432.

60. In *Astraea*, p.92, Frances Yates points out that a Frozen knight, "his armor so naturally representing Ice", enters the Iberian tournament in Sidney's revised *Arcadia*, Sidney, ed. Feuillerat, i.286. Perrott may also have been alluding to his appearance as an unknown knight in a tilt held in January of that year, when he "cum unwares", *HMC Hatfield*, xiii.199.

Fates, and another who gazed longingly at the portrait of a lady. (61)

Their differences unresolvable by parley, the challengers and defendants proceed to tilt with staves, and both sides "performed their partes so valiantly . . . that their prowess hath demerited perpetuall memory". (62) On the second day, the sport comprises a tourney and barriers fought with swords. The same challengers enter, but this time travelling in a new pageant car. This carries a female figure of Desire which they turn to longingly, to the sound of doleful music. The tournament ends with the boy-herald approaching Elizabeth in the ash-coloured garments of repentance, and carrying an olive-branch in token of peace. The foster children of Desire humbly submit: "They acknowledge the blindenes of their error, in that they did not know desire (how strong so ever it be) within it self to be stronger without it selfe then it pleased the desired, they acknowledge they have degenerated from their Fosterer in making violence accompany Desire" [p.83].

Many elements of the allegorical siege hark back quite clearly to earlier Henrician shows, and the initial challenge followed by ^a two-day tilt closely echoes the format

61. von Raumer, *History*, ii.434.

62. p.80. A blank score cheque for this tilt survives in Bodleian MS Ashmole 845, fol.166: "The Tournay holden at Westminster on Monday the 15. of May. 1581. when as the prince dolphine of Auuergne and the the [sic] frenche commissioners were heer".

of the great tournament in 1511.(63) The mock siege with its battery of comfits was equally familiar, as was the pervasive colour-symbolism which relied on the courtly audience's recognition. Desire's herald first appears in red and white, while on the second day the four foster children's pageant car is drawn by horses "apparelled in White and carnation silke, beeing the colloure of Desire" [p.82]. The gunners and ensign bearer on the top of the rolling trench appeared in crimson, and Nallot notes that the trumpeters who followed the car wore red, white and yellow plumes. The trumpeters and gentleman of Windsor's train came attired in red and white vests and hose, with plumes of the same colour.(64) In the same way, Desire and Hope formed a stock association going back to the 1501 wedding masque for Prince Arthur and Katherine of Aragon. The four foster children describe themselves as "long haples, now *hopeful*", and on the second day their herald mourns that now "they are not greatly companied with *hope*, the common supplier to Desires army" [pp.67, 82, my italics].

The Four Foster Children of Desire is usually regarded as a direct policy-statement of the court's attitude to the proposed French match with the Duke of Alençon. The French Commissioners, who were at court for what they hoped would

63. The delay between the issue of the challenge and the tilt a month later, unexplained by Goldwell, may have resulted from the Commissioners' late arrival in London. See Burghley's memoranda and revised schedule of events, *CSP: Foreign, 1581-1582*, pp.144-145.

64. pp.66, 82, 68-69; von Raumer, *History*, ii.432, 433.

be the final and successful stage of the marriage negotiations, were also present to watch the show.(65) Most scholars concur that the device identifies the defeated Desire with Alençon, and that it was designed to prepare his ambassadors for a similar failure.(66) Indeed, for some critics, "the meaning of the pageant was obvious".(67) There is something in this. The day before the arrival of the French Commissioners, Elizabeth had warned Leicester and Walsingham that she felt repugnance at "the ardent desire of so young a man as Alençon".(68) If *The Four Foster Children* was designed to extinguish this desire, Alençon's agent Simier had already witnessed court shows that seem open to similar interpretation. On 11th January 1579, the day of his first audience with Elizabeth, Simier had been entertained with "A Maske of Amasones", a particularly resplendent device clearly designed to impress. The Revels Accounts include an unusually long and detailed

65. For a full list of the French Commissioners sent to London, see J. le Laboureur ed., *Les Mémoires de Messire Michel du Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissière* (Paris; 1659) 2 vols. i.703. Nallot notes that on the first day of the tournament, Elizabeth sat between Mauvissière, the French ambassador, and the Prince Dauphin, von Raumer, *History*, ii.434.

66. See Ivan L. Schulze, "The Final Protest Against the Elizabeth-Alençon Marriage Proposal", *Modern Language Notes* 58 (1943) pp.54-57, who concludes that the tournament "warned the French ambassadors that their mission must end in failure", p.57. See also Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth*, pp.258-260; Ronald A. Rebholz, *The Life of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1971) pp.36-38; Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry*, pp.44-46; and Council, "O Dea Certe", p.330.

67. Rebholz, *Fulke Greville*, p.38. See also Read, *Lord Burghley*, p.260: "The symbolism is obvious".

68. CSP: Spanish, 1580-1586, p.110, my italics.

description.(69) The masque took the form of a barriers between six Amazons and six knights. The men lost, and Mendoza obviously considered the outcome important enough to make a note of it to Philip II.(70) It could be argued that the 1581 show was also meant to impress upon the French that Alençon was fated to encounter the same formidable battery of defence.

But the tradition of previous court shows suggests that, at best, such policy-statements were couched as hints in the most equivocal and tentative manner, even if Elizabeth could say, as she did of Leicester's 1564 show, "This is all against me".(71) It is necessary, therefore, to approach the show with a greater degree of circumspection than those who insist that "the meaning of the pageant was obvious". No policy statement made so publicly before Queen and ambassadors could afford to be "obvious". The French match was generally unpopular in England. When negotiations began again in earnest there was a flurry of activity on the part of courtiers and writers to make this point to Elizabeth.(72) But it also had supporters, among them Lord Burghley and the Earl of Sussex. Whatever the

69. See Feuillerat ed., *Documents of the Revels: Elizabeth*, pp.286-7, 301.

70. CSP: Spanish, 1568-1579, p.630. The show closely resembles the fictional account of a tournament in Anthony Munday's prose romance, *Zelauto: The Fountaine of Fame* (1580), ed. Jack Stillinger (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale; 1963) pp.40-50.

71. CSP: Spanish, 1558-1567, p.404.

72. One of the most notorious examples is John Stubbs' *The discoverie of a gaping gulf whereinto England is like to be swallowed by an other French mariage* (1579).

outcome of the endless marriage negotiations, it would have been far from diplomatic to alienate France, and it cannot be assumed that individual courtiers were in a position to lecture the sovereign or foreign ambassadors so publicly, even in this oblique way.

There is an argument, then, for seeing a degree of equivocation in this show similar to that of *The Lady of May* and the other pageants discussed. The pageant was less anti-marriage propaganda than an exercise in suppressing faction, and, as Conyers Read suggests, it "presented the world with a picture of Anglo-French friendship", in which real differences were subsumed under romantic battles with "that sweetemie, Fraunce", as Sidney put it elsewhere.(73) Sidney and Greville of the challengers, Henry Grey, Thomas Perrott, Edward Denny and the Knollys brothers of the defendants, can all be associated with the Protestant anti-marriage faction led by Leicester.(74) But Windsor and Tresham belonged to Catholic families, and Arundel became a Catholic in 1584. They, like Cooke, a cousin of Burghley's, or Radcliffe, a relation of Sussex's, may all have been supporters of the French match. Such a medley may well have been designed, like Elizabeth's own

73. Read, *Lord Burghley*, p.260; Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella*, 41, in *Poems*, ed. Ringler, p.185.

74. Greville and Denny were close friends of Sidney; Grey and Perrott both had connections with Lord Grey de Wilton and Ireland; the Knollys' sister, Lettice, was Leicester's wife.

prevarications, "to keep everyone in a state of uncertainty".(75)

This political mêlée necessarily compromises the standard interpretation of the show. The conquest of Desire is not as "obvious" as first appears. Although the boy-herald approaches Elizabeth at the end of the triumph in the pose of submission, with sack-cloth and an olive branch, Desire has not been extinguished. Indeed, the fate of Desire is embedded in paradox: for conquest means death, but submission signifies perpetuity.(76) By losing the fight in this pageant, Desire is allowed to continue its adoring posture, as the foster children eventually admit: "They acknowledge Noble Desire shoulde have desired nothing so much, as the flourishing of that Fortresse" [p.84]. For Desire has not been extinguished but chastised and, perhaps literally, chastened. Desire is taught propriety, the proper expression of sentiment, and the stratagems that make this possible put *The Four Foster Children* on the same footing as the shows already considered.

The least subtle of such stratagems, perhaps, is the judicious use of epithets. Here Desire is not "ardent" or "valiant" but "vertuous", "honourable", "just", "noblest" and "Noble" [pp.67, 72, 81, 84]. In earlier shows, Desire

75. Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, p.159. See also Henry Woudhuysen, *Leicester's Literary Patronage: A Study of the English Court 1578-1582* (unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford; 1981) pp.340-345.

76. One recalls that in the abandoned 1562 masque before Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, Ardent Desire's companion was Perpetuitie.

had come closer to conquering Beauty but he was (like Desire in the Inner Temple Revels) educated and civilised in the process. Here the epithets accompanying Desire imply that it has already been legitimised, making it very different from the aggressively libidinous Desire of Henrician shows. Moreover, for the first time in courtly shows, Desire is figured as a woman, a fact which necessarily alters the nature of the sexual siege. Desire is foster-mother to the four challengers, and on the second day enters the tilt-yard personified as "a beautiful Lady, representing Desire . . . Whereunto their eyes were turned, in token what they desired" [p.82]. Desire shares characteristics with Beauty, and, as an object of the challengers' devotions, is clearly a version of Elizabeth herself. In this guise, Desire is explicitly non-violent and it is specifically this peaceableness that the four challengers transgress. It is important to recognise the separation of the foster children from the figure of Desire at this point. They are defeated for their overweening presumption, for mistaking sexual desire for loyalty. Like Astrophil, or the young men of whom Bembo speaks in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, they are young and have to be educated in the proper expression of affection. As Astrophil learns, reluctantly, to read from the legend of Beauty in Stella's face, so the four foster children learn that "the whole storie of vertue

is written with the language of Beautie".(77) As their foster-mother, Desire echoes Stella's role as "step-dame Studie" or the lover's "schoole-mistresse".

The political mix of the participants in this show has already alerted the reader to a degree of equivocation. The notion that Desire is something to be learned substantiates this, for the defendants of Beauty also speak the language of desire. It may seem paradoxical that the professed enemies of Desire should speak in its terms, but the difference is telling: for the defendants have already learned Desire's proper expression in the court. In the introductory speech at the entry of Perrott and Cooke, for example, the audience is told that the Frozen knight dissolved because "Desire, (ah sweete Desire) enforced him to behold the Sun on the earth . . . melting with such delighte, that hee seemed to preferre the lingering of a certaine death . . . suche is the nature of engraven loyaltie" [p.73]. The same can be seen in Perrott and Cooke's roles as Adam and Eve. Elizabeth is transmuted into the new Tree of Knowledge, "the Garden of your Graces . . . where vertues growe as thicke as leaves did in Paradise" [p.76]. The angel who announces them explains how Adam and Eve, the originators of sexual desire, may now become

77. pp.70-71. *Astrophil and Stella*, 1, 46, in *Poems*, ed. Ringler, pp.165, 188. See also *Astrophil and Stella*, 71: "Who will in fairest booke of Nature know, / How Vertue may best lodg'd in beautie be, / Let him but learne of Love to reade in thee, / *Stella*, those faire lines, which true goodnesse show / . . . 'But ah', Desire still cries, 'give me some food'", *ibid.* p.201.

exponents of a new kind of virtuous desire: "For as they were before driven from their Desire, because they desired to knowe the best, so now shall they be driven to their Desire whiche they covet to honour most" [p.74]. Their former presumptuousness in tasting the forbidden fruit parallels the boldness of the four challengers. But now reformed, Adam and Eve have learned the proper form of desire - honour - and are therefore permitted to return to the earth.

Perrott and Cooke were not alone among the defendants in articulating the language of Desire. As the desolate Knight, Thomas Radcliffe admits that Beauty is "of every one to be desired, but never to be conquered of Desire". He too has learned that the perpetuity of Desire depends on submission. He offers Elizabeth a shield of rock covered in moss, "A double signe of his desire, thinking that nothing could manifest Beawtie so well as Pithagoras wallnut, a tender ryne and a hard shell" [p.78]. The Knollys brothers, as sons of Despair, also allow Desire's claim: "Of all affections that are, Desire is the most worthie to woe, but least deserves to win Beawtie, for . . . no soner hath desire what he desireth, but that he dieth presently: so that when Beawtie yeeldeth once to desire, then can she never vaunt to be desired againe". The sons of Despair do not confront the challengers because Desire is intrinsically wrong, but because Desire must be allowed "ever to wish" [pp.79-80]. All the defendants whose

speeches Goldwell records make this point. Desire is not to be rejected but curtailed, and the scope of its demands legitimised.

Desire is not, therefore, extinguished but reformed and re-educated. The children of Desire do not ultimately fail because they stop loving Beauty. That is most important. They fail because they cannot have her to themselves. In Neo-Platonic theory the desire for beauty is never satisfied and therefore must always aspire higher in a scale of meditative excellence. At the end of the pageant the children surrender but their desire has not been extinguished. They have simply been taught how desire might suitably be expressed. For the argument was not one of possession but one of priority, not personal satisfaction but general good.

The deviser of the show emphasises this by making the central image of *The Four Foster Children* the Sun. This emblem, with all its biblical and imperial precedents, becomes the epitome of Elizabeth. As the Sun, she cherishes and nurtures all men and cannot be eclipsed by the private desire of a favourite. The Frozen knight was melted by beholding "the Sun on the earth", and, like the gods of Elisium, he was galvanised by the cry "the Sunne is besieged" [pp.73, 74]. Adam and Eve adore Elizabeth as the Sun, Nature's most perfect creation, and despise the selfish attempts of the Foster Children to conquer her. Figured in this iconography, Elizabeth is "the Sunne . . . the lighte

of the worlde, the marvel of men, the mirour of nature" [p.76]. Perrott and Cooke compare the four challengers with Phaeton and Icarus whose presumption against the sun led to their undoing. They warn that it is misfortune that makes them think they cannot "sincke deepe enoughe into the sea, unlesse you take your fal from the sunne", while the Knollys brothers refer to "The wanton youth, whose waxed wings did frie with soaring up aloft" [pp.75, 79]. Adam and Eve's angel quotes Phaeton's epitaph from the *Metamorphoses*, "Magnis excidimus ausis", as a warning. The challengers are likened to the Eagles, blinded from looking at the Sun, which Radcliffe refers to, and which Perrott and Cooke possibly bore as part of their train.(78)

The Sun emblem is essential to an understanding of *The Four Foster Children*. It was French. At any rate, heliocentric iconography had been popularised by the French Court and by Henry III in particular.(79) There is no doubt the English courtiers were aware of their borrowing, and it was presumably intended to allude to Alençon's own private motto, a Sun and the words "cherisheth and chaseth". It has also been suggested that the sun emblem referred

78. "the Eagle beholding the sunne, coveteth to builde hir nest in the same, and so dimmeth her sight", p.78. Nallot mentions a pageant car with six multi-coloured eagles, each containing a consort of trumpeters and musicians, von Raumer, *History*, ii.433.

79. See Yates, *Astraea*, pp.160-168; and Strong, *Art and Power*, p.26. When Alençon entered Antwerp in 1582, he was hailed as the Sun which would nourish Protestantism in the Netherlands and chase out the infamous Spaniards. See *The joyful and royal entertainment of prince, Frauncis. Into Antwerpe*, trans. Arthur Golding (1582), sigs.E6-E6^v.

specifically to a *nom-de-plume* that Simier used of Elizabeth in his letters.(80) With the popularisation of royal myths like Cynthia and Belpheobe, such astral imagery was to become endemic in Elizabethan iconography. The image of the Sun-Queen, although outwardly familiar, really belongs to this period. It was first fully worked out as a consistent metaphor on the 1578 Norwich visit, where the Queen was hailed as "The Starre of comfort" and one of "two Sunnes" shining on the city. When she left, "Our Sunshine day is dashte with sodaine shoure".(81) In the next decade, the Accession Day Tilts would establish the Sun image firmly in Elizabethan iconography. Of the tilting devices mentioned by Camden, those incorporating a sun or star almost invariably refer directly to the Queen.(82)

80. In the Hatfield papers there is a key to the ciphers Simier used in his letters to Elizabeth between 1579 and 1581: "La Royne d'Angleterre. - Le souleil: la perle: le diaman . . . Monsieur. - Le loryer: la victoire: l'olivier", *HMC Hatfield*, ii.448. See also Schultze, "The Final Protest against the Elizabeth-Alençon Marriage", p.56.

81. Churchyard, *A discourse of the queenes maiesties entertainment in Suffolk and Norffolk*, sigs.B4^v, C1; Garter, *The ioyfull receyuing of the Queenes maiestie into Norwich*, sig.E4.

82. William Camden, *Remains Concerning Britain*, ed. R. D. Dunn (University of Toronto Press, Toronto; 1984) pp.176-191. For example: "Upon his Princes Favour he wholly relied, which devised the Sunne shining upon a bush, subscribing SI DESERIS PEREO. As he which in like sense bare the Sunne reflecting his rayes from him, with QUOUSQUE AVERTES?", *ibid.* p.183. In his own account of courtly emblems, George Puttenham describes the Sun device of the Emperor Heliogabalus, more aptly applied to Elizabeth "likening her Maiestie to the Sunne for his brightnesse, but not to him for his passion, which is ordinarily to go to glade, and sometime to suffer eclypse", *Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Willcock and Walker, p.103.

But perhaps the closest parallel appears in a tournament held at Westminster in January 1581.(83) Three-quarters of its participants also performed in *The Four Foster Children* that May, and its imagery shares much with that show.(84) Emblems of the sun, desire and beauty run throughout this little-known pageant, known as the Callophiscus Challenge. The chief challenger, the Earl of Arundel, disguised as Callophiscus, insists that "his Mistresse is for *Beautie* for her face . . . the most perfect creature", the "beames" of whose eyes cannot be endured any more than the clouds can withstand "the shining and appearing of the *Sunne*".(85) One of his companions, the Blue knight, concurs that "by remembraunc of hir name onelie sturreth vpp all *desires* to vertue and by the perfeccions of hir *bewtie* . . . subdueth the stoutest hart of hir beholders".(86)

In the course of the tournament, the Earl of Oxford enters as the Sun-Tree Knight, reviving the familiar topos of the allegorical forest. Under this persona, Oxford

83. See Feuillerat ed., *Documents of the Revels: Elizabeth*, p.336. For a list of challengers and defendants see William Segar, *Honor military, and civill* (1602), pp.195-196. Oxford's speech was printed in *Axiochus*, attributed to "Edw. Spenser" (1592), sigs.D1-D4^v. Other speeches belonging to the tournament are to be found in *MSC*, I.ii, pp.181-187; and in an untitled broadsheet, STC 4368a.

84. The Earl of Arundel, as Callophiscus, was chief challenger. Defendants who also took part in the May tournament were: Lord Windsor, Philip Sidney, Henry and Robert Knollys, Fulke Greville, Thomas Kelway, Rafe Bowes, George Goring, Anthony Cooke, Henry Brunckerd, Edward Denny, Richard Ward and Thomas Perrott; see Segar, *Honor military, and civill*, p.195.

85. See the untitled broadsheet, STC 4368a.

86. *MSC*, I.ii, p.182, my italics.

claims once to have lived in a "Groue, where euery graft beeing greene, hee thought euery roote to be precious", but like the allegorical groves at Kenilworth and Ditchley, this one also contains a medley of trees.(87) The knight discovers "as great diversity of troubles as of Trees: the Oak to be so stubborne that nothing could cause it to bend; the Reede so shaking, that euery blast made it to bow; the Iuniper sweete, but too lowe for succour; the Cipresse faire, but without fruite . . . the Tree that bore the best fruite, to be the fullest of Caterpillers, and all to be infected with wormes".(88) Oxford leaves the grove and eventually comes upon the dazzling Sun-Tree, guarded by a Hermit.(89) This mysterious figure explains that it is "the Tree of the Sunne, whose nature is alwaies to stand alone, not suffering a companion, beeing it selfe without comparison".(90) The device has certain Burgundian overtones, recalling the famous *Pas de l'Arbre d'Or* held at Bruges in 1468, at the marriage of Margaret of York to

87. *Axiochus*, sig.D1.

88. *ibid.* sigs.D1-D1^v. This was to be echoed in Perrott and Cooke's tilt-yard speech in May: "The Sunne . . . nourisheth the tree whose roote groweth deepest, not whose toppe springeth loftiest". Perrott and Cooke allow that the sun's beams, royal favour, should be equally distributed, "the Jeniper shrub to growe by the loftie Oake, and claime no prerogative where the sun grauntes no priuiledge", Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, p.75.

89. A paper in the Revels Accounts, endorsed 1st April 1581, refers to a "Tree with shyldes, hermytage & hermytt, Savages, Enchaunter, Charryott, & incy dentes to theis", which may allude to Oxford's device in this pageant. See Feuillerat ed., *Documents of the Revels: Elizabeth*, p.345.

90. *Axiochus*, sig.D2.

Charles the Bold.(91) The tree remains green all the year round, enabling Oxford to pun on his own name, and alluding to Elizabeth's motto, *semper eadem*.(92) It is presented, moreover, as an emblem of Elizabeth herself:

Vestas bird sittest in the midst, wherat Cupid is euer drawing, but dares not shoote, beeing amazed at that princely and perfect Maiestie.(93)

The disabled Cupid represents that legitimised desire which alone could be publicly sanctioned in the court of Elizabeth. Oxford prostrates himself before it, in token of his loyalty and obedience. He seems to have won the prize in the tilt that followed.(94)

The Four Foster Children of Desire and the Callophiscus challenge both consider proper ways of expressing sexual desire, and in both it is transmuted into a language of loyalty and obedience. Neither was concerned simply to warn off the French negotiators, and even if they had been, evidence suggests that Alençon was already familiar with Elizabethan courtly equivocation. Later that year, the Duke left France for the Netherlands but contrary winds blew him off course. In November he arrived instead at the

91. This included a golden tree to be decorated with the shields of warriors defeated in combat. See Strong, *Splendour at Court*, pp.38-41. In 1575 at Woodstock, Sir Henry Lee had presented Elizabeth with an oak-tree laden with "A number of fine Pictures with posies of the Noble", see Cunliffe, "The Queenes Maiesties Entertainment at Woodstocke", p.98.

92. Oxford's family name was de Vere. The tree "springeth in spite of Autumnus, and continueth all the yeere as it were Ver", *Axiochus*, sig.D2^v.

93. *ibid.* sig.D2.

94. William Segar, *The booke of honor and armes* (1589), p.96: "The Prize was giuen to the Earle of Oxford".

English coast and came to court, not on a state visit but privately. His chief motive was to secure financial assistance from Elizabeth for his exploits in the Low Countries, although he had not put the marriage question squarely behind him. At the New Year of 1581-1582 he mounted a "royall Combat and fight on foote before her Maiestie" in which the challengers included himself, the Prince Dauphin and the Earls of Leicester and Sussex.(95) Thus there was not only a mixture of French and English, but one of opponents and supporters of the match. This suggests that Alençon's pageant, too, was designed to suppress not to foment faction. Alençon himself entered "sur vn chariot fait en forme de rocher. L'Amour & le Destin le menoient lié de grosses chaisnes d'or vers sa Maiesté".(96) A song follows, its stanzas sung alternately by the figures of Love and Fate. The former addresses Elizabeth in terms that seem to recall the May tilt: "Invaincu, mais Vainqueur des plus Grands de la terre", while Love tells Elizabeth she brings her chained prisoner:

Non pour sentir l'orgueil de vostre cruauté;
Mais afin qu'adorant vostre chaste beauté,
Vous changiez sa prison en franchise
honorable.(97)

This recalls Desire 's bid in *The Four Foster Children*.

But propriety is maintained by insisting on the chastity of

95. *ibid.* p.98. See also Segar, *Honor military, and civill*, p.196.

96. The fullest account of this pageant is by Luigi Gonzaga, *Les Mémoires de Monsieur le Duc de Nevers* (Paris; 1665) 2 vols. i.555-557, this quotation p.556.

97. *ibid.* p.556, my italics.

Beauty, even though Fate urges Elizabeth to forget her "voeu de chasteté".

The Duke of Nevers also mentions another show which concluded these Christmas revels, and in which Alençon took part. This involved several knights imprisoned in a castle by the power of a magician. After a combat, the castle opened to reveal a staircase and "vne lampe ardente". The prisoners descend, having been delivered "par le moyen d'un plus excellent & magnanime Prince, & le plus constant en amour qui fut iamais; & par la plus chaste, vertueuse & heroique Princesse qui fut au monde (entendant mondit Seigneur et sa Maiesté)".(98) But while Elizabeth and Alençon are figured as joint-liberators, the emphasis remains diplomatically upon her chastity and his constancy.

If *The Four Foster Children of Desire* was meant to show the indestructibility or, rather, the perpetuity of Desire, Alençon's Christmas pageants that year proved its point.

iv. Essex's Device of Love and Self-Love

In *The Four Foster Children of Desire*, the conquest of Desire is tempered by its perpetuity. The four challengers are punished specifically for their violence not for their adoration, which is palpably expected to continue. More than a policy-statement on the French match, the device was also designed to suppress faction and to examine the nature of love and desire at the Elizabethan court. The equivocal

98. *ibid.* p.557.

nature of the show allies it with the genre of the open-ended, unresolvable courtly debate, discussed above in a previous chapter. As courtly discourse, its imperative was primarily to entertain and to praise, not to instruct.

The same can be said, to some extent, of a device presented at court in the following decade by the Earl of Essex. This show, which Sir Henry Wotton called the Earl's "darling piece of love, and self love", was performed on Accession Day, 1595.⁽⁹⁹⁾ With Alençon long dead and the Queen well beyond child-bearing age, speculations about a royal marriage were no longer a reality. But the nature of Essex's device suggests a continuity with previous court shows. The language of desire apparently remains as powerful a courtly tool as ever. The device takes the form of a series of debates between Essex's pageant-persona, Erophilus, the lover of Desire, with Philautia, or Self-Love. Their subject is the proper expression of devotion to Elizabeth, and the whole could be read, like those shows already discussed, as a meditation on the problems of expression at court. At the same time, the language of love is laced delicately with critique, and, in Essex's case, with pique at royal disfavour.

As in all the shows studied here, Essex's device evades simple interpretation. Indeed, any reading of this particular show must be tempered by the tantalising

99. Sir Henry Wotton, *Reliquae Wottoniae* (1651), p.21.

fragmentariness of the evidence.(100) The authorship remains unknown (although it has been attributed to both Essex and Bacon) while any interpretation must be based on a purely conjectural ordering of the scattered texts and inconsistent accounts that survive.

Modern scholars are agreed, however, on a rough order.(101) There are two draft speeches by the figure of Philautia, written in French by Essex's secretary, Edward Reynolds.(102) If these begin the show they suggest a debate between Philautia and an emissary of Erophilus-Essex. In what seems to have been an opening speech, Philautia addresses Elizabeth in confident tones:

my judge is favourable, for your Majesty has ever rejected the pleadings of love, and given credence to Philautia. This messenger, expressing the force of his master's affection, solicits your Majesty's love; but he proves that no love is

100. This device seems to have consisted of the following parts: 1) A speech by Philautia, printed in *CSP: Domestic, 1595-1597*, pp.133-134; 2) A speech (or letter) from Philautia to Elizabeth, printed in *Bacon*, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii.376-377; 3) The Squire's speech at the tilt-yard, *ibid.* p.378; 4) Speeches by a Hermit, Soldier, Secretary and Squire, in a) *ibid.* pp.378-386, and b) *An Elizabethan Manuscript at Alnwick Castle, Northumberland*, ed. Frank J. Burgoyne (Longman, London; 1904) pp.57-63, the latter used here; 5) A speech presenting an Indian Prince as a Tilter, printed in a) *CSP: Domestic, 1595-1597*, pp.131-133, and b) *Bacon*, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii.388-390, the latter used here. There is an account of the masque in a letter from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, 22nd November 1595, reprinted in *Peele*, gen. ed. Prouty, i.179-181. Peele commemorates the Tilt in *Anglorum Feriae*, *ibid.* pp.265-275.

101. See Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, p.209; Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, pp.172-176.

102. *CSP: Domestic, 1595-1597*, pp.133-134. Internal evidence leads Strong to suspect that this part of the device was performed before the Accession Day Tilt itself, possibly on 16 November, 1595. See Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, p.209.

worthy of your entertainment. Love is an empty trade, a dream, an intoxication, and he who seeks another self loses himself.(103)

Self-love apparently scorns lovers as *selfish*, a paradox which alerts the reader to her unusual presentation in this show. Here, Philautia represents that devotion that might, with propriety, be expressed to the Queen, in terms of the *selfless* service which is epitomised by those who remain "faithful to themselves". She warns Elizabeth against the "stratagems" of lovers, and instead "counsels the love of those whom one can either serve or be served by, and that only as long as their service avails, and till others can be found cheaper". The exigencies of courtly love seem here to be reduced to the barest functionality. Philautia does not reject Erophilus' devotion out of hand, but she uses the same casuistry seen in *The Four Foster Children of Desire*. Desire needs to be educated in its proper articulation: "Philautia cannot blame them for loving, if she may teach them how to do it", and a miniature sermon on the dangers of presumption follows.

Unfortunately no answering speech from Philautia's interlocutor, Erophilus' Squire, seems to have survived. It would have been of some interest, for it appears to win a retraction from her: "I will no longer be an obstacle to the servant of Erophilus, but will entreat the Queen to take the devoted offer of love, if neither for the sake of

103. CSP: Domestic, 1595-1597, p.133.

Erophilus nor for that of love, yet for the sake of Philautia".(104)

The debate thus far is apparently self-contained. The forces of desire triumph after suitable instruction, making this device very similar to the *Four Foster Children*. But, also like the 1581 show, simple identifications of this kind remain elusive. In a speech (or letter) that seems logically to follow her retraction, Philautia appears to withdraw her initial submission.(105) In what is effectively an extension of the debate, Philautia proceeds to recount an audience with Pallas "upon whom Philautia depends". In language straight out of *The Four Foster Children*, Pallas advises Philautia that it is better "to raise the siege than send continual succours, and that may be done by stratagem". Pallas advises her to win Erophilus by *discourse*: "Address your self to Erophilus. You know the rest". Both she and Philautia anticipate what Venus, "the Goddess of fools" and Erophilus' patroness, will say in his defence. At this stage, Philautia presents herself before Elizabeth again, with a promise to send three emissaries to Erophilus, to argue her case more fully.

The three ambassadors, a Hermit, Soldier and a Secretary of State, now make their appearance in the tilt-yard. The Squire re-enters, carrying the Queen's token, a glove, and accompanied by the Earl of Essex as Erophilus.

104. *ibid.* p.134.

105. Bacon, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii.376-377. See also Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, p.209; and Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, p.172.

The latter is clad, like the four foster children, in the symbolic colours of Desire, "innocent white and faire carnacion".(106) The Squire seems to have complained against the unorthodox appearance of Philautia's creatures in the tilt-yard (presumably because they are not accoutred as knights) although it is not certain whether a dialogue or a dumbshow ensued. It is more likely to have been the latter, since both Rowland Whyte and George Peele refer to Essex's "mute approache and accion of his mutes".(107) Whyte describes how the Hermit presented Essex with a book of meditations, the Secretary, political discourses, and the Soldier, "Oracions of brave fought Battles".(108)

A tilt follows, and then what Whyte calls "thafter Supper" in which Philautia's three ambassadors renew their efforts to wean Erophilus from his vain following of

106. Peele, *Anglorum Feriae*, l.191, in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.270. For the glove, see Whyte's description: "he [Essex] sent his Page with some Speach to the Queen, who returned with her Majesties Glove", *ibid.* p.179.

107. Peele, *Anglorum Feriae*, l.195, *ibid.* p.270. See Whyte: "with this dumb Shew our Eyes were fed for that Time", *ibid.* p.180. Whyte also mentions the unexpected entry of "thordinary Post Boy of London, a ragged Villain all bemired, upon a poore leane Jade, gallaping and blowing for Liff", who delivered a packet of letters to the Secretary who in turn gave them to Essex, *ibid.* p.180. Young considers the possible political significance of this entry, relating it to the Essex-Burghley rivalry over suitable candidates for the office of Secretary of State, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, pp.173-175.

108. A single speech survives that might have relevance here, but it exists only in a draft, part of which was later used by the Secretary in the continuation of the masque after supper. See Bacon, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii.377-378. Contrast the opening of this with that of the Secretary's later speech, Burgoyne ed., *Elizabethan MS.*, p.59.

love.(109) The ambassadors represent the humanist values of duty and service, and as Hermit, Soldier and Statesman, figure three virtues of the commonwealth: contemplation, fame and experience. Each one urges the lover that self-fashioning and education are the best and only ways of expressing love to the Queen, for they are the tools of good policy, good government, and good commonwealth.

Each stresses that he wishes to educate not extinguish Erophilus' desire. The Hermit reminds him of the vagaries of royal favour: "The gardens of loue . . . freshe to daie and fading to morrow, [as the beams of the sun] comforts them or is turned from them", and urges him to replace them with "the gardens of the Muses" which "keep] the priuiledge of the golden adge, they [ever flourish and are in league] wth time. The monum^ts of witt [survive the monuments of power: the verses of a poet] endure wthout [a syllable lost, while states and empires pass".(110) This seems a clear statement on the dangers of presuming too far, but the Hermit concludes by saying that his precepts will make Erophilus' love more worthy of its object:

the guifts of the Muses will enworthie him in his loue, and wheras now he looketh vpon his Mr^s outsyde wth the eyes of sence, w^{ch} ar<e> das<e>led and amased, hee shall then beholde her high perfecons and heavenlie minde wth ye eyes of iudgm^t, w^{ch} grow stronger by neerelie and directlie viewi<n>g such an obiecte.(111)

109. See Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, p.209, and Peele, *Anglorum Feriae*, for the names of the challengers and defenders.

110. Burgoyne ed., *Elizabethan MS.*, p.57.

111. *ibid.* p.58.

Both iconography and theme recall *The Four Foster Children*. Again, presumptuous lovers who are over-bold need to be taught how to temper their desire.

The Soldier then offers Erophilus a role-model. Lovers should learn honour from the examples of war and not simply extract amorous metaphors from them. He too relates his profession to the rationalisation of desire at court. But the Secretary's speech that follows is, for our purposes, perhaps the most interesting of the three. Like the previous speakers, he redefines the proper expression of love within the specific environment of the late Elizabethan court. If Erophilus' real desire is "to make y^e prince hap]pie whom he serues" then his study should be statecraft and policy (one of the attributes of Spenser's "rightfull Courtier" in *Mother Hubberds Tale*). Philautia seeks only "his owne happines". Therefore "lett him be true to himself, & avoide all tedious reaches of state, that are not nearlie ptinent to his pticular". One message comes through loud and clear. Presumption must be reined, but proper devotion may be allowed. The Secretary concludes with a recipe for the perfect courtly lover:

when his m^rs shall pceaue his [endeavours are to become a true suppo]rter of her, a dischardge of care, a [watchman of her person, a scholar of her wisdom] an instrum^t of [her operation, and a conduit of her virtue, this with his diligences, accesses, humility and patience, may move her to give him further degrees and approaches to her favour. So that I conclude I have traced him the way to that which hath been granted to some few, *amare et sapere*, to love and be wise.(112)

112. *ibid.* p.60.

This is the culmination of Philautia's defence. Duty, obedience, and loyal service should advertise to the sovereign a courtier's worth, not the tradition of courtly compliment that has too much in common with flattery. Self-love is paradoxically selfless, the mainstay of the commonweal and of humanist tenets of statecraft. Private desire, on the other hand, is a disruptive and divisive phenomenon.

What takes place is a debate, however, not a lecture. Erophilus has his say too, or rather, the Squire speaks on his behalf. The latter does not refute the arguments that confront him, but he ingeniously re-locates them. He abides by the insistence on loyalty and service, but maintains that these may as easily be reconciled to Desire. All those virtues upheld by the messengers of Self-love - contemplation, fame and experience - find their apotheosis in Elizabeth herself, doubly justifying his master's devotion to her. He deconstructs the speeches of the messengers one by one, to conclude:

For the Muses they are tributarie to her Ma^{tie} for
y^e greate libertie they haue enioyed in her
kingdome during her most flourishing time . . . W^t
library can present such a storie of great accons
as hir Ma^{tie} carrieth [in her royall breast by the
often returne of this happie daie? . . . For
Fame], can all the exploytes of warr winne him
s[uch a title, as to have the name] favorite and
selected seruante to s[uch a Queen? For Fortune,
can any insolent politique promise to himself such
a fortune by making his own way, as the excellency
of her nature cannot deny to a careful,
obsequious, and dutiful servant? And if he
could, were it equal honour to attaine it by a

shape of cunning, then by the guifte of such a
ha[nd. (113)

Erophilus' Squire thus re-locates the language of service in Elizabeth, not in the self as Philautia's emissaries had urged. He promises to confer with the Muses "for her recreaon", to sacrifice himself in war for her remembrance, and "to her seruice he will consecrate all his watchfull indevors", keeping for ever in his heart the "picture of her beautie".

This, at least, corresponds with Whyte's account of the device. (114) The majority of scholars follow his scheme and draw their conclusions accordingly, reading Essex's show as a bid for royal favour couched in terms of hyperbolic compliment. (115) But, as usual in the case of these courtly entertainments, the critic is obliged to be wary. This is particularly true of a device the textual nature of which remains so vague. For certain elements within the

113. *ibid.* pp.62-63.

114. "they first delivered a well pend Speach to move this worthy Knight, to leave his vaine following of Love, and to betake him to heavenly Meditacion; the Secretaries all tending to have him follow Matters of State, the Soldiers perswading him to the Warr; but the Esquier answered them all; and concluded with an excellent, but to plaine *English*, that this Knight wold never forsake his Mistresses Love, whose Vertue made all his Thoughts Devine, whose Wisdom taught him all true Policy, whose Beauty and Worth, were at all Times able to make him fitt to command Armies", *Peele*, gen. ed. Prouty, i.180.

115. Chambers concludes that the "speeches [of the device] turned on the Earl of Essex's love for Elizabeth", *Elizabethan Stage*, iii.212. See also G. B. Harrison, *The Life and Death of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex* (Cassell, London; 1937) pp.90-91, who bases his interpretation almost entirely on Whyte's account; Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, p.141; and Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, p.176.

masque suggest that Erophilus' apparent success, like Desire's defeat in 1581, is not as simple as it first appears.

It is, after all, impossible to deny the strength of Philautia's arguments as presented by her three messengers. They speak as mouthpieces of humanist idealism. The humanist-as-courtier, his roles as thinker, active statesman and soldier, are here outlined as effectively as in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* or Elyot's *Governor*. If Philautia was destined to lose the argument, one wonders why the deviser of the masque had her re-enter the scene after her initial submission before the Squire. It is possible that, like Sidney in *The Lady of May*, Essex felt the ramifications of the argument could not be contained within such a pat dialogue. By bringing Philautia in again, armed with the considerable rhetorical force of Pallas and her three emissaries, the author of the show provides another opportunity for the figures of Self-love and the Lover-of-Desire to battle it out.

More than one critic has pointed out that the attributes praised by the Hermit, Soldier and Secretary

could in many cases be associated with Essex himself.(116) He was known as a court poet, officer (he was Master of the Horse) and above all as a soldier. There is a particularly pointed comparison in the Soldier's speech to the Squire. He remarks that ladies "will quicklie discerne a champion meete to [wear theyr gloue", when Essex himself enters the tilt-yard wearing Elizabeth's glove in token of her esteem. Considerations such as these do not radically alter previous interpretations but they do offer an alternative. The device could be read as more than an avowal of Desire's loyalty. It could also be seen to dramatise a very real debate in Essex's career between undying devotion and self-love.

With this in mind, the series of debates between the agents of Erophilus and Philautia cease to be a foregone conclusion. Again, like *The Lady of May*, the outcome may have been intended to be left open, or at least uncertain and equivocal. In her speech to Elizabeth, Philautia reports Pallas as saying "The time makes for you". A marginal note addressed to Essex in Bacon's hand adds: "That your Lordship knoweth, and I in part, in regard of the

116. See Ray Heffner, "Essex, the Ideal Courtier", *English Literary History* 1 (1934) pp.7-36. While not dismissing the Soldier and Secretary, Heffner singles out the Hermit, an emblem of contemplation, as alluding most specifically to Essex's known retiredness and love of learning, pp.19-21. See also Steven W. May ed., "The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex", *Studies in Philology* 77 (1980) pp.1-132, who proposes a similar reading of the Hermit, and suggests that "After 1599 . . . Devereux's only viable course of action was the graceful acceptance of just such a retirement", p.18.

Queen's unkind dealing, which may persuade you to self-love".(117) It is possible that this is why the arguments of Philautia were put forth so strongly: to make doubly clear to Elizabeth Essex's self-sacrifice in putting her before his own private satisfaction.

The first interpretation (that which labours Essex's loyalty to the Queen) depends for its evidence on Whyte's reconstruction, in which the Squire indisputably has the last word. But Whyte's account contrasts with what might have been Bacon's original putative scheme. A rough draft in Bacon's hand seems to outline the debate:

The persons to be three: one dressed like an Heremite or Philosopher, representing Contemplation; the second like a Capitain, representing Fame; and the third like a Counsellor of Estate, representing Experience: *the third to begin to the Squire, as being the master of the best behaviour or compliment, though he speak last.*(118)

This may refer to speeches made at the tilt-yard, and not to the continuation after supper, with which the device concludes. But the evidence suggests that the tilt-yard encounter was a dumbshow, and therefore that this, though only a rough draft, indicates Bacon's initial plan for "thafter Supper". If so, the Secretary was to speak last on account of his courtesy, providing a model of the humanist-as-courtier in action.

Whyte's account of the sequence is so precise that it is possible an early plan of Bacon's to give the last word

117. Bacon, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii.377.

118. *ibid.* p.376, my italics.

to the Secretary was changed at the last minute. Harrison relates the whole entertainment to Essex's need to reassure Elizabeth of his loyalty after the dedication to him of a seditious pamphlet about the succession.(119) Although Elizabeth did not seem to suspect his collaboration, he may have felt it wise to put her in no doubt of his loyalty in the tilt-yard that November. But interpretation is still dogged by uncertainty. In his *Anglorum Feriae*, Peele makes much of the Soldier and Secretary who solicit Essex to follow their exemplary lives, but makes no mention at all of the Squire's expression of love for the Queen. One cannot read too much into what amounts to a poetic rendering of the tilt, but one could see it, perhaps, as a discreet omission. Whyte records that Elizabeth's reaction was mixed: "if she had thought there had been so much said of her, she would not have been there that night". If love had the final word and did not please Elizabeth, there would be an argument for excluding it from the account in *Anglorum Feriae*. If not, all the more reason for dwelling on the virtue of the Secretary:

t'apply him to the care
[Of common weale affaires and shoue the way,
To helpe to underbeare with grave advice,
The waightie beame whereon the State depends.(120)

119. The pamphlet was called *A conference about the next succession to the crowne of England* (1594), by R. Doleman, thought to be the *nom de plume* of the notorious Jesuit, Robert Parsons, author of *Leicester's Commonwealth*. When shown a copy of this dangerous text, dedicated to himself in name, Essex, perhaps politically, became ill. See Harrison, *Life and Death of Essex*, pp.88-90.

120. Peele, *Anglorum Feriae*, ll.200-203, in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.270-271.

Peele's evidence typifies the problem of interpreting such shows. Effectively, either reading is possible: a vindication of love or a vindication of self-love. It remains impossible to reach a firm conclusion, except to say that some evidence suggests a qualification to the apparent success of Erophilus.

The confusion is not relieved by another tilt-yard speech, which internal evidence links to the 1595 device. This was spoken by a page on behalf of an Indian Prince from the "West Indias", the only son of a great king, but born blind.⁽¹²¹⁾ From the speech one learns that an oracle advised the king to send his son to England "Where reigns a Queen in peace and honour true". The page describes the prince as "armed after the Indian manner with bow and arrows, and when he is in his ordinary habit an Indian naked, or attired with feathers, though now for comeliness clad". This hints that the Indian prince is more than he seems. In Renaissance iconography, a naked, feathered, blind boy, armed with a bow and arrow could only be one

121. The speech is printed in *CSP: Domestic, 1595-1597*, pp.131-133; Walter Bouchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex* (Murray, London; 1853) 2 vols. ii.501-505 (although Devereux believes it to belong to another show); Bacon, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii.388-390, the latter used here. Spedding links the Indian Prince with Raleigh, recently returned from his Guiana voyage, with whom Essex may have been seeking alliance.

person, Cupid.(122) This is made clearer when, in Elizabeth's miraculous presence, he suddenly regains his sight and is presented to the Queen as "Seeing Love".(123)

"Seeing Love" is the greatest rationalisation of desire yet to be encountered in courtly pageants. He petitions the Queen to accept him: "though Philautia hath hitherto so prevailed with your Majesty, as you would never accept of him while he was an unperfect piece, yet now he is accomplished by your Majesty's grace and means, that you will vouchsafe him entertainment". He offers Elizabeth his gifts of youth, "his wings of liberty" and, perhaps most importantly, his bow and arrows "to wound where it pleaseth you". He lists several arguments against love, including presumption in aiming too high and diminution in stooping too low, which were among Philautia's objections to Elizabeth's acceptance of Erophilus. But they all depended on love's blindness. Now restored to sight, he argues, Cupid may be welcomed at court.

122. If the identification with Cupid is correct, it might be possible to associate the Indian Prince with one of the tilters described by Peele. In *Anglorum Feriae*, Robert Dudley enters "Lyke Venus sonne] in Mars his armor clad", a reference, perhaps, to the normally naked Prince now "for comeliness clad". Dudley was evidently accompanied by a pageant of some kind, although the poet declines to "dive into the depthe of his device". Peele compares his precipitate entry with an arrow shot by "an Archer with a bended bowe", *Anglorum Feriae*, ll.273, 276, 282, in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.273. The association of ideas provides a further link between the two. Compare Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, p.175.

123. Bacon, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii.389. Devereux transcribes "seemly Love", *Lives and Letters*, ii.502, 504.

All this seems, at first sight, to strengthen Erophilus' bid for favour. But, as evidence in earlier shows could be shown to qualify desire's success so, on inspection, this speech on behalf of Cupid appears similarly equivocal. For, like the Secretary and Philautia's other servants, "Seeing Love" puts himself in the position of instructor and delivers advice to Erophilus' Squire. The speech of his page is one of the clearest statements on the proper articulation of desire, and in this it anticipates the Secretary's speech after supper: "Let him consider whom he serves", he says, addressing Erophilus, "since in his blindness he hath chanced so well as to fix his affections in the most excellent place, let him now by his sight find out the most ready way".(124)

Instruction is not reserved for Erophilus, however. With "Seeing Love", Elizabeth herself will be able to distinguish truth from falsehood, devotion from flattery:

Your Majesty shall obtain the curious window into hearts of which the ancients speak; thereby you shall discern protestation from fullness of heart, ceremonies and fashions from a habit of mind that can do no other, affection [affectation?] from affection. Your Majesty shall see the true proportion of your own favours, so as you may deliver them forth by measure, that they neither cause surfeit nor faintness . . . And to conclude, your Majesty may be invested of that which the poet saith was never granted, *Amare et sapere*.(125)

124. Bacon, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, viii. 390.
 125. *ibid.* p.390.

Cupid's page thus ends with a tag that anticipates *verbatim* the advice which the Secretary is to give Erophilus later that night.

To summarise: Essex's device at the 1595 Accession Tilt seems on first reading to be a straightforward vindication of Erophilus or Desire. But, on closer inspection, it proves to be as equivocal and unsusceptible to simple identification as all of the courtly shows considered so far. Philautia's arguments are too strong to be dismissed out of hand, and it is possible that one of her messengers may have had the last word in the argument. In the additional speech by the page of "Seeing Love", if it can be assumed to relate to the rest of the show, the author maintains a similar ambivalence. As instructor to both Queen and courtiers, he mimics the humanist role of the Secretary and the other messengers of Pallas and Philautia. Yet he urges Elizabeth's acceptance of love and of love's bow and arrow.

If the debate is between love and self-love, then the outcome is by no means certain. The deviser of the show ensured that the arguments should appear strong on both sides. One could say that by re-locating the humanist virtues of contemplation, fame and experience in Elizabeth, Erophilus still abides by them. In that case the "darling piece of love, and self love" ceases to be a debate-play at all, and both parties are in fact concerned with the same

thing: the proper expression of desire and of counsel at the court of Elizabeth.

Elements from Essex's 1595 device reappear with striking similarity near the end of Jonson's play, *Cynthia's Revels*.⁽¹²⁶⁾ One of the inset masques which concludes the play introduces the figure of Cupid disguised as his opposite, Anteros. In this guise, he ushers in four nymphs from the court of Perfection and presents them to the presiding queen-goddess, Cynthia. He offers the latter a crystal ball, "note of monarchie, and symbole of perfection" which is able "to shew whatsoeuer the world hath excellent" and which is akin to the gift of privileged sight offered Elizabeth by "Seeing Love".⁽¹²⁷⁾ In Jonson's later masque, *Love Restored*, Cupid's brother, Anti-Cupid, is, like Anteros, called a lover of virtue. So here it seems the transformation of Cupid is complete. He cannot be metamorphosed back again: "it was ominous to take the name of ANTEROS vpon you, you know not what charme or inchantment lies in the word".⁽¹²⁸⁾

The figure of Philautia also appears in the masque, although disguised as her antithesis, Storge or "naturall

126. The play was performed at Blackfriars by the Children of the Chapel in 1600, printed in Quarto the following year, and reprinted in the 1616 Folio, see *Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, iv.1-184. All references are to this edition. The editors add that a play so ostentatiously addressed to the Queen may be presumed to have been designed for court-performance, although no evidence for this survives, *ibid.* i.393.

127. *Cynthia's Revels*, V.vii.16-17, 19-20.

128. V.x.84-86.

Affection . . . allowable selfe-loue", a hand-maid of reason. This disguise recalls the exemplary Philautia, a servant of Pallas in Essex's device. In Jonson's inset masque, her emblem and impresse represent the Aristotelian golden mean: "SE SUO MODVLO. Alluding to that true measure of ones selfe, which as euerie one ought to make".(129) In her masque-persona, Self-love approximates to self-knowledge.

One cannot isolate the final masque from the rest of the play, however, which is, as its subtitle suggests, an extended allegory on love and self-love.(130) When not disguised under their pageant-personae, Cupid and Philautia are cast in their conventional roles, Philautia as egotism, Cupid as mischievous desire. Indeed, Cupid is Philautia's page for the duration of play. The play's central motif is the fountain of self-love, "the mythic *Fons* by which Narcissus perished for the love of his own image".(131) The play begins with images of presumption punished - Narcissus, Actaeon, Niobe - all of which are drawn from the *Metamorphoses*. It was this that led Herford and Simpson to forge a link between Jonson's play and Essex's disgrace in 1599, and in particular with his precipitate and ill-advised entry into the Queen's bed-chamber that September.(132)

129. V.vii.26, 29, 32-34.

130. "The Fountayne of selfe-Loue". In the 1616 Folio version, Jonson adds a dedication to "The Speciall Fountaine of Manners: The Court", which he urges to "render mens figures truly", p.33.

131. Jonson, ed. Herford and Simpson, i.399.

132. *ibid.* pp.393-395.

Historical associations of this kind can never be more than conjectural. But in addition to this incidental link with Essex, there are other more important similarities. Both *Cynthia's Revels* and the 1595 tilt-yard device could be read as meditations on the problems of expression at court. In the 1595 show, the strength of Philautia's arguments hinted that Erophilus might be severely tempted to follow self-love rather than selfless devotion to his sovereign. In *Cynthia's Revels*, likewise, obligatory praise does not go unmixed. There is a hint of criticism.

The play's teasing fluctuation of genre, which hovers between satire and masque, has been commented on by a number of scholars.(133) It contains many elements characteristic of the later Jonsonian masque: mythological characters, allegory, anti-masque, and the movement towards a restoration of celestial and royal hegemony. Cupid is, after all, transformed into his virtuous anti-type, while Philautia and the other court-vices are reformed through penitence at the statue of Niobe.

But the play is also a ruthless exposé of the masque form, dedicated, as it is, to the preparation of the "Revels" instigated by Cynthia. The vision of vices

133. See Ernest William Talbert, "The Classical Mythology and the Structure of *Cynthia's Revels*", *Philological Quarterly* 22 (1943) pp.193-210; Allan H. Gilbert, "The Function of the Masques in *Cynthia's Revels*", *ibid.* pp.211-230; E. M. Thron, "Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*: Multiplicity and Unity", *Studies in English Literature* 11 (1971) pp.235-247; and John C. Meagher, *Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masques* (University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana; 1966) pp.181-184.

masking as virtues, which occurs in the final masque, was a standard Renaissance emblem of flattery.(134) Anxious to mitigate accusations of her severity against Actaeon, Cynthia orders her courtiers to arrange an entertainment. But her relaxation of moral authority provides an opportunity for the foolish courtiers to exhibit their presumptuousness, a vice which reaches unparalleled heights in the scene that immediately precedes the performance of the masques: "what neede wee gaze on CYNTHIA, that haue our selfe to admire?".(135) Not only, then, does the play allow Jonson ample scope for anti-court satire. It also illustrates the dangers that attend lending an ear to the talkative tongue, rumour. Cynthia admits that her leniency allowed the entrance to "giddie Cupid" and other vices into her court:

CVPID, we must confesse this time of mirth
(Proclaim'd by vs) gaue opportunitie,
To thy attempts, although no priuiledge.(136)

Jonson effectively shows that the sins of love and self-love are both endemic to court, but adopts the normal Elizabethan ruse to exclude Cynthia from direct blame. Nonetheless, as one critic sees it, he uses the occasion of her temporary leniency to "involve the Queen actively in the dynamics of social corruption and reform".(137)

134. This aspect is explored by Gilbert, "The Function of the Masques", *passim*. See also Karl F. Zender, "The Unveiling of the Goddess in *Cynthia's Revels*", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 77 (1978) pp.37-52.

135. *Cynthia's Revels*, V.x.45-46.

136. V.xi.85-87.

137. Zender, "The Unveiling of the Goddess", p.45.

v. *Endimion*

Lyly's *Endimion* may seem a surprising end-piece to a chapter on Desire. There are no personifications of Desire in the play, nor of the ubiquitous Cupid who appears in four of Lyly's other dramas.(138) But the discussion of other court shows seems to call for a new interpretation of this much-studied play.

Endimion, like many courtly texts, lays itself open to a particular kind of exegetical interpretation. One recalls that Roland Whyte said of Essex's 1595 device that the "World makes many untrue Constructions of these Speaches, comparing the Hermitt and the Secretary, to two of the Lords, and the Soldier to Sir Roger Williams".(139) Ben Jonson refers to a "paper" belonging to Sir Walter Raleigh explaining "ye Allegories of his Fayrie Queen" in which the Blatant Beast signifies the Puritans and Duessa Mary Queen of Scots, while Sir Kenelm Digby wrote a romance in which he and his wife were identified by an accompanying "key". Later in the seventeenth century, John Aubrey received a similar key to Sidney's *Arcadia*, in which the characters were seen to figure as various members of the Sidney family, and Philoclea as Penelope Rich, although its author admits that "all I know of it is not worth

138. See *Sapho and Phao*, *Gallathea*, *The Woman in the Moon* and *Loves Metamorphosis*.

139. Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.180.

anything".(140) From the last century *Endimion* too has been read by some as the caricature of some particular courtly intrigue.(141) Perhaps one should bring a similar scepticism to the play, or at least to the multifarious historical identifications that it has invited, some of which are more fanciful than others.

The problem with such historical interpretations is the varying degree of certainty they evince. None of *Endimion's* interpreters doubt that Cynthia is the same Cynthia as that of Spenser, Jonson or Raleigh: the Queen. Yet even among the most dogmatic of historical critics, an element of doubt persists. The identifications remain elusive, and other levels of allegory are acknowledged to exist. The play seems to provide hermeneutic tools such as

140. Jonson, *Conversations with William Drummond*, in Jonson, ed. Herford and Simpson, i.137; Sir Kenelm Digby, *Loose Fantasies*, ed. V. Gabrieli (Rome; 1968); John Aubrey, *'Brief Lives' chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 and 1696*, ed. Arthur Clark (Clarendon, Oxford; 1898) 2 vols. ii.250-251. The author of the letter, dated 18 February, 1687, is D. Tyndale.

141. See N. J. Halpin, *Oberon's Vision in the Midsummer-Night's Dream* (Shakespeare Society, London; 1843); G. P. Baker ed., *Endimion* (New York; 1894); Bond ed., Lyly, iii.81-103; Josephine W. Bennett, "Oxford and *Endimion*", *PMLA* 57 (1942) pp.354-369; and F. S. Boas, *Queen Elizabeth in Drama and Related Studies* (Allen and Unwin, London; 1950).

contrast or allusion, yet it consistently defies simple schematisation.(142)

This leads to what Saccio calls the "oddity" of the play, and to what a host of critics have defined as its perplexing and enigmatic nature.(143) It is this that I wish to concentrate upon, and suggest that *Endimion* may share with those courtly shows already studied, a degree of "functional ambiguity". The use of, and delight in, equivocation have already been shown to be central in the handling of a delicate and complex subject: the means of expressing 'desire' at the court.

The play begins with Endimion addressing the queen-goddess, Cynthia, in the overtly sexual terms of a courtly lover. He tells his friend, Eumenides, that he desires to "possesse the Moone herselfe", for her beauty is such that

142. See Hunter, *John Lyly*, pp.184-193; Huppé, "Allegory of Love in Lyly's Court Comedies"; Percy W. Long, "The Purport of Lyly's *Endimion*", *PMLA* 24 (1909) pp.164-184; Peter Saccio, *The Court Comedies of John Lyly* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1969) pp.169-186, and "The Oddity of Lyly's *Endimion*", *Elizabethan Theatre* 5 (1975) pp.92-111; J. A. Bryant Jr., "The Nature of the Allegory in Lyly's *Endymion*", *Renaissance Papers* (1956) pp.4-11; Peter Weltner, "The Antinomic Vision of Lyly's *Endymion*", *English Literary Renaissance* 3 (1973) pp.5-29; and Sallie Bond, "John Lyly's *Endimion*", *Studies in English Literature* 14 (1974) pp.189-199.

143. Saccio, "The Oddity of Lyly's *Endimion*", title and p.95. See also Saccio, *Court Comedies*, p.169, where he writes of the play's "perplexity" and "mysterious" nature; Long, "Purport of *Endimion*", p.175, calls it "enigmatic", and Robert S. Knapp, "The Monarchy of Love in Lyly's *Endimion*", *Modern Philology* 73 (1975-1976) pp.353-367, an "enigma", p.353; it remains "a puzzle" for Susan D. Thomas, "*Endimion* and its Sources", *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978) pp.35-52, this quotation p.35.

at its peak all should wish to "rauish" her.(144) It is by no means certain whether this kind of sexual imagery is suitable when wooing such an unattainably high mistress.(145) He is duly punished for his pride by Cynthia's coldness; despairs, suffers and sleeps. In a later scene, despairing at her apparent coyness, he muses "my heart which cannot bee bent by the hardnes of fortune, may be brused by amorous desires", and promptly falls asleep.(146) He eventually re-emerges from unconsciousness having learned to speak his desire in a more appropriate and decorous mode.

This mode is figured as the kind of friendship which Eumenides tortuously compares with love. The latter's inner eclogue on the nature of friendship, gives it all those characteristics that make it suitable for expression to Cynthia. Unlike love (but like Cynthia) friendship is "infinite and immortall"; it is "the image of eternitie, in which there is nothing moueable, nothing mischeeuous". When he awakes, Endimion too realises that Eumenides' friendship "is immortall".(147) The wise Geron warns Eumenides that Desire is a transient phenomenon:

Desire dyes in the same moment that Beautie sickens, and Beautie fadeth in the same instant that it flourisheth.(148)

144. *Endimion*, I.i.14-15, 60, in *Lyly*, ed. Bond, iii.21, 22, all references to this edition.

145. On the dubious nature of Endimion's early passion, see Knapp, "Monarchy of Love", pp.357-361; and Saccio, "Oddity", pp.98-99.

146. *Endimion*, II.iii.7-9.

147. *ibid.* III.iv.116, 125-126, V.i.151.

148. III.iv.131-132.

Eumenides replies that "Vertue shall subdue affections, wisdome lust, *friendship beautie*".(149) As the conqueror of beauty, friendship thus assumes the traditional place of Desire, and provides a positive alternative to Endimion's unsuccessful discourse. Having undergone the reform and restoration which Eumenides predicts in the first scene, Endimion is at last worthy to be accepted by Cynthia. He is welcomed and rewarded for having learned, passively it seems, the proper mode of expression:

The time was Madam, and is, and euer shall be, that I honoured your highnesse aboue all the world; but to stretch it so far as to call it loue, I neuer durst . . . Such a difference hath the Gods sette between our states, that all must be dutie, loyaltie, and reuerence; nothing (without it vouchsafe your highnes) be termed loue.(150)

While he might whisper love to himself, he will say "honor" aloud. Cynthia rewards his seemly hesitancy with a unique favour: "this honorable respect of thine, shalbe christned loue in thee, & my reward for it fauor".(151)

Endimion's desire is thus legitimised, and, as the proper expression of love at court, is defined and given the stamp of royal approval. This re-introduces the familiar topos of Desire-as-loyalty, already witnessed in the shows discussed. But *Endimion* also shares something else with them. The simple 'progressive' reading of Endimion's

149. III.iv.143-144, my italics.

150. V.iii.162-170.

151. V.iii.179-180.

punishment, reform and acceptance belies a more complex structure. As early historical interpretations of the play soon manifest, the drama both invites and repulses identification. It seems to provide a relatively straightforward reading, yet certain elements stubbornly resist schematisation.⁽¹⁵²⁾ *Endimion* problematises interpretation at every step, making it virtually impossible to write about without reducing it to some crude schema. For Lyly's plays do not pivot upon a causal narrative like other contemporary Elizabethan drama. With the exception of *Mother Bombie*, they are far removed from classical forms and unities. Causal plot is placed alongside (if not subsumed under) an allegorical aggregate. The relationship of plot to subplot is too often read as if Lyly's plays were Shakespeare's when they have more in common with *The Faerie Queene*. In *Endimion*, love, a multi-faceted phenomenon, splinters into a mass of allegorical signs, each one subject to equivocation and interpretation. As a rule, allegory foregrounds and usually complicates modes of representation, and it is this consciousness of its own form that makes

152. For example, *Endimion* might be compared with Sir Thopas and Corsites as a sleeper, with both these and Eumenides as lovers, or with Geron as the retired, melancholic lover, yet none of these throw particular light on the nature of *Endimion*'s situation. Rather, they reveal different facets of a single emotion, and create an impression which Saccio describes as entering "a roomful of mirrors - or the middle books of *The Faerie Queene*", *Court Comedies*, p.170.

Endimion so perplexing, and liable to defeat "the critical systems that have tried to contain it".(153)

The initial problem with *Endimion* is the nature of its protagonist's love. It is suggested that Endimion might be mad or sane, treacherous or just, but the debates on the subject in the first two scenes do not attempt to specify which. Like so much else, it is left open to question. In the first scene, for example, Eumenides reviles his friend as "ridiculous", "mad", "peeuish" and accuses him of idolatry and blasphemy.(154) There are echoes here of Orlando Furioso, who lost his wits on the moon.(155) Yet, as Endimion's self-defence makes clear, the question of his sanity, like Cynthia's constancy, is a matter for interpretation. Arguments can be presented on either side, and presumably, like the nature of Cynthia's constancy, it is something that can only be left as a paradox. But we are left in doubt as to whether Endimion is being held up for imitation or for ridicule.

153. Saccio, "Oddity", p.95. On Lyly's allegorical method, see also Saccio, *Court Comedies*, pp.169-186; and Weltner, "Antinomic Vision", pp.5-7. For a more general study, see Rosamond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1966).

154. *Endimion*, I.i.8, 16, 19.

155. One of the possible sources for Endimion the lover (as opposed to the beloved) is Pliny's *Natural History*, II.vi.41-43. Lyly may have borrowed from Pliny the notion of the eccentric, doting astronomer. In another analogue, Antonio Epicuro's pastoral drama *Mirzia* (published posthumously as *La Martia* in 1582), the central character Hortensio becomes mad at the impossibility of his love's fruition with the moon-goddess, Diana. See Thomas, "*Endimion* and its Sources", pp.37-42.

The second scene makes this no clearer. Tellus and Floscula dispute Endimion's love for Cynthia. For Tellus, it is a treacherous dotage for which Endimion used her own affections as a cloak. But Floscula defends him:

Suffer then *Endimion* to followe his affections,
though to obtaine her be impossible, and let him
flatter himselfe in his owne imaginations, because
they are immortall.(156)

We are presented with two equally feasible possibilities. Endimion's love represents either the highest affection humans are capable of, or the crazy dotage of a perjured courtly lover. The scene does not resolve the dilemma, which seriously compromises the play's central symbol, Endimion's love. While Tellus exercises her jealous spells over him, she nonetheless admits to Floscula that she knows the extent of her powers, like Juno "who woulde turne *Iupiters* louers to beastes on the earth, though she knew afterwards they should be starres in heauen".(157) She remains incapable of winning back his heart once it is fixed on a worthier object, and her witch, Dipsas, knows that even though she can enchant Endimion, the truth of his love for Cynthia will triumph in the end.

A further question hangs over Endimion's fate. One might legitimately ask what exactly he is punished for. Cynthia declares that she was distant to him in order to rein his presumption:

156. *Endimion*, I.ii.32-34.
157. *ibid.* I.i.67-69.

I fauoured thee *Endimion* for thy honor, thy vertues, thy affections: but to bring thy thoughts within the compasse of thy fortunes, I haue seemed strange, that I might haue thee staied.(158)

Yet she does not punish him directly, as she proves quite capable of doing in the cases of *Tellus* and *Semele*. Both these women are made to suffer for their waspish tongues, and *Cynthia* shows herself to be particularly sensitive to discourse that is not "answerable to your dueties" and "fitte for my dignitie".(159) Whatever else *Endimion* is punished for, therefore, it is clearly not for a talkative tongue, and this implies that some elements of his worldly address to *Cynthia* cannot have gone amiss.

For *Endimion* is not, strictly speaking, punished by *Cynthia* at all. He is cast into an enchanted sleep at the behest of *Tellus* for an entirely different crime: dissimulation. *Tellus'* revenge cannot win him back, but it serves to exacerbate his misunderstanding of *Cynthia's* favour. She fails to make *Endimion* burn for love of her, but succeeds in making him regard the moon-goddess as a courtly mistress, and in making him address her, however inappropriately, as such: "Sweet *Cynthia*, how wouldst thou be pleased, how possessed? . . . Desirest thou the passions of loue, the sad and melancholie moodes of perplexed mindes, the not to be expressed torments of racked thoughts?".(160) *Tellus* threatens to entice him with "amorous deuises", to

158. IV.iii.78-81.

159. III.i.18, 19.

160. II.i.4-10.

lead him into "loose desires" and "dissolute thoughts", which will make him become a dandy and write "Sonnets in my fauour".(161) In fact, he does none of these things for her, but is tricked into doing them for Cynthia. This is what makes him mistake Cynthia's coldness for courtly coyness when in fact it is her response to his pride. It leads to his despair and the full trappings of courtly-love melancholia: contemplation, withdrawal and sleep.(162)

This conclusion serves to compromise Cynthia's omnipotence somewhat, and also alters our interpretation of Tellus. The latter evokes the earthy and worldly aspects of desire, especially uncontrollable physical passion. Her love is consistently associated with images of burning and flames. She wants Endimion to "burne" for love of her, complains of her own "burning desire", and is accompanied by the allegorical maid-servants Favilla and Scintilla.(163)

Yet Tellus effectively works in conjunction with Cynthia. The poignancy of Cynthia's punishing strangeness would be lost on Endimion without Tellus' intervention.

161. I.ii.46-47, 58.

162. This familiar topos was to be revived by Sir Henry Lee at the Ditchley entertainment in 1592. There he is cast into a deep sleep by the Fairy Queen as a punishment for transferring his rightful devotion to her elsewhere. See Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I*, pp.129-131.

163. *Endimion*, I.ii.44, iv.13. On Tellus' fiery attributes see David Edge, "Lyly's *Endimion*", *Explicator* 39.iii (1981) p.3; Long, "Purport of *Endimion*", p.179; and Saccio, "Oddity", pp.101-102. Flames were a standard device signifying passion. See Ardent Desire's costume of "burnyng flames of gold" in 1522, Hall, *Chronicle*, p.631; and Dudley's entry at the 1595 Accession Day Tilt, "Lyke Venus sonne . . . Besett with glorious globes and golden flames", *Anglorum Feriae*, ll.273-274, in Peele, gen. ed. Prouty, i.273.

Cynthia's aloofness is only brought home to him by his fundamental misunderstanding of the situation, a misunderstanding that Tellus promotes. Indeed, on reflection, there is no simple opposition between the two powers. One depends upon the other, and each has a case. Endimion is equally guilty of dissembling and of presumption. He claims, for example, that his love for Cynthia contains "no flatterie, nor deceit, error, nor arte", but proceeds immediately to dissemble with Tellus by vowing that he loves her. This can only be read as a gross inconsistency. There is no getting round the troubling fact that, as Saccio puts it, "Endimion has lied".(164) This serves to justify Tellus in her punishment. If she is just yet cruel, then Cynthia is merciful yet just.

The two-sidedness of love is reflected in the first of two mysterious dreams which Endimion has while he lies in his enchanted sleep. A female figure threatens violence but refrains from stabbing him and turns into an apotheosis of magisterial beauty that allies her to Cynthia herself: "in her heauenly face such a diuine Maiestie, mingled with a sweete mildenes, that I was rauished with the sight aboue measure, and wished that I might haue enioied the sight without end". The dual aspects contained within this lady are also figured by two accompanying women, each of whom maintains a single symbolic aspect, "vnmoueable crueltie"

164. *Endimion*, II.i.44-45. Saccio, "Oddity", p.103.

and "constant pittie".(165) The rendering of Elizabeth's paradoxical nature, which is one interpretation of the dream, would have been familiar from other shows and court poems. Zabeta's arborification of lovers at Kenilworth in 1575 was considered both cruel and just. Dudley would not be so rash as to impute which. Zabeta anticipates the Moon-goddess of *Cynthia's Revels* as a just arbitrator, but she also reveals her lighter side: "But what haue serious repetitions / To doe with reuels, and the sports of court? / We not intend to sowre your late delights / With harsh expostulation". Similarly, the "dred *Mercilla*" yet has "piteous ruth" on her enemies in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*.(166)

Lyly's method is akin to Spenser's, but *Endimion* could be read not only as the "Legend of Constancie" that Saccio proposes.(167) It is also a "Legend of Desire". It provides a place and means for the exercise of equivocation and ambiguity, and reveals a way of defining the parameters of courtly desire, something at once distinguishable from, yet ultimately inseparable from, the discourse of worldly, sensual love.

165. *Endimion*, V.i.97-100, 101-102. A number of critics read this dream as an allegory of the Four Daughters of God in spite of the unequivocally tripartite formulation. See Saccio, *Court Comedies*, pp.175-186; Bryant, "Nature of the Allegory", pp.7-8; Knapp, "Monarchy of Love", p.364; and Huppé, "Allegory of Love", p.105n.

166. *Cynthia's Revels*, V.xi.28-31; *The Faerie Queene*, V.ix.40, 50.

167. Saccio, "Oddity", p.108.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPENSER: PRINCE OF POETS, POET OF PRINCES

Then pardon me, most dreaded Soueraine,
 That from your selfe I doe this vertue bring,
 And to your selfe doe it returne againe.(1)

Introduction

The stress in the last chapter on the inherent ambiguity and equivocation of courtly texts leads naturally to a study of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In the preceding inquiry, poets and courtiers were shown to contribute to the polite fiction that made up the cult of their Tudor sovereign, and to capitalise on an old medieval allegory of Beauty and Desire to flatter her in her unique femaleness. But they were also shown to exploit ambiguities endemic in such texts to suggest alternative fictions, and not always such orthodox ones. Leicester's entertainment at Kenilworth, for example, fused his submission to the Queen as a loyal subject with a bid for power over her natural, and, by implication, political body. This kind of courtly transaction corresponds to a notion of the reciprocity of power-relations between monarch and subject that has found increasing favour with literary historians in recent years,

1. *The Faerie Queene*, VI.Pro.7.

and which, for some, Spenser has seemed to epitomise.(2) *The Faerie Queene* is full of such complexities, but the preceding inquiry has made it no easier to interpret. It remains a dark conceit, with a "strange fullness and roundness" as Kenelm Digby long ago realised.(3) If anything, the preceding studies have only served to show that Spenser's poem is an archetypal courtly text, equivocal, ambiguous and, like Jonson's "more remou'd mysteries", evasive of simple identifications.(4)

The original inspiration for this study came from Spenser. Some years ago a study of love-language in *The Faerie Queene* prompted me to consult the *OED*. It emerged there that Spenser was the first to use the verb to court in the sense of paying homage "to one whose favour, affection or interest is sought", and he was also cited as one of the first to use the word in its amorous sense, to *make love*. At the time this seemed to open a rich vein. It suggested a correlation between Elizabeth's court and the enforced

2. See, for example, Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text", in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Parker and Quint, pp.303-340; Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke*, and *James I and the Politics of Literature*; Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, chapter 5; Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; 1983) chapter 4; and A. Bartlett Giamatti, "A Prince and Her Poet", *Yale Review* 73 (1984) pp.321-337.

3. Kenelm Digby, "Concerning Spenser that I wrote at Mr May's Desire" (1638), reproduced in *Edmund Spenser: A critical anthology*, ed. Paul J. Alpers (Penguin, Harmondsworth; 1969) pp.57-60, this quotation p.60.

4. *Hymenaei*, Preface, in *Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, vii.209.

Petrarchan rhetoric used by her courtiers and poets in order to gain attention, influence and prestige.

Subsequent investigations, mapped out in chapter 2, proved the *OED* to be out by a few years. The amorous sense of to court had already developed on the Continent, independently of Elizabeth's female sovereignty, and had been current in English from the 1560s. But the Dictionary remains correct in its emphasis. The structure of *The Faerie Queene* is itself predicated upon a courtship: Arthur's quest for Gloriana. The poem itself is, moreover, an act of courtship, an offering to its eponymous heroine and its dedicatrix, "The Most High, Mightie and Magnificent Empresse". It presents itself as an *enchiridion*, a tool of commonwealth designed "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline".(5)

Within the confines of a study such as this, the next section must necessarily be highly selective. What follow are merely notes towards Spenser's delineation of a courtly regime, in the imperialist themes of Book II and their apparent subversion in Book VI. One could not realistically conclude a study of courtship and courtliness without reference to Spenser's Legend of Courtesy, although I am aware that the narrowness of focus will leave gaps and beg questions that no apology, however courteous, can excuse.

5. Letter to Raleigh, in *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Hamilton, p.737.

i. Book II: a Poem of Princes

Evidence in chapter 2 showed that Spenser used the verb to court equivocally, sometimes approving it and sometimes satirising it. But there are two occasions in *The Faerie Queene* where he seems to present courtship as a normative model. Both episodes are interrelated, and both occur in Book II.

In the second canto Sir Guyon arrives at a castle where he is welcomed by Medina, a "comely curteous Dame" who "comely courted with meet modestie" [II.ii.14,15, my italics]. But her courtesy is contrasted with the behaviour of her sisters who, far from entertaining the stranger knight, are found "Accourting each her friend with lauish fest" [ii.16, my italics]. This lavish feast and "wanton rest" again contrast with Elissa's gruff stance at the banquet, when she refuses to show solace "ne court, nor dalliance" to her lover [ii.35, my italics]. Such contrasts, typical of the triadic motifs in the Medina episode, suggest that proper courtship combines, but tempers, the looseness of Perissa and the severity of her eldest sister, Elissa.⁽⁶⁾ Medina (substantiated by an

6. See James Carscallen, "The Goodly Frame of Temperance: The Metaphor of Cosmos in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II", *University of Toronto Quarterly* 37 (1967-1968) pp.136-155: "we can feel here all the mediaeval concern with danger and *bel accueil*, and if the two extreme sisters could fittingly combine these they would achieve the courtesy that graces Medina", p.140. See also Merritt Y. Hughes, who calls Medina a "queen of Courtly Love", in "England's Eliza and Spenser's Medina", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 43 (1944) pp.1-15, this quotation p.9.

authorial voice at stanza 26) criticises the extremes of the courtly-love code. Huddibras, we are told, "made loue vnto" Elissa, and Sans loy poses as a champion who fights "for loue" [ii.17, 18]. Medina and the poet both reduce this pose to an absurd paradox: "Straunge sort of fight . . . A triple warre with triple enmitee, / All for their Ladies froward loue to gaine" [ii.26]. The epithet "sober" links Medina with the Palmer [ii.14, 28, 38; 1.7], and her house is a manifestation of the latter's sermon to Guyon at the end of the preceding canto: "temperance . . . with golden squire / Betwixt them both can measure out a meane, / Neither to melt in pleasures whot desire, / Nor fry in hartlesse grieve and dolefull teene" [i.58].

Alma, like Medina, is also "sober" [ix.Arg.]. She both extends and amplifies the model of proper courtship initiated by Medina, adding an intellectual dimension to the latter's emotional one.⁽⁷⁾ She too makes "gentle court and gracious delight" to Arthur and Guyon [ix.20, my italics]. Alma, a virgin though "woo'd of many", is herself in a permanent state of courtship [ix.18]. In the middle of her anthropomorphic castle Spenser places the heart, and describes it in twelve stanzas, a number expressive of wholeness.⁽⁸⁾ Spenser adumbrates this idea by stressing

7. See Walter R. Davis, "The Houses of Mortality in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*", *Spenser Studies* 2 (1981) pp.121-140.

8. It is therefore with particular sarcasm that Prays-desire reminds Arthur that he has "twelue moneths sought one, yet no where can her find" [ix.38, my italics]. On the number twelve, see Alastair Fowler, *Triumphal forms: Structural patterns in Elizabethan poetry* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; 1970) pp.6-8, 134-136.

that, in this locale, courtship is unequivocally good. There ladies sit "*Courted of many a iolly Paramoure*". Guyon and Arthur follow suit and "gan dispose / Themselues to court, and each a Damsell chose"; "Thus they awhile with court and goodly game, / Themselues did solace each one with his Dame" [ix.34, 36, 44, my italics]. As Nohrnberg points out, the triple blushing that takes place between Arthur, Guyon and Shamefastnesse, reminds us that we have arrived at the literal heart of the sanguine humour.(9) But blushing is not only a traditional trope for the flush of sexual encounter, it is also a badge of self-recognition. As one critic puts it, "Arthur and Guyon pay court - and discover more about themselves".(10)

The notion of 'proper' courtship vouchsafed here had already been broached at the beginning of canto ix. Curious about the icon on Guyon's shield, Arthur questions him about the Faery Queen, and does so with the same courtesy as Alma: "him the Prince with gentle court did bord", and he bows to Guyon's "*curt'sie*" [ix.2, my italics]. Canto ix begins with Arthur's renewed vow to serve Gloriana, the language of desire ("infinite desire", "desire", "whole desire") translating, as we have seen elsewhere, into a language of loyalty: "faithfull seruice, and meet amenance" [ix.3, 5, 7, 5]. In Arthur's quest, Spenser seems to envisage a perfect relationship between knight and Queen in

9. James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1976) p.297.

10. Davis, "The Houses of Mortality", p.124.

which grace and valour are duly rewarded with bounty and advancement. The quest also serves as a reminder that the structure of *The Faerie Queene* as a whole is predicated on a courtship - Arthur's wooing of Gloriana - and that this serves as the idealised model for such legitimate love-making.

The heart, the perfect locus for courtship in Alma's castle, is described as "a goodly Parlour" [ix.33]. This is the only usage of the word throughout Spenser, and is presumably intended, in its etymological sense, to signify a place for speech. One might ask what makes the courtship here so desirable and so different from the models of deceitful courtship that otherwise fill *The Faerie Queene*. A plausible suggestion might be that Alma's castle provides a model for guarded speech which, it could be argued, tempers the otherwise prolific and morally dubious rhetorical procedures of love-making. As Hamilton points out, Alma's tour "avoids the sexual organs" entirely.⁽¹¹⁾ This utter silence on a taboo subject may alternatively be interpreted as a seemly reticence. Where Cupid plays unarmed, sex is necessarily understated. Indeed, one again encounters the image of legitimised Desire, already traced throughout Tudor court shows. It is the same reticence about sex that leaves the sense of touch unnamed of all the five in canto xi [13], and which is silent about Belpheobe's

11. Hamilton ed., *The Faerie Queene*, p.252. See also James W. Broaddus, "Renaissance Psychology and Britomart's Adventures in *Faerie Queene* III", *English Literary Renaissance* 17 (1987) pp.186-206, esp. p.189.

middle parts in canto iii [26]. Guyon, also a virgin, is himself extremely reticent about his own lady. At a time of great physical stress he refers to her [vii.50], but her identity remains unknown and at least one critic may be forgiven for forgetting that he has a mistress at all.(12)

In *The Schoolmaster* Roger Ascham had paralleled linguistic and sexual propriety, linking the female virtues of silence and chastity. Alma's castle, a model for the chaste body, seems to flesh out his idea. Not only are the sexual organs discreetly passed over (it remains in doubt whether the body is male or female); the mouth, too, serves as a prototype. Its guarded words represent the suppression of a "talkative tongue", that troublesome organ which, Ascham showed, led equally to moral degeneracy and to political fragmentation. Here, conversely, the mouth is a model of restraint:

. . . it did locke and close,
That when it locked, none might thorough pas,
And when it opened, no man might it close,
Still open to their friends, and closed to their
foes. [ix.23]

Two images seem to operate here. The first is that of silence as defence, not dissimilar to Guyon's silence in the

12. Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, p.299: "Guyon is fairly unique among his peers in not having a lady; his virtue is almost too "private" for that".

cave of Mammon [vii.24, 31].(13) The second is that of civil conversation, like the entertainment offered by Medina and Alma. A Porter guards every "word", only allowing those "in good order, and with dew regard; / Vtters of secrets he from thence debard, / Babblers of folly, and blazers of crime" [ix.25]. Such babblers are encountered throughout the poem in the forms of Envy [I.iv.32], Occasion [II.iv.5], Maleger [II.xi.10], Sclaunder [IV.viii.24], Malfont [V.ix.25], Detraction [V.xii.35] and, of course, the Blatant Beast [V.xii.37]. The mouth of Alma's castle, on the other hand, provides a highly specific image of speech subjected to interior control. The castle is compared with the Tower of Babel and therefore, perhaps, with the state of linguistic uniformity that existed before its fall. Likewise, it never speaks "out of time" (punning on *tempus* and *temperans*) while Alma herself also observes the "season dew" [II.ix.25, 20].

Alma's castle might be seen, in Bakhtin's phrase, to represent the 'classical' as opposed to the 'grotesque' body. The classical body is complete, finished, its orifices closed: "The opaque surface and the body's "valleys" acquire an essential meaning as the border of a closed individuality that does not merge with other bodies

13. Guyon also refuses to pollute his mouth with food, discarding Proserpina's deceptively golden apples [II.vii.55-56]. In so doing, he distinguishes himself from Tantalus - sentenced to suffer unsatisfied greed eternally - although he becomes physically exhausted as a result and faints at the end of the canto. See Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, pp.333-343.

and with the world".(14) The grotesque body, on the other hand, draws attention to the protuberances and orifices, nose, phallus, belly, anus. While the speech of the classical body embodies the "verbal norms of official and literary language, determined by the canon", that of the grotesque corresponds to Ascham's seditious "talkative tongues". The guarded mouth of Alma's castle therefore manifests the principles of Tudor censorship, and in particular the notorious "Statute of Silence", introduced by the Lords in 1581 to suppress "seditious words and rumours".(15) The traditional penalty for speaking "out of time" involved dismemberment. John Stubbs lost his right hand for penning the pamphlet, *A gaping gulf*, and other writers figured such state repression as the tearing out of tongues. In Gascoigne's *Steele Glass* the poet, as Satyra, has his tongue cut out with the "*Raysor of Restrayne*", and Spenser describes a similar barbarity suffered by the poet Bonfont [V.ix.25].(16)

One grotesque antitype of Alma's virtuous mouth in Book II is the Gulf of Greediness which swallows and vomits indiscriminately. Another is the Rock of Reproch which overturns the mouth's function as an organ of civil

14. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Cambridge Mass.; 1968) p.320. For another definition of Renaissance grotesque and its application to Spenser, see David Evett, "Mammon's Grotto: Sixteenth-Century Visual Grotesquerie and Some Features of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*", *English Literary Renaissance* 12 (1982) pp.180-209.

15. Quoted by Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, p.26.

16. *The Steele Glass*, in *Gascoigne*, ed. Cunliffe, ii.146.

conversation. Spenser elaborates such comparisons throughout Book II. While the mouth or gate into Alma's castle is judiciously opened and closed, the inner sanctum of Acrasia's Bower "euer open stood to all" [xii.46], and is fashioned of "substaunce light" as opposed to Alma's "worthy substance" [xii.43, ix.23]. The "gouernall" of its porter Genius [xii.48] provides an evil antithesis to Alma's "sober" and "goodly gouernment" [ix.1. xi.2], as his "idle curtesie" [xii.49] does to her decorous courtship. Guyon [i.5], Medina [ii.14], Belpheobe [iii.26], Alma [ix.19], and Shamefastnesse [ix.40] are all dressed in costumes that reach to the ground, and that expose the minimum of flesh. One might contrast the sartorial depravity of the Bower's creatures: the "looser garment" of Genius [xii.46], the "garments loose" of Excesse [xii.55], the tantalising behaviour of the bathing beauties [xii.66] and Acrasia herself, "arayd, or rather disarayd" [xii.77]. One might similarly contrast the phallic significance of the "pure and shiny" fountain in the Bower, ornamented with icons of "naked boyes" and frothing forth "siluer dew" [xii.60, 61], with the reticence on such subjects at Alma's castle. Again, Phaedria's "loose lap" [vi.14] contrasts with Alma's enclosed virginity. As C. S. Lewis suggests, the Bower of Bliss represents "the whole sexual nature in disease".(17)

17. Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, p.332. See also N. S. Brooke who suggests that, as an antitype to Alma's castle, the Bower is "an allegorical study of the disordered human body", "C. S. Lewis and Spenser: Nature, Art and the Bower of Bliss", *Cambridge Journal* 2 (1949) pp.420-434, this quotation p.431.

Its antithesis, by contrast, is the regimen of health metaphored in Alma's wholesomeness.

As suggested earlier, the curious half line at iii.26 could be interpreted as a discreet omission, leaving unsaid the description of Belphoebe's middle parts.⁽¹⁸⁾ The caesura seems particularly appropriate, moreover, because Belphoebe's utterances are themselves frequently cut short for contingent or emotional reasons. She often substitutes flight for speech, breaking off in mid-sentence to disappear in a fit of pique. One of the most significant silences, for the purposes of this study, occurs in Belphoebe's encounter with Braggadocchio in II.iii.⁽¹⁹⁾ There what looks suspiciously like developing into a fully-fledged anti-court satire, associating the court with "pleasures pallace", is suddenly broken off:

In Princes court, The rest she would haue said,
But that the foolish man, fild with delight
Of her sweet words, that all his sence dismaid,
And with her wondrous beautie rauisht quight,
Gan burne in filthy lust . . . [II.iii.42].

Perhaps Spenser felt it was inappropriate that a figure of Elizabeth, albeit her private, feminine self, should indulge in anti-court satire. The situation can only resolve itself in silence. A similar interruption occurs at stanza

18. It has been so interpreted by Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text", pp.326-327.

19. See also her half-line to Timias, IV.vii.36: "Is this the faith, she said, and said no more, / But turnd her face, and fled away for euermore". For an analysis of these and other significant "lacunae" in *The Faerie Queene*, see Debra Fried, "Spenser's Caesura", *English Literary Renaissance* 11 (1981) pp.261-280.

34 when Belphoebe's reply to Trompart's question, "which of the Gods I shall thee name", is cut short by her sighting of Braggadocchio [iii.33]. Braggadocchio and Trompart are like characters out of *Mother Hubberds Tale*, fit "To serue at court in view of vaunting eye" [iii.10]. Braggadocchio asks why Belphoebe chooses not to dwell at court where "thou maist loue, and dearely loued bee" [iii.39] but she, boasting a non-courtly provenance [III.vi.1-2], explicitly manifests courtly virtues outside the court. This characteristic stratagem (it reappears in *The Teares of the Muses*) enables Spenser to uphold Elizabethan courtly values while satirising the unspecified court to which Braggadocchio attaches himself. He contrasts the "gallant shew" apparently admired at court, with the "honour" written in Belphoebe's forehead and found, as she says, not at court but in the woods and waves [II.iii.5, 24, 41].

For whatever reasons, the poet's silence over Belphoebe's middle parts and her own silenced satire seem related. As one critic puts it, "The surveillance of women concentrated upon three specific areas: the mouth, chastity, the threshold of the house. These three areas were frequently collapsed into each other".(20) In

20. Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed", in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy Vickers (University of Chicago Press, Chicago; 1986) pp.123-142, this quotation p.126. For a feminist approach to the constraints placed upon female utterance in the English Renaissance, see Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and difference in Renaissance drama* (Methuen, London; 1985) chapter 6.

preserving her chastity, Belphoebe is kept from making potentially compromising statements against the court of the very Queen she represents. This brings us back to Alma's castle where, again, bodily control and rhetorical propriety are linked. Indeed, they here approximate to the regimen of a "virgin Queene most bright" [xi.2]. This loaded title refers specifically to Alma, but could equally be applied to Belphoebe. If the latter represents Elizabeth's body natural, it seems appropriate that Alma should represent her body politic. With this in mind, it could be argued that cantos ix, x and xi provide a vision of the body politic where such a ruler flourishes.(21) Moreover, Alma's anthropomorphic castle could be seen to serve as an archetype for Elias' formulation of court society. The physical control and constraint of the affects, which he felt were demanded by that society, are here figured in a brilliant conceit. The court itself becomes personified and, as a body, is subjected to rigorous physical restraint. Alma's castle thus seems to embody in a single metaphor the symptoms, causes and effects of court society.

The state/body metaphor was embedded in Renaissance political iconography, and it is as well to be reminded that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries "the social plenum is the body of the king, and membership of this anatomy is the deep structural form of all being in the

21. This point has also been made by Robin Headlam Wells, *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Cult of Elizabeth* (Croom Helm, London; 1983) pp.58-61.

secular realm".(22) In her Accession speech, Elizabeth declared that she now had by God's permission "a Body Politic to govern", and she was frequently to extend the image as a self-styled mother and wife to her country. In recent years, critics have also traced a connection between royal iconography and the geography of England. In the Ditchley portrait Elizabeth stands proprietorially over Saxton's map of the island, while in other pictures her own body is represented as a map of Europe.(23). It has been suggested that, in the Armada portrait, Elizabeth's virgin body refers implicitly to England's insular triumph over a foreign aggressor.(24) In a famous passage, Thomas Starkey styled the commonwealth as a body to be controlled:

like as in every man there is a body and also a soul, in whose flourishing and prosperous state both togidder standeth the weal and felicity of man, so likewise there is in every commonalty, city and country, as it were, a politic body, and another thing also, resembling the soul of man, in whose flourishing both togidder resteth also the true common weal. This body is nothing else but

22. Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (Methuen, London; 1984) p.31. Contrast Foucault's anatomy of the Hobbesian social body in "Body/Power", *Power/Knowledge*, p.55: "the great fantasy is the idea of a social body constituted by the universality of wills. Now the phenomenon of the social body is the effect not of a consensus but of the materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals". The political theory behind the royal body has been charted by Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1957), and by Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies*.

23. See Richard Helgerson, "The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England", in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (University of California Press, Berkeley; 1988) pp.327-361, esp. p.331.

24. This has been suggested by Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text", pp.314-315.

the multitude of people, the number of citizens, in every commonalty, city or country. The thing which is resembled to the soul is civil order and politic law administered by officers and rulers.(25)

Alma, one recalls, derives her name from the Hebrew *almah* meaning virgin; but also from the Latin *anima* meaning soul.(26) Her regime therefore conflates what must have been for many Elizabethans a troubling paradox. As *almah*, a virgin, Elizabeth's place was private and domestic, under the authority of a paternalistic society, rather as Alma listens to the three counsellors in the upper chamber of her castle. But as *anima* or spirit, Elizabeth is the "civil order and politic law" that governs, like Alma's officers, in "goodly order" [ix.33, 25, 28, 31].

Just as Alma's physical health is parodied in the diseased worlds of Mammon and Acrasia, so her political regimen is held up against images of anarchy. Before the beginning of Book II, Amavia's "gouvernance" was defeated by Acrasia [i.54]. Disguised "in Palmers weed" [i.52] as she infiltrated the Bower of Bliss, Amavia is merely a "weak simulacrum" of that archetypal governor, the Palmer

25. Thomas Starkey, *Dialogue Between Pole and Lupset*, ed. Kathleen M. Burton (London; 1948) p.55. See also Elyot, *The Governor*, ed. Croft, i.1: "A publike weale is a body lyuyng, compacte or made of sondry astates and degrees of men, whiche is disposed by the ordre of equite and gouerned by the rule and moderation of reason".

26. See Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus linguae Romanae et Britanicae* (1565), s.v. *alma*; Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, s.v. *alma*; and Alastair Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time* (Routledge, London; 1964) p.86.

himself.(27) Similarly, the fiery ^{Furor} lacks "gouernance" to guide him [iv.7], while Phedon is told to "guide thy wayes with warie gouernaunce" [iv.36]. One of Mammon's faults is his promotion of "wrongfull gouernement" [vii.13]. More seriously, perhaps, Guyon loses his own symbol of control, his horse Brigadore, from the Spanish *briglia d'oro*, meaning 'golden bridle'. The beast wears a "golden bit" [V.iii.29] and saddle [II.ii.11, iii.12, V.iii.35], an image not only of restraint but also of the golden mean.(28) When Guyon first appears in Book II, he is a master of horsemanship, guiding his steed with "equall steps" [i.7], but he loses him at the beginning of canto ii and henceforth has to travel on foot. Likewise, when he leaves Alma's castle he leaves Shamefastnesse behind, a dereliction, according to Thomas Elyot, akin to the loss of Brigadore: "By shamfastnes, as it were with a bridell, they rule as well theyr dedes as their appetites".(29)

Each of these images of failed government contrasts with the strict regimen of the Palmer:

Still he him guided ouer dale and hill,
And with his steedie staffe did point his way:
His race with reason, and with words his will,
From foule intemperance he oft did stay,
And suffred not in wrath his hastie steps to
stray. [II.i.34]

With that blacke Palmer, his most trusty guide;

27. See Alastair Fowler, "The Image of Mortality: *The Faerie Queene*, II.i-ii", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 24 (1960-1961) pp.91-110, this quotation p.93.

28. See Alastair Fowler, "Emblems of Temperance in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II", *Review of English Studies* ns.11 (1960) pp.143-149.

29. Elyot, *The Governor*, ed. Croft, i.51.

Who suffered not his wandring feet to slide.
 But when strong passion, or weake fleshlinesse
 Would from the right way seeke to draw him wide,
 He would through temperance and stedfastnesse,
 Teach him the weake to strengthen, and the strong
 suppressse. [iv.2]

The Palmer's rule of reason promotes linear progression, the greatest rebellion against his guidance being swerving, departure, straying, or taking the wrong path. In an ideal commonwealth, as in an ideal body, man remains "to reasons rule obedient" [xi.2], just as "Guyon obayd" the Palmer [v.25], or as "The knight was ruled" [xii.29]. In the extended political metaphor, reason is figured as a king whose "regalitie" is robbed by raging passion [i.57]. Like any king under duress, reason dwells within a fortified garrison, the "fort of Reason" [iv.34, xi.1]. In canto vi, Guyon is able to ignore Pyrochles' taunts because he "with strong reason maistred passion fraile" [40], and we see him "Bridling his will, and maistering his might" in the Bower of Bliss [xii.53].

Government is a key word in Book II. Indeed, control is one of the Book's most persistent themes, and as Nohrnberg notes, "there is a premium in Book II on resistance and restraint".(30) As we have seen, bodily regimen corresponds closely with political government in the castle of Alma, the body politic of a virgin Queen. According to Elias' formulation, civilisation acts in the name of such a government, allowing the colonisation of new

30. Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, p.290.

lands, but also demanding the ruthless constraint of physical passions and emotional affects. These two ideas are closely linked in Book II. The colonisation of Virginia, anticipated by Spenser in the Proem, is related, for example, to the control of a virgin or 'classical' body. But images of interior constraint and external colonisation are conflated most characteristically by Spenser in a metaphor that runs consistently throughout Book II: the ship.

The verb to *govern* derives from Latin *gubernare* and Greek *kubenan*, meaning to *steer*, and in particular, to *steer a vessel*. It need hardly be said that the image of the "venturous vessell" [Pro.2] which opens Book II, runs (like the river Gihon) throughout the Book. Guyon's quest is repeatedly styled a "voyage" [i.34, v.25, xi.5] and its conclusion a "wished hauen" rather like the "happie shore" already gained by Una [i.32, 2]. He rejects the false "Port of rest" offered him by the sirens at the Bower of Bliss because his quest has not yet achieved its goal [xii.32], while he is himself compared with "a tall ship" as he struggles against Sansloy and Huddibras [ii.24]. In the cave of Mammon, Guyon accuses the money-god of gaining "wrongfull gouvernement" and immediately adds the metaphor of

merchant ships and "swelling sayles" that are tossed at sea by "troublous stormes" [vii.13-14].(31)

One further salient element needs to be added to the ubiquitous ship-metaphor, however, and that is the significance of the Palmer. As a pilgrim who has returned from Jerusalem, the Palmer appears already to have reached the goal of the Red Crosse knight. Few would disagree that he "is the guiding principle of Sir Guyon and hence a fit pilot for his boat".(32) But his name also signifies something else: the *palma* or oar. The word is used in this sense by Virgil, and is defined by Cooper as "the broade parte of an ower".(33) The sense is used by extension from the word for the hand, *palma*. The Palmer, then, quite literally steers (or governs) Guyon, as Spenser constantly reiterates. The knight travels "by Palmers gouernance", "his sage Palmer, that him gouerned" [xii.Arg., 38]. When he travels without the Palmer, Guyon is compared with a benighted "Pilot" whose normal means of navigation are hidden [vii.1]. By contrast, Phaedria's boat is

31. Elsewhere, Spenser adopts the ship metaphor to describe Lord Grey de Wilton's embattled and controversial government of Ireland: "the realm was left like a ship in a storm amidst all the raging surges, unrul'd and undirected of any . . . but he, like a most wise pilot, kept her course carefully, and held her most strongly even against those roaring billows, that he brought her safely out of all, so as long after . . . she rode at peace", *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. W. L. Renwick (Clarendon, Oxford; 1970) pp.19-20.

32. B. Nellish, "The Allegory of Guyon's Voyage: An Interpretation", *English Literary History* 30 (1963) pp.89-106, this quotation p.94.

33. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, v.163; and Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. *palma*.

"Withouten oare or Pilot it to guide" [vi.5, xii.15], until the Palmer meets and reprimands her, at which point she suddenly acquires oars and "from them rowed quite" [xii.16].

The ship serves as a device for fusing succinctly two demands of a civilised society: physical control in the form of the Palmer's parental guidance, and imperialism figured in the adventurous voyage to new worlds. The Palmer's strict government urges Guyon beyond the ocean to conquer a new empire. In the Proem, Spenser adds that it is the reader who must undertake such an enterprise in the discovery of Faery, and here he posits the need for authorial guidance with a severity worthy of the Palmer himself. The reader, he says, must acknowledge the imperative to follow, to be steered towards epic closure, and to be directed en route by the poet's "certaine signes":

. . . ne let him then admire,
But yield his sence to be too blunt and bace,
That n'ote without an hound fine footing trace
[II.Pro.4].

As if to test the reader's vigilance, Spenser presents one almost immediately with a false guide-figure who mimics his own words. In the first canto Guyon asks "by what meanes may I his footing tract?", to which the disguised Archimago offers his own direction, "as sure, as hound" [i.12]. Guyon makes his first mistake, exchanging his own guide, the Palmer, for an infernal mirror-image, who falsely leads him to the stricken Duessa. Guyon, in effect, exchanges the

Palmer's "slow pace" for the "zealous hast" of Archimago [i.7, 13].

The technique of defining by contraries recurs throughout *The Faerie Queene*. To emphasise the importance of guidance and government, Spenser fills Book II with false guides which it is implicitly the duty of the reader to identify. Canto vi, for example, claims to inculcate a "Harder lesson" that will put the reader's "weaker sence" to the test [vi.1], alluding to the "better sence" of the Proem [Pro.2]. Guyon repeats his first mistake, and for a second time becomes separated from the Palmer, exchanging him for Phaedria and her oar-less boat. Mammon also usurps the Palmer's role as he leads Guyon along "a beaten broad high way", while at the end the knight asks him "Into the world to guide him backe, as he him brought" [vii.21, 65]. The circularity of Mammon's tour contrasts with the strictly linear progression of Guyon's pledged quest.

The poet's association with the Palmer as a governor hints that these false guides should, by extension, also be considered false authors. At times the hint is less than tentative. In the first canto, for example, Spenser's echo of Archimago's own words parodies the authorial voice that claims to steer the reader in the Proem: "Vouchsafe to stay your steed for humble misers sake. / He stayd his steed for humble misers sake" [i.8-9]. Guyon's response is specifically to Archimago's words and not Spenser's, making his first mistake the more serious and, for us, the more

sonorous. In the same way, one might read Maleger as a parody author. He tears up landmarks "or signe of sundry way" [xi.35] whereas the narrative voice of the Proem provides "certaine signes here set in sundry place" [Pro.4].

In a linear quest, the circularity of a tour like Mammon's is to be discouraged: it results only in a death-like faint. Self-reflexiveness is a sign of intemperance throughout Book II. One of the ways in which Spenser styles this is by showing the general redundancy of false art and false words. Acrasia's curse, "*giue death to him that death does giue*" [i.55], not only puns on her victim's name, Mortdant; its rhetorical device of *antimetabole* provides an epitome of fatally self-reflexive speech. Likewise, as soon as Guyon contemplates himself and "himselfe with comfort feedes", he is ensnared by Mammon [vii.2]. Phedon's helpless self-reflexivity - "The sad spectatour of my Tragedie" [iv.27] - is repeated in Pyrochles who, like Shakespeare's Antony, is figured as a man at war with himself, "His owne woes authour", who can only find comfort "in himselfe" [v.1, 14]. His brother Cymochles reaches a kind of linguistic stasis in his use of *adnominatio*: "he them deceiues, deceiu'd in his deceit" [v.34]. Occasion, too, figures as an authorial antitype: "matter did she make of nought", "new matter framed / Vpon the old" [v.19, 21], contrasting with the Proem's "matter of iust memory" [Pro.1], while Phaedria devises "Matter of merth enough, though there were none" [vi.3]. The Bower of

Bliss, with its puzzling reciprocity of art and nature, is the culmination of such undirected engendering of matter, the "aboundance of an idle braine" which the poet rejects at the outset [Pro.1]. Exemplifying its sterile circularity is the image of Jason and Medea inscribed on the Bower's gate: "That seemd the waues were into yuory, / Or yuory into the waues were sent" [xii.45].

The firm guidance of the narrative voice and of the Palmer is not, however, Spenser's only alternative to false art of this kind. Another might tentatively be found in Prince Arthur. In x.68, Arthur's reading of *Briton moniments* suddenly and, to him inexplicably, breaks off. He stops short at his own father, Uther Pendragon, presumably because he cannot read about himself, and certainly not about his future exploits in the chamber of Eumnestes, good memory. Evidently the time has not yet arrived when the Prince might know "the certain Sire, / From which I sprong" [I.ix.3]. His reading ends as an epic begins, *in medias res*. Arthur effectively embodies the new epic that will continue *Briton moniments*, and which is, at the risk of being facetious, *The Faerie Queene* itself.⁽³⁴⁾ Spenser suggests this delicately with a subsumed pun on Arthur / Author, paralleling "th'Authour selfe" with "The Prince him selfe". The only other capitalisation of the word "author" in the poem occurs at VII.vi.16. This is also one of the very few occasions where Spenser does not

34. See Fried, "Spenser's Caesura", pp.261-266.

use the noun with pejorative overtones. If there is any significance in the capitalisation of "There", line 2, it is possibly to stress Spenser's heavy paronomasia in this stanza: Uther - There - Author - Arthur. "There" is the point at which Arthur perceives *Briton moniments* to end but which we know is also a beginning. It would, perhaps, be specious to suggest another subsumed pun on "Cesure" (ie. caesura, the only usage in Spenser) with Caesar. At stanza 49 Arthur is presented as a British Caesar, breaking the nation's long subservience to Rome. One could argue that the caesura at which *Briton moniments* breaks off is analogous (although the etymology is false) with the Prince, a new Caesar. According to one time-scale, *The Faerie Queene* is set before Arthur's kingship and during his training for arms; in other words, at the time when Britain still lay under the Roman yoke.

This may seem to digress from the issues of bodily control and government broached earlier. But, as Spenser himself says elsewhere, "Though out of course, yet [it] hath not bene mis-sayd" [VI.xii.2]. The last section extrapolates the association, initiated by the Proem, between Guyon's voyage and the reader's own voyage of discovery. Poetic, physical and allegorical adventures coalesce:

No empire was ever settled to long continuance but in the first beginnings of it there was an uninterrupted succession of heroic and brave men to extend and confirm it. A like necessity is in languages, and in ours we may promise ourselves a long and flourishing age, when divine Spenser's

sun was no sooner set but in Jonson a new one rose.

Kenelm Digby's image of poetic empire-building draws, perhaps, on Spenser's own vision of "the kingdome of oure owne Language" in which "rough words must be subdued".(35) Arthur, like Spenser's author, is also presented as an imperialist. An interpretative caesura occurs at x.49 when Spenser separates one's own reading of *Briton moniments* from Arthur's, looking forward to the latter's delivery of the British from Roman rule. The following stanza associates this epic act with Christ's redemption of man, although this presumably still remains hidden from Arthur himself.

The histories in II.x and their continuation in III.iii and ix, chronicle the slow process of centralisation that culminated, according to state propaganda, in the Tudor

35. Digby, "Concerning Spenser", in *Edmund Spenser*, ed. Alpers, p.59; Spenser, *Three proper, and wittie, familiar letters* (1580). The same theme is developed by Daniel in *Musophilus* (1599), ll.821-830, where he compares learning with Atlantic discovery in terms that echo the Proem to Book II: "Then would they onely labour to extend / Their now vnsearching spirits beyond these bounds . . . And set their bold *Plus vltra* far without / The pillers of those Axioms age propounds. / Discou'ring dayly more, and more about / In that immense and boundlesse Ocean / Of Natures riches, neuer yet found out / Nor fore-clos'd, with the wit of any man", in *Samuel Daniel: Poems and A Defence of Ryme*, ed. Arthur Colby Sprague (University of Chicago Press, Chicago; 1930, reissued 1950) pp.92-93. See also Jeffrey Knapp, "Error as a Means of Empire in *The Faerie Queene* I", *English Literary History* 54 (1987) pp.801-834.

dynasty.(36) The consolidation of an island kingdom is presented as a series of conquests, both aggressive and defensive: essentially the same process as that of expansion or imperialist ambition. Alma's struggle against Maleger and his forces may therefore, perhaps, be interpreted in terms of a colonial or occupying power. Alma's castle, in which both the natural and politic bodies are figured, exists under continual siege, interrupted but not concluded by the arrival of Guyon and Arthur. Her enemies, those physical senses that jeopardise the composure of the civilised body, are also styled as *political* malcontents, as rebels: "the rebellious passions which continually threaten the body natural are one and the same as the dissident elements which seek to destroy the equilibrium of the body politic".(37) Maleger, "His bodie leane and meagre as a rake, / And skin all withered like a dried rooke" [xi.22], is not only a parody of Alma's temperate body but the personification of a body "Distempred

36. In "*Briton moniments: Spenser's Definition of Temperance in History*", *English Literary Renaissance* 15 (1985) pp.42-58, Joan Warchol Rossi sees *Briton moniments* and the *Elfin chronicle* as part of a continuous and cumulative narrative. She takes issue with those who regard them as dichotomous visions: Kathleen Williams, *Spenser's World of Glass: A Reading of The Faerie Queene* (University of California Press, Berkeley; 1966) pp.66-68; Harry Berger Jr., *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in the 'Faerie Queene' II* (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1957) pp.89-114; Jerry Leath Mills, "Prudence, History, and the Prince in *The Faerie Queene*, Book II", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 41 (1977-1978) pp.83-101; and Michael O'Connell, *Mirror and Veil: The Historical Dimension of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill; 1977) pp.69-81.

37. Wells, *Spenser's Faerie Queene and the Cult of Elizabeth*, p.62.

through misrule" [ix.1]. His name, suggesting sickness, anticipates Samuel Daniel's image of ignorance in *Musophilus*: "This sicknes of the states soule, Learning, then / The bodies great distemperature insues".(38) The metaphor of the state as a body whose health was to be vigilantly controlled was a familiar one in colonial discourse, and was certainly known to Spenser who uses it throughout his *View of the Present State of Ireland*:

there will perhaps of itself appear some reasonable way to settle a sound and perfect rule of government by shunning the former evils and following the offered good, the which method we may learn of the wise physicians which first require that the malady be known thoroughly and discovered, afterwards do teach how to cure and redress it, and lastly do prescribe a diet with strait rules and orders to be daily observed, for fear of relapse into the former disease or falling into some other more dangerous than it.(39)

Spenser consistently uses the image of the colony as a diseased body in need of physic, to counteract the civic disorder which he describes as a "contagion". As one critic puts it, the power of the metaphor is that it "tacitly sanctions the colonial enterprise".(40)

In the iconography of their presentation, the "passions bace" [ix.1] and "strong affections" [xi.1] which besiege

38. *Musophilus*, ll.801-802, in *Poems and A Defence of Ryme*, ed. Sprague, p.92. See Cooper, *Thesaurus*: "sicke, sorrowfull, pensiffe, or heavie". C. G. Osgood also suggests that Maleger represents physical disease, *Variorum*, ii.343.

39. *View*, ed. Renwick, pp.2-3. For other examples, see *ibid.* pp. 2, 3, 19, 32, 81, 86, 93 and 109-110.

40. Eamon Grennan, "Language and Politics: A Note on Some Metaphors in Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*", *Spenser Studies* 3 (1982) pp.99-110, this quotation p.104.

the body natural and politic are "ragged, rude, deformd . . . all in straunge manner armd" [ix.13]. Like the Irish rebels described in the *View*, they are explicitly uncivilised. Alma's foes are repeatedly styled "villeins" [ix.13, xi.5, 26, 29, 35], the traditional antithesis of "cortois". They are characterised by the adjective and adverb *cruel* and *cruelly* (from Latin *crudelis*) [ix.15, xi.1, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 21, 24].

One explanation for this may be that the enemies of imperative affect-control at court must necessarily be designated as *non-courtly*, and therefore as uncivilised. In Arthur's struggle with Maleger, Spenser adds another image which links physical control with colonisation. Maleger and all his bands are armed with arrows:

All deadly daungerous, all cruell keene,
 Headed with flint, and feathers bloudie dide,
 Such as the Indians in their quiuers hide.
 [II.xi.21]

The analogy is an interesting one. The enemies of courtly affect-control are figured as Indians who, like the Irish, are seen as an uncivilised, indigenous population to be ruthlessly suppressed.⁽⁴¹⁾ As Elias points out, civilisation ineluctably becomes an apology for colonialism.

41. Noted by Kitchin, *Variorum*, ii.343. For studies of the American allusions in Book II, see Thomas H. Cain, *Praise in The Faerie Queene* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln; 1978) pp.91-101; John N. Wall Jr., "'Fruitfullest Virginia': Edmund Spenser, Roanoke Island, and the Bower of Bliss", *Renaissance Papers* (1984) pp.1-17; and Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, chapter 4. This section was partly inspired by Stephen Greenblatt's *Clarendon Lectures: "Imagining Possession"*, delivered in Oxford, May 1988, and to be published shortly.

Extending the metaphor, subjection to such indigenous populations is seen in terms of "captiuitie . . . tyranny . . . bondage" [xi.1]. Representing slavery to the senses, Maleger's army is essentially and qualitatively different from another kind of subjection, that of "reasons rule" and "goodly gouernment" [xi.2]. As we shall see below, the distinction between two kinds of suppression is not always clear-cut. But here "passions bace" and "strong affections" are represented as uncivilised, lower races to be subdued (and enlightened) by civilised order. This illustrates what Greenblatt has called Freud's "master analogy": "civilization behaves towards sexuality as a people or a stratum of its population does which has subjected another one to its exploitation. Fear of a revolt by the suppressed elements drives it to stricter precautionary measures".(42) The control of the affects (in part, though not entirely, control of the sexual instincts) is seen not simply as repression but as colonisation, the subduing of a race armed with Indian arrows. Spenser has already referred to such an act of

42. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, in *Civilization, Society and Religion*, ed. Strachey, pp.293-294. Book II is particularly susceptible to Freudian interpretations. See, in particular, Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, chapter 3, and Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, chapter 4. Greenblatt struggles with his Freudian reading in the latter, however, and can be seen to move unconsciously to the more Foucauldian understanding of power-relations fully espoused in his later work, *Shakespearean Negotiations*.

colonisation in the paradoxical "fruitfullest Virginia" of the Proem [Pro.2].(43)

Spenser's oxymoron here signals a noted paradox in colonial discourse. Alma's dual roles as natural and politic bodies can sometimes appear incompatible. The control of her temperate, virginal, 'classical' body is figured in terms of closure: the closing of the mouth, the modest silence over sexual orifices, the *hortus conclusus* of the virgin body. Yet to maintain physical equilibrium, the body must engage in battle, must exert itself outwards in aggressive and repressive action, as in Arthur's encounter with Maleger in Alma's defence. "Fruitfullest Virginia" is not the only oxymoron Spenser plays with. The very naming of a territorial conquest Virginia had its paradoxical side.(44) As one critic writes: "Within the dominant discourses of early modern England, then, woman's body could be both symbolic map of the "civilized" and the dangerous terrain that had to be colonized", or "with one man man'd" like Donne's female America.(45) In Britomart the inclosed virgin body and aggressive imperialist are succinctly

43. For other contemporary references to the colony, see Archibald Bolling Shepperson, "Earth's Only Paradise", *Virginia Quarterly Review* 33 (1957) pp.595-603.

44. The act of naming itself justifies conquest. Spenser avers that pre-conquest Britain was deservedly unnamed [x.6], until "Brute this Realme vnto his rule subdewd" [x.13], and gave it the name it still has. Guyon's destruction of the Bower of Bliss, "so nam'd amis" [xii.69] enacts a similar process when he re-names and therefore colonises it: "their blisse he turn'd to balefulnesse" [xii.83].

45. Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories", p.133; Donne, "To his Mistris Going to Bed", l.28, in *Donne: Elegies, Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Gardner, p.15.

aligned. In another striking example, Walter Raleigh describes the elusive empire of Guiana:

Guiana is a Countrey that hath yet her Maydenhead, neuer sackt, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not beene torne, nor the vertue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance.(46)

Guiana is styled a virgin who has been spared just those depredations of civilisation that Raleigh and his men, like the Spanish, bring with them. The virgin land, like Elizabeth herself perhaps, is desirable because inviolate, yet it continues to tempt male appropriation.(47)

Raleigh's metaphor conflates Michelet's famous dictum that the Renaissance marked the discovery of the world and the discovery of man, (or woman, in this case).(48) Yet, as Spenser well knew, the process of colonisation was not a simple one. Certain textual idiosyncrasies, like paradox and oxymoron, seem (to some modern eyes at least) to belie the success of the occupying power. In recent years,

46. Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* (1596), ed. Sir Robert H. Schomburgk (Hakluyt Society, London; 1848) p.115. Using the same example Montrose notes that: "The female body - and, in particular, the symbolic body of the queen - provides a cognitive map for Elizabethan culture, a matrix for the Elizabethan forms of desire, and a field upon which the relations of Elizabethan power are played out", "A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Shaping Fantasies of Elizabethan Culture: Gender, Power, Form", in *Rewriting the Renaissance*, ed. Ferguson, Quilligan and Vickers, pp.65-87, this quotation p.79.

47. This echoes Spenser's own exhortation to Englishmen to plunder "that land of gold". Exploration is figured as conquest of the Amazons who "Can from all men so rich a kingdome hold" [IV.xi.22].

48. The geographical world and the female body have been intriguingly linked by Helgerson in "The Land Speaks", in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Greenblatt, pp.327-361.

colonial discourse has become a subject for new analysis. It has been recognised that metaphors such as the diseased state could be used to justify colonial enterprise, but that the ambiguities inherent in language reveal ethical tensions within the structure of such a discourse.(49)

We have seen how Raleigh's metaphor of Guiana as virgin body was open to ambivalence. In another passage Raleigh contrasts the behaviour of the English and the Spanish toward the indigenous populations of the New World. According to Raleigh, the Arawaak people were exploited and abused by the Spaniards

who indeed (as they confessed) tooke from them both their wiues, and daughters daily, and vsed them for the satisfying of their owne lusts, especially such as they tooke in this maner by strength. But I protest before the maiestie of the liuing God, that I neither know nor beleue, that any of our companie one or other, by violence or otherwise, euer knew any of their women, and yet we saw many hundreds, and had many in our power, and of those very yoong, and excellently fauored which came among vs without deceit, starke naked.(50)

With a restraint worthy of Sir Guyon, Raleigh and his men declined to ravish individual virgins, thus distinguishing themselves from the Spanish with that kind of moral

49. Grennan traces contradictions within the agricultural and medical metaphors of Spenser's *View*, in "Language and Politics". Greenblatt identifies similar strains in Artegall's confrontation with the egalitarian Giant [V.ii] in "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and The Representation of Rebellion", in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Greenblatt, pp.1-29; he gives another account of colonial discourse in "Invisible Bullets", *Shakespearean Negotiations*, pp.21-65. For a somewhat different perspective, see Knapp, "Error as a Means of Empire", pp.801-811.

50. Raleigh, *Discovery*, ed. Schomburgk, p.61.

indignation that was an accepted element of English war propaganda against Spain.(51) Yet Raleigh's next remark adds an ironic if unintentional twist: "which course, so contrarie to the Spaniards (who tyrannize ouer them in all things) drew them to admire hir Maiestie, whose commandement I told them it was, and also woonderfully to honour our nation". Entirely won over, the Arawaaks put themselves in Raleigh's hands, provisioning his crew and providing a pilot to direct him on his gold-seeking quest for Guiana.

English temperance, performed apparently at the behest of a distant Virgin Queen, thus conquers the native people far more effectively than the Spaniards' more conventional brand of terrorism. Violation of a kind is performed in the name of chastity. But the moral indignation wears thin. Whatever the self-restraint of the English in this bower of bliss, they engaged, with no visible compunction, in selling female slaves to the West Indies, and indeed competed with the Spanish in this profitable commercial enterprise.(52)

This brief example illustrates how ethical and colonial considerations were often incompatible. Metaphor glosses over tensions but can also be seen to give them away. To return to Spenser, such a crux seems to occur at the moment when the baffled Arthur rouses himself and finally defeats Maleger. Spenser uses the simile of a volcano. It

51. See David B. Quinn, *Raleigh and the British Empire* (Penguin, Harmondsworth; 1947, repr. 1973) pp.139-140.

52. Raleigh, *Discovery*, ed. Schomburgk, pp.39-40.

suggests a hidden determination in Arthur, hitherto "vnderkept, and downe supprest" in "so streight prison", but which at length bursts forth like fire, "And striues to mount vnto his natiue seat" [xi.32]. Arthur uses this hidden strength to break his "caitiue bands" [xi.33] and ultimately to defeat his foe. It is a curious and emotive image. Until this moment all the images of subjection have been directed against Maleger and his soldiers, stressing their imperative suppression. Yet now a part of Arthur, an extremely important part, in fact, is itself described in terms of subjection - "supprest", "prison", "bands" - which seeks at the crucial moment to return to its native seat. Arthur acts as colonising aggressor, but is himself, under normal circumstances, under another kind of constraint, that which keeps an inner strength "vnderkept". The fact that Arthur can call on this inner strength at a time of crisis, hints that the total suppression of wild, unconstrained instincts is an impossibility, even in the civilised world.(53) One recalls that, though bound and gagged by that world, both Occasion and the Blatant Beast are allowed to go free. Book II ends with an act of quasi-proselytisation as the Palmer and Guyon release the deformed animals from Acrasia's spells. But some souls cannot be

53. Contrast J. C. Gray, "Bondage and Deliverance in the 'Faerie Queene': Varieties of a Moral Imperative", *Modern Language Review* 70 (1975) pp.1-12. He examines the paradox of Christian bondage suggested by Spenser in *Amoretti* lxviii: Christ "did bring away / captiuitie then captiue vs to win".

redeemed, like the apostate English in Ireland who subsist in "a most dangerous lethargy".(54)

Let *Grill* be *Grill*, and haue his hoggish mind,
But let vs hence depart, whilest wether serues and
wind. [II.xii.87]

ii. Book VI: a Prince of Poets

Grill's stubborn persistence in his apostasy casts a shadow over the end of Book II, and over the success of Guyon's quest. The act of colonisation remains incomplete, and the agents of power are forced to acknowledge elements within themselves that might return, unbidden, to their "natiue seat". It is this relation between power structures and their apparent subversion that the following section hopes to chart. This, I hope, may redeem the sudden shift to Spenser's last Book because (at the risk of neglecting other important areas) in no part of *The Faerie Queene* does the theme of truancy seem as outspoken as in the Legend of Courtesy.(55) The relentless movement away from court, the apparent centre where "courtesies excell" [VI.Pro.7], is signalled from the outset. Spenser's

54. Spenser, *View*, ed. Renwick, p.64.

55. See J. C. Maxwell, "The Truancy of Calidore", *English Literary History* 19 (1952) pp.143-149; Harry Berger Jr., "A Secret Discipline: *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI", *English Institute Essays* 20 (1961) pp.35-75; William V. Nestruck, "The Virtuous and Gentle Discipline of Gentlemen and Poets", *English Literary History* 29 (1962) pp.357-371; David L. Miller, "Abandoning the Quest", *ibid.* 46 (1979) pp.173-192; and Harry Rusche, "The Lesson of Calidore's Truancy", *Studies in Philology* 76 (1979) pp.149-161. For an example of contrasting views, see Lewis, *Allegory of Love*; and Donald Cheney, *Spenser's Image of Nature: Wild Man and Shepherd in the Faerie Queene* (Yale University Press, New Haven; 1966).

"equivocal formulation" in the Proem, as at other points in *The Faerie Queene*, problematises the very source of courtesy itself.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Indeed, he illustrates its breadth of meaning first in etymological discontinuity. Like Guazzo in his *Civile Conversation*, Spenser begins with a definition of terms. Guazzo points out that examples of civility may be found beyond the *civitas*, and of incivility within it: "You see then, that we give a large sense and signification to this woorde (civile) for that we would have understoode, that to live civilly, is not sayde in respect of the citie, but of the quallities of the minde".⁽⁵⁷⁾ In the same way Spenser's courtesy is shown not to originate in court (even if it may be found there) but, like Guazzo's civility, "deepe within the mynd" [Pro.5].

The last Book of *The Faerie Queene* moves with its titular knight ever further away from his and its own courtly provenance: "Him first from court he to the citties coursed, / And from the citties to the townes him prest, / And from the townes into the countrie forsed, / And from the country back to priuate farmes he scorsed. / From thence into the open fields he fled" [ix.3-4]. Calidore is not the only figure who leaves the court behind. Melibee is voluntarily retired from court, as is the Hermit, whose "curt'sie" suggests that he is "Some goodly person, and of

56. Humphrey Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of The Faerie Queene* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1972) p.24. On Spenser's distinction between court and courtesy, see also *The Faerie Queene*, III.vi.1, ix.3, and VI.v.38.

57. George Pettie trans., *The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo*, i.56.

gentle race", although he does not entertain his guests as "courting fooles" [v.36, 38]. He has hung up his arms in a gesture of retirement, like both Aldus, "courteous still to euery wight" [iii.3], and Bellamour, a one-time colleague of Calidore's at the Faery court [xii.11]. Tristram is in exile from court, the victim of avuncular usurpation [ii.27]. Even Venus is figured in a pastoral setting away from court. She neglects as "vnfit" her island of Cytherea, whereon "She vsed most to keepe her royall court" and instead spends "many an howre" sporting on mount Acidale with the Graces [VI.x.9; IV.v.5].

The ontological distance from the court is emphasised by the number of exaggerated or parody court-gestures that occur throughout Book VI.(58) The excessive gestures of humility in Crudor, made to "stoupe to ground with meeke humilitie" in "groueling" wise [VI.i.38-39], and Briana who "Before his feet her selfe she did proiect" [i.45] are early examples. Turpine "Fell flat to ground" [vii.25], and Enias is reduced to the same ignominious posture [viii.10]. The Salvage Man unwittingly evokes court gesture when he approaches Serena "like a fawning hound . . . Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground" in a mock version of *bassios los manos* [iv.11]. The salvage nation perform a parody blazon over the body of Serena [viii.39], their cannibalism grotesquely perverting Petrarchan convention,

58. See also Richard Neuse, "Book VI as Conclusion to *The Faerie Queene*", *English Literary History* 35 (1968) pp.329-353, who finds that Book VI "most clearly signals the bankrupt status of the courtly class", p.338.

while the greatest parody of courtly love is embodied in the person of Mirabella, the poets' "cruel fair" brought to life. There is a hint of similar mockery in Calidore's courtship of Pastorella who "neuer had acquainted beene / With such quaint vsage, fit for Queenes and Kings" and who "Did litle whit regard his courteous guize, / But cared more for Colins carolings / Then all that he could doe, or euer deuize: / His layes, his loues, his lookes she did them all despize" [ix.35]. A more sinister version of courtly love recurs in the brigand Captain who makes love to the captive Pastorella: "With looks, with words, with gifts he oft her wowed" [xi.4].

But, as the preceding study of Book II suggested, the relation between law and transgression is not a simple one. It is certainly far from straightforward in Book VI. If Calidore moves consistently away from court, he does, in the end, retrace his steps, and like several other figures in Book VI (Aladine, Priscilla, the bear baby, Melibee, Pastorella) return home. Calidore's truancy at length gives way to obedience, and courtesy returns to court.(59) The court remains, therefore, the structural point of exit

59. Many critics have written on the apparently cyclical structure of *The Faerie Queene*. See, for example: Northrop Frye, "The Structure of Imagery in *The Faerie Queene*", *University of Toronto Quarterly* 30 (1960-1961) pp.109-127; Williams, *Spenser's World of Glass*; Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, chapter 5; Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*, *passim*; Neuse, "Book VI as Conclusion"; and Susanne Woods, "Closure in *The Faerie Queene*", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 76 (1977) pp.195-216.

and return sketched out in the Letter to Raleigh, and prefigured by the poet in his reciprocal image of courtesy:

Right so from you all goodly vertues well
 Into the rest, which round about you ring,
 Faire Lords and Ladies, which about you dwell,
 And doe adorne your Court, where courtesies
 excell. [VI.Pro.7]

I do not go so far as to suggest that the motif of return resolves either Book VI or *The Faerie Queene* as a whole. After all, while Calidore returns to court, Melibee, like Colin Clout in another poem, returns to his pastoral home. But themes of orthodoxy and subversion, resistance and authority, truancy and power interpenetrate one another. This suggests a tentative model for what Foucault might have called an "analytics of power": "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power . . . These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network . . . They are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite". These points of resistance are "mobile and transitory . . . producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves".(60)

There is of course a danger in taking such theoretical distinctions out of context, but one may treat them as a starting-point nonetheless. In Book II subversion was

60. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, i.90, 95-96.

styled as rebellion, but the same imagery of subordination was applied to the very instigators of force: Arthur's inner strength was "downe supprest". Such elements, like Grill, cannot be wholly contained within the colonising enterprise. In Book VI images of constraint are similarly ambiguous. In canto iv, for instance, Calepine's lack of protective armour gives him "libertie" to chase after the bear [19]. For once a knight is glad to be rid of his accoutrements, reversing the traditional dangers of disarming in order to promote a kind of non-chivalric combat. This was a lesson Calidore also had to learn from Tristram, but in other cases images of constraint are more puzzling. The Hermit, for example, dwells in the freedom of solitude, yet his house is described as "like a little cage" in which "he liu'd alone, like carelesse bird in cage" [v.38, vi.4]. Calidore, too, is captive. That his love for Pastorella serves as an escape from duty is an illusion, for he becomes "entrapt of loue" [x.1]. In neglecting his quest he merely enters into another kind of bondage, "Caught like the bird" in Cupid's "subtile bands . . . ne thence could be redeemed / By any skill out of his cruell hands" [ix.11]. Cupid's bands bear a striking resemblance to the wounds of the Blatant Beast, which also resist the power of medicine [vi.13]. While believing he has escaped the onus of his quest, Calidore has merely substituted it for another, "Another quest, another game in vew", which he intends to follow "for euer" [x.2]. This is little

improvement on the "endlesse trace" he undertakes for Gloriana [i.6]. When he appears most free, then, he is in fact most imprisoned. A similarly paradoxical and puzzling image occurs in *Amoretti* lxxx. As in *Amoretti* xxxiii and the Proem to Book VI, the poet seeks rest from his "taedious toyle" and "tedious trauell"; "me being halfe fordonne", he begs an opportunity to gather strength in order to continue *The Faerie Queene*:

Then as a steed refreshed after toyle,
out of my prison I will breake anew:
and stoutly will that second worke assoyle,
with strong endeouour and attention dew. [*Amoretti*
lxxx]

At first glance the "prison" seems to be the onerous task of completing *The Faerie Queene* according to the ambitious plan presented originally in the Letter to Raleigh. But on inspection it appears that "prison" is wherever the poet remains when he is not composing his epic. The release he begs is in fact an extension of his prison term. He asks to be allowed to remain stabled, "in pleasant mew, / to sport my muse", but when rested his horse will bound forth free into Faery. Like Calidore's truancy, escape merely translates as another kind of imprisonment.

If Book II contains within it exemplars of courtship in Medina and Alma, Book VI begins with a model for courtly utterance: Calidore, we are told, "with the greatest purchast greatest grace" [i.3]. Spenser's heavy alliteration draws attention to *grace*, substantiated in the

description of Guyon's discourse as "gracious speach" [i.2, my italics], and analogous to the reciprocity of grace figured in canto x. There, the fourth figure of the group of maidens is "a goddesse graced" who the others "with her goodly presence all the rest much graced" and "with such courtesie doth grace" [x.25, 12, 27, my italics]. The remaining three Graces "graced her so much to be another Grace" [x.26, my italics]. If Calidore's ideal discursive economy is mirrored in the poet's rhetoric, it may also be reflected in Spenser's own tentative and hopeful image of royal reciprocity in the Proem [7]. Speaking in perfect accord with authority - "the greatest" - the knight gains reward, favour and popularity: "As its title promises, the treatise becomes the ideal courtier in book form, an urbane ambassador that courts its international readership as the courtier inspires his prince: by means of example, good will, and becoming speech".(61)

It may seem strange, then, that the spirit of "gracious speach" should be rendered for the most part silent. Calidore rushes headlong out of the poem at the midpoint of canto iii, chasing a similarly breathless Blatant Beast [iii.26]. When he reappears in canto ix, we find him "discoursing diuersly / Of sundry things, as fell, to worke delay" [ix.12]. In some ways this undirected and retarding speech corresponds to the image of the recreative courtier sketched in *Mother Hubberds Tale*. When "this Courtly

61. Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, p.681.

Gentleman with toyle / Himselfe hath wearied", he entertains himself with music and "with Loues, and Ladies gentle sports".(62) So far, this accords with Calidore's delight in Colin Clout's pipings and in Pastorella. But in addition, the virtuous courtier "His minde vnto the Muses he withdrawes":

With whom he close confers with wise discourse,
Of Natures workes, of heauens continuall course,
Of forreine lands, of people different,
Of kingdomes change, of diuers gouernment,
Of dreadfull battailes of renowned Knights.(63)

This summons to the epic genre is conspicuously ignored by Calidore as, in a backward movement, he returns to the "lowly Shepheards weeds" and "Oaten reeds" which the poet formally relinquished for "trumpets sterne" at the poem's opening.(64) As Nohrnberg notes, "Calidore's course reverses the development of civilization, which the development of Virgil's poetic canon was alleged to have recapitulated".(65) Calidore puts off courtly language when he is made "To chaunge the manner of his loftie looke; / And doffing his bright armes, himselfe addrest / In shepheards weed, and in his hand he tooke, / In stead of

62. *Mother Hubberds Tale*, ll.753-754, 757.

63. *ibid.* ll.763-767.

64. I.Pro.1. See also the *October* eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*, ll.56, 59. The despairing Cuddy declines to follow the Virgilian progression from "Oaten reede" to "sing of warres and deadly drede".

65. Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, p.664. See also A. Leigh DeNeef, "Ploughing Virgilian Furrows: The Genres of *Faerie Queene* VI", *John Donne Journal* 1 (1982) pp.151-166: "the militant narrator of Book I, we recall, puts his chivalric armor over his shepherd's weeds, just as the narrator of Book VI puts his weeds over his armor", p.157.

steelehead speare, a shepheards hooke" [ix.36]. As with Musidorus in Sidney's revised *Arcadia*, a change in costume reflects a change in rhetorical style.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Calidore gives up the courtly courtesies offered to Pastorella for a text approximating more closely to "*Colins carolings*" which she affects [ix.35], and he thus marks a return to "the blueprint world, the polyglot landscape of borrowed conventions" assembled earlier in *The Shepheardes Calender*.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Calidore's dereliction finds an analogue in Colin Clout, "Vnder which name this Poete secretly shadoweth himself", as E. K. wrote in *The Shepheardes Calender*. Colin also abjures his poetic duty. Or rather, his apology makes it clear that he thinks of it as such:

Great Gloriana, greatest Maiesty,
Pardon thy shepherd, mongst so many layes,
As he hath sung of thee in all his dayes,
To make one minime of thy poore handmayd,
And vnderneath thy feete to place her prayse.
[VI.x.28]

66. The shift from epic to pastoral is ominously prefigured in the scenario of canto iii, which re-enacts the Proem to Book VI. Interrupting the love idyll of Calepine and Serena, Calidore makes the best of the situation by sitting down with Calepine and indulging in epic discourse, talk of "aduentures" [iii.22]. Meanwhile Serena wanders off, enticed, like the narrator of the Proem, by the sprinkled variety of Faery, only to be snatched up by the Blatant Beast, "thus loosely wandring here and there" [iii.24]. This episode prefigures the dangers attendant on substituting epic action for epic discourse, and epic discourse for romantic wandering.

67. Berger, "A Secret Discipline", pp.62-63. Berger emphasises the sense of return in this canto: "we are led with Calidore out of chivalric Faerie, back in time to Spenser's early poetry. All the space between vanishes - five books of Faerie, eight cantos of Book VI, the arduous questing, plaintive or moral, which led to this moment", p.63.

Colin's apology sets up a binary structure of law and transgression in which he personally styles his *otium* as deviancy. Ascham had linked moral degeneracy and political fragmentation in *The Schoolmaster*. To this equation Spenser adds a poetic integer. Private affect and its pastoral celebration are for a moment presented as disloyalty to the public and dutiful courtship of the Queen. This is a crux which Spenser refers to again and again, and most controversially, perhaps, in the April eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*. (68)

Calidore's truancy is equally mirrored in the narrative voice of the Proem. (69) Both knight and poet are guideless, alone and bemused, in a series of parallels which Spenser elaborates. The narrative voice anticipates Calidore's vacation when he "My tedious trauell doe forget thereby" [Pro.1]. He proceeds along "these strange waies, where neuer foote did vse", while Calidore embarks on "an endlesse trace . . . in waies vntryde" [Pro.2, i.6]. The knight begins in doubt: "Yet know I not or how, or in what place / To find him out" [i.7]. The poet also seeks guidance in searching out what seems hidden from him:

68. For recent studies of the April eclogue, see Cain, *Praise in The Faerie Queene*, pp.14-24; Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, pp.84-89; Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, pp.121-132; and Montrose, "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text", pp.320-322.

69. For the analogy between poetry and courtesy that runs throughout Book VI, see Nestruck, "Virtuous and Gentle Discipline", and Tonkin, *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral*, pp.14, 17.

"secret comfort", "Ne none can find", "Reuele to me the sacred nourserie / Of vertue . . . Where it in siluer bowre does hidden ly", "not in outward shows, but inward thoughts defynd" [Pro.2, 3, 5]. Both contrast with Sir Guyon who journeyed "not like a wearie traueilere" [II.ii.23], and with the 'strong' narrator of Book II who insists that the reader may not progress without following his carefully laid "signes" [II.Pro.4]. Calidore has no governing companion, but travels alone "bound by vow, which I profest / To my dread Soueraine . . . I should no creature ioyne vnto mine ayde" [VI.ii.37].

Indeed, an infectious travel-weariness seems to effect many of the figures of Book VI, including Calepine [iii.29, iv.1, 25], the Salvage Man [iv.9], Timias [v.17, 21, 40], Serena [v.40, viii.34], Arthur [vi.19, vii.19] and most scandalously Calidore who, after only nine stanzas, already refers to his "weary trauell" [i.10]. He seems to despair at the outset of achieving either his quest - the "endlesse trace" he must pursue "incessantly" - or fame: "Yet shall it not by none be testifyde" [i.6, 7, 6]. It is with a degree of irony that Spenser suggests that Calidore "Ne rested he himselfe" [ix.3], since at exactly that point he enters Melibee's pastoral idyll and embarks on his lengthy retirement there. Similarly, Calepine "Ne ought was tyred" while searching for Serena, yet "he slept full fast" only to be wakened by her screams as the cannibals begin their assault [viii.47]. Calidore also sleeps at a

critical juncture when, in the middle of his rescue operation to deliver Pastorella from the brigands, he "rested him till day" [xi.47].

The theme of weariness that runs consistently throughout Book VI reaches its apotheosis in the pastoral interlude of cantos ix and x. It is here that rest seems to carry with it no opprobrium. Melibee declares that

. . . when I wearie am, I downe doe lay
My limbes in euery shade, to rest from toyle,
And drinke of euery brooke, when thirst my throte
doth boyle. [ix.23]

Several etymological meanings of Acidale have been suggested including the Greek *akida* (suggesting *akidis*), 'free from care', and Latin *accidia*, the sin of sloth; while the etymology of *weary* contains a sense of going astray.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The Graces themselves were begotten by Jove when he "rested weary" [x.22]. The iconographical position of the fourth grace worshipped by Colin Clout, suggests Venus who, on permanent vacation at Acidale, might be seen to represent the recreative mode which the poet here celebrates.

It was solace such as this that charmed Keats' "romantic eye", and which seems to have influenced Romantic interpretations of *The Faerie Queene* as a whole.⁽⁷¹⁾ Hazlitt believed Spenser's poetry to be "inspired by the

70. See W. Renwick ed., *Spenser Selections* (Oxford; 1923) p.202; William Nelson, *The Poetry of Spenser: A Study* (Columbia University Press, New York; 1963) p.293; and OED, s.v. *weary*.

71. Keats, "Imitation of Spenser", l.24, in *John Keats: The Complete Poems*, ed. John Barnard (Penguin, Harmondsworth; 1973, 2nd. ed. 1977) p.37.

love of ease, and relaxation from all the cares and business of life". For Coleridge, Spenser "placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep", and Yeats believed that, courtly duties aside, Spenser "would have written all his life long . . . of the loves of shepherdesses and shepherds, among whom there would have been perhaps the morals of the dovecot".(72) Even among modern critics it is generally agreed that Book VI does not have same allegorical rigour as the rest of the poem, and in particular Book V. They tend to see "a devaluation of explicit programs of allegorical significance . . . [and] a corresponding efflorescence of . . . romance motifs".(73) The narrative voice of Book VI has even been accused of a degree of poetic lassitude, when it was suggested that Spenser's handling of certain episodes "betrays a mind not fully engaged by what it is doing".(74) There are certainly a number of small carelessnesses, such as substitution of Matilda's name for Serena's [v.Arg.], or

72. William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818); S. T. Coleridge, from marginal notes in a copy of *The Faerie Queene* (1818); W. B. Yeats, *Poems of Edmund Spenser* (1902), introduction: quoted in *Edmund Spenser*, ed. Alpers, pp.131, 144, 173.

73. Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, p.655. In his edition of *The Faerie Queene*, Hamilton writes: "For no other book does the usual kind of allegorical interpretation seem so entirely inadequate, irrelevant and disposable", p.621. See also Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, p.353; Williams, *Spenser's World of Glass*, pp.190-191; and Graham Hough, *A Preface to The Faerie Queene* (Duckworth, London; 1962) p.201.

74. Maxwell, "The Truancy of Calidore", p.148. See also O'Connell, *Mirror and Veil*, p.165: "the discords [in VI.Pro] are merely the slips of fingers playing an old piece a little inattentively". Berger seeks to defend the "deliberate casualness" he finds in the narrative voice, "A Secret Discipline", p.38.

the unfulfilled promise to divulge the origins of the Salvage Man "when time shall be to tell the same" [v.2]. Even the provenance of the Blatant Beast is in some doubt [i.8, vi.9-12].

But what Spenser really effects is not truancy but a fragmentation (or multiplication) of his poetic personnel.⁽⁷⁵⁾ This is most clear at the moment when his two personae, Calidore and Colin, fail to recognise each other: "thou shepheard, whatsoeuer thou bee" [x.21]. While Colin's apology sets up a binary structure of law and transgression, another voice exonerates Calidore for his privileged "glaunce" of Colin's vision [x.4]. It is this *third* voice that announces itself in the rhetorical questions in canto x: "Who now does follow the foule *Blatant Beast*?", "Saue onely *Glorianaes* heauenly hew / To which what can compare?", "who knowes not *Colin Clout*?", while Colin adds "Who can aread, what creature mote she bee?" [x.1, 4, 16, 25]. Both Colin and Calidore are truant poets, idolising private loves instead of following royal

75. On Spenser's different delineations of the narrator, see Kathleen Williams, "Vision and Rhetoric: The Poet's Voice in *The Faerie Queene*", *English Literary History* 36 (1969) pp.131-144; Jerome S. Dees, "The Narrator of *The Faerie Queene*: Patterns of Response", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 12 (1970-1971) pp.537-568; Stan Hinton, "The Poet and his Narrator: Spenser's Epic Voice", *English Literary History* 41 (1974) pp.165-181; Paul Alpers, "Narration in *The Faerie Queene*", *ibid.* 44 (1977) pp.19-39; and Richard Helgerson, "The New Poet Presents Himself: Spenser and the Idea of a Literary Career", *PMLA* 93 (1978) pp.893-911.

behests (to fulfil a quest, to compose a national epic).(76)

But the narrative voice separates itself from each of them:

Now turne againe my teme thou iolly swayne,
Backe to the furrow which I lately left;
I lately left a furrow, one or twayne
Vnplough'd, the which my coulter hath not cleft.
[ix.1]

On every other occasion Spenser employs this georgic image it serves to express the poet's exhaustion.(77) Here, however, it signifies a return to duty, a revival of strength as the narrative voice, associated from the Proem with Calidore, separates from him to take up the story while the knight abandons it.(78) Thus the narrative voice avers that Calidore does in fact achieve his quest, "Reaping eternall glorie of his restlesse paines" [ix.2], strangely contradicting the knight's own feeling that he treads "an endlesse trace" [i.6]. The narrator continues in this

76. For Berger, Acidale "displays . . . an indeterminate and creative collaboration between the epic poet and his pastoral persona", "A Secret Discipline", p.68. In a revised version of this article, Berger makes more of the theme of poetic truancy, describing Colin's vision as "a violation of the rules" of the epic genre, "The Prospect of Imagination: Spenser and the Limits of Poetry", *Studies in English Literature* 1 (1961) pp.93-120, this quotation p.95. See also Knapp, "Error as a Means of Empire", p.824.

77. "But now my teme begins to faint and fayle, / All woxen weary of their iournall toyle" [III.xii.47, 1590 ed.]; "But here my wearie teeme nigh ouer spent / Shall breath it selfe awhile, after so long a went" [IV.v.46]; "And turne we here to this faire furrowes end / Our wearie yokes, to gather fresher sprights" [V.iii.40]. The image, and its sense of weariness, derive from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, ll.886-888: "I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere, / And wayke been the oxen in my plough. / The remenant of the tale is long ynough", in Chaucer, ed. Robinson, p.26.

78. See Alpers, "Narration in *The Faerie Queene*", p.34, who notes "a recapitulation of the narrator's discourse and a recovery of its strength".

energetic vein, promising to describe Acidale which "by course I will declare" [x.4, my italics]. Narrator and knight reunite triumphantly when Calidore takes up the quest again. As one critic puts it, "the quest of the hero and the effort of the poet come into that alignment from which they departed at the opening of the poem. Both hero and poet serve the fairy queen, and yet the parallel between them is most marked in an analogous dereliction".(79) Calidore is compared with a ship that directs her "course" to a single shore but is waylaid. The narrator adds "Right so it fares with me in this long way, / Whose course is often stayd, yet neuer is astray" [xii.1, my italics]. All that has passed "Though out of course, yet hath not bene mis-sayd", and now poet and knight re-embark on their original journey: "But now I come into my course againe" [xii.2, my italics].

If they can be enumerated as such, Book VI seems to contain at least three poetic voices: the recreative in Calidore, the plaintive in Colin, and the moral in the narrator.(80) The first returns to court and its discursive economies, the second to the pastoral "Oaten reeds" left behind at the Proem to Book I, and the third remains the 'strong' poet who persists to the twelfth canto

79. Nohrnberg, *Analogy of The Faerie Queene*, p.675.

80. These distinctions are drawn by E. K. in his "generall argument" to *The Shepheardes Calender*. Their application to Book VI is adumbrated by Berger, "A Secret Discipline", pp.45-48. See also Cheney, *Spenser's Image of Nature*, chapter 1.

of the sixth Book, and on to the *Mutabilitie Cantos*. In these competing roles, Spenser seems able to enact the complex and prescriptive demands laid on the individual voice by a courtly regime. The functional ambiguity endemic in courtly texts manifests itself as generic multiplicity, the "variety of matter" Spenser described to Raleigh.(81) In some Renaissance theories of genre, pastoral and epic were not exclusive but inclusive forms which shared a particular relationship with each other.(82) But, as a blueprint of inclusiveness, the epic "is the one, perfect kind of poem, the original for all the other kinds . . . It contains within it the universal and controlling rules for the composition of each kind".(83) It was a form (as Tasso said) ideally suited the autocratic environment which Spenser found himself in:

the most excellent poem belongs exclusively to the most excellent form of government. This is monarchy.(84)

81. Letter to Raleigh, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Hamilton, p.737.

82. On the relation of pastoral to epic, see the following genre studies: Rosalie L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance* (University of California Press, Berkeley; 1973), and *Shakespeare's Living Art* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey; 1974) esp. chapters 6-7; and Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Clarendon, Oxford; 1982).

83. Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem* (Lyons; 1561), iii.96, quoted in Lee A. Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth Century Rhetoric* (Routledge, London; 1968) p.228.

84. Torquato Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, trans. Mariella Cavalchini and Irene Samuel (Clarendon, Oxford; 1973) p.37.

AFTERWORD

It has been the aim of this study to examine a particular moment in the history of love: the moment when *courtship* came to mean 'wooing a member of the opposite sex' through its association with the complex rhetorical procedures of court society. As the word developed, it left behind a much older medieval verb for love-making which derived (in the Romance languages, at least) from the word for 'lady'. One no longer 'ladies', one 'courted', and, as a result, courtship came under the sway not of the wilful *donna* but of a particular behavioural environment: the court. This semantic shift coincided with the process of 'courtisation' which, in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe, marked the beginnings of the genesis of absolutism. By imposing physical and psychological constraints upon its members, civilised society forced wooing into a discursive mode, and elaborate apparatus were erected to intervene between men and women in the satisfaction of their desire. But when satisfied within the legitimate bounds of marriage, that desire formed the bedrock of the nuclear family, and therefore of society at large.

The interiorisation of the affects and stress on the private domestic satisfactions of the nuclear family have for long been ascribed to a surge of 'bourgeois' idealism from the early seventeenth century. According to quasi-Marxist critiques, such bourgeois domestic ideals were diametrically opposed to narcissistic and self-indulgent

courtly practices, practices which largely trivialised romantic pursuit. That is certainly one way of formulating a notional transition from the unsatisfied and thwarted love of courtly-love convention to the 'bourgeois' domestic ideal of harmonious and fruitful marriage. But, as an earlier chapter showed, some historians suggest that courtly and bourgeois ideals were not so simply opposed. Far from being antithetical, they were shown to share a similar if not identical origin. In Elias' formulation, the 'bourgeois' ideals of romantic love and the trials of courtship were symptoms of those civilised constraints - both external and self-imposed - concomitant with a courtly regime and its attendant monopoly of force. Similarly, scrutiny of the minutiae of love and sex was evinced in endless debates on the subject, debates that, primarily at least, were wholly courtly in origin and orientation. This endless verbalisation of love could serve as a delaying tactic permanently postponing the consummation of desire, as the traditional sonnet sequences demonstrated. But it was also a means of scrutinising and categorising sexual love, and, as Freud was later to claim, of privileging it as a source of psychological truth.

For this reason, Spenser's portrayal of private love and courtship in the *Amoretti* seems to provide a fitting conclusion to this study. At first sight, Spenser's poems appear to abide by the same courtly conventions as any other Elizabethan sonnet-sequence. The tyranny of his "Fayre

cruell" provides a pretext for the agonised self-examination of the poet-lover [Amoretti xlix]. He subsists in a paradoxical world where "My loue is lyke to yse, and I to fyre" [ibid. xxx]. Her "hart-thrilling eies" disobey the behests of Cupid but share his mischievous cruelty, alternately encouraging and dismissing the lover [ibid. xii]. But after sixty-two sonnets everything changes. The cruel fair relents, allows the poet a rapturous kiss, and agrees to be his bride. The two parts of the sonnet-sequence sit rather uncomfortably together, the mistress' formulaic intransigence inexplicably melting away to compassion, and her tigerish jibes giving way to "the message of her gentle spright" [ibid. lxxxii]. Spenser's sequence makes a unique departure from the norm as it develops toward the celebration of marriage and its domestic joys:

There pride dare not approach, nor discord spill
the league twixt them, that loyal loue hath bound:
but simple truth and mutuall good will,
seekes with sweet peace to salue each others
wound:
There fayth doth fearlesse dwell in brasen towre,
and spotlesse pleasure builds her sacred bowre.
[Amoretti lxv]

The shift is a dramatic and an unprecedented one. The traditional courtly premium on thwarted passion gives way to the overt celebration of desire, or rather, the legitimisation of desire within marriage. In this respect, Spenser's sonnet-sequence is virtually unique. It does not peter out, like *Astrophil and Stella*, nor end, as the

sonnet-sequences of Shakespeare, Daniel or Drayton do, with a lament. From the sixty-third sonnet it anticipates the lovers' union in marriage, the domestic and sexual values of which are to be resoundingly praised in the *Epithalamion*:

Her lips lyke cherryes charming men to byte,
 Her brest like to a bowle of creame vncrudded,
 Her paps lyke lyllies budded,
 Her snowie necke lyke to a marble towre,
 And all her body like a pallace fayre,
 Ascending vppe with many a stately stayre,
 To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.
 [*Epithalamion*, ll.174-180]

Although it quite consciously takes place outside the court, Spenser's wooing in the *Amoretti* serves as a paradigm for the kind of courtship that has been under review. Courting is figured as a complex rhetorical procedure, one that in its articulation acknowledges the strength of sexual desire, but which, in addition, seeks to rationalise and socialise it within the prescriptive bounds of civilised society. In Spenser's love-poems the two traditions - 'courtly' and 'bourgeois' - exist side by side, the despair of the courtly lover developing into the legitimate desire of the husband. For the first time, the lillies and roses of the cruel fair are within reach, and the mistress's traditional distance and indifference are replaced by male authority and appropriation.

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