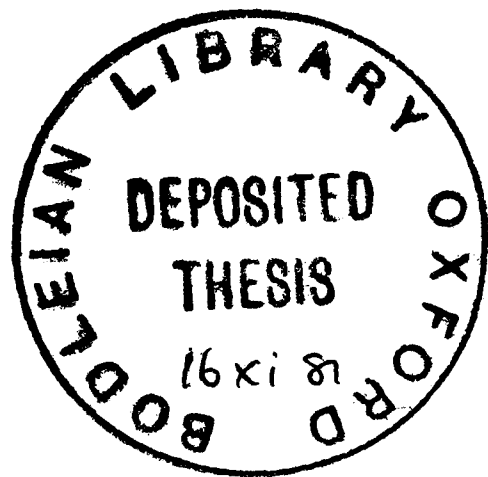


THE IDEA OF METAMORPHOSIS IN SOME
RENAISSANCE ENGLISH WRITERS

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of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Title: The Idea of Metamorphosis in Some Renaissance English Writers

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This thesis explores the use made by Lyly, Spenser, Chapman and Marston of the idea of metamorphosis, with a brief epilogue on Jonson.

The two preliminary chapters define certain important contexts for the theme of metamorphosis in this period. Chapter I briefly considers Ovid's use of the theme, the Pythagorean and Platonic theory of transmigration, and the allegorization of metamorphosis. Medieval commentaries on the Metamorphoses are examined, but it is argued that Renaissance attitudes to Ovid and to metamorphosis are significantly different, being uniquely sensitive to both the poetic and metaphysical aspects. Renaissance responses to Apuleius' Golden Ass are also examined.

Chapter II studies other Renaissance contexts: in the philosophy of man, in magic, witchcraft and alchemy, and in the love-poetry of Petrarch and Ronsard. Neither Elizabethan lyric poetry nor the epyllion, however, make suggestive use of the theme: it is explored more fully in larger structures or different poetic modes.

The next four chapters deal with the English writers. Lyly's plays use the theme of metamorphosis in two contexts: love, and the adulatory myths of the court. Chapter IV considers the complex and varied uses of metamorphosis in Spenser's Faerie Queene. It examines the treatment of of myth, the concepts behind the Garden of Adonis, and transformation as related to the theme of mutability.

(continued)

Chapter V examines the idea of form, set against deformity or transformation, in Chapman's poetry: especially The Shadow of Night and Hero and Leander. Here the basic philosophic or metaphysical assumptions behind Renaissance views of the myth of metamorphosis are defined.

Chapter VI deals with the satiric use of transformation by Marston. His Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image is analysed as parodying the common image of metamorphosis as an effect of love. The satires present a negative image of transformation caused by man's guilt and folly.

The Epilogue, dealing with the negative image of transformation in Jonson's plays and the positive one in the masques, concludes the study while suggesting further directions for exploration.

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Introduction

This thesis is an attempt to explore the image of metamorphosis in four English Renaissance writers: in the plays of Lyly, in Spenser's Faerie Queene, in Chapman's poetry, and in Marston's verse satire. In my first two chapters I provide a background for this exploration, looking at the ways in which the idea of metamorphosis might be treated in the Renaissance. I have set my limits around 1600: but I end the study with an epilogue on Jonson which, I hope, draws certain important elements of the investigation together, and is intended to serve in place of a formal conclusion.

A study of this kind needs no apology. It has not been attempted before, and the importance of the subject more than justifies it. Sixteenth century poets are fascinated by metamorphosis, and make constant and complex use of it. I have chosen four very different writers in order that something of the range of this use may be apparent.

A degree of critical attention has recently been paid to metamorphosis, but this is embodied in two almost equally unsatisfactory books, the second drawing largely on the first: Pierre Brunel's La mythe de la metamorphose (Paris, 1974), and Irving Massey's The Gaping Pig: Literature and Metamorphosis (Berkeley, 1976). Both Massey and Brunel employ structuralist methods, and draw upon psychology and anthropology, to deal with writers ranging from Apuleius to Lautréamont. Massey's derivative work does not need notice. Brunel's short book displays a highly questionable method, leaping from myth, totemic rite, classical epic and symbolist poem to Ionesco and Alice in Wonderland in the pursuit of a more or less private end. Brunel concludes that the myth of metamorphosis 'est une hypothèse sur le temps d'avant la naissance et sur le temps d'après la mort. Elle franchit la limite entre la matière et l'esprit'¹. This is unexceptionable. But while it may tell us something about the pure

1. Brunel, op. cit., p.177.

structure of the myth, it is of no help in explaining the uses made of it by a Renaissance writer.

More valuable are a number of short articles or incidental treatments in books which are actually about something else. Three articles I have profited by are M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas's 'Marvell and the Concept of Metamorphosis'¹, in the last number of the Criterion; Christine Rees's 'The Metamorphosis of Daphne in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry'², and Ronald Paulson's 'Satire, and Poetry, and Pope'³. Paulson's paper is suggestive in a general way: the first two articles are closer to the writing of my period, but while they deal sensitively with seventeenth century lyrical poetry, they do not illuminate the profounder metaphysical implications of metamorphosis as it would be understood by a sixteenth century writer. What Bradbrook and Lloyd Thomas say about Marvell's Garden, suggestive though it is, indeed emphasizes the divergence between Marvell and Spenser.

The Gods, that mortal Beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race.

The authors conclude that 'Metamorphosis is for Spenser and the Spenserians the poetical answer to the problem of Time and the decay of beauty'⁴. This sounds well, but it is not true. For Spenser metamorphosis is more a problem than a solution. Christine Rees's discriminating and intelligent article does make the point, with regard to the myth of Daphne, that the metamorphosis of love into art may be more a frustration than a fulfilment. Again, however, she concentrates on seventeenth century lyric poetry, referring only incidentally to earlier periods and other modes. With these, I may mention Kitty Scouler's Natural Magic (Oxford, 1965), for important observations: I shall come to more specialized works at the end of this Introduction.

1. In the Criterion, xviii (1939), 236-54.

2. In MLR lxvi (1971), 251-63.

3. In English Satire, Papers read at a Clark Library Seminar, Jan.15,1972 (University of California, Los Angeles, 1972), pp.59-102.

4. Art. cit., p.243.

The lack of earlier treatments has made it necessary for me to define the scope of the subject more or less through my study, rather than set it out clearly beforehand. Some points, however, need to be made here. The approach to the theme of metamorphosis in terms of mythical structure, or of poetic image, is inadequate and misleading with respect to a poet like Spenser. For the sixteenth century writer, metamorphosis is a complex metaphysical and allegorical symbol, its meanings enormously multiplied by philosophical and mythographical tradition. This makes the study of metamorphosis in a work such as The Faerie Queene very much more difficult, but also, I think, finally more rewarding. It will become apparent in the course of my study that I concentrate especially on the sixteenth century view of metamorphosis as linked to the nature of man. For Spenser the image is both inward and outward in its implications, mirroring the decay of man's moral nature and its possible redemption, as well as the mutability of the world and its continuity in change.

I use the term metamorphosis rather than transformation because my starting point is this classical myth, the change of a human being into a rock, a plant or a beast. By the time of their literary use these myths are thought of as aetiological, though G. S. Kirk emphasizes that they may not have been so in conception.¹ They explain the physical phenomena of nature on the assumption of a primary anthropomorphism. The laurel tree did not exist before Daphne was transformed: she was chaste and shy, the laurel is evergreen and shrinks from Apollo's touch. But the myths, of course, are above all specific and particular narratives: 'mythical "metamorphosis" ... is always the record of an individual event: the change of one individual and material form into another'²

I do not go into the question of the importance of these myths in primitive religion or psychology. Lévi-Strauss finds myths of transformation especially apt for fitting into his view of mythical structures as a system

1. Myth: Its Meaning & Function in Ancient and other Cultures (1970 rpt. Cambridge, 1978), pp. 76-77.

2. E. Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic forms, 2, tr. R. Manheim (New Haven, 1955), p.47.

of mediation between polar extremes.¹ This may suggest that the theme of transformation would be particularly suited to structuralist analysis: but I am not sure of this, and in any case I do not undertake it.

In general we may feel that such myths imply a sense of kinship with the rest of physical nature: man's liability at any moment to be subsumed into another aspect of it, and his sense that even so, he survives through this new aspect. But of course this sense may be frightening rather than reassuring. The emphasis of the stories can also be on the tragic loss of self implied in the change, the sense that man is clinging to a precarious individuality and freedom in the midst of a natural world that threatens to swallow him up. Even in more sophisticated versions, these senses tend to survive.

Ovid's treatment of myths of metamorphosis, of course, is neither primitive nor religious. He is strongly conscious of the multiple associations they establish between the natural world and the human psyche: he is also, I think, drawn to metamorphosis as a mode of subsuming time. His poem has no real successors, but its enormous scope tends to establish metamorphosis almost as the essence of myth.

Philosophical readings of metamorphosis - or rather, metempsychosis - long precede Ovid, and these are in fact the most important influence on later views of Ovidian myth. Here, it is not kinship but difference which is stressed. Both the Platonic and the Christian traditions emphasize man's uniqueness and his superiority to the rest of creation. Metamorphosis into some aspect of 'lower' nature therefore becomes a frightening degradation, something to be resisted at all costs. This fear of change is increased by the association of various animals with various vices. Moreover, the view of the universe as a hierarchical scheme enforces a sense that movement within it tends to be vertical.

1. See C. Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (Eng. trans. London, 1966 rpt.1972), pp. 109-133, and G. S. Kirk, Myth, ed. cit., pp. 63-73.

Indeed man's need to see himself as different and superior is a persistent element in his relations with the rest of the natural world, ^{one which} Darwinian biology fails to remove ¹. The possibility of metamorphosis places an enormous burden on human nature. Man has to define his nature and preserve it: in more optimistic moments he may also see himself as refining or uplifting it. I believe that the Renaissance is uniquely conscious not only of Ovidian myths as poetry, but also as referring to the precariousness of the human condition. The Renaissance, that is to say, receives metamorphosis not simply as poetic image or mythical structure, but as idea: an idea which influences literature in various ways.

In my first chapter, I discuss Ovid and interpretation of his poem, as well as of Apuleius' Golden Ass, trying to define important elements in the Renaissance view of the story of metamorphosis. In the second, I turn to more diverse uses of the idea of metamorphosis, in philosophy, magic, and in love-poetry. I have provided these first two chapters as a context for the rest of my study, but not as a connected history. The chapters on the English writers must be allowed to stand more or less as separate investigations, on the same theme, but not necessarily tracing the progress of a pre-determined set of notions. I hope that suggestive relations do eventually emerge.

I must emphasize at the start that I am not studying responses to Ovid, or the course of mythological allegory. These matters are important but subsidiary. To some extent they help to define the context I have spoken of, but not to the exclusion of other elements. Moreover, I am not attempting to provide a view of all the ways in which metamorphosis may be used in writing of the period: in the Neolatin 'eclogue of metamorphosis'², for example,

1. There is a provocative discussion of this problem in Mary Midgley's recent book, Beast and Man (Hassocks, 1979).

2. The term is used by Leonard Grant, Neo-Latin Literature and the Pastoral (Chapel Hill, 1965); pp. 248-57.

or in the formation of myths of locality, or in naturalist poetry. I have chosen these four English writers because together they may present an image of the richness and diversity in Renaissance uses of this theme. Lyly, Spenser, Chapman and Marston are all very different from each other, and they are almost equally distant from Jonson. Instead of trying to survey the general uses of the idea in the literature of the period - a procedure which could easily degenerate into the making of lists-- I have tried to increase the range of my reference by examining individual instances of different orders of depth and subtlety. I hope that this procedure will be justified by the results achieved.

As I said, there are no special studies of this subject: but in different areas I have been aided by Jean Seznec's The Survival of the Pagan Gods (Eng. tr. 1953 rpt. 1972); by Ernst Cassirer's The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy (Eng. tr. 1963 rpt. 1972); by D. J. Gordon's The Renaissance Imagination (Berkeley, 1975), and by J. E. Hankins's Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory (Oxford, 1971). Other debts are acknowledged through the thesis.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

The following short titles or symbols have been used:

CCSL	<u>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</u>
Chambers, <u>Stage</u>	E.K. Chambers, <u>The Elizabethan Stage</u> (Oxford, 1923), 5 vols.
Comes	Natalis Comes, <u>Mythologiae siue explicationum fabularum libri x</u> (Venice, 1581)
<u>FQ</u>	<u>The Faerie Queene</u>
<u>GL</u>	<u>Gerusalemme liberata</u>
<u>Met.</u>	<u>Metamorphoses</u>
<u>OF</u>	<u>Orlando Furioso</u>
<u>PL</u>	<u>Patrologia Latina</u>
<u>Var.</u>	<u>The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition</u> by E. Greenlaw, C.G. Osgood, & F.M. Padelford (Baltimore, 1932-49), 11 vols. <i>All Spenser citations are from this edition.</i>

The Geneva Bible, 1560 (facs. rpt. Madison 1969) has been used for all Biblical citations in the chapter on Spenser.

Standard abbreviations are used for journals.

I have tried to minimize the use of op.cit., but where only a single work of the author is repeatedly cited, I have sometimes preferred to use the author's name as a pointer, rather than the title of the work: thus 'Cartari' instead of Le imagini de i dei. The full reference to the edition used is given in the first footnote.

In quotations from 15th or 16th century editions, printer's contractions have been silently expanded and the virgule replaced by a comma.

Chapter I

Ovid: myth and allegory

For the Renaissance, the myth of metamorphosis is one expression of its view of man as possessed of not a fixed, but a shifting nature: a nature, as it were, poised between different kinds of consciousness, or between divinitas and feritas. Man unites all natures in a single nexus of infinite possibility, and may choose his special station. In neoplatonic readings of classical myth, therefore, transformation is a mark of this mobility: 'Quis hunc nostrum chamaeleonta non admiretur?' says Pico in his celebrated Oration, going on to compare man with Proteus¹; This is perhaps the most important of Renaissance readings, but it is by no means the only one. The Renaissance stands at one end of a vast tradition of 'interpretation' of myth: physical, moral, allegorical, even scientific, magical or alchemical. Ovid in this age cannot be simply a purveyor of delightful fictions or a humanist model of eloquence: the Metamorphoses, so widely read, analysed and imitated, evoked a complex and varying range of responses. In this chapter, therefore, I shall first consider Ovid's own treatment of metamorphosis and certain allegorical assumptions about transformation; then look at the attitudes expressed in medieval commentaries on Ovid; and finally, try to distinguish the attitudes of Renaissance commentators and mythographers to Ovid and to the myth of metamorphosis.

I. Ovid: theories of metamorphosis: attitudes to myth

It has been questioned whether the Metamorphoses are in fact about metamorphosis. Transformation seems often to work in the poem as a thematic link, rather than as its theme. The Hellenistic models from which Ovid derived the idea for his poem appear to have been more truly about transformation, though little is known about them.² This is not to say that metamorphosis serves in Ovid's poem simply the function of providing a superficial impression of

1. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, De hominis dignitate, Heptaplus, De ente et uno, e scritti vari ed. E. Garin (Florence, 1942), p. 106.

2. See G. Karl Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses (Oxford, 1975), pp. 2-3. A contrary approach, taking metamorphosis as central, is offered by S. Viarre, L'Image et La Pensée dans les "Metamorphoses" d'Ovide (Paris, 1964).

coherence. It is treated with extreme subtlety and variation, sometimes becoming the main narrative focus, sometimes retreating to the periphery of the story. This fact is bound up with the main quality of the poem: its multiplicity. One could say with equal truth that the Metamorphoses are about myth, or about love, as about metamorphosis. Perhaps it is this very fluidity of themes which makes the range of later interpretations possible.

There is no doubt, though, that Ovid's epic, while avoiding Virgilian gravity, is ultimately serious in its intentions. It is placed in a framework of universal history (though, indeed, this is generally ignored in the narrative), and the innumerable changes with which the poem deals are clearly to be set against the Augustan dream of a Roma aeterna. The contrast may be either flattering or ironic. More subtly, as Charles Segal observes, the nature of Ovid's mythical world, outwardly romantic and pastoral but actually full of arbitrary violence and pain, may suggest 'a certain insight into the Roman world of the time'¹.

Quintilian characterizes Ovid's art by the term lascivia². Such levity may however be only superficial. Unable to grant full truth and importance to myth, or to believe, like Virgil, in the ultimate existence of a stable world-order, Ovid nevertheless manages to extract from his matter an extraordinary imaginative complexity. This is communicated above all through atmosphere, feeling, and narrative tone; each individual tale receives distinct and separable poetic treatment, while being embedded in a dense mythic undergrowth which carries associative links from one to another. The special needs of a carmen perpetuum of this kind require perpetual feats of legerdemain³ on the part of the raconteur: no formal structural principle immediately presents itself.

1. C. Segal, Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses (Wiesbaden, 1969), p. 86.

2. Institutio Oratoria, IV.i.77, X.i.88. I use the edition of H.E. Butler (Loeb, London, 1921-2), 4 vols.

3. See Quintilian, Inst. Or. IV. i. 77: the word he uses is praestigiae.

Certainly Ovid does not choose categories of transformation as such a principle. Further, though historical process is clearly at work, the poem's chronology (dealing with the gods, I - VI.420; mythical heroes and heroines, VI.421- XI.84; and the 'history' of the movement from Troy to Rome, (XI.85- XV.879) is inconsistent in its details. The poem's narrative continuity is subterraneously achieved by parallels, echoes, anticipations, and an often self-consciously elaborate interlacing of themes and motifs. It is all the more difficult therefore to extract from this process any single attitude towards metamorphosis, or special function for it. Karl Galinsky suggests that metamorphosis, freed from being an actual subject, is a functional principle in the poem: explaining its shifts in narrative tone, its fluid structure, and its 'transformation of myth'.¹ Such a view may seem to take a metaphor too far. It is one indication of the desperation felt by commentators.

The myth of Myrrha and Cinyras (X.298-518) demonstrates one aspect of the equivocal rôle played by metamorphosis. In some respects Myrrha's transformation is the point of the story; the only possible solution to an outrageous and painful situation, an alternative both to death and to life. It is described in detail: Myrrha asks to be changed

sed ne violem vivosque superstes
mortuaque extinctos, ambobus pellite regnis
mutataeque mihi vitamque necemque negate!

(X. 485-7)²

The metamorphosis is immediate: and we have here, as in so much Ovidian metamorphosis, the shocking sense not only of a human body being transformed, but of its imprisonment in alien substance:

iamque gravem crescens uterum perstrinxerat arbor
pectoraque obruerat collumque operire parabat:
non tulit illa moram venientique obvia ligno
subsedit mersitque suos in cortice vultus.

(X. 495-8)

1. Galinsky, op. cit. p.63.

2. All citations are from the Metamorphoses ed. F.J.Miller, rev. G.P. Goold (Loeb, Cambridge, Mass. 1977), 2 vols.

Like the brotherless Heliades (II.340-366), Myrrha both is the tree and is encased by it. While she welcomes her change, it appears also a shocking violation of her human form; and her new shape is again violated in the human act of childbirth: 'media gravidus tumet arbore venter' (X.505).

But, as Ovid says, 'tanti nova non fuit arbor' (X.310): the transformation itself is outweighed by what has preceded it. Myrrha's incestuous love, her despair, the amoral assistance of the nurse, Myrrha's self-detesting participation in crime: all this is given elaborate and extended treatment. The story receives special tragic prominence for being prefaced by moral warnings; the atmosphere of obsessive and unnatural lust is compounded by the darkness of night. The narrator's main interest is psychological, in the nature of love; and we can see Myrrha and Cinyras, therefore, as linked to the several tales of impossible loves that surround it - Byblis and Caunis (IX.454-665), Iphis and Ianthe (IX.666-797), Orpheus and Eurydice (X.1-77) and Pygmalion (X.243-297). It is most closely paralleled by Byblis, but there are considerable shifts in narrative tone and feeling between all of these stories, and in each case the resolution offered by metamorphosis is different (in the Orpheus story there is none):

Yet, overlying this thematic connexion, a link is also established between Myrrha's transformation to a tree and the other tree-metamorphoses that hedge it about: Dryope (IX.326-393), Cyparissus (X.106-142), the tree passage in the Orpheus story (X.86-105), and the punishment of the Maenads (XI.67-84). In the transformations of Dryope and the Maenads, we have the same sense of violation and imprisonment that attends the metamorphosis of Myrrha. No simple conclusions about appropriate or punitive change can be drawn; while Myrrha and the Maenads are guilty, Dryope's punishment is an arbitrary and cruel intrusion upon a world apparently of pristine innocence. Dryope

errs unwittingly: her fault is not knowing that she

frutices omnes corpus putet esse dearum. (IX.382)

Indeed her innocence and piety are stressed that we may be the more outraged 'quoque indignere magis' (IX.336-7). The transformation that follows her plucking of the lotus-blossom, itself a transformed nymph, links her fate to that of those perennial victims in Ovid, pursued virgins

Lotis in hanc nymphe, fugiens obscena Priapi,
contulerat versos, servato nomine, vultus.

(IX.347-8)

This kind of arbitrary or undeserved suffering is a strong element in the Metamorphoses. As Charles Segal points out, it is largely a poem about victims; an epic of rape, rather than an epic of love.¹ Transformation, though sometimes a solution to an impossible human situation (as in the case of Myrrha), is often imposed, involuntary and cruel, as with Callisto and Actaeon. In the latter case, as in the imagined metamorphosis of Pentheus (III.708-733), who is mistaken for a boar by his frenzied mother and aunts, death follows the transformation. Metaphors of the chase predominate; the pursuing lover, Jove or Apollo, is at the critical moment seen as a ravenous beast of prey:

alter in ambiguo est, an sit comprehensus, et ipsis
morsibus eripitur tangentiaque ora relinquit:
sic deus et virgo est hic spe celer, illa timore.

(I.537-539)

And though, as here with Daphne, metamorphosis may be an escape, the loss of the human form is almost always seen in Ovid as damaging and irreversible. Although Ovid's stylization of suffering prevents deep tragic involvement, and although, as Fränkel stresses,² the general character of the poem is romantic and sentimental, pain and cruelty abound in it; indeed, seem often to be presented for the sake of a stylistic effect. Thus the brilliant and horrifying detail

1. Segal, op. cit. p.93

of the flaying of Marsyas is balanced by the transformation of his companions' tears into a stream bearing his name (VI.382-400).

The question that Ovidian metamorphosis unremittingly raises is, above all, the question of identity: what gives a human being his distinct personality? In most of the metamorphoses Ovid describes, we sense the continuing identity of the metamorphosed person, surviving an imposed 'otherness'. Daphne remains shy, retains her integrity; Io is frightened by her shadow, still thinking of herself as human; Lycaon persists fierce and ravenous. Indeed we may see in all this a deep scepticism about human capacity for real change: physical transformation is a means of avoiding the necessity for adjustment through psychological change. Thus Narcissus dies to himself: Niobe becomes a stone. The facility with which external mutation is accomplished, and the corresponding alteration of condition, removes the need for real or inward transformation. The characters of Ovid, fixed in their single attitudes of passion or reluctance, avoid tragedy by transmutation. This is possibly the reason for the poem's perplexing shifts of tone and mood: violence is common, frustration and despair abound, but the poem is untragic and each incident is mediated to us by a sympathetic, but ultimately detached sensibility. The catastrophes, made inevitable by the characters' single-minded pursuit of particular ends, are in some respects only material: the inner core of personality is not yielded, it is scarcely even touched.

The persistence of this kind of identity has led some critics to trace in Ovid's Metamorphoses the influence of the ideas of the Stoic philosopher Posidonius.¹ Posidonius is said to have postulated a theory of man's two natures, one of personality, the other external and corporeal. The second is subject to change, but the first persists. Another philosophical link is of course made

1. See Galinsky, op. cit. p.47 and n.66 on p.76, and for Posidonius in general, L. Edelstein, 'The Philosophical System of Posidonius', AJPh lvii (1936), 286-325 .

by Ovid himself, and this is with the doctrines of Pythagoras.¹ The speech of Pythagoras in the fifteenth book of the Metamorphoses sets forth a philosophy of universal and continuous change: not only is the whole of nature in the process of constant transmutation, but man also is subject to the fate of metempsychosis. His soul will inevitably pass after death into a succession of bodies:

omnia mutantur, nihil interit: errat et illinc
huc venit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupat artus
spiritus eque feris humana in corpora transit
inque feras noster, nec tempore deperit ullo,

(XV.165-8)

This is properly transmigration of souls, not metamorphosis: but the idea is closely linked with that of physical transformation, and is often confused with it. For Pythagoras in this speech, the mutability of physical nature confirms his doctrine of the 'wandering' of the soul: the imperishability of matter 'nec perit in toto quicquam, mihi credite, mundo, / sed variat faciemque novat' (XV.254-5) suggests the imperishability of the spirit.

Pythagoras converts metamorphosis to the subject of a homily, but it is a homily of an eccentric and idiosyncratic kind, as the style of the speech² suggests. He does not moralize transformation, though he elicits a moral from it, the kinship of all nature and the wrongness of killing animals. Supremely uninterested in myth, he concerns himself with cosmic and physical changes, the marvellous properties of particular places, the generation of animals: his interests are those of the natural historian. The purpose of the speech may be to link these interests, and this sense of universal sympathy, to the classical myths Ovid has so adroitly handled, but the relationship is an ambiguous one: Pythagoras, far from providing a context for Ovid's poem, is for Ovid simply

1. See Diogenes Laertius, Lives of the Philosophers VIII.4-5 : ed. and tr. R.D.Hicks (Loeb, Cambridge, Mass. 1950) 2 vols., and the texts in G.S.Kirk and J.E.Raven, The Presocratic Philosophers (Cambridge, 1963 rpt.1979) nos. 268-272, pp. 222-3.

2. Lines 143-152 are an example.

an interesting specimen within the frame of his own larger and more complex treatment. The Neoplatonist Porphyry, expounding Pythagorean doctrines in his De abstinentia, makes an explicit connexion with classical myths of metamorphosis but it is one that Ovid notably neglects:

But fables obscurely signify, that animals have souls similar to ours, when they say that the Gods in their anger changed men into brutes, and that, when they were so changed, they afterwards pitied and loved them. For things of this kind are asserted of Dolphins and halcyons, of nightingales and swallows.

Indeed, Pythagoras' speech, apparently providing the poem with a profound philosophical justification, makes us all the more conscious that the work as a whole does not communicate a philosophy. Pythagoras' characterization of a natural order in constant flux merges into the poem's larger patterns of change and mutation, of fluid movement between god, man, beast and tree, so that his moral admonitions are swallowed up in a sense that so fluid an order is no order at all. So shifting and uncertain are the boundaries between various states, so swift and irrational the transitions from one to another, that philosophical solemnizing seems finally irrelevant. Metamorphosis is for Ovid a supremely flexible poetic subject, expressive of certain qualities of human nature in its ambiguous interaction with external nature: partly being swallowed up by it, partly animating it. Transformation can finally be turned to any kind of use, from being an exploration of human psychology to displaying an exercise of wit: what the poem does communicate is an extraordinary responsiveness to the possibilities, poetic and imaginative, for such use.

But the Pythagorean theory of metempsychosis had an influential philosophical posterity: in its most important expression, we find it in Plato. Plato derived his theory of the progress of the soul through a cycle of births not purely from Pythagoras but ultimately from Orphic sources.²

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1. Porphyry, On Abstinence from Animal Food, tr. Thomas Taylor, ed. E. Wynne-Tyson (London, 1965), III.16 : p.126.
 2. See Proclus, Commentary on the Republic XVI.338-41: tr. A.J. Festugière (Paris, 1970) iii.297-9; and the discussions in W.K.C. Guthrie, Orpheus and Greek Religion (London, 1935) pp.164-5, Werner Jaeger, The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers (Oxford, 1947) pp. 83-9, and Erwin Rohde, Psyche (London, 1925) pp. 341-7.

It is impossible to determine how and where the doctrine of metempsychosis arose, but, as Werner Jaeger emphasized,¹ it is plain that its main importance was in developing a theory of the soul. its immortality and after-life, independent of the body. Certainly this is Plato's chief concern: transmigration is for him - as it is not for Pythagoras - in some respects a myth, a 'figure', and is thus incorporated into the myths he creates. And it is only through allegorical interpretation of such Platonic myth that mutation of bodies can be seen as a figure for spiritual metamorphosis: it is thus that Pythagorean transmigration becomes an influential element in a later theory of transformation.

In the Phaedrus myth, we are told how the soul, having once lost its wings by the ill-doing of its irrational part, descends into a human body, and according to the life it leads in this body, suffers rebirth in an appropriate form. Only the soul of a philosopher is able soon to return to its first celestial state: the souls of ordinary men are compelled to pass through a cycle of births, fitted to the conditions of their previous existence.

And in the thousandth year both good and evil souls arrive at a place where they must draw lots and choose their second life ... the soul of a man may pass into the life of a beast, or that which has once been a man return again from the beast into human form. But the soul₂ which has never seen the truth will not pass into the human form.

The same idea is expressed in a passage in the Phaedo (81a- 82d), where Socrates explains how the soul that is attracted by the corporeal is corrupted by this love for the body and is necessarily re-imprisoned in it: gluttons are reborn as asses, tyrants as wolves. E.R. Dodds comments on Plato's 'undisguised relish' in predicting the future of his fellow-men, with the implication that everybody except the philosopher is on the verge of becoming sub-human.³

1. Jaeger, op. cit. p.84.

2. Phaedrus, 249b. All citations are from The Dialogues of Plato, tr. B. Jowett (4th, ed. Oxford, 1953), 4 vols.

3. The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkeley, 1951 rpt.1973), p.215.

In its most celebrated form, however, we meet this theory in the myth of Er at the end of the Republic (X.617d -621b) and in the creation myths of the Timaeus. It is of immense significance that in the Timaeus, transmigration is linked to the idea of man's two natures, and to the distinction between the immortal and mortal souls, which now virtually split the human personality into two. Man's rational, immortal soul is placed in his head, while his irrational soul is imprisoned in the chest, and tethered 'like a wild animal' in the belly (69e -70a): here we have the beginnings of the influential Platonic doctrine of the Beast Within. Since human nature, thus 'was of two kinds', a man who suffered the contamination of the flesh

would continually be changed into some brute who resembled him in the evil nature which he had acquired, and would not cease from his toils and transformations until he helped the revolution of the same and the like within him to draw in its train the turbulent mob of later accretions, made up of fire and air and water and earth, and by this victory of reason over the irrational returned to the form of his first and better state. (42c)

Transmigration becomes the theoretical basis for an aetiological myth: the origins of women, birds, animals, reptiles and sea-creatures are explained by a process of rebirth into increasingly debased forms (90e -92c). 'These are the laws', says Timaeus, 'by which animals pass into one another, now, as ever, changing as they lose or gain wisdom or folly' (92c). From this theory of the first mutations of bodies, and the fitting of the shape to the soul, it is a short step to regarding metamorphosis as an expression of spiritual change.

For the Neoplatonists these Platonic ideas are particularly congenial. The myths of Plato are to them, like all ancient myth, capable of the profoundest allegorical significance: and it is such passages from the Timaeus or the Phaedrus¹ that are behind the Neoplatonic myth of the Fall, so important for later western literature. Human existence is here a stage in a process of

1. There is some difference, however, in the accounts of human creation in the Timaeus and in the Phaedrus: in the Timaeus (41a-44d) man is created by the gods in an act of benevolence and the soul is placed by them in the body, while in the Phaedrus, the descent to the body is itself a fall.

descent or ascent, and this process involves mutation of bodies. Plotinus, recalling an Orphic myth, speaks of the soul seeing its reflection in the mirror of Dionysius and descending into the world of that image, and in the Tractate on Beauty this idea seems to be linked with a version of the myth of Narcissus.¹ Certainly it is this latter myth that Ficino uses in explaining the Neoplatonic ideas of the fall of the soul from the spiritual to the material.² For Plotinus the process of descent is expressed by incorporation in 'bodies progressively more earthy',³ but he does not speak of transmigration as concretely as Plato did. Neoplatonic philosophy tends ultimately to make a doctrine of reincarnations into a series of metaphors for the progress of the soul, and metamorphosis is accommodated within the same allegory: 'humanity ... is poised midway between gods and beasts, and inclines now to the one order, now to the other; some men grow like to the divine, others to the brute'⁴.

Proclus, commenting on the Timaeus⁵, takes Plato's description of a descending order of births - as a man, as a woman, then as an animal - to be a classification of souls rather than a literal account of origins. Since for him the human soul can never become the soul of a lower animal, he takes Plato's account of transmigration into animals to be allegorical. It is to be understood that the life of a tyrant may be described as that of a wolf. This is made clearer in the commentary on the Republic⁶: where Plato had described the metempsychoses of heroic souls into animals, Proclus reads these passages as allegory. The adoption by Orpheus of the life of a swan, or by Ajax that of a lion, symbolizes their predominant use of the faculties they share with these creatures - musical (Orpheus), wrathful courage (Ajax) - while they have fallen through the influence of irrational passion from the divine or heroic state. Only philosophy can preserve the soul from this lapse. The same principle

1. Plotinus, The Enneads IV.3.12, I.6.8., tr.S.MacKenna (3rd.ed. London, 1962) pp. 270-1, 63.

2. M. Ficino, Commentarium in Convivium Platonis, de Amore, VI. xvii: ed. R.Marcel (Paris, 1956 rpt.1978), p.235.

3. Enneads, IV.3.15, Ed.cit. p. 273.

4. Ibid. III.2.8, p.167.

5. Commentaire sur le Timée, V.295: tr. A:J.Festugière (Paris, 1968) vol.v, pp.172-3.

6. Commentaire sur la République, XVI.312-9: tr. A:J.Festugière (Paris, 1970) vol. iii, pp. 271-9.

is applied in Calcidius' enormously influential 4th century commentary on the Timaeus. The significance of the Platonic doctrine of transmigration is that indulgence in base passions will, in this life, make men more like animals:

Sed Plato non putat rationabilem animam uultum atque os ratione carentis animalis induere, sed ad uitiorum reliquias accedente corpore incorporationem auctis animae uitiiis efferari ex instituto uitae prioris, et iracundum quidem hominem eundemque fortem prouehi usque ad feritatem leonis, ferum uero et eundem rapacem¹ ad proximam luporum naturae similitudinem peruenire, ceterorum item.

These Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrines are also found in the Corpus Hermeticum. Hermes, explaining the relations between God, the cosmos, and man, repeats without much modification the Platonic ideas of metempsychosis: souls pass from reptiles to sea-creatures, from sea-creatures to animals, from animals to birds, from birds to men and then to daemons.² But this passage is contradicted by a later one where it is clearly stated that a human soul cannot enter an animal body, and that the belief in transmigration is a great error.³ A corrupt soul is punished by its own impiety, but it cannot become animal.

The relation between these two passages demonstrates more clearly than anything else the movement from Pythagorean and Platonic metempsychosis to Neoplatonic and Christian belief in the sanctity of the individual human soul, which, though it may be deformed by sin, cannot lose its special and divine nature. It may rise to a higher grade of being, but cannot fall to a lower one. Augustine, in the De civitate Dei, makes a ferocious attack on pagan theories of progressive transmigration:⁴ such stories are incredible and unedifying. At the same time, he rejects the Neoplatonic doctrine of the Fall, especially as stated by Origen: the soul does not descend through sin to progressively more earthy bodies (XI.23) and the resurrected body will be united with the soul (X.32). It is this important and fundamentally Christian distinction that is behind the medieval and Renaissance belief that while transfiguration is a fact, trans-formation, however real the deformity of the soul, is a metaphor.

1. Calcidius, Commentary on the Timaeus CXCVIII, in Plato Latinus ed. R. Klibansky, vol. iv, ed. J. Waszink (London, 1962), p.219.

2. Corpus Hermeticum X.7 :ed. A.D. Nock & A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1946), i.116.

3. Ibid. X.20, p.123.

4. De civitate Dei X.30, XIII.19. For reasons explained in Appendix I, I use the edition of J. L. Vives (Basel, 1522), but book and chapter nos. correspond to PL.

It is important to remember that the Renaissance receives its notions of the relation of soul and body from Aristotle as well as from Plato. Aristotle rejects theories of transmigration completely.¹ For him the human soul is irreversibly human and must be attached to a human body. Indeed soul is to body what form is to matter, actuality to potentiality. They are inseparable elements in a single substance (De anima, 412a). But this concept of the soul as the form of the body can be used as the basis - perhaps purely verbal - of a tension between the soul and the body. Certainly it is used in this way in the Renaissance: the degeneration of the soul should imply the debasement of the body which it informs. In one sense, then, soul as form implies form as shape, and a metaphorical relation is established even if actual metamorphoses are denied.

We have come a long way from Ovid. Such implications are not common in the Metamorphoses. It is true that transformation sometimes expresses the essence of the transformed creature, as in the case of the rapacious Lycaon, or the more extraordinary description of the deification of Hercules, consumed by fire so that nothing of his mortal shape remains, only the imprint of his father Jove:

utque novus serpens posita cum pelle senecta
luxuriare solet, squamaque nitere recenti,
sic ubi mortales Tirynthius exuit artus,
parte sui meliore viget

(IX.266-9)

But this not always the case. Indeed the persistence of personality often contradicts the arbitrary imposition of shape, as with Callisto or Io: the psychological elements of the story resist moral or even spiritual allegory. The philosophical justification for such allegory may be seen as in a sense inimical to the spirit of Ovidian myth. I believe this opposition to be the source of a powerful tension in the use of myth by Renaissance poets: on the one hand we have the imaginative recreation of the free Ovidian movement between god, man, beast and tree, and on the other the pressure of philosophical convictions, as well as of an allegorizing tradition that we must now examine.

1. De anima 407b. All citations from The Works of Aristotle translated into English ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford, 1910-52), 12 vols.

It would be far too long a digression to go into the history of mythological allegory here: it is explored very fully by Jean Pepin in his invaluable study, Mythe et Allegorie (Aubier; 1958). The ancient controversy¹ regarding myth and its meaning, as it is received by later generations, is enshrined by Cicero in an influential work, the De Natura Deorum. The Stoic Balbus, defending the gods and their histories against the scorn of the Academician Cotta, puts forward three possible interpretations of myths. They may express moral or philosophical lessons, the gods being personifications of virtues; they may be exaggerated versions of historical incidents; and they may symbolize the operations of the elements, the gods being then forces of nature². As Jean Seznec has so ably shown³, these three ways of interpreting myth are each to have a long history, through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance: more to our purpose, they are also three ways of looking at mythical transformations.

I shall make only a few points here. Historical explanations of myths (given an enduring title by the efforts of Euhemerus, a Messinian of the 3rd century B.C., and much favoured by the fathers in their attacks on pagan beliefs)⁴ are reductive in character. An example is the 6th century mythographer Fulgentius' explanation of the stories of Ganymede and Europa: they are the spoils of war, the eagle being a sign on a war-standard, the bull a figure on the prow of a ship⁵. Such explanations, though Pepin terms them 'allegorisme réaliste', are in some respects not allegory at all: they explain away the fantastic element, such as the metamorphosis, and by extracting the 'real' incident, dismiss the fable.

The physical allegory of myth is more important, though not more influential. It links mythical transformations to the unceasing transmutations of the

1; See J.R.Tate, 'The Beginnings of Greek Allegory', Classical Review xli (1927), 214-5.

2; De natura deorum ii.60-9: citations from the edition of H.Rackham (Loeb, Cam. Mass.1933). Balbus allows only a very limited application to historical readings, which are rejected as impious by Cotta, i.119.

3. The Survival of the Pagan Gods tr. B.F.Sessions (1953rpt. Princeton, 1972).

4. See J.D.Cooke 'Euhemerism' Speculum ii (1927), 396-409; Tertullian, Apologeticum X -XII (CCSL , i. 105-10); Lactantius, Divinae Institutiones I.14-18 (PL . vi.190-214); Isidore of Seville, Etymologiae VIII.xi: ed. W.M.Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), vol.i.

5. Mitologiarum libri tres, i.20; in Opera ed:R.Helm (Leipzig, 1898), p.31.

four elements and 'opens' myth to science: and, in its zodiacal interpretations, to astrology. We may consider for example the allegory of Proteus propounded by Heraclides Ponticus (1st century A.D.): Proteus, transforming himself to a lion (fire), a dragon (earth), a tree (air), and to water, is prime matter; his daughter Eidothea is the deity presiding over these transformations and conferring form.¹ Such allegory is especially favoured by the Stoics and often associated with them.²

The moral or spiritual allegory of the myth of transformation I have already considered in some of its aspects. Allegory of this kind is fully developed only by the Stoics and the Neoplatonists: the latter especially regard myth as the vehicle of the profoundest spiritual truths, such as are conveyed in Porphyry's On the Cave of the Nymphs in Homer and in Apuleius' allegory of Cupid and Psyche in The Golden Ass. Boethius, in the De consolazione philosophiae, may be seen as applying to the plight of the metamorphosed sailors on Circe's island precisely the interpretation attached to theories of transmigration that we have been examining: 'Ita fit ut qui probitate deserta homo esse desierit, cum in divinam condicionem transire non possit, vertatur in beluam.'³

While the ancients tend to regard the three sorts of interpretation as mutually exclusive to some extent, a later mythographical tradition brings them together in an eclectic mixture: syncretism of this kind is displayed by Fulgentius in his 6th century Mythologiae, though he tries to offer a common etymological basis for his readings. The mythographical tradition is in fact fairly well developed by the time close reading of the Metamorphoses in this light begins: and it is to that period that I shall now turn.

1 Héraclite, Allegories d'Homère, ed.&tr. F. Buffière (Paris, 1962), 66.7.

2. See Cicero, De natura deorum II.63-69; Plutarch, in Moralia, 19A-20B rejects the physical allegory of the Stoics for simple morals.

3. De consolazione philosophiae, 1V.3 : ed. S. J. Tester (Loeb, Cam. Mass; 1973), p. 334.

II. Medieval commentaries on Ovid

It is with the twelfth century, felicitously termed by Traube the aetas Ovidiana¹, that any study of attitudes to Ovidian metamorphosis has really to begin, since it is this period that we have the first detailed commentaries on the Metamorphoses. There is in this age - especially at Chartres - what may be called a flowering of allegory. The Timaeus, in Calcidius' translation, provides the age with a cosmology to which all literature must be related; not only because of its literal truth but also for its poetic and symbolic value.² From their reading of Macrobius and Martianus Capella, the twelfth century schools evolve a view of myth as the necessary covering, the involucrum or integumentum for philosophical truths. The terms are defined by Bernardus Silvestris:

Integumentum est genus demonstrationis sub fabulosa narratione veritatis involvens intellectum, unde etiam dicitur involucrum.³

Bernardus distinguishes allegoria from integumentum by assigning the former to Scripture, which is both literally and symbolically true, and the latter to fables,⁴ but the distinction is rarely so strictly made. The conviction that Plato and other ancients had veiled their deepest meanings in myths or fabulae demanded an application of the allegorical method to all classical myth, especially with a view to uncovering the relations between man's moral life and the order of the universe.

Arnulf of Orléans provides in this age an exposition of Ovid's poem and what may be called a theory of metamorphosis.⁵ Transformation is for him the theme of Ovid's work, and when rightly understood it imparts to the poem its moral significance and philosophical weight. In saying this Arnulf stands in contrast to an earlier tradition of monastic study represented by such a writer as

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1. L.Traube, Vorlesungen und Abhandlungen, II, Einleitungen in die latinische Philologie des Mittelalters, ed. P.Lehman (Munich, 1911), p.113. Cited in L.K.Born, 'Ovid and Allegory', Speculum ix(1934), 363.
 2. Cf. W.Wetherbee, Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century (Princeton, 1972), pp. 29-30 et passim.
 3. The Commentary on the first six books of the Aeneid of Vergil commonly attributed to Bernardus Silvestris, ed. J.W.&E.F. Jones (Lincoln, 1977), p.3.
 4. Wetherbee, op.cit.p.113 and p.267 excerpt 2.Cf. also Peter Dronke, Fabula (Leiden, 1974), Chap. I, for the best recent discussion of these terms.
 5. Allegoriae super Ovidii Metamorphosin ed. in F.Ghisalberti, 'Arnolfo d'Orléans, un cultore di Ovidio nel secolo XII' Memorie del Reale Istituto Lombardo (classe di lettere scienze morali e storiche), xxiv(1932), 155-234.

Conrad of Hirsau (1070 - 1150), who in his Dialogus super Auctores warns his pupils against reading the Metamorphoses:

Nonne auctorem eundem maximam dixerim partem ydolatriae in Metamorfosion, id est in transformatione substantiarum, ubi obscurata in se ratione, qua ad imaginem et similitudinem dei factus est, de homine lapis et bestia factus et avis, mutatam, scribit a diis in bestias diversas naturam creaturae rationalis?¹

For Conrad the Metamorphoses deny man's special status as a rational being formed in God's image. Arnulf, however, takes the transformations as themselves indicative of the moral purpose of the work, and in this he is deeply influenced by the Platonism of Chartres.

The accessus to Arnulf's glosulae on the Metamorphoses provides what its editor, Fausto Ghisalberti, calls the first medieval life of Ovid; it remains through the 13th and 14th centuries the most influential of introductions to the poet, frequently copied and borrowed from. Arnulf's procedure is more or less in accordance with the rules laid down by Servius in the preface to his Commentary on the Aeneid². He begins by treating of the poet's life, and then goes on to say that his enquiry will be 'de titulo, de materia, de utilitate, de intentione, cui parti philosophie supponatur liber iste, de modo tractandi...'³ The materia of the work is for him precisely designated by its title, Metamorphoses.

The mutations with which the poem deals are divided by Arnulf into three kinds, natural, magical and spiritual. Thus the mutation of an egg to a chicken is natural, that of Lycaon to a wolf magical, and that of Agave to a frenzied worshipper of Bacchus spiritual. We notice here the lack of distinction between metamorphosis as such - change of shape - and moral or psychological change: thus 'de insano fit sanus' is for Arnulf a perfectly acceptable mutation. Mutations may be further classified as:

de re animata ad rem animatam ut de Licaone homine in lupum, de animata in inanimatam ut de domo Baucidis in templum, de inanimata ad animatam ut de statua Pigmalionis in⁴ virginem. De animata ad inanimatam ut de dracone mutato in saxum.

1. Accessus ad auctores: Bernard d'Utrecht: Conrad d'Hirsau, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Leiden, 1970), p.114.
2. Ed. G. Thilo & H. Hagen (Leipzig, 1878-1884), i.1.
3. Ghisalberti, 'Arnolfo', p.180. Cf. also Ghisalberti, 'Medieval Biographies of Ovid' JWCI ix (1946), 18.
4. Ghisalberti, 'Arnolfo', p.181.

The Renaissance will offer nothing so detailed or painstaking.

This consideration of materia leads to the question of intentio.

Significantly Arnulf sees Ovid's treatment of mutability as illuminating not only material and external change, but also inward change, in the soul. It is thus that Ovid seeks to recall us from error to a contemplation of unchanging divinity:

Intencio est de mutacione dicere, ut non intelligamus de mutacione que fit extrinsecus tantum in rebus corporeis bonis vel malis sed etiam de mutacione que fit intrinsecus ut in anima, ut reducat nos ab errore ad cognitionem veri creatoris.

The soul, according, to Arnulf, has two movements: a rational movement like that of the stable firmament and an irrational wandering like the motions of the planets. We should not be long in recognising here a familiar notion from the Timaeus (36c-37c, 43a-44b). Reason should govern the brute soul as the firmament governs the planets: the tension between the two tendencies of soul, celestial and earthly, is depicted by Ovid through the fable of Io:

Ideo dicitur Io mutata in vaccam quia corruit in vicia, ideo
pristinam formam dicitur recepisse quod emersit a viciis.²

These considerations are to recall us from a submergence in earthly mutable things. Finally Arnulf notes the alternative of a practical intention: simply to compile myths, or to make credible the final flattering apotheosis of Caesar. But Arnulf's preferences are clear: of the double utilitas of the poem, the knowledge of fables and the 'erudicio divinorum habita ex mutacione temporalium', it is the second that is stressed.

The Metamorphoses must therefore be assigned to moral or ethical philosophy. For Arnulf, as Ghisalberti says, the aim of the poet was entirely moral³. In assuming this, and in offering a theory of metamorphosis that relates it to Platonic ideas regarding regarding the nature of man, Arnulf is clearly responding to the new humanism of the twelfth century. The cosmology with which the Metamorphoses open was related in the age both to Genesis and to the Timaeus: it

1. Ghisalberti, 'Arnolfo', p.181.

2; Ibid.

3. Ghisalberti, 'Mediaeval Biographies', p.18.

was not difficult to appropriate the poet to the ranks of the Platonic philosophers.¹ The kind of allegory suggested by Arnulf makes the poem more acceptable to the eye of Christian faith, though it does not Christianize.

But although Arnulf's accessus promises so serious a theory of metamorphosis, his allegories do not in fact fulfil that promise. What we are presented with looks curiously like sleight of hand; having justified a serious philosophical approach to Ovid's poem by virtue of the philosophical significance discovered for mutation, Arnulf proceeds to allegorize the fables largely by other means. In the accessus he had suggested a view of the Metamorphoses that would see it as a series of variations on one moral or spiritual metaphor. But instead of pursuing this metaphor any further, he extends his allegory indifferently to the historical, rational, and physical modes.

Arnulf's enumeration of the 'mutationes' in the poem follows fairly closely that in the 4th century prose summary of the Metamorphoses attributed to Lactantius Placidus². Each fable is tersely listed by Arnulf as a mutation, and so large is his conception of mutatio that even 'Phebus in amantem' (I.8) can be included. This procedure enables Arnulf to move, as it were, out of the moral limits of the kind of mutation he had described in the accessus into the domain of all myth: 'de mutatio à fabula', as Paule Demats puts it.³

In the Allegoriae, Platonic explanations are rare. Very few of the hundred and eighty-four allegories reflect a truly moral mutation⁴. The Metamorphoses are obviously not easy to reduce to a single moral scheme, and Arnulf shows no signs of attempting this. Instead he opens the poem to the great variety of mythographical explanations and in doing so disjoins and fragments it. His accessus becomes no more than an introduction to a manual of

1. See Paule Demats, Fabula: Trois Études de mythographie antique et Médiévale (Geneva, 1973) pp. 132-6; S. Viarre, La Survie d'Ovide dans la littérature scientifique des XII^e et XIII^e siècles (Poitiers, 1966), p. 97ff., pp. 109-10.

2; Ed. in D.A. Slater, Towards a Text of the Metamorphoses of Ovid (Oxford, 1927), studied in B. Otis, 'The Argumenta of the so-called Lactantius', Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, xlvii (1936), 131-63. D.C. Allen, in Mysteriously Meant (Baltimore, 1970), 163, makes the absurd statement that the Argumenta were not known in the Middle Ages.

3. Demats, op.cit. p. 136.

4. e.g. I.5, Giants; II.6, Callisto; VI.14, Niobe; XIV.3, Circe.

mythography, and his chief debts are to previous mythographers; to Fulgentius, to the chapter on the pagan gods in Isidore of Seville's Etymologiae, and to the Vatican Mythographers¹. The poet is forgotten, and the explanations are weighed down with passives 'unde dicitur', 'inde fingitur'. Abandoning his more singular premises, Arnulf allies himself with an established allegorical tradition: 'Modo quasdam allegorice, quasdam moraliter exponamus, et quasdam historice.'²

This is not to say that Arnulf's allegories are uninteresting. Many are ingenious and memorable, and they show the strength of the mythographical tradition while adding to it. Arnulf especially favours historical, etymological, and physical readings:

Filia Ladonis fingitur mutata in harundinem ideo quod fluvius ille habundat harundine et de harundinibus compactis fiunt fistule. Ladon fluvius est Grecie iuxta quem greci studentes invenerunt VII. artes quas Pan id est totum, Roma scilicet que totum esse volebat id est rerum omnium habere noticiam. Tandem Siringam mutatam id est artes grecas, de greco in latinum transmutatas consecutus est, et cum eis cantavit.³

But, as we see here, the historical rationalization tends to remove the metamorphosis altogether: the allegory rests on a series of static and reductive correspondences. Thus Echo, who is good report, is changed into rock because echoes are heard in rocky places: 'Et mutata in lapidem dicitur quia in locis saxosis melius resonat echo quam alibi.'⁴ From the philosophical spirit of the accessus we have moved to the more academic interests of the compiler of myths. Indeed we may find that in the Allegoriae the alternative intentio that Arnulf had proposed for Ovid 'Vel intencio sua est fabulas in ceteris libris dispersas in hoc volumine breviter colligere'⁵ triumphs over the one that had justified the whole undertaking, the theory of metamorphosis.

1. Etymologiae, VIII.xi; the three Mythographi Vaticani are edited by G.H. Bode, Scriptores rerum Mythicarum latini tres Romae nuper reperti, (Celle, 1834).

For Arnulf's borrowings, see Ghisalberti's notes to the text.

2; Ghisalberti, 'Arnolfo', p.201.

3. Ibid.p.203.

4. Ibid. P. 209.

5. Ibid. p.181.

The movement away from an interest in the process of metamorphosis, and in the significance that such transformation may have for the moral life of man, to a concern with myth as fable and the variety of allegorical relations that can be discovered for it marks the whole tradition of medieval Ovidian study after Arnulf. Renaissance Neoplatonism is again to relate metamorphosis to the condition of man: but this emphasis, though it derives from the same philosophical sources as Arnulf's accessus, does not follow from it. Indeed it stands in contrast to the kinds of Ovidian commentary that are to be found in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Medieval poetry may also offer such a contrast. There is for example the remarkable 12th century poem beginning 'Profuit ignaris' edited and discussed by Peter Dronke,¹ where the transformations of the gods for love become part of a wider meditation on the force of love in the universe, uniting celestial and earthly natures and transforming one into the other. Physical and spiritual analogies are held in sophisticated balance: the descent of the gods shows the divinity of love, but it may also show the corruption of the divine through lust; human beings suffer in love, but their metamorphoses perpetuate their loves - 'Phyllis it in florem per Demophoontis amorem!'² The cosmological start to the poem indicates that the poet, 'Iuxta Platonem'³, wishes to show us the original perfection of nature made changeable and corrupt through man's fall: mutation is itself the Fall. Finally the loves of the gods may symbolize the mingling of the four elements; thus there is a further cosmic implication. The poet, ironic and detached, commits himself to none of these analogies; the poem is also half-way to being a seduction-piece. I mention this poem only to qualify what I shall be saying about medieval Ovid commentary: I do not want to generalize about a medieval 'attitude' to Ovid, impossible to categorize in any case if we remember Dante's fierce 'overgoing' of Ovidian metamorphosis in the Inferno, XXV, and the irony in the treatment of the Narcissus and Pygmalion stories in the Roman de la Rose.

1; Medieval Latin and the rise of the European Love-lyric (2nd ed. Oxford, 1968) Text, vol. ii. 452-457; discussion, vol. i. 232-238.

2. Line 101.

3. Line 140 et seq. The analogy is with the Timaeus.

The most influential of Arnulf's followers in the tradition of allegorized Ovid was John of Garland, whose verse Integumenta Ovidii,¹ composed around 1234, was frequently interlaced with Arnulf's Allegoriae in medieval commentaries on the Metamorphoses. John, a grammarian rather than a philosopher, has no interest in relating the theory of mutation he receives from Arnulf to the explanations he offers for the fables of Ovid. As Paule Demats neatly points out, John's verses exhibit clearly the cleavage between 'le domaine philosophique de mutatio et le domaine allégorique de fabula'².

In his opening verses John defines four kinds of mutation: 'Ars et natura, typus et magus, a genitura/ Mutant que pereunt, dant veneunt et emunt' (11-12). Creation is itself the material expression of the ideal world, and the first metamorphosis is that of the elements out of chaos. This philosophy is not carried further. For John metamorphosis is merely a figure of speech: his allegories, mostly derived from Arnulf, simply state the allegorical equivalent of the myth or its characters with mechanical brevity: 'Virtutes Superi, viciorum turba Gigantes / Mens humilis Phlegra, mons tibi fastus erit.' (83-4). He deals summarily with Ovid's tenth book, explaining that the metamorphoses here are not allegorical but express only an identity of name, property or state: 'Sic tibi Iacinctus flos est Cyparissus et arbor/ Taurus crudelis, bos meretricis amor' (411-12).³ He refuses to consider the speech of Pythagoras: 'Dogma quid hoc fuerit Nasonem consule, doctis/ Quid dicatur adhuc hic, superesse volo' (503-4):⁴ and having thus skirted any dangerous doctrines, closes on a Christian note: the star to which Caesar is transformed is in fact the star seen by the Magi.

So commonly was John's poem quoted and interlaced with Arnulf's Allegoriae⁵ that the two together may be said to have inspired the medley of prose and verse

1. Integumenta Ovidii, poemetto inedito del secolo XIII, ed. F. Ghisalberti, (Messina & Milan, 1933) Introduction, p. 17.

2. Demats, op. cit. p. 157.

3. The last two references are to the Cerastae and the Propoetides, Metamorphoses X. 220-242. *op. cit. p. 159*

4. Paule Demats believes that this refusal 'trahit une répugnance profonde à réintroduire la mutatio que fabula avait evincée'; Ghisalberti notes (p. 73) that John's circumspection about a heretical doctrine is paralleled by a later allegorizer, Giovanni del Virgilio.

5. See Ghisalberti, ed. Integumenta, p. 1.

which is the Allegorie librorum Ovidii Metamorphoseos (c.1322-23)¹ of Dante's friend, Giovanni del Virgilio. Giovanni has some things to say about metamorphosis in his accessus², but not a great deal. He cites Boethius to prove that men may be transformed into gods, and an incident from the life of St. Anthony to illustrate magical metamorphosis, but his interest in these instances seems not to extend beyond the purposes of classification. In a somewhat perfunctory way he assigns the poem to ethics because 'omnes poete tendunt ad mores'³.

The tone of Giovanni's allegories is both pious and pedantic. He is greatly indebted to Arnulf, and also to John⁴, but tends to favour moral allegories more than they do: in most cases these consist in identifying moral equivalents for each character. Phoebus is a chaste and modest person, Daphne is chastity itself, which takes root (becomes a tree) in the heart of those who seek it (I.9). Moreover, academic dispute figures largely in his view of Ovid's world: Hercules sustains a thesis, not the world, for Atlas, and Marsyas is a sophist and an exposed plagiarist (IV.25, VI.30). In many cases the explanations have a tired and mechanical air about them:

Vigesima secunda mutatio est de Medea, que voluit toxicare Theseum.
Per Theseum intelligo hominem virtuosum. Per Medeam novercam
intelligo personas malas, que odiunt virtuosos et persecuntur
ipsos. Sed virtuosi prevalent, et eorum fama cantatur. (VII.22).

Mutatio has here become a name for any incident in the poem.

Giovanni does engage briefly with the problems of Pythagorean metempsychosis: 'quod erroneum est et hereticum nisi referatur ad mores' (XV.3), and he sees it as figuring moral change. Earthly mutability is finally contrasted with the immutability and permanence of the true God. Moreover, in the last transformation, the stellification of Caesar, Giovanni sees an inverse relation to Christ's incarnation: we are urged thereby to a participation in divinity (XV.22).

When we turn from the work of these medieval grammarians to the greatest and most comprehensive of medieval allegorizations, the French verse

1. Ed. in F. Ghisalberti, 'Giovanni del Virgilio espositore delle "Metamorfosi"', Giornale Dantesco xxxiv (1933), 1-110. For the date of the Allegorie, see p.5.
2. Ghisalberti, 'Giovanni' pp.13-19, esp. 17-18.
3. Ibid. p. 19.
4. Cf. Ibid. pp. 34-5, and notes to the text.

Ovide moralisé (early 14th century)¹, we are immediately conscious of a great difference of scope, motive and intention. In the first place, of course, the Ovide moralisé is a much larger work altogether: where Arnulf or Giovanni usually assign one meaning to each fable, as tersely as possible, the Ovide moralisé provides a considerably expanded translation, followed by a three-fold or four-fold explication, in the manner of Scriptural exegesis. The allegorization considerably outweighs the text. The writer takes his allegories from a wide variety of mythographical sources; but most attention has focused on the Christian significations he discovers for the fables, and for the subtlety and variety of these he is alone responsible.

The author of the Ovide moralisé ^{an anonymous Friar Minor,} is the first to apply the exegetical method in a fully developed form to classical myth. He proceeds to uncover literal (historical), moral, allegorical (physical or spiritual) and anagogical (Christian) meanings: I use these terms as they are defined in Dante's Convivio². To one fundamental inconsistency, however, he pays no attention. While Scripture is taken as true in all its four senses, the literal truth of fable, if there is one, must undermine all its other meanings. Thus to say that Phaethon was a young astronomer makes it difficult to substantiate that he is also to be taken as Lucifer.

To the author of the Ovide moralisé, however, these inconsistencies are irrelevant. His interest is in mythography of a new kind, and the several meanings established for the fables increase the work's encyclopaedic scope. For him the Metamorphoses are a collection of fables:

Pour ce me plaist que je commans
Traire de latin en romans
Les fables de l'ancien temps,
- S'en dirai ce que je entens -
Selonc ce qu'Ovides les baille. (I.15-19)

and his task is to discover the truths they conceal:

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1. J.Engels, Études sur l'Ovide moralisé (Diss. Gröningen, 1945), pp.46-8 places the poem between 1291 and 1328, probably between 1316 and 1328. All citations of the poem are from: Ovide Moralisé, poème du commencement du quatorzième siècle, ed. C. de Boer, M.G. de Boer & J. van't Sant (Amsterdam, 1915-38) 5 vols.
 2. Convivio, II:i, in Dante, Tutte le Opere, ed. E. Moore (Oxford, 1904) p.252.

cestes fables
 Qui toutes samblent mençoignables
 Mes n'i a riens qui ne soit voir:
 Qui le sens en porroit savoir,
 La veritez seroit aperte
 Qui souz les fables gist couverte. (I.41-46)

The work is enriched by the multiplication of allegories. The question of Ovid's own interests is not raised. For this poet, metamorphosis as a principle behind the poem is of no consequence, because the poem itself is permitted no unifying virtue save that of comprehensiveness.

Since the poet of the Ovide moralisé, then, is not specially interested in the theme of mutatio, he is able to avoid the absurdities that result from earlier attempts to classify all the fables under this head. It is only rarely that he will refer to a particular story as a mutacion at all. The progress from mutatio to fabula is virtually complete. And just as the contradictions between different kinds of significance are ignored (Pentheus, who condemned the Bacchanals, is a saintly man persecuted by idolators, iii.2586-2596,, but later, Bacchus is the true Lord, whose enemies are the Jews, the Pharisees and the heathen, 2741-2823), the relation between myth and significance too becomes exceedingly tenuous. This is especially the case with the Christian allegories.

These meanings are often subtle and sophisticated, but there is little effort to establish immediate metaphorical relations between fable and allegory. The interpretation may work (as in Scriptural exegesis) through two removes of metaphor or verbal association. Explaining the myth of Actaeon, the poet says that God

Fist son chier fil dou ciel descendre
 Au monde, et char humaine prendre,
 Et tapir souz forme de serf.
 Acteon fu muez en cerf,
 Et detrenchiez et devorez
 Si fu par ses chiens acorez,
 Puis qu'il ot Dyane veüe
 Baignant en la fontaine, nue.
 Dyane, c'est la Deïté
 Qui regnoit en la Trinité,
 Nue, sans humaine nature,
 Qu'Acteon vit sans couverture,
 C'est li filz Dieu, (iii.627-639)

Christ took the form of a 'serf'; Actaeon was transformed into a 'cerf'; therefore we may take Actaeon as Christ. In this case, we may feel that the structures of both myth and allegory are so powerful that their juxtaposition is deeply fascinating: but it is unhistorical and indeed impossible to apply this sense consistently to the Ovide moralisé. The author prefers to forget the imaginative quality of the myth, even its actual events, once the relation is established: his sens is then granted an independent life. The most scandalous tales yield a doctrinal meaning: Myrrha is the Virgin, Adonis Christ.

La mirre amere signifie
Nostre mere, sainte Marie,
La sainte, la vierge pucele
Qui de Dieu fu la fille et ancele. (X.3750-53)

The poet of the Ovide moralisé does not hypothesise a Christian Ovid¹. Indeed he can Christianize the fables only by removing the responsibility for their meanings from the poet to the allegorizer. The sheer bulk of his additions to the work makes it quite clear that he regards it as a compendium, to be improved by accretion: 'Pour mieux acomplir ma matire/ Vous vaudrai raconter et dire/ Un dit, qui n'est pas en cest livre' (II.4583-5). Two principles are chiefly at work in this process - that of the romance and that of the historical cycle. Indeed in its historical and genealogical emphases the work may be seen as looking forward to the mythography of Boccaccio. For Arnulf, Ovid was to some extent a poet advancing a view of human nature through symbolic metamorphoses. But for the later poet, neither the mutations nor the philosophy are of importance; they would stand in the way of the kinds of reading he offers.

It is impossible to determine how much currency the Ovide moralisé had in succeeding centuries, though some twenty manuscripts of it survive² and one of two abridged prose versions was produced as late as 1466-7.³ It influenced

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1. This was one medieval solution, embodied in the ps.Ovidian De Vetula (c. 1260), a text edited by P.Klopsch (Mittelalt.Stud.und Texte II, Leiden, 1967).
 2. See ed. of de Boer, i.44-51, listing 19 mss.; he had not then seen the Copenhagen Ms. Thott 399,2^o, studied by J. van't Sant, Le commentaire de Copenhague de l'Ovide moralisé, with crit.ed. of Bk.VII (Amsterdam, 1929).
 3. For René of Anjou; ed. by C. de Boer, Ovide Moralisé en prose, from Vat. Ms. Reg.1686 (Amsterdam, 1954); the other prose redaction was transmitted through Bibl.Nat. Ms.fr.137 and B.L.Ms.Royal 17 E. iv.

the second version (c.1342) of the Latin moralization of the Metamorphoses, the Ovidius moralizatus of Pierre Bersuire, Prior of St. Eloi de Paris¹, but not the first version, produced around 1340.² In this first version, the Ovidius moralizatus, which comprises the fifteenth book of Bersuire's huge Reductorium morale, enjoyed a vast and independent circulation. It was printed by Badius Ascensius at Paris in 1509 under the name of Thomas Walleys, a Dominican friar, and translated into French to form the main part of the Bible des poètes, a beautifully illustrated Metamorphoses published at Bruges by Colard Mansion in 1484 and at Paris by Anthoine Verard in 1493.³ Bersuire's moralization has an important mythographical introduction, entitled De formis figurisque deorum: and for the iconography of this he consulted Petrarch, who had described the gods in his as yet unpublished Africa (iii.128-264).⁴

This humanist influence, though important in showing Bersuire's concern for accurate and pictorial images of pagan deities, turns out to be ultimately

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1. For Bersuire (1290?-1362), a Benedictine, see C. Samaran and J. Monfrin, 'Pierre Bersuire', in Histoire Littéraire de la France, xxxix (Paris, 1962) 259-450.
 2. There seems no alternative to a long note here. The first version of Bersuire's moralized Ovid was made at Avignon c.1340. It was copied into numerous mss. and attributed to other mythographers of the age, such as Robert Holcot, Nicholas Trevet and Thomas Walleys. Printed by Badius as Metamorphosis Ovidiana Moraliter a Magistro Thoma Walleys Anglico de professione praedicatorum sub sanctissimo patre Dominico: explanata (Paris, 1509), it was reprinted in 1511, 1515 and 1521. The 1509 edition was transcribed and reissued by the Institut voor Laat Latijn at Utrecht as Werkmateriaal 1 (1960) and 2 (1962), under the supervision of J. Engels. This is the edition I have used. The second version, composed in Paris c.1342 after Bersuire had seen the French poem and the Fulgentius metaforalis of the Franciscan John Ridevall, and almost continuously revised by Bersuire, exists in a large number of mss. A stream of articles in the journal Vivarium, from 1964 on, have signalled the progress being made on a critical edition of this (see, e.g., J. Engels 'L'edition critique de l'Ovidius moralizatus de Bersuire' Vivarium ix (1971), 19-24 and M. van der Bijl, 'Petrus Berchorius, Reductorium morale, liber xv: Ovidius moralizatus, cap. ii', Ibid. 25-48). Chapter i of this later version, the De formis figurisque deorum, has been critically edited by J. Engels and issued as Werkmateriaal 3 of the Inst. voor L. Latijn, Utrecht, in 1966. Most of my information comes from Engels' introduction to this edition. In addition to the arts. cit. above, see F. Ghisalberti, 'L'Ovidius Moralizatus di Pierre Bersuire', Studi Romanzi, xxiii (1933), 5-136, and J. Engels, Études sur l'Ovide Moralisé (Diss. Groningen, 1945), 23-45.
 3. This also contains material from one of the two prose redactions of the Ovide moralisé in French verse: the one in Bibl. Nat. Ms. fr. 137 & B. L. Ms. Royal 17 E. iv.
 4. Bersuire states this in the Prologus to his moralization: see P. Berchorius, Reductorium morale lib. xv, cap. i De formis figurisque deorum, transcr. J. Minderaa from the ed. of Paris 1509 (Inst. voor L. Latijn, Werkmateriaal 1, Utrecht, 1960) ff. I^b-II^a. For convenience, I use the foliation as given from the original edition. Petrarch's name is misprinted as 'petato'.

deceptive. Petrarch's elegant descriptions are free of moralizing attributes: Bersuire 'resets them in a framework of moralitates'¹. Bersuire's predominantly mythographical interests are revealed by this introduction, which, in its first version, was widely influential.²

Bersuire makes a specific parallel between his allegorical methods and those of Biblical exegetists in his Prologus, where he begins by quoting Paul: 'A veritate quidam auditum auertent: ad fabulas autem conuertentur ... Dicit apostolus paulus praedicator & rigator fidei christianae'. Citing the use of parables and figures in the Bible, he points out that the methods of poets is similar:

Sacra enim scriptura his & similibus fabulis solet vti vt exinde possit aliqua veritas extrahi vel concludi. Simili modo fecerunt poetae qui in principio fabulas finxerunt: quia per huiusmodi figmenta semper aliquam veritatem intelligere voluerunt. (f.I^a)

Most fables have a sound historical or natural meaning, says Bersuire, quoting Rhabanus Maurus, but his special endeavour will be to extract the moral or spiritual sense 'vt sic per ipsas fictiones hominum possint morum & fidei mysteria confirmari ... & Ouidius dicit. Fas est & ab hoste doceri.' (f.I^b). The pagans are thus to be confounded by their own fables. In his stress upon the spiritual meaning, Bersuire distinguishes himself from the historical rationalizing of earlier commentators:

non intendo nisi rarissime litteralem sensum fabularum tangere: sed solum circa moralem sensum & allegoricam expositionem laborare sequendo scilicet librum Ouidii qui dicitur metamorphoseos: vbi recte videntur quasi per modum tabulae omnes fabulae congregatae. (f. I^b).

As this last statement shows, Bersuire is securely within the medieval tradition of regarding Ovid's poem as a handy compendium of myth: which is in fact why he chooses it for inclusion in his moralized encyclopaedia.

Where Arnulf, and to some extent, Giovanni, remain reductionist interpre-

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1. Beryl Smalley, English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century (Oxford, 1960), p.263.
 2. For the first version of the De formis, Bersuire used Fulgentius, the chapter on the pagan gods in Rhabanus Maurus' encyclopaedia, De universo, 'Alexander' (Mythographus Vat. III) and Petrarch; later he added to these from the French poem and from Ridevall. See ed. cit. fol. I^b-II^a, and Engels' ed. of later version (1966), pp. 4-5: also Engels' Introduction, and Smalley op.cit. 262-3. Detached from the rest of the Ovidius Moralizatus, it served as the basis for the Latin handbook, Libellus de imaginibus deorum; it was also translated into French and used as an introduction to the Copenhagen Ms. Thott 399 2^o of the Ovide moralisé, as well as to the Mansion-Verard version. See E. Panofsky, Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art (1960 rpt. 1972), pp. 78-81, notes 1-2, esp. Table on p. 81.

ters, attempting to explain away the peculiarities of myth, the Ovide moralisé and Bersuire have moved towards a stance which we might call fully allegorical. The sense is distinct from the story and runs as it were parallel to it; the organic narrative is broken into its constituent parts, each of which has its virtually independent allegorical equivalent.

Bersuire does not always provide a fully elaborated four-level interpretation of every fable. But even where he does, as with the myth of Saturn devouring his children, which he expounds 'litteraliter: naturaliter: historialiter: & spiritualiter' (f.II^a), he makes an absolute distinction between the allegorical, or spiritual meaning, and all the others, which he regards as inferior: 'Dismissis istis expositionibus dicimus allegorice' (f.II^b). In place of Arnulf's indifferent choice or conflation of expository methods, or the Ovide moralisé's amplitude of alternatives ('Autre sentence i puet avoir'; 'donons a ceste fable/ Autre sentence profitable' I.3075,3109-10) we have a distinctive recognition that in the case of pagan myth as against scripture, the four kinds of exegesis do not form an interdependent series, a ladder. Bersuire's imposed Christian allegory is unhistorical in its details (Lychaon signifies the Jews who failed to recognise the Son of God)¹ but he avoids the larger unhistoricity of earlier commentators, who present the various readings as if they could at once be true.

Thus, though in his Prologue Bersuire suggests as an example an historical explanation for the fable of Atlas transformed to a mountain (f.I^a), he does not use this in the text of his moralization. In Book IV he offers several allegories for Atlas: he is the avaricious and subtle theologian, disputing of celestial matters, but refusing to receive Christ (Perseus) in his heart; he is therefore turned by the Devil (the Gorgon) to obstinacy and hardness of heart. He may also be interpreted as Christ himself, who sustains heaven and is the cornerstone of the Church.²

1. See Petrus Berchorius, Reductorium morale, liber xv, cap.ii-xv 'Ovidius moralizatus' transcribed by D.van Nes from the ed. of Paris 1509 (Inst. voor Laat Latijn, Werkmateriaal 2, Utrecht, 1962), f.XVIII. I continue to give the foliation, as transcribed, from the original 1509 edition.

2. Ibid. fol. XLII^b.

This last allegory may be taken as an example of the kind of reading Bersuire especially favours. The equation of Atlas with Christ works, like that in the Ovide moralisé of Christ with Actaeon¹, at two removes; Atlas is fabled to have been turned to stone, God made Christ, metaphorically, the cornerstone of his Church. The transformation is itself irrelevant: other details of the myth must be ignored. Bersuire can see in certain fictional transformations a figure for moral change, but transformation as a process holds no interest for him. He is concerned rather with the metaphorical equations he can suggest for each of the figures in the fable; the significance of the metamorphosis, if it is considered at all, must be accommodated to each variation of meaning.

Thus Bersuire sees no single guiding principle in Ovid's poem. It is a collection of fables, which exist almost independent of time as they are independent of author. Bersuire makes no attempt to attribute his meanings to Ovid; in this he differs from the author of the French translation preserved in the Mansion-Verard version, who, perhaps by some rhetorical convention, shifts the responsibility to the pagan poet: 'Il semble par ceste fable que Ovide entende la creacion de adam'².

Bersuire is the last of the great medieval commentators. If he differs from the earlier ones like Arnulf and Giovanni, he is linked with the English classicizing friars of the same period, rather than with the distinctively different attitudes of the humanists and of his friend Petrarch.³ It is true that his moralization of the Metamorphoses appears to have had some popularity up to the early 16th century, and the mythographical introduction, the De formis figurisque deorum, has an even longer period of influence, fragments of it appearing in the marginalia of printed editions of the Metamorphoses as late as 1556.⁴ But it is mainly the descriptions, not the moralizations, which are

1. See above, pp. 25-6.

2. La bible des poetes. metamorphose.nouvellement imprime a paris (Paris, A.Verard 1493), fol.ii^v.

3. The most important study of the friars is that by Beryl Smalley, English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth century (Oxford, 1960). She notes, p. 264, that Bersuire's links with humanism are closer than those of the English friars, but acknowledges the great difference in the humanist attitude, pp.1-8, 280-298.

4. See J.Engels, Introduction to ed.of the later version of De formis (Inst. voor L. Latijn, Werkmateriaal 3, Utrecht, 1966)p. VI.

influential: the version in the handbook, the Libellus de imaginibus deorum, omits them.¹ Bersuire's moralized Ovid exists midway between formal school commentary on the Metamorphoses and the preaching tradition²; it exhibits in its entirety virtually none of the concerns which animate the antiquarianism or classicizing of Petrarch.

The main points I would like to make after this survey of the medieval allegorizations of the Metamorphoses are these. In medieval commentary, beginning with Arnulf's Allegoriae (not his accessus) metamorphosis is lost sight of. Ovid's poem becomes simply a collection of fables, with no special literary rationale. Both in the reductive interpretations of Arnulf and John of Garland, and in the elaborate doctrinal allegories of the Ovide moralisé and Bersuire the myth is made, in some degree, irrelevant. The interest of these commentators in Ovid's poem is not literary, in the sense that the poetic qualities of the narrative are ignored³; it is also not philosophical, in the sense that, after Arnulf, no commentator attempts to propose a kind of philosophy for the poem which is connected with the poem's most apparent themes. As I stressed in my discussion of Ovid himself, I do not believe such a philosophy to exist in the Metamorphoses, but the theme of metamorphosis may certainly invite philosophical speculation. The medieval commentators are interested not in metamorphosis as a process, but in the allegorization of its products. The physical and moral type^s of allegory naturally have to assign a meaning to the metamorphosis, but the early commentators do not pursue these meanings very far, while the later ones replace them by doctrinal readings in which the transformation is of practically no consequence. Most important, the Ovide moralisé and Bersuire offer a comprehensive re-telling of the Metamorphoses, narrative and allegory blended in an interpretative point of view that no reader can escape.

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1. The Libellus was edited by H. Liebeschütz, in Fulgentius metaforalis (Stud. der Bibl. Warburg, iv, Leipzig, 1926), pp. 117-28. For the iconographic tradition it represents, see Panofsky, loc. cit., and the somewhat outdated account in Seznek, Survival (1972) pp. 170-9. The possibility of the Libellus having influenced Chaucer is discussed in E. H. Wilkins, 'Descriptions of Pagan Divinities from Petrarch to Chaucer' Speculum xxxii (1957), 511-22: for qualifications, see Panofsky, loc. cit. 79-80 and Engels, Introduction to De formis, (1966) p. XV;
 2. Cf. Smalley, op. cit. 264n², and J. B. Allen, The Friar as Critic (Nashville, 1971) p. 6.
 3. Ghisalberti, 'Medieval Biographies' pp. 42-3, suggests the emergence of an 'embryonic kind of aesthetic judgment'; but this, I think, remains embryonic.

III. Renaissance commentators and mythographers

The purpose of this long enquiry into the history of moralized Ovid has been not only to establish the traditions on which the Renaissance may have drawn, but also to demonstrate that Renaissance attitudes are, in important respects, distinct. Jean Seznec, in his The Survival of the Pagan Gods, argues quite rightly that the allegorical tradition survived into the Renaissance, but one implication of his invaluable book is that an unbroken line of continuity connects medieval exegeses with later ones. It has become usual to stress this continuity, and to explain the disappearance of certain medieval types of interpretation by an undefined 'lack of popularity'. This is deeply misleading.

As in so much else, the distinctions must begin with Petrarch. It has been said that Petrarch bequeathed to humanism a new sense of history, which gives to antiquity its own, separable, and unified value¹. Étienne Gilson points out in a valuable article that Petrarch regarded his own age as one of darkness; when he describes himself as standing on the confines of two peoples, 'simul ante retro que prospiciens', he is not contrasting the 'Middle Ages' with the coming 'Renaissance', but imagining himself in a twilight between the pure radiance of antiquity and a darkness when all knowledge of it would be lost.² In other places, as in the famous apostrophe to the Africa³, Petrarch does however permit himself a guarded optimism about the future.

What Petrarch hoped for, above all, was a renewal of the literary tradition under the new humanist ideal of eloquence: 'a purification of Latin diction and grammar, a revival of Greek and a return from medieval compilers, commentators and originators to the old classical texts'⁴ In the De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia, he opposes to scholasticism 'Ciceronian eloquence, Platonic wisdom and Christian piety'⁵: and itⁱⁿ is these three terms, literary, philosoph-

1. See T.E.Mommsen, 'Petrarch's conception of the "Dark Ages"', Speculum, xvii (1942), 226-42; Smalley, op. cit. 292-8, and Panofsky op.cit. 10-11.

2. É.Gilson, 'Sur deux textes de Pétrarque: II. "In confinio duorum populorum"', Studi Petrarqueschi vii (1961), 42-50. The quotation is from Petrarch's Rerum Memorandarum Libri, ed. G.Billanovich (Florence, 1945) I.19.

3. Africa, IX. 451-77: ed. N. Festa (Florence, 1926).

4. L.Thorndike, 'Renaissance or Prenaissance?' JHI iv (1943), p.68; the sentence is applied to Petrarch by Panofsky, loc. cit.11.

5. The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. E.Cassirer, P.O.Kristeller and J.H. Randall, Jr. (Chicago, 1948 rpt.1971), Introduction, p.14.

ical and religious, that Renaissance attitudes to myth, Ovid and metamorphosis are to be redefined. It may be interesting that Erwin Panofsky describes Renaissance man's 'change of heart' itself as a sense of "metamorphosis":¹

The early humanist editions of the *Metamorphoses*, beginning with the editio princeps of Ovid's Opera, published at Bologna by B. Azoguidus in 1471 and reprinted at Venice in 1474 and at Parma in 1477, contain no commentary at all.² Politian, who owned the copy of the 1477 edition now in the Bodleian, annotates it throughout in his own hand, but his notes are mainly textual. He collated this edition with two old codices³ and marks variants, as well as passages of special interest; he also provides some summaries and quotations from Greek authors.⁴ The atmosphere of humanist learning surrounds the 1502-3 Aldus edition of Ovid's works in 3 volumes, printed at Venice; it is conveyed by Aldus' prefatory epistle and the 'Index graecolatinus',⁵ but this again is a plain text without commentary. The new value placed on the text of Ovid in these editions, and on the reader's uninterrupted access to it, is, curiously enough, not impaired in the most thoroughly annotated of all Renaissance editions of the Metamorphoses, and the most popular - that of Raphael Regius, first published at Venice in 1492.

The Regius commentary is scholarly and critical, not allegorical: it applies to the text of the Metamorphoses the methods of the new humanist scholarship, expounding meanings, noting parallels, and above all remarking rhetorical felicities. In his commentary Regius will mention moral meanings only incidentally; but in a long preface, he states his absolute conviction that the transformations in the work have moral significance, and finally: 'Sed quid de Metamorphosi multa? Exemplar mihi, vt semel dicam, totius humanae & ciuilis vitae

1. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 37.

2. I have examined the last two, and gather they are reprints of the ed. prin. from J.M.S. Cotton, 'Ex libris Politiani: Incunabula Bodleiana', MLR xxxii (1937), 397.

3. See Bodl. Auct O Infra II. 9, ms. note on fol. 440^r: this is transcribed in Cotton, art. cit. 398n, with a slight error - 'Auditoribus' for 'Adiutoribus'.

4. E.g. fols. 60^r, 101^r (special interest); 76^v, 86^r (Greek parallels etc.)

5. Ovid, Opera omnia (Venice, 1502-3), i. sig. a2^{r-v}, a4^r - f4^r.
See also Opera omnia (Aldus, Venice, 1515-16), vol. ii for an edition with some textual notes but no allegories.

esse vide tur'¹. He goes on to emphasise the poem's copiousness and elegance, and its usefulness in the instruction of schoolboys.² By 1513, fifty thousand copies of this edition had been printed; Regius' commentary was supplemented by the critical notes of Jacobus Micyllus in a Basel edition of 1543, and to the end of the sixteenth century the Regius-Micyllus version remains the standard Renaissance edition. George Sandys used it in the 17th century, and Golding may have done so as well.³ In 1601, a variorum edition of Ovid's works was published by Wechel at Frankfurt, and this brings together the notes of a large number of Renaissance scholars: Regius and Micyllus are naturally given pride of place in the Metamorphoses commentary, and the Observationes of Hercules Ciofanus follow. It is notable that the emphasis throughout is on textual, critical, and, to some extent, antiquarian matters. The Regius edition was, as D.P. Harding remarks, probably intended for use in schools, and its huge number of printings may indicate that it was so used.⁴ It is important to note, then, that it communicates, first, an assumption that the Metamorphoses can be straightforwardly moral and instructive, even without elaborate allegory; and second, that the poem is valuable above all for its literary qualities, for its richness, and for its multifarious associations with the whole of classical history and myth.

However, presumably to fill a need, the early Regius editions are supplemented, in the first book, by the 'tropological' commentary of the Dominican friar, Petrus Lavinius: these editions begin appearing in 1510 and continue for the first forty years of the century.⁵ Lavinius offers an extreme Christianisation of Ovid's poem, suggesting that the poet is the unwitting medium for the

1. To Francisco Gonzaga of Mantua, dated Venice 1493. I quote from a variorum edition of Ovid's Opera omnia (Frankfurt, 1601) Tom. III, In quo Metamorphoseos lib. xv. Cum commentariis Raphaelis Regii, & Annotationibus Jacobi Micylli, sig.)(3^r

2. Ibid. sig.) (3^r - v.

3. See D.P. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid (Illinois, 1946) pp. 18-21.

4. Ibid. p. 19. John Brinsley, A Consolation for our Grammar Schooles (1622), facs. ed. by T.C. Pollock (New York, 1943) p. 66, recommends for use a Regius edition.

5. See Harding, op. cit. p. 20, and J. Engels, 'Les commentaires d'Ovide au XVI^e siècle' Vivarium xii (1974), 7.

profoundest Christian truths: 'hoc tamen suis verbis spiritus sanctus nobis aperuit'.¹ Lavinius' commentary returns us to the assumptions of Bersuire; it appeared, indeed, the year after Badius had printed the Ovidius moralizatus under Walley's name. In our quick leap from Petrarch to humanist editions, we have ignored the popularity of Christian moralizations throughout this period. It is indicated by the Mansion-Verard conflation of Bersuire and the Ovide moralisé in prose,² as well as by the printing in 1497 of G. Bonsignori's abridged and allegorized Metamorphoses in Italian, a text dating from 1370.³ Caxton's English translation, surviving only in manuscript, is based on something like the Mansion text,⁴ and Christian allegories are also provided in Augustini's Italian version.⁵ It may be significant that several of these are in the vernaculars, where piety is more at a premium.

Lavinius' preaching duties apparently kept him from completing his commentary;⁶ perhaps more was not demanded. Petrarch had pleaded not only for textual accuracy but for a new ideal of historical truth. With the growth of humanist scholarship, Christian readings of pagan myth must increasingly have seemed unhistorical and insensitive. They may not have been universally accepted: Rosemond Tuve analyses one of the prose versions of the Ovide moralisé to show that doctrinal meanings were even then being excised.⁷ Satirical attacks on the moralizers of the Metamorphoses are made in the Epistolae obscurorum virorum (1515), Letter I. 28 (here the version of Walley's-Bersuire is mentioned)⁸ and by Rabelais in the Prologue to Gargantua⁹, where a certain 'Frère Lubin' is the culprit.

J. Engels identifies Lavinius as Lubin, and suggests that the attacks, not

1. P. Ovidii Nasonis poete ingeniosissimi Metamorphoseos libri xv. In eosdem libros Raphaelis Regii luculentissime enarrationes. Neque non Lactantii & petri Lauinii commentarii non ante impressi (Venice, 1527), fol. 14^r.
2. See above, p. 27.
3. Ouidio methamorphoseos vulgare (Venice, 1497) See Proemium for date of composition.
4. The Metamorphoses of Ovid tr. W. Caxton, 1480, facs. of the Phillipps Ms. (Bks. 1-9) and the Pepys Ms. (Bks. 10-15) in Magdalene College, Cambridge (New York, 1968), 2 vols.
5. Tutti gli libri de Ouidio Metamorphoseos tradotti dal litteral in uerso uulgar con le sue Allegorie in prosa... per Nicolo Agustini (Venice, 1522).
6. Lavinius, ed. cit. note 1 above, fol. 27^r-27^b.
7. Allegorical Imagery (Princeton, 1966 rpt. 1977) pp. 310, 313.
8. See ed. of F. G. Stokes (London, 1909) p. 74.
9. F. Rabelais, Oeuvres complètes ed. J. Boulenger & L. Scheler (Paris, 1955) p. 5.

only of Rabelais, but also of Erasmus and Luther, on doctrinal readings of the Metamorphoses, created such a stir that all these three authors, as well as

'In Ovidii Metamorphoseos libros commentaria sive enarrationes allegoricae vel tropologicae' were placed on the Index of 1559 promulgated at Rome.¹ The Church may have had other reasons for condemning Rabelais, Erasmus, and Luther; but Engels is certainly right in relating the ban to the disappearance of the Walley-Bersuire versions (and the Lavinius allegorizations) around mid-century.

Melanchthon and Luther had condemned the methods of Scriptural exegesis itself. Melanchthon regards allegory with suspicion, distrusting the dislocation from the plain literal sense. He warns against a misuse of the four-level interpretation:

In talibus locis nihil opus est mutare historiae uerba, sed a simili talia argumenta ducuntur. Haec duximus adscribenda esse, quanquam olim e scholis ac templis omnia illa Monachorum de quatuor sensibus explosa sint: tamen quia nonnulli plus satis hanc prodigiosam uarietatem in interpretando amant, propter auctoritatem ueterum, quorum aliqui allegorij immodice delectantur; uolui lectorem monere, ut ad Metamorphoses illas iudicium adhiberet.²

It is this tradition of monastic study that Luther attacks in his Lectures on Genesis. Allegory is intrinsically distasteful to him ('exempla & uestigia patrum me terrent'), but he is especially offended by the attribution of doctrinal meanings to myth: 'quidam Metamorphosin Ouidij in allegorias uerterint. Mariam fecerunt Laurum: Apollinem Christum'³. Yet Luther himself uses myths as moral exempla, and Melanchthon declares 'Fabulae omnes pertinent aut ad mores, aut ad scientiam naturae, aut ad historiam'⁴. I believe their criticisms to have worked, not in proscribing all allegory, but in helping to end the tradition of a Christianized Ovid. In doing so they may have helped to revive the allegory of the poets in place of that of the theologians.

Erasmus and 'pietas litterata'

So far, I have noted the scholarly and critical character of humanist editions of the Metamorphoses, and the fact that although the Christian allego-

1. J. Engels, 'Les commentaires d'Ovide au XVIe siècle', Vivarium xii (1974), 3-13.

2. P. Melanchthon, Opera, Vol. ii (Wittenberg, 1562), p. 34. See also Institutiones Rhetoricae (Cologne, 1518), D4^r - E1^r.

3. In primum librum Mose Enarrationes (Wittenberg, 1544-60), iii. fol. cxvii^v. This passage is cited by Sez nec, Survival, p. 96n.

4. See Luther, op. cit. fol. cxxv^v; and Melanchthon, De Rhetorica libri tres (Wittenberg, 1519), C2^v.

ries survive up to a point, they are under attack in the 16th century. I think that the Renaissance poet is uniquely in a position to respond to the imaginative qualities of the myths of transformation, but he is also uniquely conscious of their moral significance. The second part of this attitude owes almost everything to Erasmus, certainly the most influential man of his age. Allegory is for Erasmus an important instrument in drawing the whole of classical literature into an educational programme which is moral in essence.¹ In the Enchiridion, he argues that myth should be read in the same way as scripture: 'Sed uti divina Scriptura non multum habet fructus, si in littera persistas haereasque: Ita non parum utilis est Homericæ, Virgilianæque Poesis, si memineris eam totam esse allegoricam'.² Significantly this kind of enquiry is immediately associated with Platonic philosophy. Attacking the dry subtleties of the scholastics, Erasmus proposes a renewal of Pauline and patristic exegesis. He is careful to specify that any truth is Christ's³, but refers the pagan fables not to doctrine, but to the moral life of man. Proteus is the human mind, transformed by the passions to the qualities of beasts⁴; the cups of Circe symbolize sensuality, the apotheosis of Hercules shows the ascent of the virtuous to heaven.⁵

The myth of Circe is one that Erasmus puts to recurrent and memorable use. It seems above all to illustrate his sense of the need for man to preserve his humanitas through reason, study and judgment. We may recall a splendid passage from the Adagia (Dulce bellum inexpertis), where Nature adjures man: 'Quæ Circe nativam vertit formam? ... Ego te divinum quoddam animal finxi, quid venit in mentem, ut te ipsum in tam immanem belluam transformares, ut nulla jam bellua, futura sit bellua, si cum homine componatur?'.⁶ In the De copia rerum, Erasmus expounds the allegories to be found in myths, and provides a long explanation of the story of Circe: those who will not be guided by reason are no longer men.⁷

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1. See the discussion of pietas litterata in R.R. Bolgar, The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries (1954 rpt. New York 1964), pp. 336-40.
 2. D. Erasmus, Opera omnia (Leiden, 1703-6) v. 7E-F: Enchiridion militis Christiani, II
 3. Ibid. 9D-E.
 4. Ibid. 18C: Enchiridion, VI.
 5. Ibid. 29C-D.
 6. Opera omnia, ii. 954F-955A.
 7. Opera omnia, i. 91B-D. De duplici copia verborum ac rerum, II .

Man, of all the creatures, is in constant danger of transforming himself to a monster or a beast; the price of humanity is eternal vigilance. Erasmus makes his most serious and forceful use of these ideas when writing on a subject very close to his heart, in the De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis libellus. He is horrified that a child's education may be neglected:

An non abominandum ostentum habeatur animus humanus in corpore bestiae? quemadmodum legimus apud Circen homines veneficiis mutatos in leones, ursos, ac sues, ut in his tamen esset mens hominis, quod idem sibi usu venisse prodidit Apulejus, neque non credit D. Augustinus homines verti in lupos. Quis sustineret ejusmodi monstri pater appellari? ...
Natura quum tibi dat filium, nihil aliud tradit, quam rudem massam. Tuae partes sunt, obtemperantem & in omnia sequacem materiam in optimum habitum fingere. Si cesses, feram habes: si advigiles numen, ut ita loquar, habes.

For Erasmus, education is truly a shaping and reforming process. His image of man is closest to the one proposed by Plato in the Republic IX.588b -589b , 'like the composite creations of ancient mythology, such as the Chimera or Scylla or Cerberus, ...in which two or more different natures are said to grow into one', the human struggling against the monstrous or the bestial. In the end it may seem that only humane studies can preserve this humanity.

But in spite of Erasmus' seriousness here, we must note that the passages cited from the Adagia and the De copia, are, essentially, illustrative. They function as models of how to write, how to use classical parallels: the piece on allegory in the De copia is followed shortly by advice on making lists of examples - aptly for my theme, the illustration given is of examples for changeableness or inconstancy.² Erasmus' most lasting influence as an educator is in the dissemination of such models: so that it becomes completely natural to use mythical parallels, makes them into proverbs. Myth is tamed by such means: the educative purpose of Erasmus removes the disturbing elements of pagan fables and converts them to a source of delight and instruction. Erasmus himself recommends selective readings in the classics, and, later, Vives recommends expurgation.³ The Erasmian view is a very important one, but in my next chapter, I shall supplement it by others. Before that, I would like to look at three Renaissance treatments of Ovid.

1. Opera omnia, i. 493D-494A.

2. Ibid. 103E-104F.

3. Cf. Bolgar, op.cit.339-40, and J.L.Vives, De tradendis disciplinis III.5
tr. by J.F. Watson as Vives on Education (Cambridge, 1913) p. 128.

Three versions of the Metamorphoses: Sabinus, Aneau and Golding

I have chosen these examples because they are close together in time and all belong to the middle of the sixteenth century: and they are all, I think, influential. George Sabinus' Fabularum Ovidii Interpretatio was given as a series of lectures at Königsberg and first published in 1554: it was reprinted at the university press in Cambridge in 1584. Barthélemy Aneau contributed a long allegorizing preface, and marginal moralizations, as well as his translation of the third book, in Trois premiers liures de la Metamorphose d'Ovide, Traduictz en vers François (Lyons, 1556). Arthur Golding's translation of the Metamorphoses into English verse in 1567 is well known.

Sabinus' book is interesting for several reasons. In the first place it is assigned to Melanchthon by the 19th century editors of his Opera: they include among his classical commentaries an Enarratio Metamorphoseon Ovidii which is this work, always printed (they list 16 editions) under the name of Sabinus.¹ Sabinus was Melanchthon's son-in-law. Although both Melanchthon's Enarratio and Sabinus' Interpretatio are discussed and cited by modern writers such as D.C.Allen and James Nohrnberg², they clearly have not examined either the one or the other, since they are unaware that the two works are one.³ I am not competent to judge the evidence brought by Melanchthon's editors for giving the work to him: his other commentaries are not very similar. Since this one was always published as the work of Sabinus, I shall discuss it as if it were written by him. It may be noticed that Melanchthon is twice mentioned in the course of the interpretation - a strange procedure if it were all his.⁴

For Sabinus his father-in-law's strictures about allegory seem to have operated precisely as a warning and no more: indeed they serve to distinguish the new kinds of allegory from the old, and to formulate a peculiarly Renaissance ideal of 'concinna allegoria'. The interpretation must be both elegant

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1. Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia, ed.C.G.Bretschneider and H.E.Bindseil (Brunswick, 1834-60), xix.496-654. Prefatory note by the editors, citing editions, 496-7.
 2. Don Cameron Allen, Mysteriously Meant (Baltimore, 1970), p.178n³⁵, pp.179-82. J.Nohrnberg, The Analogy of the Faerie Queene pp.113n, 401n, 521, 613 ; 611-2.
 3. I have compared the Cambridge edition (1584) with that in the Melanchthon Opera; they are identical, except that a preface by Sabinus is excluded in the latter.
 4. Opera, xix.p.559, p.587. The editors suspect an attribution by Sabinus here: see p.559ⁿ.

and appropriate:

Et hanc ipsam curam quaerendi concinnas allusiones, & vitandi monstrosas, & seruandi modum prodesse iunioribus ad formanda iudicia non dubium est. Et recte assuefacti in his puerilibus exercitijs postea circumspetiores erunt in enarratione doctrinae Ecclesiae: nec ludent intempestiuis, insulsis, & absurdis allegorijs, vt Origenes & Monachi, qui vt Protheus

Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum
Ignemque horribilemque feram, fluviumque liquentem.

Ita isti omnibus materijs sine discrimine quaslibet figuras induerunt. Vt autem haec licentia perniciosa est, ita concinnae allegoriae in loco adhibitae, magna & dulcia sunt ornamenta, & memoriam adiuuant.¹

Thus the allegory of the poets is to serve indeed as a model for the allegory of the theologians.

Sabinus' commentary is one of the books that, around the middle of the 16th century, replaced the old moralizing explications: it is a product both of humanist scholarship and of the Renaissance reverence for classical myth as the vehicle of profound truths. Sabinus is convinced of the moral purpose of poetry:

Poetica nihil aliud est nisi Philosophia numeris & fabulis concinna,
qua honestarum artium doctrina² & praecepta de moribus illustrata
regnorum exemplis continentur.

Ovid's purpose in relating these fables is to show divine providence, and so he chooses the structure of a 'carmen perpetuum' - 'autor persequitur quandam historiae seriem ab initio mundi ad sua tempora deductam, qua docet res humanas non casu aut fortuito ferri, sed gubernari diuinitus'³. The poem is richly comprehensive, including history, geography, astronomy, physics and natural sciences: a thesaurus eruditionis 'cuius quidem lectio conducit, primum ad formandos vitae mores; inuitant enim nos exempla ad virtutem, & a turpitudine dehortantur.'⁴ The subject of the work is transformation: and these transformations indicate the monstrous deformities of lustful and degenerate men.⁵ But Sabinus gives an important place to the poem's function as a model of the humanist ideal of eloquence: he has already quoted Erasmus on the delights, as well as the instruction, of poetry.⁶

1. Fabularum Ovidii Interpretatio, Ethica, Physica et Historica (Cambridge, 1584)

¶ 3^v : Dedicatory preface.

2. Ibid. ¶ 7^r. G.S. De Vtilitate, Argumento, ac titulo operis.

3. Ibid. ¶ 8^r.

4. Ibid. ¶ 8^r -v.

5. Ibid. ¶ 8^v.

6. Ibid. ¶ 8^v, ¶ 8^r.

It is possibly this new, specifically literary approach to the classics, (as seen more exclusively in the Regius- Micyllus version) that is responsible for Sabinus' restatement of a single moral principle for the poem, the theme of transformation. Sabinus is concerned with the interpreting of Ovid's fables; to some extent, then, his interests coincide with that of the Renaissance mythographer. Nevertheless, for him the poem has an independent artistic unity, which he defines in terms of its theme.

Sabinus' interpretative method is to take a substantial section of the poem, comprising sometimes several mutations, and then to analyse the more important ones. The fables are enumerated according to the principle established by Lactantius Placidus; but the selection of interpretative units is individual, and the attribution of significance too is selective. Thus the fable of the disguised Mercury (I.669-81), noted by Lactantius as a mutation: 'Mercurius in pastorem', is numbered by Sabinus¹ but neither clearly mentioned nor explained, though Sabinus has much to say about Mercury as a symbol of eloquence. Moreover, rhetorical felicities are noted in the margin; Sabinus' real intentions as critic, mythographer and pedagogue are seen to be straining against the traditional division of the poem into a series of fabulae conveniently termed mutations

Moral and physical readings are preferred: fulfilling the ideal of a concinna allegoria, they also express characteristically Renaissance interests. The fable of Lycaon warns against impiety, that of the Giants against seditious ambition.² The metamorphoses of Jupiter signify the power of the superior elements on inferior ones 'qua omnia procreantur'.³ Lorenzo Valla is quoted for an allegory of Procne and Philomela as Oratory and Poetry,⁴ and Melanchthon himself for one of Proteus as the human mind. This explanation is a memorable one. Sabinus cites Plato, Euthydemus 288, for Proteus as a Sophist using verbal tricks: he may also be nature itself, generating various species; and finally:

Est & erudita Prothei allegoria quae extat apud Caelium Calcagninum, is per Protea intelligit veritatem, quae in abdito latens non facile potest apprehendi: atque ait, illum hac de causa fingi in antro

1. Sabinus, *ed. cit.* p.42 and marginal note p.46; Lactantius Placidus, Narrationes I.xi in D.A.Slater, Towards a Text of the Metamorphoses of Ovid (Oxford, 1927).
2. Sabinus, *ed. cit.* p. 23, pp.14-15.
3. *Ibid.* p.218.
4. *Ibid.* p.245.

obdormiscere, * comprehensum vera dicere; in varias autem transire formas, quia dum ingenium ad veritatem indagandam ratione ducitur, variae oriuntur formae, quae veritatis speciem habent, hoc est, falsae opiniones, quibus deludimur; multa enim putamus esse vera, quae non sunt. Quo plura vero simulachra seu commenta opinionum nobis obiiciuntur, eo instandum acrius, donec Proteus redeat in suam formam, hoc est, veritas illucescat.¹

This allegory of Proteus as truth is an old one: we find it in Augustine.² As Sabinus says, 'Metamorphosis Protei non minus varias allegorias, quam ipse formas recipit'³: his handling of these readings is notable for its seriousness and subtlety. Sabinus' book is not a long one, and his explanations are not as elaborate as those we find later in Comes⁴; but he does suggest a particular way of reading the Metamorphoses, sensitive to their poetic qualities as to their symbolic value, especially to the meanings suggested by the myths themselves.

Barthélemy Aneau's preface to the Trois liures de la Metamorphose d'Ovide, Traduictz en vers François. Le premier & second, par C.L. Marot. Le tiers par B. Aneau (Lyons, 1556) communicates a much more heightened philosophical tone, fitted to the climate of its age in France. It was published the year after the first collection of Ronsard's Hymnes: it proposes a virtual fusion of the functions of poetry and myth. Aneau begins by telling us that 'L'ame de l'homme procedée de l'infini, est aussi infinie en ces deux propres actes de volonté, & de intelligence', and the soul therefore yearns for unlimited, secret, and metaphysical truths. (a4^{R-V}). Poets, 'haultement rauiz par vn vehement esprit diuin', speak of nature's secrets, and Ovid too is inspired by this 'Enthousiasme' (a4^V). The wise, drawn in by 'la curiosité d'entendre l'obscur' will penetrate the veils of fiction: Aneau cites a Socratic maxim, 'Les choses difficiles sont les plus belles' (a5^R). Indeed the Muses take their names from 'Μούσα' *musa* signifiant profonde enquete' (a5^V). At the same time, the fables are delightful and attractive.

These 'mysteres cachez' (a6^V) are not the farfetched attributions of the scholastics: they are meanings residing in the myths themselves. Aneau's firm rejection of senses 'tropologiques' and 'anagogicques' ('car cela est mesler

1. Sabinus, ed. cit. p. 330-31.

2. Contra Academicos, iv. 13.

3. Sabinus, ed. cit. p. 329.

4. Natalis Comes' Mythologiae were first published in 1567; B.C. Garner, 'Francis Bacon, Natalis Comes and the Mythological Tradition' JWCI, xxxiii (1970), 264n, states that the supposed 1551 edition is non-existent.

le Ciel avec la terre:& les choses sacrées avec les prophanes', c5^r), for 'la naturelle cognoissance de Dieu par ses effectz' (a5^v), seems to be based on the strictures of Melanchthon in his In Hesiodi libros de Opere et die enarrationes¹.

Aneau offers instead a Neoplatonic allegory for the metamorphoses of Jupiter:

IVPITER en la Poësie Grecque & Latine figuré amoureux, & iouyssant, & engendrant de toutes belles Dames, mesmement vierges, n'est autre, sinon l'universel & grand esperit, l'ame du monde, qui toute aime, tout desire estre ioinct à soy, & tout transforme, & transsubstantie en soy, comme en soueraine perfection, & pource à toute chose se conioinct & informe, & en tout produict generation: principalement és plus excellentes essences, ou Rationales ou animales, ou vegetantes, comme es hommes, bestes, & plantes. (a7^{r-v}).

Jupiter, as the world-soul, producing Minerva from his head and Bacchus from his thigh, generates both the wisdom that proceeds to heaven and the natural vigour of the earth (a7^v). Aneau's natural and physical allegories are based on Platonic science; he also suggests moral explanations which refer the myths of transformation to the life of man or that of the state (b1^v). But, as he stresses, he has not attempted to search out the most esoteric meanings in the allegories he appends to the margins of the text: over-elaborization may result in not being able to see the wood for the trees. (c6^r). He is sarcastic about alchemical readings: of the stone that Saturn consumed in place of Jupiter, he says: 'ie la delaisse aux Alchimistes chercheurs du grand bien' (a8^r)!

Above all, Aneau stresses the richness and diversity of Ovid's work (b5^r), deriving both from its poetic qualities and from the myths on which it is based. The extraordinary structure of the carmen perpetuum, like the speech of Pythagoras, makes metamorphosis the key to its meaning, essentially a philosophy of nature: 'en la nature des choses les formes se muent continuellement, la matiere non périssante' (b5^v). As Guy Demerson notes, this is a feeling we may relate to Ronsard's mythological imagination. Demerson contrasts Aneau's emphasis upon lucidity and allegorical decorum - an emphasis derived, here as in Sabinus, from Melanchthon - with the more occult and paganising interests of the Pléiade.² Yet given Aneau's Neoplatonic assumptions, we may feel that the pursuit in formal Ovid commentary of concinnae allegoriae acts both as a spur and a release to the poetic imagination.

1. Published at Paris, 1543, with an important 'Praefatio'.

2. La Mythologie classique dans l'oeuvre lyrique de la 'Pléiade' (Geneva, 1972) p. 501.

Eleanor Rosenberg suggests that Golding's insistence on moral meanings in Ovid, in the 1564-5 dedication to the first four books of his translation of the Metamorphoses and the 1567 address to the reader, might have been in deference to the known liking of his patron Leicester for utilitarian and pious works.¹ It is impossible not to feel, however, that Golding's emphasis is too much part of a general Renaissance attitude to be purely politic.

In the Epistle to the ryght Honorable ... Robert Erle of Leycester Golding ascribes to Ovid a Pythagorean and Platonic 'dark Philosophie of turned shapes',² which is essentially a moralization of the speech of Pythagoras in the fifteenth book. Metamorphosis, thus, is established as the basic theme of the work, the source of its philosophical significance. All nature is mutable; nothing perishes, but takes another form; and only the righteous are truly men. Golding opposes the doctrine of transmigration on Christian grounds, but extracts from it a thoroughly Christian meaning. Explaining the tripartite division of the soul in Aristotelian terms, he stresses that by the exercise only of their lower faculties men degenerate:

And finally he doth proceede in shewing that not all
That beare the name of men. . .
Are for to be accounted men: but such as under awe
Of reasons rule continually doo live in vertues law:
And that the rest doo differ nought from beasts, but rather bee
Much woorse than beasts, bicause they doo abace theyr owne degree.
(55-62)

Man is potentially either divine or bestial. He stands above the other creatures, but his nobility and dignity are precarious: 'none more beastly, vyle and devilish than is hee/ If reason giving over, by affection mated be' (567- 78). Although such readings of the myths of metamorphosis are common, Golding is unusual in the almost exclusive emphasis he places on them: the soberness and gravity of his tone are striking. What he offers us, essentially, is a puritan Ovid, and a doctrine of metamorphosis related insistently to the moral life.

Less detailed allegories are offered in the preface To the Reader, and here Golding's tone is didactic in a way unlike anything we find in Sabinus or

1. E. Rosenberg, Leicester, Patron of Letters (New York, 1955), p. 157.

2. The Epistle, 7. All citations from Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation (1567) ed. J.F. Nims (New York, 1965).

Aeneas Golding feels the need not only to explain, but to defend, and finally, perhaps, to sell his work. In the Epistle, perhaps influenced by the use of a Regius-Lavinus commentary, Golding had Christianised the first book, drawing parallels between Ovid and the author of Genesis (Epistle, 343-4). But this attribution of Scriptural influence, like Lavinus' commentary, ends with the first book (Epistle, 343-510). For the rest Golding is content to draw the moral of spiritual metamorphosis:

So was Elpenor and his mates transformed into swyne,
 For following of theyr filthie lust in women and in wyne.
 Not that they lost theyr manly shape as to the outward showe,
 But for that in their brutish brestes most beastly lustes did growe.
 For why this lumpe of flesh and bones, this bodie, is not wee.
 Wee are a thing which earthly eyes denyed are to see.

(To the Reader, 97-102)

At the same time, the poem's pleasure and variety are stressed, perhaps to attract the reader (To the Reader, 183-203). In the Epistle, Golding had found apt metaphors for this blend of copia and utilitas :

This Ortyard of Alcinous in which there wants not any
 Herb, tree or frute that may mans use for health or pleasure serve,
 This plenteous horne of Acheloy

(The Epistle, 582-4)

Ovid's poem, then, is truly a cornucopian text.

Mythography

This may be the right note on which to leave the Metamorphoses for some observations on the mythographers, whom I shall have to cite frequently later. My study of metamorphosis takes up only a few threads in the web of Renaissance mythography, and I do not wish to lose myself, like George Eliot's Mr. Casaubon, in the search for a key to all mythologies. The works of Boccaccio, Giraldi, and Comenius cannot be sifted through for one attitude to the myth of transformation, nor do they show a special interest in transformation as distinct from other elements of myth. Myths are treated of by many other kinds of writer: the emblem-atists (Aeneas in his Picta Poesis (Leiden, 1552) partly converts the Metamorphoses to an emblem-book), 'hieroglyphists' like Valeriano, iconographers like Cartari, and the makers of dictionaries.¹ But the Renaissance is the great age of the professional mythographer: the slender treatises of classical and medieval

¹. See D.T. Starnes and E.W. Talbert, Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries (Chapel Hill, 1955). For the other authors cited, see Bibliography.

writers are not comparable. The scientific mythographers of this age¹ multiply versions of myth as versions of meaning. Boccaccio, choosing genealogy as his organizational principle, had committed himself to a kind of euhemerism throughout, while collecting moral and physical readings with enthusiasm; Giraldi's interests are predominantly antiquarian, and Comes' philosophical. Comes, who states 'Quod omnia philosophorum dogmata sub fabulis continebantur'² is led by his sense of the primacy of myth over the philosophy of the schools to a rich and thoughtful eclecticism. He ranges over the whole field of classical poetry and philosophy, drawing it into the scope of mythography and informing myth with an enormous voracity.

I have noted the movement, in medieval commentaries on Ovid, towards making the Metamorphoses into a mythological handbook. In the Renaissance, the poem recovers some of its independence: the humanist editions, like that of Regius, direct attention once more to its poetic qualities, and even a popularization like the French prose translation called Le Grand Olympe provides a 'liure sans allegories'.³ In some respects the poetry and the commentary become separate, perhaps because their study has become so specialized. Yet they are constantly related: I have just noted the voracity of Comes' Mythologiae, and conversely, poetry too (as we see in Aneau's preface) is hungry for meanings, capable of illimitable relations with the world. The educational programme of Erasmus enforces a sense that all literature is deeply moral: in spite of reservations about Ovid, the Metamorphoses were taught in school,⁴ while the mythographers became indispensable aids to the teacher as to the poet.⁵ As a result, Renaissance writers - especially learned ones like Spenser - are uniquely alive to classical poetry as poetry, and yet conscious of the inexhaustibility of meaning in these texts. The myth of metamorphosis, so brilliantly treated by Ovid, is for them both poetry - a subject for imitation - and philosophy.

1. See Seznec, Survival (1972), pp.229-56 for a rather hostile treatment of these writers.

2. Natalis Comes, Mythologiae (Venice, 1581)p. 671.

3. Le Grand Olympe des hystoires poetiques du prince de poesie Ouide Naso en sa Metamorphose (Paris, 1537), 3 vols. in one: i.fol.1 .

4. For the reservations, see Vives, De tradendis disciplinis III.v trans cit., p. 124. ; for the school curricula, see T.W.Baldwin, William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke (Urbana, 1944) i: 339, 367, 387.

5. Baldwin, i.421; ii.291; and Erasmus, De ratione studii, Opera Omnia i.523E.

IV. Metamorphoses II : The Golden Ass

The fable of metamorphosis need not be associated with Ovid. The second century world of Apuleius' novel¹ offers us, indeed, an extravagantly different experience. Lucius' odyssey, beginning in transformation, ends in conversion²: the novel, though not a moral work, is a religious one. An ironic justice is evident in the metamorphosis of the hero: he is punished for his curiositas, a quality explicitly linking his fate with that of Actaeon (II.4³). By the second book this curiositas is firmly centred on the arts of magic, especially of transformation. Lucius' obsession is such that

Nec fuit in illa civitate quod aspiciens id esse crederem quod esset, sed omnia prorsus ferali murmure in aliam effigiem translata, ut et lapides quos offenderem de homine duratos, et aves quas audirem indidem plumatas, et arbores quae pomerium ambirent similiter foliatas, et fontanos latices de corporibus humanis fluxos crederem. (II.1)

This dislocation in Lucius' sense of reality is confirmed by the strangeness of his experiences. The first lines of the novel associate metamorphosis with fortune: 'figuras fortunisque hominum in alias imagines conversas' (I.1), and both are odd and contradictory. Auerbach described the novel as full of 'fear, lust and silliness'⁴, and he is certainly right about the preponderance in it of the gruesome and the grotesque. But Apuleius' interests are also philosophical and religious: Lucius errs by involvement in magic without the sanction of religion, and his experiences are all subsumed at the end in his initiation into the mysteries of the Isis-cult.

These other Metamorphoses, then, present for the Renaissance a critical problem completely unlike that of Ovid's poem. In spite of their licentiousness, they invite one kind of allegorical reading, a moral or spiritual one: and not being myth, they resist the other kinds of reading applied to Ovid. Apuleius was the first classical author to be printed in Italy. In the Preface to the beautiful Roman editio princeps of 1469, Andrea de Bussi interprets The Golden

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1. I use this anachronistic term because it is commonly employed, and convenient: see, e.g. P.G. Walsh, The Roman Novel: The Satyricon of Petronius and the Metamorphoses of Apuleius (Cambridge, 1970).
 2. See the discussion in A.D. Nock, Conversion (Oxford, 1933), 138-155.
 3. All citations from The Golden Ass, with tr. of W. Adlington, rev. & ed. S. Gaselee (Loeb, Cam. Mass. & London, 1915 rpt. 1977).
 4. Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, tr. W.R. Trask (Princeton, 1953 rpt. 1973) p.60.

Ass as an allegory of man's life in the world. The emphases of this preface, beginning with praise of Cardinal Bessarion and going on to mention the work of De Bussi's master, Nicholas of Cusa, on Proclus, are thoroughly Platonic: Apuleius is one of the Platonici.¹ The popularity of Apuleius in quattrocento Italy is attested by Boiardo's translation.² Neither of these editions are ~~annotated~~.

Philip Beroaldus, described by Pico as 'a living and speaking library of all learning'³ provides in his great folio commentary on The Golden Ass (1500)⁴ a copious model of humanist scholarship. This remained the standard edition in the 16th century: and as with the works of Virgil or Ovid, we have a small island of text surrounded by a sea of commentary. Beroaldus' enthusiasm for his text, even for its outlandish and exuberant style, is precisely because of its fecundity: 'quanta eloquentia ... quanta elegantia, quanta rerum uerborumque copia' (Scriptoris intentio atque consilium, fol.2^V). This copia provides him with the occasion for abundant and wide-ranging comment. His Preface contains a long and learned disquisition on magic in antiquity: he is fascinated by the magical content of the book, and relates it to that in the Odyssey 'protei transfigurationes, & sirenum cantus, & circes pocula' (Praefatio, fol.1^R). But these esoteric attractions of the work are legitimized by Apuleius' highly moral intention:

Verum sub hoc transmutationis inuolucro, naturam mortalium & mores humanos quasi transeuntur designare uoluisse. ut admoneremur ex hominibus Asinos fieri: quando uoluptatibus belluinis immersi Asinali stoliditate brutescimus, nec ulla rationis uirtutisque scintilla in nobis elucescit: (Scriptoris intentio, fol.2^V).

Lucius' transformation to an ass is a lapse into corporeal sensuality: his regaining of human form is a recovery of reason, of the true inner man. This is also a temporal progress, from the folly of youth to the wisdom of age. Plato and Proclus are cited in support of the allegory: many men live the lives of wolves or swine, 'Quod minime mirari nos oportet cum terrenus locus circes ipsius sit diuersorium' (fol.2^V). Moreover, such is the variety of men's lives

1. Lucii Apulei platonici madaurensis philosophi metamorphoseos liber: ac nonnulla alia opuscula eiusdem (Rome, 1469) no foliation or signatures.
2. See Apulegio volgare, tradotto per el conte Mattheo Maria Boiardo (Venice, 1518) - first edition in 1478.
3. I find this in Thomas Lodge, A learned Summary upon the famous Poeme of William of Saluste Lord of Bartas tr. from Simon Goulart (London, 1621) *2^R.
4. Commentarii a Philippo Beroaldo conditi in Asinum Aureum Lucii Apuleii (Bologna, 1500). All citations in the text are from this edition.

that in some sense they are transformed daily: Beroaldus responds, thus, to the narrative sense of flux and diversity. He ends by attributing to Apuleius not just a Platonic, but a Pythagorean intention: Apuleius is explaining the doctrine of metempsychosis:

Vt uidelicet sub hoc mystico pretextu Apuleius noster pythagoricae platonicaeque philosophiae consultissimus dogmata utriusque doctoris ostenderet & sub hac ludicra narratione palingenesiam atque metempsychosim idest regenerationem transmutationemque dissimulanter affereret. (Scriptoris intentio, fol. 2^v).

Considering that metempsychosis does not figure in The Golden Ass, this boldness is striking. Beroaldus does not doubt the deeply moral purpose of Apuleius' work, but, in keeping with the spirit of his age in Italy, he does not hesitate to place this meaning within the folds of a wholly pagan doctrine. He asserts, indeed, the primacy and spiritual profundity of the prisca philosophia he finds concealed 'sub hac ludicra narratione'.

In the succeeding century there is a partial assimilation of, and a cautious retreat from, the boldness of these premises. Guillaume Michel introduces his French translation (1522, by the conservative printer Philippe le noir¹) with an account of 'L'intention de l'auteur de ce present liure', from Beroaldus. But he breaks off just before this mention of Pythagorean doctrine, and concludes with a pious and unexceptionable moral, an exhortation to 'la vie de raison, honneur et saintete' (fol. 2^x). Minor edification and comment is introduced in the translation, but Michel keeps for the end a 'sens nouuel', to be gained through 'quelque petite maniere de exposition allegoricque que les modernes contemplatifs pourra recreer' (fol. 166^v).

The Platonic allegory of Beroaldus is here rejected for a Christian one. Lucius, leaving his own country to journey to Thessaly in search of magical knowledge, is 'l'homme viateur en ce monde', who has abandoned earthly desires to seek a spiritual existence. (fols. 166^v-167^x). But the pilgrim Lucius errs through carnality: he succumbs to the love of the chambermaid Fotis. He had wished to be a bird, to be raised to a divine state: but Fotis' error transformed him to

1. Lucius Apuleius de lasne dore autrement dit de la Couronne Ceres, tr. G. Michel (Paris, 1522). Philippe le noir printed Molinet's Christian allegorization of the Roman de la Rose in 1521.

a brutish ass. Fotis, we are roundly told, 'cestassauoir la temtation dyable contre laquelle fault resister' (fol.167^r). Men are reduced to brutes by sin. The next section of this allegory goes on to explain that many who desire to 'fly' are made 'beasts': that is, ambition, greed or a Faustian thirst for knowledge results inevitably in fall and corruption. Lucius' regaining of human shape may be understood as a sacrament of penitence: the redness of the roses he eats may represent the blood of Christ. Thus Lucius, or man, regains the 'premier estat humain, cestassauoir dinnocence' (fol.168^v). At the end we have a prayer to the Virgin, truly the Isis or Ceres of Apuleius' fiction. Michel's allegorical purpose, we should note, is far less extreme than that of the medieval moralizers of Ovid. He does not attempt the anachronism of working Christian meanings into his highly pagan text: he suggests simply a way of reading it which may be consonant with Christian faith.

William Adlington's translation of The Golden Ass, first published in 1566, is supposed by Charles Whibley, the editor of the Tudor Translations edition of 1893, to have been based on Michel's: and this view has been generally accepted¹. I am certain, however, that Adlington's translation is - apart from the use of Beroaldus and possibly a Spanish translation² - almost wholly derived not from Michel but from the French of Jean Louveau, whose version was in print by 1558. Francis Douce, who owned both the 1584 Louveau and the 1596 Adlington, suggests this dependence in a manuscript note in his copy of the latter³. The most striking early parallels are in the 8-line verse rendering of the first few lines of Apuleius ('At ego tibi sermone ... mireris', I.1), which is translated from Louveau's 9 lines of French verse, and in the Life of Lucius Apuleius briefly expressed, translating exactly that section of Beroaldus Vita Lucii Apuleii which is given in Louveau's French.⁴

1. See Whibley's Introduction, pp.xxvi-xxviii ; S. Gaselee's Introduction to the Loeb edition of Apuleius I have cited, pp.viii-ix n ; H.B.Lathrop, Translations from the Classics into English (New York, rpt.1967), p.160.

2. See The eleuen Bookes of the Golden Asse Containyng the metamorphosie of Lucius Apuleius, tr. W.Adlington (London,1596) A3^r, where Adlington refers to 'the French and Spanish translators'. All citations of Adlington in the text are ~~from~~ this edition of 1596.

3. This copy is now in the Bodleian, Douce A.252.

4. See Adlington, ed.cit.A4^v ('That I to thee some ioyous iests...') and A3^v-A4^r (Life), corresponding to Luc.Apulee de l'ane dore, XI livres. Traduit en François par I.Louveau d'Orleans (Paris, 1584) A8^r (Verse), A6 -7^r (Life); and Beroaldus, ed. cit. fol.2^r (Vita)

Louveau's translation, thirty years later than Michel's, contains no moralization, apart from a brief statement of Apuleius' moral purpose in the dedicatory Epistle:¹ beside it the earlier version seems as old-fashioned as the Bible des poètes beside Aneau's Trois Liures. Adlington's use of Louveau and Beroaldus together accounts for the tone of his translation, wholly unlike that of Michel.

Adlington's preface To the Reader (1596, A2^V-A3^R) is an interesting and intelligent document. He recognizes that the attractions as well as the dangers of Apuleius' work lie on its surface: in the 'magnificence of prose' so much praised by Beroaldus, and in the entertaining fictions, full of 'such exceeding plenty of mirth'. Apuleius' style seems to be self-displaying rather than functional, his story 'a mere iest and fable' (A2^V). This double extravagance is justified only by the 'intent of the author' - and in his account of this, Adlington shows his study of Beroaldus' Scriptoris intentio atque consilium.

Adlington sees the poet's fables of transformation as intended to recall men to 'the knowledge of their present estate', that they might 'transform themselves into the right and perfect shape of men' (A2^V). In his dedicatory Epistle to the Earl of Sussex, he had mentioned, among other classical myths, the fable of Actaeon:

when a man casteth his eyes on the vaine and soon-fading beauty of the world, consenting therto in his mind, he seemes to be turned into a brute beast, and so to be slaine through the inordinate desire of his owne effects. (A2^R)

But Lucius' story is more complete in its application than classical myths:

Verily under the wrap of this transformation is taxed the life of mortal men, when as we suffer our minds so to be-drowned in the sensual lusts of the flesh and the beastly pleasure thereof (which aptly may be called the violent confection of witches) that we lose wholly the use of reason and virtue, which properly should be in a man, and play the parts of brute and sauage beasts. (To the Reader, A2^V)²

While Lucius is transformed through carnality, he is also shown as recovering his proper shape through prayer, by 'eating 'the sweet rose of reason and virtue, which the rather by mediation of prayer we may assuredly obtain' (A3^R). This

1. Ed; cit., A3^R.

2. Cf. Beroaldus, 'Verum sub hoc transmutationis inuolucro...' quoted above p.48.

transformation parallels that of the companions of Ulysses, or that of Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible. Recommending his work finally to the reader, Adlington gives almost equal importance to delight and instruction in its effects: 'egging men forward from their asinal form to their human and perfect shape, besides the pleasant and delectable iests therein contained' (A3^r).

In important respects, Adlington's prefatory pieces show a compromise between Beroaldus' Platonist and antiquarian enthusiasm, Michel's Christian morals, and Louveau's plain text. The moral Adlington attaches to The Golden Ass is derived from Beroaldus but avoids Platonist or Pythagorean labels. It is not irreconcilable with the Christian meaning proposed by Michel, but again avoids specific reference to matters of faith. Adlington's translation itself tends to tone down the oddness and exuberance of Apuleius' style, which he praises, but also distrusts. We may describe Adlington's attitude as an Erasmian one.

Although references to The Golden Ass are common in Renaissance writing, and use of it may range from the satire of Machiavelli's L'asino d'oro to the romantic fantasy of A Midsummer Night's Dream, its influence is of course neither of the same quality nor of the same scope as that of Ovid's Metamorphoses. But the great importance of Apuleius' work is in the completeness of its 'figure of mans life' (Adlington, Epistle, A2^r). Lucius' story incorporates two major and complementary metamorphoses: man to beast and beast to man. Philosophically understood, it mirrors both the descent and the ascent of man in the scale of creation, and the ascent, moreover, is expressed in explicitly religious terms. Further, the contexts in which the novel is placed, those of Thessalian magic and antique religion, are deeply fascinating to the Renaissance. Apuleius' story is frequently mentioned in discussions of witchcraft, following the example of St. Augustine (De civitate Dei, XVIII.18). All this is apart from the enormous popularity and influence of the Neoplatonic allegory of Cupid and Psyche which forms the 4th, 5th, and 6th books. Apuleius' work, generally, brings me closer to the subjects of my next chapter.

Looking back on this enquiry, we are pressed to certain important conclusions. The Renaissance response to myth and to metamorphosis is strongly moral, and may be philosophical or speculative. But at the same time, the humanist editions and commentaries do allow the reader to respond to the poetic and imaginative qualities of the myth, indeed enhancing a sense of its richness and inexhaustibility. What is constantly stressed in the age is the notion of copia, the desirability of diversity and abundance of material,¹ and Ovidian myth provides an influential model of such diversity, both in its subjects and in its meanings. It is in Spenser's poetry that we see the full effects of this double response. The significances of, and modes of treatment for metamorphosis are multiplied, but in its profoundest implications the theme of transformation is related to man's moral nature.

1. See the discussion of this in Terence Cave's The Cornucopian Text (Oxford, 1979).

Chapter II

The idea of metamorphosis: some Renaissance contexts

In this chapter, I shall be dealing with a disparate body of material. My purpose is chiefly exploratory: I shall begin by considering some philosophical uses of the idea of metamorphosis, then examine how it is treated in discussions of magic, witchcraft and alchemy, and finally turn to certain literary uses which are widely influential. All of this may be taken as establishing a background, rather than a fixed body of 'sources'.

1. Philosophy

The main subject of my thesis is how metamorphosis comes to be used, in the English Renaissance, in a wide variety of literary contexts. These literary uses, though often depending on symbol or metaphor, are not necessarily moral or philosophical. Nevertheless, the philosophical interpretation of the myth of metamorphosis, and its place in the amorphous body of thought called the Renaissance philosophy of man, is of great importance. The sense of the capacity for self-transformation is an essential part of Renaissance self-consciousness. What is most deeply characteristic about this age is reflected however in the double implications of the symbol: it has both a positive and a negative aspect. On the one hand it stresses man's freedom and power, his ability to choose his own station, to make himself either god or beast. On the other hand, it may simply show man in his most pathetic and simian aspects: his 'glassy essence, like an angry ape', is constantly changing, endlessly imitative, and subject to the diseases of his fallen nature. Having nothing of his own, he must play a thousand different parts. The classic statement of the first point of view is to be found in Pico : for the reverse of this, we must go to Montaigne.

The first significant expression of the Renaissance concept of man and his place in the universe is traced by Ernst Cassirer in the thought of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64).¹ From the middle ages, and especially from the

1. The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, tr. M. Domandi, (1963 rpt. Philadelphia, 1972), pp.8 -45.

writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, Cusanus had received what was virtually a dogma of hierarchy. He does not directly criticize this scheme, but in reframing man's relation with God he bypasses it. The divine is so far separated from the human that proportional relations break down: 'finiti et infiniti nulla proportio'¹. God is both far and near, and man's position too cannot be entirely fixed, but is relative and redefinable.

For Cusanus, man is the bond that links the universe: not only because he contains all the elements within himself, but also because of his capacity to know all things - if not certainly, at least by conjecture². Cusanus repeats the familiar concept of man as microcosm, but with an important difference. Homo omnis creatura is a medieval commonplace³, but although man's inclusiveness is a sign of excellence, it need not be an index of freedom. For Cusanus, the intermediacy of man's position on the scale of being gives him a unique capacity for ranging freely through it. The potential of the entire universe can be realized in him, as, in absolute terms, it is realized in Christ.

Quapropter natura media, quae est medium connexionis inferioris et superioris, est solum illa, quae ad maximum convenienter elevabilis est potentia maximi infiniti Dei. Nam cum ipsa intra se complicit omnes naturas, ut supremum inferioris et infimum superioris, si ipsa secundum omnia sui ad unionem maximitatis ascenderit, omnes naturas ac totum universum omni possibili modo ad summum gradum in ipsa pervenisse constat.⁴

Within the limits of his humanity, which creates as it were a parallel world, man can then be anything, embody any order of being:

Regio igitur ipsa humanitatis deum atque universum mundum humanali sua potentia ambit. Potest igitur homo esse humanus deus atque, ut deus, humaniter potest esse humanus angelus, humana bestia, humanus leo aut ursus aut aliud quodcumque. Intra enim humanitatis potentiam omnia suo existunt modo. In humanitate igitur omnia humaniter, uti in ipso universo universaliter, explicata sunt, quoniam humanus existit mundus. Omnia denique in ipsa complicata sunt humaniter, quoniam humanus est deus.⁵

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1. See Cassirer, *op. cit.* p. 11, and Nicholas of Cusa, Opera omnia, i, De docta ignorantia, ed. E. Hoffmann and R. Klibansky (Leipzig, 1932) I. 3, pp. 8-9.
 2. See Opera omnia, iii. De coniecturis, ed. J. Koch and C. Bormann (Hamburg, 1972), II. 14, p. 143. On the impossibility of certain knowledge, see De coniecturis, Prologue, p. 4.
 3. The best discussion of the microcosm theory is in R. Allers, 'Microcosmos: from Anaximander to Paracelsus', Traditio ii (1944), 319-407. See pp. 345-46 for citations from medieval authors, such as Gregory the Great and Alanus de Insulis.
 4. De docta ignorantia, ed. cit., III.3, p. 126.
 5. De coniecturis, ed. cit., II.14, pp. 143-4.

It is true that Cusanus grants man this endless capacity for self-remaking and transformation only within the limits of his own humanity. Man's mirroring of divine creativity is necessarily imperfect. Although he may, through his intellect, seem to re-enact the divine roles of rector, ordinator and gubernator¹, and although man has the capacity to comprehend the whole universe 'notionaliter'², Cusanus is conscious that human knowledge, even of finite things, can never be certain³. Nevertheless, the mind's infinite striving is a proof of its divine origin, and as Cassirer stresses, 'man's freedom allows him to want or not want himself'⁴; only if he chooses his own humanity will he attain to God. Humanity is not something fixed and given: it is something man must himself make and choose. Man can be all things: equally he can be nothing. What is imposed upon him is the specifically human duty of choice, the need to form himself according to the capacities he possesses.

Ficino is more attached to the notion of hierarchy than Cusanus, but in his most central statements, he too liberates man from it. In the Theologia Platonica he celebrates the human soul as the bond and link of the universe, tying superior natures to the inferior. This intermediate position makes man's soul universal:

Hoc maximum est in natura miraculum. Reliqua enim sub Deo unum quiddam in se singula sunt, haec omnia simul. Imagines in se possidet divinorum, a quibus ipsa dependet, inferiorum rationes et exemplaria, quae quodammodo et ipsa producit. Et cum media omnium sit, vires possidet omnium. [Quod] si ita est, transit in omnia. Et quia ipsa vera est universorum connexio, dum in alia migrat, non deserit alia, sed migrat in singula, ac semper cuncta conservat, ut merito dici possit centrum naturae, universorum medium, mundi series, vultus omnium nodusque et copula mundi.⁵

Here then, as in Cusanus, we have man as microcosm, but transformed as in Cusanus from a 'given' physical model into an active intellectual ideal.

1. De coniecturis, ed. cit., II.14, p. 145.

2. See citation from Idiota III.5, in Cassirer, op. cit., p. 45, note 59.

3. See De coniecturis, ed. cit., Prologue, p. 4.

4. Cassirer, Individual and Cosmos, ed. cit. p.65.

5. Marsilio Ficino, Théologie Platonicienne de l'Immortalité des âmes, crit. ed. with tr. by Raymond Marcel (Paris. 1964-70), i.pp. 141-2: Theologia Platonica III.2. The Theologia Platonica was composed between 1469-74, and published in 1482.

It is not only that man, by virtue of his unique position, is all things, but this universal creature is also in a state of active universalization: the soul seeks to become all things. What Ficino stresses above all is the soul's motion, its ceaseless assimilation of all orders of being into itself. By this activity, the mind actively reforms and purifies the world, transforming matter to spirit:

sic hominis anima iam labefactatum restituit mundum, quoniam eius munere spiritalis olim mundus, qui iam corporalis est factus, purgatur assidue atque evadit quotidie spiritalis.¹

Ficino's idea of humanitas, a quality that both links man to his fellows by a bond of love and to the world by affinity between the mind and its objects,² leads to the characteristic Renaissance belief that the self-affirmation of man involves the giving of form to the world; the microcosm gives meaning to the macrocosm³.

In all this, we may see Ficino stressing the necessity of such a nature as man's, the supreme importance of his medial position and his unique capacity to comprehend the whole world into himself.⁴ But in certain places, while celebrating this capacity, he seems to raise man to a status beyond what is implied by his place in the series rerum. In the thirteenth book of the Theologia Platonica, he infers from man's activities in the arts and government that man not only acts as a mediator, but rivals God in his creative activity. He transforms lower nature by his own powers and ranges freely to the higher world:

In iis artificiis animadvertere licet, quemadmodum homo et omnes et undique tractat mundi materias, quasi homini omnes subiiciantur. Tractat, inquam, elementa, lapides, metalla, plantas et animalia, et in multas traducit formas atque figuras; ...Neque uno est elemento contentus aut quibusdam ut bruta, sed utitur omnibus, quasi sit omnium dominus. Terram calcit, sulcat aquam, altissimis turribus conscendit in aerem, ut pennas Daedali vel Icari praetermittam. Accendit ignem Merito caelesti elemento solum caeleste animal delectatur. Caelesti virtute ascendit, caelum atque metitur. Super-caelesti mente transcendit caelum.⁵

1. Theologia Platonica, XVI.3, ed.cit. iii.p.118.

2. See P.O Kristeller, The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino (New York, 1943), pp. 110-15.

3. See Cassirer, Individual and Cosmos, ed.cit., pp.66-67.

4. See Theologia Platonica, III.2, ed. cit. i.p.141.

5. Theologia Platonica, XIII.3, ed.cit. ii.pp. 224-25.

Man makes use of the elements and the animals, as well as of the higher beings 'ad doctrinam magicaeque miracula'. The link between this and the celebration of man in the Hermetic Asclepius¹ is plain; indeed this Hermetic text is constantly cited in Renaissance assertions of the power and dignity of man. Thus man, Ficino concludes, is a kind of god, 'quidam Deus', and at the end of this chapter he makes the bold claim that the man who understands the motions of the heavens could even make them himself, if he had the necessary materials. So overwhelming is the force of this assertion that man, although his place in the hierarchy has been so carefully defined, seems to transcend all such definitions. Later, Ficino goes on to say that the soul seeks to become everything just as God is in everything:

Vitam siquidem agit plantae, quatenus saginando indulget corpori. Vitam bruti, quatenus sensibus adulatur. Vitam hominis, prout de humanis negotiis ratione consultat. Vitam heroum, quantum naturalia investigat. Vitam daemonum, prout mathematica speculatur. Vitam angelorum, prout divina inquirat mysteria. Vitam Dei, quantum Dei gratia omnia operatur. Quod admiratus Mercurius Trismegistus inquit: "Magnum miraculum esse hominem, animal venerandum et adorandum, qui genus daemonum noverit quasi² natura cognatum, quive in Deum transeat, quasi ipse sit deus."

We return, thus, to the same passage in the Asclepius, the celebration of man's powers through an assertion of his capacity for self-transformation. The image of Protean man is no less vital to Ficino than it is to Pico. Kristeller, who appends these passages to an important article, stresses that whereas Ficino celebrates man's centrality and universality, Pico celebrates his freedom.³ But Ficino seems here to be claiming as much if not more for man's powers to range freely through the scale of being; by seeking 'quotidie' to become God, the soul clearly surpasses all orders and unites itself directly to the highest essence.

For Ficino, then, the analogy between the various forms of human life and the various grades of being is more than a metaphor: the soul actively

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1. See Corpus Hermeticum, ed. A.D.Nock and A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1946), ii.301-2, Asclepius, 6.
 2. Theologia Platonica, XIV.3, ed. cit., ii.256-7.
 3. P.O.Kristeller, 'Ficino and Pomponazzi on the Place of Man in the Universe' JHI v (1944), 226. Kristeller does say that Ficino's idea of man 'transcends the limits of the traditional notion of hierarchy'.

participates in all the grades of being, in its own way transforming all things into its own nature. This then becomes the basis for his interpretation of Plato's accounts of the transmigration of souls¹, and his efforts to reconcile them with Christian theology. He cites the image in the Republic (IX: 588 C) of man as a 'multiplex animal', combining the forms of a many-headed monster, a lion, and a man, and says:

Post haec iubet Plato, ut interiorem illum hominem nutriamus potiusquam bestias illas, ne propter famem, deficiente homine, solae in nobis supersint bestiae. Per haec admoneremur, ut [ad] transitum animarum accipiamus non in varias species, sed in habitus. Erit itaque arbor apud Platonem, qui nutritioni deditus die nocteque torpebit; milvus, qui raptu vivet per concupiscentiam; leo, qui egregie militabit; draco, qui crudeliter in genus hominum saevit; homo, qui ratione civili vivet; heros, qui naturalia perscrutabitur; daemon, qui mathematica; angelus, qui divina. Talis enim fit animus, qualem induitur habitum. Talis, inquam, in corpore, talis et extra corpus.²

We may note the correspondence of this passage with the one I have just quoted (p. 58 supra) about the soul seeking to become everything. Since the soul is what it knows, it assumes the life of a beast or that of a hero with equal versatility. All this depends on the premise, quoted with approval by Ficino from the Egyptians, that 'homo solus est animus'.³ In the last book of the Theologia Platonica, Ficino constructs a more elaborate explanation for the myths of transmigration: in its passion the soul reverts to a gaseous body which assumes different bestial shapes, according to the attitude of the soul.

Qualis enim quaelibet animalis vitam moribus imitata est, talem in primis sese facit, talisque omnino eius affectio et dispositio appareret, si sensu aliquo cerneretur, talem quoque figuram quodammodo in umbroso ipsius corpore fingit, si modo ex affectu et habitu animae vehementi colorari possit leve corpus et figurari.... Atque ita forte⁴ intelligenda est apud veteres hominum in bestias transformatio.

This, of course, may seem to take us more into the realm of Platonic para-physiology. Essentially, however, throughout the Theologia Platonica,

1. See Theologia Platonica, XVII.4, ed. cit. iii.pp.170-74.

2. Theologia Platonica, XVII.4, ed. cit. iii.pp. 171-2.

3. Ibid., p.173.

4. Ibid. XVIII.10, p.233.

Ficino stresses the versatility of the human soul, its capacity to embody any order of being and its ceaseless changing. While it can descend into the most brutish of natures, it may also rise to the highest: its ability to be potentially all things is the true mark of its perfection and its divine origin.

Pico, in his Oratio (1486), makes a point of distinguishing his view of man from earlier ones.¹ His confidence in man's powers is not, I think, greater than Ficino's, but his emphasis upon man's freedom and mobility, and, above all, his responsibility for his own nature, is distinct and memorable. At the same time, it may involve man in serious dangers.

For Pico in the Oratio, the myth of metamorphosis expresses what is truly remarkable and unique about man, his capacity to make himself:

Quem non immerito Asclepius Atheniensis versipellis huius et se ipsam transformantis naturae argumento per Proteum in mysteriis significari dixit. Hinc² illae apud Hebraeos et Pythagoricos metamorphoses celebratae.

Man, alone of the creatures, has nothing distinctively his own, but a portion of everything. He has no fixed place or seat in the universe, but may make for himself the nature which he chooses. His free will is supplemented by free choice, and his uniqueness is to consist in this very capacity for choice:

Nec certam sedem, nec propriam faciem, nec munus ullum peculiare tibi dedimus, o Adam, ut quam sedem, quam faciem, quae munera tute optaveris, ea, pro voto, pro tua sententia, habeas et possideas. Definita ceteris natura intra praescriptas a nobis leges coercetur. Tu, nullis angustiis coercitus, pro tuo arbitrio, in cuius manu te posui, tibi illam praefinies. Medium te mundi posui, ut circumspiceres inde commodius quicquid est in mundo. Nec te caelestem neque terrenum, neque mortalem neque immortalem fecimus, ut tui ipsius quasi arbitrarius honorariusque plastes et factor, in quam malueris tute formam effingas. Poteris in inferiora quae sunt bruta degenerare; poteris³ in superiora quae sunt divina ex tui animi sententia regenerari.

The famous metaphor of the seeds amplifies this. As plastes, factor or gardener, man is responsible for the form he brings to being. Despite their human shapes, what we see around us are plants, beasts, angels or gods: men

1. G. Pico della Mirandola, De hominis dignitate, De ente et uno, e scritti vari, ed. E. Garin (Florence, 1942), p.101.

2. Ibid., pp. 106-8.

3. Ibid., pp. 104-6.

are defined wholly according to their inward essence.

These passages in the Oratio are so celebrated that it seems scarcely necessary to have quoted them. But it is necessary to be clear about the implications of these statements, and to note that, in the context of Pico's other writings, they are not absolute. Pico suggests here that there is nothing that can be described as a condition proper to humanity. Man contains the seeds of all natures, but his goal is not comprehensiveness. He may become one of an infinite range of natures by cultivating one gift and suppressing others. His nature itself is transformation, a process of being changed: 'se ipsum ipse in omnis carnis faciem, in omnis creaturae ingenium effingit, fabricat et transformat'¹. It is precisely because he has no peculiar gifts that man can lay claim to any and every kind of nature. But this is a dangerous assertion, for by removing from man the ability to rest in his own nature, Pico releases him into the uncertainty of transformations: man can never be himself. This mobility is not the same as man as microcosm, or the universality of the Ficinian model of the mind, that ocean where each kind finds its own resemblance.

In the Oratio, Pico appears to suggest that it is even within man's power to choose the existence which will make him one spirit with God, settled 'in solitaria Patris caligine'². Man seems here to have his salvation in his own hands. The Oratio is after all a studied piece of rhetoric, where Pico outlines a process of ascent through the three crowns of philosophy, to rest at last with God.³ The process is active and self-directed, like man's making of himself.

But this view is severely qualified, or contradicted, by the Heptaplus (1489). In the Proem to the seventh book, Pico sets strict limits to natural perfection, and notes that man's felicity lies in his capacity to receive grace, which is not won but bestowed⁴. Indeed he points out the deficiency of the freely transformable model he had established in the Oratio, a deficiency we have noted:

1. De hominis dignitate, ed. cit. p. 108.

2. Ibid., p.106.

3. Ibid., p.116.

4. Heptaplus, ed. cit. 324-38.

Quin immo, cum a fine a natura statuto, reliqua infra hominem numquam, homo quasi semper exorbitet, videbitur, nisi alio¹ se privilegio iacet, infelicissima omnium humana conditio.

Man and the angels are blessed, for they are capable of felicity: Pico's view is not pessimistic. But the optimism is orthodox and religious: man can only be truly raised through grace, and he cannot aspire to this by himself: 'Ad hanc ire homo non potest, trahi potest'².

Indeed the creation of the world may be paralleled ~~to~~ the redemption of man's moral nature, dark and empty through original sin³. It did not rest in man's powers to redeem himself and he is not now capable of the highest type of transfiguration. The confident vision of the Oratio is redefined in strictly religious terms. Pico says clearly that man cannot, as it were, raise himself by his own bootstraps 'nixum propria fortitudine nihil supra se ipsum potest assurgere'⁴. In his Cabalistic interpretation of the first words of Genesis, Pico ends with the image of man as the world, and the world as man⁵. Such an image, traditional and unremarkable though it is, may seem to return us to a much more fixed and predictable, though comprehensive, place for man than is suggested by the Oratio. The splendid and memorable assertions of the earlier work are finally modified by the assumptions of faith. This is a process we may mark more widely.

The editors of The Renaissance Philosophy of Man conveniently place Pico's Oratio in a volume which also contains Pomponazzi's Aristotelian treatise on the immortality of the soul, and the Spanish humanist J. L. Vives' fable about man⁶. These works are interesting in that they reflect different views of Pico's model of Protean man. Vives' Fable, directly derived from Pico, encapsulates the confidence of the Oratio in an elegant allegory: man acts a pantomime before the gods, where he puts on the nature of every kind of wild beast, enacts the part of a good and prudent man, and finally emulates the gods

1. Heptaplus, ed. cit. p. 332.

2. Ibid.

3. Heptaplus, lib. VII cap.1, ed. cit. p.340.

4. Ibid., Proem to lib. VII, ed. cit. p. 330.

5. Ibid., 'Expositio' pp. 380, 382.

6. The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. E. Cassirer, P.O.Kristeller, J.H. Randall (Chicago, 1948 rpt.1971), pp. 257-393.

themselves, even passing 'the characters of the lower gods and ... piercing into that inaccessible light surrounded by darkness where Jupiter dwells'¹. Man thus shows himself truly the son of Jupiter, partaking of his nature, and the gods, already overwhelmed by the powers of this 'multiform Proteus, son of the Ocean'², agree that divine honours be granted to him. The optimism of this picture appears to be complete. Man's capacities for self-transformation are finally positive and upward-tending: the Fable ends on an elegantly unobtrusive reference to the resurrection of the body³. In fact the form Vives chooses for his allegory, presenting man as mimic on the world's stage, is capable of other interpretations: even the gods feel that it is 'unworthy of him to appear on a stage and practice the disreputable art of the theater'⁴. But in effect man's context does not damage his being, and the mutability of his essence is a mark of his perfection.

Pomponazzi's Aristotelian tractate, disproving the immortality of the soul, is extremely different. At one point Pomponazzi too seems to recall Pico's celebration of man's powers: 'some have said that man is a great marvel, since he is the whole world and can change into every nature, since to him is given the power to follow whatever property of things he may prefer'⁵. But this impression of freedom is simply an indication of man's place in an ordered and hierarchical universe. As the most perfect of the animals man contains the lower natures while being joined to the higher ones, and so may choose the vegetative, sensitive, or intellectual lives. The Pician air of this assertion is belied by a framework which strictly limits human possibility. The fact that man's nature is multiple and ambiguous is a proof of the soul's mortality, for what is immortal is one, and man's soul, being many, must be mortal. To claim a real amphibiousness for man, to say that he is capable of both material

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1. A Fable About Man, tr. N. Lenkeith in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. cit., p.390. For the original text of the Fabula de homine, (c.1518), see J.L. Vives. Opera omnia (Valencia, 1783), iv.3-8. For convenience, I cite the translations of Vives and Pomponazzi from Renaissance Philosophy.
 2. Ibid., p. 389.
 3. Ibid., p. 393.
 4. Ibid., p. 391.
 5. On the Immortality of the Soul, in ibid. p. 376. For the Latin text, see tr. by W.H.Hay II of P.Pomponazzi, De immortalitate animae (Haverford, 1938), with facs. of editio princeps, Bologna, 1516.

and immaterial modes of perception 'is to change human nature into divine. And this is not very different from the fables of Ovid in his Metamorphoses'¹

The gloominess of this picture is somewhat lightened by the enormous responsibility placed by Pomponazzi upon man himself. He cannot hope for the sort of transfiguration which is the final guarantee of Pico's optimism: he must control his nature himself, and achieve for it the moral and intellectual life proper to full humanity. Indeed his life becomes a struggle against transformation, which may cause him to slip from his limited perfections. Although the bases of Pomponazzi's thought are heretical, his view of man fits more easily into an orthodox Christian picture, and it is an influential view in the age. Man's task is to maintain a precarious humanity by suppressing the claims of his lower nature, though he cannot deny them. The view is not optimistic: at the most it is cautious, self-protective, and rational. Its stress on man's moral responsibility for himself associates it with Renaissance Stoicism, though Pomponazzi is not guilty of Stoic self-confidence: its denial of higher powers to man accommodates it to Sceptical thought, though the Sceptic's sense of human wretchedness is more extreme, and his fideism ultimately more sincere

Renaissance Neoplatonism is also subject to doubts and fears. I have noted Pico's qualifications in the Heptaplus. A much greater severity is evident in the thought of John Colet, deeply influenced by Ficino,² but convinced of the frailty of man's nature, his irremediable corruption through sin. Men are capable of very little through their own powers: whatever comes into contact with the human mind degenerates according to its receptacle 'pro facilitate et ineptia humanae mentis'³ To know truth, men must be **changed** utterly, and this is only possible through complete self-abnegation and reliance on divine grace⁴.

1. On Immortality, ch. ix, ed.cit. p. 328.

2. See Sears Jayne, John Colet and Marsilio Ficino (Oxford, 1963).

3. John Colet, Enarratio in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos, tr. & ed. J.H. Lupton, (London, 1873), p. 164.

4. Ibid., p. 164: 'si aspicere velint, ab ea condicione qua sunt, in aliam omnino, videlicet divinam, se transmutari oportere', and p. 165 'ita est necesse homo exuat omnes suas vires et subjiciatur Deo omnino paciens, si inspiracione ad divina intelligenda illustretur'.

Indeed the optimism of Vives' Fable is unusual. In the Renaissance generally, the positive image of man's capacity for self-transformation given by Pico or Ficino is shadowed by doubts and limitations which threaten to reverse their premise of human 'dignity'. Most important, of course, is the Christian conviction of sin and human incapacity. Raleigh, who repeats almost word for word Pico's assertion of man's Protean powers, in the History of the World¹, is nevertheless strongly conscious that the image of God in man is 'wholly blotted out and destroyed by sin'.² Perhaps for that reason, he presents a more moral and conventional image of the meaning of metamorphosis:

To the same end were all those celebrated metamorphoses among the Pythagoreans and ancient poets, wherein it was feigned that men were transformed into divers shapes of beasts, thereby to shew the change of men's conditions, from reason to brutality, from virtue to vice, from meekness to cruelty, and from justice to oppression.

As moral allegory, metamorphosis almost always signifies degeneration: it tends to become an image of man's fall.

But a potentially more interesting development presents a true negative to Pico's Protean model, a view of man as changeable, inconstant and lacking peculiar gifts, so that he is not exalted above all creatures by his unique capacities, but is probably inferior to the beasts. What is most interesting about the Renaissance expression of this unoriginal view is that it frequently takes the form of a paradox. Man seems to be humbled and reviled, but this may conceal a deeper assertion of human gifts.

The Renaissance love of paradox is such that we are in constant danger of being tricked by it. We may take as an example Cornelius Agrippa's famous Sceptical treatise, De incertitudine et vanitate Scientiarum et Artium, written around 1526 and published in 1530. Agrippa's work is a scathing attack on the errors, contradictions and limitations of all the

1. Works (Oxford, 1829), ii.62-3.

2. Ibid., p.54.

3. Ibid., pp. 62-3. See Pierre de la Primaudaye, Suite de l'Academie Françoise, (Paris, 1580), Ch. 84, p. 180, for a Ficinian explanation of Pythagorean and Platonic transmiration, but with a far stronger moral emphasis.

sciences, and ends in a paradoxical encomium of the ass. Not unfittingly, he says, was Apuléius of Megara turned from a philosopher into an ass, for otherwise he could never have penetrated into the mysteries of Isis.¹ This may seem to advocate a holy ignorance, or even a cultivation of simplicity and humility: paradoxical encomia of this kind are traditional enough. More remarkable and contradictory is Agrippa's own motto, prefixed to the whole work:

Inter Diuos nullos non carpit Momus:
 Inter Heroas monstra quaeque insectatur Hercules:
 Inter Daemonaꝝ rex Erebi Pluto irascitur omnibus Vmbris:
 Inter Philosphaꝝ ridet omnia Democritus:
 Contra, deflet cuncta Heraclitus:
 Nescit quaeque Pyrrhias:
 Et scire se putat omnia Aristoteles:
 Nullis heic parcat Agrippa,
 Contemnit: scit, nescit: flet, ridet: irascitur, insectatur:
carpit omnia:²
 Ipse philosophus, daemon, heros, deus, & omnia.

Contemnit cuncta Diogenes >

By taking all knowledge as the province of his satire, Agrippa is himself released into the protean possibilities of his nature, philosopher, hero or god.

Ambivalence of a different kind is to be seen in another work we may loosely call a satire, Giambattista Gelli's Circe (1549). This is one of the earliest of translations from the Italian into English³, and may therefore be of added interest: its implications, moreover, are controversial. Circe is a series of dialogues based, as Gelli says in his prefatory epistle, on Plutarch's Gryllus⁴. On Circe's island, Ulysses attempts to persuade the victims of her transformations to reassume the human shape: successively, the oyster, mole, snake, hare, goat, doe, lion, horse, dog, and calf refuse the offer. Only the elephant, who had been a philosopher in his former life, accepts, and at the close sings a hymn to the Creator. The animals who refuse retransformation present many of the most traditional arguments regarding the misery of the human condition and the comparative happiness and security of the bestial state.⁵

1. H.C. Agrippa, De incertitudine et vanitate Scientiarum & Artium (Paris, 1531) fol. **CLVI**^v

2. Ibid., sig A1^v (reverse of title-page).

3. It was translated by Henry Iden, Circes of Iohn Baptista Gello (London, 1557)

4. G. B. Gelli, Dialoghi, ed. R. Tisisoni (Bari, 1967), p.146. See Plutarch, Moralia 985 C - 992E : in Moralia, vol.xii, ed. F.C.Babbitt (Loeb, London, 1957).

5. See Pliny, Natural History, Proem to Bk.vii, and Plutarch, op.cit.

In this respect Gelli's work goes considerably beyond Plutarch's, since the Gryllus is mainly concerned with proving that the animals are rational: the debate as it is conducted between Ulysses and the animals in Circe is not so much about reason (contra George Boas¹) as about happiness. Boas and Lovejoy regard Circe as one of the channels through which the idea of 'the superiority of the animals' is transmitted from Plutarch to Montaigne; pre-eminently, therefore, as a piece of theriophily². Men would be better off if they were beasts.

The ramifications of the 'theriophilist' debate, as it is explored by Boas in The Happy Beast, are fascinating³. I do not have the space to consider them here, but there are important points to be made about Circe. Gelli's intentions, through most of the work, seem to be essentially satirical and ironic. Like many 16th century writers who talk about the beasts, Gelli is primarily interested in man, and the his dialogue may in the end serve to define the peculiar responsibilities of the human condition. Ulysses' conversations with the transformed beasts, as Boas notes, run through the scale of creation, from oyster to elephant. Ulysses is consistently worsted in debate by the inferior creatures: Gelli refrains notably from giving him the arguments he needs. He is so discouraged by this that by the tenth dialogue he has resolved to be changed himself if he fails again⁴. To the elephant, however, he delivers a virtual harangue, in strongly Pician terms, explaining man's liberty and capacity for self-transformation:

'l'uomo, per avere questa volontà libera, può acquistarne uno più degno e un manco degno, come pare a lui: o inchinandosi inverso quelle cose che sono inferiori a lui, o rivolgendosi inverso quelle che gli sono superiori. . . . se egli, voltando la faccia al cielo, considerà filosofando la bellezza de i cieli e il meraviglioso ordine

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1. G. Boas, The Happy Beast in French Thought of the Seventeenth Century (Baltimore, 1933), p. 2, p.28 ff. The debate about reason is conducted by Gelli in a more indirect way, in a contrast between Ulysses' dialectic and the empirical logic of the beasts.
 2. A.O.Lovejoy and G. Boas, A Documentary history of Primitivism and related ideas (Baltimore, 1935), i.411.
 3. On this debate, see, in addition to Boas, M.Y. Hughes, 'Spenser's Acrasia and the Renaissance Circe' JHI iv (1943), 384-5. Hughes has interesting comments on the reverse 'theriophobia' of Vives and Zanchiùs.
 4. Gelli, Dialoghi, ed. cit., p.272.

della natura, egli si muterà di terreno in animale celeste; e se egli, sprezzati tutti gli impedimenti del corpo, attenderà a contemplare le cose divine, si farà quasi uno Iddio.¹

Who would not admire this noble creature, Ulysses asks, so uniquely gifted with the power to make himself what he wills? No wonder the elephant is soon exclaiming 'Non più, non più, Ulisse: fammi oramai lasciare questa natura ferina, e tornare uomo'.²

In his opening epistle to Cosimo de' Medici, Gelli had defined man's state very much in the terms of the Oratio 'in potestà de l'uomo è stato liberamente posto il potersi eleggere quel modo nel quale più gli piace vivere, e, quasi un nuovo Prometeo, trasformarsi in tutto quello che egli vuole'.³ Circe seems above all to be concerned with this Pician model of man, exposing its dangers as well as its ultimate validity. Since man's state is uniquely fluid, it can only be described in terms of various orders of being. Most men are no more than beasts, and it would be better if they were beasts, freed of the guilts and anxieties of the human state. An interesting variant of this idea is to be seen in Giordano Bruno's Cantus Circaeus, where Circe defends her conversion of wicked men into beasts on the grounds that this shows their proper forms and makes them less harmful.⁴ Ulysses, in Circe, persuades the elephant Aglafemo to resume his human shape because, as a philosopher, he can hope for a higher transformation, a movement upwards.⁵ In spite of the presence of the 'middle', rational man Ulysses throughout the work, we are left with the sense that human nature - as in the Oratio - can only be defined in terms of transformation movement either up or down: there is no specifically human state in which he can rest. This is his misfortune as well as his saving grace, for most men will sink rather than rise.⁶

1. Gelli, Dialoghi, ed. cit., p.286.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.145. See editor's note, p. 407, on whether 'Prometeo' should be emended to 'Proteo'. The confusion, if it is genuinely Gelli's, is interesting.

4. Giordano Bruno, Opera latine, ed. F. Fiorentino, F. Tocco et al. (1879-91, facs. rpt. Stuttgart 1961), ii (1), pp.193-94.

5. See Gelli, Dialoghi, ed. cit. p. 270. 287. See Plato on the philosophers, cited p. 9 supra.

6. P. Boaistuau, in Le theatre du monde (Paris, 1558) tr. into English by J. Alday in 1566, seems to have used Gelli's arguments for an account of man's misery. See discussion in A. De Gaetano, Giambattista Gelli (Florence, 1976) pp.347-57.

It is Montaigne who presents the true obverse to Pico's Protean model, not simply in the scepticism of the longest of his essays, the Apologie de Raimond Sebond, but in the whole mode of the Essais themselves. The Apologie, of course, recapitulates much of what is to be found in Pliny, Plutarch or Gelli upon the dignity of the animals. Man is presumptuous in denying his kinship with them: 'La plus calamiteuse et fraile de toutes les creatures, c'est l'homme, et quant et quant la plus orgueilleuse ... Comment cognoit il, par l'effort de son intelligence, les branles internes et secrets des animaux? par quelle comparaison d'eux à nous conclud il la bestise qu'il leur attribue? Quand je me jouë à ma chatte, qui sçait si elle passe son temps de moy plus que je ne fay d'elle?'¹ Indeed the loss of sympathy with the beasts is a sign of degeneracy, for there is

un certain respect qui nous attache, et un general devoir d'humanité, non aux bestes seulement qui ont vie et sentiment, mais aux arbres mesmes et aux plantes. ... Il y a quelque commerce entre elles et nous, et quelque obligation mutuelle.²

Since men are just as well equipped by nature for survival³, their wretchedness is very much a defect of the mind and passions. In status they are neither above nor below the rest of the creatures, and it is only pride that makes them imagine they are.⁴

Montaigne's most scathing attack is on man's pride in his human shape. There is a Stoic story, he says, that if Ulysses had been offered the choice between folly as a man and wisdom as a beast, he would still have preferred to retain his human form.⁵ This idolatry manifests itself in giving a human shape to God: 'De toutes les formes, la plus belle est celle de l'homme; Dieu donc est de cette forme'⁶ The taking of the human shape as an absolute is most effectively punctured by the fact of its mutations and deformities:

1. M. de Montaigne, Essais, ed. M. Rat (Paris, 1962), .i.496 (II.xii, 'Apologie de Raimond Sebond').

2. Ibid., i. 478 (II.xi, 'De la Cruauté')

3. Ibid., i. 501-3 (II.xii, 'Apologie')

4. Ibid., i.505.

5. Ibid., i.537.

6. Ibid., i.594.

Et y a des formes mestisses et ambiguës entre l'humaine nature et la brutale. Il y a des contrées où les hommes naissent sans teste, portant les yeux et la bouche en la poitrine ... Quoy, ceux qui naturellement se changeant en loups, en jumens, et puis encore en hommes?¹

I need not detail the range of ideas, all expressive of conceit, which Montaigne attacks in this essay: the microcosm theory², Hermetic idol-making,³ Pythagorean transmigrating⁴, and above all the effort to make man what he cannot naturally be: 'L'homme ne peut estre que ce qu'il est, ny imaginer que selon sa portée'⁵. Man is a weak and feeble creature, and his modes of perception are fallible and corrupt.⁶ If he wishes to be other than he is, his only hope is to abandon himself utterly to God's will and aid: 'C'est à nostre foy Chrestienne, non à sa vertu Stoïque de pretendre a cette divine et miraculeuse metamorphose'⁷.

But it is not a sense of human wretchedness that is the most characteristic feature of the Essais: it is Montaigne's sense of human nature, and the world, in a Heraclitean state of flux. 'Les petits des ours, des chiens, montrent leur inclination naturelle; mais les hommes, se jettans incontinent en des accoustumances, en des opinions, en des loix, se changent ou se deguisent facilement'⁸. This is from an early essay. In the later ones, the sense of change is more absolute:

Je peints le passage:...Je pourray tantost changer, non de fortune seulement, mais aussi d'intention. C'est un contrerolle de divers et muables accidens et d'imaginations irresoluës et, quand il y eschet, contraires; soit que je sois autre moymesme, soit que je saisisse les subjects par autres circonstances et considerations.⁹

Man may not be a microcosm, but 'chaque homme porte la forme entiere de l'humaine condition'¹⁰ Time transforms him 'Quelles Metamorphoses luy voy-je faire tous les jours en plusieurs de mes cognoissans!'¹¹

1. Essais, ed. cit. i.585 (II.xii. 'Apologie')

2. Ibid., i.600.

3. Ibid., i.591.

4. Ibid., i.621-2.

5. Ibid., i.579.

6. Ibid., i.661-78 - Sceptical instances.

7. Ibid., i.681.

8. Ibid., i.159 (I.xxvi 'De l'institution des enfans')

9. Essais, ed. cit. ii.222 (III.ii 'De repentir')

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., ii.237.

Yet it is finally man's very inconstancy and changeability that makes him so fascinating to Montaigne, worthy of investigation and sympathy. The Sceptical and Christian premises which overturn the confident humanist model of man yield to a different kind of humane study. Changeability becomes a new source of virtue: 'Les plus belles ames sont celles qui ont plus de variété et de souplesse'¹. It is on this note, perhaps, that we should leave the Essais.

Bruno

Bruno is the last philosophical writer of this period that I shall discuss, and I must apologize for not discussing him in detail. A book could be written on the image of metamorphosis in Bruno's thought. Essentially, his use of it is in the Neoplatonic and Hermetic contexts we may see in Pico: but Bruno is manifestly an eccentric, and strongly imaginative thinker. I have already mentioned the Cantus Circaeus, where Circe's transformations are placed in the context of a mysterious, potent, and finally beneficent magic. A relatively more orthodox view is taken in the Spaccio de la bestia trionfante, one of the Italian dialogues he wrote while in England between 1583-85.² It is an account of moral reform in the heavens, to be accomplished by expelling the shapes of animals which have been placed there. Most central to the plan is the reform of Jupiter himself, who clearly represents man³, and who has suffered countless metamorphoses for love.: his 'nave de le metamorfosi'⁴ is now worn and decayed, and he seeks rest. But this moral allegory is interrupted by other, magical and Hermetic elements. Towards the close of the work, there is a notable defence of Egyptian animal-worship and the association of animals with the divinity latent in nature⁵. As Frances Yates points out, 'the beast is expelled on one level and triumphs on another'⁶.

1. Essais, ed.cit. ii.237 (III.iii. 'De trois commerces')

2. The Spaccio was published, with a false continental imprint, at London in 1584. I use, for all Bruno's Italian dialogues, the Dialoghi Italiani, ed. G. Gentile and G. Aquilecchia (Florence, 1958).

3. See Dialoghi italiani, ed. cit., p.560.

4. Ibid., p. 576.

5. Ibid., pp. 776-82.

6. F.A. Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (London, 1964 rpt. 1978) p.223.

More than any other writer of this period, Bruno shows the capacity to convert his images to double and richly ambiguous uses. Because the fundamental bases of his thought are magical, transformation assumes for him the mysteriousness and potency that it has in the art of magic. In L'Asino Cillenico del Nolano, a short dialogue appended to the Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo, he adopts the terms of Agrippa's encomium of the ass in De incertitudine to celebrate the Apuleian or, as he calls it, the Mercurial¹ ass, a symbol of holy ignorance. Whereas in one place he will use metamorphosis to represent moral degeneration, as in the greater part of the Spaccio or in the Argument to his De gli eroici furori,² another of the dialogues written in England and dedicated to Sidney, in another context it may become a profound religious or spiritual symbol. This is the case, for example, when in the Eroici furori Actaeon, who in love-poetry is commonly a figure of the lover being torn to pieces by the violence of his passions, becomes a figure of the pursuer of truth converted into what he seeks:

Così Atteone con que' pensieri, quei cani che cercavano estra di sé il bene, la sapienza, la beltade, la fiera boscareccia, ed in quel modo che giunse alla presenza di quella, rapito fuor di se da tanta bellezza, dovenne preda, veddesi convertito in quel che cercava³.

The Petrarchan image is changed into a fundamental Neoplatonic mystery, the fact of love as transforming the lover into his beloved: 'lo amore transforma e converte nella cosa amata'⁴.

These images cannot all be fitted into a scheme. Bruno's syncretic thought reflects a characteristically Renaissance sense of the multiplicity and inexhaustibility of any mythical symbol. I could have ended this section with Montaigne, whose Essais present what is finally the most important of 16th century treatments of human nature. Bruno is a less original and less attractive

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1. 'Cillenico' refers to Mercury, born in a cave of the mountain Cillene. The Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo was published in London in 1585. See Dialoghi Italiani, ed. cit., pp.914-23. It should be noted that all Bruno's Italian dialogues, published in England by John Charlewood, have false continental imprints, either of Venice or of Paris.
 2. This was also printed in London in 1585. See the Argument to Sidney, Dialoghi Italiani, ed. cit., pp.927-36.
 3. Eroici furori, IV.1, Dialoghi, ed. cit., p.1008.
 4. Ibid. For Actaeon as the image of the lover, see Petrarch, Rime sparse, XXIII.147-160 ('Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade').

writer. But in his confusions and ambiguities we find a more persistent, even obsessive sense of the implications of metamorphosis as an actual, physical symbol of man's condition. The Eroici furori contains a great image of this, an image which, if I could have found a visual representation of it, would have been a frontispiece to my thesis:

Or questa conversione e vicissitudine e figurata nella ruota delle metamorfosi, dove siede l'uomo nella parte eminente, giace una bestia al fondo, un mezzo uomo e mezzo bestia discende¹ dalla sinistra, ed un mezzo bestia e mezzo uomo ascende de la destra.

Man is caught on a wheel of metamorphosis, from which there is no escape.

II. Magic, Witchcraft and Alchemy

1. Magic

Renaissance magic is a large subject, and it is not my purpose to examine it here. In the past twenty-five years a number of important studies have changed our view of the Renaissance in these respects: they make us conscious of the diversity of elements in Renaissance magic, as of the range of its influence.² This rich and varied content is communicated above all by a book radical and unorthodox in its time, but of immense influence, Cornelius Agrippa's De Occulta philosophia (composed in 1510, but not published in its entirety until 1533). But although the syncretism of Agrippa's book makes it extremely interesting, and although the arts of magic include arts of transformation (discussed by Agrippa in Bk.I, chaps: lxiv, lxv), what is most of interest to my argument is not the various practices of Renaissance magic, but the figure of the Renaissance magus. It is important to look at this figure, for he expresses a characteristic Renaissance dream, that of man's capacity to transform himself and his world.

1. Eroici furori, I.3, in Dialoghi Italiani, ed. cit., p.1003. I have found zodiacal wheels and wheels of fortune, but no wheel like this one. Dame Frances Yates, whom I consulted on the subject, said she had seen no representation of it elsewhere in Bruno's works. Bruno is, of course, constructing his own emblems in Eroici furori.

2. See Yates, op.cit. and The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (London, 1979) D.P.Walker, Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella (Stud. Warburg Inst.xxii, London, 1958): P.Rossi, Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science (1957: Eng.tr. London, 1968): C.G.Nauert, Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought (Urbana, 1965). I leave aside studies of the Cabala.

We may, however, approach the magician through his world. Magic in general consists in the drawing out of occult virtues in objects, drawing down of astral influences from the heavens, and various arts of communication, divination, and conjuring. Ficino, whose magical theory is largely contained in the third book of De vita, the De vita coelitus comparanda, is especially concerned with the drawing down of planetary influences, through a link between the spiritus humanus (uniting body and soul) and the spiritus mundi (uniting world and world-soul).¹ The bases of this magic are Hermetic², but Ficino is cautious about its ends, speaking of health rather than of power. This caution is not shared by Agrippa, who makes comprehensive use of Ficino's work³.

Agrippa begins his book (I.i) by offering a description of magic. The world is triple: elementary, celestial and intellectual, and every inferior is governed by a superior. Man may rise through the degrees of creation by drawing to himself the virtues of each order: natural magic seeks to draw out elementary virtues, celestial magic to participate in the influences of the heavens by the rules of astrology and mathematics: and ceremonial magic attempts to establish links with Intelligences, spirits, angels or demons.⁴ These are the subjects of Agrippa's three books.

We should note the enormous influence of ideas that are part of natural magic in particular: especially the view of the whole of nature as linked by sympathies and correspondences, and therefore capable of being altered and transformed by properly directed influences. The infusion of occult virtues in objects is explained by Agrippa in highly Neoplatonic terms, borrowed from Ficino (De occulta philosophia I.xi, corresponding to De vita III.i): these virtues are derived from the Platonic Ideas, through the medium of the anima

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1. See De vita, III.iii, in M. Ficino, Opera omnia (Basel, 1576), i.534-5, and discussion in Walker, Spiritual and Demonic Magic, pp. 12-14.
 2. See De Vita, III.xxvi, ed. cit. i.570-2, and Asclepius, 18, in Corpus Hermeticum, ed. cit.ii.348-9. For Ficino's anxiety about these elements see Walker, op. cit. pp. 42-4.
 3. The edition I cite throughout is De occulta philosophia libri tres (Cologne, 1533). See I.xiv, p. 19 against De vita III.iii, ed.cit.i.534 and I.xi, p. 15 against De vita III.i, ed. cit. i.531.
 4. De occulta philosophia, p. 1.

mundi and the rays of the stars. The notion of sympathy is discussed in I. xxxvii, where there is a notable passage on the great chain of being, and on the constant flow of virtues from superiors to inferiors, so that 'His exemplis uidemus quomodo certis quibusdam praeparamentis naturalibus & artificialibus, coelestia quaedam dona desuper suscipere possumus.'¹ Giambattista della Porta, in his Magia naturalis (1558), an influential handbook, borrows from Agrippa and Ficino for his definition of magic, which the Platonists regard as a science

qua inferiora superioribus, vel terrena coelestibus subiiciantur, & illecebris quibusdam arte petitis vniuersi qualitatem alliciat. Ob id Aegyptii Naturam ipsam Magam vocarunt, quod² vim in alliciendo, attrahendoque similia per sibi similia possideret.

This sympathy consists in love. The whole of creation is distinguished by sex, and male and female, fire and air, water and earth, are drawn together by love³. We may recall Pico's description, in the Oratio, of the magician as one who marries earth to heaven like the elm to the vine⁴.

For Agrippa, the drawing out of the occult virtues of objects may even proceed on grounds of similitude: 'ad augendam audiciam, quaeramus leonem, uel gallum, & ex his capiamus cor, uel oculos, uel frontem'⁵. His discussion of the transformational arts of classical witches like Circe or Pamphile (I.xli, xlv, lxxii) grows directly out of such accounts. The whole philosophy of natural magic is based on a comprehensive sort of animism: the world and its objects are quickened by spirit, or essences which the magus must extract and apply.

→ As Agrippa puts it in the unusually modest terms of the De incertitudine, magicians simply direct the operations of nature 'applicando actiua passiuus', so as to produce prodigies and transformations.⁷

1. De occultia philosophia, I.xxxvii, ed. cit. p. 43.

2. G. B. della Porta, Magia naturalis, (Naples, 1589) I.ii, p. 2.

3. Ibid., I.ix, p. 10. See Ficino, De Vita, III.xxvi, ed.cit. i.570.

4. De hominis dignitate, ed. cit., p. 152.

5. De occulta philosophia, I. xv, ed. cit. p. 20.

7. De incertitudine, ed. cit. fol. LIII^{r-v}.

The De occulta philosophia, however, is anything but modest. The emphasis Agrippa places, in the first chapter, upon man's capacity to ascend the scale of creation through magical operations is renewed in the the the third and last book of ceremonial magic. In an important chapter (III.xxxvi), the assertions by Ficino and Pico of man's centrality, his universality and his unique capacity for free movement and self-transformation are specifically linked to the unique powers of the magus. Agrippa, we may say, returns the Asclepian premises of Ficino and Pico to their source, reasserts them in their ancient context of magical religion.

Man is the image of God and of the world: both microcosm and imago dei. He is the 'nexus, uinculum atque nodus' of all things, having a similitude with both lower and higher planes and able to operate freely in all¹. Knowing himself, he knows all things: God, the world, its creatures, animals, stones, plants, the elements, demons and angels. Finally - and here Agrippa cites an unknown work of the Arabian alchemist Geber (Jābir ibn Haiyān), the Summa Alchymiae² - the more the magus studies himself,

tanto maiorem vim attrahendi consequitur, tantoque maiora & mirabiliora operatur, ad tantamque ascendet perfectionem, quod efficitur filius dei, transformaturque in eandem imaginem quae est deus, & cum ipso unitur, quod neque angelis, neque mundo, nec cuiquam creaturae datum³ est, nisi soli homini, posse scilicet filium dei fieri, & uniri deo³.

The magus knows himself finally the son of God. In the succeeding pages, while stressing that the magus has no power without the word of God, Agrippa nevertheless suggests the existence of demi-gods, born like Christ directly from Him, who can perform miracles: and for this he cites Lazarelli's Crater Hermetis⁴.

The magus, through his magical arts, becomes truly the Hermetic man described in the Asclepius, capable of free ascent and descent through the

1. De occulta philosophia, III.xxxvi, ed. cit., p. 285.

2. This citation is unlike anything in Geber's known works: Agrippa is not referring to the Summa perfectionis metallorum. M. Plessner, 'Geber and Jābir ibn Hayyān: An Authentic sixteenth century quotation from Jābir' Ambix xvi (1969), 113-8, supposes the Summa Alchymiae to be a lost Latin translation of a genuine work by Jābir.

3. De occulta philosophia, III.xxxvi, ed. cit., p. 286.

4. For Lazarelli, see P.O. Kristeller, 'Marsilio Ficino e Lodovico Lazarelli' (1938), rpt. in Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters (Rome, 1969), pp. 221-47, and Walker, op. cit. pp. 64-69.

whole of creation, and able to control and direct all the forces of nature. He can produce miracles in the macrocosm because he is himself a 'great miracle' capable of transforming all to himself and himself to all. Agrippa asserts that there is nothing that cannot be performed by a soul 'standing and not falling'

Forma igitur¹ totius magicae uirtutis est ab anima hominis stante et non cadente .

This confidence of the magus in his powers is displayed by other 16th century magicians as well, notably by Cardano and Paracelsus. England's own magus, John Dee, exhibits equal confidence in his alchemical work, a 'magic parable', the Monas Hieroglyphica² (1564). Dee regards himself as one of the illuminati, capable of gaining universal knowledge³: in the 'Mathematicall Preface' to the Elements of Euclid he envisages the mathematical mind as moving freely through the scale of being:

The Mathematicall minde, [can] deale Speculatively in his own Arte: and by good meanes, Mount aboute the cloudes and starres: And thirdly, he can, by order, Descend, to frame Naturall thinges, to wonderfull vses: and when he list, retire home into his own centre: and there, prepare more Meanes, to Ascend or Descend by: and, ⁴ all, to the glory of God, and our honest delectation in earth.

Moreover, Dee notes that the mechanical arts, especially the making of wonderful artefacts like Archites' wooden dove, Albertus Magnus' brazen head, and the speaking images described in the Asclepius are all achieved through mathematics.⁵ This list of his parallels Ficino's in the Theologia Platonica, where he is speaking of man's activities in the arts: but of course such lists are conventional.

I have concentrated here on the more positive and metaphysical aspects of magical theory. Agrippa, of course, deals with its more necromantical and dangerous elements as well, speaking of the 'passions' that the magician can

1. De occulta philosophia, III.xliv, ed. cit., p.310.

2. See C.H.Josten 'A translation of John Dee's "Monas Hieroglyphica" (Antwerp, 1564)' with facs. of original text, Ambix, xii (1964), 84-221. For Dee's view of his work, see fol.7^r (fac.p.135), fol.2^v (fac. p.117). I discuss the work below, under alchemy.

3. See fol.6^r, facing p. 131. For Dee's magical interests, see A True and Faithfull Relation of what passed for many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee, ... & some Spirits ed. Meric Casaubon (London, 1659), and The Private Diary Of Dr. John Dee, ed. J. O. Halliwell (Camden Society, xix, London, 1842).

4. The Elements of Geometrie of the most auncient Philosopher Euclide of Megara, tr. Sir Henry Billingsley, ed. John Dee (London, 1570), sig. c3^v.

5. Ibid. A 1^{r-v}. See Theologia Platonica, XIII.3, ed. cit. p.223.

induce:

cuiusmodi passiones etiam magicae confectiones inducere possunt, per suffumigationes, per collyria, per unguenta, per potiones, per ueneficia, per lampades & lumina, per specula, per imagines, incantamenta & carmina, per sonos & concentus, ... Neque solum his artificijs eiusmodi passiones, apparitiones & imaginationes inducuntur, sed etiam res ipsae atque homines reuera permutantur, & in uarias formas transfigurantur, sicut de Proteo, Periclimeno, Acheloo, & Metra Erisichthonis filia narrant poetae; sic Circe socios mutauit Vlyssis ...

Spenser's Archimago is pre-eminently this sort of magician, and these magical powers are familiar to everyone. In magic, the vulgar and the sublime are inextricably mixed, as Faustus, who knows that 'A sound Magitian is a Demi-god', and is resolved to be 'as cunning as Agrippa was',² realizes to his cost. But the higher aspirations of the magus, presuming to span the whole scale of creation and convert all to his use, are finally more dangerous. It is the conceit of such a figure that Bacon attacks so ruthlessly in his diatribes against Cardano, Agrippa and Paracelsus.

As Paolo Rossi has shown in his valuable book on Bacon, Bacon was himself profoundly influenced by the philosophy of natural magic.³ Throughout his work he used the notions of sympathy and antipathy, and of the action of superiors on inferiors:⁴ he also believes in the occult powers of the imagination.⁵ As Rossi stresses, his description of the scientist, serving and learning from nature, may owe something to the statements of magicians like della Porta, or even Agrippa in De incertitudine.⁶

Bacon's attack on magic and the figure of the magus is not because of the content of their philosophy: it is an attack on human pride. In the Temporis partus masculus, he condemns Cardano as a weaver of cobwebs, Paracelsus as an impostor and charlatan, and Agrippa as a trivial buffoon. Magic makes man himself into a pantomime, and knowledge into a science of miracles.⁷ The Baconian scientist absorbs nature's variety by gradual assimilation, by a 'literata experientia': he does not arrogate universality, the power for

1. De occulta philosophia, I. xlv, ed. cit. p. 53.

2. Doctor Faustus, I.i.89, 144, in Marlowe, Works ed. F. Bowers (Cambridge, 1973).

3. Rossi, op. cit. pp. 11-16.

4. See De augmentis scientiarum, III.iv, in Works ed. R.L. Ellis & J. Spedding, (London, 1857-59), iv.356.

5. Sylva sylvarum : ed. cit. ii.602 ff.

6. See Rossi, op. cit. pp. 18-22.

7. Works, ed. cit. iii. 532. See 530-36.

infinite and comprehensive transformations, to himself by magical means. He may end by becoming as various and supple as Montaigne's 'plus belle ame', but his development excludes metamorphosis. It may be interesting that Bacon, in his profoundly philosophical mythography, shows very little inclination to link myths of transformation with the nature of man. What absorbs him is the protean nature of matter.¹

2. Witchcraft

The literature of witchcraft is probably the only body of writing in this period to argue, seriously and openly, the actual possibility of transformation. Witchcraft was a major contemporary problem, and to accept the stories of witches and their powers in toto would have meant that human existence was contingent and threatened, a prey to irrational forces capable of causing radical disorder. I am concerned with only one aspect of witchcraft (I use this term as transitive, ignoring Evans-Pritchard's distinction between witchcraft and sorcery²), but even this, the power to transform, is a subject of heated debate.

As Keith Thomas has noted, the general run of actual accusations against witches in England in this period makes very little mention of animal metamorphoses³. The problem, like a great many other things about witchcraft, is above all an academic one: but it is nevertheless important enough for Scot to treat at length in the Discoverie of Witchcraft (1584). I shall look here at Scot's own work, and two of the books he attacks most vigorously, the Malleus Maleficarum (?1486) by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, and Jean Bodin's De la Démonomanie des Sorciers (1580).

The Malleus Maleficarum, a repulsive and influential treatise,⁴ in fact begins with a consideration of the question of transformation. The authors

1. See Temporis partus masculus, in Works, ed. cit. iii.533 on the protean nature of substance, and De sapientia Veterum, Works vi.651-2 on Proteus as matter.

2. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (Oxford, 1937), passim. Witchcraft is an innate quality, sorcery a transitive process using spells and malevolent magic.

3. Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (rev.ed., Harmondsworth, 1973 rpt.1978)p. 529, with note 29.

4. Kramer and Sprenger were appointed Inquisitors of witchcraft offences in the Bull of Innocent VII, Summis desiderantes affectibus, 1484: the Malleus was the most important manual of its sort in the next hundred years.

are faced with a primary obstacle, in the shape of an obscure Canon Episcopi (cap. 26, q.5), which declares transformations to be impossible:

Qui credit, posse fieri aliquam creaturam, aut in melius deterius ve transmutari, aut in aliam speciem vel similitudinem transformari,¹ quam ab ipso omnium Creatore, pagano & infideli deterior est.

The problem is set out in full, but then completely overturned. Other authorities are produced to show that transformations are caused by witches (Exodus XXII.18, Leviticus XX.27, and Deuteronomy XVIII form the bases of all the witch-burners' faith), and the authors are soon declaring that denial of the witches' abilities in this respect amounts to heresy : 'errores haereticales'².

The question is taken up and explained in greater detail in Pars I Quaestio X of the work. The authors state that there are two ways in which witches may 'make' or 'transform' creatures. In the first place, creatures of an inferior sort (the kind that are spontaneously generated, as was believed, from putrefaction, such as frogs and snakes) can be made as distinct from created, by witches. The devils rove over the world collecting the semen of such creatures, and can generate 'imperfect' beings from this matter. They can even change things into serpents or frogs³. In the second place, although men cannot actually be changed into animals, the devils can so impose on the human senses that they seem to be changed, not only to themselves, but to others. This latter assumption of course concedes the correctness of the Canon Episcopi, which embodies a fundamental article of faith. But so prevalent and persuasive is the delusion of the senses caused by the witches, that transformation is accepted in all but name: 'Diabolus potest Fantasiam hominis decipere, vt homo vere animal videatur'⁴ Augustine is cited in support of this view⁵.

Augustine is in fact one of the greatest authorities for all academic writers on the powers and devices of witches. In Pars II.Q.1, caps.VIII and IX,

1. Malleus Maleficarum in tres divisus partes...auctore Iacobo Sprengero (Frankfurt, 1580) Pars I. Q. 1, p.1.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Malleus, p137-8.

4. Ibid., p.133.

5. Ibid.

the authors return to this question, and Augustine is again referred to for the transformations reported in De civitate Dei XVIII.17 [18]. These are the stories of Circe, of the companions of Diomedes who were transformed into birds, and of the father of Praestantius who was changed, so he said, to a pack-horse¹. Of the classical examples, we are told, the transformations caused by Circe were a deception of the eyes, and the birds who flew around Diomedes' temple were devils in the form of birds. The third story involves a more complicated series of deceptions; delusion of the senses, both subjective and objective, and the agency of devils in performing the actual tasks of pack-horses.²

Few remedies, if any, appear to be of use against such enchantments. It is the witch who must be forced to remove the spell, and all Kramer's and Sprenger's arguments lead up to the rigorous judicial processes described in the third part of the book. Kramer and Sprenger are whole-heartedly committed to the assumption of thoroughgoing demonic interference in human lives, and what emerges from the third part is, more or less, that the witch has only to be accused to be tortured and burned.

In certain important respects, the assumptions of the Malleus are not, I think, noticeably modified in Bodin's Démonomanie, for all that Christopher Baxter has recently defended its logic³. Bodin's work, composed nearly a hundred years after the Malleus by a celebrated political thinker and historiographer, is set in a different context of thought, more contemporary for my purpose. But as Baxter himself notes, it is 'the late-sixteenth-century equivalent to the Malleus Maleficarum'⁴, and Bodin's assumption of demonic interference in men's lives is no less complete.

In the context of this discussion, it is the sixth chapter of Bodin's

1. See De civitate Dei, ed. J.L.Vives (Basel, 1522), pp.582-4.

2. Malleus, ed. cit. , pp. 277-78.

3. C. Baxter, 'The Logic of Persecution' in The Damned Art, ed. S.Anglo (London, 1977), pp.76-105.

4. Baxter, ed. cit. p.78

second book that is of interest. Bodin here considers the question of transformation, and his modernity and secularity may be seen in the fact that he mainly adduces examples from classical myth. Unlike the authors of the Malleus (Bodin was not a Christian)¹ he does not bother with theories of delusion or 'praestigiosa ars'.. He is certain that transformations occur: Philosophes 'Pomponatius, & Theophraste Paracelse des premiers/de leur age, tiennent que la transmutation est tres-certaine d'hommes en bestes'². Bodin finds it extraordinary that such stories should be disbelieved, when

tous peuples de la terre, & toute l'antiquite en demeure d'accord. Car non seulement Herodote l'a escript il y a deux mil deux cens ans, & quatre cens ans au parauant Homere: ains aussi Pomponius Mela, Solin, Strabq, Dionisius Afer, Marc Varon, Virgille, Ouide, & infinis autres.

Lycanthropy is the phenomenon most often attested by Bodin's authorities. This he regards as no illusion or fable but a well attested fact 'chose tres certaine, veritable & indubitable'⁴. Circe's changing of the companions of Ulysses to beasts is also no fable 'car mesme S. Augustin aux liures de la Cite de Dieu recite la mesme histoire, encores que cela luy semble estrange'⁵. Interestingly, he later goes on to cite Chrysostom's opinion that this change is allegorical 'dit que la Sorciere Circe auoit tellement abesty les compaignons d'Ulysse par voluptez bestiales, qu'ilz estoient comme porceaux', but rejects this view: Homer himself says that the sailors were not changed in mind, and Boethius also suggests this.⁶ Circe is therefore definitely a maleficent witch, and her victims are unfortunate, not guilty. There are virtually no bounds to the power of devils: if Satan could transport Christ to the top of the temple, all forms of transportation are possible 's'il est possible en vn, il est possible en tous'⁷.

1. See Baxter's discussion of his 'daemonic Judaism' in art. cit.

2. De la demonomanie des Sorciers (Paris, 1580), fol.98^r.

3. Ibid. fol. 99^r.

4. Ibid., fol.101^v.

5. Ibid., fol. 99^v.

6. Ibid., fol. 101^v.

7. Ibid., fol. 104^r.

There are certain points we can now make about the discussion, in the context of witchcraft, of stories of transformation. Metamorphosis is here a wholly external, imposed process. Bodin's rejection of moral allegory for a story so commonly allegorized as that of the swine of Circe demonstrates the divergence between the interests of these writers and those of others who employ the myths as material. The writers on witchcraft are dealing with what they see as a major social and political disturbance: they cannot afford to allow their 'facts' to lose their sharpness of edge. Transformation is for them not an idea at all, it is an instrument: paradoxically, not an instrument used by the witch so much as an instrument for her persecution. Both the Malleus and the Démonomanie are rule-books for courts. It is true that the belief in the witch's powers of animal metamorphosis may have been common at the popular level: this is a level with which I am not really concerned in my study, but we may simply note the frequency with which such motifs appear in folk-literature¹. Bodin's work is, on the other hand, an intellectual codification of the case against witches, and in it the argument is conducted on a very different plane. Bodin connects witchcraft with Neoplatonic magic, and is as ferocious against Pico's Orphic hymns as against Agrippa, 'l'un des plus grands Sorciers du monde'². All magical activity involves diabolic pacts³. Bodin's acceptance of the myths of transformation as factual evidence demonstrates simply a determination to prosecute. About the utter enormity of books like the Malleus and the Démonomanie it is better not to comment: Baxter's adoption of Bodin as a kind of culture-hero strikes me in much the same light.⁴

Reginald Scot seems to have shared this view of Bodin and the Malleus.

Discussing transformations (Book V, chaps. 1-7 of the Discoverie of Witchcraft)

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1. See Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-literature (rev.ed. Copenhagen, 1955-57), passim.
 2. Démonomanie, fol.220^r. See fols. 19^v-20^r.
 3. See Démonomanie, Book I, Chapter 1.
 4. See Baxter, art. cit.p.102. For a corrective against the implications of Baxter's final paragraph (about the actual existence of witchcraft practices) see N. Cohn, Europe's Inner Demons (St. Albans, 1976), pp.252-3 et passim.

he employs the joint weapons of ridicule and Christian doctrine. In so doing, he returns the myths to their more normal status as fiction or allegory. He mentions Bodin's dismissal of Chrysostom, and repeats that 'Ulysses his people were by the harlot Circes made in their brutish manners to resemble swine'¹. Bodin, as he notes 'maintaineth for true the most part of Ovids Metamorphosis, and the greatest absurdities and impossibilities in all that booke: marie he thinketh some one tale therein may be fained'². The stories retold in the Malleu out of Augustine are treated with the same scepticism. Essentially, the ground of Scot's scepticism is fundamental Christian faith in the special status and dignity of man, and in the orderliness of nature:

God hath endued everie man and everie thing with his proper nature, substance, forme, qualities, and gifts, and directeth their waies. As for the waies of an asse, he taketh no such care; howbeit, they have also their properties and substance severall to themselves. For there is one flesh (saith Paule) of₃ men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds.

This conviction, grounded on I Corinthians 15, 39, is basic to Scot's insistence that we read the stories of transformation as moral allegory (the tale of Nebuchadnezzar⁴), or simply as entertaining tales. For literature, this is a more important attitude.

3. Alchemy

Barthélemy Aneau, in his preface to the Trois liures de la Metamorphose d'Ovide, rejects the alchemical interpretations of classical myths as wholly unhistorical:

Ie ne l'ay aussi adaptee à l'Alchemie (ce que sont aucuns comme Suidas Chrysogon Polydor & autres. La conquete de la toison d'or) pource que ie confesse volontiers ne l'entendre pas, & n'ay leu ancien auteur Grec ne Latin qui en tel sens l'ayt prinse, & ne say si Ouide, & les vieux Grecz d'ond il a deduict son oeuvre, iamais y penserent.

Aneau's scepticism is probably characteristic of most Renaissance mythographers.

1. Reginald Scot, The Discoverie of Witchcraft (1584) ed B. Nicholson (London, 1886), p.73.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.79.

4. Ibid., p.81.

5. Trois liures, ed. cit. (1556), sig. c5^r.

An interesting context for Aneau's scepticism is provided by D. P. Walker in Spiritual and Demonic Magic, ed. cit. pp. 97-8. At this time, Jacques Gohory, a Paracelsist and associate of the Pléiade, was publishing his translations of the first three books of the Amadis de Gaule in the belief that the work was an alchemical allegory.

Nevertheless the literature of alchemy provides a consistent, if specialized and eccentric, attitude towards the classical myths of transformation, and we may consider it before going on to the deeper concerns of the art

Aneau refers to Suidas and to Chrysogonus Polydorus, the editor of a collection of alchemical treatises published from Nuremberg in 1541 and 1545 (see my Appendix II). Alchemical allegories were, as we may see from Suidas, fairly old¹. They become progressively more intricate and multiple with the development of all mythography. The literature of alchemy tends from its beginnings to use veiled and enigmatic terms, designed to conceal the secrets of the art from the profane vulgar, creating virtually a mythography within the science itself. The construction of these veils naturally leads also to the adoption of the veils of pre-existent fable. Interestingly, Aneau rejects the alchemical readings almost in the same breath with Christian doctrinal ones: he sees the one as irrelevant and the other as irreverent². In their detail and sense of conviction, the two types of reading are not dissimilar.

Petrus Bonus of Ferrara, in his 14th century treatise, the Margarita pretiosa novella, is led by his alchemical allegories of myth to a consideration of how Virgil and Ovid mingle truths and fictions in their poetry, and how the misrepresentation of their true meanings results in an association of poetry with lying. He cites the fable of Proteus in Virgil's Georgics, of the Gorgons, of Aeneas' search for the golden bough, the conflagration caused by Phaethon, Theseus and the Minotaur, as images of the alchemical process of fermentation: 'hoc fermentum est illud forte & fortissimum, quod omnia vincit & ad se convertit'³. The transformations of fable represent the flux of the alchemical process, ending in the stone which can transmute all bodies to itself.

The most complete and detailed alchemical interpretation of myths of

1. See Suidae Lexicon, ed. A. Adler (Leipzig, 1928-38), s.v. Δέρμας. The editor notes that this explanation may be derived from John of Antioch. The Lexicon belongs to around the 11th century.

2. Trois liures, ed. cit., c5^r.

3. See Margarita pretiosa novella, in J.J. Manget, ed. Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa (Geneva, 1702), ii. 42. This collection is hereafter referred to as Manget.

metamorphosis appears to have been undertaken by two French alchemists of the 16th century, Nicholas Valois and Pierre Vicot. Their translation and allegorisation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, surviving in manuscript, has been studied by Paul Kuntze in a dissertation on which I am dependent for my information¹. The work consists of an allegorising metrical translation of the Metamorphoses alternating with a prose commentary in which alchemical meanings are further explained. The translation seems to be strongly influenced by the Ovide moralisé.

Ovidian cosmology is related to the Mosaic account of creation, but the production of the cosmos out of chaos is more properly understood as a veiled description of the magisterium, the alchemist's masterwork, which results in the production of a universal remedy. As in Chaos, so in the alchemical vessel the elements are separated by the magus. The Sun and the Moon are the first to emerge, and from the union of heat and moisture man is produced: that is, mercury, or the philosophers' stone, is made from a union of gold (Sol) and silver (Luna). Mercury rules the alchemical realm just as man stands high over the rest of creation².

The individual transformations in the rest of Ovid's work are explained on the same principle, which tends, indeed, to become wearisome. The metamorphoses of Jupiter receive careful attention, and so, of course, does the story of the golden fleece³. The authors are convinced that the secrets contained in this poem have been transmitted by the ancient sages 'qui de crainte estoient cachés dans les deserts'⁴, under the guise of fiction. They employ a very large number of alchemical authorities. By far the greatest debt is to Raymond Lull, unquestionably the 'directeur' in this enterprise: 'Arnaldus estoient squant, mais Lullius est beaucoup plus proffond'⁵.

I cannot judge the influence of this work, but alchemical interpretations of myth were well known in the 16th century. An example is Robertus Vallensis'

1. P. Kuntze, Le Grand Olympe, eine alchimiste Deutung von Ovids Metamorphosen (Diss. Ph. D. Halle, 1912). We should not confuse this Grand Olympe with other French translations of the Metamorphoses under the same title. See the one cited p. 46 supra.

2. Kuntze, pp. 22, 25-6. See extract, p. 130.

3. Ibid., pp. 28, 29.

4. Ibid., p. 84.

5. Ibid., p. 73. Lull was probably not the author of the alchemical works attributed to him. For Arnaldus, see Rosarium Philosophorum, printed in Manget, ii.

Figure 1

EMBLEMA XXIII. *De secretis Natura.* 101
Aurum pluit, dum nascitur Pallas Rhodi, & Sol concumbit Veneri.



EPIGRAMMA XXIII.

Res est mira, fidem fecit sed Gracia nobis
Ejus, apud Rhodios qua celebrata fuit.
Nubibus Aureolus, referunt, quod decidit imber,
Solubierat Cypria junctus amore Dea:
Tum quoque, cum Pallas cerebro Jovis excidit, aurum
Vase suo pluvia sic cadat instar aquae.

N 3 AURUM

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VET. D. 2. 2. 18 p. 101

De veritate et antiquitate artis chemicae (1561): Vallensis begins his allegories by citing Pico's De hominis dignitate on the fact that the ancients concealed truths in fables.¹ Probably the most mysterious and deeply thoughtful use of mythology to convey alchemical meanings is that by Michael Maier (1568-1622), Paracelsist physician to the Emperor Rudolf II. For Maier, the myths are not simply material to be interpreted but a living language of symbols which can be employed to teach the profoundest scientific and religious truths. Maier's splendid alchemical emblem-book, the Atalanta fugiens of 1617, draws upon myth (see Fig. I) , as well as the traditional alchemical symbols such as the lion, the dragon, the hermaphrodite and the king. Atalanta and Hippomenes, transformed into lions in the temple of Cybele, signify the final stage of alchemical transmutation, when the redness of gold is attained² (this state was symbolized in alchemy by a red lion). Each of Maier's 50 emblems have three elements, the musical setting, the figure, and the verse: they are followed by an explanatory "Discursus"³. Maier seems to have drawn on mythological symbolism throughout his work, especially in the early Arcana arcanissima (? 1614) and in the Viatorium (1618).

Maier's work belongs to a rather later phase of European alchemy than that which concerns us here: an alchemical revival, or what Frances Yates, who incidentally discusses Maier's alchemical mysticism, calls a Rosicrucian enlightenment⁴. But his mystical and positive use of myth is an important reminder. Specific alchemical allegory is only a small and specialized influence on attitudes to myth, and is frequently satirized⁵. Far more important is the whole enterprise of alchemy itself, which is properly seen as a dream of transformation, of natural perfectibility as residing in the power of human art.

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1. De veritate... artis chemicae is printed in L. Zetzner's collection, the Theatrum Chemicum (Ursel, 1602), 3 vols. See i.16-17.
 2. M. Maier, Atalanta fugiens (Oppenheim, 1618), p.9 'Praefatio ad lectorem'.
 3. On the sources of Maier's symbols, see H.de Jong, Michael Maier's Atalanta fugiens, Janus, Suppl. viii (Leiden, 1969).
 4. See F.A. Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment (1972 rpt.St.Albans,1975), 114-23.
 5. See Nashe, Works ed. R.B.Mckerrow rev. F.P. Wilson (Oxford,1958) iii.221, Donne, Sermons, ed. G.R.Potter & E.M.Simpson (Berkeley,1953-61), vii.191, Jonson, The Alchemist, II.i.

The alchemical sense of an infinitely transmutable physical nature is perhaps incalculable in its influence: in the more philosophical alchemists this is matched by a sense that man, not metal, is the true subject of the alchemical process, and what is finally achieved is a transmutation of spirit. It is not surprising, then that this ambition, whether physical or moral, should have possessed so many of the most gifted of Renaissance minds.

Early alchemy was seen specifically as an art of transmuting metals, but allegorical and visionary writing about the art is also ancient¹. Hermes Trismegistus was, after all, regarded as its founder, and an enigmatic document, the Tabula Smaragdina, was supposed to be his alchemical testament.² Up to the 16th century, the enormous literature on the subject consists on the one hand of practical directions for transmutation, and on the other hand of semi-mystical writing investing the process with religious or cosmic symbolism.³ The distinction between the practical alchemist and the Hermetic mystic-magician is, however, never absolute: the art itself is always of actual importance.

But virtually all writers wish to conceal the secrets of the art, and a vivid and emblematic private language is thus created. The metals are referred to by the planets which govern them, and the stages of the alchemical process, distinguished by four or later three colours, black, yellow or green, white and red, are symbolized by emblematic beasts or birds: the raven, the green lion, the silver eagle, the red lion. Symbols like that of the egg (representing both cosmos and alchemical vessel), the dragon biting its own tail, the hermaphrodite (for Mercury), or even narratives involving the figures of king and queen, ritual sacrifice, marriage and resurrection, mythologize the whole process⁴.

1. See J.M. Stillman, The Story of Alchemy and Early Chemistry (New York, 1924), p. 135, and 'Le Divin Zosime: Sur la Vertu' in F. Berthelot, Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs (Paris, 1887-8), Fr.trans., iii.117-121.
2. Printed, with the commentary of Hortulanus, in De Alchemia (Nuremberg, 1541).
3. Contrast, for example, Geber's Summa perfectionis metallorum, also in De alchemia, ed. cit., with the Tabula Smaragdina. See the distinctions drawn by the editor, Chrysogonus, between various types of writers on the subject, in his Praefatio, aa4^r.
4. The most convenient collection of alchemical illustrations is in C.G. Jung's Psychology and Alchemy, tr. R.F.C. Hull: Collected Works, xii (2nd ed. London, 1968). See Maier, and Lamsprinck's De lapide philosophico figurae et emblemata in the collection Musaeum Hermeticum (Frankfurt, 1625).

The alchemical process is circular: a wheel of transmutations, as the medieval English adept, Sir George Ripley, defined it:

The Wheele of Elements thou canst turne about ¹
Trewely consevyng our Wrytyngs wythout dowte.

The magus initiates the transmutations of metals in order to turn 'the philosophers wheele', to bring about chemical changes in metals. The cycle parallels on the one hand the creation of the world out of chaos and on the other, the cycle of generation and corruption in nature. Both parallels were explicit in the very terms of the art, and in justifications of it by analogy with either process. Moreover, nature brings forth nothing perfect: the task of art is to perfect and complete her processes.

One important assumption in alchemy was the perfection of prime matter, which, though now dispersed in the four elements, remained in every natural substance. Paracelsus defines prime matter, which he calls Iliaster, as made up of mercury, sulphur and salt, or spirit, soul and body. Man too, says Paracelsus, is made up of these components, and Mercury, the principle of volatility, sulphur, the principle of combustibility, and salt, the principle of permanence, express man's composite nature.² The task of the alchemist is to extract this perfect first matter, which, whether gold, stone, elixir, tincture or quintessence, would bring all matter to a like perfection³. This he does by causing spirit to act upon matter:

by thir powerful Art they binde
Volatil Hermes, and call up unbound
In various shapes old Proteus from the sea ⁴
Draind through a Limbec to his Native form.

Although gold was the nominal goal of the alchemical process, this was to be understood not as common gold (aurum vulgi) but as aurum philosophorum. This, far excelling natural gold in its properties⁵, expressed a condition of

1. The Compound of Alchymy, in E. Ashmole, ed. Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum (London, 1652), p.133.
2. Paracelsus, The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings, ed. A. E. Waite (London, 1894), i.201-4, p. 99, with note on pp.99-100.
3. See Roger Bacon, Speculum Alchemiae, in De Alchemia, ed. cit., p. 258.
4. Paradise Lost, III.602-5.
5. See Hortulani philosophi super Tabulam Smaragdinam Hermetis Commentarius, in De Alchemia, ed. cit. p. 366.

perfection. The alchemist believes this perfection to be attainable by art. The volatile, 'hermaphroditic', self-reflexive Mercury is the agent of alchemical transmutations, but while the alchemist begins with common mercury, he ends with the mercurius philosophorum, which generates the perfecting stone the lapis philosophorum. At this stage it is not really possible to distinguish between aurum, mercurius, and lapis: they are in a sense the same.

The parallels we have noted with the cosmic cycle and that of natural generation were not simply lateral: for if the alchemist attained his end he could repair both the decay of the world and the corruption of nature. The Ovidian myth of the four ages, gold to iron, is of importance here: the 'alchymist diuine' would return the present age to gold. John Davies' compliment to Queen Elizabeth

Rudenesse it selfe she doth refine,
Even like an Alchymist diuine;
Grosse times of Iron turning 1

plays upon precisely this conceit, just as the satirical obverse of it is to be found in Mammon's dream of aurum vulgi placing him in 'nouo orbe ... the rich Peru:...golden mines,/ Great Salomon's Ophir!'².

At the same time, in Paracelsan medicine especially, but also in earlier alchemy, the stone was also a quintessence, an elixir or a tincture, an aurum potabile which would function as a universal remedy and even guarantee immortality. Elias Ashmole defines, out of St. Dunstan's De occulta philosophia, four kinds of stone: the mineral stone, transmuting metals to gold or flints to diamonds: the vegetable stone, offering control over plants and animals: the magical stone, giving powers of divination and prophecy: and the angelical stone, the food of the angels, the 'Heavenly Viaticum', the gift of immortality, enabling its possessors, like Hermes, Moses or Solomon, to converse with angels.³

1. The Poems of Sir John Davies, ed. R. Krueger (Oxford, 1975), p. 71

2. Jonson, The Alchemist, II. i. 2-4.

3. E. Ashmole, ed. Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, A4^v-B2^r.

While the alchemist would thus perfect the world through the stone, the alchemical process was also more closely associated with man himself. John Dee, in his enigmatic alchemical work, the Monas Hieroglyphica, identifies the philosophers' mercury with man and Adam:

Et, (Nutu Dei,) iste₁ est Philosophorum Mercurius ille Celeberrimus, Microcosmus, & Adam.

Like Mercury, man is both the universal agent, and universal subject, of the alchemical process. The shifting, volatile, and 'double' nature of mercury perfectly expresses man's inconstant and amphibious nature: yet like the sublimed and fixed philosophers' mercury, man too is capable of rest in his higher nature.

As Josten notes, Dee's symbol of the monad represents the universal principle of transmutation 'of which Mercury is the universal agent, and "mercurial man", i.e. the true alchemist or magus, as a fit recipient of that influence, is the noblest subject'². Having posited this philosophical concept as central, Dee can be contemptuous of the labours of vulgar alchemists, 'miserrimi Alchimistae'³. Dee gives an early indication that the subject to be transmuted is the magus:

Quo finitu Progressu: Qui aluit, in METAMORPHOSIM, Primus $\frac{1}{4}$ pse abibit: Rarissimique, post, Mortalium conspicietur oculis.

Essentially, then, the alchemist's search for perfection becomes a search for perfection in the self. Dee likens Mercurius to Adam: an old parallel is that between the lapis and perfect man, or Christ. Petrus Bonus says:

Similiter per hanc Artem cognoverunt & judicaverunt antiqui Philosophi hujus artis, virginem debere concipere & parere: quia apud eos hic lapis concipit & impraegnatur a se ipso, & parit se ipsum ... Adhuc etiam nove₅unt, quod Deus fieri debeat homo die novissima hujus Artis, ...

So also, the Paracelsist Gerard Dorn exhorts men to a spiritual regeneration through Christ who is, we may say, the tinctura philosophorum:

O miserum tale genus hominum, quod lapidibus non est praestantius,

1. J. Dee, Monas Hieroglyphica (Antwerp, 1564), fol.14^v, facs. in C. H. Josten, 'A Translation of John Dee's "Monas Hieroglyphica"... with an introduction and annotations' Ambix xii (1964), 84-221. I have relied heavily upon Josten in interpreting this obscure work.

2. Josten, art. cit., p. 103.

3. Monas, ed. cit., fol.17^v.

4. Ibid., fol. 7^{r-v}.

imo longe inferius eo ... Transmutemini (inquit) transmutemini de lapidibus mortuis in viuos lapides philosophicos. Ego sum vera medicina, corrigens et transmutans ... id quod non est, in id quod esse debet.

Having described the miraculous Paracelsian tinctures and remedies, Dorn draws the moral that if man knows how to transform things in the external world, how much more should he know how to transform the microcosm.²

The religious interpretation given to alchemical experience by such writers as Bonus and Dorn (and by Heinrich Khunrath³) is not precisely the same as Dee's assumption of special status for the magus, and I shall come to the consequences of Dee's claims in a moment. Before that, there are a few points to be made.

The connexions made by alchemists between the processes of their art and psychic change were of deep interest to C.G. Jung, many of whose major works are concerned with alchemy⁴. Jung felt that the necessary failure of the alchemical experiments in fact fostered a closer identification between the material symbols of the art and the psychological states of the artifex, especially the expressions of his unconscious. Jung's learning and humanity still make these researches of his fascinating and provocative. Charles Nicholl, in a recent and ambitious book, The Chemical Theatre (London, 1980), draws upon Jung's scholarship to put forward an argument regarding the influence of alchemy in Renaissance England. The first part of Nicholl's book, where he explores the range and nature of this influence, and discusses alchemical images in the writings of Donne and Jonson, is extremely useful and interesting. The second half of the book is devoted to an alchemical interpretation of King Lear, and this is, I believe, a huge mistake.

Nicholl bases his interpretation upon the alchemical parable, common in varying forms, of the death (or killing) of the king (prime matter), his trial

1. G. Dorn, Clavis totius philosophiae chemistica II: Speculatiua Philosophia, in Theatrum Chemicum, ed. cit., i.267. Cf. I Peter 2, 4-5.

2: Ibid., p. 307.

3. The author of Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae solius verae, Christiano-Kabbalisticum, divino-magicum (Hanover, 1609).

4. See, especially, Psychology and Alchemy (ed. cit.), and Collected Works, tr. R.F. C. Hull, vol.xiii, Alchemical Studies (London, 1967), and vol.xiv, Mysterium Coniunctionis (London, 1963).

by fire and water, and his eventual resurrection and marriage. Lear is indeed a play about spiritual transformation, but to say that it is about alchemy is like saying that Oedipus Rex is about alchemy.¹ Alchemy creates a secondary symbolism on the basis of a primary symbolism: that is, it uses highly charged religious or mythical images or structures - king, lion, unicorn, sacrifice, resurrection - to dignify the processes of its own art. As we have seen in Bonus and Dorn, these parabolic tendencies may return upon the alchemist, so that he uses the processes of his art to contemplate the mysteries of his spirit. Lear is a strongly symbolic play, making use of cosmic and religious analogies so large that they threaten to shatter the confines of its dramatic form, and stupendously enlarge its scope. But if it derived these symbols from alchemy, it would be deriving them at two removes, and the alchemical reference would - as in the case of alchemical allegory of myth - be an end in itself. This is to make Lear a smaller play, and it is not.

Nevertheless, the relation between alchemical transmutation and the nature or perfectibility of man is important to some writers, and is of considerable general influence. Finally the argument is not about alchemy, but about man. As most readers have noticed, Jonson's Alchemist is not concerned with the failure or fraudulence of Subtle's experiments: it is about human self-delusion, egoism, folly and greed. Jonson's critique of alchemy, here and elsewhere, rests upon the conviction that the Mercurial powers arrogated to himself by the Renaissance magus, his conviction that he can change nature by human art, express only a deeply dangerous and unwarranted pride. The Hermetic dream of man as god or demon, able to comprehend and change the world, is satirically rejected for an exposé of man's frailties and sins.

What emerges, again, from Renaissance alchemy, is Baconian science. Bacon believed in many of the principles of alchemy: he accepted the possibility

1. Nicholl may have been affected by Jung's observations about Goethe's Faust: see Psychology and Alchemy, ed. cit., pp. 477-80.

of metallic transmutations¹. What he attacked so savagely was the Paracelsan figure of the alchemist-magus, presuming to liken macrocosm with microcosm, to comprehend what he is so much inferior to:

Tu divina naturalibus, sacris profana, fabulis haereses miscendo,
veritatem (sacrilege impostor) tum humanum tum religiosam polluisti...
Tu evidentiam rerum crudam et personatam contemplationi ex praescripto
subiiciens, et substantiarum Proteos pro motuum calculis quaerens,
scientiae fontes corrumpere et humanam mentem exuere conatus es; ...
Nec non Magorum hiatus ubique pro viribus amplificasti, importu-
nissimas cogitationes² spe, spem promissis premens, imposturae
tum artifex tum opus.

III. Love as metamorphosis: Petrarch and Ronsard

So far, we have been examining man's transformable nature in contexts which are ultimately metaphysical or philosophical. But there is another, more Ovidian sense in which metamorphosis may be linked to man's nature, and that is as a psychological quality. The Renaissance is strongly conscious of this, and it is communicated most powerfully in the poetry of love. For Petrarch being in love is itself transformation. Metamorphosis becomes in his poetry a potent image of the lover's bewildering fluctuation, his swift changes of psychological state, and above all his loss of himself in love. The myth that runs through the whole of the Rime sparse is obviously the myth of Apollo and Daphne, and in its simplest form, this represents the lover reaching his lady only to find that she has been turned into the laurel of poetic fame³. Essentially, however, the image of metamorphosis applies to the lover himself. I cannot discuss the complex and varying developments of this idea, but we may look at the longest poem in the Rime, 23, 'Nel dolce tempo del prima etade', an extraordinary, highly 'artificial' and moving poem of metamorphosis.

The poet sees himself as changing into stone, virtually impervious to love, when love pierced him to the heart: he, not Laura, becomes the laurel:

ei duo mi trasformaro in quel ch'i' sono
facendomi d'uom vivo un lauro verde
che per fredda stagion foglia non perde. (23, 38-40)

1. See De Augustis, in Works ed. cit. i.574.

2. Temporis partus masculus, in Works, ed. cit., iii.533.

3. See Rime sparse, 5, 6. All citations of the Rime sparse, throughout this thesis, are from the edition, with tr., by R. M. Durling, Petrarch's Lyric Poems (Cam. Mass. 1976).

Daphne's immortality, transferred to the frustrated lover, becomes a perpetuation of grief: her transformation is escape, the poet's is an inadequate process of sublimation. The poet had desired the laurel as his crown, but had not anticipated the cruel transformation which changes his feet to roots and entraps him in the stasis of an unfulfilled love (41-49).

The myths, and the metamorphoses, succeed each other with bewildering rapidity. Like Phaethon, the lover is struck down when he mounted too high: like Cygnus he laments for his lost hope 'ricercando dallato e dentro a l'acque' (57). The poet's art, his poetry, is inextricably mixed with love and suffering, his suffering makes him sing: 'mercé chiamando con estrania voce' (63). The lover, telling his love, is transformed by his lady's anger to a stone, like Battus: 'un quasi vivo et sbigottito sasso' (80). He is petrified, but still living, trembling at her anger within the stone. He weeps, like Byblis, and is transformed into a fountain: ironically he glances at the artificiality of the metaphor:

Chi udi mai d'uom vero nascer fonte?
e parlo cose manifeste et conte. (119-20).

The lover, suffering not one transformation but many, constantly returns to human shape and is retransformed. this cycle increases his pain. As Echo, he remains 'Spirto doglioso errante' (141) for many years, then returns:

et ritornai ne le terrene membra,
credo per piu dolore ivi sentire. (145-6).

The implications of the myth remind us that it is Narcissus' self-love that leads to Echo's denial and frustration: he dies to himself, she remains only to reverberate the emotions of others, the fate of the poet.

The last metamorphosis is the only one which does not reach the cyclic return to humanity, and remains, even in its telling, incomplete. The lover sees his lady bathing, like Diana: she is a 'fera bella et cruda' (149), but it is he who is transformed, like Actaeon, into a stag, fleeing his desires. The poet insists on the Eruth of his story: this is at once a highly

artificial, contrived classical reference subsuming the lover's experience into the removed world of myth and a highly personal expression of a painfully real psychological state:

Vero dirò; forse e' parrà menzogna:
 ch'i' senti' trarmi de la propria imago
 et in un cervo solitario et vago
 di selva in selva ratto mi trasformo,
 et ancor de' miei can fuggo lo stormo. (156-160).

The lover's loss of himself in love is expressed in the extreme force of 'trarmi de la propria imago': he is drawn from his own shape, metamorphosed. Essentially, what is lost is freedom: the free movement of the human form is exchanged for a paralysing fear, entrapment, the growing of roots, the covering by stone. In the last stanza the poet returns to a calmer and more resigned note: he has never known satisfaction in love, but he has transformed his love through poetry: at last he is seen in the active role of the eagle carrying Ganymede to the sky. Yet for all this, the lover, still obsessed by his laurel, seems still to be bound: the violent images of pain and suffering are dissolved momentarily, but art's victory is precarious and unsatisfying.

For Petrarch, transformation is unfulfilment. The particular character of his love makes his images of metamorphosis essentially images of pain. The lady is harder than stone 'duro lauro/ ch'à i rami di diamante et d'or le chiome' (30, 23-4), and the lover, transformed daily, is never free of attachment and grief. Images of water and stone run through the poems: if the lady is one, the lover is the other. Petrarch establishes metamorphosis as a fundamental metaphor for the lover's state.

Ronsard takes up this image and transforms it. He too, in characteristically Petrarchan terms, sees himself as being transformed by love: 'changeant ma vie en cent metamorphoses'¹, but for him these metamorphoses are most commonly symbols of consummation. His changes are less imposed by love

1. Les Amours, 1552, CI, 11, in Oeuvres Complètes, ed. P. Laumonier (Paris, 1914-75), iv. 100. All references to Ronsard's poems are to this edition, cited as Laumonier.

and his mistress than an active entering into the pleasures and contradictions of erotic experience. Of course the Amours do contain typically Petrarchan images of painful metamorphosis, such as that in Sonnet LXXXIX¹, reworking in fiercer and more savage terms the Actaeon image of 'Nel dolce tempo'. But the fierceness is itself a sign of Ronsard's more active erotic imagination. In Sonnet XVI, he imagines himself as being transformed into natural objects which can then take on the burden of his pain: but the wish is his

Je veulx muer mes deux yeulx en fontaine,
 Mon cueur en feu, ma teste en un rocher,
 Mes piedz en tronc, pour jamais n'ap₂rocher
 De sa beaulté si fierement humaine.

The most celebrated sonnet of metamorphosis is a confident and exultant dream of sexual consummation:

Je voudroy bien richement jaunissant
 En pluye d'or goute à goute descendre
 Dans le beau sein de ma belle Cassandre,
 Lors qu'en ses yeulx le somme va glissant.
 Je voudroy bien en toreau blandissant
 Me transformer pour finement la prendre,
 Quand elle va par l'herbe la plus tendre ³
 Seule à l'escart mille fleurs ravissant.

The metamorphoses of Jupiter are absorbed into a vision of free and luxuriant love: the image of Narcissus, which immediately succeeds these two, is transformed by the association into one of fruition: Cassandre is a fountain and he will plunge into her depths. The Petrarchan sense of being overtaken by change: 'io senti' me tutto venir meno/ et farmi una fontana a pie d'un faggio' (Rime, 23, 116-17) is replaced by the uninhibited desire of 'Je voudroy'. Cassandre 'ma Circe enchanteresse' can transform him utterly, but he luxuriates in bondage.⁴ The Medusa image occurs over and over in the poems, and this is a clearly Petrarchan convention, but in one of the Sonets pour Helene (I. LII), he wishes for a thousand eyes to see Helene with, for all that her 'regard Medusin'... en rocher me mue'⁵.

1. Laumonier, iv. 89-90.

2. Amours, XVI, Laumonier iv.20

3. Amours, XX, Laumonier iv.23-24.

4. Amours, LXV, Laumonier iv.66.

5. Sonets pour Helene, I. LII, Laumonier xvii.243.

As Ian McFarlane remarks, 'desire and transformation are akin to one another' in Ronsard's mind: he quotes from one of the Sonets of 1569 'mon desir / Qui en vivant en cent formes me mue'¹. Moreover, transformation is frequently associated with dream, a wish-fulfilment fantasy: it becomes a mode of bridging the gap between reality and wish. This view of metamorphosis is highly important and influential. It is not by any means the only way in which metamorphosis is used in Ronsard's immensely copious poetry. In a much larger way Ronsard is fascinated by metamorphosis because he sees it as expressing certain qualities of the natural world, its motion, flux and diversity. Metamorphosis becomes part of an animistic vision of nature renewing herself through transformations: as for example in Le Narsiss, where Narcissus, who had been 'un froid simulacre, en attendant la mort', is changed into a flower which, although short-lived, revisits the pool every spring.² The Hymnes, of course, present the most comprehensive vision of the cyclic transformations and renewals of nature. As to images of motion, intermingling, and continuity in his verse I cannot do more here than to refer to McFarlane's important essay.³

It has not been possible here to do justice to either Petrarch or Ronsard, but my main point, the absorption of metamorphosis in their poetry into the psychology of love, is clear. After Petrarch, the transformations of the lover become an obsessive part of love-vocabulary. In Bembo's Gli Asolani (1505), the Petrarchan lover Perottino speaks of lovers as salamanders, living in fire, or frozen to ice, or giving their hearts to their ladies to be torn every hour into a thousand pieces: 'Altri hora in fonte si trasmuta, hora in albero, hora in fiera'⁴. Gismondo, who thinks that Perottino has simply followed a delusive image of love, suggests a likeness to Actaeon:

Percioche credendo se essere amante & innamorato: mentre egli pure
nella sua donna s'incontra imaginando, egli è un solitario ceruo

1. I.D. McFarlane, 'Aspects of Ronsard's Poetic Vision', in Ronsard the Poet ed. T. Cave (London, 1973), p.42. See Laumonier, xv.198.

2. See Laumonier vi.81-2.

3. Art. cit. note 1 supra.

4. Pietro Bembo, Gli Asolani (Venice, 1575), pp. 29-30.

diuenuto: che poi a guisa d'Atteone i suoi pensieri, medesimi,
quasi suoi ueltri, uanno sciaguramente lacerando

The Petrarchan image of love makes the lover into a prey of emotions so violent and conflicting that his very identity is called into question: his psychological instability mirrors itself in the myths of metamorphosis, imposing now one shape on him, now another. Petrarch is strongly conscious of the divergence between love and duty 'Questi m'a fatto men amare Dio / ch'i non doveva, et men curar me stesso' (Rime, 360, 31-2), but throughout the Rime, metamorphosis is not a moral symbol, it is a psychological one. Laura herself is less important than the lover's fascination with his own experience, its painful contrariety and fluctuation. It is this obsessiveness of Petrarchan love that is attacked by such writers as Bruno, and in the terms of this attack the psychological symbol is converted into a moral one.

In the Argument to the Eroici furori, Bruno abuses this kind of love as 'una superficie, un'ombra, un fantasma, un sogno, un Circeo incantesimo':² at the same time, the whole of the Eroici furori is an attempt to convert the images of lower, sensual love into types of 'heroic furor'. The sonnet given to Tansillo in the third dialogue uses the metamorphoses of Jupiter to present two views of love:

Quel dio che scuote il folgore sonoro,
Asterie vedde furtivo aquilone,
Mnemosine pastor, Danae oro,
Alcmena pesce, Antiopa caprone;
Fu di Cadmo a le suore bianco toro
A Leda cigno, a Dolide dragone;
Io per l'altezza de l'oggetto mio
Da soggetto piú vil dovegno un dio.³

As Tansillo later explains, Jupiter transforms himself into the shapes of various beasts according to the diversity of the affections: but through the sense of their own dignity the gods can regain their divine forms: 'come il furioso eroico, inalzandosi per la concepata specie della divina belta e bontade, con l'ali de l'intelletto e voluntade intellettiva s'inalza alla divinitade, lasciando la forma de soggetto piú basso'⁴. The heroic lover's movement is

1. Bembo, op. cit., p.124.

2. Bruno, Dialoghi italiani, ed. cit., p. 929.

3. Ibid., p. 1001.

4. Ibid., pp 1003-4.

upward, towards a higher transformation.

The capacity of love to raise and transform the lover, to transform him into his beloved, to unite him with the highest principles of beauty and goodness, is a fundamental part of Neoplatonic theory: it occurs over and over again in the trattati d'amore¹. In its most celebrated expression it is found in Ficino's commentary on the Symposium:

Illud quoque evenire sepe numero solet ut se in amati personam quisque transferre cupiat. Nec immerito, deus namque pro homine fieri cupit atque conatur. Quis autem pro deo hominem non commutet?²

Love, which creates the world out of chaos,³ reforms and ennobles the lover, producing in him a true transformation of spirit. These universal powers of love are praised by Bembo in Castiglione's Courtier:

Thou with agreement bringest the Elements in one, stirrest nature to bring forth, and that which ariseth and is borne for the succession of the life. Thou bringest severed matters into one, to the unperfect givest perfection, to the unlike likenesse, to the Sea calmnesse, to the heaven, lively light.⁴

Both kinds of love, the higher and the lower, involve metamorphosis. The Neoplatonic view of love is the obverse to the Petrarchan one, but it may also be seen as complementing it. Love, which 'muov' el ciel, l'alme informa, el mondo regge'⁵, expresses itself through transformations. The Petrarchan psychology of love may be explicitly transmuted, as in Bruno's Eroici furori, to become an image of higher love (I have already cited Bruno's conversion of the Actaeon myth⁶), but in a more generalized way, the possibility of one kind of love implies the other.

Through this chapter, I have been trying to trace the contexts in which metamorphosis might become an image of man's protean and transformable nature.

1. On the trattati in general, see J. C. Nelson, Renaissance Theory of Love (New York, 1958).
2. M. Ficino, Commentarium ... in convivium Platonis, sive de amore, ed. with Fr. tr. by R. Marcel (Paris, 1956 rpt. 1978), p.153 (II.vi)
3. See *ibid.*, pp.140-141.
4. B. Castiglione, The Courtier, tr. Sir Thomas Hoby, 1561 (London, 1974), p.321.
5. G. Benivieni, Canzona d'Amore composta ... secondo la mente e opinione de' Platonicis, stanza II.4: printed with Pico's Commento in De hominis dignitate etc., ed. cit., p. 453.
6. See p.72 supra.

The Renaissance is rich in mythological poetry, where metamorphosis may be treated in various ways, with different degrees of emphasis. The poets of this period are uniquely responsive to the imaginative possibilities of Ovidian myth, to the opportunities they offer for psychological exploration, for examining the relation between man's life and nature's, and for detailed and memorable description: as for example in Sannazaro's Salices, with its lingering, drawn-out metamorphic close. The use of metamorphosis to create myths of locality, as in the poems of Pontano, or in Lorenzo de' Medici's Ambra¹, transforms the contemporary landscape into the frozen life of the Ovidian forest. These uses are suggestive and vivid, but it is no part of my purpose to offer a view of the range and variety of mythological poetry in this period. I have stressed, rather, the implications that might be attached to the idea itself of metamorphosis, and especially the relation that this process bears to Renaissance views of human nature and human abilities.

Before going on to the main part of my study, of the four English writers I have chosen, it may be worth making a few points about the English poetry of this period. England does not have a lyric poet like Ronsard, a poet whose imagination is so suffused by mythology that love and nature both express themselves in terms of myth. The greatest Elizabethan lyric poets do not use myth, or the image of physical metamorphosis, in the same way: although both Shakespeare and Donne, for example, are strongly conscious of the transformations of time and change. The idea that love is transformation, a theme treated so memorably by Petrarch and Ronsard, is important to English poets, but for the most suggestive and varied uses of the theme we must look to larger structures than those of love-poetry. In the minor Elizabethan lyric images of metamorphosis dwindle into conceits, as happens indeed with most Petrarchan images².

1. See Lorenzo de' Medici, Opere, ed. L. Cavalli (Naples, 1969), pp. 503-13, and G.G. Pontano, Poesie latine ed. L.M. Sabia (Turin, 1977), i. 129-33.

2. Leonard Forster studies this process in his book The Icy Fire (Cambridge, 1969).

In a useful recent study, A. P. Prescott charts the imitations in England at this time of French poets like Ronsard and Desportes: she notes the taste for poems involving metamorphosis¹, but the imitations reduce the impact of the image. Ronsard's 'Je voudroy bien richement jaunissant' was translated by Sir Arthur Gorges and by Lodge in Phyllis²: the atrociously bad poet John Soowthern provides a version of Desportes' Diane, I. xxxiv³, and we find another version in Thomas Watson's collection, Italian Madrigals Englished (1590):

Since my heedless eyes began to be ranging,
I, thrice accursed, always have been changing.
First was I made a hart, and deadly wounded
By Phyllis, in whom yet all my hope was grounded;
Then to a dying swan my alt'ring state was turned,
For though I sung, yet my fainting heart still mourned;
And now to a salamander changed, with flames surrounded,
O what a life is this, to live still wounded.

Fellowes' collection of madrigals offers other examples of the lover recalling classical metamorphoses:

The heathen gods for love forsook their state,
And changed themselves to shapes of earthly kind.
But my desire is of another rate
That into heavenly grace transforms my mind.⁵

As another writer notes more caustically, 'He tickles this age that can/ Call Tullia's ape a marmasyte / And Leda's goose a swan'⁶.

The Elizabethan epyllion is the most obviously Ovidian poetry of this period. For all its self-conscious and ironic exploration of the qualities of erotic experience, however, it is I think indifferent to the full possibilities of the theme of metamorphosis. The most memorable achievement of the epyllion is its celebration of a romantic eroticism intensified by the 'freedom' of myth, although incorporating the dangers of obsession or satiety. Shakespeare is

1. A. P. Prescott, French Poets and the English Renaissance (New Haven, 1978), pp. 137-39.
2. See Gorges, Poems ed. H.E. Sandison (Oxford, 1953), pp. 55-6 and Lodge, Works ed. E. Gosse (Glasgow, 1883), ii, Phyllis, p. 51. See Prescott, pp. 108, 113.
3. J. Soowthern, Pandora (London, 1584), sig. C2^r.
4. Printed in English Madrigal Verse, 1588-1632, ed. E.H. Fellowes (3rd ed. Oxford 1967), p. 274. Fellowes does not note the source.
5. In Fellowes, ed. cit., p. 81: from R. Carlton, Madrigals to Fiue Voyces, 1601.
6. In Fellowes, ed. cit., p. 301: from T. Weelkes, Airs or fantastic spirits, 1608.

particularly conscious of these dangers, transforming the classical myth into an even more potent pattern of reluctance or indifference tied to complete infatuation or possessiveness. He may have derived some suggestions for this from the Ovidian story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (Met. IV.285-388), and others from the passive Adonis of Spenser's tapestry description (FQ III.i.34-8), but his development of it in Venus and Adonis effectively creates a new myth, that of the reluctant youth. This figure is to be found elsewhere in Shakespeare: the young man of the sonnets, Bertram in All's Well, but it becomes practically a convention in the epyllia¹.

Shakespeare succeeds brilliantly in keeping his denouement within the terms set by the rest of the poem: erotic overkill is literally manifest in the borrowed detail of the boar who only wanted a kiss². Venus' predatory passion completes its reduction of Adonis to a love-object when the goddess plucks the flower to which his body has been transformed, and places it in her breast:

To grow unto himself was his desire,
And so 'tis thine; but know, it is as good³
To wither in my breast as in his blood.

Shakespeare's poem is remarkable in displaying this final predatory gesture, and the destructiveness of passion itself, without relying on a moral for proof, and without detracting from the sensuous richness of the fable. Indeed, although there is in Shakespeare's poem (as there is not in Ovid's fable) the implication that Adonis himself is transformed to the flower that springs from his blood, and although the symbolic 'comparisons' between the flower and the youth are fully worked out by Venus herself, Shakespeare deliberately neglects the possible moral connotations of Ovid's final comment on the brevity of the

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1. See Weever's Faunus and Melliflora and Beaumont's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, both printed in E. S. Donno's collection, Elizabethan Minor Epics (London, 1963), and Thomas Edwards, Narcissus, in Cephalus and Procris. Narcissus, ed. W. E. Buckley (Roxburghe Club, London, 1882).
 2. From The Dead Adonis, in The Greek Bucolic Poets, ed. J. M. Edmonds (Loeb, London, 1928), pp. 480-3.
 3. Venus and Adonis, 1180-2, from Complete Works, ed. P. Alexander (1951 rpt. London, 1978).

wind-flower, or anemone (Met.X.737-39). In a sense this whole transformation sequence is a play of fancy, a kind of conceit elaborated in Venus' highly wrought reflections on the newly-sprung flower. We may note these qualities, or the more conventional 'warning to women' motif in Lodge's Scillaes Metamorphosis (1589)¹, but there is little more we can do with them. I shall discuss Chapman's Hero and Leander later.

There are interesting minor poems of metamorphosis: a fascinating example being Thomas Moufet's The Silkwormes and their Flies (1599), where one of the most wonderful of natural metamorphoses draws the poet to a contemplation of other metamorphoses: in the creation of the world, in myth, and in art². Kitty Scoular describes the taste for marvels in much of the nature-poetry of this period (though Moufet's might be better called a naturalist's poem), and the sense of wonder, 'a habit of mind knitting together an awareness and appreciation of the variety, the mystery, and the flux of the universe'³.

There may also be darker and more negative images of transformation. As moral allegory, metamorphosis nearly always illustrates a process of decline, of man's loss or abdication of his higher powers. In conventional homiletic uses, the image of transformation is a means of concretizing this loss. Nashe enters spiritedly into the convention in Christs Teares:

Pride and inflammation of hart we borrow from the lyon, avarice from the Hedghog, luxury, ryot and sensuality from the Hogge ... Enuy from the Dogge, Ire or Wrath from the Wolfe, gluttony or gurmandise from the Beare, and lastly sloth from the Asse. ... Let vs not glory that wee are men, who haue put on the shapen of Beastes.⁴

The schematic association of the beasts with various vices is traditional.⁵

There may be an interesting contemporary influence which reinforces this: the comparative physiognomy of such a work as G.B.Porta's De humana physiognomonia, which argues that men's inward qualities are expressed in their features, and demonstrates this through illustrations where a particular cast of human

1. Also printed in Donno, ed.cit.: see p.47, 'L'Envoy'.

2. The Silke wormes and their Flies: Liuely described in Verse, by T.M., a Countrie Farmar, and an apprentice in Physicke (London, 1599): see pp.6-18, 23-24.

3. K.W. Scoular, Natural Magic (Oxford, 1965), p.5.

4. Works, ed. R.B.McKerrow, corr. F.P. Wilson (Oxford, 1958) ii.112-3.

5. See Boethius, De consolatione philosophiae IV.3, ed.cit. (Loeb) p.334.

countenance is set beside its near relative in the animal world (the wrathful next to the lion, the sensual next to the pig) and the two are shown to resemble each other because they reflect the same passions or affections. Porta indeed believes that the stories of metamorphosis are clear indications of the link between outward appearance and inward affect.¹

Later in the period, we may see metamorphosis becoming an explicitly satiric device, as in Gervase Markham's huge manuscript poem The Newe Metamorphosis,² begun in 1600:

What subiecte then, thinke yo^u I did finde out
to shewe the world infected wth the goute
wth pestilence, plague & rotten dropsie
of Pride, Deceipte & itching Lecherie
... Their strange Mutation
wrought by the Gods iuste Transformation.³

Markham's poem is an enormous gallimaufry of tales usually concluded by a punitive metamorphosis. Its purpose is a sustained 'arraignment of vice', and this motive is interesting, though for Markham metamorphosis is really no more than a tame fictional weapon.

All this is minor, however. It is in the much greater writers of the period that we find ideas of transformation put to rich and original uses. Such writing demands separate study: we cannot glance at it simply to fill in a background. In some respects, though, we may see the image of transformation very much as part of Renaissance habits of thought: in incidental uses it is usually an admonitory image, expressing a fear of being changed. Ascham, who speaks of the English travellers in Italy being transformed like the swine of Circe,⁴ is particularly severe upon the abdication of the self decreed by duty. The sense of self, so important to writers of this period, is also curiously precarious: men see themselves as constantly under attack. It becomes necessary to define and explore the self, and the image of metamorphosis is often a means to this. But the image itself is protean: it cannot be limited to any one use. Something of its richness and diversity may become apparent in the next four chapters.

1. De humana physiognomonia (Hanover, 1593) I.i, pp.2-3.

2. B.L. Addl.Mss. 14824, 14825, 14826: autograph 'by J.M.Gent. 1600'. The ascription to Markham was made by J.H.H.Lyon in A Study of the Newe Metamorphosis (New York, 1919): he also showed that the poem was not finished until c.1615.

3. Addl. Ms. 14824 fol.6^r.

4. The Whole Works, coll. & ed. J.A. Giles (Oxford, 1864), iii.148 ff.

Chapter III

Lylian comedy : love's metamorphoses

Transformation is an important element in Lyly's plays. For most of the actual metamorphoses Lyly's classical source is Ovid, possibly mediated by Italian literature. But the examination of Lyly's sources and debts is faced with serious difficulties: in spite of the generalized 'Ovidian' atmosphere of the plays in their preoccupation with the pains of love, their conflicts between Venus and Diana, their forest setting and mythological characters, the delight and instruction offered by Lyly is in strong contrast to the frustration, violence and arbitrary suffering that reign in Ovid's forest. The same motifs are used but with an important redirection. It is instructive to look at the difference. Lyly's use of the classical myth of metamorphosis, and, more generally, the idea of transformation, is characteristic of much Renaissance reading of Ovid, as also of the Renaissance impulse towards independent mythologizing.

I shall consider in detail two of the most important of Lyly's plays, Gallathea and Loves Metamorphosis, and look more briefly at four others: Sapho and Phao, Endimion, Midas and The Woman in the Moone. All these plays belong to Lyly's middle or late period (c. 1583-1591), most were performed at court, and all make use of mythological characters and classical deities. In studying their use of the myth of transformation, I shall try to define the elements of the 'redirection' I have mentioned: the mingling of instruction with delight, the sense of love's transforming power, and the absorption of classical fable into the larger myths of the Elizabethan court.

The reasons for Lyly's employment of mythological themes are not obscure. Harbage stresses the clear tendency of private companies, especially children's companies, to choose plays with classical subject-matter.¹ For the children of Paul's or the Chapel, by whom Lyly's plays were mainly performed, such plays would form part of an education in the classics.² We see here, thus, the

1. A. Harbage, Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (New York, 1952) pp. 66-68

2. Cf. H.N. Hillebrand, The Child Actors (Urbana, 1926), pp. 36-7 ; and M. Shapiro, Children of the Revels (New York, 1977), pp. 2-5.

reflection of Elizabethan humanist zeal, but also a programme of taming classical myth by making it serve the dual Horatian purpose set out in the prologue to Campaspe, 'discipline with delight'¹. To introduce, as Lyly does, the story of Erysichthon into an already tamed Arcadia of love-sick shepherds and nymphs tones down by this association the frightening aspects of the pagan myth, and makes it useful as a moral example. This attitude is not derived from the mythographers: Giraldi and Comes are convinced of the essential seriousness and mystery of the world of myth, and they convey this in their passionate antiquarianism or philosophical gravity. Lyly's view of myth is Erasmian: it is a product of the spread of classical education that makes mythology at once more moral and less weighty. What he contributes to the formulation of romantic drama is a notable vein of serio ludere.

It has been argued that, for the particular kind of pastoral mythological play represented by Gallathea (? S.R.1585)², which has no real English precedent except Peele's Araygnement of Paris (pr. 1584), Lyly's main debt is to Italian pastoral drama. The case for a general influence of one tradition upon another is persuasively documented by V.M.Jeffery in three MLR articles³, but the effect of this is damaged by her most considerable work, the book on Lyly⁴, where the tracing of parallels is so elaborate that it becomes both trivial and specious. Jeffery overstates most impermissibly when ignoring clear classical sources for arguably obscure Italian ones.⁵ However, it is worth examining this material if it provides a genuine source for the way in which Lyly uses the idea of transformation.

We may consider three Italian pastoral plays in which metamorphosis plays

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1. All citations from The Complete Works of John Lyly ed. R.W.Bond (Oxford, 1902 rpt. 1973), 3 vols.: referred to as Bond. See ii.p.315.
 2. Gallathea is extant in a quarto of 1592 but it is universally identified with 'a commoedie of Titirus and Galathea' ent. S.R. 1 April, 1585. It was probably performed at court on New Year's Day, 1587/8, by the Children of Paul's. See Chambers, Stage ii.18, and J.R.Brown & M.Cottier, 'A Note on the date of Lyly's Gallathea', MLR li (1956), 220-1.
 3. 'Italian and English Pastoral Drama of the Renaissance', MLR xix (1924), 56-62; 175-87; 435-44.
 4. John Lyly and the Italian Renaissance (Paris, 1929).
 5. See ibid., p.85, where Jeffery suggests that the situation of Lyly's Endimion parallels that in Epicuro de' Marsi's Mirzia (comp. c.1545-7, pr. as Martia, attr. to Selvaggio de' Selvaggi, Parma, 1582), where one of the shepherds is in love with Diana herself. This is a clear element of the classical myth as received by Lyly.

an important or decisive part: Cinthio Giraldi's Egle (1545)¹, Epicuro de' Marsi Mirzia (c. 1545-7)², and Luigi Groto's Calisto (1561)³. Giraldi's Egle is a notable attempt to revive what Giraldi believed to be the character of the old satyr play⁴. It tells of the love of the satyrs for the nymphs, and its metamorphic close is imitated from Sannazaro's Salices: the nymphs, chased by the satyrs, are all transformed into streams, flowers, trees or vines. The mood of the play, as expressed in a soliloquy by Egle (the mistress of Silenus) at the start of the second act, is epicurean; the sylvan gods dominate the action, and although Diana frustrates their hopes by metamorphosing the nymphs at the end, the dramatic sympathy remains with them. Egle is set almost wholly in the world of myth, and its plot, though somewhat complicated by the stratagems of the satyrs, is essentially the pure mythic structure of the pursued virgin transformed through the intervention of Diana: it is notable that the play ends with Pan recounting the metamorphosis of Syrinx, who had been one of the nymphs, and is now Pan's reed-pipe.

Mirzia does present certain parallels to Loves Metamorphosis, but the question of influence is highly debatable⁵. Metamorphosis is used as a solution: the shepherd Ottimio, hopelessly in love with Diana, is transformed to a stream in which the goddess may bathe, and the disdainful Mirzia suffers a punitive transformation into a myrtle-tree until she agrees to love. Groto's Calisto is considerably more complicated in plot, and is full of metamorphoses and problems of identity. Jove, intent on seducing Calisto, and Mercury, out for amusement, mingle with Diana's nymphs by changing their shapes: Jove appears as Diana, and Mercury as Isse, whom he browbeats in an amusing scene into abandoning her identity to him. Isse is loved by Apollo, who is also in the

1. Egle, Favola di Satiri di Giovan Battista Giraldi Cinthio (Parnaso Italiano, xxiv, Venice 1786): see preliminary note for date.

2. In I drammi pastorali di Antonio Marsi, ed. I. Palmadini (Bologna, 1887-8), vol. i. See note 5 on previous page.

3. La Calisto. Nova favola pastorale (Venice, 1583): this is a revised version of a play first acted in 1561, as indicated on fol. 5^r. E. Carrara, La poesia pastorale (Milan, n.d.) p. 344, suggests that the earlier Calisto was a comedy more in the manner of Plautus.

4. See Egle, ed. cit., I. i, pp. 202-3, and Carrara, op. cit. pp. 321-23.

5. See Jeffery, pp. 84-5, but note the other parallels given on pp. 87-91, and the likeness to Greene's Alcida (1588): discussion below.

woods as a shepherd: moreover, all the nymphs have shepherd-suitors who finally accept them after the gods have ended their sport and returned to heaven.

It is not impossible that Lyly derived some ideas for his blend of myth and pastoral from such examples, but what primarily distinguishes his treatment is a certain quality of seriousness and decorum. In fact his plays are much less pastoral than these Italian ones (in spite of the great differences between Egle, Mirzia, and Calisto): sheepkeeping is entirely absent, and there is no stress on pastoral pastimes¹. Lyly communicates, through his style and through the elaboration of his plots, above all a concern with ideas. In these Italian examples, myth simply classicizes the pastoral world while providing, in Calisto and Egle, a certain amount of salacious entertainment. The Ovidian tales of metamorphosis are more freely adopted as contributing to an atmosphere largely unaffected by moral problems: at the end of Egle, the nymphs are metamorphosed into that sylvan nature which has been celebrated through the play, and in Calisto, the disguised gods restore a golden age of free love². Mirzia, with its debts to Sannazaro's eclogues³, is a more purely pastoral work than either of these, and though the metamorphoses here have an important function, the main interest is in the dramatic recreation of the world of Neapolitan pastoral. Lyly's concerns, and his treatment of the theme of metamorphosis, are essentially very different.

I. Gallathea and Loves Metamorphosis

Lyly's middle comedies are situational in terms of plot, presenting a variety of scenes but little that happens in the strict course of causal development. This 'static'⁴ structure is designed for the apt treatment of Lyly's materials - known, if slightly altered mythological episodes - and his meanings, which may be called moral or allegorical in a loose sense. The plays display themes rather than action. This plotlessness is a condition of pastoral: in

1. These activities are stressed in Calisto, I.iii, I.iv, and V.vii; Mirzia, I.ii et passim.

2. See Calisto, Prologo, ed. cit. fols. 5^v - 6^r.

3. Cf. Carrara, op.cit. pp.318-9.

4. The term is used by M.Best, 'Lyly's Static Drama', Ren. Drama, n.s.i (1968), 75-86.

pastoral, as in poetry, nothing can happen, though pastoral may make things happen, by becoming part (as in Shakespeare) of a larger structure. Pastoral is allegorical virtually in its essence, so that it may refer us to ideas and actions that do develop and interact: but it is enabled to make these references only by its own abstinence, by its withdrawal into rural otium. So in Gallathea, a potentially exciting situation, the sacrifice of ~~Her~~ to the sea-monster, is defused by the monster's predictable failure to arrive: in Loves Metamorphosis, the tension in the tale of Erisic_uthon's impiety and punishment is absorbed by his daughter's providence and Ceres' forgiveness. In both the plays, the interest is in the quality of the situation rather than on its outcome. This may be the reason why the pastoral world abounds in metamorphosis. Transformation is from its classical beginnings sudden, magical, outwardly arbitrary though often deeply significant: it effects a resolution or at least an 'end' not by causal necessity but by divine will. In the actionless world of pastoral, then, such transformations may hold the key to meaning.

Not that there is a key to Lyly's plays, and I should not wish to suggest that transformation is their only or even their predominant theme. Nevertheless, it is certainly a major theme in Gallathea, supporting the play's main concern, an attempted defiance of divinity. Peter Saccio stresses this latter concern in a valuable chapter of his book on the court plays¹. Paradoxically, we may see the absolute powers and commanding presence of Lyly's gods as owing less to classical accounts than to Renaissance mythography: and although, as I have noted, Lyly's treatment of myth is not as serious as that of Comes, he does undoubtedly employ his views. Comes invests the pagan gods with a new, and powerful, deity. Christian writers had stressed that the gods of the pagans were all manifestations of the same divine power,² and this conviction is behind Comes' assertions that all the punishments suffered by mortals for offending the gods are divine retributions for sacrilege: 'haec idcirco celebrata sunt a

1. 'The Gods of Gallathea', in The Court Comedies of John Lyly (Princeton, 1969), pp.15-158.

2. Cf. Nicholas of Cusa, De docta ignorantia, I.xxv, in Op. Omn.I.pp.52-3.

poetis, vt nullum Deorum cultum impune negligi a mortalibus sciretur', he says, referring to the story of the Calydonian boar¹. We would be wrong in regarding Lyly's gods with Bond or Huppé as simple personifications of virtue and vice ('For Wantonness, Lyly gives us Venus; for Love, Cupid; for Chastity or Virginitie, Diana; for Cruelty or Devastation, Neptune'²), or with Hunter as entirely human ('Lyly's Venus is ... the elegant court lady, intent on love and with somewhat unusual powers'³). When Neptune, therefore, sets out in Gallathea (II.ii.15-21) to show himself a God, and to make manifest his 'deitie', we should be conscious that what is being proposed is a display of absolute power.

Saccio does not emphasize one aspect of Lyly's pagan divinities that Lyly himself constantly stresses, the power to transform. In this speech of Neptune's, we are told that divinity must make itself manifest through self-transformation:

then Neptune that hast taken sundrie shapes to obtaine loue, stick not to practise some deceipte to shew thy deitie, and hauing often thrust thy self into the shape of beastes to deceiue men, be not coy to vse the shape of a Sheepehearde, to shew thy selfe a God. (II.ii.17-21)

As in Ovid, the gods rule a shifting world, and the proof of their deity is in their power to assume any shape they wish, as also to impose any shape upon mortals. Men err by assuming the human version of metamorphosis, which is disguise: the deities punish by deceiving more absolutely, and by effecting absolute and irreversible changes. Lyly calls our attention to this power by making Neptune's speech bear absolutely no relation to the action: Neptune does nothing as a shepherd, and is not required by the plot to deceive anybody.

This double theme of deception and transformation is emphasized in the very start of the play, where we meet Tyterus and his daughter Gallathea, disguised as a boy. The cause of this disguise emerges through the story of the wrath of Neptune and the virgin-sacrifice: the play's main plot. Several classical parallels are suggested in this scene. Tyterus' first speech, directly recalling

1. Comes, VII.3, p.472.

2. Bond, II.255. See also B.Huppé, 'Allegory of Love in Lyly's Court Comedies' *ELH* xiv (1947), 93-113.

3. G.K.Hunter, John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier (London, 1962)p.144.

perhaps the most familiar lines of classical poetry for the boys who were acting

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi (Virgil, Ecl.I.1)

reminds us also of the pleasant conceit which places this pastoral world on the unpropitious banks of the Humber¹:

let us sit downe Gallathea, vnder this faire Oake, by whose broade leaues beeing defended from the warme beames, we may enjoy the fresh ayre, which softly breathes from Humber floodes. (I.i.2-5)

The association of the names Tyterus and Gallathea also derives from the same eclogue (30-2), though Gallathea herself may recall her more famous classical prototype, the nymph loved by the cyclops Polyphemus and immortalized by Raphael in the Villa Farnesina in Rome. But it is possible to make too much, as Saccio and Hunter² do, of this particular mythic reverberation. In the classical story Galatea is pursued by the monstrous Polyphemus, who kills her lover Acis³. But Lyly's monster is a sea-creature, not at all like the grotesque but comic and pathetic Polyphemus, who sings a rustic song to his beloved, and enters Theocritan pastoral as a shepherd⁴.

The pastoral world of Lyly's play labours under the shadow of enormous reversals and calamities. Tyterus explains the reason for Gallathea's disguise by recounting a history of human inconstancy and impiety being followed by divine retribution. The sacrilegious tearing down of Neptune's temple, which once stood on this spot,

enraged so the God who bindes the windes in the hollowes of the earth, that he caused the Seas to breake their bounds, sith men had broke their vowes, and to swell as farre aboue theyr reach, as men had swarued beyond theyr reason: then might you see shippes sayle where sheepe fedde, ankers cast where ploughes goe, fishermen throw theyr nets, where husbandmen sowe theyr Corne, and fishes throw theyr scales where fowles doe breede theyr quils: then might you gather froth where nowe is dewe, rotten weedes for sweete roses, and take viewe of monstrous Maremaides, in steed of passing faire Maydes. (I.i.25-34)

The second half of this speech, the description of the flood, is clearly derived from Ovid's more celebrated account in the Metamorphoses, imitated by Renaissance

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1. Brown and Cottier, art.cit., MLR li (1956), 221, suggest that Gallathea was first written for a performance in Lincolnshire near Mexborough where the Humber is the closest river. On 22 Nov.1583 Lyly married Beatrice Brown of Mexborough.
 2. Saccio, p. 121-2 ; Hunter, p. 195. The Virgilian Galatea has not been noticed.
 3. See the account in Met. IX.740-897.
 4. Idylls VI and XI.

poets from Ronsard to Marvell:

Occupat hic collem, cumba sedet alter adunca
 et ducat remos illic, ubi nuper arabat:
 ille supra segetes aut mersae culmina villae
 navigat, hic summa piscem deprendit in ulmo.
 figitur in viridi, si fors tulit, ancora prato,
 aut subiecta terunt curvae vineta carinae;
 et, modo qua graciles gramen carpsere capellae,
 nunc ibi deformes ponunt sua corpora phocae. (Met. I.293-300)

Bond imagines that the reference to 'the God who binds the winds in the hollowes of the earth' is derived from Aeneid I.52-4, describing Aeolus; the allusion seems much more clearly to be drawn from Ovid (I.262-4), and Jupiter, not Aeolus, is meant¹. In the Metamorphoses, Jupiter and Neptune unite in this first great act of divine retribution for human corruption, impiety and sacrilege: the world itself is changed after Lycaon's individual crime is punished by transformation (I.209-243). The echoes of this early catastrophe, mediated by distance and the pastoral context into 'sweet maruailes' (I.i.35), link Lyly's themes with a larger view of transgression and change.

The balanced antitheses of Lyly's Euphuistic style emphasize the sense of reversal and transposition: men, who in their greed and presumption violate the divine order, are naturally persecuted by Fortune, 'constant in nothing but inconstancie'. They must suffer the punitive wrath of the offended deity, who reverts natural order in a more terrible way, drowning the land under the sea. The story of Neptune's wrath and the form it finally takes is borrowed by Lyly from yet another Ovidian myth, the tale of the sacrifice of Hesione, the daughter of the Trojan king Laomedon, who denies Apollo and Neptune their reward for building the walls of Troy:

'non impune feras' rector maris inquit, et omnes
 inclinavit aquas ad avarae litora Troiae
 inque freti formam terras complevit opesque
 abstulit agricolis et fluctibus obruit agros.
 poena neque haec satis est: regis quoque filia monstro
 poscitur aequoreo (Met. XI. 207-12)

Lyly too has the flood and the monster (called the Agar, after the eagre, the tidal bore on the Humber estuary²). But in his account a virgin is sacrificed every five years, and if she is not the fairest in the land, Neptune will take a

1. See Bond, I.565. It is Jupiter who actually binds the winds: compare Aeneid I.60-3;

2. See Drayton, Poly-Olbion, xxviii.483-84.

horrible vengeance. Bond proposed Hyginus' Fabularum liber as the source for Lyly's story¹; since Hyginus mentions the previous sacrifice of other virgins, a detail not in Ovid and not a feature of other similar tales like that of Andromeda (Met. IV.670-736). This identification is challenged by D.C.Allen, who suggests Comes' Mythologiae as the more likely source². Allen's suggestion has been generally accepted, but it rests on a careless and dangerous misreading of Lyly's text. Allen's reading of Gallathea runs together the flood (over long before the play begins) the monster (not due to arrive until Act V) and the sea-storm referred to in Act I Scene iv, where Dicke says 'Dyd you euer see water buble as the Sea did?' (I.iv.10). He chooses Comes' account on the grounds that it refers to the monster causing the water to boil and producing an inundation:

Neptunus ... indignatus horrendum ac infestissimum cete immisit,
quod mare euomens vniuersam regionem inundauit.³

Allen seems unconscious of the fact that here, as in Hyginus and in other mythographers like Palaephatos⁴, the monster is clearly called a whale, which explains the 'mare euomens' (vomiting sea, a reference to the whale-spout), and in any case, Lyly's play has nothing of this sort at all.

The apologists for Italian influence on Lyly propose other sources. Jeffery's suggestion that Ariosto's reworking of the Andromeda story in Orlando Furioso VIII.51-57, the tale of Proteus and the people of Ebuda, might have influenced Lyly seems reasonable.⁵ Less likely is a connexion with the Pastor Fido, another play hinging on annual virgin-sacrifice, but (although written in 1583) not performed until 1587 nor printed until 1590.⁶

Obviously it is misguided to hunt for one specific source at all. No educated Englishman could have failed to be saturated in Ovid from an early age: in most grammar schools the reading and memorization of the Metamorphoses began in the fourth or fifth forms and continued without interruption thereafter⁷.

1. Bond, II.421, quoting Hyginus from an edition of Paris, 1578.

2. 'Neptune's Agar in Lyly's Gallathea', MLN xlix (1934), 451-2.

3. Natalis Comes, Mythologiae (Venice, 1581), II.8, p.110 (De Neptuno). This edition is hereafter referred to, throughout this thesis, as 'Comes'.

4. C. Iulii Hygini ... Fabularum liber...Palaephati de fabulosis narrationibus, liber I, etc. (Basel, 1535), p.237. Palaephatos euhemerizes this whale as a rapacious king called Cetus.

5. Jeffery, John Lyly, pp. 78-9.

6. See Jeffery, p.79 and Bond, II.476.

7. See T.W. Baldwin, Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke (Urbana, 1944) i. 339 et passim.

Erasmus recommends the use of the mythographers as aids to the master; annotated editions like that of Regius contain a considerable amount of supplementary detail taken from history and mythography.¹ The boys would be expected to write exercises on themes from their authors, and to use the fables as examples. Brinsley advises that they should 'make right use of the matter of their Authors ... as of ... Ovids Metamorphosis, and so on to the highest. To helpe to furnish them with varietie of the best morall matter, and with understanding, wisdome, and precepts of vertue'.² There are certain reasons why Comes is more likely to have influenced Lyly in his play than Hyginus, but these would not establish him as Lyly's only mythological authority. Comes was in fact more widely read and used by writers: moreover, Hyginus provides only summary accounts of the fables, without Comes' detailed comment, and above all his moralizations. I believe that Lyly was influenced by Comes' moralization of this fable, and this is apparent if we look closely at the moral drawn from the story of Laomedon and Lyly's main theme in Gallathea.

Comes stresses the misfortunes that may result from neglect of the gods:

At calamitates, quas pro neglecto Neptuno passus est, quid aliud significat quam Dei cultum sine calamitate non negligi?...Quod autem ob neglectos Deos Laomedon poenas persoluerit, multasque calamitates subierit, id etiam ad religionem Deorum immortalium homines impellit: ... Nos igitur ad religionem, & ad memoriam acceptorum beneficiorum sempiternam per₃ hanc Laomedontis fabulam sapientes antiqui adhortabantur.

In Lyly too we have this sense of men bringing upon themselves the wrath of the angry gods, who punish their inconstancy by general reversal. But Tyterus and Meleboeus too, as is soon apparent, are attempting a violation of Neptune's authority: by disguising their daughters as boys they lay the scene for a situation that can only be solved by metamorphosis.

1. De ratione studii, in Opera omnia, ed.cit. I.523 C.

2. J.Brinsley, A Consolation for our Grammar Schooles, 1622 (facs.rpt.New York, 1943), p.55. See Erasmus, De ratione studii, Op.om, I.524-6; De copia, Op.om. I. 90F- 91E; Baldwin (quoting Hoole, A New Discoverie of the Old Arte of Teaching Schoole, 1660), ii.395-6.

3. Comes, II. 8 , pp. 114-15

It is necessary to discriminate very carefully between disguise as a plot-element in Elizabethan comedy and the implications of Ovidian transformation. The illusion of the stage, with boys acting as girls, makes further disguise a self-referring piece of wit. But although disguised characters may refer to their change as a kind of metamorphosis (like Falstaff in Merry Wives, V.v, or Florizel in The Winter's Tale, IV.iv) , the elaborate art of Lyly's Gallathea sets up a real opposition between disguise and transformation, making one a solution to the other. Gallathea is reluctant to adopt a disguise, preferring to accept her destiny. Tyterus regards her as too young to understand change, but what she herself stresses is her singleness, her constancy. In the play, therefore, we must see her as belonging to the unchanged Diana; as a virgin she must do so, until she is wholly changed by Venus' more absolute powers. That love is itself a kind of metamorphosis is both a Petrarchan and an Ovidian lesson: it is certainly the moral of Gallathea as of Loves Metamorphosis. Lyly shows his awareness of the other implications of such erotic metamorphosis in this brief exchange:

Tyte. To gaine loue, the Gods haue taken shapes of beastes, and to saue life art thou coy to take the attire of men?

Galla. They were beastly gods, that lust could make them seeme as beastes.
(I.i.90-4)

Gallathea's reply is that of the straightforward moral allegorist: but this attitude is not validated by the rest of the play, where Venus and Cupid must finally triumph.

The two sub-plots of Gallathea also contribute to this theme of transformation. Indeed the first is inextricably bound up with the main plot, necessitating a joint dénouement. This is the account of the truant Cupid who determines to adopt the appearance of a maiden and work havoc among Diana's nymphs. The theme of the runaway Cupid is familiar from Moschus' first Idyll: it is used by Tasso in his Aminta, where Amore, disguised as a shepherd, announces in the Prologue his intention of straying in the woods to wound the shepherds and nymphs:

Che crederia che sotto umane forme
e sotto queste pastorali spoglie
fosse nascosto un dio? non mica un dio
selvaggio, o da plebe de gli dei,
ma tra' grandi e celesti il più potente¹

1. T.Tasso, Aminta , ed. M.Fubini, B.Maier, E.Barelli (Milan, 1976), Prologo, 1-5.

Lyly would probably have known Aminta, published in 1581. He lays the same emphasis on Cupid's manifesting his deity through his disguise: 'vnder the shape of a sillie girle shewe the power of a mightie God' (II.ii.1-2). Cupid's own disguise, like Neptune's, is in its way merely exemplary, demonstrating the essence of his power, which is the working of transformations in mortals. To the singleness and constancy of Diana's nymphs he opposes the contradictions and conflicts of love:

A heate full of coldnesse, a sweet full of bitternesse, a paine full
of pleasantnesse; which maketh thoughts haue eyes, and harts eares;
(I.ii.16-18)

Cupid's double-dealing is part of the ambiguous essence of love itself, described here, as in Loves Metamorphosis, in strongly Petrarchan terms. In the third act, as Telusa and Eurota declare the strange passions that have overtaken them, they realize that he has made their Diana into a Venus(III.i.2).

Love, as these nymphs know, is death. For to forsake Diana is to die, whether actually or symbolically; as Telusa says

I loue Meleboeus, and my deserts shalbe aunswerable to my desires. I
will forsake Diana for him. I will die for him. (III.i.93-4)

In Diana's company of virgins, deceit is death or transformation: as with Callisto in Ovid, and with the nymphs of Boccaccio's Il Ninfale Fiesolano, on whom Diana takes a terrible revenge, transforming them to rocks, trees, or fountains, if they lapse in chastity¹. But Telusa knows herself to have discovered a greater god:

O deuine Loue, which art therefore called deuine, because thou ouer-
rearest the wisest, conquerest the chastest, and dost all things both
vnlikely and impossible, because thou art Loue. Thou makest the bash-
full impudent, the wise fond, the chast wanton, and workest contraries
to our reach, because thy selfe is beyond reason. (III.i.102-7)

The protean powers of love, therefore, as in Tasso's Aminta, conquer the 'vaine and onely naked name of Chastitie' (III.i.15-6).

Diana, in her address to the errant nymphs, three scenes later, stresses the other side of the picture, condemning 'Venus truls'

What els are they but Silenus pictures; without, Lambes & Doues, within,
Apes and Owles; who like Ixion imbrace cloudes for Iuno, the shadowes
of vertue in steede of the substance. (III.iv.41-4)

Diana here reverses for her purpose the common image of the Sileni Alcibiadis,

1. See stanzas LXXXVIII-XCV, in G. Boccaccio, Opere minori in volgare, ed. M. Marti, (Milan, 1971), iii.665-668.

outwardly ugly figures which open to reveal the portrait of a god. Lyly may have derived the suggestion for this from Erasmus' more serious treatment of the 'reversed Sileni' in a famous essay of the Adagia¹. As Diana sees it, love is illusion and deceit; an appetite, not a divinity. I have described the terms Lyly uses to define the operations of love in Gallathea as Petrarchan: they are the terms familiarized by the two first discourses of Bembo's Gli Asolani, where Perottino describes the pains of human love, and Gismondo defends its pleasures. Diana emphasizes only the darker and baser aspects of this passion. Reversing the words of Cupid and Neptune, she asks whether Venus 'mistrusting her deitie, practise deceite' (III.iv.71). She orders that Cupid be shot with his own arrow, so that

thou shalt be inamoured, not on Psyches, but on Circes. (III.iv.83-4)

Psyche, as Neoplatonic allegory had established with Apuleius, is the human soul, and the love of Cupid and Psyche is the staple of the neoplatonic theory of love as expressed in the trattati d'amore. Diana shows her opinion of this love by proposing that it should be attached to Circe, the great Renaissance symbol of lust². Where Cupid and the nymphs see change, contradiction and the working of contraries as part of the mysterious divinity of love, Diana sees it unequivocally associated with the beast-making, the deceit, the base transformations of Circe.

But although all of Diana's nymphs are in love with the disguised Gallathea (Tyterus) and Phillida (Meleboeus), their own love for each other remains something curiously removed from the range of Cupid's indiscriminate arrows. Both are remarkably transparent: in their love-dialogue, supposition reverses the work of disguise:

Phil. Suppose that I were a virgine ...

Galla. Admit that I were as you woulde haue mee suppose that you are ...
(III.iv.16, 22)

Unlike Orlando with Rosalind, the two are swift in spotting each others' real sex. But this simply transforms the comic situation to a crisis of frustration:

1. Opera omnia, ii. 774 B-C (Sileni Alcibiadis). The parallel in Erasmus' reversal of the image has not been noted. See Lyly's use of a similar notion in Campaspe, 'The prologue at the Court', Bond II.316.

2. ^{See} Comes, VI. 6, pp. 378-9 (De Circe).

Poore Phillida, what shouldest thou thinke of thy selfe, that louest that I feare mee is as thy selfe is: (IV.iv.37-8).

The only possible solution to this impasse, inevitable in the pastoral and Ovidian context, is a magical transformation. But whereas in so much of Ovid's work metamorphosis simply perpetuates the frustration of the lover, holding the beloved forever out of his reach, and providing thus only a negative resolution, Lyly is careful to choose one of the few tales in the Metamorphoses where transformation is a means to fulfilment.

The story of Iphis and Ianthe is told in Metamorphoses IX.666-797. It is a tale of unnatural and impossible love, like those which surround it: the stories of Byblis, of Orpheus' search for Eurydice, of Pygmalion, and of Myrrha. Nevertheless it is distinguished from them, and especially from the immediately succeeding tale of Byblis, by its tone of innocent and divinely sanctioned love, and by its happy ending. In this respect it is the perfect choice for Lyly, a natural instrument for the end of delight with instruction, and the ideal comic resolution for his plot. Venus herself, as she promises in the last scene to transform one of the two girls, asks 'Was it not Venus did the like to Iphis and Ianthes?' (V.iii.143), and this explicit reference should prompt us to look not only at the plot of Ovid's story, but also at its quality.

The arbitrariness of the tale is remarkable, even in Ovid. Ligdus, Iphis' father, loves his wife, and 'vita fidesque/ inculpata fuit' (IX.672-3). Yet he has resolved to kill his child if she is born a girl, though he weeps to command it:

'edita forte tuo fuerit si femina partu, -
inuitus mando; pietas, ignosce! - necetur.'
dixerat, et lacrimis vultum lavere profusis,
tam qui mandabat, quam cui mandata dabantur. (IX.677-81)

This peculiar obstinacy indeed comes to seem something external, 'given': comparable therefore with Gallathea's sea-spawned monster. But where Iphis is preserved by divine command, Isis appearing in a dream to Telethusa and ordering her to disguise her daughter, Gallathea's disguise is an attempt to deceive divinity. Gallathea herself sees this clearly: but for her too divine patronage is ultimately forthcoming: Isis' place is taken, appropriately, by Venus.

Lyly may have derived something of Gallathea's character also from that of Iphis, who has the same courage and sense of justice, and gives expression to her feelings in a long soliloquy. Both stories end on the same note of reconciliation and answered prayer: 'nec timide gaudete fide!' says Ovid in a valedictory apostrophe, and this gladness is also felt in the close of Lyly's play. The Iphis and Ianthe motif links the main plot and the first sub-plot of Gallathea both in theme and in action. The quarrel between Venus and Diana over the binding of Cupid is resolved by Neptune, who remits the virgin-sacrifice to please Diana, and secures Cupid's release to please Venus. Neptune gets nothing out of this bargain; he yields it seems for the sake of universal harmony alone:

It were vnfitte that Goddesses should striue, and it were vnreasonable
that I shold not yeeld, and therefore to please both, both attend;
(V.iii.64-6)

Neptune's graciousness is matched by the supervenient grace of Venus, resolving the love of the two girls: 'Then shall it be seene, that I can turne one of them to be a man, and that I will' (V.iii.139-40).

The second comic sub-plot appears to be more removed from the main action, but the thematic connexion is clear and important. The three boys, Raffé, Robin and Dicke, in their pursuit of masters, conduct a kind of exposé of human presumption. Here too, as Neptune says of the main characters, 'men beginne to bee equall with the Gods, seeking by craft to ouer-reach them that by power ouer-see them' (V.iii.10-11). The Mariner is the first of these overreachers, claiming

I can shift the Moone and the Sunne, and Knowe by one Carde, what all
you cannot do by a whole payre ... the wonders I see woulde make all
you blinde: you be but boyes, I feare the Sea no more then a dish
of water. (I.iv.30-35).

This is a large statement for one who has just been 'All sowc't in waues/ By Neptune's slaues' (I.iv.85-6).

The next, and much longer encounter, is with the Alchemist. Bond seems to be right in assuming that the technical terms for this episode, as well as some details, are probably derived from Reginald Scot's attack on alchemy in The Discoverie of Witchcraft (1584),¹ though he may also have known the other two great exposures of this kind which are Scot's own sources, the 'Canon's Yeoman's

1. Bond, II.423. Scot, Discoverie, xiv.1., ed. cit.pp. 294-5. et seq.

Tale' and Erasmus' colloquy De Alcumystica. Lyly's satire on pseudo-science as well as the pretensions of the Renaissance magus echoes the scepticism of Erasmus and Scot: at the same time it extends and elaborates the themes of the play - defiance of divinity, deception, disguise, and transformation.

The beggarly appearance of the Alchemist, an ironic indication of his actual poverty, is emphasized by his boy Peter

such cunning men must disguise themselves, as though there were nothing in them, for otherwise they shall be compelled¹ to worke for Princes, and so be constrained to bewray their secrets. (II.iii.71-3)

The Alchemist thus sets up a contrast between his external poverty and his secret wealth: 'O my childe, Gryphes make theyr nestes of gold though their coates are fethers, and we fether our nestes with Diamonds, though our garments be but frize'. He claims to deceive the world through a kind of parodied humility:

Yf thou knewest the secret of this Science, the cunning woulde make thee so proude that thou wouldest disdain the outwarde pompe. (II.iii.111-5)

The irony, of course, is in our knowledge that the Alchemist's poverty is both outer and inner: as his boy Peter says, it is a 'beggerly Science', blowing 'gold to nothing, with a strong imagination to make nothing anything' (II.iii.133-4). And we may catch also the reverberations of another meaning, the gold/dross, wealth/starvation ambivalence so closely explored in Lyly's Midas. Like Midas, the Alchemist wishes to 'make gold of his breade, and such is the drouth of his desire, that we all wish our very guts were golde' (II.iii.117-19). The base greed of alchemists was much satirized and attacked in sixteenth-century England. Charles Nicholl collects a great number of examples in the first chapter of his book: we may cite Lodge's satire on alchemy in A Fig for Momus (1595)², reproving the siren-like attractions of this fraudulent science.

But the more serious implications of Lyly's satire relate not just to greed and dishonesty, but to pride. Despite the light comic context, therefore, we can relate this exposé to the issues I have discussed in the preceding chapter. The Alchemist claims divine powers: like the Renaissance magus, he studies the

1. Cf. 'The Canon's Yeoman's Tale', (Frag.VIII G, 892-96), in Chaucer, Works ed. F.N.Robinson (2nd ed. rpt. London, 1968), p. 217, and Scot, Discouerie, ed. B. Nicholson (1886), p. 296. The parallel is noted by Bond, II.423.

2. Nicholl, op.cit. pp. 7-13. Lodge, 'The Anatomie of Alchymie', in A Fig for Momus, Ep. VII, pp.66-70, in Works, ed. E. Gosse (Glasgow, 1883), vol. iii.

secrets of nature in order to control her laws and transform the elements. His boy Peter calls him 'a little more then a man, and a hayres bredth lesse then a God' (II.iii.38-9). His craft, he emphasizes, is a 'misterie', based on the hidden natural laws of proportion and harmony:

I Rafe, the fortune of this Arte consisteth in the measure of the fire; for if there be a cole too much, or a sparke too little ... all our labour is in vaine; besides, they that blowe, must beate tyme with theyr breathes, as Musicians doe with their breasts, so as there must be of the mettals, the fire and workers a verie harmonie. (III.iii.14-19).

The presumption of the magus lies in this seeking to imitate divine power, to reproduce the hidden harmony of nature. The Alchemist knows himself to be challenging the gods. Peter (in an ironic reference to the production of a shower of sparks) tells the boys that his master has reproduced the golden shower in which Jove came to Danae, a favourite subject for alchemical allegory¹. The Alchemist himself claims more far-reaching powers:

When in the depths of my skill I determine to try the vttermost of mine Arte, I am dissuaded by the gods; otherwise, I durst vndertake to make the fire as it flames, gold, the winde as it blowes, siluer, the water as it runnes, lead, the earth as it standes, yron, the skye, brasse, and mens thoughts, firme mettles. (II.iii.121-25)

This is all in the familiar terms of a Faustian assumption of dominance over nature, using the alchemical art to reduce the elements to the metals which correspond to them. Raffe has already said 'if he can doe thys, he shall be a god altogether' (II.iii.43): no wonder he is now convinced that 'you shall see me haue a golden bodie' (II.iii.129).

The Alchemist, thus, is not simply the scoundrel and trickster that he is in Chaucer or Erasmus, although Raffe makes bawdy jokes at his expense:

I sawe a prettie wench come to his shoppe, where with puffing, blowing, and sweating, he so plyed her, that he multiplyed her. ...

Robin. What by fire?

Raffe. No, by the Philosophers stone.

Robin. Why, haue Philosophers such stones?

Raffe. I, but they lie in a priuie cupboard. (V.i.18-26)

In spite of the poverty of his actual accomplishments, the Alchemist does claim the highest powers. Above all he claims the capacity to transform nature, the prerogative, as Neptune and Cupid have pointed out, of divinity alone.

1. See Jonson, The Alchemist, II.i.102. See my Appendix II, p.322

As I have stressed in my preceding chapter, these pretensions were also under attack in Renaissance England. Scot's work was obviously influential; Agrippa's De incertitudine, with its scathing denunciation of the art in Cap. xc, very widely read in Latin, was translated into English in 1575.¹ Later, we have Bacon's more serious philosophical animadversions. For Lyly, the Alchemist's claims for universal transmutations are part of the defiance of divinity which must be judged and condemned in the larger patterns of the play.

Virtually the same pretension is satirized in the last of the Raffe's three masters, the Astronomer. Again we have the echoes, distant and light, of a much larger Renaissance attack on all astrology, another science of presumption, arrogating to men what belongs to God. The folly and error of the science was attacked by John Foxe (the Martyrologist) in a treatise based on Pico's Disputationes in Astrologiam, written just before he left Magdalen College in 1545². Lyly's astronomer is certainly guilty of presumption:

When I list I can sette a trap for the Sunne, catch the Moone with
lyme-twigges, and goe a batfowling for starres. (III.iii.42-3)

Raffe, always hopeful, thinks this master too near to a god. The Astronomer promises no less:

I will make the Heauens as plaine to thee as the high waie, thy
cunning shall sitte cheeke by iole with the Sunnes Chariot .
(III.iii.75-7)

As Raffe sees immediately, this is to be 'translated from this mortality':

Thy thoughts shall be metamorphosed, and made haile fellowes with
the Gods. (III.iii.82-3)

The Astronomer is undone by a burlesque piece of frailty, talking of the stars while falling backwards into a pond (V.i.7-8). This is of course a traditional joke, recounted by Agrippa in his De incertitudine and repeated by Sidney, for example, in A Defence of Poetry³.

1. Of the Vanitie and vncertaintie of Artes and Sciences, tr. J. Sanford (London, 1575). See De incertitudine, ed. cit (1531) ff. cxxxiv-cxxxvi, for the attack on alchemy.
2. See J.H. Smith 'John Foxe on Astrology' (with text) ELR i (1971), 210-25.
3. De incertitudine, ed. cit. f. XLV^v; Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose, ed. K. Duncan-Jones and J. van Dorsten (Oxford, 1975), p. 82. The ultimate source is probably Plato's Theatetus, 174a, and we have in Chaucer, The Miller's Tale, (Frag. I.A. 3457-60) ed. cit. p. 51. These last two parallels are given in Bond, II.572.

But the conceit of these figures, the Mariner, the Alchemist and the Astronomer, is deflated not only in the local burlesque of the comic scenes, but also in the larger themes of the play. It is clear from Neptune's first speech that the power to transform nature is a divine prerogative: mortals err by presuming to deceive and by claiming divine prescience. The play ends in a magical transformation more wonderful than anything that the Alchemist can promise: but this is accomplished only by the free grace of divinity. In the scene of the abortive sacrifice of Hæbe there is a strong sense that the best that mortals can do is inadequate. Hæbe, in spite of her high-flown farewell speech, is not accepted by Neptune: her lack of beauty saves her life but leaves her people at the mercy of the angered god. This is not her fault 'desteny would not haue it so, desteny could not' (V.ii.66-7): but effectively it leaves everything in the hands of the three deities who meet in the last scene to administer justice and mercy.

The end of this play fulfils the ambiguous essence of love as the dominant power of the whole action. It is in the nature of love to effect a transformation: Cupid's irresponsible and painful mischief-making, representing one aspect of love, is balanced by Venus' larger and more beneficent powers¹. The deceits and illusions that give rise to love are finally solved by a mysterious metamorphosis. Diana does not agree: 'you must leaue these fond fond affections; nature will haue it so, necessitie must.' (V.iii.122-3). But this nature and necessity are overturned.² We are not told which of the girls is to be transformed: it is enough that this capacity of love should be asserted.

It has been remarked how Loves Metamorphosis repeats and parallels the themes of Gallathea³: certainly here too Lyly presents not only love's metamorphoses but love as metamorphosis. The three foresters in the first scene attack, even blaspheme, fundamental Neoplatonic doctrine:

Ramis: I cannot see, Montanus, why it is fain'd by the Poets, that Loue sat vpon the Chaos and created the world; since in the world there is so little loue.

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1. This divergence between Venus' and Cupid's functions in the play is stressed by Saccio, op. cit. pp. 133-4, 147.
 2. Sabinus, Fabularum Ouidii Interpretatio (ed. cit.) p.381, draws the moral that that we should seek divine help in great difficulties.
 3. See Saccio, pp. 161-2.

Mon. Ramis, thou canst not see that which cannot with reason be imagined; for if the diuine vertues of Loue had disperst themselues through the powers of the world so forcibly as to make them take by his influence the formes and qualities imprest within them, no doubt they could not chuse but sauor more of his Diuinitie.

Sil. I doe not thinke Loue hath any sparke of Diuinitie in him; since the end of his being is earthly. In the blood he is begot by the fraile fires of the eye, & quencht by the frayler shadowes of thought.

(I.i.1-12)

Lyly is using the basic terms of Ficino's De amore in order to deny them. Ficino, citing the ancient writers, places Love in the heart of Chaos and describes how the world is created through his agency: 'atque hoc amore conciliante, ab anima formarum omnium que in mundo videntur, nacta ornamentum mundus ex chaos effecta est'¹. But although Ficino says that 'amor est in omnibus et ad omnia'², these foresters are convinced by their own hardships of the opposite. They follow, not the celestial but the earthly Venus: for them love is 'in blood ... begot', and quenched by thought. Their view of love is unmistakably that of Perottino in Gli Asolani: for them love is not the child of Venus, but a mutable deity ruling the body:³

We haue bodies, Siluestris, and humane bodies; which in their owne natures being much more wretched then beastes, doe much more miserably then beastes pursue their own ruines. And since it will aske longer labour and studie to subdue the powers of our bloud to the rule of the soule, then to satisfie them with the fruition of our loues, let vs bee constant in the worlds errours, and seeke our owne torments.

(I.i.14-20)

This is the reverse of that Neoplatonic love which raises the lover to the status of a god⁴. What the foresters suffer is the more bitter aspect of Petrarchan passion, where love is simply an enslavement to a hopeless cause⁵. Lyly's rhetorical elegance subdues these passions to a tone of resigned sadness: the impulse to love, and to love in vain, is the misery of the human condition. But it is clear enough that the foresters' affections are essentially of the baser kind..

These lovers, therefore, although they are faithful and patient, do not gain their mistresses in the spirit of constant charity that invests the end of

1. Commentarium in Convivium Platonis, sive de Amore, I.iii: ed. R.Marcel (Paris, 1978), P.141. Bond, III.563, cites Parmenides and Hesiod. The idea is well-known: see Spenser, A Hymne in Honour of Love, 57-98.

2. In Convivium Platonis, III.i, p.160.

3. P. Bembo, Gli Asolani, (Venice, 1575), p.19.

4. In Convivium Platonis, II.vi, p.153.

5. Cf. Petrarch, Rime sparse, 360. I-75.

Gallathea. Indeed the plays differ considerably in tone, a point ignored by allegorists like Bernard Huppé¹. Loves Metamorphosis, in spite of the elaborate symmetry of its character-relations, is uneven and complex in its themes, and ironic in its treatment of character. Lyly's art has moved considerably beyond the innocence of Gallathea: Loves Metamorphosis, later by some years², presents a darker and more subtle image of love.

This is most strongly evident in the changed rôle of Cupid, no longer the enfant terrible of the Moschian idyll, but a great god 'as irresistible as Venus, as irate towards transgressors as Neptune, and as all-powerful as Jove'³. His power is acknowledged even by the defender of chastity, Ceres, who brings him gifts and counsels her nymphs not to disdain him. It is significant that in this play Diana should be replaced by Ceres. Ceres is chaste, and wishes that her virgins should 'keep their thoughts as chaste as their bodies': (II.i.120) but as the goddess of natural abundance and the fruition of the earth she is far from representing the cold virginity of Diana. She is conscious of the need to 'parley' with Cupid, and in II.i conducts a kind of catechism of love with him. As Cupid points out, Ceres is herself a fertility goddess:

Cupid accepteth any thing that cometh from Ceres; which feedeth my Sparrowes with ripe corne, my Pigeons with wholesome seedes; and honourest my Temple with chaste virgines. (II.i.83-6)

For Cupid there is no contrast between the first and last parts of this statement: Ceres prays that her nymphs may remain chaste, but Cupid opposes to this the true ideal of divine love:

Ceres, louers are chaste: for what is loue, diuine loue, but the quintessence of chastitie, and affections binding by heauenly motions, that cannot bee vndone by earthly meanes, and must not be comptrolled by any man? (II.i.123-6)

This is the love of which Ficino speaks when he says that all love is honourable, and every lover virtuous.⁴ The celestial Cupid is the patron of this love, and his statement of it is the appropriate counter to the foresters'

1. Huppé, art.cit., ELH xiv (1947), 93-113.

2. Quarto, 1601. Feuillerat, pp.580-1 suggests composition and performance c.1588-90, revival by Paul's c.1599 and by the Chapel c.1600. See Shapiro, pp.180-2 for a later dating, c.1597 for composition and first performance by Paul's.

3. P. Parnell, 'Moral Allegory in Lyly's Loves Metamorphosis', SP lii (1955), 5.

4. In Convivium Platonis, I.iv, p.143.

obsessive passions and the nymphs' arrogant disdain. Nevertheless, the human beings in the play do not conform easily to this ideal, and the play's action proceeds from their infirmities, and their flouting of divine law.

For here too, as in Gallathea, the gods are all-powerful, and mortals err by presuming against destiny and duty. They are punished by transformations: but paradoxically, as in Gallathea, they are also saved by transformations, by the mysterious power of love's metamorphoses. Both the plots bear this out: the main plot, in which the nymphs who disdain these foresters' love are transformed by Cupid into a rock, a bird, and a flower, and are retransformed through Ceres' intervention, and the second plot, almost as important as the first, where Ericthon, offending Ceres, is punished with continual hunger, and is saved by the protean powers of his daughter.

The sources for the first of these two stories are less plain than the obviously Ovidian provenance of the second. The transformations of the nymphs, for the typical vices of hardness of heart, vanity, and inconstancy, parallel the similar metamorphoses of Greene's Alcida (ent. S.R. 1588, but surviving in an edition of 1617¹). Greene's tale, narrating how the three daughters of the countess Alcida were changed for hard-heartedness, inconstancy, and garrulity into a marble picture, a bird (incorrectly called a chameleon) and a rose-bush, is very much in Euphuistic style, but it could have served as a model to that style's founder. Other possible models for Lyly, as Violet Jeffery points out, are the punitive metamorphosis of Mirzia, the eponymous heroine of Epicuro de' Marsi's play, and the transformations recounted in the fifth book of Boccaccio's Filocolo.² Boccaccio's inset tale concerns four vain ladies of Partenope, disdainful of love but proud of their conquests: they suffer appropriate metamorphoses into a marble rock, a pomegranate tree, and two thorn trees, through the just anger of Venus, Apollo and Diana³. Boccaccio's story may well have been known to both Lyly and Greene.

1. Robert Greene, Works, ed. A. B. Grosart (London, 1881-86) ix. 4. 112. See pp. for the stories of metamorphosis; and R. Pruvost, Robert Greene et ses Romans (Paris, 1938) pp. 315-8, for speculation on whether Lyly influenced Greene, or vice versa.

2. In Opere minori in volgare, ed. M. Marti (Milan, 1969), i. 685-700. See Jeffery, John Lyly, pp. 88-9. For Mirzia's transformation, see Marsi, ed. cit. i. 164. 172-3. and Jeffery, p. 85. The resemblance is not great.

3. Boccaccio, Filocolo, ed. cit. pp. 697-700.

What emerges from this, really, is that this kind of metamorphosis, where cruel mistresses are changed into shapes embodying their particular fault, is both common and uninteresting. The convention adopts a feature of Ovidian metamorphosis, that the essence of the transformed creature survives, or is expressed, in its new shape, and uses it for a simple concretization of common metaphors regarding the frailties of women. Stories of this kind - Alcida is a particularly clear example - are intended to serve as a warning to all women: they are exempla in the rigid world of courtship much as moral allegories of transformation might be to a homilist. There is usually, therefore, considerable emphasis on the emblematic details of the change, which are elaborately explained as representing the special qualities being censured. If Lyly's play had contained no more than this, it would scarcely have been worth analysing.

However, it may be worth dealing with the nymphs first. Their obstinate indifference parallels the untempered affections of the foresters: they are shallow and self-centred. Their names derive from a long tradition of pastoral and erotic poetry: Nisa figures in Virgil's eighth eclogue¹, Celia is the lady of the sonneteers, and Niobe's story is told by Ovid. But their faults are virtually in contrast to their names: unlike her Virgilian namesake, Nisa is a frigid and constant virgin, Celia is a vain and empty beauty, and Niobe a shallow and inconstant girl. They all declare their natures on their first appearance by explaining the significance of the flowers they carry. The complete adequacy of this symbolism indeed justifies their eventual metamorphosis into equally emblematic states. We may take as an example the garland carried by Niobe:

Of Salamints, which in the morning are white, red at noone, and in the Evening purple, for in my affections shall there be no staiednesse but in vnstaiednes (I.ii.4-6)²

As Parnell points out³, there is a curious aptness to these nymphs' being in the service of Ceres: for just as Ceres is the goddess of fertility while herself remaining perfectly chaste, so the nymphs, by their calculated frigidity,

1. Eclogue VIII.18, 26. Nysa has jilted Damon and married Mopsus.

2. For some speculation on these flowers, see D.Edge, 'Salamints in John Lyly's *Love's Metamorphosis*' N & Q ccxix (1974), 286.

3. Parnell. art.cit. SP lii (1955)pp.4-5

inflame the foresters but flout their love. However, there is a considerable difference in this play between the two divine patrons of the action and the human actors. Ceres' ideal of fruitful chastity, like Cupid's ideal of perfect love, is something her handmaidens never measure up to; indeed they do not understand it. As a result, Ceres herself has to conduct a dialogue with Cupid to present for us the true essence of chaste love:

Wee will honour thee with continuall sacrifice, warme vs with mild affections; lest being too hotte, wee seeme immodest like wantons, or too cold, immouable like stockes. (II.i.127-9)

Thus the divinities in this play are forced to become exemplary and symbolic figures beyond what is required in Gallathea.

The nymphs' carrying of emblematic garlands is paralleled by the sacrifices offered by the foresters to Cupid in IV.i. Since the whole essence of these three figures is contained in their love-desperations, the gifts they offer are also emblematically appropriate. Ramis offers a bleeding heart, Montanus a bloodless one, and Siluestris a heart 'swolne with sighes': symbolized by a pair of lamps, by a distaff and halter, and by a fan of swans' and turtles' feathers. Montanus' speech is significant:

With this distaffe haue I spun, that my exercises bee as womanish as my affections, and so did Hercules: and with this halter will I hang my selfe, if my fortunes answere not my deserts, and so did Iphis. (IV.i.13-16)

The enslavement of Hercules by Omphale, and his performing of the tasks of a woman, was traditionally regarded as a supreme example of heroic virtue debased and transformed by the lower appetites¹. The story of Iphis, who hanged himself for love of Anaxarete, is told in the Metamorphoses XIV.699-764. As Montanus makes clear, his passion is both unmanly and hopeless: like Pyrocles in Sidney's Arcadia, who is also described by Musidorus as a 'distaff-spinner', he is 'Transformed in show, but more transformed in mind'².

1. See Ovid, Heroides IX.53-118; Tasso, Gerusalemme Liberata, XVI.3; Spenser, The Faerie Queene, V. v.23-4.

2. The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. J. Robertson (Oxford, 1973), p.20, p. 28.

The lovers' lack of ideal high-mindedness is made explicit when in the same scene they seek revenge on the nymphs for their cruelty, even suggesting to Cupid the appropriate punitive metamorphoses. They are as petty as the nymphs, but their jealousy and anger is clearly discriminated from the justified wrath of Cupid. Cupid agrees to these punishments not because the lovers have propitiated him with gifts, but because the nymphs have blasphemed his 'god-head'.

you shall be reuenged, and they chaunged, Cupid proue himselfe a great god, and they peeuish girles. (IV.ii.110-12)

Cupid, changing Niobe to a bird, Nisa to a rock and Celia to a flower (the symbolism of these states is elaborately explained) punishes them for the arrogance that had made them claim immunity from love. In so doing he reaffirms the order of society and of nature, ordering the foresters to be constant in the rites and customs of love, and counselling them also to the proper balance of human love:

let your othes be without number, but not without truth; your words full of alluring sweetnesse, but not of broad flatterie; your attires neate, but not womanish (IV.i.117-9).

But a more absolute metamorphosis than this will finally be necessary. When Ceres begs for the restoration of her nymphs, Cupid agrees on condition that they accept their lovers. Ceres assents, but the nymphs are not themselves ready to change. In a reversal of the usual comic ending, they declare themselves to prefer their changed shapes to forced love. This resolution is expressed in three symmetrical speeches: 'How happie was Nisa, which felt nothing'; 'more good commeth of the Rose, then can by loue'; 'turne me againe, Cupid, for yeeld I will not!' (V.iv.71, 78-9, 98-9). These nymphs have sized up human love, and rejected it. They prefer their metamorphosed states, because they are thus freed of the vexations of life subject to love's uncertainties. But their resolve is of course also an expression of callousness: their refusal to engage with life simply reflects their selfishness. They are, we may say, perfectly consistent Grilles of the romantic world. This is a neat conceit on the basic idea of apt transformation: if the transformation expresses these characters' essence so well, it is only natural that they should prefer it.

The nymphs are ultimately made to yield by Cupid's more terrible threats

I will turne them againe, not to flowers, or stones, or birds, but to
monsters, no lesse filthie to bee seene then to bee named hatefull:
(V.iv.105-7)

and by Ceres' entreaties. But they insist that they will not be changed in
essence, that their lovers must accept them as they are:

I am content, so as Ramis, when hee finds me cold in loue, or hard in
beliefe, hee attribute it to his owne folly; in that I retaine some
nature of the Rocke he chaunged me into. (V.iv.133-5).

And in their willing agreement to these conditions, their free acceptance of
their loves in a spirit of generosity and patience, the foresters may at last
be seen as rising out of the baser passions that had so long ruled them.

It is for this last reason that Cupid and Ceres promise in the end to effect
a true transformation in the nymphs. the transformation of love which changes
hearts. This, surely, is the metamorphosis referred to in the play's title: the
metamorphoses sought by the foresters and granted earlier by Cupid were in them-
selves a form of idolatry. They accomplished nothing, for they altered condition,
but not essence. As Cupid has already made clear, and as Ceres warned her nymphs
in Act II Scene i, it is in the power of love alone to effect a more radical
change:

I will make such vnspotted loue among you, that there shall bee no
suspition nor iarre, no vnkindnesse nor iealousie: but let all ladies
heereafter take heede that they resist not loue, which worketh wonders.
(V.iv.160-3)

These powers of love are seen also in the second plot of the play, the
story of Erisichthon. This is taken directly from Ovid, and at one point at least
Lyly indulges in a close classical imitation, the description of Famine in
Act II.ii, after the Metamorphoses VIII.797-807. But the points of difference are
more striking.

The story of Erysichthon is also to be found in earlier classical writers,¹
but Ovid's treatment of the tale invests it with unique and grotesque implications.
In the Metamorphoses the tale actually begins with a reference to the shape-
changing abilities of Erysichthon's daughter, who is compared in this respect to

¹ E.g. Callimachus, 'Hymn to Demeter', 31-117. The versions are compared by
Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, ed. cit., pp. 5-8.

Proteus, mentioned only a few lines previously

sunt, quibus in plures ius est transire figuras,
ut tibi, complexi terram maris incola, Proteu. (VIII.730-1)

But our interest moves rapidly to Erysichthon himself, a man who scorned the gods and neglected their altars. From the very beginning we have this note of defiance offered to divinity, and this is what makes the story appropriate material for Lyly's play. Erysichthon takes his axe into the grove of Ceres to cut down her sacred oak; he kills a man who tries to stop him, fells the tree, and with it, the nymph of Ceres who dwells within. The nymph prophesies punishment: it is swift and complete. Ceres sends Famine to work on Erysichthon: hungering in his sleep, he wakes up to an insatiable craving for food:

quod pontus, quod terra, quod educat aer,
poscit et adpositis queritur ieiunia mensis
inque epulis epulas quaerit; (VIII.830-2)

This is Ovid's opportunity for an extraordinary and grotesque exaggeration. Erysichthon's hunger is described in the terms of a Rabelaisian, but enormously frightening, gluttony. He swallows the food of whole cities and continents; his hunger is unremitting, even cosmic:

quodque urbibus esse,
quodque satis erat populo, non sufficit uni (VIII.832-3)

He seems to swell to encompass countries and continents: mountains of food pass into his maw, oceans of nutriment find no bottom to his belly, 'cibus omnis in illo/ causa cibi est, semperque locus fit inanis edendo (841-2).

Finally, Erysichthon is compelled to sell his daughter (not named in Ovid except as the wife of the crafty Autolycus). But she prays to her former seducer Neptune for aid, and he gives her the power of self-transformation. She is sold often to many masters, but always escapes and returns to her father: thus finding him food, though, as Ovid stresses, dishonestly

praebebatque avido non iusta alimenta parenti. (VIII.874).

These provisions, though, are finally of no avail. Erysichthon is so consumed by hunger that he consumes himself in the end, becoming his own food. Through Ovid's

telling of the myth he becomes also a figure of frightening immortality, like Spenser's Malbecco.

Lyly's use of this extraordinary narrative in his 'wittie and courtly pastorall' may appear strange. But he treats it with considerable subtlety, toning down its most grotesque aspects, while emphasizing through it themes that are essential to the play as a whole. His adaptation of the story to its pastoral context seems to me to be considerably more successful than Lodge's treatment, in a different genre, of the equally frightening tale of Scylla¹.

Erisic_thon on his first entry is a stern, even puritanical figure. Lyly stresses his pride and impiety:

What noyse is this, what assembly, what Idolatrie? Is the modestie of virgins turnd to wantonnesse? The honour of Ceres accomted immortal?
And Erisic_thon ruler of this Forrest. esteemed of no force?
(I.ii.58-61)

The implications of Erisic_thon's action, as he cuts down Ceres' tree, are given powerful and elaborate expression by Lyly through the speech of Fidelia, the nymph dwelling within it. This is one of those set speeches Lyly so much favours, like that of Haebe in Gallathea! it places in the mouth of a minor and exemplary character many of the main concerns of the play.

Fidelia is a chaste nymph, who was turned into a tree while escaping from a satyr: she herself compares her fate with that of Daphne and Myrrha. Erisich_thon's murderous attack is the occasion for an extended discourse on chastity, for which Fidelia has allowed her body to be 'growne ouer with a rough barke' though her 'mind nothing can alter, neither the feare of death, nor the torments.' (I.ii.121-2). Fidelia's praise of chastity presents the ideal version of that virtue so selfishly paraded by the three nymphs: but it is an extreme version in itself, impossible to preserve in the world and requiring qualification within the larger patterns of the play. Erisic_thon's attack is interpreted by her as sexual violation:

It is thy spite Cupid, that hauing no power to wound my vnspotted

1. Scylla's Metamorphosis, 1589 : in Donne, Elizabethan Minor Epics, ed. cit.

mind, procurest meanes to mangle my tender body, and by violence to gash those sides that enclose a heart dedicate to vertue: or is it that sauage Satire, that feeding his sensuall appetite vpon lust, seeketh now to quench it with bloud, that being without hope to attaine my loue, hee may with cruelty end my life? (I.ii.91-7)

Erisichthon, committing not only sacrilege but the murder of a chaste nymph, is guilty of crimes both towards Cupid and towards Ceres. Just as Fidelia represents an extreme of chastity against which the nymphs must be measured, Erisichthon represents an extreme of violence which shows the distemper of passion; he is an *exemplum* for the foresters, though they are reluctant to visit him (IV.i.132-4) Significantly, it is Cupid who ultimately secures his pardon from Ceres.

Since Erisichthon must finally be reclaimed into the comic world, Lyly makes his all-consuming hunger a fairly remote and abstract affliction. It is certainly not the Gargantuan cosmic consumption that it is in Ovid. In order that Erisichthon may be pardoned as a man, Lyly keeps his personality within human limits. Erisichthon knows himself to have offended, and seeks forgiveness, but - and this is where the end of one plot directly looks at the other - he can only be saved by the retransformation of love.

It is his daughter Protea¹ who is to save him, and not merely through her own capacity for shape-changing, but through the inward motions of love. Protea has already been seduced by Neptune, and is promised to Petulius (the name may indicate his wantonness or waywardness). She is therefore no virgin, and not vowed to chastity. But she is high-spirited, (*generosa*) and intelligent: she is conscious of filial duty as of her duty to the gods. Neptune therefore answers her prayer, and she is granted the appropriate Protean powers.

In virtually all the mythographers (the tradition may begin with the rationalizations of Palaephatos in the 2nd century B.C.²), it is explained that Erysichthon's daughter Metra is sold into prostitution, and that accepting gifts in kind rather than in cash from her customers, she succours her hungry father.

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1. The name may have been suggested to Lyly by Ovid's mention of Proteus in VIII.731. The mythographers call her Metra.
 2. See *C. Iulii Hygini ... Fabularum liber... Palaephatos de fabulosis narrationibus*, etc. (Basel, 1535), pp. 222-3 for the explanation of Metra.

Comes certainly takes this view, in an exact reminiscence of Palaephatos:

mox ob extremam rerum omnium inopiam filiam prostituerit, quae modo bouem, modo ouem pecunias in concubitus mercedem accipiens, modo¹ res alias ab amantibus extorquens, ita paternae inopiae subueniebat.

This may be the reason why Lyly, keeping the transformations of Protea, also introduces a Syren who appears to try Petulius' love, and is finally banished by Protea who has assumed the appearance of the ghost of Ulysses. This complicated fiction, not satisfactorily dealt with by critics,² may be partly understood by reference to the mythographers: it is important to the play's themes.

Both Huppé and Parnell take the Syren as representing a prostitute: sirens of course, were traditionally so interpreted³. The siren in Lyly's play removes any suggestions of that kind from Protea herself: Protea's deceits remain good subterfuges undertaken under the patronage of a god, while the Syren's deceits introduce a further variation on feminine attitudes, and another image of love. Like the nymphs, the Syren hates and despises men, but in a more extreme and treacherous way. She accuses men of being responsible for her present transformation:

Of all creatures most vnkind, most cunning, by whose subtilities I am halfe fish, halfe flesh (IV.ii.29-30)

There is certainly the implication here that sexual love, especially of the meretricious kind known to the Syren, is itself a kind of transformation. Protea, on the other hand, manifests a practical and generous human love, saving her lover as well as her father. Of all men, only Orpheus and Ulysses had ever passed by the sirens and resisted them. In allegorical tradition this feat of Ulysses symbolized the power of wisdom to resist temptations⁴. Protea, taking the shape of Ulysses, causes the Syren to 'shrinke... for shame', and succeeds in removing the scales from Petulius' eyes. This is rather a comic scene, balancing the Petrarchan ardours of the foresters, and setting Protea's frankness (she values Petulius for his money as well as his love, IV.ii.37-8) against the nymphs' exaggerations.

1. Comes, V.xiv, p.346. (De Cerero)

2. Huppé, art. cit. p.110, and Parnell, art. cit. pp.7-9, discuss the episode.

They note, of course, that the selling of Protea implies selling into prostitution

3. See Servius on Aen.V.864 (ed. Thilo & Hagen, cit.): the sirens are meretrices.

4. Comes, VII.xiii, p. 500 (De Sirenibus).

We should not, then, be surprised when in the last Act Cupid suddenly takes Protea under his patronage, telling Ceres:

thou seekest to starue Erisichthon with thy minister, famine, whome his daughter shall preserue by my vertue, loue. (V.i.9-10)

Not only is Protea's faithful love rewarded, but Fidelia's blood has also, we are told, been metamorphosed into flowers. The ones who truly gain from this experience are Protea and Petulius, and it is Protea who sees very clearly:

Omnia vincit amor, & nos cedamus amori (V.ii.13)

Through the force of love, Erisichthon too is relieved of his hunger: 'Here is none but is happie' (V.iv.166). The close of the play makes it clear that love, transforming all it touches, is both celestial and earthly:

Cupid. I will soare vp into heauen, to settle the loues of the gods, that in earth haue dispos'd the affections of men. (V.iv. 168-70)

There is less Neoplatonism in Lylian pastoral than is commonly thought, and it would be ill-advised to explore the plays for mysteries of the union of Pan with Proteus, a rallying-cry for critics since Edgar Wind's seminal essay.¹ The sort of speculation indulged in by Richard Cody in his book on Shakespearean pastoral (glancing at Lyly by the way) seems to me to be especially unwarranted.² But Lyly does make use of one fundamental Neoplatonic belief, the belief in love's power to transform. It is likely he received this idea from the trattati d'amore,³ but whatever his sources, the idea is so pervasive in the plays that we may take it as truly guiding the action. Lyly is writing of human love, not the ideal Neoplatonic passion (I shall come to Endimion later) but, as we see in the opening to Loves Metamorphosis, he is conscious that love's own being is celestial. Though men are imperfect, and shepherds passionate, love can in the end reconcile all, and create a world out of chaos. This kind of transformation is seen in the plays finally as the prerogative of divinity to accomplish. Metamorphoses are common in Lyly's comic world, but the play must

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1. 'Pan and Proteus' in Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (rev. ed., Harmondsworth, 1967), 191-217.
 2. The Landscape of the Mind, (Oxford, 1969)
 3. See Jeffery's discussion of the relation of the trattati to the discussions of love in Euphues, John Lyly, ed. cit., pp. 29-49.

end in the metamorphosis of love. It is the discovery of this emphasis that enables us to look forward from Lyly to Shakespeare, to the world of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

As I emphasized at the start, Lyly's art is essentially light, civilized and moral. As with the Euphuistic style, we must accept the conventions Lyly lives by if we are to understand his characteristic achievement: and we may end by finding it surprisingly sophisticated. Lyly's pastoral world is itself a fiction which he does not even attempt to flesh out. But he makes elaborate and subtle use of certain common elements of pastoral, its intimacy with the pagan gods and its fluid acceptance of the metamorphoses of myth. The landscape of pastoral contains unseen numbers of metamorphosed beings, contributing to it a hidden but everpresent mythical life. In relative terms Lyly's forest world is uncluttered with the débris of its Ovidian past, but he shows no hesitation in contributing fresh transformations to it. Dr. Johnson, writing on Pope, condemns this mythological facility: 'A new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient: nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.'¹ Lyly's skill lies in converting this undoubted puerility to the purposes of a moral and serious entertainment.

II. The playwright as courtier-

his Invention, was so curiously strung, that Elizaes Court held his notes in Admiration.

I shall deal much more briefly with the four court comedies I mentioned at the start: Sapho and Phao, Endimion, Midas and The Woman in the Moone. Here I do not propose separate analyses of the plays at all, but the examination of certain ideas that are especially important to the first two, and stand in juxtaposition to the themes of the other ones.

In discussing Gallathea and Loves Metamorphosis, I have avoided references to court allegory: no two plays could be less suited to this. With these others,

1. Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. B. Hill (Oxford, 1905), iii.225.

I have adopted this quotation, gratefully, from Hunter's John Lyly, p. 32

2. Edward Blount, Epistle dedicatory to Lyly's Sixe Court Comedies (London, 1632), sig. A3^r.

however, we cannot be so exclusive in our view. Endimion and Sapho and Phao are of special importance to us in understanding the adulatory myths of the Elizabethan court, where metamorphosis becomes a symbol for royal favour or disfavour: as Diana, the queen naturally exercises this power over her courtiers.

The elaborate historical allegories that have been offered for these plays, taking them to refer to the French marriage proposal (Sapho and Phao)¹, Elizabeth and Leicester or Elizabeth and Oxford or even, in a supreme flight, Elizabeth and James VI of Scotland (Endimion)², and to Philip of Spain (Midas)³, may be allowed to die of critical neglect. There was clearly a great burgeoning of such efforts in the early years of this century, and nostalgia is not called for. As a parallel movement, indeed as a counter, elaborate neoplatonic allegories also flourished for a time.⁴ A distressing modern version of this allegorical tendency, assuming in us the proportions of original sin, may be seen in a recent article by Peter Weltner, who interprets Endimion on Jungian principles.⁵

What Lyly displays in most of his work is an extremely 'courtly' tact and delicacy, an acute sensitivity to the dangers of misinterpretation, rather than a meddlesome urge to advise the prince. The Elizabethan court was an envious place, with many ready to extract the most damaging meanings from any court spectacle. Lyly did not ultimately make good in Elizabeth's service⁶, but that he survived so long is proof of a sufficient instinct of self-preservation. As Fidus replies to Euphues and Philautus in Euphues and his England 'an Englishman learneth to speake of menne, and to holde his peace of the Gods'⁷. Euphues' direct questions about the queen only offend the old man, who replies with 'some talk which shall breede your delight touching my Bees' and all we actually

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1. I shall mention only one example of each allegory. For Phao as the Duc d'Alençon, see Bond II.366.
 2. Elizabeth and Leicester, Bond III.10. Elizabeth and Oxford, J.W. Bennett, 'Oxford and Endimion' PMLA lvii (1942), 354-69. Elizabeth and James, Feuillerat, John Lyly, pp. 169-87.
 3. Bond, III.109-10.
 4. See P.W. Long, 'The purport of Lyly's Endimion', PMLA xxiv (1909).164-84.
 5. 'The Antinomic Vision of Lyly's Endymion', ELR iii (1973), 5-29. Saccio's book is also subtitled A study in Allegorical Dramaturgy, but his definition of allegory is very broad (see pp.4-5) and its application rather pointless.
 6. See W.B.Austin, 'John Lyly and Queen Elizabeth', N & Q clxxvi (1939), 146-7.
 7. Bond, II.38. Huppé, art. cit. ELH xiv (1947), 97n, cites instances of Elizabeth's displeasure at references to her personal relations in court entertainments. E.K. Chambers, Sir Henry Lee (Oxford, 1936), p.90, has an important example.

^{get}
/is an ideal and purified image of the commonwealth. This is the essence of courtly compliment. Doubts and fears may certainly enter this picture, and they may be expressed in topical comments or thematic implications: but they are of necessity subsidiary and unobtrusive. What the adroit entertainer of the court is required to present is a picture of the justice and propriety of the sovereign's relations with it, not a veiled comment on past controversies.

To see Lyly's plays in their historical context, therefore, we should see them as arising from the pressures and demands of court life, and representing the adulatory myths of that court. It is impossible to explain Sapho and Phao and Endimion without reference to the central presence of the sovereign in front of whom these plays were performed.¹ To this extent the historical explanation is essential. But the royal figure of Elizabeth, for most writers of the time, is as much a symbol as anything else in literature: she is not a temporal but an ideal monarch, inspiring devotion in quasi-religious terms. The exaltation of Elizabeth was by the 1580s no longer a matter of flattery or compliment: it was bound up with a vision of justice and order of which the queen was simply the fit symbol.² Plays which, under whatever fictional guise, refer to the queen and her court, exist therefore in an already half-mythical world, and the suggestiveness and potency of the fictions adopted are indeed enhanced by the royal reference.

We may, therefore, relate Sapho and Phao and Endimion to other Tudor entertainments which present a mythical situation, a dispute or a problem, which the presence of the sovereign must resolve. Such situations are presented for example in Sidney's Lady of May³, where the queen in fact makes her own free choice of solution; or in a much later entertainment, the Gray's Inn masque of Proteus and the Adamantine Rock, where her very presence is effi-

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1. The S.R. entry for Sapho and Phao is 6 April 1584. Shapiro speculates a public performance c.1582, and a court performance on Shrove Tuesday 1583-4. See Shapiro, pp.259,262,264. Feuillerat, p.573, takes March 3 1581/2 as the date of the court performance. The date of Endimion (quarto,1591) is more in doubt. See Bennett, art.cit.PMLA lvii,363-4n for the possibility of a court performance on Feb.2 1587/8. See Feuillerat, p.577, for a date of Feb.2 1585/6.
 2. See E.C.Wilson, England's Eliza (Cam.Mass.1939) and F.A.Yates, Astraea (1975 rpt Harmondsworth 1977), pp.29-87.
 3. Presented for the Queen by Leicester at Wanstead, 1578. Ed. in Miscellaneous Prose, ed. cit. 21-32.

cacious.¹ It is similarly efficacious in the Woodstock entertainment of 1575, where the blind hermit Hemetes regains his sight when certain conditions are fulfilled. The Ditchley entertainment of 1592 presents the Queen being led through a grove of metamorphosed lovers to a sleeping knight, in a hall hung with allegorical pictures. As the Queen interprets the pictures, the enchantment is dispelled, the knight awakes, and the grove's prisoners are released.³

The fiction of metamorphosis as a mark of royal disfavour, or even of neglect or indifference, had already been a feature in the Kenilworth festivities of 1575. In the long farewell speech which Gascoigne, in the person of Sylvanus, spoke to Elizabeth as he ran beside her horse, we hear of one of Diana's nymphs called Zabeta. Her rare gifts have drawn the noblest persons in the world to sue to her for grace, but she has repulsed them all:

I could tell your Highnesse of sundry famous and worthy persons, whome shee hath turned and converted into most monstrous shapes and proportions; as some into fishes, some others₄ into foules, and some into huge stony rocks and great mountains:

But, Gascoigne goes on, Elizabeth has treated not only 'cicophants', but also her most faithful followers like this. He describes the 'strange and cruel metamorphosis' of Constancy into an oak-tree (balanced by that of Inconstancie into a poplar, and other allegorical transformations of Vaine-glory, contention and Ambition) and the undeserved punishments of Dewedesert and Deepedesire^{turned} into a laurel and a hollybush. The speech of the hollybush, suitably pastoral in its images, begs the Queen to remain here with her followers.⁵ Gascoigne, in this somewhat obvious allegory, is clearly both flattering the Queen by investing her with Diana's powers of punitive transformation, and asking her favour for his patron Leicester.

Indeed the exaltation of the Queen as Diana or Cynthia naturally meant that classical myths of metamorphosis could be converted to local use

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1. The masque is edited by W.W.Greg in Gesta Grayorum, 1688, (Malone Society reprints, Oxford, 1914) pp.58-67. Performed at Court, Shrovetide, 1594/5.
 2. 'The Tale of Hemetes the Heremyte' in J.Nichols, The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth (London, 1823) i.557-63. See discussion in Chambers, Lee, p. 87.
 3. Text in Chambers, Lee, Appendix E, pp. 276-97.
 4. G.Gascoigne, The Princely Pleasures at the Courte of Kenelwoorth, 1575, printed in Nichols, Progresses of Elizabeth, i.520.
 5. Nichols, Progresses of Elizabeth, i. 521-2.

In her classical rôle Diana is a stern goddess, punishing the lapses of mortals without mercy, and effecting swift and irreversible transformations upon them. The absolute loyalty she demands from her nymphs, and the absolute powers she has over them, parallel the more difficult elements of the cult of Elizabeth. Her courtiers are required to be entirely faithful: any transgression may be followed by an overwhelming expression of displeasure, which in quite literal terms causes a substantial alteration of condition. The extreme terms in which such an alteration, whether psychological or actual, could be put, are to be seen in the condition of Timias after Belphoebe's rejection of him in The Faerie Queene. IV.vii.36-43. Timias becomes completely unrecognizable: he seems a different person, but of course his change is one of state, of fortune rather than essence. This feature distinguishes it from all the moral allegories of transformation in the poem: Timias' fault is minor, but his suffering, so arbitrary in its extent and duration, changes his situation beyond recognition.

A possible reflection of these powers of the sovereign to punish or transform may be seen in an inscription, at the entrance to the park from Whitehall, transcribed by Paul Hentzner in his Itinerarium:

The Fisherman who has been wounded learns, though late, to beware;
 But the unfortunate Actaeon always presses on.
 The chaste Virgin naturally pitied:
 But the powerful Goddess revenged the wrong.
 Let Actaeon fall a prey to his dogs,
 An example to Youth,
 A disgrace to those that belong to him!
 May Diana live the care of Heaven;
 The delight of mortals;
 The security of those that belong to her!¹

The world of the court entertainment or masque is dominated by the presence of the sovereign in a way that the court play, clearly, is not. The final reference of the entertainment is outward, beyond the fiction. In George Peele's Araynement of Paris, the monarch is only slightly more assimilated into the

1. This is quoted, in Walpole's translation, in Nichols, Progresses of Elizabeth, i. 86. Hentzner visited England in 1598.

framework of the fiction: here too we have the basic pattern of the Elizabethan entertainment, where a problem or situation established in the performance is solved by the presence of the sovereign. But in Lyly's plays the fiction is more of a whole: it is not interrupted and taken over. Nevertheless, where the central figure is clearly identified with the sovereign, the play, for all the elaboration of its narrative, may be seen as enacting the complimentary pattern of the entertainment or masque. In Sapho and Phao, the classical story must be altered to make this possible: the harmonious close of this play, much unlike the tragic tale out of the Heroides¹ upon which it is based, is conventional, and in courtly terms, necessary.

Both Sapho and Phao and Endimion present important aspects of the attitudes to the sovereign, and her relations with her court, that I have been discussing. Phao is granted extraordinary beauty by Venus,² and Sapho, here a queen rather than a poetess, falls in love with him. Although his metamorphosis thus precedes his reception into favour, it is impossible not to see this arbitrary and magical beauty almost as a result, an effect of royal favour: and, of course, an effect of love. For Sapho this infatuation is a moral and social problem: Phao, on the other hand, seems to err in self-love, and is cautioned against this by the tale of Sybilla. At the end, however, Sapho triumphs over Venus:³ she rises above love, though keeping Cupid at her side, thus re-affirming the paradoxical role of the Virgin Queen adored by, and demanding adoration from, her courtiers. Sapho achieves a constancy invulnerable to disguise or deception: she is proof against the baser devices of love, while herself exercising its higher powers.

Endimion, a much longer play, is much more complicated in its plot. There is one sort of allegory unmistakably present in it, the physical allegory of

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1. Heroides, XV, in ed. of G. Showerman, rev. G.P. Goold, (Loeb, Cam. Mass. 1977)
 2. This incident is not in Ovid. Bond, II.364, cites Aelian's Varia historia, in an English translation by Abraham Fleming, 1576. Lyly could easily have got the story from an annotated edition of the Heroides: see the variorum edition of Ovid's Opera I have cited, (Frankfurt, 1601) i. 159-60.
 3. Cf. Elizabeth's triumph over Venus and Cupid in Churchyard's 'Tuesdays Device' presented to the Queen at Norwich, 1578: printed in Nichols, Progresses of Elizabeth, ii. 196.

Cynthia as the moon and Tellus, the rival for Endimion's love, as the earth: but this is not pursued very far. More pervasive is a general, and unspecified, Neoplatonism, very much a part of the mystical adulation of the Queen as Cynthia: we may compare Chapman's Shadow of Night. Essentially, however, the most memorable aspect of Endimion is its presentation of the situation of the courtier, wholly dependent upon his sovereign's favour, overwhelmingly punished for lapses in duty, yet with little expectation of actual reward. We may see Lyly's treatment of this frustrating situation as possibly anticipating his own disappointments: 'Thirteene yeeres your Highnes servant: but yet nothings'¹ but biographical interpretations would obviously be mistaken. Nevertheless, the strains of court life are visible in this play as rarely elsewhere in Elizabethan drama.

Endimion is undeniably about the predicament of the courtly lover, fanatically devoted to his sovereign: but it also displays the perils facing all such love, the dangers of being blinded by other, inferior attractions, and the difficulties of regaining a position of favour once lost. The losing of favour results in Endimion's long sleep, which may of course be seen also (since it is the result of his dissembling with Tellus, II.i, and her machinations) as a submergence in the baser and more earthly passions. Yet what we should note is that Endimion's sleep comes after a period of seven years' worshipping of a jealous and suspicious Cynthia, which indeed forces him into dissimulation:

Wouldst thou haue mee vowde onelie to thy beautie? and consume euerie minute of time in thy seruice? remember my solitarie life, almost these seuen yeeres: whom haue I entertained but mine owne thoughts, and thy vertues? what companie haue I vsed but contemplation? ... Haue I not spent my golden yeeres in hopes, waxing old with wishing, yet wishing nothing but thy loue. (II.i.12-22)

Despite the force of these reproaches, however, the final patterns of the court play demand that Endimion's devotion to Cynthia be his only true virtue

1. Petition to the Queen, 1601, after having been disappointed in his hopes of the Mastership of the Revels, and that of Tents and Toiles: in Feuillerat, p. 561.

and saving grace. Hunter comments on Lyly's 'altering' of the classical myth to make Endimion in love with Cynthia rather than the other way about¹. This alteration, of course, was something that had already been accomplished by (especially Neoplatonic) allegory. Comes, who believes Endymion to have been an astronomer, sleeping by day and charting the moon's courses by night, holds him up as an example of single-minded devotion²: Fraunce, later, simply states that he may be taken as 'a figure of the soule of man... ravished by celestiall contemplation.'³ Such Neoplatonism as there is in Lyly's play merges easily with the myths of the court. Tellus had seemed to transform Endimion, both outwardly and inwardly: 'there shall such dissolute thoughts take roote in his head, and ouer his hart grow so thicke a skinne, that neither hope of preferment, nor feare of punishment ... shall alter his humor' (I.ii.46-50). In the end, Endimion, wholly changed by his long sleep, unrecognizably old and withered, is restored to youth by the renewal of Cynthia's favour. The other transformation caused by the witch Dipsas, the change of her servant Bagoa to an aspen tree, is also reversed, but this is a minor and illustrative action merely, demonstrating the absoluteness of Cynthia's powers.

The themes of Midas⁴ and The Woman in the Moone⁵, very different from these we have been considering, may still present an obverse to them. Midas, as Stephen Hilliard points out in an important essay⁶, is in Lyly's play not simply the figure of greed and philistinism that he is in Ovid (Met. XI.85-193), but also a type of tyranny and misrule. Midas' incapacity to discriminate, whether in human values or in divine matters, imposes upon him the fate of transformation: but paradoxically, this is transformation of a partial kind.

1. Hunter, op. cit., p.189.

2. Comes, IV.8, pp. 222-3 (De Endymione)

3. Abraham Fraunce, Amintas Dale (London, 1592), fol.43^v.

4. Entered S.R. October 4, 1591, quarto, 1592. Probably performed at court on January 6, 1589/90. See Shapiro, p. 259.

5. Entered S. R. Sept. 22, 1595? Quarto, 1597. Performed at Court, perhaps by an adult company, during the inhibition of Paul's boys, in the mid-1590s. See Saccio, op. cit., p. 226.

6. S. Hilliard, 'Lyly's Midas as an Allegory of Tyranny' SEL xii (1972), 243-58.

making him suffer because he is still partly human. So much is in Lyly's source: but Lyly increases the moral weight of the story by adding to Midas' failings his inability to choose rightly as a ruler. In this respect Midas presents an admonitory image of kingship just as Cynthia presents an adulatory one: to put it very simply, while Cynthia has the free power to transform her subjects, Midas is himself transformed by his infirmities. The contrast, of course, is partly that of mode of treatment: Cynthia is beyond moral questionings, while Midas is placed in the frame of moral allegory.

The Woman in the Moone, on the other hand, presents the reverse of the image of love to be found in Lyly's other plays: it is constructed as an aetiological myth, demonstrating the origins of universal human frailty. Pandora's changeability, caused by the caprice of gods who are here both irresponsible and dangerous, is something that is at first imposed on her: but she grows into it, preferring to remain with the inconstant moon. This is a sustained piece of misogyny: but in addition, the play presents also a wholly pessimistic view of human nature, as of human love. It does so in conventional terms, anatomizing the folly and fickleness of women by linking each mood to the influence of a particular star: perhaps because of this, the mood of the play is colder and more satirical than what is to be found anywhere else in Lyly.

I have ended with these two plays which seem to reverse the images of the former ones: but by doing so, they may throw those images into relief. Lyly's most characteristic uses of transformation are in the positive contexts I have outlined, the contexts of love and of royal power. It becomes, for him, a way of reconciling opposites in experience and expectation, whether in the frustrations of love or in the life of a courtier.

Chapter IV

Spenser: The Faerie Queene

In discussing The Faerie Queene I come to the most important elaboration of my general study of the Renaissance use of metamorphosis as metaphor, symbol or allegory. With Spenser such use may be seen as reaching maturity, and attaining also the greatest complexity, variety and depth to be found in English Renaissance writing. We are no longer at the level of Lyly's light through learned classicism, where transformations are chiefly borrowed from classical mythology, and redirected in the spirit of a Renaissance entertainment. We had noticed three main impulses in Lyly's employment of the figure of transformation: an Erasmian vein of instruction through moralizing of myth, a courtly vein of compliment through converting the sovereign to a classical deity with the power to transform, and an essentially Neoplatonic sense of love as an agent of metamorphosis. Lyly too is fascinated by the myth of metamorphosis, but his use of it is not profound. Spenser on the contrary is one of the profoundest of poets, and his fascination works itself out in a variety of ways, none of them simple.

Certainly it is not a simple question of a debt to Ovid. It is astonishing that this debt has not yet merited a book, but it has been studied incidentally by many commentators on the poem, and in extenso by C.R. Edwards in his 1958 Yale University dissertation, Spenser and the Ovidian Tradition. Edwards' study is more about Spenser and Ovid than about the Ovidian tradition. We should note, however, that Spenser's use of metamorphosis is by no means tied to his use of Ovid, and indeed the search for specific classical debts tends to obscure the importance of transformation as a general theme in the work. It is true that Ovid seems to be the poet, even more than Virgil, from whom Spenser inherits a whole quality of sensibility: but Spenser's sensibility is ultimately his own,

and it leads him to view his world in a unique way.

I do not argue that Spenser's attitude towards his materials is like that of Ovid. Robert Durling, in an important and elegant study, The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic (Cambridge, Mass. 1965), finds much to contrast in the poetic presences of Ovid and Spenser.¹ Durling's discussion of Ovid is confined to the poet of the Amores, the Ars amatoria and the Remedia amoris, but his conclusions could be extended to the author of the Metamorphoses as well. Ovid tends, by a variety of manipulative devices, to draw our attention to his narrative virtuosity; he minimizes the moral and tragic qualities of the myths he retells; and he characteristically displays an ironic levity very unlike the seriousness and sense of mystery that mark Virgil's handling of myth. To a considerable extent, these qualities reappear in Ariosto's manipulation of the poetic world of the Orlando Furioso. Ariosto too reminds us constantly of his presence as manipulator: he ranges freely over the enormous richness and variety of his narrative materials, choosing which to develop and which to hold in reserve. His delight in displaying the devices of this control is comparable to Ovid's manifest skill in 'linking' various episodes, the mira virtus continuationis so severely castigated by Quintilian:

illa vero frigida et puerilis est in scholis adfectatio, ut ipse transitus efficiat aliquam utique sententiam et huius velut praestigiae plausum petat, ut Ovidius lascivire in Metamorphose~~sin~~ solet, quem tamen excusare necessitas potest res diversissimas in speciem unius corporis colligentem.²

These affinities were noted in the Renaissance because of the indefensible success of both poets. Minturno is forced to admire Ovid's technique,³ and Cinthio Giraldi uses him as an example of the successful transgression of epic rules.⁴ Finally, however, the argument about the episodic structure of the romanzi ends in a debate between multiplicity and unity. Tasso launches into a metaphysical flight:

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1. See also the conclusions of Michael Holahan in his article, 'Iamque opus exegi: Ovid's Changes and Spenser's Brief Epic of Mutability' ELR vi (1976), 244-70.
 2. Inst. Or. iv.1.77.
 3. L'arte poetica del Sig. Antonio Minturno (Venice, 1564) p.34.
 4. Cinthio Giraldi, Scritti estetici (Milan, 1864) i. 51.

se l'unità porta in sua natura perfezione, ed imperfezione la moltitudine, se i pitagorici numerano l'una fra' beni e l'altra fra' mali, se questa a la materia s'attribuisce e quella a la forma, perché ne la buona fauola ancora de l'epopeia non sarà ricercata l'unità? ¹

Ariosto's poem has more excuse for unity than Ovid's, and indeed he insists on the coherence of his narrative and the rationale of his method far more than does Ovid, who, content that his should be a carmen perpetuum, submits his poem more readily to the swirling multiplicity of the myths he recounts. Nevertheless, the Orlando Furioso does not display the prescriptive Horatian lucidus ordo: it is the satirical Horace whom Ariosto imitates when, in a famous passage, he characterises both the universal madness of love and the world of his poem.

Varii gli effetti son, ma la pazzia
È tutt'una però, che li fa uscire;
Gli è come una gran selva, ove la via
Convieni a forza, a chi vi va, fallire:
Chi su, chi giù, chi qua, chi là, travia;
(OF xxiv.2) ²

Nunc accipe, quare
desipiant omnes aequae ac tu, qui tibi nomen
insano posuere. velut silvis, ubi passim
palantis error certo de tramite pellit,
ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit, unus utriusque
error, sed variis illudit partibus;
(Horace, Satires ii.3.47-51) ³

Ariosto treats his subject with Ovidian wit and self-mockery; like Ovid too, he is conscious of the multiplicity of human motives and actions. His world is, though on a different level from that of the Metamorphoses, one of flux and change. The Orlando Furioso is the great Renaissance example of the mixed, multiple and inclusive epic, its variety of episodes flowing one into the other, which, though it might organize itself around Virgilian parallels,⁴ nevertheless in its tone and atmosphere suggests the changeful narrative of the later books of the Metamorphoses.

Spenser adopts Ariosto's discursive method of narration, but with important changes that entirely alter the relation subsisting between the poet and his world.

1. Discorsi del poema eroico, III, in T. Tasso, Prose ed. E. Mazzali (Milan, 1959) p. 574
2. All quotations from Orlando Furioso, ed. N. Zingarelli (Milan, 1944).
3. From the edition of H. R. Fairclough (Loeb, Cam. Mass. 1929)
4. For the Virgilian parallels, see Pio Rajna, Le fonti dell'Orlando Furioso (Florence, 1900)

In the first place, the nature of Spenser's material enforces a radical conversion of Ariosto's vein of irony to the fine discriminations of our sage and serious poet. In the second place, Ariosto's naturalism (and this in spite of Astolfo's visit to the moon with St. John¹) is supplanted by a nature illumined by the light of the transcendental. Spenser's overgoing of Ariosto is accomplished by a re-organization of the complex and various Ariostan epic world in spiritual and moral terms - expressed in allegory - which justify its richness and relate it insistently to our deepest concerns. The unity of the poem, therefore, is not as it is in Ariosto, fictive (though sustained by an analogy between the poet as creator, and the Creator of the world²) it is essential, established outside the poem by the necessary relationship of the virtues the poem allegorizes. This is not to say that the poem can do without traditional linking and unifying devices - there is of course the ubiquitous Prince Arthur. Nevertheless, in his epic of the institution of a hero, Spenser can assume a given principle of unity not available to Ariosto, writing of love's madness, or Ovid, writing of love's metamorphoses.

But if The Faerie Queene does not finally depend upon such defences of multiplicity of 'fable' in the epic poem as that supplied by Giraldi for Ariosto, it is nevertheless not single in its intention or effects. 'The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline'³, but our attention is drawn immediately to the book's variety of matter. We may adapt to Spenser Sir Isaiah Berlin's celebrated application of a Greek epigram to Tolstoy: while Ovid and Ariosto are clearly foxes, Spenser is a fox who wishes to be a hedgehog.⁴ The complexity and multiplicity of Spenser's poem have been universally recognized: its scope is *enormously* expansive, not simply because Spenser chooses to organize his poem as a series of actions, rather than, like Virgil or Tasso, as a total action, but because of the inclusive relations of allegory. The poem's allegory is not continuous but multiple, the narrative is polyphonic, the tone endlessly shifting, the poet's

1. OF, 35. 68 ff.

2. See Durling, The Figure of the Poet ed.cit., Ch.v, and 'The Divine Analogy in Ariosto' MLN .lxxviii (1963), 1-14.

3. Letter to Raleigh, Var.FQ.I. p.167

4. 'The Hedgehog and the Fox', 1953, in Russian Thinkers (London, 1978), pp.22,51.

subjects and models enormously varied. Spenser is a poet possessed by a hunger for multiplicity while attaching himself to the unity of a moral scheme.

It is true that Spenser seems to derive the idea for his poem from Virgil and from Renaissance views of the Aeneid¹. Nevertheless, his adoption of the Ariostan discursive narrator, binding together a rich variety of episodes and narrative threads, is significant. The flux and change which characterize the universes of both Ovid and Ariosto are marked also in the flux and reflux of the narrative: the Faerie Queene's pattern is stricter, but the richness of its imaginative texture is derived substantially from Ovid - not only in specific mythical allusions, but also in the whole theme of transformation and mutability.

We may in some sense see Spenser struggling with the rich, deceptive and changing Ovidian world in his poem: seeking to order it, as the mythographers do, through allegory: conscious of its potent image of universal natural processes: affected by the idea of love as an agent of transformation: and attempting to resolve its contradictions finally in the image of an upward transformation to spirit.

The Faerie Queene begins with the Redcrosse knight and Una entering the Wandering Wood. As they leave it, they encounter the shape-changer Archimago, who brings them to another forest:

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side
(FQ I. i. 34, 1-2).

Much of the action of the poem takes place in forests of this kind: the forest is indeed an image of its world, just as the 'gran selva' of madness or love is an image for the world of Orlando Furioso. The Wandering Wood is first described through a catalogue of trees ultimately derived from Ovid's Metamorphoses (x.90-104), where Ovid lists the trees which come to hear

1. See Letter to Raleigh, Var. FQ . I.p.167; Minturno, De Poeta (Venice, 1559), p.40, and J.C. Scaliger, Poetics libri septem (Lyons, 1561), III.xii, p.91 ff. Cf. also M.Y. Hughes, Virgil and Spenser (1929 rpt. Dallas, 1969), p.402.

Orpheus sing.¹ Spenser would not have been unconscious of this parallel, but there are other, more immediate sources for his tree-catalogue, as for his wood of error. Examining one of these passages may reveal something of the way in which Spenser uses his image.

Tasso offers us a tree-catalogue, in a different context, in the Gerusalemme Liberata:

L'un l'altro essorta che le piante attemi,
e faccia al bosco inusitati oltraggi.
Caggion recisi da i taglianti ferri
le sacre palme e i frassini selvaggi,
i funebri cipressi e i pini e i cerri,
l'elci frondose e gli alti abeti e i faggi,
gli olmi mariti, a cui talor s'appoggia
la vite, e con pie torto al ciel se'n poggia.

Altri i tassi e le quercie altri percote,
che mille volte rinovâr le chiome
e mille volte ad ogni incontro immote
l'ire de' venti han rintuzzate e dome;
ed altri impone a le stridenti rote
d'orni e di cedri l'odorate some.
Lasciano al suon de l'arme, al vario grido,
e le fere e gli augei la e'l nido.

(GL, iii.75 - 76)²

There is a clearly enforced contrast in Tasso between the spirit - or spirits - of this wood and the heroic enterprise of the Christian camp. For Goffredo the wood is a source of timber for 'engines to assault the town': it is cut down for this purpose when he first prepares to attack Jerusalem, and must be cleared by Rinaldo, in a critical proof of heroism, of the spirits which inhabit it before the timber can again be used for the city's final deliverance. For most of the poem, the forest is an image of that pagan space in which the knights wander and lose themselves before returning to the call of duty and virtue in the siege of Jerusalem. In an overwhelmingly important episode at the end (G.L. xviii. 11-39) Rinaldo prays, arms himself and goes to the enchanted grove to purge it. To do this he must withstand the temptations of the nymphs who issue from trees, and cut down the myrtle, Venus' tree as it is Armida's. The resolved Rinaldo thus stands

1. See Var. FQ.I. pp.179-81, and another parallel not noted there, in F. Colonna, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (1499) ed. G.Pozzi and L.A. Ciapponi (Padua, 1964), i. 5

2. All citations from T. Tasso, Poesie ed. F. Flora (Milan, 1952).

against the whole classical Ovidian forest, and rejects it; in destroying the wood he severs Armida from her pagan past. To do this, virtually without discrimination, is for Tasso a necessary prelude to the winning of the holy city.¹

This view of the Ovidian forest is important to Spenser's poem as well: but it is by no means the only, or even the dominant view. For the Faerie Queene the image of the forest is more all-embracing: we may recall another statement of Tasso's, where he compares the whole matter of poetry to a selva oscura:

e la materia è simile ad una selva oscura, tenebrosa e priva d'ogni luce. Laonde se l'arte non l'illumina, altri errarebbe senza scorta e sceglierebbe peravventura il peggio in cambio del meglio.²

Spenser's forest is, in fact, illuminated by art: it is a fictional landscape of topoi, emblematic beasts, symbolic structures and allegorical personages blending into a pastoral, mythological, and sometimes historical background. Nevertheless, he is conscious of the difficulty of finding his way in it:

Ye sacred imps, that on Parnasso dwell ...
 Guyde ye my footing, and conduct me well
 In these strange waies, where neuer foote did vse
 Ne none can find, but who was taught them by the Muse.
 (FQ VI. Proem 2)

But while the poet himself, guided by the Muse, can say that his 'course is often stayd, yet neuer is astray' (FQ. VI xii, 1) it is otherwise with Redcrosse at the very start of the poem, upon his entry into the Wandering Wood. Commentators rightly point out the parallel with Dante's 'selva oscura':³ more comprehensive and significant than that with a common element of all romance, the forests through which knights journey and lose their way.⁴ William Nelson makes another important connection, with the Aeneid: in the first book Aeneas enters a dark wood where he meets his mother and learns of his recovered fleet, and in the sixth he wanders in the forests of the underworld in his search for the golden bough.

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1. The immediate sources for this episode are Ariosto, Cinque Canti II. 101 ff. and Lucan, Pharsalia, III.373-453. Rinaldo re-enacts Erisichthon's crime in Metamorphoses VIII. 738-76. See Milton, On the morning of Christ's Nativity, XX.
 2. Discorsi del poema Eroico, II : Prose, ed. cit. p. 514.
 3. Inferno, I.i : and Convivio IV.24 on the 'selva erronea di questa vita' (Opere, ed. Moore, p. 329).
 4. See J. Arthos, On the Poetry of Spenser and the Form of Romances (London, 1956) p. 59 f.

Servius explains silva in Aeneid I.314 as corresponding to the Greek hyle, or first matter:

Quam Graeci ὕλην vocant, poetae nominant sylvam, id est elementorum congierem, unde cuncta procreantur.

For the episode of the sixth book there is a more orthodox explanation of forests as places where beastliness and passion predominate.¹ The emphasis of the second explanation clearly fits it to moral allegory, such as that of the Wandering Wood, but for the general image of the forest in The Faerie Queene it is the first explanation that is most interesting.

The multiplicity of The Faerie Queene is, then, represented in the most characteristic image of its world. The forest is a place of diverse choices, a conglomerate of elements out of which all things are created: essentially, therefore, it is a place of transformations. For Ovid this is certainly so: its very natural features are in his poem the result of metamorphoses. Spenser is not writing a poem like the Metamorphoses, but the world of his poem too is a world in flux. It is appropriate therefore that it should begin with the most traditional image of diversity, multiplicity, and change.

In analysing Spenser's use of the idea of transformation in The Faerie Queene, I shall discuss, first, the fluidity of physical nature in the world of the poem. I shall then consider the thematic importance of deception, and the more serious implications of metamorphosis as moral allegory. Thirdly, I shall look at the use of classical myths of metamorphosis and independent mythologizing in this kind: and fourthly, the transformations of nature as opposed to those of art. Finally, I shall examine the theme of mutability in the poem, especially in its relation to transformation rather than simply change in all its aspects. It will obviously be difficult to keep any of these divisions separate, and to some extent all such schemes are arbitrary

¹ The Poetry of Edmund Spenser (New York, 1963) p.159. Nelson implies that Servius is the first to connect silva with hyle, but the connexion is derived from Calcidius, e.g. Comm. in Tim. CXXIII: ed. Waszink, p.167. It was thought to be etymological. See also the definition of the short poem called sylva: Scaliger, op. cit. III. 100, p.150.

and inadequate. Nevertheless, if the infinite shapes of creatures bred in The Faerie Queene by such labours convince us that the poem is one of those which 'by their change their being do dilate' we may hope that it will 'worke its owne perfection so by fate', turning to itself at length again.

I. Physical nature

Wordsworth, in the 1815 Preface, speaks of 'the conferring, the abstracting and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting', and proceeds to analyse one of his most Spenserian passages, the one in Resolution and Independence :

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
 Wonder to all who do the same espy
 By what means it could thither come, and whence,
 So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
 Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
 Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun himself.

Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead
 Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.
 (57-65)

Wordsworth points out how in this passage the images are so treated as to grow, by a sort of imaginative metamorphosis, into each other: 'the stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison.'

Wordsworth is engaged in analysing a particularly subtle and memorable instance of epic simile. It would be interesting to apply the same technique to his great master in the art of epic simile, Spenser: but that would take me too far out of my course. I should like to stress, rather, the characteristically Wordsworthian approximation' of organic life to inorganic object, and the fusion of the two in a strange but powerful half-life. This may help to illuminate a

process we mark continually in the poetry of Spenser, the interaction and interchange of qualities between the animate and the inanimate. We may begin by looking at a striking passage from Colin Clouts Come Home Againe:

For as we stood there waiting on the strond,
Behold an huge great vessell to us came,
Dauncing upon the waters back to lond,
As if it scornd the daunger of the same,
Yet was it but a wooden frame and fraile,
Glewed together with some subtile matter,
Yet had it armes and wings, and head and taile,
And life to moue itself upon the water.
(212-219)

The ship here both is and is not a ship: its motion seems miraculous, transforming it, through the amazement of the beholder, to some strange sea-monster, at once artificial and animate. Jortin refers us to a passage in Cicero's De Natura Deorum,¹ quoting Accius' Medea, but a classical parallel for the shepherd Colin's naive wonder does not explain the quality of this passage. The ship is not straightforwardly imagined as a sea-dragon or monster of the deep: its hold on the imagination is derived from the fact that it is a mechanical monster, so to speak. The wooden frame glued together is imbued with life, and that this should be so is a source of fascination.

Physical objects, and even physical persons, seem often in the world of The Faerie Queene to be suspended or moving between different states of being: between animate and inanimate, abstract and concrete, organic and inorganic, image and meaning. Spenser suggests the processes of transformation not simply through elaborate Ovidian fictions, but through the ways in which physical nature is represented.

We may consider the descriptions of Acrasia's bower, a place, as is traditionally recognized, of surpassing art. It is, however, an art which simulates nature, and such nature as is present emulates art:

so cunningly, the rude,
And scorned parts were mingled with the fine
(II.xii. 59,1-2).

This natural-artificial mingling is most subtly expressed in a riot of pathetic fallacy. The eroticism of the bower invests all physical objects with a human

1. Var. Minor Poems I. p.460: Cicero, De nat. deor. II.89

wantonness. Guyon, entering the garden, comes to the gate

No gate, but like one, being goodly dight
 With boughes and braunches, which did broad dilate
 Their clasping armes, in wanton wreathings intricate.
 (II. xii. 53, 7-9)

The image is further complicated by the introduction of artificial embellishments which go even further in appropriating to themselves the qualities of a different state of being. The 'embracing vine' of the porch is laden with fruit:

Some as the Rubine, laughing sweetly red,
 Some like faire Emeraudes, not yet well ripened.

And them amongst, some were of burnisht gold,
 So made by art,

(II. xii. 54-5; 8-9,1-2)

The first jewels mentioned are there as similes; but this is merely preparatory to the discovery of actual wealth lurking concealed in the foliage. This tree is not like the one in Proserpina's garden: there we have literally a realm of gold, whereas here we have a realm of transformations.

What Acrasia does to her victims is early adumbrated in what is going on amidst the foliage of her bower: not merely in the golden fruit, but in the golden ivy (II.xii.61). These camouflaged riches are not simply the typical ornamentation of a garden of earthly delights; what is more interesting is that its simulation is informed by a typically human lasciviousness, in another triumph of pathetic fallacy:

Low his lasciuious armes adown did creepe,
 That themselues dipping in the siluer dew,
 Their fleecy flowres they tenderly did steepe,
 (II.xii.61,6-8)

C.W.Lemmi comments on the association of the ivy with lust; here and elsewhere, Spenser clearly intends us to be aware of this association. Nevertheless, the real emphasis of the passage seems to be on the confusion of states, an impure mingling of organic and inorganic; not so much art striving to compare with nature as art imbued with an excess of natural life. And just as the 'dead' foliage of the bower shares in a frightening excess of vitality, so the actions of the real

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1. Cf. Poliziano, Stanze per la Giostra I. 94-7; George of Montemayor, Diana tr. B.Yong, ed. T.M.Kennedy (Oxford, 1968) p.143 → All citations of Poliziano are from his Rime ed. N Sapegno (Rome, 1949).
2. Var.FQ. II pp. 382-3

combination of lust and sloth. The Ovidian story is thus particularly suited to moral allegory, and Renaissance writers are not slow to provide it.¹ Indeed, without the Ovidian reminiscence and its Renaissance allegorization, Spenser's story of a lazy nymph does not fully account for the corrupting influence of the fountain upon Redcrosse:

Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame,
 Poured out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd,
 Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame:
 (I.vii.7, 1-3)

An opposite quality, that of purity, is lent by another nymph of Diana to the fountain where Guyon attempts to wash Ruddymane's hands clean (II.ii). This nymph actually is metamorphosed - like Niobe, she becomes an ever-weeping stone effigy. The details of the metamorphosis are Ovidian: much as in I.vii, Spenser constructs a pseudo-Ovidian tale of pursuit, prayer to Diana, and sudden change. Preservation of chastity through metamorphosis is very much an Ovidian convention: we see it in the transformations of Daphne and Syrinx, and at least in intention in that of Arethusa. Others are transformed through grief, like Cyane, the Sicilian nymph, who became a fountain.

It is this sort of Ovidian myth which provides the classical background for free invention in Renaissance Italian and Neolatin poetry of myths of locality which invest features of landscape, especially rocks, rivers and fountains, with special properties. Boccaccio mythologizes freely in his pastoral works on this basic pattern of nymphs transformed through the anger or pity of Diana: we have a whole landscape of such figures in Il Ninfale Fiesolano, where the nymph Mensola is ultimately transformed into a river. In Lorenzo de' Medici's Ambra, the nymph of that name, pursued by a river-god, is changed into a rock; and similar myths of locality feature in the Latin poems of Giovanni Pontano. A great storehouse of such tales, obviously, is Solinus' Polyhistor: and Alastair Fowler indeed suggests that some of the details of Spenser's allegory in this

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1. Cf. B. Aneau, Picta Poesis (Leiden, 1564) p.33: 'Fons Salmacidos. Libido effoeminans'
 2. Eg. 'Ad Musam, de conversione Sebethi in fluvium' in Poesie Latine, ed. L.M.Sabia (1964 rpt. Turin, 1977) i. 128-32.

episode are borrowed from Solinus.¹

It is not novel to mythologize the origins or special properties of a fountain, but the freshness and dignity with which Spenser invests a pseudo-Ovidian myth are remarkable, and they derive at least partly from his skill at working the object and the quality together:

Lo now she is that stone, from whos two heads,
 As from two weeping eyes, fresh streames do flow,
 Yet cold through feare, and old conceiued dreads;
 And yet the stone her semblance seemes to show,
 Shapt like a maid, that such ye may her know;
 And yet her vertues in her water byde:

(II.ii.9, 1-6)

The nymph's 'stony feare' is responsible for her petrification: her chastity remains in her waters. At the same time, there is a clear allegorical link between the 'stedfast virgin' and the rock to which she is transformed, the rock of faith or of Christ,² from which flows the water of doctrine.³

The nymph in one sense is metamorphosed into an allegory: and remarkably, we can see this in the change of narrative tone, from Ovidian tale ('Dan Faunus chaunst to meet her by the way') to the Palmer's solemn injunction: 'This babes bloody hand/ May not be clensd with water of this well' (II.ii.10,1-2). As in Ovid, the essence of character survives the change: but in the very process, we come to see these spiritual qualities, and the object which embodies them, in a more abstract light. Thus this is not simply an attaching, after the manner of Bersuire, of Christian allegory to classical myth. So completely are subject, quality, and object interfused that the Ovidian transformation seems simply to concretize the common emblems of Christian faith.

A third metamorphosis in the first two books of The Faerie Queene is that of Fradubio (I.ii.30-43). Here too we have an interesting mixture of human and vegetable attributes: blood trickles from the wound when the Redcrosse knight breaks off a branch from the tree into which Fradubio has been transformed. In itself,

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1. 'Emblems of Temperance in the Faerie Queene, Book II' RES n.s.xi (1960). 148 : Solinus, Collectanea rerum memorabilium ed. T.Mommsen (Berlin,1895) p 51, an account of the river Diana, in Sicily.
 2. I. Corinthians x.4
 3. See Fowler, 'Emblems of Temperance,' p.148, citing Bersuire's allegorization of the Solinus passage, and 'The Image of Mortality: The Faerie Queene,II.i-ii' HLQ xxiv (1961), 91-110

however, this detail is not original: although it is not in Spenser's main source for the whole episode, Ariosto's account of the metamorphosis of Astolfo in Orlando Furioso (VI.26 ff.) it is a striking element in other parallel episodes, especially those in the Inferno (XIII.31-45) and in the Aeneid (III.24-46).

Of these the most haunting is the Dante episode, in the Wood of the Suicides: Fradubio too is in some sense a suicide. But Spenser elaborates upon his continued human suffering in the transformed, and non-human state:

in open plaines,
Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleake,
And scorching Sunne does dry my secret vaines:
For though a tree I seeme, yet cold and heat me paines.
(I.ii.33, 6-9)

Having sinned in the flesh Fradubio is imprisoned in the flesh; his transformation to a tree reverses the ancient image of man as an inverted tree, his root in heaven rather than on earth.¹ He must therefore continue to suffer in the flesh; metamorphosis is for him not a solution to, but a perpetuation of this suffering. Transformations to animal or plant are commonly allegorized in the Renaissance as the reduction of the human soul, through abdication of her nobler powers, to her merely sensitive or vegetative existence. The deeper implications of the Fradubio episode are theological: Fradubio has enacted Adam's fall², and cannot be retransformed until he is regenerated, 'bathed in a liuing well' (I.ii.43,4). Yet the particular quality of the episode derives from its physical details, and especially from the confusion of physical attributes, which indeed enforce its moral meaning. Fradubio has become a tree, but he is not one: his capacity for suffering is the mark of his humanity. Spenser's spiritual allegory of transformation here converts the details of pagan animism - the sensitive plant - into a profoundly Christian distinction. Man can be so transformed by his lower nature that he is virtually unrecognizable. In a more

1. Timaeus, 90a.

2. See Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser, pp.162-3. and J.Nohrnberg, The Analogy of the Faerie Queene (Princeton, 1980) pp.161-6

profound sense, all men are so transformed by the sin of Adam. But this metamorphosis does not release him from the requirements of his human birth: it makes these requirements more painful and more pressing. The impossibility of ever losing this responsibility is what distinguishes the condition of man. I am conscious that in saying this, I ignore such figures as Grille (II.xii.86-7) and Adicia (V.viii.49). The allegory there is, I think, of a different kind: they are exempla, illustrating particular extremes of degeneration. Fradubio's position is more representative: the theological allegory urged by commentators indeed confirms this. What is remarkable about Spenser's presentation of these ideas is their concretization in the physical details of the story: the interpenetration of human and vegetative natures that calls our attention to its illegitimacy.

But this confusion and interpenetration of states is not simply an aid to allegory: it is present in the whole physical world of the poem. In the rejected ending to Bk III, Amoret and Scudamour embracing are compared not to a living, but to a marble hermaphrodite: in the image, flesh hardens, almost is purified to stone, to marble washed in a bath:

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

There is a reminiscence here of an epigram in the Greek Anthology¹, as well as, possibly, of Ariosto and Ovid. Nevertheless, the image stands out amongst the multitude of more conventional lapidary images employed by classical and Renaissance poets: it has a peculiar quality of unexpectedness. At the same time, of course, the marbling of Amoret and Scudamour removes the shock of the comparison, especially of its physical implications.

The other extreme of this perception of flesh hardening to stone is to see flesh as softened into permeable matter, penetrated even by sunlight, as with Chrysogone in III.vi:

1. Greek Anthology, ed. + tr. W. R. Paton (Loeb, London, 1917) vol. iii. no. 783 ; and OF X.96-9, describing Angelica tied to the rock, imitated from Met. IV. 671-4, describing Andromeda.

The sunne-beames bright vpon her body playd,
 Being through former bathing mollifide,
 And pierst into her wombe,
 (III.vi.7, 5-7)

The physical theory behind this generation is the mutual attraction and interpenetration of the elements: it is through the interaction of moisture and heat that life is born 'discors concordia fetibus apta est' (Met. I.433) But such mixtures can also become dangerous and corruptive. Certain perverse parallels to the physical details of Chrysogone's conception of Belphoebe and Amoret exist in the physical atmosphere of the Bower of Bliss. Acrasia, lying upon a bed of roses, is clad in a veil which seems like 'scorched deaw':

Her snowy brest was bare to readie spoyle
 Of hungry eies, which n'ote therewith be fild,
 And yet through languow of her late sweet toyle,
 Few drops, more cleare than Nectar, forth distild,
 That like pure Orient perles adowne it trild,
 And her faire eyes sweet smyling in delight,
 Moystened their fierie beames,
 (II. xii.78, 1-7)

Here too is a mixture of water and fire, but as an image of that kind of mingling of the elements which Comes takes Circe to represent in the physical allegory.¹

This doubleness is characteristic of Spenser's images throughout the whole poem: each one has its corrupt parallel or complement. Describing Chrysogone's conception of the twins, Spenser returns to one of the first Ovidian similes in The Faerie Queene (I. i.21), that of the creatures formed in the Nile mud through the action of the sun's rays:

Miraculous may seeme to him, that reades
 So straunge ensample of conception;
 But reason teacheth that the fruitfull seades
 Of all things liuing, through impression
 Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion,
 Doe life conceiue and quickned are by kynd:
 So after Nilus invndation,
 Infinite shapes of creatures men do fynd,
 Informed in the mud, on which the Sunne hath shynd.
 (III. vi. 8)

Earlier the image had described the teeming spawn of Error: here it communicates

1. Comes, VI. 6, p. 377.

an excited absorption in the essential metamorphosis of creation, the conversion of earth to living beings:

sic ubi deseruit madidos septemfluis agros
 Nilus et antiquo sua flumina reddidit alveo
 aetherioque recens exarsit sidere limus
 plurima cultores versis animalia glaebis
 inveniunt et in his quaedam modo coepta per ipsum
 nascendi spatium, quaedam imperfecta suisque
 trunca vident numeris, et eodem in corpore saepe
 altera pars vivit, rudis est pars altera tellus.
 (Met. I. 422-9)

In the Metamorphoses as a whole, the first forming of animal life, and of the human body, is an epitome of the positive process of transformation. Prometheus, moulding man from clay, gives forms and shapes to the whole earth 'tellus induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras' (I. 87-9). These descriptions, like that of the gradual softening into shape of the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha, display both an imaginative fascination with this process of - we may say - matter receiving form, and a sense of the importance of this change as expressing the duality of human nature. For Ovid, the hardening of flesh back to stone - as with the Propoetides (X. 238-42) - is often an image of regression.

Spenser, in his use of the creation myths from the first book of the Metamorphoses, shows both an Ovidian fascination with the process of hard objects being mollified into soft, yielding flesh, of spontaneous generation from hot moist earth, and a sense of the implications of this image as an allegory of the humanizing of man, as it would be seen in the Renaissance.¹ While in the sixth canto of the third book, in the account of Chrysogone's conception of Belpheobe and Amoret, and in the Garden of Adonis, it is the physical processes of generation that seem specially to concern him, in the Proem to Book V, he turns to the moral and allegorical implications of the myth. The Ovidian myth of the second creation of men out of stones is here involved with another of the myths of the first book, that of the four ages of the world:

1. cf. Boccaccio, Genealogie deorum, IV. xlv : ed. V. Romano (Bari, 1951) i.198.

For from the golden age, that first was named,
 It's now at earst become a stonie one;
 And men themselves, the which at first were framed
 Of earthly mould, and form'd of flesh and bone,
 Are now transformed into hardest stone:
 Such as behind their backs (so backward bred)
 Were throwne by Pyrrha and Deucalione:
 And if then those may any worse be red,
 They into that ere long will be degenerated.

(V. Proem 2)

Just as the world grows 'daily wourse and wourse', so men too progressively regain in spirit the physical quality of their first being. We find a similar sentiment in Chapman's Shadow of Night. The hardening of human hearts provides the real motive for the decay of the world and the apparent degeneration of the cosmic scheme. The excited absorption in the physical miracle of generation, in the third book, is here succeeded by a melancholy conviction of man's degeneration from spirit to mere matter.

In the fifth book itself the whole world is seen under the aspect of one metal, iron; the classical metaphor of an iron age is translated into concrete emblems, so that the earth seems indeed to have undergone a physical transformation. The instrument of Artegall's justice is the iron man Talus: but his opponents too bear iron weapons and are clad in iron armour. Sir Terpine is fettered in iron by Radigund; Artegall attacks her in single combat 'as if she had an yron anduile beene', and is later bound with 'cold yron chaines' in an iron prison. The Souldan in Canto VIII rides in a chariot 'with yron wheelles and hookes arm'd dreadfully', and is clothed in rusty armour; the same iron hooks reappear on the staff of Malengin in the next canto (V. ix. 11). Geryoneo has a huge iron axe, and Grantorto in the final episode appears dreadfully clad in a 'a cote of yron plate',

And in his hand an huge Polaxe did beare,
 Whose steale was yron studded, but not long,
 With which he went to fight, to iustifie his wrong.

(V. xii.14, 7-9)

While iron seems thus to symbolize the spirit of this fallen age, it is at the same time the stern symbol of the lex talionis¹. The kind of justice

1. See Augustine, De civitate Dei XXI. 11; ed. J. L. Vives (Basel, 1522), p. 726

executed by Talus is that of punishment fitting the crime; as Hooker says, laws of arms and laws politic are equally framed upon depraved nature,

'presuming man to be in regard of his depraved mind little better than a wild beast'.¹

Another aspect of the iron age imagery is also interesting. Most classical writers emphasise the coming, with the iron age, of the mechanical arts;² in the fifth book of The Faerie Queene there is an emphasis on engines and machines, usually of war, and Talus is himself a kind of mechanical contrivance.

Talus is modelled, as commentators since Warton have pointed out, on the bronze giant Talos who ran round Crete thrice a day and displayed the laws of Minos on brazen tablets. Warton quotes the Pseudo-Platonic account of this wonderful creature in Minos 320 C, and cites other important descriptions, notably by Apollonius Rhodius and Apollodorus.³ One interesting element of both these last two accounts is Talos' combination of human vulnerability with metallic strength: the giant's lifeblood is contained in a single vein running from his neck to his ankle.⁴ Spenser omits this feature: his allegorical ends in the fifth book require that Talus be 'Immowearable, resistless, without end', wholly metallic and completely invulnerable.

An interesting analogue to Talus is the golden porter in the Cave of Mammon, who is called Disdain. Just as in Book V things are seen under the aspect of iron, so in the Cave of Mammon everything is formed of precious metals, especially gold. It has long been remarked that the action and moral temper of Book II are in some ways paralleled by those of Book V.⁵ There is also a striking use of emblematic materials and objects in both books. The Book of Temperance is also, obviously, set formally in an iron age; though not stressed throughout as in the Book of Justice, this is indicated in the use of emblematic materials in the Cave of Mammon. It was after all in the iron age, as Spenser says in a passage echoing Ovid, that

1. Works, ed. J. Keble, R. W. Church, and F. Paget (Oxford, 1888), i. 240.

2. Cf. Virgil, Georgics I. 143-5.

3. Observations on the Fairy Queen of Spenser (London, 1807) i. 135ff.

4. Argonautica IV. 1648; Bibliotheca I. 9. 26.

5. Cf. T.P. Roche, The Kindly Flame (Princeton, 1964) pp. 200-10; Nohrnberg, Analogy, ed. cit. pp. 352-71.

gan a cursed hand the quiet wombe
 Of his great Grandmother with steele to wound,
 And the hid treasures in her sacred tombe,
 With Sacriledge to dig. Therein he found
 Fountaines of gold and siluer to abound,
 (II.vii. 17, 1-5)

Ovid connects iron with gold in its banefulness; 'iamque nocens ferrum ferroque nocentius aurum/ prodierat' (I. 141-2) in Mammon's underworld realm iron doors, and 'huge great yron chests and coffers strong' conceal vast heaps of gold.

In this realm gold is to be found in such profusion that it is clearly an obscene parody of a golden age. All values here are reduced to money, though, in moral terms, we must be conscious with Guyon of the equation of money with muck:

Regard of worldly mucke doth fowly blend,
 And low abase the high heroicke spright,
 (II.vii.10,5-6)

Guyon makes an explicit contrast between the golden age of the world's youth and this realm of gold, an underworld of sin and decay, (II. vii. 16).

It is appropriate then that this world should have its own antithesis to Talus in the golden porter with an 'yron club' who guards the gate to the palace of Philotime:

A sturdy villein, striding stiffe and bold,
 As if that highest God defie he would;
 In his right hand an yron club he held,
 But he himselfe was all of golden mould,
 Yet had both life and sence, and well could weld
 That cursed weapon, when his cruell foes he queld.
 (II.vii.40, 4-9)

While Talus cannot be exactly reduced to an allegorical personification, this golden giant is actually identified as Disdain. He is associated with those giants 'of Titans race' who formerly rebelled against Jove; traditional types of pride and defiance of divinity, who are placed by Dante at the very bottom of the eighth circle, guarding the pit of Hell.¹ But like Talus, this figure too is a robot, a metallic giant with both 'life and sence'. He is allied thereby with the strange creatures of romance (the brass guards with iron flails in

1. Inferno , XXXI

Huon of Bordeaux have been mentioned by many critics in connexion with Talus)¹:
 he is wonderful and concrete, but is immediately, in a remarkable display of allegorical ruthlessness, turned into something typical and abstract.

Talus has a larger part in the narrative, and never quite becomes abstract in the same way : his relentless energy draws our attention to what he is made of just as much as to what he does. This is emphasized in a rare moment of weakness, when Talus is breaking the news of Artegall's imprisonment to Britomart :

The yron man, albe he wanted sence
 And sorowes feeling, yet with conscience
 Of his ill newes, did inly chill and quake,
 And stood still mute, as one in great suspence,
(V.vi.9, 4-7)

This attribution of pity to the iron creature, like the tears of Milton's Satan, is one of Spenser's most interesting anomalies. One might say that this not so much an animation or humanizing of Talus as a transformation in the mode of the narrative. While the quest of Artegall and Talus and their joint punishment of error and depravity falls into the framework of moral allegory, with these two agents as representative figures in the deepest sense, at this point in Book V the narrative mode has changed (or relapsed, if we look back to Books III and IV) to that of novelistic romance. The human reality of Britomart's love enforces an infusion of 'sorowes feeling' into the semi-abstraction, the metal man Talus. This brief transformation of narrative mode in fact momentarily permits us to see the iron age as capable of transformation through the forces of love and pity, just as Talus is momentarily humanized: a rare occurrence in this generally grim book.

We may relate Spenser's fascination with the mechanical virtuosity of Talus to his interest in the mechanics of actually producing a robot. Two such figures play important parts in the action of The Faerie Queene; the false Una in Book I, and the false Florimell in Books III and IV. The false Una is created by Archimago expressly for the purpose of deception and dissimulation; indeed

1. Berners, Huon of Bordeaux ed. S. Lee (EETS extra series, xl, London, 1882), i. p. 98. See J. Aptekar, Icons of Justice (New York, 1969) p. 44.

Una herself is not named until her double is made. Archimago appears here very much in the role of a necromancer: he forms a woman out of a 'spright' by means of 'charmes and hidden artes'. Like Pygmalion, Archimago is entranced by his own handiwork: 'The maker selfe for all his wondrous witt,/ Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight' (I. i. 45, 6-7). But appropriately for one who deceives by night and in sleep, the false Una is made of air; she is scarcely conceived of as an actual apparition, but rather as a mirage, an illusion.

The false Florimell is on the other hand overwhelmingly concrete, an artificial beauty constructed of the stock images of a blazon: she is made of snow, wax, vermilion, burning lamps 'in siluer sockets' and golden wire. All this is quickened by mercury, and by 'a Spright to rule the carkasse dead' (III. viii. 6,7). What the witch has accomplished is the dream of the Renaissance magus, the creation of a human robot animated by spirits under the magus' control. Essentially, however, the figure is formed of the elements that constitute the catalogue of a mistress's charms in Renaissance, especially Petrarchan, love-poetry; and in stressing the word 'dead' at the end of his description, Spenser emphasises the improper simulation of organic life by inorganic matter. Petrarch himself codifies, and indeed to some extent dehumanizes Laura's beauties :

La testa or fino e calda neve il volto,
 Ebene i cigli e gli occhi eran due stelle,
 Onde Amor l'arco non tendeva in fallo;
 Perle e rose vermiglie, ove l'accolto
 Dolor formava ardenti voci e belle;
 Fiamma i sospir, le lagrime cristallo.¹

Spenser breaks these metaphors down to their constituents and employs them as substances; the process seems to be more than simple parody. The deadness of the false Florimell is due to a deliberate withholding of animation by the poet; the witch creating her is the type of the accurate but uninspired artist.

We may set beside this passage a remarkable description of Belpheobe in Book II, conceived in virtually similar images:

1. Rime sparse, 157, 9-14.

Her face so faire as flesh it seemed not,
 But heavenly pourtraict of bright Angels hew,
 Cleare as the skie, withouten blame or blot,
 Through goodly mixture of complexions dew,
 And in her cheekes the vermeill red did shew
 Like roses in a bed of lillies shed,
 The which ambrosiall odours from them threw,
 And gazers sense with double pleasure fed,
 Hable to heale the sicke, and to reuiue the ded.

In her faire eyes two liuing lamps did flame,
 Kindled aboue at th'heauenly makers light,
 And darted fyrie beames out of the same,

(II.iii. 22, 23, 1-3)

The succeeding stanzas compare her forehead to an ivory table, her lips and teeth to rubies and pearls, her hair to golden wire. Nevertheless, Belphoebe's beauty involves these other images of perfection naturally: she vivifies them. Thus her loveliness is of the kind that can 'revive the ded'; because she is herself a divine creation, the poet describing her can range freely amongst natural, human, and cosmic images of perfect beauty. Indeed the ten remarkable stanzas devoted to this description seem constantly to transform and reconstitute her out of these various elements. She remains not a single creation but a paragon, an inclusive vision of all states and kinds of beauty. In a sense such a vision anthropomorphizes the universe; Belphoebe, shifting as we watch her between all the phenomena of physical nature, confers to all the particular miracle of her own beauty. Her involvement with the beauty of nature is even actual:

As through the flouing forrest rash she fled,
 In her rude haire sweet flowres themselues did lap,
 And flourishing fresh leaues and blossomes did enwrap.

(F.Q.II. iii.30, 7-9)

The false Florimell, on the other hand, remains a false 'animation' of dead elements; another allusion in her composition is obviously to the heartless court beauty, the 'Petrarchan' coquette, icy because she is made of snow. Not for her the Petrarchan oxymoron of 'calda neve'. She remains at the level of inorganic matter, an automaton which can simulate animate processes but is essentially untransformed. A curious parallel to this reduction of subject to object is in Spenser's description of Serena amongst the cannibals (VI. vii. 41-43) Serena is real and living, but in this grotesque

situation, she is physically reduced to a collection of beautiful objects, which, we realize with fascinated horror, are regarded by the cannibals in the even cruder and more physical terms of things to eat. This is a real and grotesque parody of the blazon.

The mixture of natural and artificial, organic and inorganic, provides Spenser with some of his most potent and suggestive images. The natural world of his poem is full of such instances of mingling and interfusion of effects between one state and another; sometimes as cases of actual transformation, sometimes in the interchange of the physical elements, and sometimes in the case of allegorical figures. I have not yet discussed the theme of mutability in the poem, the vision, which seems central to Spenser's basic concerns, of the whole physical world in a Heraclitean state of flux: as it is stated, for instance, in the Mutability Cantos, and in the Proem to Book V. Nor have I as yet examined the Garden of Adonis Canto, where great natural images of transformation and renewal are brought together in a rich and complex vision of positive mutations. These passages, forming, as they do, the most essential expression of Spenser's ideas of transformation, cannot I think be properly considered until we have looked at other aspects of transformation in the poem.

II. Deceit and shape-changing

The narrative themes of the poem make illusion, deceit and shape-changing extremely important. The knights in the forest, clinging to their single and increasingly manifest virtue, are confronted by evil in various shapes and appearances. But the relations established between inward essence and outward appearance are exceedingly complex; the poem, itself a dark conceit, enacts its meaning in pageants and masks where the spectacle is the significance. In certain of the characters we mark the imaging out of virtue and feeling: Una's 'hidden care' is represented by her veil and black stole, her truth and innocence by her whiteness and the 'milk white lambe' - the image is the idea. But after Redcrosse's dream, induced by that most potent

of all shape-changers, Archimago, Una's appearance seems a disguise ('Vnder blake stole hyding her bayted hooke') and her former transparency is confused with darkness and deceit. The nature of Spenser's allegory rejects simple oppositions between appearance and reality: what is emphasized is confusion.

We may consider two important early figures, Archimago and Duessa. Both are pre-eminently shape-changers, and their powers are derived from magical arts. Archimago's deception of the Redcrosse knight can clearly be seen as a continuation of the encounter with Error in the Wandering Wood. Archimago is compared to Proteus:

He then deuised himselfe how to disguise;
 For by his mightie science he could take
 As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
 As euer Proteus to himselfe could make:
 Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
 Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,
 That of himselfe he oft for feare would quake,
 And oft would flie away. (I.ii.10, 1-8)

These last two lines are of course characteristically Spenserian: the magician imposes his illusion even upon himself. That the allusion to Proteus is significant is, I think, pointed by the fact that although Spenser does not have the metamorphoses mentioned by classical writers (water, lion, tree, or boar¹), the association of each change with one of the elements is retained. Giraldi gives one view of Proteus as the unformed matter out of which all substantial forms are made.² We may see a link between the Wandering Wood, the silva of Virgil which can be related to the ancient silva or chaos of first matter, the monstrous shapes of Error which are compared to the deformed productions of the earth in classical myth, and these deceitful metamorphoses of Archimago. Archimago and Duessa are both associated with the forces of Chaos and old Night. Hankins sees much of Spenser's poem as a struggle between Form and Formlessness or Deformity³.

1. See, for example, Ovid, Ars Amatoria, I.759-62, and the allegory of Heraclides Ponticus cited p. 15 supra.

2. L. G. Giraldi, De deis gentium (Basel, 1548), p.228.

3. J. E. Hankins, Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory (Oxford, 1971), p.65. This book is hereafter referred to as Hankins.

There are other views of Proteus which may fit Archimago. Augustine regards the Dèvil as protean:

Eius enim sunt illa phantasmata, qui miseras animas multorum, falsorumque deorum, fallacibus sacris cupiens irretire, & a uero ueri dei cultu, quo solo mundantur & sanantur auertere: sicut de Proteo dictum est, Formas se uertit in omnes,¹ hostiliter insequens, fallaciter subueniens, & utrobique nocens.

This connexion is important, for Archimago is leagued, like all necromancers, with the powers of darkness. But the most direct link is in his being a magician. Comes thinks of Proteus as a magus: 'Alii crediderunt per magicas artes Proteum in praedictas formas se mutasse'². Nohrnberg suggests Simon Magus, whom Bodin discusses in his Démonomanie, as a possible prototype³. Other associations are with sophistry and false opinions, like Tasso's allegory for the enchantments in the wood of his magician Ismeno.⁴ The protean quality of these allegories in fact points to what is most memorable about Spenser's Archimago, his shiftiness. He is not so much a personified evil, like Duessa or Acrasia, but a means of casting all in doubt. Because of this shiftiness, he tends, we may say, to trip up on himself: as in the last lines of the stanza I have quoted, and where, disguised as the Redcrosse knight, he is promptly attacked by his natural ally Sansloy (I.iii.24-5).

Duessa's shape-changing is less capricious than Archimago's. She is disguised as a beautiful woman, though she is actually ugly and deformed. More powerfully than Archimago, she can induce irreversible transformations in her victims, as with Fradubio and Fraelissa. Duessa is a difficult character to deal with because she operates at so many levels of allegory, but in one respect she simply deceives Fradubio: she imposes a fictional ugliness on Fraelissa which he takes to be real. Yet what begins in deceit ends in

1. Augustine, De civitate Dei X.10, ed. J. L. Vives (Basel, 1522), p.300.

2. Comes, VIII.8, p. 559.

3. J. Nohrnberg, The Analogy of The Faerie Queene (Princeton, corr.ed.1980), .247-59. See Bodin, Démonomanie, ed. cit., fol.102^v.

4. 'Account of the Allegory of The Poem' in H. Morley's ed. of Fairfax's trans. of Jerusalem Delivered (London, 1890), p. 439.

a profound and virtually irremediable spiritual change. Fradubio's confusion results in corruption so extreme that even the apparently guiltless Fraelissa is affected by it: for she too, like him, is transformed to a tree.

So pervasive are the deceits of Spenser's forest that, in order to cope with them, the good characters too are forced to disguise themselves and change appearance. Arthur's shield unmasks deceits, and turns rogues to their proper semblances ('men into stones therewith he could transmew', I. vii. 35,6), but Arthegall first appears as a 'saluage knight' (IV:iv.39), and masks are ubiquitous. The necessity constantly imposed upon us, to discriminate between one form and another, to note details of appearance because nothing is exactly as we expect it, suggests that the poem's whole mode of expression is through transformations. The alteration of substantial forms is a means to baffle us with, but it is also our only guide to what is happening.

III. The Moral Allegory of Transformation

One of the most remarkable descriptions in The Faerie Queene is that of the House of Alma (II ix 21-60). This piece of divine art is above all a work of surpassing form. But this form may be attacked by deformity and disintegration. The rout of savage and misshapen men who attack Alma's House are on the most obvious level figures for diseases of the body: their leader Maleger takes his name from the Latin male aeger, badly sick. But clearly the physical allegory here is less important than the moral:

Of all Gods workes, which do this world adorne,
 There is no one more faire and excellent,
 Then is mans body both for powre and forme,
 Whiles it is kept in sober gouernment;
 But none then it, more fowle and indecent,
 Distempered through misrule and passions bace:
 It growes a Monster, and incontinent
 Doth loose his dignitie and native grace.
(II ix. 1. 1-8)

The 'strong affections' which war continually against reason in the body attack it through the infirmity of the flesh: and the flesh may be corrupted through vice. The singularly clear and hard allegory of this book shows us Guyon, the representative of Temperance ('sober gouernment') leaving the House of Alma before Maleger's troops launch their final attack upon it. It has then to be rescued by Arthur, who, besides comprehending all the moral virtues, surely exhibits in his actions something of the operation of divine grace. While Guyon is within the House its assailants are securely shut out: when he leaves, it is vulnerable again, and can only be defended by God's grace freely granted.

The stanza I have just quoted is Spenser's clearest statement in The Faerie Queene of the moral allegory of transformation. Man's body not tempered by reason or kept in 'sober gouernment' grows a monster, and loses the virtues implanted in its creation. The monsters who attack the House of Alma, therefore, are not only fit figures for vice and depravity, but that very House deformed and abused. They are insubstantial, yet ride terrible beasts and assume terrifying shapes.

In one basic respect, of course, the predators are phantoms: their deformed bodies are the potential deformities of the body they seek to infect. The untransformed, single and perfect human body is set against the multiple possibilities of transformation through vice and disease.

The deformed shapes of the creatures which attack the five senses are described in passages of grotesque vividness. Spenser makes it clear that these 'ugly formes' portray temptations to sin: "foolish delights and fond abusions" - yet, at the same time, their very deformity shows the true shape of the sin, as in Bosch's Temptation of St. Anthony :

some fashioned in the wast
Like swine; for so deformed is luxury
Surfeat, misdiet, and unthriftie wast
(II.xi. 12,6-8)

We should have no difficulty, in the next canto, in locating Grille's vice. As with so much of Spenser's allegorical writing, we have an inextricable mixture of shape and meaning: the figure itself, sharply concretised but hovering on the edge of the abstract, becomes what it implies. Interestingly, these half-beasts recall the creatures who populate the walls in Phantastes' chamber:

Infernall Hags, Centaurs, feendes, Hippodames,
Apes, Lions, AEgles, Owles,
(II.ix. 50, 8-9)

at the same time, they suggest the beasts in Acrasia's island and the various creatures who impede Guyon's journey to it, like the ones Ruggiero meets on his way to Logistilla's castle.¹

The 'Captain of the Lusts of the Flesh' as Ruskin calls Maleger,² clearly comprehends them all and stands in exact opposition to the House of Alma. While the House is whole, substantial, and healthy, Maleger is defective, a phantom, and diseased. Moral and physical allegory coincide: evil itself is defect or privation, and 'peccatum est in anima sicut infirmitas in corpore' as Aquinas puts it.³ Elsewhere he speaks of the 'vulnera naturae' which are caused by original sin.⁴ Maleger thus displays the body transformed, and, interestingly,

1. OF. VI 60-66

2. See Var FQ II p.343

3. Summa Theologica, I, 11, Q.85 Art.4; in Opera Omnia, vii (Rome,1892)p.114

4. Ibid. Art. 3, p.112

this is here seen as lack of form.

Arthur chiefly displays fortitude in this episode, and the resemblances to the Hercules-Antaeus story are suggestive. Boccaccio suggests at one place that Hercules is Fortitude,¹ though in general he is the champion of Virtue, just as Arthur comprehends all the moral virtues and aids each in turn. Like Antaeus, Maleger is born of the earth and renews his strength from contact with it. The mythographers see this as representing the earthly origin of lust.

Fulgentius quidem moralem sensum fictioni subesse demonstrat, dicens Antheum de Terra ^{fessa sit} natum libidinem esse quae sola ex carne nascitur, qua tacta et si/in vires resurgit, verum ab homine virtuoso carnis denegato tactu superatur.²

The Bower of Bliss

While the House of Alma, thus, is attacked by the vices and frailties of fallen human nature, the Bower of Bliss is undone by the excesses of human art. On one level of the allegory, Maleger's troops represent bodily infirmities, weaknesses of the flesh, while Acrasia's arts reveal a more serious corruption of the will. This is of course not an absolute distinction, for the beasts of Maleger, are related to Acrasia's transformed lovers, and Acrasia herself represents, in her quality of Incontinence, lust or the concupiscible appetite. Her victims are seduced by sweet sounds, odours, soft beds and other delights of the senses. Her realm is guarded by sea-monsters like Maleger's hordes. But here the emphasis is insistently upon the enchantress herself as the producer of these illusions: the monsters 'are not these in deed,

But are into these fearefull shapes disguiz'd
By that same wicked witch, to worke us dreed
(II.xii.26,3-4)

Acrasia is not simply an illusionist: she can transform men physically, as the misshapen beasts on her island show. Her influence is in fact more potent and subversive than Maleger's. Guyon's defacement of the Bower therefore suggests a punitive transformation.

1. Genealogie deorum, XIII.i; ed. V.Romano (Bari,1951) ii. 642.
2. Ibid. I. xiii, ed. cit. i. 42-3

their blisse he turn'd to balefulnesse
 Their groues he feld, their gardins did deface
 Their arbors spoyle, their Cabinets suppressse,
 Their banket houses burne, their buildings race,
 And of the fairest late, now made the fowlest place.
 (II.xii. 83, 5-9)

Implicit in the conversion is the sense that the change reveals the essence of the Bower, which is a moral wilderness, a place for 'th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame'. In Trissino's L'Italia liberata dai Gotti, the pleasure-filled palace of Acratia is bounded on one side by a dreadful forest of thorns and nettles: the two places are juxtaposed, but in a sense (impossible to miss in this rigidly moral work) they are the same place. Acratia herself is similarly constituted: she is an ugly and deformed hag whose beautiful appearance, and whose Protean self-transformations, must end in the revealing of her essential shape.¹ The same reductive metamorphosis is suffered by Alcina in Ariosto's fable of the beguiling of Ruggiero and his final disenchantment by means of the magic ring (OF VI. 70-74). It has been noted that Spenser transfers this deformity, and the revelation scene, to Duessa, who is despoiled of her borrowed beauty by Arthur and Redcrosse in Book I. viii, 46-50.² His Acrasia is not herself transformed, though she can transform others; and Guyon imposes a change upon the Bower by purely physical means.

Tasso's palace of Armida seems at first to be morally more ambiguous. It is an imposture, for it is ultimately dissolved into thin air by Armida herself. But by leaving the responsibility for its dissolution with Armida, and by allowing Rinaldo the parting feelings of love and pity, Tasso appears to treat this dream of pleasure more kindly. Guyon's destruction of Acrasia's bower, on the other hand, leaves no room for equivocation.

Spenser's Acrasia is linked to the great classical witches, Circe³ and Medea: like them, and like Armida, she is a genuinely beautiful and enchanting woman with powerful arts. Her arts represent a highly complex and sophisticated

1. L'Italia liberata, V, in G.G. Trissino, Tutte le opere (Verona, 1729), i. pp. 46-47.

2. See Var FQ I. 262.

3. This relation is discussed by M.Y. Hughes 'Spenser's Acrasia and the Circe of the Renaissance' JHl iv (1943), 381-99.

redirection of the forces of nature; it is in character therefore that she should inhabit a natural paradise considerably refined and overlaid by beautiful artifice. It would be false, however, to relate the 'goodly workmanship' of Acrasia's garden in itself with what is spurious, deceitful, and morally vicious - as Lewis does. What we see in the Bower is not Art per se, but art's imitative power dangerously misapplied. This is where Acrasia, reclining in the heart of the garden, is so important: she is the directive principle behind it, and the Bower is a fiction constructed for her purposes.

Comes' interpretation of Circe,¹ which Spenser certainly knew, is one of the most remarkable examples of Renaissance allegory. In nature Circe is the generative principle, and her magic potions are the forces that mingle the elements and cause procreation. In man she is the libido driving sensual appetite, and capable of transforming him into a beast: this lust is opposed to reason represented by Ulysses, and on a moral level the whole action of the Odyssey shows a struggle between these two forces. These Circean associations for Acrasia are supported by Venerean ones. Reclining in the middle of the Bower with her lover Verdant, Acrasia's pose immediately recalls traditional descriptions of Venus with her lovers, and especially the Lucretian account of Venus embracing Mars.² This picture is imitated by Politian in his Stanze,³ and is probably the source of Botticelli's painting of Marte e Venere. Tasso presents Armida and Rinaldo in the same pose,⁴ and Spenser, directly following him, is probably aware of the long history of this description.

Acrasia, then, is a kind of Venus as she is a kind of Circe, the Venus of earthly pleasure and voluptuousness, drawing heroes away from feats of arms and the life of duty. This is one image of the Venus Pandemos discussed in the Symposium 180-1, the Venus identified with illicit love and lust and much

1. Comes, VI. vi, pp.377-80

2. De rerum natura I. 31-40

3. Stanze, I. 122

4. GL xvi. 18-19

attacked by medieval writers, whose delight is all in 'beds, in bowres, in banquetts, and in feasts'. Boccaccio points out that this Venus, disdained by the moral Stoics,¹ is praised by the Epicureans, since they regard pleasure as the chief good; and indeed the Bower is like a vulgar Epicurean fantasy.

Ovid suggests that Circe is particularly susceptible to the desire awakened by

Venus:

Circe (neque enim flammis habet aptius ulla
talibus ingenium, seu causa est huius in ipsa,
seu Venus indicio facit hoc offensa paterno,
(Met. XIV 25-7).

If we bear in mind Comes' characterization of Circe as the generative principle which causes the elements to mingle, and which also causes their corruption, we should be interested by a passage in the Symposium (138a-b) where Eryximachus distinguishes between the two kinds of love:

when, as I was saying, the elements of hot and cold, moist and dry, attain the harmonious love of one another and blend in temperance and harmony, they bring to men, animals and plants health and plenty, and do them no harm; whereas the wanton love getting the upper hand and affecting the seasons of the year, is very destructive and injurious, being the source of pestilence and bringing many other kinds of diseases on animals and plants; for hoar-frost and hail and blight spring from the excesses and disorders of these elements of love .

Ficino is particularly severe upon the vulgar sort of love, which is a kind of madness or 'fascination': this impure passion is communicated, like a disease, through the humid, sanguine vapours emitted through the eyes:

Quod autem radius emissus ab oculis vaporem secum spiritalem trahat et vapor iste sanguinem, ex eo perspicimus quod lippi et rubentes oculi spectantis proxime oculos radii sui emissionem cogunt morbo simili laborare.²

1. Genealogie deorum, III. xxii; ed. cit. I. 148

2. In Convivium Platonis VII. iv., ed. cit. p.247

We may recall Spenser's picture of Acrasia 'depasturing' Verdant:

through his humid eyes did sucke his spright,
Quite molten into lust and pleasure lewd;
(II.xii.73, 7-8).

Hughes distinguishes lucidly the elements in the Renaissance conception of Circe, wholly different from the splendid Homeric goddess¹. Spenser's version of this figure is derived mainly from Comus. The transformations she effects are the deformities caused by bestial vices in man's lower nature: the beasts on the island have figures 'according to their mindes like monstrous' (II.xii.85,5). This is the clear and unambiguous pattern of moral allegory.

But there is more ambiguity in the canto than so strict a pattern might suggest, and it makes the whole idea of metamorphosis a more complex and frightening one. Much of this is contributed by Spenser's borrowings from Tasso, especially the ambience of an overwhelmingly attractive, if corrupt, pleasure garden. Armida is never fully rejected. Acrasia has no such part to play in the narrative of The Faerie Queene: her part ends with Book II. Nevertheless, the transformational arts of the Bower remain in many ways more suggestive than the beast metamorphoses within it. Although Acrasia is a witch, she is not like Duessa: she is at once more abstract and more physical. In some respects Acrasia seems to be as she is in Comus, simply a centre of overwhelmingly powerful natural forces, radiating her extraordinary concentration of appetite. She cannot be stripped and exposed like Duessa, even if her construct, the Bower, is destroyed. Her capacity to transform all she touches remain what it has always been, undisturbed by allegorical punishments.

Whatever is illusory about the Bower is destroyed by Guyon: he reduces it to the waste that it is in essence. The end of the book thus presents us with the breaking of the fable: Acrasia is led away, and her victims restored to human shape. The fairy tale completeness of this moral action, however, is contradicted

1. Hughes, 'Spenser's Acrasia', cit. above.

by what actually remains. Guyon and the Palmer effect no miraculous retransformation, though Verdant receives counsel and Acrasia's lovers their human shapes:

Yet being men, they did unmanly looke (II. xii. 86,3)

The fundamental and almost irreversible nature of this transformation is exemplified in the recalcitrance of Grille. Guyon draws a grim moral from Grille's 'repining' for his hoggish shape:

See the mind of beastly man,
That hath so soon forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth, with vile difference,
To be a beast, and lacke intelligence.

(II. xii. 87, 1-5)

Since Guyon and the Palmer are forced to let Grille be Grille, and leave while they can, Spenser's allegory of Temperance in fact ends in the conviction of human degeneration so extensive that it resists moral réform.

The source of Spenser's Grille is, very clearly, Plutarch's dialogue on whether the beasts have the use of reason, or Gryllus.¹ Warton proposed a further or alternative dependence on Gelli's Circe, which had been translated into English and was known in England². The second association, like the first, is oblique and ambiguous. Both Plutarch and Gelli employ the common and various instrument of classical and Renaissance writers, the extended paradox. Plutarch's 'theriophilia' suggests itself indeed as an allegory against allegory. Gelli's, though it ends by confirming man's claim to superior powers, does so by demonstrating exactly how precarious and incomplete that claim is. Spenser disregards this vein of irony so completely that he might as well have been unaware of it. It would be tempting to think that by converting Grille to a figure of moral allegory, expressed in Christian and Platonic terms, he

1. Moralia, 985D - 992E. This was pointed out by Jortin: see Var.FQ II, 394.
2. See Var. FQ II, 394. The translation, by Henry Iden, was published in 1557. It should be noted, however, that the pig Gryllus himself does not appear in Gelli: Plutarch's dialogue is mentioned, but not named, in the epistle. Spenser could not have got this figure only from Gelli.

is commenting on the 'theriophilist' debate¹ and implicitly condemning its extreme spokesmen, but nothing of this is apparent. Norhnberg finds allusions to Gelli's dialogue in Spenser, and even suggests that the beast metamorphoses of Book II emphasize 'a theme of the Hermetic Asclepius, the capacity of man for self-transformation into whatever he attaches himself to'² but this is specious and absurd. For all the complexity and multiplicity of The Faerie Queene, Spenser is capable of extreme allegorical narrowness.

In The Faerie Queene Grille is strictly a moral exemplum : he has been transformed through bestial appetite, the lusts fed by Acrasia, and forgotten his higher or human nature.³ The real point Spenser is making about this kind of transformation is expressed through another point of difference with Plutarch and Gelli. Grille does not argue, as an animal, against restoration to the human state : he has been restored already by the Palmer. He cannot, as it were, prevent this breaking of the fable, but he still wishes for his hoggish shape, because his hoggish mind is unaltered. Spenser removes the external attributes of the metamorphosis by an arbitrary and magical act (the stroke of the Palmer's 'vertuous staffe') but enforces all the more strictly a realization that things remain what they were. It is for us, now, to see Grille as a hog; his submergence in that state is made wholly subjective : 'Let Grill be Grill, and haue his hoggish mind' (II. xii. 87,9) This sense is identical to that of Pico in the Oratio, defining men's natures according to their inward state,⁴ but the idea is implicit in all moral allegory of metamorphosis. Spenser executes a variation on the theme by removing the external change to call our attention to the internal one. Grille's recalcitrance, his gross and defiant corporeality, is memorable and even comic : but the moral that Guyon draws restrains the potential, Rabelaisian independence of this creation. The 'vile difference' between Grille's desires and the excellence of his birth results in a tragic sense of the extent of human corruption in the fallen world.

1. See Hughes, 'Spenser's Acrasia' pp. 384-5.

2. Nohrnberg, p. 501.

3. See Petrus Costalius, Pegma, cum narrationibus philosophicis (Leiden, 1555) p. 176, 'In Grillum. Voluptatem immanissimus quisque sequitur Lubens', for an example of this kind of moral allegory.

4. Pico, De hominis dignitate, ed. cit. p. 108.

Another instance of allegorical ruthlessness, used to remarkable and surprising effect, is to be seen in the story of Malbecco (III. ix-x). Spenser's treatment of this character begins in the novelistic discriminations of Pavidell's seduction of Hellenore at her husband's table (III. ix. 27-31). These two are a debased Paris and Helen, but Malbecco himself lacks a classical prototype. At the start of the story he is a jealous and miserly old man, a pitiable but disgusting figure. In the course of the narrative he is stripped of his wife and his belongings, suffering thus, as it were, an external process of reduction. By the time he meets Braggadocchio and Trompart in the forest (III. x. 23) the narrative itself has passed into a world of knaves and fools, the world of the fabliau or picaresque tale : we fully expect him to be robbed again by this pair, and he is. Malbecco now begins to seem less and less human : among the satyrs he 'counterfeites' a goat (III. x. 47), while Hellenore, a female Grille, is determined to remain with her half-human companions. Losing all he has, Malbecco is finally metamorphosed into a symbol, an abstract embodiment of jealousy, clawing among cliffs. In this astonishing description (III. x. 54-60) he exchanges human substance for insubstantial and terrible immutability. His change is physical, but it converts him to an abstraction:

Ne ever is he wont on ought to feed,
 But toades and frogs, his pasture poysonous,
 Which in his cold complexion do breed
 A filthy bloud, or humour rancorous,
 (III. x. 59, 1-4)

At the end he has 'forgot he was a man, and Gealositie is hight'. First characterized, Malbecco is later depersonalized with a formidable over-explicitness, challenging common objections to the allegorical mode. This episode may seem to take the idea of metamorphosis as far as it can conceivably go.

In the larger patterns of The Faerie Queene, these reductive metamorphoses of men through humour or appetite are countered by the more positive processes of spiritual and moral allegory. The knights seek to grow into their virtues : in moments of extreme clarification the good characters become indeed so abstract that the ideas for which they stand shine through their fleshy dress. Most striking, of course, is the spiritual journey of Redcrosse and Una, a movement towards

regeneration, enfranchisement and restoration. Except in the first book, however, these clarifying moments of perception are isolated and occasional : for most of the narrative we see human nature as flawed and inconstant, and the world as mutable and decaying. For all that Spenser's poem embodies so positive an ethical scheme, it is set in a world which threatens to overthrow our sense of the possibility of such ideals being achieved. Metamorphosis becomes, more and more, a symbol of the fallen world, and the higher transformation, upwards to spirit rather than downwards to matter, seems increasingly distant. These themes are finally taken up in the Mutabilitic Cantos. Before we can look at these, however, we need to examine other images of transformation in the poem.

IV. Myth

Spenser most directly recalls Ovid in his treatment of classical myths of metamorphosis. The two most celebrated and extended passages of this kind are the descriptions of the tapestry in the Castle Ioyeous (III.i.34-38), showing the love of Venus and Adonis, and that in the house of Busirane (III.xi.30-46), showing Cupid's tyranny over the gods.

Although the cosmic and generative aspects of love are celebrated by Spenser in great allegorical set-pieces placed at critical points in the third and fourth books, it is remarkable how bitter and painful love actually appears to be in the narrative, in the human elements of plot. This aspect of love is most fully symbolized by Cupid, who directs the force of love to mortals, and is tyrannous, cruel and malicious. At the same time, love is necessary and inescapable: there is a strong emphasis upon destiny, upon 'the fatall purpose of divine foresight' (III.iii.2)

In Canto VI, Cupid is said to wander 'in the world in strange aray/
Disquiz'd in thousand shapes, that none might him bewray' (St.11), and this capacity for disguise simply illustrates the effects he has on others.

Most of all, his power seems to be identified as a *power* of transformation. His tyranny is manifested in his ability to effect such radical changes in personality, and his effects are so deceitful, that images of metamorphosis are inseparable from his activities. From Petrarch onward, Ovidian examples of transformed lovers become part of the vocabulary of love: the lover's sudden and overwhelming psychological changes are expressed through allusions to the Metamorphoses. Britomart, whose own love is virtuous and chaste, even part of the providential scheme of British history, nevertheless cannot avoid such associations. Glauce assures her that her love is more natural than the 'monstrous' lusts of Myrrha, Biblis, and Pasiphae (standard examples to warn or encourage the infatuated donne of Boccaccio's stories¹) but Britomart herself regards her case as like that of Narcissus:

1. E.g. Fiammetta, I, in G. Boccaccio, Opere minori in volgare ed. M. Marti (Milan, 1971)iii.447.

I fonder, then Cephisus foolish child,
 Who having vewed in a fountaine shere
 His face, was with the loue thereof beguild:
 I fonder loue a shade, the bodie farre exild.
 (III.ii.44,6-9)

Britomart's own quest reaches no conclusion in Book III, and though constant and enduring, she feels herself a victim. The seat of reason is usurped 'Loue my lewd Pilot hath a restlesse mind' (III.iv.9,6)¹.

In the virtuous characters, then, love is a painful fire: in the weaker or corrupt ones, it is incontinent luxury. Cupid's tyranny is evident in the whole book, but his power is felt most sharply by the strong (a familiar theme of the love-poets), while the weak yield willingly to the pleasurable wantonness represented by the lower, earthly Venus. This is not the Venus Pandemos of the neo-platonists, but the figure of classical myth and legend, associated with promiscuous love and unchastity. The first representation of classical myth in Book III - the tapestry of the Castle Ioyeous - presents the seductions of the inferior Venus, while the second, at the end of the book in the House of Busirane, presents the malice of the cruel Cupid.

The love of Venus and Adonis, as represented in Malecasta's tapestries, is a tale of seduction and sexual enslavement, ending in death and transformation. It reflects in miniature the world of the castle itself, a world of 'superfluous riotize' where knights and ladies spend their days in lascivious sport "swimming deepe in sexuall desires". Spenser's account of the myth, therefore, presents it virtually as a exemplum, though this is more subtly done than in the allegorizers. Its relation to the Ovidian tale, as to Bion's Lament, is an oblique one: taking elements from both, Spenser at the same time neglects what is most vital to the classical writers, and implicitly condemns the whole Ovidian psychology of love.

Ovid's account presents, not an emasculated Adonis, but a Venus transformed by love. For Adonis' sake Venus adopts the dress of Diana, and accompanies her lover in the chase (Met.X. 533-539) though she hunts only the timorous animals, keeping away from the fierce ones. Much of the narrative is taken up

1. This is part of the reworking of a celebrated Petrarchan sonnet, Rime, 189 'Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio'.

by Venus' explanation of this fear, the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes. Venus, offended by Hippomenes' ingratitude after she has aided him to win Atalanta, fills the pair with lust in Cybele's temple. Cybele is angered by this desecration and transforms them into lions. These creatures, and all other savage beasts, are Venus' enemies, and she warns Adonis against them.

But Adonis does not heed her advice, and the chief factor in his foolhardiness is virtus: 'sed stat monitis contraria virtus' (Met.X. 709). This virtus is strongly expressed in Titian's painting of Venus and Adonis¹. Venus clings to a positively martial youth, boar-spear in hand and hounds straining at the leash. Adonis' virtus leads him again to the hunt and to his death. His blood is transformed to a flower by Venus as a memory of their love, and Ovid emphasizes its fragility.

The point of Venus' inset tale about Atalanta and Hippomenes is not lost on later allegorizers of the Adonis story, and Alciati, for example, in one of his emblems, clearly identifies the boar as lust.² This allegory may still be present in Spenser's representation of the myth, but Venus' restraining love is not given any contrary attribute of continence. Her love initially transforms Adonis virtually into a toy: he is, one may say, a passive object of her lust. Lavishing perfumed baths and soft beds upon the boy, she 'spies' on him covertly: her actions are strongly reminiscent of those of Cymochles in II.v.34.

This account of beds and perfumes probably derives from Bion's Lament for Adonis, where the rites of the Adonia are recalled in describing the grief of Cypris, and the dead Adonis is strewn with flowers, garlands and Syrian perfumes.³ Upton noted Spenser's debt to Bion in the image of Venus wiping away Adonis' blood in III.i. 38,⁴ but it is probable that the 'prettification' of the myth in Spenser is also largely derived from the Greek pastoral poets.

But while Spenser neglects Ovid's attribution of virtus to Adonis and Venus' adoption of the ways of the woods, he also neglects the passion of Bion's Lament, and its account of universal grief, of a marriage of love and death.

1. In the Museo del Prado, Madrid.

2. Emblem 77; in Emblemata, cum commentariis Claudium Minoem (Paris, 1583) p. 267

3. The Greek Bucolic Poets, ed. & tr. J.M.Edmonds (Cam.Mass. 1928;1960) p.393

4. Var FQ III.208.

The goddess 'makes endless mone' for her dead lover, and wipes away the blood from his white skin, but her action seems aesthetic rather than emotional. In death as in life, Adonis remains an object, a beautiful but passive victim. His transformation, thus, completes a process of trivialization:

But when she saw no help might him restore
Him to a dainty flowre she did transmew
Which in that cloth was wrought, as if it lively grewe.
(III.i.38,7-9)

It may be significant that this metamorphosis of Adonis does not strictly follow the classical account. Bion speaks of Cypris' tears and Adonis' blood being turned, respectively, to anemones and roses.¹ Adonis himself is not transformed: his dead body is subsequently laid in Cypris' bed. Ovid's account is slightly more ambiguous. Venus says she will turn Adonis' blood into a flower (the anemone): 'at cruor in florem mutabitur', and she is described as doing this (x.731-735), but at one point she does speak of the change of her hero:

nobis Cinyreius heros
invidiae mutatus erit?
(X.730-1).

Nevertheless, Spenser ignores the distinction. In the tapestry, it is the dead boy himself who is turned into a flower, and the flower itself seems then to be transplanted to the embroidery. This 'dainty flowre' seems a particularly apt emblem of the sort of love that has just been described: it is a reductive metamorphosis, just as Spenser's account of the myth itself is a reductive one. By trivializing and prettifying the myth, he can assimilate it into the degraded world of Malecasta's castle. Adonis' transformation, and his recreation in art, must be seen here less as an effect of love than as a kind of idolatry. Spenser, in a sense, is making use of Ovid's traditional associations with erotic licence to comment upon the enslavement and debasing of human nature that is part of the court of love ethic, and is so evident in Malecasta's castle.

If the classical myth of Malecasta's tapestry is a story of female wantonness and male passivity, the subjects of Busirane's tapestry are more varied and complex. As most readers have noticed, this tapestry resembles that of Arachne in

1. Ed. cit. p. 391

Metamorphoses VI. 103-128¹. It shows the metamorphoses of the gods for love, and is a pictorial and symbolic representation of the Triumph of Cupid enacted in the Masque which follows. As in Ovid's account of Arachne's tapestry, moreover, these metamorphoses carry suggestions of humiliation and debasement.

In Ovid's poem, the subject of Arachne's tapestry is inextricably connected with her own motives as the artist; showing the gods transformed to baser shapes, tricking and deceiving mortals, she expresses her own impiety and conceit. Thus the implications of the work as a whole are more complex than what Arachne herself intends: she displays the degrading changes of the immortals 'committing headdie ryots, incests, rapes' but these suggestions of meanness and deceit are qualified by her own feelings of envy and hatred. Minerva's tapestry, earlier described, has already shown not only a new creation by divine power (the olive-tree) but also the punitive metamorphoses of those mortals who dare to challenge or insult the gods

ut tamen exemplis intellegat aemula laudis,
quod pretium speret pro tam furialibus ausis
quattuor in partes certamina quattuor addit
(Met. VI. 83-5)

Spenser has already, in the mock-heroic transformation poem Muiopotmos, made use of the contest between Arachne and Minerva: and there he resolves its outcome more straightforwardly than Ovid does. But in this tapestry description, it is not the impulse of the anonymous artist that is in question, but the transforming power of love itself. We may say that by representing Arachne's subjects in the same spirit, but removed from the Ovidian framework of a contest between human and divine artists, Spenser is subtly redirecting the impulses behind the representation. Here it is the tyranny and malice of Cupid that is most in evidence: it is his power which transforms the immortals to mortal shapes, and it is he who proudly arrogates to himself the throne of Jove:

Whiles them on earth great Ioue these pageaunts playd,
The winged boy did thrust into his throne,
And scoffing, thus vnto his mother sayd,
Lo now the heavens obey to me alone,
And take me for their Ioue, whiles Ioue to earth is gone.
(III. xi. 35, 5-9)

It is Cupid's 'scoffing' which sets the tone of the work. Spenser's tapestry-description is considerably more elaborate than Ovid's: it is a detailed spectrum of love's transformations, including in its allusions far more of the Metamorphoses than the twenty lines devoted to Arachne's web. Its presentation of classical myth is vivid and memorable, and in praising the artist's delicacy and 'sweet wit', Spenser communicates a genuine fascination with the marvellous subjects of Ovidian poetry. The detail of the description, no less than that of Politian's account of similar subjects represented on the doors to Venus' palace in the Stanze,¹ shows the hold of the Metamorphoses on the educated imagination.

Most space is devoted in the tapestry to the metamorphoses of Jupiter. The presentation of his amorous successes as a kind of triumph of love is not unusual. We may note that Marlowe places 'the gods in sundrie shapes' indulging their lusts in the 'pavement' of Venus' temple at Sestos: these figures display the goddess's power.² Politian describes not only the metamorphoses of Jupiter, Apollo and Neptune, but Hercules in the dress of a woman, wholly enslaved by love.³ An interesting parallel, moreover, is provided in the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, where Poliphilus and Polia watch four triumphs of Jupiter's loves: Europa, Leda, Danaë, and Semele. They go on to meet several other women loved by the gods: Callisto, Antiope, Isse, Alcmene and Phyllira are among them.⁴

Although Colonna presents the triumphs themselves as belonging to Jupiter's mistresses, the figure of Cupid is conspicuously present, painted on the triumphal chariots. Edgar Wind explains these four theogamies as demonstrations of the power of Venus Physiozoa (the generative principle of nature) in the four elements -- Europa and the Bull represent the earth, Leda and the Swan represent water, Danaë

(contd. on next page)

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1. Stanze per la giostra, I.105-119, in A. Poliziano, Rime, ed. N. Sapegno (Rome, 1949).
 2. Hero and Leander, I.
 3. Stanze, I.105-8, 114.
 4. F.Colonna, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (1499) ed. G. Pozzi & L.A. Ciapponi (Padua, 1964) pp.150-72.

and the shower of gold represent the air, and Semale consumed by flame represents fire. The triumphs are, of course, triumphs of love over Jupiter, to be exact: in one of the pictured scenes, Jove is represented as saying to Cupid 'You are sweet for me and bitter', implying love's power to make him suffer.¹

Other interpretations of such divine metamorphoses are also current in the Renaissance, and neoplatonist allegories make the myths represent, not the debasement of the gods, but the upliftment of mortals. Certainly this is the explanation Comes offers for the ravishment of Ganymede to the heavens - the virtuous soul ascending to God in contemplation; and Barthelemy Aneau, in the *preface* to his Trois Liures de la Metamorphoses d'Ovide (1556) explains the amours of Jupiter as the desire of the World-Soul to become everything and transform everything to itself.²

Such interpretations form no part of Spenser's themes in this Canto. What Spenser is demonstrating is a tyrannical and hurtful love, reductive in its transformations and cruel in its operations : the changes of the classical gods are studies in humiliation. The tone of Spenser's description stresses loss, pain and suffering (Apollo's loves, Phaethon, Apollo's change to a 'cowherd vile') and the disorder created by Cupid's usurpation of Jove's seat.

Kings Queenes, Lords Ladies, Knights and Damzels gent
 Were heap'd together with the vulgar sort,
 And mingled with the raskall rablement ...
 To shew Dan Cupids powre and great effort:
 (III. xi. 46, 1-5)

It is explicitly said that this kind of love is idolatry : a golden image of Cupid is worshipped (III. xi. 40); and in the next room Britomart sees the forms of false love worked upon the walls 'for love in thousand monstrous formes doth oft appeare' (III. xi. 51, 9).

The representations of classical myths in this tapestry, thus, discredits the image of metamorphosis as a mark of the effects of love. I have discussed the great importance of this image to the love-poetry of Petrarch and Ronsard. Spenser

1. E. Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (Harmondsworth, 1967) p. 168 n⁶², p. 163 : see Hypnerotomachia, ed. cit., fig. on p. 161.
 2. See Comes, IX. 13 . p. 658, and Aneau, cit. p. 43 , supra.

is not using the straightforward censure of moral allegory : his subversion of the image is through its attachment to a false and corrupt love. The view of love presented in this Canto and implied in this account of the metamorphoses of the gods is essentially that of Perottino in Bembo's Gli Asolani, bitterly attacking the changeable Cupid:

nel uero chiunque il segue, niuno altro guiderdone delle sue fatiche
riceue, che amaritudine: niuno altro prezzo amerca, niuno appagamento,
che dolore

Later Perottino expresses the pains of the lover in typically Petrarchan images of transformation : one lover's heart is torn to pieces every hour by his lady, 'altri hora in fonte si trasmuta; hora in albero, hora in fiera'². For Spenser the transformations of the gods and their exile from heaven while Cupid rules in Jupiter's place is an even larger image of the tyranny of passion : the gods' descent implies their debasement, and by implication the debasement of the higher faculties in man. The almost unbearably concrete image, in the Masque of Cupid, of Amoret's bleeding heart carried in a silver basin before her, actualizes the metaphors of love-poetry and makes them virtually obscene.

Yet the reason for Amoret's suffering and her wedding-night abduction remains unclear. Amoret is described as the 'lodestarre of all chaste affection', and this chastity is never in doubt. She and Scudamour are clearly destined for each other. Nevertheless, their love is tormented and unfortunate. Commentators have noted suggestive parallels in their story to the myths of Cupid and Psyche, and Orpheus and Eurydice.³ Scudamour compares himself to Orpheus when he relates how he led Amoret out of the Temple of Venus : there is a story that Eurydice was bitten by a snake on their wedding night. Amoret's long search for her husband, and her separation from him soon after their marriage, parallels the quest of Psyche.

But while we should note these echoes and parallels, their observation also requires us to make important discriminations. The myth of Cupid and Psyche

1. P. Bembo, Gli Asolani (Venice, 1575) p. 20.

2. Gli Asolani, ed. cit p. 30.

3. See A.C. Hamilton, The Structure of Allegory in the Faerie Queene (Oxford, 1961) pp. 137-52; K. Williams, Spenser's Faerie Queene (London, 1966) p 107

is one of the most celebrated of neoplatonic allegories, presented as such by Apuleius in his Golden Ass : an allegory of the human soul in its quest for God. Some elements of this allegory, though not the whole of it, may be present in Spenser's placing of Cupid and Psyche in The Garden of Adonis. The Orpheus-Eurydice myth is also variously allegorized. Interestingly, both myths are used by Renaissance neoplatonists to explain the mystical identity of love and death. Edgar Wind, in his notable essay, 'Amor as a God of Death', points out the funerary uses of the figures of Eros and Psyche (in the myth itself Psyche is said to have gone to her wedding with black torches, believing she was to die) and discusses how Renaissance neoplatonists like Ficino, Pico, and Lorenzo de' Medici expounded the idea of love as a voluntary death and emphasized its 'bitter-sweet' quality.¹

Many of these images are present in Spenser's account of the love of Amoret and Scudamour as well. Scudamour uses the dulce amarum epithet in saying that 'true love with gall and honey doth abound' (IV. i. 1.), and describes the whole course of his love as one of extreme pain and suffering, though crowned at last with happiness. Like Orpheus, he loses his Eurydice, and his inability to pass through the flames to Busirane's house may be interpreted as a reluctance to die, to make the ultimate sacrifice of personality required of the lover.

But Spenser's Cupid is not the Ficinian Amor, and the enchanter Busirane is scarcely a figure for the mystical Thanatos. Both are evil figures, their operations showing the enslavement of the soul by lust, and by the baser passions which accompany all earthly love. Spenser intends the love of Amoret and Scudamour to show, with remarkable completeness, the whole psychology of human love : it is less a moral allegory than a psychological one. In a sense, Amoret's wedding-night abduction is wholly an imposed, external factor : a mechanical contrivance which exhibits the course taken by earthly, human love, which is almost involuntarily a slave of the passions and a prey to fear, jealousy, and suspicion. Spenser incorporates into his psychological allegory many of the most traditional and most potent symbols of human love, especially as used by the love-poets. But the

1. Pagan Mysteries, ed. cit. 157-63.

effect of his allegory is to reduce the significance of these symbols, for his purpose is to demonstrate the tyranny of false love, the cruelty of the earthly Cupid who triumphs in his Masque less as a second Jove than as a Lord of Misrule. The masque itself, like the tapestry, is dominated by images of disorder. Metamorphosis is one such image, and the transformations of the gods for the sake of this baser kind of love demonstrate a disorder in man's moral and psychological nature itself.

In these two instances in Book III, Spenser uses classical myths of metamorphosis to present a particular image of the transformations caused by love. A potentially richer and more complex symbolism may be suggested by his use, in independent contexts, of the figures of myth. One such figure in the third and fourth books is Proteus, who rescues Florimell from the lecherous fisherman (III. viii. 29-36) and imprisons her in a cave at the bottom of the sea. At the close of Book IV the wedding of the Thames and the Medway is celebrated in Proteus' house, and Florimell is released, to be married to Marinell.

The myth of Proteus, the archetype of the self-transformer, is particularly suited to physical allegory. We might, therefore, have dealt with him in a later section, in association with the kind of natural allegory to be found in the Garden of Adonis. Indeed it is beyond doubt that all these three figures, Proteus, Florimell, and Marinell, represent above all certain qualities of physical nature. Roche, citing Emblem 106 of Alciati's Emblemata, notes that Cupid is there shown as ruling both sea and land, and this is indicated by his holding flowers in one hand and a fish in the other:

Altera sed manuum flores gerit, altera piscem,
Scilicet vt terrae iura det atque mari.¹

Florimell and Marinell may thus represent the two parts of the natural world : moreover, they are, like earth and moisture, united in love so that generation may take place. A further allegorical dimension is suggested by Fowler, who notes that Florimell's flight from the witch's monster (III. vii. 22-27) her smearing with fish-scales in the fisherman's boat (III. viii. 26) and her descent

1. A. Alciati, Emblemata, cum commentariis per Claudium Minoem (Paris, 1583), p.346. cited and discussed in T.P. Roche, The Kindly Flame (Princeton, 1964) pp.189-94.

under the sea to the society of the sea-gods (III. viii. 36) 'glance at the myth of Venus' flight from Typhon and metamorphosis into the fish that later became the constellation Pisces'¹. Moreover, Florimell's seven-month imprisonment at the hands of the frosty Proteus (see III. viii. 34-5) and the image of winter's end upon her release and union with Marinell (IV xii. 34) suggest the physical allegory of the myth of Proserpina.²

Proteus fits into these natural allegories : he is anciently regarded as the unformed matter out of which all things are made, and therefore capable of taking any form. This is the interpretation, for example, offered by Heraclides Ponticus, who also says that Proteus' daughter Eidothea is the divinity presiding over all the mutations of matter and imparting form.³ The Orphic hymn addresses him as combining both functions:

First-born, by whose illustrious pow'r alone
All Nature's principles are clearly shewn:
Matter to change with various forms is thine,
Matter uniform'd, capacious and divine.⁴

This view of Proteus is repeated by Renaissance mythographers like Giraldi, who describes him as the informis rerum materia⁵ and by Comes, who quotes another Orphic Hymn.⁶ On this reading, then, we may see Proteus' wooing of Florimell as matter desiring the beauty of form : Florimell has been identified with the principle of beauty from her first appearance, as explicitly as possible (III.i. 15, 28). At the same time, Florimell's imprisonment in Proteus' cave may symbolize beauty trapped within matter and obscured by it. The transformations of Proteus fail to win Florimell's love : she has already chosen Marinell, whose guardianship of the Rich Strond (III. iv. 21-23) suggests that he symbolizes the fertility and abundance of the sea, and indeed the principle itself of such abundance in nature.

1. A.D.S. Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time (London, 1964) p. 134.
This book is hereafter cited as 'Fowler' In Ovid, Met. V. 321-31, the giant Typhoeus is the pursuer.
2. Fowler, p. 134; this is suggested by A.C. Hamilton, The Structure of Allegory in the Faerie Queene (Oxford, 1961) pp. 147-52, where he treats the story of Florimell and Marinell as a variant on the Cupid and Psyche myth. This was sometimes taken as a nature myth, with Psyche as a Proserpina-figure.
3. Homeric allegories, 66.7 - cited p. 15 supra.
4. The Hymns of Orpheus, tr. T. Taylor (London, 1787) p. 149.
5. L.G. Giraldi, De deis gentium (Basel, 1548) Syntagma V. p. 228.
6. Comes, VIII. 8 , p. 557

This is, more or less, the physical allegory proposed by Hankins for the episode.¹

However, the richness of Spenser's symbolism here derives from Proteus' own capacity to embody all kinds of meanings.² As Sabinus had noted, 'metamorphosis Protei non minus varias allegorias, quam ipse formas recipit'³. Many of these allegories are inappropriate here, but Proteus' various roles in mythography and literature are important : the image of metamorphosis he presents is not solely to be understood physice. In the first place, Proteus has already been introduced in III. iv. 25 as a prophet or seer : he foretold Marinell's fall at the hands of a woman (Britomart) to his mother Cymoent. This, of course, is derived from Virgil, Georgic IV. 387-93, where Proteus is described as vates⁴ : the rest of this Georgic is mainly devoted to his oracular warning to Aristaeus. Proteus' capacity for metamorphosis becomes here a sign of the elusiveness of this gift : Sabinus cites an allegory of Proteus as truth, difficult to grasp under the multitude of false opinions which delude us.⁵ Indeed Cymoent fails to understand the truth of Proteus' warning, and reproaches him as the 'father of false prophecis' (III. iv. 3) when her son is wounded by the disguised Britomart.

There is a third important aspect to Proteus, and that is his role as a lover. Spenser describes him as assuming various shapes to win Florimell's love, and then more frightening ones to terrify her into submission. Ovid suggests in the Ars amatoria that the lover should be a Proteus,

Pectoribus mores tot sunt, quot in ore figurae;
 Qui sapit, innumens moribus aptus erit,
 Utque leves Proteus modo se tenuabit in undas,
 Nunc leo, nunc arbor, nunc erit hirtus aper.⁶

These purely expedient mutations, undertaken to gain a desired object rather than to elude his own captors, distinguish Spenser's Proteus from his prototype in myth and link his transformations to the other transformations of the immortals for love, as depicted in Busirane's tapestry. Proteus is more versatile as a lover, but also,

1. Hankins, pp. 230-33.

2. See A.B. Giamatti, 'Proteus Unbound' in The Disciplines of Criticism ed. P. Demetz T. Greene, and L. Nelson (New Haven, 1968) pp. 437-475.

3. Fabularum Ovidii interpretatio (Cambridge, 1584) p. 329, cited p. 42 supra.

4. Cf. Met. XI. 249. This description is constantly repeated : see Boccaccio, Genealogie deorum gentilium, ed. V. Romano (Bari, 1951) ; 343 ; Comes, VIII. 8 .

5. See pp. 41-2 supra. The allegory of Proteus as truth is also given by Giraldi, p. 228.

6. I. 759-62, in ed. of J.H. Mozley, rev. G.P. Goold (Cam. Mass. 1979).

of course, less successful. His metamorphoses do not display the transforming power of love, but only its deviousness and deceptiveness. Since he is not a victim, like Jove or Apollo, but himself a flatterer and abductor, his role under this aspect isolates in Proteus some of the meaner implications of the tapestry while approximating him also to the enchanter Busirane himself : Florimell is imprisoned like Amoret. Proteus' various shapes may indeed represent the mutable passions of man's lower nature. Giraldi takes this explanation from Servius and others : 'dicentes, hominem in libidinem habere stultitiam, ferocitatem, dolum, quae dum inuicem in uno homine uigent, pars illa quae uicina est diuinitati, ed est prudentia, non apparet.'¹

There are other implications in the narrative details of the Proteus-Florimell episode, but these ones, attaching to the figure of Proteus himself, suggest the range of significances Spenser can give the idea of metamorphosis by abstracting a figure of classical myth and working him into other contexts. Probably the physical allegory remains the most important one : when the Thames and the Medway are married in Proteus' house, we can see his multiform versatility as representative of the abundance and variety of forms in nature: he is host to 'the seas abundant progeny' (IV. xii. 1). No one significance cancels another out, nor even modifies it : precisely because Proteus is a figure of myth, his various roles can each be drawn upon as exempla of particular themes Spenser wishes to present.

1. Giraldi, Syntagma V p. 228 - cf. Servius, ed. Thilo and Hagen, iii. 351.

V. The transformations of art

Spenser's interest in artefacts is a notable mark of a general Renaissance fascination. His use of them is far more disciplined and purposeful than that of his contemporaries : compared to Sidney, he is singularly uninterested in the merely decorative artifice. More than other writers he is interested in the capacity of art to confuse our sense of reality, to attempt transformations which turn art into nature or suggest that the natural is artificial - as in *The Bower of Bliss*. It is these aspects of art that the Bower chiefly emphasizes, because it is founded on the transformational arts of Acrasia. Lewis believes that the opposition between nature and art in the poem is an opposition between the good and the vicious.¹ The problem is more complex: art exists as the servant of intention, and it is after all a natural vice that produces the corrupt artefact. The ambiguity of Spenser's descriptions of artificial objects stems from a fascination with the thing achieved coupled with a disturbing sense of the need to distinguish motives.

Guyon and Palmer enter Acrasia's garden through an ivory gate, carved and painted with the history of Jason and Medea. There are obvious warnings both in the gate's construction 'wrought of substance light' and in the classical story. Nevertheless, its workmanship is a miracle of art :

Ye might have seene the frothy billowes fry
Under the ship, as thorough them she went,
That seemd the waves were into yuory,
Or yuory into the waves were sent;
(II. xii. 45, 1-4)

Ekphrastic writing of this kind tends to stress the lifelikeness of the imitations: all the passages in classical and Renaissance poets which form the sources and analogues for Spenser's description insist on the extraordinary vividness of the scenes represented, and the skill of the artist : 'materiam superabat opus'. All these poets - Tasso, who seems to be most directly in Spenser's mind, describing the gates to Armida's palace : Politian, who has a marvellous and influential account of the doors to Venus' palace in Stanze per la Giostra; and Ovid, describing the doors to the palace of the Sun² - suggest both the absolute presence of the characters

1. C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (1936 rpt New York 1966) pp. 324-30.
2. GL. XVI. 1-8; Stanze I. 97-119; Met. II. 5-18.

represented in art, and the fact of the work as an artifice. In doing so, they imply something about their own power as artists to create a reality which pleases by our consciousness of it as artificial. Our attention is drawn to art's capacity to transmute its subjects, and to leave them suspended in 'another nature':

Il poeta insiste sulla mirabile verità della scultura ... ; ma si sente che è la verità di una fantasia, tanto sono lievi¹ i suoni di quei versi, che sembrano sciogliersi in aria luminosa.

This is Momigliano on Politian's description of the Birth of Venus, a source for Botticelli's painting. The poet, describing a work of art, is in effect commenting on the processes of his own poetic creation.

In their most positive expression, these powers of the poet may transform the world, 'in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature ...

Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done; neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely.'²

But there is an important distinction to be made. By describing an artefact, the poet not only demonstrates art's transmutation of nature, but distances himself from it, objectifies it in order to show us what may be its most disturbing aspect. Art metamorphoses its subjects into itself: when its subject itself is metamorphosis, it presents us with a double image of transformation, superimposing one upon the other. The second image, because it is a product of human wit, may fatally modify or distort the first.

Adonis, transformed into a flower through a process of sexual trivialization, is again transformed into the stuff of art in Malecasta's tapestry: the flower is worked in it 'as if it lively grew' (III.i. 38,9). In my last section I discussed the version of the myth as Spenser gives it: but of course it is

1. A. Momigliano, Introduzione ai poeti (Rome, 1946), p.40.

2. A Defence of Poetry, in Philip Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose, ed. K. Duncan Jones & J. van Dorsten (Oxford, 1973), p. 78.

a version produced by the anonymous artist. The tapestry is particularly suited to its context: it presents a particular image of love, and of love as metamorphosis. For in a sense it is love that transforms Adonis first to a toy and then to a flower: and the flower that grows in the tapestry perpetuates only loss and reduction. The artist absorbs the myth into his fiction, and thereby becomes responsible for it. The metamorphosis of Adonis, we are conscious, is his material, to transform as he wishes: the subject becomes its representation.

The same problem confronts us in the House of Busirane. Here the description is so long and detailed that Spenser seems to be making a point about the myths themselves. Yet, as I noted in my last section, the point is made almost by transferring the artistic impulse of Arachne into the content of the myths. Spenser's artist, again, is anonymous: as a result, we may see the tapestry more as a possession, part of the house in which it is placed. In moral terms this is important: but aesthetically the tapestry also presents a warning. In Muiopotmos, Spenser resolves the contest between Arachne and Minerva simply by making Minerva win - although in fact the product of human art, celebrated in three marvellous stanzas on the rape of Europa, seems poetically to surpass the divine one. Ovid's problem is more complex: Arachne wins, but she has erred in presumption and kills herself through injured pride (Met. VI. 1-145). The problem is further complicated by the fact that the subjects of Arachne's tapestry - love and metamorphosis - seem in fact to be the subjects of the Metamorphoses themselves. With Busirane's tapestry the question of the artist is not explicitly raised: he is praised for his wondrous skill' and 'sweet wit', defeating the limitations of his medium, so that we may even see the shepherds calling to Ganymede 'to take surer hould'. But his illusionist powers mirror the illusions and deceits of love. The miraculous life that the myths gain, the potent attraction of the medium, becomes a new source of danger.

What the Bower presents is a transformed landscape, its natural beauties either created or simulated by art, even to 'the painted flowres, the trees upshooting hye' (II.xii.58). What results is an illusory pleasance, a place rivalling the actual terrestrial paradise, Parnassus or Eden, but incorporating at its centre the most profound embodiment of 'infected will'. The art of the Bower reflects Acrasia's allegorical vice of incontinence. The transformation of the landscape can thus be a fit figure for the transformation of men, and the art that creates a garden can, instead of being 'the purest of human pleasures', a reminder of Edenic bliss, be an indication of man's Fall:

Luxurious Man, to bring his Vice in use,
 Did after him the World seduce: . . .
 He first enclos'd within the Gardens square
 A dead and standing pool of Air:
 And a more luscious Earth for them did knead,
 Which stupifi'd them while it fed.¹

VI. Great creating nature: The Garden of Adonis

Sources and analogues for the Garden of Adonis have been the subject of exhaustive study.² It would be unhelpful to add to the list, and superfluous to repeat it. My primary interest in the Garden is in its somewhat ambiguous conception as a place of creation and of transformations: it is this that I shall try to explore.

The Garden of Adonis appears to be supremely a place of natural transformations, symbolized most potently by the constant metamorphosis of Adonis himself, who is 'transformed oft, and chaunged diuersely'. When approached, as we have approached it, through the Bower, it seems to set the 'good' transformations of Nature against the bad ones of art. This is too simple an

1. Marvell, 'The Mower against Gardens', 1-8.

2. The most important recent discussion is in Hankins, Source and Meaning, pp. 234-86.

opposition. The Garden may in part be designed to fulfil the nature-art contrast, and suggestions of this kind are incorporated in it. Essentially, however, Spenser is absorbed here with nature itself, and with the actual problem of transformation. While the Garden seems to embody the world of rich, complex and unceasing changes, the world of Ovidian myth as of natural creativity, it contains, as I hope to show, three important defences against change. Spenser's purposes in this Canto seem to be the working out of these defences, through the metamorphoses of birth, copulation and death, into an assurance of continuity and even permanence.

The start of Canto VI presents us with important themes. The encounter of Venus and Diana in the woods, their reconciliation and adoption of the twins Amoret and Belphoebe, is the mythical-allegorical basis for the relation of love and chastity in the third Book. The separate rearing of Amoret and Belphoebe may suggest the division, rather than the reconciliation, of Venus and Diana; but this is only one aspect of their relationship. Essentially, they are brought together by a miraculous transcendence of their powers in Chrysogone's conceptions of the twins: and ^{the} ~~it~~ is an effect of divine love, completely chaste and yet supremely fruitful. Both Christian and classical creation myths are involved in this account of 'pure' generation. As a virgin who gives birth, Chrysogone recalls the second, sinless creation of man in Christ¹, but in the description of her impregnation by the Sun, Spenser reminds us of the first creation of the whole world.

Next gan the earth to show her naked head,
 Out of deep waters which her drownd alway.
 And shortly after, everie living wight
 Crept forth like wormes out of her slimie nature,
 Soone as on them the Suns life giving light,
 Had powred kindly heat and formall feature,

(Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, 857-62)

Such creation is the operation of generative virtue in its purest form: in the fallen world, we see its effects in nature. Amoret and Belphoebe, conceived free of sins of the flesh, are fostered in nature by Venus and Diana,

1. Cf. Upton's citation of Sannazaro. De partu Virginis ii.372-6, in Var.FQ III.250

Amoret in a fertile natural paradise, Belphoebe in the wild woods. The canto begins with Belphoebe and the infusion of innate virtue in her birth: a virtue she retains even in 'saluage forests'. It continues with Amoret and her fostering in the garden of Adonis. The creation of the twins is an effect of divine grace, a transformation of matter through spirit. Belphoebe, reared in the forest, shows that virtue operating in the wilderness, setting itself an ideal of purity and of 'honour'. Amoret, brought up in the garden, is surrounded by the creativity of nature, and must apply her virtue to its fruitful generations. Together, they are examples, in the midst of nature, of the transformation of nature through grace: Spenser's central Christian concern in The Faerie Queene.

The Garden of Adonis is a hortus conclusus, a place recalling pagan terrestrial paradises, and Eden.¹ Its philosophical and mythological meanings present more difficult problems. Robert Ellrodt's fruitful suggestion² that the Garden is a store-house of the Augustinian rationes seminales, the seminal reasons of all future generations simultaneously created by God in the beginning, more or less resolved the old controversy about the Garden's nature. However, recent critics have felt that while Ellrodt rightly locates the conceptual basis for the garden and shows that it is not simply a confused mixture of notions about form and matter derived from Lucretius or Ovid (in Golding's popularization), he is too hasty in dismissing all Platonic influence. Both Hankins and Nohrnberg³ cite interesting passages from Ficino's commentaries and his Neoplatonist writings which help to link the philosophical and mythological aspects of the Garden: the seminal reasons with Venus and Adonis.

The Garden is 'the first seminarie/of all things, that are borne to live and die (III.vi.30, 4-5). Vives, commenting on Augustine, says

Ex quo manifestissime comprobatur, quod priusquam coelum & terram deus faceret, paradysum ante condiderat, sicut & legitur⁴ in Hebraeo: Plantauerat autem deus paradysum Eden a principio.

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1. Documentation is probably unnecessary here: however, see Var.FQ III.253-6, and Nohrnberg, pp.513-19.
 2. R.Ellrodt, Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser (Geneva, 1960) pp.77-84: hereafter Ellrodt.
 3. Hankins, loc.cit.; Nohrnberg, pp.550-3.
 4. Aurelij Augustini, opus absolutissimum, de ciuitate Dei, with comm.by J.L.Vives (Basel, 1522) p.405, on CD XIII.21. This commentary is hereafter referred to as Vives, and all citations of De ciuitate Dei [CD] are from this edition. For Spenser's knowledge of it, see Appendix I.

Vives is referring to Genesis 2.8. Genesis 1 says that God created the plants and animals before he made man; Genesis 2 says that He placed man in Eden and then caused plants and animals to grow out of its soil. This discrepancy led Augustine, in the De Genesi ad Litteram¹, to state his influential theory of dual creation: first of the seminal reasons of all living things, and then the day to day generation of bodies. Since Eden existed from the beginning, it would have contained these seminal reasons - indeed it would have been 'planted' with them - and later, after Adam's advent, it would also be a place of corporeal generations, of trees, plants and beasts. As Hankins points out, the hexameral tradition thus accounts for the presence both of the seminal principles (the incorporeal herbs and plants of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.5) and of living creatures in the Garden: a point that has puzzled many readers.²

In Spenser's Garden, the seminal reasons of all creatures are planted in the ground; 'infinite shapes' and 'vncouth formes' grow out of the earth, like flowers or trees:

euery sort is in a sundry bed
Set by it selfe, and ranckt in comely rew:
(III.vi.35,3-4)

Ellrodt has no explanation for this except to state that 'the main allegory commanded the lesser metaphors'.³

It has gone unnoticed that the image of animals growing out of the earth like plants also derives from Genesis 1 and 2, and is a special feature of Du Bartas' conception of Eden. In Genesis 1.24 God commands the earth to 'bring forth the living thing according to his kind': these, as Augustine explained them, were the seminal reasons of all animals. In Genesis 2.19, the second creation of the animals as corporeal forms is also from the earth "So the Lord God formed of the earth euerie beast of the field and euerie fowle of the heauen". This is probably Du Bartas' inspiration for a remarkable piece of description in La Seconde Sepmaine, a passage Spenser is likely to have read. Du Bartas' Eden is in most respects a highly 'artificial' garden; however, instead of hedges cut into the shapes of animals, it contains...

1. De Gen. ad litt. VI.ii. in PL xxxiv.340

2. See Hankins p.281.

3. Ellrodt p.75.

Ains de vrais animaux en la terre plantés
 Humaut l'air des poulmons, et d'herbe alimentez:
 Tels que les boramets, qui chez les Scythes naissent

O merveilleux effect de la dextre divine!
 La plante a chair et sang, l'animal a racine;
 La plante comme en rond de soy-mesme se meut;
 L'animal a des pieds et si marcher ne peut;¹

Simon Goulart, explaining this passage, states that Eden contained 'Animall Plants, which the Grecians call Zoophites....but these true Zoophites, and that in all sorts, merit this name, being true and living Animals planted in the earth'². Du Bartas' comparison of these zoophites to the Scythian boramets, and his later description of a tree whose leaves are turned into birds or fishes, suggest that he is prompted simply by a desire to increase the marvels of Eden. But it is notable that he has no other descriptions of animals in the Garden, only of birds singing in evergreen bowers, like Spenser's, and the usual attributes of constant spring and autumn, blossoms and fruits, together. At other points we have noted Spenser's fascination with the idea of the spontaneous generation of the earth, expressed in an Ovidian simile. For Ovid, the creation of living beings from the earth is the most miraculous of all transformations, and a figure for creation itself as animation.

Spenser's image is not a metaphor: it is a concretization of the fundamental process of creation. Strictly considered, of course, these forms or shapes are incorporeal: they must 'borrow matter' to 'become a bodie'. But in this second creation, the first process is simply re-enacted: matter receives form, the earth is animated, and indeed, through this divine miracle, transformed.

In another respect Eden could be regarded as a 'seminarie/of all things, that are borne to live and die' Augustine explains that the seminal reasons of all future generations are contained in the first members of each species, just as we were all contained in Adam:

Omnes enim suimus in illo uno, quando omnes ille unus
 corruptit....Nondum erat nobis sigillatim creata
 distributa forma, in qua singuli uiueremus, sed iam
 natura erat seminalis, ex qua propagaremur.³

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1. Eden, 511-24, in Du Bartas, Works, ed. U.T.Holmes, J.C.Lyons and R.W.Linker (Chapel Hill, 1935-40) iii.18. This edition is cited throughout.
 2. A Learned Summary upon the famous Poeme of William of Saluste, Lord of Bartas tr. T.Lodge (London, 1621) 2nd Week, p.33
 3. CD XIII.14, Vives p.396.

The generative character of Eden is stressed in Hankins' quotation from Gregory the Great: 'Paradise is the womb of the human race, whose gates the serpent opened'. Such an interpretation legitimizes the anatomical allegory of the Garden.¹

But the parallels with Eden, of course, are not and cannot be complete. If the Garden of Adonis is such a paradise, it is at the same time within fallen nature, and must suffer the effects of the Fall. Time with his scythe is present in the Garden, cutting down 'the flowring herbes and goodly things', destroying 'both leaues and buds without regard'. Here, presumably, it is not the seminal reasons which are destroyed, but their products. We must remember that while the Garden is removed from the world and separated from it by analogies with Eden and by its character as a conservatory of pre-existent seeds, these seeds actually exist in the matter of the world itself. Allegorically, its relations with the world are inclusive rather than exclusive. As Augustine explains, the rationes seminales are distinct from the rationes aeternae because they exist within time and in matter :

Omnium quippe rerum quae corporaliter visibiliterque nascuntur, occulta quaedam semina in istis corporeis mundi hujus elementis latent.²

The whole earth contains the seminal principles of future life : it has already accepted 'omnes numeros eorum quos per tempora exsereret secundum suum genus'³.

On one view we may see the Garden as a metaphor for the natural world in its entirety. Therefore Venus walking through the Garden and lamenting the depredations of Time, is the generative principle in Nature injured by, and hostile to, the destruction of living things by Death.⁴

Much controversy has clothed the 'naked babes' in the Garden, pleading with the porter, Genius, to be let out 'to liue in mortall state' (III. vi. 32). Ellrodt and Hankins⁵ believe they are the vegetal-sensitive souls of men, closely linked to the seminal reasons; Lewis and Fowler⁶ think they are rational souls. The real

1. See Hankins, p. 283, citing Moralium, IV. xii; and pp. 239-41 for the anatomical allegory. Cf. also Fowler, pp. 136-8

2. De Trinitate, III. viii. 13, in PL xLii. 875.

3. De Genesi ad litteram V. v.14, in PL. xxxiv. 326.

4. See Ellrodt, p. 81.

5. Ellrodt, p. 82 ; Hankins, p. 272.

6. C.S. Lewis, reviewing Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser, Études Anglaises, xiv (1961), 110-111, and Fowler, p. 136.

difficulty arises because of their cyclic return to the Garden, to be replanted and 'grow afresh' until, after a thousand years, they 'are clad with other hew, / Or sent into the changefull world againe' (III. vi. 33). This passage is dangerously close to the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration. It clearly recalls Aeneid. VI./43-51, where Anchises describes the wheel of generation :

has omnis, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,
Lethaeum ad fluvium deus evocat agminem magno,
scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant,
rursus et incipiant in corpora velle reverti.

(748-51)

Virgil's 'life-seeds' are certainly human souls. The thousand-year cycle also suggests the Platonic accounts of transmigration in the Phaedrus and the Republic.¹ I have noted, in my first chapter, how such accounts could be turned to the uses of moral allegory : but their relation to the physical, natural allegory of the Garden is more difficult to explain. If Spenser is using Augustinian notions so pervasively here, he cannot have been unconscious of Augustine's denunciation of such doctrines: 'Sed quoniam haec falsa sunt clamante pietate, conuincente ueritate'.²

Hankins thinks that the return of the babes to the Garden represents 'the survival of the vegetal or vegetal-sensible soul, or of its seminal reasons'. Although it was generally believed that the vegetal and sensitive souls died with the body, Hankins quotes Ficino in support of the view that they might survive and be re clothed with bodies. Even otherwise, they would not become entirely extinct, but would be reabsorbed into the World-Soul or the vegetal life of the world. Like matter, they are 'not destroyed but redistributed'.³

This seems the most acceptable explanation of Spenser's wheel of generation. It may also be that Spenser is referring to the preservation of those seminal reasons which carry the typical characteristics : the principle of species. The difficulty with this explanation, however, is the period - a thousand years - which appears to elapse before the species produces another specimen. We should also remember that the Garden contains the principle of species in another form - Adonis. Hankins's explanation is

1. See my discussion, above pp. 9-12.

2. CD XII. 20 [21], Vives p. 380.

3. Hankins, pp. 272-3, quoting Ficino, Comm. in Plotinum III. i. 15 (Opera omnia, ed. cit. p. 1695) and citing (*ibid.*) VI. vi. 7 (P. 1785).

better, but I find it hard to accept the rest of his suggestions concerning the wheel of generation. He proposes its identity with the cosmic cycle discussed by Eusebius (explaining Plato) in Praeparatio Evangelica, xi¹. This is summarized by Vives in a note on Augustine's twenty-second book.² Although Plato (Politicus, 269c - 273d) is talking of cyclical destructions and renewals of the world - coming with each 'Great Year', when all the heavenly bodies have returned to the same position in which they originally stood, to Christian writers this conception is simply a distorted version of Christian belief in the end of the world, the last judgment, and resurrection. It is in this context that Eusebius cites the passage, and Hankins ignores this. Augustine is very clear on the absolute need to reject the Platonic cycles of destruction and renewal. That does not mean that Spenser could not have used them, but they would not be a more orthodox doctrine than that of the transmigration of souls.

It does not seem very likely that the cycle of births in the Garden is organized in terms of the Platonic Great Year, or, indeed, of the resurrection of bodies. Hankins feels that the depredations of Time in it are cyclical destructions causing great havoc even amongst seminal reasons, which otherwise

should happie be, and haue immortall blis :
(III.vi.41, 3)

The wheel of generation may have been adopted from the Aeneid simply, rather, as a defence against time.

We may now look back on the discussion so far. As the storehouse of the rationes seminales, the origins of all living beings, the Garden is pre-eminently a place of creation. This metamorphosis of matter is vividly suggested in the image of shapes and forms growing out of the earth. But Time is present in the Garden, and the world of Nature is subject to death and change. The cyclic return of the babes to the Garden may be one assurance of continuity. But a more complex defence against Time is contained in the seminal reasons themselves.

Augustine's theory of rationes seminales is founded on Ecclesiasticus 18.1:

1. Hankins, pp. 275-6. See Eusebius, Praep. Evang., 559b-562d: ed. and tr. E. H. Gifford (Oxford, 1903), iii. Part 2.

2. Vives, p. 781, on CD XXII.28

3. CD XII.19 [20] Vives, p. 378 ; CD XII.20 [21] Vives, pp. 379-81.

'He that liueth for euer, made all things together'. Every individual creature exists already in the form of invisible latent potentialities, which ensure that whatever is generated grows 'according to its kind' :

Unde fit ut de grano tritici non nascatur faba, vel
de faba triticum, vel de pecore homo, vel de
homine pecus.¹

The seminal causes thus, being already created, ensure the fixity and continuity of species. The different species are distinguished from each other : in Spenser's Garden, the 'infinite shapes of creatures'

Some fit for reasonable soules t'indew,
Some made for beasts, some made for birds to weare,
(III. vi. 35, 5-6)

are separately planted. This is founded on I. Corinthians 15. 38-9 :

But God giueth it a bodie at his pleasure, euen to euerie
sede his owne bodie.
All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of
flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes,
and another of birds.

The Augustinian theory of seminal reasons is one of the strongest of Christian arguments against pagan aetiological myths of metamorphosis. Later, it is the orthodox defence against the Darwinian theory of evolution by random variation and natural selection. Since all things have already been made by God, species cannot mutate, nor can one being change into another. Augustine affirms that two blessings are given even to fallen nature by God : the gift of propagation, and the principle of conformation (the identity of species):

Huic autem propagationi si conformatio non adhiberetur,
nec ipsa in sui generis formas modosque procederet.²

The fathers are much exercised about pagan stories of transformation. Augustine repudiates them altogether:³ if any sense can be made of them at all, it is only an allegorical one. Men may become like beasts, or the Devil may create an illusion but one being cannot become another, for they are already decided and distinguished in their seminal reasons.

Thus, as Augustine says, the whole creation is the unfolding of hidden purposes in daily generations :

1. De Genesi ad litteram IX.xvii.32, in PL xxxiv.406.
2. CD XXII.24, Vives p.776.
3. Ibid. XVIII.18, Vives pp.582-4.

Ipse namque operatione, qua nunc usque operatur, facit
ut numeros suos explicent semina, & a quibusdam
latentibus atque inuisibilibus inuolucris in formas
uisibiles huius quod aspiciamus decoris euoluant.¹

The myth of the Garden, therefore, contains within its seeds the strongest argument for the pre-ordained order and continuity of living beings. Nature creates, but does not transform : more properly, Nature brings to birth what is already created by God. We may note that Lucretius' eloquent account of the principles of nature (De rerum natura I. 158-191), once thought to be the conceptual basis for Spenser's description of the Garden, confirms this principle of the fixity of species and the preordained fitting of apt material and an appropriate body to each seed.

omnia quando
paulatim crescunt, ut par est, semine certo,
crescentesque genus servant; ut noscere possis
quidque sua de materie grandescere alique.²

The seminal reasons in the Garden determine the forms of living creatures, and are therefore imagined as pre-existent forms or shapes growing in it. They are incorporeal, though they are not souls : they unite with matter 'fetched' from Chaos to 'become a bodie' and enter life. If the garden is a 'beautiful and delightful' world of forms, it is closely associated with, though distinct from, the chaos of prime matter. In speaking of this matter, Spenser constructs his second defence against mutability and transformation. The stock of matter is never diminished

The substance is eterne, and bideth so
Ne when the life decayes, and forme does fade,
Doth it consume, and into nothing go,
But ^uchanged is, and often altred to and fro.
(III. vi. 37, 6-9)

Essentially, however, as Spenser qualifies in the next stanza, the substance is not changed : it is only the external form, the 'outward fashion' which alters. First matter is both eternal and always the same, but individual substances (the elements, for instance) are outwardly changed by the impression of different forms. In spite of this secondary point about the 'alteration' of individual substances through their apparent changes of form and 'hew', Spenser's main concern in the whole passage is to oppose the permanence and indestructibility of first matter, considered in general, to the variability and mutability of forms.

1. Ibid. XXII. 24, Vives p. 776.

2. De rer. nat. I. 188-91, in ed. of W.H.D. Rouse, rev. M.F. Smith (Loeb, Cam. Mass. 1975). For Spenser's possible debt to Lucretius, see Var. FQ. III. 340-2.

Many parallels have been cited for this assertion, and no single one needs to be taken as a source. La Primaudaye emphasizes this indestructibility of matter 'rien ne se fait de rien : de rien ne s'escoule en rien : ains tout ce qui naist ou meurt, ne change que de forme'¹ and Du Bartas is fascinated by its changeless changelessness :

Toute pareille a soy, toute en soy contenue,
 Sans que le vol du temps l'accroisse ou diminue,
 Immuable d'essence, et muable de front,
 Plus que n'est un Prothee²

Although Chaos is not part of the Garden, this permanence of matter through all mutations of form is an important part of Spenser's themes in this Canto. Matter may seem a Proteus, but it contains a principle of stability. This argument from physical principles is a traditional and powerful counter to the pessimism which the mutability of nature induces. The syncretic Bruno, his imagination much possessed by transformation, posits the eternity of matter at the start of the Spaccio³ as a kind of guarantee against the metamorphoses with which the work is concerned, and Pythagoras, in Ovid's fifteenth book, has a similar assertion : 'nec perire in toto quicquam, mihi credite, mundo/sed variat faciemque novat' (Met. xv. 254-5). Spenser introduces this passage as an extension of the response we have been considering, an answer to the problem of change.

The third defence against transformation and mutability is contained in the mythological part of the narrative - by a paradox, in the oft-transformed figure of Adonis himself. The philosophical doctrine of the rationes seminales seems at first wholly inimical to the mythological description that takes up Stanzas 40 - 50.

Venus' bower, in the middle of the garden, contains

every sort of flowre,
 To which sad lovers were transformed of yore;
 Fresh Hyacinthus, Phoebus paramoure, ...
 Foolish Narcisse, that likes the watry shore,
 Sad Amaranthus, made a flowre but late,
 (III. vi. 45, 1-6)

The flower-metamorphoses of beloved youths are a characteristic feature of classical

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1. P. de la Primaudaye, Suite de L'Academie francoise (Paris, 1580), fol. 8^v (1^{er} jour).
 2. 1^{ere} sepmaine, 2nd jour, 199-208 : Works, ed. cit. ii. 229-30.
 3. Dialoghi italiani, ed. cit. p. 556.

loci amoeni, and wholly appropriate in a garden of Venus and Adonis.¹ Adonis himself, or, more properly, his blood was transformed to a flower, as Spenser tells us in his account of the Castle Ioyeous tapestry, and here the other version of the myth, whereby he was revived from death to spend six months of the year with Venus and the other six with Proserpina, is also suggested:

for he may not
 For euer die, and euer buried bee
 In balefull night, where all things are forgot;
 All be he subject to mortalitie,
 Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
 And by succession made perpetuall,
 Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie:
 For him the Father of all formes they call;
 Therefore needs mote he liue, that liuing gives to all.
 (III. vi. 47)

The metamorphosed lovers in the Garden are part of its world of classical myth, and do not belong to the same order as that of the incorporeal plants of stanzas 34-5. Spenser is not pursuing a logical sequence : he moves from one aspect of the Garden to another through a process of association, orderly but eclectic. In each part, Spenser constructs his own defence against mutability and Time in terms of natural order and fecundity.

In Poussin's painting of the Realm of Flora², the flowers suggest both the idea of natural renewal and abundance, and the survival of a principle of beauty and love. The beautiful youths loved by the gods do not perish entirely : their beauty and the love for them are immortalised in the flowers to which they are transformed. Flora's art, we are told in Ovid's Fasti (V.227-8) causes beauty to spring from the wounds of Adonis. Absorbed into the cycle of nature, these lovers gain a kind of immortality : and this is emphasized by their presence in a locus amoenus with the assurance of eternal spring.

Yet these are elegiac flowers, commemorating death and grief as much as love and beauty. Hyacinth, Narcissus, and Amyntas (a reference to Thomas Watson's pastoral love-elegy) were all transformed in death, and were unfortunate in love : they are 'sad lovers', as Politian notes in a similar flower passage in the Stanze (I. 79).

1. See Nohrnberg, p. 513

2. The painting is reproduced and discussed in E. Panofsky's 'Et in Arcadia ego' in Philosophy and History : Essays presented to Ernst Cassirer (Oxford, 1936) facing p. 242, p. 244.

The misfortunes of these youths, then, may remind us of the impermanence of earthly love and beauty, and particularly of the death of Adonis himself. The Garden, we are told on our first introduction to it, is so called by Venus' 'lost lovers name'. In Ovid the myth points to the fragility of youth and beauty, and Adonis is changed to the short-lived anemone : 'brevis est tamen usus in illo' (X. 737)

But the survival of those other florified youths in Spenser's Garden, in spite of what we have earlier been told of the ravages of Time amidst the 'flowing herbes and goodly things', may suggest to us the principle of Adonis' survival as well. The hyacinth or the narcissus continue as a species : to be transformed to a flower is to be absorbed into a natural cycle of constant renewals, and since one flower is like another, such a metamorphosis tends to emphasize a principle of continuity amidst change. The undifferentiated individuals of natural species urge the same conclusion to Keats:

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!

In the eternal spring of Venus' garden, these flowers express the eternity of their species, and under this aspect can indeed be related to the rationes seminales, though they are not the same.

Natalis Comes, from whom Spenser probably derived the basis of his allegory of Adonis, gives the myth two physical interpretations. In the first Adonis is the seed of wheat, which lies in the ground for six months before emerging to the temperate climate of Venus. In the second Adonis is the sun : Comes quotes the Orphic hymn to Adonis, where this identification is made, and where Adonis is also called 'of many forms'. The Boar is winter¹, Both these allegories, as indeed the myth and the Adonis cult itself, celebrating the death and rebirth of its hero, emphasize annual renewals and the continuity of the cycle of nature, both in its vegetative life and in its cosmic revolutions.

Hankins believes that Adonis can be identified with the principle of species on the basis of two lines in the Anticlaudianus of Alanus ab Insulis.² I am not sure

1. Comes, V. 16 . pp 350-1.

2. Hankins, p. 247, citing Anticlaudianus, PL ccx. 544B, 550B.

Alanus' lines will bear such an interpretation, but we should note that the traditional allegory itself carries the implication. If Adonis is the seed of wheat renewing itself in yearly cycles of growth and decay, we are bound to see him as a principle of what Augustine calls 'propagation and conformation'. The vegetative myth itself suggests the analogy. Moreover, Spenser's stanza on Adonis 'eterne in mutabilitie', seems to blend both aspects of the allegory, the vegetative and the cosmic. Adonis may not 'for ever die, and ever buried bee' : he is subject to mortality but is constantly reborn. At the same time, he is 'the Father of all formes' who gives life - and this is the Sun.

Hankins quotes Ficino on the perpetuity and unity of species.¹ This perpetuation by succession is a principle of immortality : the type-form survives through generating successive, mortal, individual forms. It includes mutability within itself while preserving its typical characteristics unchanged. In respect of the changes he suffers, Adonis is 'transformed oft' : in respect of his being still the same species, he is 'eterne in mutabilitie'. Indeed, it is through mutability, or mortality, that the type survives, for the seed of wheat, for example, must fall to the ground in order to be regenerated, and individual forms can only perpetuate themselves in succession, through successive deaths. Moreover, Adonis' presence in the Garden is necessary, for God has implanted this principle in the seminal reasons. Species must remain true to itself, for things are created to reproduce each 'according to their kind'.

While Adonis, then, represents the perpetuity of species, he is also identified with the active power of generation, the Sun. Spenser has already, in the description of Chrysogone's impregnation, spoken of the generative virtue of the Sun.

Great father he of generation
Is rightly cald, th'author of life and light;
(III.vi. 9,1-2)

Physically, the sun is the efficient cause in generation, quickening 'the fruitfull seades of all things liuing' and bringing them to birth. Ficino speaks of it at the Vicar of God, causing procreation:

1. Hankins, pp.247-8, esp.citation on p.248 from Comm. in Plotinum, IV.iii.8 (Opera omnia, ed. cit. p.1735).

Procreatio, inquam, tamdiu assidua quamdiu sol, Dei vicarius, ¹
continue superiora illuminat corpora et continue generat infima

The Orphic hymn to *Apollo* describes him as the author of all earthly forms,² and the polymorphic Adonis, as Comes notes, is identified with the Sun.³ Adonis, therefore, imparts forms to matter: 'him the Father of all formes they call'. He is the principle of life itself: 'Therefore needs mote he liue, that liuing giues to all'.

In the first part of the Garden's allegory, we are reminded that the products of this 'first seminarie' are mortal, and so Time enters the Garden: in the second, we are reminded of the fate of the seed, that Adonis is transformed oft and changed diversely, that he is 'subject to mortalitie'. But because the Garden holds the blessings which were imparted to all nature in the beginning, propagatio et conformatio, it is a place of eternal spring where Adonis lives eternally: Time seems to disappear, and the boar is imprisoned under the mount.

These paradoxes are, for Spenser, part of the natural creation itself. It includes mutability and mortality, but it also displays the unity, order, and permanence of God's purpose in creation. In his account of the Garden of Adonis Spenser refers to change, transformation and decay, but his central concern is to enshrine in the Garden the natural principles which resist such change. On the mythical level, the Garden appears to include metamorphosis: it is filled with the flower-shapes of transformed lovers and Adonis himself 'transformed oft' suggests an inclusive view the Ovidian world of changes. But the philosophy of the Garden rejects the fable, while in other ways it asserts the continuity both of matter and of form.

The first and most important guarantee against the random transformations of Ovidian fable is the Christian theory of seminal reasons, planted in the Garden for all eternity. Creation is determined and orderly: actual metamorphosis is impossible. In the second place, as Spenser tells us, although individual forms perish and substances appear to alter, the first matter of which everything is composed remains the same. In the third place, the natural cycle too survives

1. *Theologia Platonica*, XVIII.iii: ed. Marcel (cit.) iii. 190

2. *Hymns of Orpheus*, tr. T. Taylor (London, 1787), p. 164.

3. See p. 212 supra; Comes, V. 16. p. 350

change and decay. The species is perpetuated through a succession of individual forms. Moreover, the generative principle in Nature also survives all accidents of mortality: the love of Venus and Adonis continues to fill the world with its fruits. As the source of all forms, the generative part of the anima mundi, they represent the formal principle in physical nature: and this too is one, although it may express itself in multiplicity.

VII. Mutability

Spenser's chief preoccupation in The Faerie Queene is mutability and the ruinous effects of time. We cannot properly consider this large theme within the scope of this study, but certain aspects of it need to be examined.

To a considerable extent, like Ovid in the Metamorphoses, Spenser sees transformation as a concrete symbol of mutability. As a symbol, however, it is both a curse of the fallen world, and an ambiguous hope of positive change. Spenser's most crucial statement of metamorphosis as the Fall is in Book IV:

Then beautie, which was made to represent
The great Creatours owne resemblance bright,
Vnto abuse of lawlesse lust was lent,
And made the baite of bestiall delight:
Then faire grewe foule, and foule grew faire in sight
(IV. viii. 32, 1-5)

This is clear and unambiguous. Man was made in the image of God, and in the terms of Christian neoplatonism, this image is called beauty: 'pulchritudo est splendor divini vultus'.¹ It is in the soul that we resemble God, and this is the seat of beauty, as Spenser stresses in the first Hymne: it is the soul that gives beauty to the body. The soul is corrupted by sin, and beauty becomes the object of lust:

goodly beautie, albe heavenly borne,
Is foule abused, and that celestiall hew,
Which doth the world with her delight adorne
Made but the bait of sinne, and sinners scorne;
(An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, 149-152)

At this point in The Faerie Queene, then, beauty is for Spenser a symbol of the nobility of man's first creation, which has been impaired, if not wholly lost, by the Fall. The abuse of beauty by lust signifies that loss: for, as Augustine had said, original sin itself is desire, and lust transmits original sin to posterity. Aquinas explains this as a loss of justice 'sed libido illa est ^{intelligenda} habitualiter, secundum quod appetitus sensitivus non continetur sub ratione vinculo originalis iustitiae'.² This deformity in human nature is 'bestiall', as Spenser says, and it is this defect which destroys the image

1. Ficino, In Convivium Platonis V. iv, ed. cit. p. 184.

2. Summa Theologica, I. II. Q.82 Art. 3, in Opera omnia, vii (Rome, 1892) p. 99.

of beauty.

True love and beauty, then, are associated with the golden age of the world: 'antique age yet in the infancie of time' (IV. viii. 30, 1), and with Eden

The Lyon there did with the Lambe consort,
And eke the Doue sate by the Faulcons side
(IV. viii. 31, 1-2)

As in Ovid, it is the old age of the world which brings sin and change. Transformation is a temporal phenomenon, connected with the unfolding of time. But it is the first sin which initiates this change: the lust which makes men beasts and changes fair to foul.

In Book V, the temporal decay of the earth is made to mirror the transformation of human nature:

For from the golden age, that first was named,
It's now at earst become a stonie one;
And men themselves, the which at first were framed
Of earthly mould, and form'd of flesh and bone,
Are now transformed into hardest stone:
Such as behind their backs (so backward bred)
Where throwne by Pyrrha and Deucalione;
And if then those may any worse be red,
They into that ere lay will be degenerated.
(V. Proem 2)

Ovid, in his account of the second creation of men, speaks of the survival of the qualities innate in the stone 'inde genus durum sumus experiensque laborum/ et documenta damus qua simus origine nati' (I. 414-5). The creation myths of the first book of the Metamorphoses describe a process of degeneration, followed by renewal in a harder and more painful state. Moreover, just as this degeneracy is punished by an individual metamorphosis (the transformation of Lycaon into a wolf) it is followed by a universal change, transforming earth to sea and covering the world once again with waters.

As men's hearts grow harder, so the world enters upon a new Stone Age¹: the cycle of myth inverts the order of natural history. In Book V., cosmic degeneration mirrors the decay of man's moral nature. In the first

1. Cf. Comes, VIII. 17 p. 590 . 'At cum rursus rudes homines & religionis cultusque Deorum ignari nascerentur, dicti sunt lapides' : q. Lotspeitch, Var. FQ. V. 157.

passage we quoted, from Book IV, Spenser seemed to place the root of man's corruption in lust : here, in terms equally traditional, he places it in the loss of original justice. Aquinas makes one complement the other:

Et ita peccatum originale materialiter quidem est
concupiscentia; formaliter vero, defectus originalis iustitiae.¹

Spenser's lament for this loss, in The Proem to Book V, involves him in a crucial paradox of his poem. It is about heroes, knights and ladies living according to 'antique vse' in a world prior to our own, and yet since it allegorically reflects our own world, he must place its values in the very midst of the corruption and decay of the earth's old age.

Man's loss of original justice is reflected in the heavens. Spenser's account of the decay of the Ptolemaic system is not original. The changes he describes are those noted by adherents of the old astronomy; and are therefore all the more a source of perplexity and gloom. As Fowler has noted, the nature of these alterations suggest the close of a Platonic Great Year², heralded by a period of great disturbance and destruction, and to be followed by the divine restoration of justice. In the Politicus such periods are cyclical (and mirror therefore the cycle of the earth's ages) but Christian writers use the Great Year as an apocalyptic symbol, a period to be followed by the dissolution of the world, God's punishment, and the rest of the faithful in the eternal Sabbath.³ But although the hope expressed at the end of the Mutability Cantos may then underlie all such accounts of the world's decay, the decay is itself a cause for the deepest melancholy and pessimism, for its roots are in fallen human nature.

In the Ovidian myth of the four ages, Justice is the last to leave the blood-soaked earth of the iron age:

victa iacet pietas, et virgo caede madentis
ultima caelestum terras Astraea reliquit.
(Met. I. 149-50)

1. Summa Theologica I. II. 82 Art 3. (Opera omnia, vii. 97)

2. Fowler, p. 193.

3. See my discussion, p. 207 . supra, and Eusebius, Præparatio Evangelica, xi

In the earlier passage we examined (IV. 30-33) Spenser tells us that the 'glorious flame' of beauty, which is divine resemblance, is almost wholly lost in the fallen world, but

few plants preseru'd through heauenly ayd,
In Princes Courts doe hap to sprout againe,
Dew'd with her drops of bountie Soueraigne
(IV. viii. 33)

and here, justice too is a power remaining only to princes

That powre he also doth to Princes lend,
And makes them like himself in glorious sight,
(V. Proem 10, 5-6)

Royalty of nature becomes, we may say, a symbol for the regenerate, confirmed both in original purity and in original justice.

It is against this pattern of decay, both moral and physical, that we are to see Mutabilitie's revolt in the last cantos. The debt of Spenser to Ovid in the Mutabilitie Cantos has been explored by W.P. Cumming¹, and recently by Michael Holahan². Cumming pointed out the echoes of Ovidian myth in the episodes of the Cantos, especially the myths of Phaethon (in Mutability's aspirations) Callisto, Alpheus and Arethusa, and Actaeon (in the Faunus and Molanna episode). Holahan studies these parallels again, but his primary purpose is to contrast the poetic presences of Ovid and Spenser. Ovid's poem ends, he notes, in a prideful assertion of the poet's capacity, through his art, to resist change : Spenser , ending as it were 'in medias res', submits himself to the discipline of history and hopes to be freed from time only through unmerited grace. Ovid, thus, claims for himself an immortality in time, justified by his triumphant handling of time in a carmen perpetuum : Spenser, with deeper humility, hopes for an immortality beyond time, in eternity, when both time and the poem will have come to a stop.

I agree with much of Holahan's argument, and his analysis of the Cantos makes it unnecessary once again to explore their relation with the Metamorphoses. I shall make more general points about Mutabilitie's revolt as a whole.

1. 'The Influence of Ovid's Metamorphoses on Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos' SP xxviii (1931), 241-6.
2. 'Iamque opus exegi' ELR vi (1976), 244-70

The chthonic origins of Mutabilitie, noted by several commentators, are interesting. She is the daughter of Titan and Earth, and a grand-daughter of Chaos (in accordance with the Hesiodic theogony which makes Chaos the parent of Earth). She is associated, then, with those old gods of darkness who are mentioned in the first Book of The Faerie Queene : Demogorgon and Night.

Demogorgon is called by Boccaccio both the father of Earth and a spirit of the earth : he 'keeps' Chaos in Spenser's poem. Hesiod makes Night the oldest of the gods : Boccaccio says she is the first daughter of Earth¹, and Spenser is probably following this genealogy, for he says that she was 'begot in Daemogorgon's hall'. When Mutabilitie strives to usurp the seat of Cynthia, the lower world is darkened, and the gods are 'much afraide' :

Fearing least Chaos broken had his chaine
And brought againe on them eternall night
(VII. vi. 14, 5-6)

This fear, that Chaos had returned to overwhelm the earth, is also to be found in Ovid's account of Phaethon's ill-fated usurpation of the chariot of Sol:

si freta, si terrae pereunt, si regia caeli,
in chaos antiquum confundimur!
(Met. II. 298-9)

Mutabilitie's threat, to break the great chain of being, is thus linked to the oppositions established in Book I, between light and darkness, form and formlessness, unity and multiplicity. Indeed Mutabilitie's beauty and ambition link her also to two magnificent but infernal figures of the early books, Lucifera and Philotime. Her revolt is certainly rooted in pride. She is a Titaness, one of the race that warred 'with Saturnes sonne for heavens regiment' : her present uprising recalls the world's first disorders and mutations, the seeds of all later discontent. While the gods and the lower world fear the return of Chaos, Jove associates Mutabilitie's revolt with a fresh uprising of Typhon². As Lotspeitch notes, Spenser is probably using the names Typhoeus and Typhon interchangeably (as in Comes VI. 22), for one of Giants who rebelled against Jove³. This rebellion is allegorized by almost all the

1. See Hesiod, ed. H. G. Evelyn-White (Loeb, London, 1936), p. 87, and Boccaccio, Genealogie deorum, ed. cit. i. 34 (Lib. I. cap. ix).

2. FQ VII. vi. 15, 8. Jove again mentions Typhon in VII. vi. 29, 6.

3. See Var FQ VI and VII, p. 277.

mythographers as symbolic of human pride : 'ambitionis furor'. We may note, however, that in view of his evident acquaintance with Plutarch's De Iside, Spenser may also have recalled the Egyptian figure, who conspired to destroy Osiris (sometimes identified with Jupiter)¹. Plutarch attaches many meanings to this enmity between Typhon and Osiris, but in the moral allegory he explains that Typhon is the irrational and rebellious part of the soul, and the diseased, disorderly and destructible quality of the body². Typhon is associated with destruction and dissolution, and by his dismembering of Osiris, imposes this quality upon natural things : Isis, as the generative principle in Nature, seeks Osiris (the formal principle) and sets out the scattered forms again³. It may also be noted that Typhon, in one exposition of the physical allegory, represents drought, scorching heat, and the destructive rays of the Sun⁴ - an aspect which may link him to Phaethon.

All these associations suggest, I think, why Mutabilitie is so powerful and threatening a figure: she is not simply 'an embodiment of time', as Fowler⁵ suggests, and her rebellion far exceeds in quality the 'Trionfo del tempo' portrayed by Petrarch, or the claims of Time in Stephen Hawes' Passetyme of Pleasure. Indeed, we are told that she is - somewhat ambiguously - both the cause and the effect of the Fall of man. It is through her power that 'the face of earthly things' is altered in the postlapsarian world:

all the worlds faire frame...
 She alter'd quite, and made them all accurst
 That God had blest; and did at first provide
 In that still happy state for ever to abide.
 (VII.vi.5,7-9)

At the same time, she is responsible for the first alteration itself: she breaks not only the laws of Nature but of God, the laws of justice and policy,

And wrong of right, and bad of good did make,
 And death for life exchanged foolishlie:
 Since which, all living wights have learn'd to die,

1. See Fowler, pp. 209-10.

2. De Iside et Osiride, 371 A - B

3. Ibid. 373 A - D

4. Ibid. 364 A - B

5. Fowler, p.227, referring to two of the Trionfi (del tempo and dell' eternità) and Hawes, The Passetyme of Pleasure, ed. W.E.Mead, EETS (London,1928) p.218.

And all this world is woxen daily worse.
 O pittious work of MUTABILITIE!
 By which, we all are subject to that curse,
 And death instead of life have sucked from our Nurse.

(VII.vi.6,3-9)

Since Mutabilitie is not, then, simply a condition of the physical world, an embodiment of earthly vicissitudes, but seems to embody a defect in man's moral nature as well, the mythical tale of Faunus and Molanna which completes this canto has particular point. The Titaness has already been convicted of pride, lack of justice, and defiance of authority. Faunus' fault is curiositas, another of the sins associated with the Fall, and linked to lust. His story closely parallels that of Actaeon, but unlike Actaeon, he is not destroyed by the angry goddess: he suffers a mock-transformation, expulsion and punishment. Even Molanna achieves a limited happiness: her streams, though stopped up with stones, find a way to the Fanchin's and they together become 'one faire river'. It is not part of Spenser's purpose to introduce here the harsh and virtually arbitrary punitive metamorphoses of his sources in Ovid: the tale is exemplary in displaying the fault, rather than in determining the punishment. Faunus and Molanna, then, survive, as is the nature of rustic demi-gods and river-nymphs, but the land is changed. The destruction of the pastoral landscape, its abandonment to be the haunt of wolves and thieves is the actual calamity: the god-inhabited woods of the early ages of the world became a wilderness, both physically and morally. Thus 'the final turn of Spenser's Ovidian canto is toward a view of the present state of Ireland.'¹

But although all these problems have been raised in the sixth canto the seventh is silent on virtually all of them. Interestingly, Mutabilitie's challenge to the gods' authority, made in front of Nature, is entirely in terms of the vicissitudes of physical nature and the changes noted in the heavens. Comparisons have several times been made to Bruno's Spaccio de la bestia trionfante, but even if Spenser did recall Bruno's framework, he completely ignores Bruno's central concern, moral reform in the heavens (mirroring the necessary reform of human nature).

Mutability puts forward several instances of change and decay on the earth

1. Holahan, art. cit. ELR vi (1976), 262.

and in the heavens: most are instances of physical change, but even where she seems to speak of men's minds, she mentions only inconstancy

eeke their minds (which they immortall call)
Still change and vary thoughts, as new occasions fall.
(VII.vii.19,8-9)

She accuses the gods with the alterations in the zodiac, rather than, like Bruno, attach to the zodiac the mythical crimes of the gods.

each of you
That vertue have, or this, or that to make,
Is checkt and changed from his nature trew,
By others opposition or obliquid view.
(VII.vii.54,6-9)

She makes no mention of the gods' transformations (a significant element in the Triumph of Cupid in Book III.xi) and her arguments for the rule of mutation in all things are taken only from 'motions' and 'alterations'. With the procession of the Seasons, months and hours, she has in fact lost her argument before it is completed, for the orderly progression of the year is here, as it is traditionally, a symbol of natural order and decorum.

Against such an argument, Nature's response too is, at least in the first part, simply an inclusive assertion of natural principles of continuity and permanence. Indeed, the first description of her has been an anticipation of this: 'Still mooving, yet unmoving from her sted'. Much labour has gone into determining sources and analogues, both for Mutabilitie's claims for universal vicissitude, and Nature's response. What is interesting about both is a certain ambiguity. As I noted, the sixth canto is full of subversive and disturbing suggestions regarding the moral implications of Mutabilitie's rebellion. It is grounded upon a real corruption and weakness in human nature, a defect that has resulted in mutation and deformity. In the seventh canto, none of this is made explicit: Mutabilitie argues only from the physical and external signs of decay or change. Nature's response to this latter argument is not a difficult one. All things seek to 'dilate' their being through change, and thereby they reach an inclusive kind of perfection. Rosalie Colie points out the source of this idea, in Plotinus' fifth Ennead¹. In a somewhat different sense we can

1. Paradoxia Epidemica (Princeton, 1966) pp.345-6.

apply the concept also to the whole process of generation and corruption in the world. Aristotle, in the De Generatione et corruptione, affirms the continuity of cyclic changes in physical nature, especially the mutual transformations of the elements.¹ Bruno, in La Cena de le Ceneri, adapts this to argue that all things have a 'goal of vicissitude' so that everything might possess successively all dispositions and forms. Mutability, thus, is comprehended into a larger pattern of wholeness and integrity. Both in terms of particular bodies, and when applied to the macrocosm, this is the most inclusive of answers to the problem of change: and fittingly, Nature can say that things "raigne ouer change, and doe their states maintaine".

But the second part of Nature's answer is more absolute:

time shall come when all shall changed bee
And from thenceforth, none no more shall see.

By referring the problem of time to the assurance of eternity, Nature replies also to those questionings which are concealed in the whole action of Canto VI and which have not so far been raised in Canto VII. The whole process is reflected in the two stanzas of the 'unparfite' eighth canto. On the mutable earth, ourselves caught up in an inevitability of change and decay, it is difficult to look beyond to the stability of the cyclic order: although physical nature may be essentially one, moving to perfection through change, we are, being part of it, bound to suffer its vicissitudes. This reflection causes deep melancholy in Spenser, a contemptus mundi expressed much in the terms of the medieval palinode.

But Nature's other promise is a source of hope. The world is created in time, but it ends in eternity. Man's degeneration and the transformation of his moral nature is mirrored in the decay of the world, and no assurance of stable physical principles can change this conviction of corruption. Nevertheless, the faithful may still hope for restoration, and rest, in the eternal Sabbath. Spenser might have expressed this in Augustinian terms:

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1. De Generatione et corruptione 336 b - 337 a . Aristotle says that this is because 'Nature always strives after the better' (336b).
 2. La Cena, V, in Dialoghi italiani, ed.cit. p.156

Dies enim septimus etiam nos ipsi erimus, quando eius fuerimus
benedictione & sanctificatione pleni atque refecti.¹

The rest of the Sabbath for which Spenser hopes is a time when all changes and transmutations are past, and human nature is restored and resurrected in its proper perfection. This restoration is not to be achieved through human means, for all the importance of the 'twelve private morall vertues': it is a condition of grace. Spenser's ethical poem can refer itself to such an eternity only by accepting the world's mutability and believing that it will have an end:

'C'est à nostre foy Chrestienne, non à sa vertu Stoïque, de pretendre a cette divine et miraculeuse metamorphose.'²

Spenser's enormous poem has drawn me into presenting a discursive and fragmented account of the images of metamorphosis we find in it. I am conscious that there are other themes in the poem which could also have been brought into the discussion, such as the opposition between nature and nurture, the wild beasts and savage men of the forest as against the nobility of the 'civilized' characters, and the fact that this opposition too is ambiguous, since the forest may shelter virtue and natural goodness as well. Without going further into the poem's immense richness of themes and symbols, however, we may be in a position now to see certain persistent elements in Spenser's use of the image of metamorphosis. In its most fundamental aspect he sees it as related to the corruption of man's nature after his fall. Images of transformation thus pass easily into moral allegory, although they are by no means exclusively moral. The corruption of external nature and the problems of mutability and decay stem from this transforming of the inner man, and reflect and multiply its images.

There are certain defences against this in the poem. In the first place, the active virtue of the knights who seek to transform themselves into the idea they represent places a positive image of metamorphosis against the negative one,

1. CD XXII.30, Vives p.786.

2. Montaigne, Apologie de Raimond Sebond, Essais, ed.cit. i.681.

and encourages us to hope that human nature might be restored to something like its earlier perfection. In the second place, although Nature has fallen with man, it still retains some of the blessings originally given it by God: it survives change and decay, absorbing mutations into a cycle of renewal. The 'physical' allegory in the poem, with its rich and exciting images of creativity and abundance, indeed leaves a more lasting impression even than the schematic exemplification of moral virtues.

Ultimately, however, if the Mutability Cantos are to be taken as Spenser's final word on the poem, all this is insufficient. The metamorphosis of man and his world, most deeply an effect of sin, cannot be countered by ethics or natural law. What man hopes for is a divine transformation, a movement upwards which does not rest with him but is wholly an act of freely bestowed grace.

The Idea of Form in the Poetry of Chapman

I. The Shadow of Night

Chapman is a poet particularly obsessed by abstract ideas, and of these one of the most important, as I hope to show in this chapter, is the notion of form. With the related ideas of deformity and transformation, this concept occupies a central place in his poetry, and may indeed be said to be its main metaphysical theme.

It is immediately obvious that Chapman's poetry is not Ovidian in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, his obsession with man's proper form, and its corruption or loss, should be seen in the context of Renaissance mythographical and philosophical treatments of Ovidian fables of metamorphosis.¹ Ovid's 'darke Philosophie of turned shapes'² was, to virtually all Renaissance writers, an expression of the precariousness of the human condition. Chapman's poetry seems to present, in remarkably detailed form, the abstract notions behind such interpretations of Ovidian myth. The primary tension in his work is between form as informing principle, as soul or Idea, and form as shape or appearance. Ideally man's form is his being: ideally the internal and external coincide. But more often they do not: and we must then see him as changed or deformed. In Chapman these reflections engender a profound melancholy, all the more so because his ideal, whether Aristotelian or Neoplatonic, presents him with an impossible beauty and perfection.

F.L. Schoell's fundamental study of Chapman's sources³ has shown the extent of his dependence on Ficino, Erasmus, Xylander's Plutarch and Wolfius' Epictetus as well as Giraldi, Comes, Cartari and possibly Boccaccio; he cites Plato and Aristotle in Latin, probably from the versions of contemporary commentators.

1. This point is made by D.J. Gordon, in 'The Renaissance Poet as Classicist: Chapman's Hero and Leander' (1956) pr. in The Renaissance Imagination, ed. S. Orgel (Berkeley, 1975), p. 102.

2. Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding translation, 1567, ed. J.F. Nims (New York, 1965), p. 405.

3. Études sur l'humanisme continental en Angleterre à la fin de la Renaissance (Paris, 1926).

His long friendship with Jonson suggests that he would have known the books in Jonson's library, of which an incomplete but still impressive list appears in the Herford and Simpson edition of Jonson's works.¹ Chapman is in fact even uncomfortably attached to his sources: the poems are encrusted with the accretions of his reading. In an epistle to Matthew Roydon prefixed to The Shadow of Night (1594), Chapman states the need for deep and arduous study before men 'can cut of the viperous head of benumbing ignorance, or subdue their monstrous affections to most beautifull iudgement.'² The connection between learning and virtue is characteristic. This epistle points to Chapman's enthusiasm for the kinds of study pursued by men like 'deepe searching Northumberland', whom George Peele describes as 'following the auncient reuerend steps/Of Trismegistus and Pythagoras.'³ Raleigh, Northumberland's friend and associate, is celebrated by Chapman in 'De Guiana' (1596) as the 'soule of Nature'⁴ and Chapman addresses a highly personal poem to a man closely linked to both Raleigh and Northumberland; the mathematician Thomas Hariot.⁵ This last poem, printed four years after The Shadow of Night, is strongly reminiscent of it: it reflects Chapman's profound concern with the problems of poetry, and sets the search for true learning against the ignorance and corruption of the age, 'errors Night' - the opposition is like that between soul and body, form and deformity.

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1. Ben Jonson, Works, ed. C.H. Herford and P. & E. Simpson (1925-52) i. 250-71; xi. 593-603.
 2. The Poems of George Chapman, ed. P.B. Bartlett (New York, 1941), p.19. All citations are from this edition, referred to as Poems in the notes. Matthew Roydon, a minor poet of some repute, was implicated together with Thomas Hariot in the blasphemy charges against Marlowe. See F.S. Boas, Marlowe and his Circle (Oxford, 1929), p. 140.
 3. George Peele, The Honour of the Garter (London, 1593) A3^r.
 4. 'De Guiana, Carmen Epicum', 125: Poems, p. 356.
 5. 'To my admired and soule-loved friend...M. Harriots' accompanying Achilles Shield (London, 1598). In 'Some Additional Poems by George Chapman', The Library 4th ser. xxii (1941-2), 172-6, Jean Robertson argues that an engraving (1620) of a man holding an abacus and rod, with a commendatory poem by Chapman at the foot, represents Thomas Hariot. For a useful account of the circle round Raleigh and Northumberland, see C. Hill, The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution (1965, rpt. London, 1972), pp. 139-45.

The earliest expression given to these ideas is in Chapman's first extant printed work $\xi\mu\lambda\kappa$ $\nu\nu\kappa\tau\omicron\varsigma$: The Shadow of Night (1594), which, read as a manifesto of an Elizabethan School of Night,¹ has earned a certain notoriety. The reading is a questionable one, and does not concern us here. What is, I think, quite remarkable about the two 'Hymns' contained in the volume, is the simultaneous presence of a body of extraordinarily complex and obscure ideas, and even a strong sense of personal isolation and eccentricity, with a tone as if it were of public admonition:

kneele then with me, fall worm-like on the ground,
And from th' infectious dunghill of this Round,
From mens brasse wits, and golden foolerie,
Weepe, weepe your soules, into felicitie:
Come to this house of mourning, serue the night...
('Hymnus in Noctem' , 324-8)

Frances Yates, who had earlier lent influential support to the theory of the School of Night, argues in a recent and stimulating essay that Chapman's two hymns are studies in inspired melancholy, as described by Agrippa in his De occulta philosophia.² She proposes a connexion between The Shadow of Night and Durer's Melencolia I (and a hypothetical Melencolia II): but it is impossible to prove whether Chapman had seen this engraving. That Chapman's 'humour of the night' is a melancholy humour is however beyond doubt. His invocation of Night in the first Hymn to 'lose my working soule, / That in her highest pitch, she may controule / The court of skill, compact of misterie' (Noct. 11-13) strongly recalls Agrippa's association - following pseudo-Aristotle in the Problemata - of melancholy with prophetic and poetic furor: 'Ex melancholia ... quidam facti sunt sicut diuini praedicentes futura, & quidam facti sunt poetae.'³ Moreover, the derivation from Agrippa would suit

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1. See A. Acheson, Shakespeare and the Rival Poet (London, 1903), F.A. Yates, A Study of Love's Labour's Lost (London, 1936), and M.C. Bradbrook, The School of Night (Cambridge, 1936). Some arguments against this theory are advanced in E.A. Strathmann's study, Sir Walter Raleigh (New York, 1951), pp. 262-71.
 2. F.A. Yates, 'Agrippa and Elizabethan Melancholy: George Chapman's Shadow of Night' in The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (London, 1979), 135-46. Cf. Agrippa, De occulta philosophia (Antwerp, 1533) i. lx. pp. 78-80.
 3. De occulta philosophia, p. 78.

the occult interests of the circle in which Chapman moved,¹ as well as the magical aspects of the hymns, presenting Cynthia 'Enchantresse-like' in her 'Magick authoritie',² and containing images from alchemy, witchcraft, and conjuration. I am concerned here, however, not with these occult aspects, but with certain more basic metaphysical preoccupations.

In the first poem, the 'Hymnus in Noctem', Chapman addresses Night as a cosmic deity, ruling over the 'vnlightsome, vast, and indigest' matter of primeval chaos:

Why letst thou order, orderlesse disperse,
 The fighting parents of this vniuerse?
 When earth, the ayre, and sea, in fire remaind,
 When fire, the sea, and earth, the ayre containd,
 When ayre, the earth, and fire, the sea enclosde
 When sea, fire, ayre, in earth were indisposde,
 Nothing, as now, remainde so out of kinde,
 All things in grosse, were finer than refinde,
 Substance was sound within, and had no being,
 Now forme giues being; all our essence seeming,
 Chaos had soule without a bodie then,
 Now bodies liue without the soules of men,
 Lumps being digested; monsters, in our pride.

('Hymnus in Noctem', 37-49)

This complicated passage is of crucial importance. In the context of the whole poem, Chapman's Night is not simply primordial darkness but an eternal source of wisdom, like the Orphic Night who counselled the world's maker on its making, and whom Pico sees as earlier and greater than creation itself.³

Chapman's description of the Chaos over which she rules recalls Ovid

(Metamorphoses I.5-31) and, more specifically, Du Bartas.⁴ Similar influences

1. For some aspects of Raleigh's and Northumberland's interests, which included alchemy, mathematics, medicine, natural magic, and astronomy, see J.W. Shirley, 'The Scientific Experiments of Sir Walter Raleigh, the Wizard Earl, and the Three Magi in the Tower, 1603-17', Ambix iv (1949), 52-66; G.R. Batho, 'The Library of the "Wizard" Earl', The Library 5th ser. xv (1960), 246-61; and P.M. Rattansi, 'Alchemy and Natural Magic in Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World', Ambix xiii (1966), 122-38.

2. 'Hymnus in Noctem', 395 and Gloss 13, Poems, p. 30.

3. Conclusiones de modo intelligendi hymnos Orphei, 15, 16 in Conclusiones sive theses Dcccc, ed. B. Kieszowski (Geneva, 1973), p.82. See Hymns of Orpheus, tr. Thomas Taylor (London, 1787), p.115; and discussion in E. Wind, Pagan Mysteries, ed. cit., pp.276-7. R.B. Waddington, in The Mind's Empire (Baltimore, 1974), pp.45-51, discusses the poems as 'Orphic hymns'.

4. La Premiere Sepmaine, Le premier jour, 223-36 in Works, ed. cit., ii.202-3. Bartlett (Poems, p.423) thinks that Chapman is using Sylvester's translation, but Sylvester did not begin translating the Premiere Sepmaine until after Chapman's poem was published. See S. Snyder's edition of Sylvester's trans., The Divine Weeks and Works (Oxford, 1979), i. p.18.

may be seen in another description Chapman could have read, that by Abraham Fraunce in Amintas Dale (1592):

When noe fyre, noe ayre, noe earth, noe water appeared,
 Confused fyre, rude ayre, vast earth, dull water abyded.
 Water, th' earth and ayre and fyre extreamely defaced,
 And fyre, th' earth and ayre and water fowly deformed.
(fol. 1^r)

The common assumption, in Ovid, Du Bartas and Fraunce, is that Chaos represents a state of imperfection and strife: 'une forme sans forme, / Une pile confuse, un meslange difforme.'¹ Matter, ugly and deformed, awaits the refinement of order and the infusion of form. In Chapman, on the contrary, the prime matter ruled over by Night is single and homogeneous, and discord begins only with the separation of the elements. Fraunce, following Boccaccio,² describes Strife as the first offspring of Chaos, and the division of the elements is called Strife 'sith it conuerseth among foure striuing & contrary elements, the one alwaies maligning and repugning the other' (Amintas Dale, fol. 4^v). But in Fraunce's account, chaos is in a state of 'wars and iarrs, all strife, and all on an vproare' (fol. 1^v) even before the 'birth' of Strife and the division of the elements.

Chapman's celebration of Night involves him in the paradox of a harmonious chaos, a state of perfection rather than privation: 'All things in grosse, were finer than refinde.' Elements of this view could have been loosely derived from the description of space in the Timaeus (49a-51b) 'the universal nature which receives all bodies', or from Bruno's celebration of matter as the 'divina e ottima parente, genetrice e madre di cose naturali, anze la natura tutta in sustanza'.³ A nearer debt might be to alchemical notions of the wholeness and soundness of the prima materia (which Paracelsus calls Iliaster)⁴ from which the elements represent a decline, and which pre-existed in darkness,

1. Du Bartas, loc. cit., 223-4 (Works, ii. p.202).

2. Boccaccio, Genealogie deorum, I.iii: ed. V. Romano (Bari, 1951), i. p.18.

3. G. Bruno, De la causa, principio e uno, iv, in Dialoghi italiani, ed. cit. (Florence, 1927), p. 312.

4. The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings, ed. Waite (London, 1894), i. 201ff.

or nigredo. Other traces of alchemical imagery are visible in the Hymns; Cynthia is called the 'great Elixer' ('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 404), a term Chapman glosses as 'the Philosophers stone, or Philosophia Medicina' (Poems, p.44). More strikingly, the darkness of Night, which contains the true inward fire of the moon and stars, is contrasted to the moral chaos of the poet's times, symbolised by gilded dross:

So to the chaos of our first descent,
 (All dayes of honor, and of vertue spent)
 We barely make retrait, and are no lesse
 Then huge impolisht heapes of filthinesse.
 Mens faces glitter, and their hearts are blacke,
 But thou (great Mistresse of heauens gloomie racke)
 Art blacke in face, and glitterst in thy heart.
 ('Hymnus in Noctem', 221-7)

The first hymn is organised through such contrasts: Night against nox mentis, primal chaos against moral anarchy, a darkness which is light against a light which is darkness. To understand this we must look again at the passage about Chaos I have quoted, and especially at Chapman's precise metaphysical distinctions between substance, forme, essence, soule and bodie.

In Chaos, says Chapman,

Substance was sound within, and had no being,
 Now forme giues being; all our essence seeming,
 Chaos had soule without a bodie then,
 Now bodies liue without the soules of men,
 Lumps being digested; monsters, in our pride.
 ('Hymnus in Noctem, 45-8)

Substance, used in one of its Aristotelian senses as prima materia,¹ lacks being until it is indued with form. Form makes matter exist, and men therefore now possess being: but their essence, which is what should distinguish them as men, is seeming, mere hypocrisy. The best short exposition of the relations of these terms, as Chapman is using them here, is Aquinas' treatise De ente et essentia. Aquinas uses substantia as the general, descriptive term, while distinguishing being, i.e. existence, from essence, i.e. quiddity 'quod quid erat esse'. Essence, deriving from the union of matter with form, is what makes a thing what it is: Aquinas uses a traditional

1. De Anima, 414a. For the use of the word substance in this sense of prime matter, see Spenser, The Faerie Queene III.vi.38.1-2.

illustration of the nature of essence by saying that humanity is the essence of man.¹ It is precisely this distinction between being and essence which Chapman draws here. Moreover, as the Renaissance knew from its reading of Aristotle's De anima - and D.J. Gordon has shown how important this work is in understanding Chapman's notion of form² - the soul is the form (εἶδος) of the body.³

In Chapman's despairingly reductive vision, these philosophical premises are contradicted by man's corruption: men have lost their essence, their humanity, and the degeneration of their souls reduces the human body by analogy to a deformed 'lump', a monster. The Aristotelian formulation that soul is the form of the body does not, of course, identify form with shape: form here means informing principle, that which gives being, and it is defined as actuality - entelecheia, usually translated as perfectio. But Aristotle's frequent use of the analogy of an impression in wax, or a statue, and of the collocation 'shape or form',⁴ closely associates man's human soul with his human shape: to Chapman the loss of the one implies, and can be visualised in, the loss of the other. Transformation becomes, thus, a fiercely logical process.

These ideas are absolutely central to Chapman's use of the concept of form, and of images of metamorphosis, in all his poetry. He makes the most brilliant and ambitious use of them in Hero and Leander, though they recur everywhere. As D.J. Gordon has emphasized, the fundamentally Aristotelian character of this ontology need not disturb our sense of 'the dominance of Platonic and Ficinian ideas in Chapman's thought':⁵ Chapman's thought (which, in its ethics, includes a strongly Stoic element) is typical of the

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, De ente et essentia, ed. M.-D. Roland-Gosselin (Paris, 1926), cap.i, p.3: 'humanitas est essentia hominis'. Cf. also cap.ii (p.8) for essence as including matter and form, and cap.iv (p.34) for the difference between being and essence: 'Ergo patet quod esse est aliud ab essentia vel quiditate.'

2. The Renaissance Imagination, pp.117-19.

3. De Anima, 412a.

4. De Anima, 412a, 407b: and, for the analogy of the impression in wax, 412b.

5. The Renaissance Imagination, p.119.

Renaissance in being eclectic without necessarily being inconsistent. It would indeed be unlike Chapman to reject metaphysical notions so basic in the age as the Aristotelian formulations of the relation between form and matter, soul and body: we may recall Spenser's lines in the highly Platonic Hymne in Honour of Beautie:

For of the soule the bodie forme doth take:
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make. (132-3)

as well as Leander's mock-scholastic arguments to Hero in Marlowe's brilliant presentation of the seduction scene (Hero and Leander I.269-76, printed in The Poems of George Chapman, ed. cit.).

The paradoxical statement that Chaos had soul without body perhaps needs some comment. Most directly, it recalls Genesis 1:2 'And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' It may also remind us of Ficino's commentary on the Symposium, where at one point chaos, still formless matter, looks towards its soul.¹ In the corrupt world of his times, Chapman sees deformed bodies, lacking their proper souls: what results is moral chaos. The poem continues to elaborate upon this point:

So all things now (extract out of the prime)
Are turnd to chaos, and confound the time.
('Hymnus in Noctem', 61-2)

The principal opposition in the poem is between the true Night which Chapman invokes, the nurse of the universe, and the source of all wisdom, and the shadow-night that breeds deformity and turns men into monsters. This idea of a nox mentis is taken, as Schoell shows, like so much else in the poem, from the Mythologiae of Natalis Comes:² here it becomes a symbol for the deformities of the age. As in Ovid, the metamorphoses of the ages, gold to iron, illustrate the painful contrast between the first ordering of the universe by form and its present confusion:

1. In convivium Platonis, de amore, I.iii, ed. Marcel (Paris, 1978), p.141.
2. Comes, III.12, p.153 (De Nocte): Schoell, p.180.

Disiunction shows, in all things now amisse,
 By that first order, what confusion is:
 Religious curb, that manadgd men in bounds,
 Of publique wellfare; lothing priuate grounds,
 (Now cast away, by self-lou's paramores)
 All are transformd to Calydonian bores,
 That kill our bleeding vines, displow our fields,
 Rend groues in peece; ('Hymnus in Noctem', 79-86)

The Calydonian boar was sent by Diana as a curse to a king who had neglected her sacrifice; it was the source ultimately of the ruin of his kingdom.¹ In Chapman's involved syntax *the confusion of the whole process is enacted: irreligious men are themselves* transformed into terrible agents of vengeance. Comes interprets the monster as a punishment for irreligiousness:

Haec idcirco celebrata sunt a poetis, vt nullum Deorum cultum impune negligi a mortalibus sciretur: sed omnia quaecunque grauia contingunt, siue sterilitas sit agrorum, siue animalium pestilentia, siue immanitas monstrorum, vel propter neglectam religionem, vel propter hominum improbitatem consilio & prouidentia Dei contingere: . . . nihil fit enim horum sine diuina voluntate.²

The confusion in Chapman's syntax suggests a sudden incoherent vision of a land ravaged by wild beasts, as if a metaphor had become actual. In this poem and others Chapman frequently sees men as suffering monstrous or bestial metamorphoses: indeed, the more vividly because the change is inward spirit rather than, as in a story of metamorphosis, in external shape. What Chapman makes the subject of his profound condemnation of human corruption is the 'impossible' disjunction between the form of the soul and the apparently human form of the body, And this is the point of his first celebration of Chaos: it is better to have no form at all than to have forms such as these.

But the outward metamorphosis may be metaphorical if not actual. What follows at this point is a remarkable inversion of the old physical parallel between the body of the world and the body of man. The world was anciently conceived as a living animal with an anthropomorphic body; Plutarch makes an elaborate comparison in De facie quae in orbe lunae apparet, which Chapman

1. Ovid, Metamorphoses VIII, 260-546.

2. Comes, VII.3, p.472 (De Apro Calydonio)

had read in Xylander's Latin translation.¹ Indeed he virtually translates the passage in his Eugenia (ll.723-32); Raleigh works out a more detailed comparison in the first book of The History of the World.² For the Stoics, the proposition that the world is living and a god is an essential part of the argument from design, which is similarly extended to the human body.³ Chapman, however, uses the parallel as an index of man's corruption and the decay of his form: man's greed and selfishness have shrunk his limbs, transforming him to a lump of 'thankless avarice':

His armes into his shoulders crept for feare
Bountie should vse them; and fierce rape forbear,
His legges into his greedie belly runne,
The charge of hospitalitie to shunne)

and the world too, in reverse anthropomorphism, is similarly diminished:

In him the world is to a lump reuerst,
That shruncke from forme, that was by forme disperst,
(*'Hymnus in Noctem'*, 97-102)

The strongly 'metaphysical' quality of this passage might remind us of one in The First Anniversary, where Donne suggests that since the bodies of the world and man are equally decayed, the world should take a new form from the example of Elizabeth Drury:

The twilight of her memory doth stay;
Which, from the carcasse of the old world, free,
Creates a new world, and new creatures bee
Produc'd: the matter and the stuffe of this,
Her vertue, and the forme our practice is: (74-8)

Immediately after this passage, Chapman illustrates the higher transformation of which creatures are capable, and to which man's degeneration into bestiality or insensibility ('stone-pesants') is a terrifying contrast. The myths of Amalthea and of the Argive ship being transformed into constellations, which Chapman took from Comes, are examples of things lower than man exalted above him through virtue, and unnoticed by Schoell, Chapman adopts

1. Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia, tr. G. Xylander (Basel, 1570), 772-3.
See Schoell, 143.
2. Sir Walter Raleigh, Works (Oxford, 1829), ii.58-9.
3. Cf. Cicero, De natura deorum II.82, 133-4.

the moral too from Comes:

Nunc antiquorum sententiam ex his exprimamus. Quemadmodum per superiora exempla nos antiqui sapientes ad beneficentiam atque ad liberalitatem adhortabantur, cum & nauem, & capram coelestem, & multa animalia vel in coelum inter astra retulerint, vel diuinis honoribus prosecuti sint:¹

The body of man, in its first excellence, mirrored his soul, which by virtue of its intelligence, mens, reflected the image of God: the corruption of the latter in him should therefore be seen in his shape:

If then we frame mans figure by his mind
 And that at first, his fashion was assignd,
 Erection in such God-like excellence
 For his soules sake, and her intelligence:
 She so degenerate, and growne deprest,
 Content to share affections with a beast,
 The shape wherewith he should be now indude,
 Must beare no signe of mans similitude.
 Therefore Promethean poets with the coles
 Of their most geniale, more-then-humane soules
 In liuing verse, created men like these,
 With shapes of Centaurs, Harpies, Lapithes,
 ('Hymnus in Noctem', 123-34)

Here again, Chapman returns to the 'impossible' dissonance between the form of the soul and that of the body. In an extraordinary^d concrete image he sees the human soul, placed by Plato in the head to keep the body erect (Timaeus 90a-b), so 'deprest' that it is as it were walking on all fours, engrossed and corporealised by matter. In the Ovidian fable, Prometheus creates man to stand upright and look up to the heavens as a sign of his nobility; Boccaccio interprets the Prometheus myth as specifically about the imparting of form, through wisdom and culture, to rude and ignorant man.² For Chapman, the fabulous creatures of myth are Promethean images of man's degeneration. The interpretation of myth that Chapman offers here is substantially one that, echoing through much Renaissance literature, mythography and philosophy, receives its most celebrated expression in Pico's De hominis dignitate,³ and one closer to Chapman's lines here in Pomponazzi's De immortalitate animae:

1. Comes, VII.13, p.405 (De Niobe).

2. Metamorphoses I. 82-6. Genealogie deorum, IV.xliv, ed. cit., i.198.

3. Pico, ed. Garin, pp. 104-6.

Recte igitur apologizauerunt antiqui cum dixerunt aliquos homines esse factos deos, aliquos leones, aliquos lupos, aliquos aquilas, aliquos pisces, aliquos plantas, aliquos saxsa, & sic decaeteris: cum aliqui homines insequiti sunt intellectum, aliqui sensum, aliqui uires uegetatiue.¹

Raleigh, writing in The History of the World about the place of man in the universe, is drawing on much the same body of ideas as Chapman when he explains, after Pico, the transformations of myth:

This freedom of the first man Adam, and our first father, was enigmatically described by Asclepius Atheniensis, saith Mirandula, in the person and fable of Proteus, who was said, as often as he pleased, to change his shape. To the same end were all those celebrated metamorphoses among the Pythagoreans and ancient poets, wherein it was feigned that men were transformed into diuers shapes of beasts, thereby to show the change of men's conditions, from reason to brutality, from virtue to vice, . . . For by the lively image of other creatures did those ancients represent the variable passions and affections of mortal men;²

Chapman's immediate source is Comes; but persisting through all the accretions of borrowed detail is a real imaginative obsession with the idea of men losing their proper shapes, being changed or deformed. This is so recurrent a feature of his poetry that it is impossible simply to regard it as something he takes over from an allegorizing mythographer like Comes, some of whose exegeses he records here.

Among these is the story of the golden chain with which, in Homer, the gods were to attempt to pull down Jove from heaven; Jove's steadfastness is an allegory of virtue:

Nothing shall stirre him from adorning still
This shape with vertue, and his powre with will.
(*'Hymnus in Noctem'*, 169-70)

Quod attinet ad auream cathenam, quod omnes Dii Iouem de coelo detrahere non possent, ego modo auaritiam, modo ambitionem esse auream cathenam crediderim; quae & si potentissima est, multosque a vera Dei religione ad falsa dogmata retraxit, . . . tamen virum bonum suo loco dimouere non poterit,³

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1. Tractatus de immortalitate animae, tr. W.H. Hay, II, with facs. of ed. prin. 1516 (Haverford College, 1938), p. xxxiii (cap. XIV).
 2. Works, ii. 62-3.
 3. Comes, II.4, p.93. (De Iunone).

Chapman's modification of Comes is in applying the moral more strictly to the human form. Men must show their shapes in actions, seek conformity between the inner and actual, and the outer or apparent images: 'Else may they easily passe for beasts or foules:/Soules praise our shapes, and not our shapes our soules.' (Noct. 179-80). The soul is not simply the form, it is the formal or efficient cause: it is entelechy, which is perfectio, that by which we are;¹ if this form is obscured, we return to a state of non-being worse than the first darkness.

The present state of complete confusion where the shape contradicts the soul ('Mens faces glitter, and their hearts are blacke'), is set by Chapman against the hidden inward virtues of Night, symbolized in the moon:

But thou (great Mistresse of heauens gloomie racke)
Art blacke in face, and glitterst in thy heart.
('Hymnus in Noctem', 226-7)

As I have noted, Chapman's conception of Night is Orphic and mystical, and is linked with the creative, poetic or prophetic aspects of Saturnian melancholy.² Night is to be sought through sorrow, in sleep, in death, and appropriately through memory. Chapman glosses the reference to memory himself: 'Plato saith dicere is nothing else but reminisci' (Poems, p.29): the soul, recalling its past, returns to that mystical darkness where it may approach God.³ Night replaces the false forms of day with the true forms of virtue, sending intimations of these through dreams:

Sweet Protean dreams she sends of euery sort:
Some taking formes of Princes, to perswade
Of men deiect, we are their equals made,
('Hymnus in Noctem', 341-3)

It is worth noting that Proteus was traditionally interpreted, also, as the materia prima,⁴ over which Night rules. The contrast between Night and Day becomes, finally, a moral antithesis between truth and deceit, reality and

1. De Anima, 415b.

2. See discussions in R. Battenhouse, 'Chapman's Shadow of Night', SP xxxviii (1941), 584-608; R. Waddington, The Mind's Empire, pp.45-51, 94-98; F.A. Yates; Occult Philosophy, pp. 135-146.

3. See Pico, ed. Gavin, p. 412.

4. See L.G. Giraldi, De deis gentium (Basel, 1548), p.228.

appearance, being and seeming. Night's 'trustie shadowes', perhaps because insubstantial, remain in a Neoplatonic sense closer to truth than the daylight pleasures of the senses.

The second hymn, 'In Cynthiam', elaborates on many of the same points made in the first, but in a mode more purely allegorical. As Jacquot comments, in the second poem 'Un même symbole cosmique représente ... l'Ame du Monde des platoniciens, la déesse païenne, et Elisabeth divinisée'.¹ Plotinus uses the moon as a symbol of the anima mundana in the Fifth Ennead:² as such it imparts forms to the world and rules over it. The same parallel is elaborately displayed by Leone Ebreo in his Dialoghi di amore, a work widely read in the Renaissance:

Il Sole e simulacro dell'intelletto diuino, dalquale ogni intelletto dipende: & la Luna e simulacro dell'anima del mondo, dallaquale ogni anima procede.³

The 'Hymnus in Cynthiam' is one of the most extreme examples of the cult of the 'diva Elisabetta': it is not surprising that Chapman should see her as ruling both England and the cosmos. In the sixth line he celebrates her as the perfect form, the circle: the circular movement of the moon and the sphere of the full moon, which symbolize the circular movement of the world-soul, together constitute a purity of form denied to sublunary matter. These ideas are here combined with those of singularity and permanence; Elizabeth's virginity, and her Phoenix motto of Semper eadem, make her a symbol of the one and the unchanging. And it is for this reason that the eclipses of the moon, described after Comes,⁴ carry in Chapman's poem so powerful a suggestion of the loss or obscuring of virtue, quite apart from the political implications of Elizabeth's marriage or illness:

1. J. Jacquot, George Chapman (Paris, 1951), p. 63.

2. The Enneads tr. S. McKenna (rev. ed., 1969), p. 417.

3. Leone Ebreo, Dialoghi di amore (Venice, 1586), fol. 110^v (Dialogo Terzo).

4. Comes, III.17, p.170 (De Luna): Schoell, pp. 185-6.

So (gracious Cynthia) in that sable day,
 When interposed earth takes thee away,
 (Our sacred chiefe and soueraigne generall,)
 As chrimsine a retrait, and steepe a fall
 We feare to suffer from this peace, and height,
 ('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 58-62)

Such suggestions are comparable to the interpretation in the Dialoghi di amore of the eclipse of the moon as the eclipse of reason in the soul by corporeal matter, when it is usurped by the animals of the passions.¹ These changes are the more terrible because Cynthia figures the purity of a divine form:

Thy bodie not composed in thy birth,
 Of such condensed matter as the earth,
 ('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 100-1)

This again is taken, unmarked by Schoell, from Comes:

Cum vero corpus lunae non sit ex aliqua materia densa vt
 terra est, aut ex ea composita,²

but Chapman is not thinking of the Aristotelian quintessence; for him Cynthia is virtually pure form. In her role as Hecate, moreover, she symbolizes the intellect, the 'forces of the mind' that can raise a human soul to divinity.

The two most remarkable passages in the Hymn, are the description of Cynthia's 'Elysian pallace' and the allegorical narrative of the chase of Euthimya. The first of these derives certain details from Comes,³ but they contribute to a symbolic description:

And Forme her selfe, she mightilie coniurd
 Their priselesse values, might not be obscurd,
 With disposition baser than diuine,
 But make that blissfull court of hers to shine
 With all accomplishment of Architect,
 That not the eye of Phebus could detect.
 Forme then, twixt two superior pillers framd
 This tender building, Pax Imperij nam'd,
 Which cast a shadow, like a Pyramis
 Whose basis, in the plaine or back part is
 Of that queint worke: the top so high extended,
 That it the region of the Moone transcended:
 ('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 182-93)

1. Leone Ebreo, fol. 119^v (Dialogo Terzo).
 2. Comes, III.17, p.171 (De Luna).
 3. Ibid., p.169. See Schoell, p.188.

The links between this passage and Spenser's stanza (Faerie Queene II.ix.22) on the human body have been noted.¹ As in Spenser, however, the proportions and lineaments of the structure are symbolic rather than actual. Chapman's source in Comus describes the shadow of the earth: Cynthia's palace, while it represents her earthly body, the Queen, must also be thought of as encompassing the whole of the earth, casting the shadow of Imperial Peace over it. The body of the Queen is at once the body politic: Frances Yates notes the imperial device of the two 'superior pillars'.² The architecture of Cynthia's palace is thus the purest example of the universal art,³ a form realized in its utmost perfection:

Without, within it, eurie corner fild
By bewtious forme,

('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 194-5)⁴

It is remarkable that in a poem otherwise so clogged with borrowed detail we should find this sequence of independent mythologizing. Cynthia's palace is the seat of forms; she herself, ruling 'the fates of all', is a figure related to the Goddess Ceremony in Chapman's Hero and Leander, sustaining the order of created things.

It is within this palace that Cynthia creates of heavenly matter a nymph called Euthimya. The name is Chapman's invention and is derived from the Greek euthimia, joy; the symbolic chase which follows is of extreme significance in the poem. Euthimya's golden wings are bound up before she sets the hunt afoot, drawing after her the affections and passions of men:

the flowrs, the shadowes and the mists,
Fit matter for most pliant humorists)
She hunters makes: and of that substance hounds
Whose mouths deafe heauen, & furrow earth with wounds.

('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 220-3)

The creation by Diana of the hounds, the huntsmen, and their monstrous steeds, the ability of Euthimya to change her shape, and the dreadful forest filled

1. See R.H. Perkinson, 'The Body as a Triangular Structure in Spenser and Chapman', MLN, lxiv (1949), 520-22.

2. Astraea (1975 rpt Harmondsworth, 1977), p.77.

3. Cf. Vitruvius, De architectura (Venice, 1567), I.i, p.6.

4. Bartlett reads Forme: I have retained the reading of the first edition.

with 'cursed sights', succeeded by the unchaste delights of the 'fruitfull Iland' to which Euthimya flees, combine to make this as much an allegory of transformation as anything else. Chapman may have derived something of this from the accounts in Giraldi and Cartari¹ of Hecate's shape-changing and her power over the elements: but the main sources of the narrative, as Schoell shows, are the myths of Actaeon and of the chase of the Calydonian boar.²

The names of the hounds are taken from Comes' chapter De Actaeone, and he derives them from Ovid: they are the hounds who hunt their master and finally tear him to pieces. The myth of Actaeon was commonly interpreted as an allegory of man being destroyed in his own ungovernable passions: this interpretation is at least implied in Comes, and we find it in Abraham Fraunce's

Ivychurch

a wiseman ought to refraine his eyes, from beholding
sensible and corporal bewty, figured by Diana: least, as
Actaeon was deuoured of his owne doggs, so he be distructed
and torne in peeces with his owne affections, and perturbations.³

as well as in one of Whitney's emblems, where Actaeon's transformation is seen as a consequence of his bestial lust: 'And as his houndes, soe their affections base,/Shall them deuowre'.⁴

The object of the chase, Euthimya, is a fleeting image of joy which transforms itself to all objects of desire: in the first stage of the hunt she is a panther, one of Diana's creatures, but also to Chapman a symbol of depravity and rapacity.⁵ The transformations of Euthimya are elaborately explained by Chapman:

And maruaile not a Nimphe so rich in grace
To hounds rude pursutes should be giuen in chase:
For she could turn her selfe to euerie shape
Of swiftest beasts, and at her pleasure scape.
Wealth faunes on fooles; vertues are meate for vices,
Wisdomes conformes her selfe to all earths guises,
('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 224-9)

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1. Giraldi, p.498; Vincenzo Cartari, Le imagini de i dei degli antichi (Venice, 1580), p.116. For Chapman's use of Giraldi see 'Hymn. in C.', Gloss 8; of Cartari, see D.J. Gordon, 'Chapman's Use of Cartari...', MLR xxxix (1944), 280-5, and The Renaissance Imagination, pp.103-5.
 2. Comes, pp.441-2, 471; see Schoell, pp.189-90.
 3. Fraunce, fol. 43^r.
 4. Geoffrey Whitney, A Choice of Emblemes (Leyden, 1586), p.15.
 5. To my Admired and Sovle-Loved Friend ... M. Harriots, l.46. The panther was supposed to attract its prey by leaving a sweet scent: cf. Nashe, Anatomie of Absurditie, in Works, ed. R.B. McKerrow corr. F.P. Wilson (Oxford, 1958), i.21.

As Plato explains it in the *Philebus* (12 c), Pleasure is one, but assumes varied and unlike forms; the bestial metamorphoses of Euthimya are therefore an index of the lusts of the hunters. The huntsmen are not themselves described, but are borne by monstrous and ferocious beasts: 'Lyons, Bores, and Vnicorns, / Dragons, and wolues'. The nightmarish chase which follows is described with the kind of appalled fascination that we find in Spenser's accounts of the monsters that populate The Faerie Queene. The hunters are first led to a vast thicket, inhabited by the tortured souls of wicked men,¹ whose fates are severally re-enactments of the fable of Actaeon:

Others hir dogges eate, painting hir disdaine,
After she had transformd them into beasts.
('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 278-9)

These sights, however, move the huntsmen's souls not to pity but to fear: in a complicated passage Chapman explains this as the result of setting the external impression, received by the eye, over the direction given to the soul by conscience - that is, the outer image over the inner one. Indeed the narrative of the chase subsists on this idea of illusion; the contrast between seeming and being is finally an opposition between true form, as measured by the soul, and the false forms into which we are betrayed by the senses.

The second stage of the hunt leads the hunters to an island of pleasure 'full of all wealth, delight, and Emperie', rich in beautiful forms which are clearly agents of deception:

Bewtie strikes fancie blind; pyed show deceau's vs,
Sweet banquets tempt our healths, when temper leaues vs,
Inchastitie, is euer prostitute, ...
('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 374-6)

The parallel with the Bower of Bliss is not far to seek: indeed the whole narrative is full of Spenserian undertones. But the delights of the island are destroyed by the chase; the panther, now changed to a boar, ravages the island, bringing desolation in its wake. Chapman here uses the myth of the

1. Interestingly the episode seems to echo details from an equally nightmarish description in the Metamorphoses, xiv.409-15, where Circe transforms the companions of Picus, having first called upon Night, Erebus and Hecate.

boar of Calydon, which, in a not dissimilar context, he had introduced in the 'Hymnus in Noctem':

It is clear that the narrative of the hunt shows men, debased by their passions into savagery and bestiality, pursuing a mutable image of pleasure which becomes as destructive as they. Euthimya in her true form cannot be known on earth: therefore her wings are bound up and she assumes changing shapes. It is instructive to compare Chapman's narrative with Ficino's fable of Pleasure deserting the earth in the Philebus Commentary:

Terra a voluptate deserta est, hinc ergo illuc abeundum; ita tamen ut abeundo te retro ne vertas, ne Orphei more perdas praemium. Sed quonam tempore voluptas aufugit in coelum? Quo et Astraea originalis scilicet iustitia Adam peccante. Sed ne mortales orbatu voluptate inter tot adversa se afflicterent et perderent, Jupiter miseriae nostrae misertus dum abstulit voluptatem spem nobis multiplicavit. Sed fallit spes voluptatis hic consequendae, id est, ex rebus mortalibus reportandae.¹

Cynthia, in initiating and leading the chase, performs one of the functions of Hecate as the instrument of the wrath of the gods: it is as if she stages for fallen men a symbolic enactment of the consequences of their depravity. The degradations of the hunters and the mutability of Cynthia's creations, the false forms the hunters pursue, are placed by Chapman against the formal beauty of her palace, inhabited by true forms of joy.

The chase ends abruptly as night falls and Cynthia departs to begin her reign in the sky. At this point the symbolic tone of the narrative also changes: Cynthia's departure from the earth is a sign of its sinfulness, but also of the brevity of pleasure: 'Thus nights, faire dayes; thus griefs, do ioyes supplant.' The figure of Cynthia seems now to merge into that of Astraea, the last of the immortals to leave the earth, and another of the names of Elizabeth:

Discend againe, ah neuer leaue the earth,
('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 406)

1. Marsilio Ficino, The Philebus Commentary, ed. & tr. M.B. Allen (Berkeley, 1975), p.477. (Apologus. De voluptate, quod non sit cum ipsa congrendendum neque in terris speranda).

Much as in the 'Hymnus in Noctem', Chapman's celebration of wisdom and virtue engenders in him a profound melancholy: in both poems the tone of the reformer emerges rather oddly from a context of extreme and idiosyncratic feeling.

This consciousness of human corruption lingers into the celebration, towards the end of the poem, of the inward beauty of the virtuous mind, figured in Ganymede. It gives to the celebration, conceived as so often in Chapman in borrowed Neoplatonic terms, a particular urgency and significance.

He is the Ganymede, the birde of Ioue,
Rapt to his soueraignes bosome for his loue,
His bewtie was it, not the bodies pride,
That made him great Aquarius stellified:
And that minde most is bewtifull and hye;
And nearest comes to a Diuinitie,
That furthest is from spot of earths delight,
('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 462-8)

Chapman takes this interpretation of the myth from Comes, who writes:

*est enim Ganymedes anima hominum, quam, vt diximus, ob
eximiam prudentiam Deus ad se rapit ... Illa vero anima
pulcherrima est, quae minimum sit humanis sordibus, aut
flagitijs corporis contaminata: quam Deus diligens ad
se rapit.*¹

The myth of Ganymede had long been subjected to Christian or euhemeristic explanations; the Neoplatonic one that Chapman adopts here is to be seen, in probably its most familiar Renaissance form, in Alciati's Emblemata:

Aspice vt egregius puerum Iouis alite pictor
Fecerit Iliacum summa per astra vehi.
Quisne Iouem tactum puerili credat amore?
Dic, haec Maeonius finxerit vnde senex.
Consilium, mens atque Dei cui gaudia praestant,
Creditur is summo raptus adesse Ioui.²

and to Fraunce,³ also, Ganymede is a symbol of the mens humana. His beauty, therefore, since it figures the beauty of the mind detached from corporeal matter, is given a higher form than the human when he is transformed to heavenly Aquarius.

In the last section of the poem, Chapman returns to the praise of Cynthia's singleness and constancy and invokes her to reform the earth:

1. Comes, IX.13, p.658 (De Ganymede); see Schoell, p.191.
2. Omnia Andreae Alciati V.C. Emblemata cum commentariis per Claudium Minoem (Paris, 1583), p.33 (Emblem iv).
3. Fraunce, fol. 33r.

Thy virgin chamber then that sacred is,
No more let hold, an idle Salmacis, ...

('Hymnus in Cynthiam', 509-10)

The 'idle nympe', Salmacis, in Peend's translation of the Ovidian tale, was seen as causing men to lose their natures, to suffer a loss of identity in loss of shape.¹ Cynthia's constancy is a direct contrast to this: her shape-changes are only external. Chapman invokes her in the most terrible of all her shapes at the end of the poem, again taking the details from Comes

Hanc terribilem aspectu, proceritateque corporis vel ad
mensuram dimidii stadii accedere dixerunt: pedesque habuisse
ad serpentis formam, cum vultus & aspectus figura proxime
ad Gorgonum naturam accederet.²

and in this shape Cynthia is to execute a 'Magicke miracle', truly transforming nature and man.

It is remarkable that in poems so encrusted with borrowed detail what should emerge, finally, is so odd and eccentric a tone. None of Chapman's sources really explain the particular quality of his work, though they may, importantly, indicate the direction in which his mind is moving. For all the range of his reading, Chapman's poetic interests are narrow and even obsessive. What he takes from Comes contributes to a single satiric vision of human corruption, and the Neoplatonic celebration of the intellect in these poems is coupled with a melancholy sense of the defects of the age. In all this, the idea of form remains a dominant preoccupation: form in the sense of Idea as against form in the sense of shape. In the celebrations of Night and of Cynthia, true form is seen as belonging to a Neoplatonic celestial realm: 'In perfect circle of whose sacred state, / The circles of our hopes are compassed'. On the earth we are betrayed into defect and deformity; 'forme giues being', but man's form is his soul, and this is misshapen or transformed. Human beings must then be hyperbolically or metaphorically seen as changed into beasts or monsters: in another poet this might be simply hyperbole or

1. T. Peend, The Pleasant fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis (London, 1565), sig. A4^v, A3^v, A8^v.

2. Comes, III. 15, p. 158 (De Hecate). This debt has been noted by W. Schrickx in 'George Chapman's Borrowings from Natale Conti: Some hitherto unnoticed passages' English Studies, xxxii (1951) 108-9.

metaphor, but in Chapman they are images of actual transformation. The need to reconcile the form of the soul with the form of the body becomes in his poetry an increasingly obsessive theme.

II. Hero and Leander

I shall pass over Ovid's Banquet of Sense with what may seem a strange neglect. The poem does not contribute materially to the ideas I am trying to trace: its most interesting feature is its quality of what may be called unregulated irony. There is no agreement as to Chapman's intention.¹ The poem employs, almost consistently, contrasts between reality and appearance: the title-page device is the familiar Sceptical illustration of an optical illusion, a stick bent in water.² Chapman appears to put into it a great many of the notions he is most fascinated by - the familiar terms of the Aristotelian ontology appear in stanza 93 - but, oddly, to no unified purpose.

It is more productive to turn to Hero and Leander. Chapman's use of the idea of form in this poem is ably demonstrated by D.J. Gordon.³ We may note, first, the respects in which Marlowe provides the bases for Chapman's elaboration of the idea: Chapman, developing the themes of his own earlier poetry, is deliberately, at the same time, echoing and answering Marlowe.

There is in the first Sestiad a delicately extravagant description of Hero's beauty, and of the rich embroidery of her gown 'where Venus in her naked glory stroue/To please the carelesse and disdainfull eies/Of proud Adonis', and of her veil:

artificiall flowers and leaues,
Whose workmanship both man and beast deceiues.
Many would praise the sweet smell as she past,
When t'was the odour which her breath fourth cast;
And there for honie bees haue sought in vaine,
And beat from thence, haue lighted there againe.⁴

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1. See F. Kermode, 'The Banquet of Sense', BJRL xliv (1961), 83-99; J.P. Myers, "'This Curious Frame", Chapman's Ovid's Banquet of Sense', SP lxxv (1968), 192-206 and D.J. Gless, 'Chapman's Ironic Ovid', ELR ix (1979), 21-41, for a number of different reactions.
 2. McKerrow, in Printers' and Publishers' Devices (London, 1913), p.162, suggests that this is the author's own device. A variant is used on the title-page of Andromeda Liberata (London, Laurence L'Isle, 1614) Ovid's Banquet was published by Richard Smith in 1595.
 3. Essay cit., in The Renaissance Imagination, 102-33.
 4. Hero and Leander, I.19-24. All citations from Tucker Brooke's version of the 1598 ed., printed in Bartlett's ed. of Chapman's Poems.

These transformations of nature into art recall Ovid's description of Arachne's web and make Hero, as it were, a miracle both of art and nature, a triumph of form. Contrasted with these transformations are those depicted in Venus' temple. The first of the gods we see there is Proteus, and this is significant, for the pavement displays the metamorphoses of the gods:

There might you see the gods in sundrie shapes
Committing headdie ryots, incests, rapes:¹

The changes suffered by the gods of love, though lightly and ironically touched upon, carry suggestions of debasement and duplicity. Spenser's description of the tapestry in the house of Busyrane² intensifies these suggestions, and the passages are comparable: Spenser, like Bruno in Lo Spaccio de la bestia Trionfante is stressing the moral degradation implied in the descent of the gods to mortal shapes for love. The protean power of love in this context is in this context painful and humiliating. In contrast to these myths of metamorphosis is Hero, 'sacrificing turtles blood', an emblem of constancy and singleness.

This singleness is attacked by Leander's sophisticated arguments against virginity, the brilliant persuasion to love that is perhaps one of the greatest examples of the topos:

This idoll which you terme Virginitie
Is neither essence subiect to the eie,
No, nor to any one exterior sence,
Nor hath it any place of residence,
Nor is't of earth or mold celestiall,
Or capable of any forme at all.
Of that which hath no being doe not boast,
Things that are not at all are neuer lost. (I.269-76)

In Leander's argument, Hero's form is no form at all: as a virgin she is matter awaiting the impression of form. Her virginity is absence, privation, negation - all the Aristotelian adjuncts of matter: her perfection is in marriage, and form is perfectio. 'Of that which hath no being doe not boast' he says: the argument proceeds in Aristotelian terms, the terms of the

1. Hero and Leander, ed. cit., I.143-4.
2. The Faerie Queene, III.xi.28-46.

De Anima. Virginity is not visible essence, that is, the Aristotelian substance:¹ it resides nowhere, it has no celestial form, because it connotes passivity and potentiality rather than action and actuality.

One is no number, mayds are nothing then,
Without the sweet societie of men. (I.255-6)

This too is an Aristotelian argument, from the Metaphysics:² but Leander's sophistry will not allow its corollaries, that one is the source of number and the principle of all. The only singleness that Hero can properly be allowed to realize is the singleness of mutual love

Wilt thou liue single still? one shalt thou bee,
Though neuer-singling Hymen couple thee. (I.257-8)

Chapman's completion of Hero and Leander clarifies, expands or contradicts these concepts. The first important exposition of them is in the appearance of the goddess Ceremony to Leander as he lies on his bed after his return from Sestos. The name Chapman gives to the goddess is Thesme, and she is thus Law; she is accompanied by Religion, Society, Memory, Devotion, Order, State and Reverence; her attributes are Policy, Morality and Comeliness, and she is followed by the Hours and Graces. D.J. Gordon compares this description to passages in Hooker and Puttenham, and identifies Ceremony as Law and Decorum in their complex range of Elizabethan significances.³ Ceremony guards the order of civilized society and is its informing principle. Further, Gordon explains Ceremony's flaming hair from which 'hung all the bench of deities' as a version of the catena aurea, the golden chain in Homer by which the gods were to attempt to pull Jove down from Heaven and which in the Renaissance was confused with the great chain of being.⁴ What Ceremony sustains, therefore, is the hierarchy of created things, the order of the universe. It is worth comparing this identification with Chapman's earlier use of Homer's golden chain in the Hymnus in Noctem:

1. Metaphysica, Z.1029b - 1031a.

2. Metaphysica, N.1088a.

3. Gordon, op. cit., pp.111-2.

4. Ibid., p.113. Cf. Fraunce, Amintas Dale fol. 15^r on the chain with which Jove binds Juno, as the chain of order.

Nothing shall stirre him from adorning still
This shape with vertue, and his powre with will. (169-70)

Jove's holding his place in heaven, his refusal to descend to a lower order is there seen as an allegory of the true form of virtue: we recall the sombre moral of the opening of the Third Sestiad

Joy grauen in sence, like snow in water wasts;
Without preserue of vertue nothing lasts. (III.35-6)

Ceremony's final significance in this poem is in the equation of her with Form. She is the enemy of barbarism, confusion and avarice in that she invests the world with order and beauty. As the principle of form, she is the source of all civil forms

Deuotion, Order, State, and Reuerence
Her shadowes were; Societie, Memorie;
All which her sight made liue; her absence die. (III.120-2)

The symbols she bears, the pentacle drawn full of circles, are signs both of perfection, of completeness, and of power: they are, significantly, the same symbols as those Chapman attributes to the goddess Diana in The Shadow of Night.¹ The pentacle, apart from its use in magic (and it is in the context of magic that it is assigned to Cynthia) was a sign of health, the symbol of the goddess Hygeia.² The idea of the circle as the perfect form is one that constantly recurs in Chapman: and the closing lines of this remarkable description therefore carry particular weight

all the sweetes of our societie
Were Spherde, and treasurde in her bountious eie. (III.143-4)

One important aspect of the description is that while it seems to deal almost wholly in abstractions, the concrete (and iconic) details of Ceremony's appearance are carefully noted: indeed they are her significance

all her bodie
Cleere and transparent as the purest glasse:
For she was all presented to the sence; (III.117-9)

This transparency is an indication of the coincidence in Ceremony of informing principle and external appearance: form both gives shape and is shape. In

1. 'Hymnus in Cynthiam', 6-7; 515-6.

2. Giraldi, p.48; Cartari, pp. 91-2.

The Shadow of Night Chapman had stressed the violation of natural order in the disjunction between inner and outer form. Hero and Leander presents the same idea, though in more elaborately worked out and organized contexts. Ceremony's role is seen specifically in terms of the Aristotelian ontology: substance is the union of form with matter, and substance is 'poor' without 'rites' - indeed it is not even achieved.

All this is explained as Ceremony reproves Leander for having anticipated the proper sacraments of marriage, telling him

how poore was substance without rites,
Like bills vnsigned, desires without delites;
Like meates vnseasond; like ranke come that growes
On Cottages, that none or reapes or sowes:
Not being with ciuill forms confirm'd and bounded,
For humane dignities and comforts founded:
But loose and secret all their glories hide,
Feare fills the chamber, darknes decks the Bride. (III.147-54)

Leander's haste has resulted in a state of confusion and deformity, where all is absence and privation; the unsigned bills, the rank corn, are each examples of conditions where form is denied and the proper end, the entelechy, is therefore not achieved. The series of analogies culminates in an extraordinarily powerful image of privation: 'Feare fills the chamber, darknes decks the Bride'; and this is from Musaeus, as Chapman's translation shows:

Silence, the Roome fixt; Darknesse deck't the Bride,
But Hymnes, and such Rites farre were laid aside.¹

In the later contexts of the poem it is clear that Ceremony is in society what the soul is in the body, and Chapman had already employed the Aristotelian definition of the soul as the form of the body. A passage which Gordon quotes, though with qualifications, from Hooker, is an important parallel

Now even as the soul doth organize the body, and give to every member therof that substance, quantity, and shape, which nature seeth most expedient, so the inward grace of sacraments may teach what serveth best for their outward form.²

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1. The Divine Poem of Musaeus. First of all Bookes, translated...by George Chapman (London, 1616), G2^r.
 2. Richard Hooker, Works, ed. J. Keble, R.W. Church, and F. Paget (Oxford, 1888), II.259. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p.117.

Hooker's context is a different one, but the parallel he chooses is the same. In the next sections of this Sestiad, Chapman, describing Hero's state after Leander has left her, makes important use of the antithesis between inward form, the soul, and outward form, appearance: and this is related to Hero's vicarious union of the two in the 'ceremonies due' with which she celebrates the marriage of Alcmane and Mya. It is certainly this dominating interest in the idea of form, in both its implications, that leads Chapman to turn Musaeus' poem into a story of metamorphosis. The transformation of the lovers - and indeed the other transformations Chapman recounts - is in its way a solution to the problem.

Hero, so long single, constant and sincere in her transparency of self is left divided and confused by what Leander has done

nothing with her but a violent crew
Of new come thoughts that yet she neuer knew,
Euen to her selfe a stranger; (III.201-3)

The images Chapman chooses are of invasion and plunder; a rich city destroyed and changed by war: Hero sits in 'th'expunged fort/Of her chast bosome', a fort usurped by a conqueror. It is as if her own self has been driven out, and she lacks therefore a self to present to the world. All she can present is her inward state of unchastity and self-betrayal

She mus'd how she could looke vpon her Sire,
And not shew that without, that was intire.
For as a glasse is an inanimate eie,
And outward formes imbraceth inwardlie:
So is the eye an animate glasse that showes
In-formes without vs. (III.233-8)

Chapman is using Aristotle's theory of sight as he found it in De Sensu, together with other notions which Aristotle discusses in the De Anima. He employs even the rejected comparison of the eye to a mirror; Aristotle stresses that in vision the image exists not in the eye but in the observer,¹ and Chapman turns this idea to suggest that the eye reveals the inward form of the soul. Aristotle had said that the soul thinks in terms of mental images,²

1. De sensu, 438a-438b.
2. De anima, 431a.

and it is these images that Chapman now conceives as being expressed in Hero's eyes.

As yet Hero cannot think of dissembling

And this she thought most hard to bring to pas,
To seeme in countnance other then she was,
As if she had two soules; one for the face,
One for the hart; (III.269-72)

Having two souls is in effect having two forms. The complicated elaboration of this plays upon the impossibility of one soul performing contrary effects, concealing one form and displaying another. At this point, therefore, Hero makes herself a symbolic image of the destruction of her proper self. She shrouds herself in a black robe made of cypress, an emblem of grief,¹ and sits in a ritualized posture of despair, her head bowed on her knee

No forme was seene, where forme held all her sight:
But like an Embrion that saw neuer light:
Or like a scorched statue made a cole
With three-winged lightning: or a wretched soule
Muffled with endles darknes, she did sit: (III.301-5)

Hero is like matter which has never achieved form, or substance which has lost it. The image of the statue is a favourite philosophical illustration of the impression made by form on matter,² and in Hero we see the statue unrecognizably disfigured, the impression destroyed, and the soul, therefore, imprisoned and hidden by darkness. Yet this symbolic representation is perfectly expressive of Hero's inner state, which she does not dissemble, and so

her cleere teares melted on her knee
Through her black vaile, and turnd as black as it, (III.308-9)

But this state is altered by the power of Leander's image. His form, impressed on her memory, replaces her own consciousness of guilt

He came in swimming painted all with ioyes,
Such as might sweeten hell: his thought destroyes
All her destroying thoughts: (III.329-31)

and having lost her own form, she seeks strength in Leander's. The result of this, though, is dissimulation, for - and this is where we recall the

1. Ovid, Met. x.106-42.

2. See Aristotle, Physica, 191a; Plotinus, Enneads V.ix, ed. cit., p.435.

appearance of Ceremony, as well as Leander's sophistries in the First Sestyad - Hero and Leander are not truly one until they have gone through the ceremonious rites of marriage. Hero seeks to convince herself that this is not so

Had I not yeelded, slaine myselfe I had
Hero Leander is, Leander Hero:
 Such vertue loue hath to make one of two. (III.356-8)

Hero herself becomes a sophister, arguing that if she loves Leander the gods must love him too, and concluding, finally, that in spite of the breaking of her vow to Venus, she will go to the temple: 'Her health said she must liue; her sex, dissemble.' (III.400). There is further irony here, as Marlowe had noted (I.299-310): Venus is herself no chaste goddess.

It is worth comparing the description of Hero's scarf in the next Sestyad with Marlowe's account of her gown and veil at the start of the poem. Chapman's details are also expressive, though in a different way, and indeed the difference conveys much of the altered moral tone of the poem. The richly symbolic vestments in which Hero clothes herself as priestess no longer reveal her true form but conceal a broken vow

A crowne of Isickles, that sunne nor fire
 Could euer melt, and figur'd chast desire. (IV.15-16)

and it is in the images on her scarf that her real condition is represented. The pictures are emblems of danger and change, wrought instinctively by Hero's soul: and they are all the more significant because of her decision to dissemble. Chapman stresses the moral:

O what sweet formes fayre Ladies soules doe shrowd,
 Were they made seene & forced through their blood,
 If through their beauties like rich work through lawn,
 They would set forth their minds with vertues drawn,
 (IV.112-5)

In the succeeding passages there is a subtle use of the idea of form in three distinct senses: the inward form of Hero's soul, the false form she has elected to assume, and the power of the image, which is the mode of the

soul's knowledge of forms. As Hero sacrifices to Venus, there are signs of the goddess's displeasure: Hero's weapon against this is Leander's picture

Leanders forme left no ill object there.
Such was his beautie that the force of light,
Whose knowledge teacheth wonders infinite,
The strength of number and proportion,
Nature had plaste in it to make it knowne
Art was her daughter, (IV.139-44)

Earlier, in working Leander's image on her scarf, Hero had seemed to turn art to life

And to each thred did such resemblance giue,
For ioy to be so like him, it did liue.
Things senceles liue by art, and rationall die,
By rude contempt of art and industrie. (IV.54-7)

Art, here, is not transforming nature: in a sense it derives such power from its representation of a natural form that it participates in the life of its subject. What Chapman is using in the later passage is the Neoplatonic theory of the image, and this is that 'the numbers and proportions of a thing preserved in the image reflect the idea in the divine intellect and therefore impart to the image something of the power of the spiritual essence which it embodies.'¹ Leander's beauty is itself perfectly expressive of his ideal form: it is the beauty that Ficino describes in his Commentary on the

Symposium:

Quid tandem est corporis pulchritudo? Actus, vivacitas et gratia quedam idee sue influxu in ipso refulgens. Fulgor huiusmodi in materiam non prius quam aptissime sit preparata descendit. His vero tribus, ordine, modo, spetie, constat viventis corporis preparatio. Ordo, partium intervalla, modus quantitatem, speties lineamenta coloremque significat.²

And it is the power of this beauty, which is ultimately divine, that is preserved in Hero's mental image of Leander. Behind Chapman's elaboration of this idea is a whole range of complex and influential concepts. Plotinus, in the Fifth Ennead, speaking of the beauty of nature and of art, sees this as

1. E.H. Gombrich, 'Icones Symbolicae', in Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance (2nd ed., 1978), p.174.
2. In Convivium Platonis, V.vi, ed. cit., p.188.

deriving from the influence of the ideal beauty of form; and indeed the beauty of an image is as it were a condensed statement of the Idea - the mode of divine perception is a 'noble image'.¹ It was from such notions that the Renaissance developed an elaborate theory of the power and significance of visual images. Ficino expresses this in De vita coelitus comparanda, where he discusses the power of astrological images; an important passage is quoted by Gordon.² Many of these ideas recur in Leone Ebreo's Dialoghi di Amore, where, in the third dialogue, he discusses the beauty of form.³ And it is on this range of ideas that Chapman draws when he speaks of the force of light, number and proportion placed in Leander's image, which can disperse evil and induce harmony and concord.

Indeed Chapman makes an elaborate story of the future influence for good that Leander's picture exerts

many more effects
This picture wrought, and sprung Leandrian sects,
Of which was Hero first: (IV.168-70)

Hero resolves to make Leander 'her chiefe Deitie'; to give first place to what, inwardly, she holds highest. But where she errs is in continuing with her dissimulation to the world; in abandoning her former singleness not simply in love, but in deceit

Yet singularitie she would vse no more,
For she was singular too much before:
But she would please the world with fayre pretext;
Loue would not leaue her conscience perplex. (IV.192-5)

It is for this, finally, that she is punished. As she proceeds with her sacrifice, the wrathful Venus appears in her chariot to condemn her.

D.J. Gordon has pointed out Chapman's indebtedness to Cartari's Imagini for the details of this episode, as for the later tale of Hymen and Eucharis.⁴

1. Plotinus, The Enneads, V.viii, ed. cit., pp.426-7.

2. Gordon, op. cit., p.123.

3. Dialoghi di Amore, ed. cit., 201^r-203^r.

4. Op. cit., pp.103-5; see also 'Chapman's use of Cartari', MLR 39 (1944), 280-5.

The episode ends in the creation by Venus of the monster Eronusis: and this act is a symbolic abstraction and perpetuation of Hero's dissembling. Chapman derived the idea for Eronusis from Dante's description of Geryon, or Fraud, in the Inferno; he had probably read the passage in Cartari, though parts of it are reported by Boccaccio, Giraldi and Ripa.¹ But Chapman's figure fulfils a precise thematic need: she is an allegorical abstraction of Hero's fault, personifying for the world the dissimulation that Hero has initiated

she made her Architect
Of all dissimulation, and since then
Neuer was any trust in maides nor men. (IV.312-4)

The theme of dissimulation is by this emblematic figure established as the subject of this Sestiyad; Hero's new-found doubleness, her decision to have two forms rather than one, is placed both against her earlier singleness and the unity that she seeks - but cannot, in the world, achieve - in love.

Yet it is clear that in the contexts of the whole poem, the sins for which Leander and Hero are punished arouse Chapman's pity rather than his condemnation. They, who had figured the truth and purity of inward form in their outward beauty, are destroyed because of their neglect or betrayal of form: because Leander anticipates ceremonies and Hero dissembles to Venus. But in the gross corruptions and deformities of the world their sins are trifling

O louely Hero, nothing is thy sin,
Wayd with those foule faults other Priests are in;
(IV.210-11)

Hero's decision to assume a false form is indeed an effect of the world's corruption. It is as if Chapman sees in the lovers the last symbols of true virtue and beauty, destroyed and betrayed by the world. The supposed antiquity of 'Musaeus' poem, 'first of all bookes', adds to this melancholy

1. Cartari, pp. 473-4; Boccaccio, Genealogie deorum, ed. cit., i. pp. 51-2, Giraldi, p. 50; C. Ripa, Iconologia (Padua, 1611), p. 186. See Dante, Inferno xvii, 14-5.

sense of innocence long lost to men.¹ Hero and Leander's love is not a sin, as Chapman repeatedly points out: it is in a sense their fulfilment, and in this he does accept Leander's arguments in the first Sestiad. But it is also the source of their destruction because it cannot be fulfilled in the world without the denying or dissembling of their true selves.

The tale of Hymen and Eucharis, told by the nymph Teras in the next Sestiad, is therefore of special importance. It is here that we are presented with, in mythical terms, the true forms of love: and significantly this is within the frame of Hero's effort to participate in the ceremonies she has denied herself, at the wedding of Alcmane and Mya. Hymen's story, the story of marriage itself, operates in the poem as a parallel to Hero and Leander's; it shows us the perfect forms which the lovers can no longer achieve. Obviously, too, it continues and elaborates upon the theme introduced by the goddess Ceremony: the idea of form itself.

Hymen's beauty is indeed an expression of the form of love, which is concord

louers were esteemde in their full grace,
Like forme and colour mixt in Hymen's face; (V.109-10)

Chapman's reading in Ficino's Commentary on the Symposium is probably behind the elaborate description of the order and proportion of Hymen's beauty,² which figures the harmony of mutual love: and this idea of harmony receives its final expression in the classical marriage ritual, described at the close of Teras' tale. These three ideas, of the concord of beauty, the concord of love, and the concord of marriage, are briefly brought together by Chapman at the start of the tale:

And as he was so lou'd, he lou'd so too,
So should best bewties, bound by Nuptialls doo. (V.117-8)

Hymen's wooing of Eucharis is also presented in terms of the idea of form:

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1. On this antiquity, see G. Braden, The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry (New Haven, 1978), pp. 56-7, 81-2.
 2. See In Convivium Platonis, ed. cit., V.vi, pp.188-90; III.ii, p.162 and I.iv, p.142.

And now came Loue with Proteus, who had long
 Inngl'd the little god with prayers and gifts,
 Ran through all shapes, and varied all his shifts,
 To win Loues stay with him, and make him loue him:
 And when he saw no strength of sleight could moue him
 To make him loue, or stay, he nimbly turnd
 Into Loues selfe, he so extreameely burnd. (V.206-12)

Love's protean power makes him first the lily that Hymen offers to Eucharis, then Eucharis' hand which accepts the lily, and finally her heart. The incidental bits of mythology which Chapman adopts from Cartari are placed in a context of Neoplatonic theorizing about matter and form. Proteus, absolute potency, becomes love by accepting form, for love is form:¹ at the same time, love acquires through Proteus the capacity to become whatever it informs.

The ideal and general terms in which the story of Hymen and Eucharis is conceived are placed by Chapman in constant relation to the particular case with which the poem is concerned, the story of Hero and Leander. Eucharis' mind is conquered by Hymen's love just as Leander's image takes possession of Hero's; but in the mythical narrative the form of the lovers' love achieves perfection in the ceremony of marriage:

to make the flame of their delight
 Round as the Moone at full, and full as bright. (V.265-6)

And this marriage is the type of marriage itself: it is appropriate therefore that Chapman should attach to it all the significance that this ceremony holds as figuring harmony, concord, and unity, the significance given to it, for example, in Spenser's Epithalamion.

The details of the ritual are taken from the classical marriage rites of Juno, described in Cartari's Imagini.² As Eucharis proceeds to the temple, her beauty is seen as the form of beauty itself

As if forme-giuing Cyprias siluer hand
 Gripte all their beauties, and crusht out one flame,
 (V.313-4)

1. In Convivium Platonis, I.iii, p.141.

2. Cartari, ed. cit., 187-202; cf. Gordon, art. cit.

and each detail of the ritual receives its particular symbolic value. Most important are the five torches carried in the procession. Five is the number of marriage because it is composed of two and three 'the first parity and imparity, the active and passive digits, the material and formall principles in generative Societies':¹ and above all it is united around the number one

Since in two equall parts it will not seuer,
But the midst holds one to reioyne it euer,
As common to both parts: men therefore deeme
That equall number Gods doe not esteeme (V.325-8)

Numero deus impare gaudet. In explaining the significance of the number five, Chapman is drawing directly on Cartari,² but these Pythagorean ideas are widely influential. Browne, in the Garden of Cyrus, notes that five, being the number of justice, implies 'just decorum':³ this is another link with the goddess Ceremony.

Most of all, five shows 'the binding force of vnitie'.⁴ Chapman glances back to the argument Marlowe gives to Leander

One is no number, mayds are nothing then
Without the sweet societie of men. (I.255-6)

Leander's attack on Hero's singleness, illegitimate because unsanctified by ceremony, is placed against the unity of marriage. Hero has lost one kind of singleness without achieving another: and the union of Hymen and Eucharis presents this actual and perfect unity. In Jonson's Hymenaei, the name of Juno is itself turned by anagram into Unio, so that we have in the work a series of elaborate variations on the significances of the number one. Chapman's lines

For one no number is: but thence doth flow
The powerfull race of number. (V.339-40)

based on Cartari, express its highest significance.⁵ The unity of marriage

1. Sir Thomas Browne, The Garden of Cyrus, v, in Religio Medici and other Writings (London, 1906 rpt. 1969), p.224.
2. Cartari, p. 188
3. Browne, ed. cit., p.223.
4. Jonson, Hymenaei, 207, in Works, ed. cit., vii.216. Jonson's cited authorities for a description recalling Chapman's are Plutarch, Quaestiones Romanae, ii. , and Martianus Capella, De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii vii, 735 . The Plutarch passage was supposed by Schoell (pp.226-7) to be Chapman's direct source until Gordon demonstrated the debt to Cartari.
5. Cartari, p. 188 See Martianus Capella, De nuptiis, vii, 731 (tr. W.S. Stahl & R. Johnson, New York, 1977, p.276) and Ficino, In Convivium Platonis VI.xviii, ed. cit., p.238.

is connected with the ideas of form and ceremony, for unity pertains to form as duality to matter.¹

This is the form that Hero and Leander fail to achieve. In the sixth Sestiad Chapman sadly compares Leander to a boastful fool, full of form that is only show

And poore Leander, poorest where the fire
Of credulous loue made him most rich surmisde.
As short was he of that himselfe he prisde,
As is an emptie Gallant full of forme, (VI.106-9)

and Hero is shown playing on the sophistries of Leander's persuasion of her in the first Sestiad. The virtue that love has 'to make one of two' is applied by her to her own case:

When Bees make waxe, Nature doth not intende
It shall be made a Torch: but we that know
The proper vertue of it make it so,
And when t'is made we light it: nor did Nature
Propose one life to maids, but each such creature
Makes by her soule the best of her free estate
Which without loue is rude, disconsolate,
And wants loues fire to make it milde and bright,
Till when, maids are but Torches wanting light. (VI.67-75)

Earlier, Leander had said that Hero as a virgin was matter awaiting the impression of form and the infusion of being; Hero is here arguing in the same way. But she is wrong, because she has neglected the ceremony that would perfect this form, and has indeed lost her self in doubleness.

It is interesting that Hero should use this analogy with her torch, which she lights to guide Leander to Sestos. Hero's lantern is a critical element in the story, and in Musaeus' poem:² Chapman's light-imagery, throughout the poem, plays on its symbolism. Leander's beauty has 'the force of light'; the love of Hymen and Eucharis is like a flame; the fires of Hero's sacrifice burn angrily pale and red after she has broken her vow. Light itself is form, as Ficino implies in his account of creation,³ and love is

1. See Pico della Mirandola, De ente et uno, vi, ed. Garin (cit.) pp.422-4.
2. See the discussion by G. Braden, op. cit., pp. 59-63, 114-6.
3. In convivium Platonis, I.iii, ed. cit., pp.140-41. Cf. also Hero and Leander, IV.140-2, and Ficino, De vita coelitus comparanda, xvii, in Opera omnia, ed. cit., i.555, quoted by Gordon, op. cit., pp. 123-4.

always fly in couples away from the sea, who are the most beautiful of all birds, who feed on thistles which signify the thorns of love, and whose colours too are emblematic:

Their wings, blew, red and yellow mixt appeare,
Colours, that as we construe colours paint
Their states to life; the yellow shewes their saint,
The deuill Venus left them; blew their truth,
The red and black, ensignes of death and ruth. (VI.287-91)

Hero and Leander are metamorphosed into an emblem. Gordon stresses the point about metamorphosis, that 'the subject is changed to a creature that expresses its essence'.¹ This is certainly true: but Chapman isolates and abstracts this quality so that he can invent a metamorphosis where the expression, we may say, is all. Chapman's interest is wholly in the emblematic details he invents for the birds, so that they are finally not birds at all but an image. This is deeply characteristic, and in terms established by Chapman's poem, necessary. The lovers' transformation, the answer to their confused and tragic doubleness in life, perpetuates the terms of their tragedy, their love, truth and suffering, in an emblem. In this form, they are truly 'all presented to the sence': transparent, like all images. The moral, that of the tragic dissonance in human beings between the form of the soul and that of the body, is explicitly made by Chapman:

O theeuish Fates, to let Blood, Flesh and Sence,
Build two fayre Temples for their Excellence,
To rob it with a poysoned influence.
Though soules gifts starue, the bodies are held dear
In vgliest things; Sence-sport preserues a Beare.
But here nought serues our turnes; O heauen & earth,
How most most wretched is our humane birth? (VI.234-40)

III. Later poems

None of Chapman's other poems, except perhaps the Hymne to our Saviour, are as controlled and purposive as Hero and Leander and even The Shadow of Night. Chapman continues to draw upon the same nexus of ideas that we have seen him so far using, but they are too often, now, used without discretion.

1. Gordon, op. cit., p.129.

They become an obsessive part of his poetic equipment.

In Euthymiae Raptus (1609), this loss of control is seen in the structure of the poem as a whole. The poem, which is centrally about learning rather than its apparent subject, peace, presents us with a world confused, racked and overrun by violence and sin, the world of The Shadow of Night: and interestingly, Peace here too is driven to darkness and night. The comparison between true Peace and false Peace grows out of the contrast between true and false learning: and in both the opposition is between true form, which is inner, and outward form or show. The superficial scholar

studies, but for forme, and showe,
And neuer makes his speciall end, to knowe)
And that an idle, ayrie man of Newes,
A standing Face; (302-5)

and false Peace presents an appearance of quiet and content, but inwardly, like an overgrown forest, breeds venomous creatures:

She brings forth men, with vices ouer-growne:
Women, so light, and like, fewe knowe their owne:
For milde and humane tongues, tongues forkt that sting:
(318-20)

Human beings are transformed in such times to the 'Todes, Adders, Sauadges' of the forest.

This passage is followed by a dialogue on the virtues of learning in educating and forming the soul. Learning, it is clear, corresponds in this argument to intellect or mens, that faculty in man which belongs to the anima prima, the higher soul in Ficino's Commentary on Plotinus:¹

To proue that Learning (the soules actuall frame;
Without which, tis a blanke; a smoke-hid flame)
Should sit great Arbitresse, of all things donne,
And in your soules, (like Gnomons in the Sunne)
Giue Rules to all the circles of your liues;
I proue it, by the Regiment God giues
To man, of all things; to the soule, of man;
To learning, of the Soule. (352-9)

Plotinus himself states in the fifth Ennead that intellect is to soul in one sense what form is to matter:

1. Opera Omnia, ed. cit., p. 1549, on Ennead I.i.

It is in one phase the Form of the Soul, its shape;
 in another phase it is the giver of the shape - the
 sculptor, possessing inherently what is given -
 imparting to Soul nearly the authentic reality while
 what body receives is but image and imitation.¹

Chapman uses the same illustration:

And as a Statuarie, hauing got
 An Alabaster, bigge enough to cut
 A humane image in it: till he hath put
 His tooles, and art to it; hew'n, form'd, left none
 Of the redundant matter in the Stone;
 It beares the image of a man, no more,
 Then of a Woolf, a Cammell, or a Boare:
 So when the Soule is to the body giuen;
 (Being substance of Gods Image, sent from heaven)
 It is not his true Image, till it take
 Into the Substance, those fit forms that make
 His perfect Image; (366-77)

Later, Chapman makes learning and virtue identical: in the first Ennead

Plotinus applies the same analogy to virtue shaping a soul:

cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is
 crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to
 make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling
 your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it
 the godlike splendour of virtue,²

It is important that in Chapman's elaborate simile learning or virtue
 is seen as impressing form not separately on the soul, but in the substance.
 The soul is 'substance of Gods Image', substance, that is, in the sense of
 divine essence or form; this, in the body, forms substance in the second
 sense, the Substance or essence of man which is the compound of soul with
 body.³ It is this substance which must be informed with divine resemblance;
 the soul is the repository of that image, but it must be impressed in the
 whole man by learning:

Learning and impulsion; that inuest
 Man with Gods forme in liuing Holinesse,
 By cutting from his Body the excesse
 Of Humours, perturbations and Affects;
 Which Nature (without Art) no more eiects,
 Then without tooles, a naked Artizan
 Can, in rude stone, cut th'Image of a man. (378-84)

1. Enneads, ed. cit., p.436.

2. Ibid., p.63.

3. See pp.232-3, supra.

Learning is seen as man's only means of remaking his essence in the image of God; and this it does by imparting true forms to the soul, filling it 'so with act, and art' that it can properly govern the body. Its function therefore is

to make her substance still contend,
To be Gods Image; in informing it,
With knowledge; holy thoughts, and all formes fit
For that eternitie, ye seeke in way
Of his sole imitation; (513-7)

Learning can in such a discipline remove our souls from corporeal taint, even to making body soul

direct
Reason in such an Art, as that it can
Turne blood to soule, and make both, one calme man: (557-9)

In medieval physiology, blood was thought of as the medium of the spiritus humanus uniting body and soul, and this is, of course, a familiar idea:

As our blood labours to beget
Spirits, as like soules as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtile knot, which makes us man:¹

It is only when the soul can thus inform and govern its body that true concord, which in Neoplatonic thought is the beauty of form, is achieved: 'the whole consort/Of his tun'd body, sings' (671-2).

What Chapman sees around him, however, is shallowness, ignorance and consequent deformity. Indeed images of such deformity; of men transformed to beasts or monsters, carry far more power in the poem than the vision of the true form of man. Such images multiply throughout:

Those inuerted men?
Those dungeons; whose soules no more containe
The actuall light of Reason, then darke beasts?
Those Cloudes, driuen still, twixt Gods beame and their brests?
Those Giants, throwing goulden hils gainst heauen? (403-7)

In a particularly vivid image false learning is compared to one of those Spenserian enchantresses (indeed the reference is probably to Duessa) who seduce knights from their true ladies (455-9). In both, the emphasis is on

1. Donne, The Extasie, 61-4.

the deception by a false form; and later, Chapman compares the pedant to one of the much satirized Elizabethan travellers, who acquire the forms and manners of all countries without having one of their own (530-61).

Chapman's sense of the functions of learning in forming man seems in some respects to be Stoic.

Other connections have been proposed for this poem - with Erasmus' Querela Pacis, with the Corpus Hermeticum, X,¹ and with Pico's Oratio.² None of these are of material help in explaining the confused and melancholy passion of Chapman's invocation to learning. This does not betray its sources by verbal parallels, as so often elsewhere in Chapman's poetry:

O liberall Learning, that well vsde, giues vse
To all things good; how bad is thy abuse!
When, onely thy diuine reflection can
(That lights but to thy loue) make good a man;
How can the regular Body of thy light,
Informe, and decke him? the Ills infinite,
That (like beheaded Hydra's in that Fen
Of bloud, and flesh, in lewd illiterate men)
Aunswere their amputations . . .
Herculean Learning conquers (688-98)

But for all Chapman's celebration of Herculean learning and the triumph of peace, it is the horrifying Spenserian vision of the Cave of Murder, in the Conclusio, which finally dominates the poem. Murder is a cosmic figure:

His Face was like a Meteor, flashing blood;
His head all bristl'd, like a thornie wood;
His necke cast wrinkles, like a Sea enrag'd; (1147-49)

Blood has in this image engulfed the world: man's universe is filled with the forms of his crimes. The departure to heaven of Peace and human love is like the earth's loss of Astraea in the classical myth.

In spite of the loose organization of Euthymiae Raptus, it has some thematic consistency and force. But such control becomes rarer. It is difficult to defend the identification of the dead Prince Henry in Chapman's Epicede with the soul in body and form in matter: indeed, in an extravagant moment, even the Cosmic Mind:

1. J. Jacquot, George Chapman, ed. cit., pp. 73-5.
2. M.-S. Røstvig, The Hidden Sense (Oslo, 1963), p. 79n.

That his diuine Ideas did propose
 First to himselfe; and then would forme in them. (137-8)

This extravagance is only partly curbed in Eugenia (1614), another commemorative compliment to a patron. The most interesting passage in this poem presents a remarkable personification of Religion, a figure related to Ceremony in Hero and Leander. In the fallen world of this poem, however, Religion is a shrunken and grotesque figure:

Who halfe intract' t her selfe was; all the part
 She had of humaines pinde euen to her heart:
 And made her forme, as if transformd she were,
 Into a leane, and lisping Grashopper:
 ...
 Her lookes were like the pictures that are made,
 To th'optike reason; one way like a shade,
 Another monster like, and euery way
 To passers by, and such as made no stay,
 To view her in a right line, face to face,
 She seem'd a serious trifle; all her grace,
 Show'd in her fixt inspection; and then
 She was the onely grace of dames and men:
 All hid in cobwebbs came she forth, (165-8, 173-81)

The form of Religion is like her being in the world, impoverished and attenuated by neglect: 'as if transformd she were'. And it is significant that her face is compared to that favourite Elizabethan image, that of the perspective picture, which alters with the viewer's angle of vision. This detail connects the description with that of Ceremony, whose face too is 'changeable to euery eie', as with that of the anamorphous Niobe of Ouids Banquet of Sence. The point about such a picture is that it appears to have no fixed form: its form is in the observer. The image becomes a metaphor of the Aristotelian theory of vision. The point that Chapman is seeking to make about Religion derives from this; the essence of Religion is her form, for she is form - but this form lies in the souls of men.

This point is elaborated in the passage in the Second Vigil on death. The mind is the only judge of form; and the true form of man is inward. Death therefore bears 'the louely forms of our felicitie', and the soul's release from the body enables it to achieve its true form. Increasingly, in

these later poems, Chapman stresses the inner form as contrasted to the outer, and sees the tragic disjunction between the two as less and less reconcilable:

A man, all Center is, all stay, all minde,¹

There is less and less room for an exploration of the subtle relation between the form of the soul and the form of the body, of the kind we find in Hero and Leander.

The theme of metamorphosis subsists on this relation's being explored and maintained: this is why the metamorphosis of the lovers remains so essential a part of Hero and Leander. But in Chapman's later poems, though the idea of form remains obsessive and even repetitive, it is applied more exclusively to the soul in separation from its body. It is only in passages of invective or satire that images of actual metamorphosis still operate, and here the stress is on the baser transformation, the engrossing by flesh. The main concern is the forming of the soul, as in this passage from Eugenia, which is, I think, an echo of Ficino's description of the formation of the Angelic Mind:²

till the soules blanck Intellectuall eye:
The worlds soule rinseth in his actiue raies,
And her Rac't table fills with formes; it staies
Blanck (953-6)

Andromeda Liberata (1614) might seem to contradict what I have just said. The myth of Perseus and Andromeda is specifically used to present us with the types of perfect lovers, such as in Hero and Leander; and Chapman incurs his largest debt to Ficino in this poem while emphasizing the coincidence in this pair of inward beauty with outward. But the poem is about a contemporary scandal, and the allegorical identifications stressed by Chapman call attention to the fact that it subsists more on compliment than on actual imaginative recreation of myth. The Neoplatonism, the ideas of form and matter, soul and

1. Eugenia, 633.

2. In Convivium Platonis I.iii, ed. cit., pp. 140-1.

body, are overworked. The Ficinian borrowings¹ achieve here a curiously sterile effect. The precise quality of the poem is summed up in the noble pair's perfunctory metamorphosis:

Who (after issue highly magnifi'd)
Both rapt to heau'n, did constellations reigne,

In the other poems, soul and body are increasingly distinct. This is so in the Hymne to our Sauour on the Crosse (1612): another poem full of Ficinian borrowings. Again the central theme is man's form, and it is in this poem that Chapman most singly contemplates the possibility of his ascent, upwards to spirit rather than downwards to flesh.

Christ has, through his own perfection, re-formed man in God's image

perfecting the forme thou didst infuse
In mans creation: (135-6)

and this is the form that man must preserve. The opposition between the soul and the body is absolute: in the terms of Christian Neoplatonism the body has become wholly an encumbrance to be shed or disregarded. Submergence in the body is bestial:

and these formes of earth,
Beauties and mockeries, matcht in beastly birth:
We may despise, (164-6)

The longest passage that Chapman adopts from Ficino here is the Neoplatonic explanation of the myth of Narcissus: and this is that the human soul neglects its proper nobility in a vain love of its body and forgets its own form for that which is merely its shadow (221-48).² The poem ends by stressing a reformatio, a transformation, that is wholly inward

And grant that while I striue to form in me,
Thy sacred image, no aduersitie
May make me draw one limme, or line amisse:
Let no vile fashion wrest my faculties
From what becomes that Image. Quiet so
My bodies powres, (291-6)

Chapman's poetry is important because it presents so clearly and singly this concern with what form is, the notions behind Renaissance allegorizations

1. From In Convivium Platonis, V.vii, viii; II.viii. See Schoell, 14-17.
2. See Ibid.; VI.xvii, ed. cit., pp. 234-5.

of the myths of metamorphosis. True form is inner, but we can only understand it through external images, and so the image of transformation becomes a deeply necessary part of poetic vocabulary. I have not tried to deal with every such image Chapman uses, but I think that there is a noticeable movement away, in the later poems, from the tension established in Hero and Leander between outer and inner form, shape and soul, to a sense of insoluble conflict between the two and, therefore, their necessary divergence. The earlier poetry also expresses this conflict; the remarkable poem To M. Harriots, accompanying a volume of Homeric translation, Achilles Shield (1598) finds an extraordinary image for it:

O had your perfect eye Organs to pierce
 Into that Chaos whence this stifled verse
 By violence breakes: where Gloweworme like doth shine
 In nights of sorrow, this hid soule of mine:
 And how her genuine formes struggle for birth,
 Under the clawes of this foule Panther earth;¹

But the conflict, here, is something that can be resolved, at least in conception. 'True learning hath a body absolute', says Chapman, and this body can be impressed upon man. Harriot's mathematical enquiries themselves are a means to this: his writings show

High fectious brawles becalnde by vnitie,
 Nature made all transparent, and her hart
 Gripte in thy hand, crushing digested Art
 In flames vnmeasurde, measurde out of it,
 On whose head for her crowne thy soule shall sitte,
 Crownd with Heauens inward brightnes shewing cleare
 What true man is (92-98)

It is this transparency that shows the true man. The transparent body of Ceremony, the emblematic acanthides, are images of congruity which, when it is denied, can only be achieved through metamorphosis. Chapman is convinced of man's blindness, ignorance and consequent deformity, but his poetry is so moving because his ideal of man's true form, essence shining through shape, remains a powerful counter to this conviction.

1. 'To My Admired and Soule-loved Friend ... M. Harriots', 41-6, p.382.
 The 'perfect eye' is Harriot's telescope.

Chapter VI

Theriomastix: John Marston and Satiric Transformations

It would be appropriate to turn from Chapman to Jonson, in whose work images of transformation are ubiquitous. But the range of Jonson's work, in the plays and the masques, is so great, and the theme of transformation so important and complex a part of it, that we cannot hope to confine in the same study an examination both of Spenser and of Jonson. A proper consideration of ideas of metamorphosis in The Alchemist and Volpone, and the quite different but no less significant treatment of them in the masques, would make this study at least a third as long again. I shall have some things to say about Jonson's satire in this chapter, and I shall touch upon important aspects of his work in an epilogue. But I have deliberately set the limits of my main investigation around 1600, and in this last chapter I shall be concerned with some interesting elements of the state of satiric writing around the turn of the century, especially as exemplified in the satire of John Marston.

Marston's satire presents us with the most negative image of transformation that we encounter in all Renaissance writing. Multiplying images of deformity and bestiality, it gives us a strongly pessimistic view - though a fragmented and partial one - of the foulness and depravity of man. Although Chapman never wrote academic satires, his combination of gloom and moral idealism can be related to the more violent and ambiguous attitudes expressed in the formal verse satire of his period, and the development of Jonson's comedy is scarcely to be understood without reference to it. In a recent book on Elizabethan grotesque, Neil Rhodes describes both Jonson and Marston as scourgers, and both as Circean writers: 'the spectacles they create are of a grotesque world peopled by monsters who must be whipped and purged'.¹ In the epistle to

1. Neil Rhodes, Elizabethan Grotesque (London, 1980), p.137.

the reader that concludes his second and final 1598 volume of satires, The Scourge of Villanie, Marston subscribes himself Theriomastix, beast-scourge.¹ For Marston, I think uniquely amongst verse satirists of this period, the reduction of his satiric victims involves them in degrading transformations expressed not only in the animal imagery common in vituperation, but also in the terms of classical myths of metamorphosis.

Marston, it is well substantiated, stands at the centre of several literary quarrels of his day. In more recent times too he has been a contentious figure. T.S. Eliot's 1934 essay more or less accurately indicates the critical difficulties in dealing with him: 'His greater defects are such as anyone can see; his merits are still a matter for controversy'.² More attention has recently been paid to Marston, but the problems have not disappeared. Inescapably a part of any serious discussion of Elizabethan satire, Jacobean drama, or even of Elizabethan Ovidian poetry, Marston has provoked varying degrees of scholarly interest and critical hostility. John Peter, in a book written some twenty-five years ago,³ makes him a scapegoat in what he sees as the degeneracy of late Renaissance satire, entitling a chapter 'Marston and the Metamorphosis of Satire': and this metamorphosis is not described as a pleasant one. Marston has since been partly rehabilitated. I do not propose to argue his merits, but to interpret certain highly interesting elements in his poetry, elements that are critical to the writing of this disturbed, and, we may say, malcontent period.

I. Ovidian parody: Pigmalion

The first of the controversies involving Marston is that surrounding his first published work, The Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image, printed together with Certayne Satyres in 1598 (S.R. 27th May). This work, together with Marston's other 1598 volume of satires, The Scourge of Villanie (S.R. 8th September) was burnt in the Stationers' Hall by order of the Archbishop of

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1. The Poems of John Marston, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool, 1961), p. 176. All citations of Marston's poems are from this edition, referred to as Poems.
 2. T.S. Eliot, 'John Marston' in Selected Essays (London, 1951 rpt 1972), p.221.
 3. Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (Oxford, 1956).

Canterbury and the Bishop of London on 4 June 1599.¹ Uncertainty as to whether the bishops' action was directed at satire or at indecent poetry² may be seen persisting in judgments of Pigmalion, a critical document in what Nigel Alexander has called the 'Ovidian debate'³ of the 1590s.

What seems to be, at first sight, an exercise in a fashionable mode of writing, the mythological erotic narrative, is disclaimed as a parody by its author in the very next piece of verse in the 1598 volume. Here, in 'The Authour in prayse of his precedent Poem', Marston declares that his purpose has been to gull prurient fools. His carefully calculated dispraise of his poem stresses its most obvious faults: its slavish conventionality, its empty rhetoric ('puffie as Dutch hose') and its ultimate celebration of wholly sensual pleasures:

And in the end, (the end of loue I wot)
Pigmalion hath a iolly boy begot.
 So Labeo did complaine his loue was stone,
 Obdurate, flinty, so relentless none:
 Yet Lynceus knowes, that in the end of this,
 He wrought as strange a metamorphosis.
 ('The Authour in prayse', 27-32)

Labeo is one of Hall's chief targets as the type of the bad poet in Virgideiaie:⁴ his complaint echoes two lines from Venus and Adonis,⁵ but Marston probably intends no specific reference. He is emphasizing, rather, the essentially sexual motive behind the rhetorical posturing of love-poets, and ironically discrediting the use of Ovidian transformation as a metaphor for sexual fulfilment. Marston's chief point, really, is that his Ovidian poem is so bad that it exposes the weaknesses of the genre: he is anxious to

Censure my selfe, fore others me deride
 And scoffe at mee, as if I had deni'd
 Or thought my Poem good, when that I see
 My lines are froth, my stanzaes saplesse be.
 ('The Authour in prayse', 39-42)

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1. Arber, Transcript iii.678.
 2. See Arber, Transcript iii.677-8 for the other works called in with Marston's and those burnt. Satires and epigrams were expressly prohibited, but John Peter, in Complaint and Satire, pp.149-50 thinks that the bishops' main concern was obscenity. G.B.Harrison, The Elizabethan Journals (London, 1938) iii.333, gives possible political reasons for the action.
 3. Elizabethan Narrative Verse, ed. N. Alexander (London, 1968), p.17.
 4. Virgideiaie, VI.i.245 seqq., see VI.i.277 seqq. for his bad love poetry: in Collected Poems of Joseph Hall, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool, 1949).
 5. Venus and Adonis, 199-200. First noted by C.A.Herpitch, N. & Q. x (1902) 63.

Curiously little attention has been paid to Marston's clear-sightedness in this matter. His early critics found no irony in Pigmalion, and treated his satirical disclaimer as an afterthought: later ones attempt to treat the poem almost on a par with Hero and Leander.¹ They neglect what Marston himself says about the faults of Pigmalion, faults deliberately contrived to provide a parody of the epyllion. Incidentally, something is also said about the transformation poem as a mode of erotic poetry.

It may be advisable to lead up to Pigmalion by making a few general points. Chapman's continuation of Hero and Leander, like Drayton's Endimion and Phoebe, constitutes an anomaly amongst Elizabethan erotic epyllia. Its gravity and moral decorum are in deliberate contrast to the concerns of the 'Ovidian' poet of this period. The most characteristic achievement of the Elizabethan epyllion, for all its reserves of irony and pathos, is the sense of a highly romantic, extremely frank eroticism which is 'free' of most social constraints because it is placed in a distanced, not quite real mythological past. It is the celebration of this romantic eroticism to which the poets in this genre devote most of their talents, though because of its derivation from Ovid it is subject to various internal pressures, such as excess, obsession, satiety, and above all the unhappy endings of the fables. In these poems, we see the erotic Ovid moving away from the profounder and more philosophical poet of the Metamorphoses, as understood in mythography and in writing of Spenser and Chapman. And as a result, metamorphosis too is deprived of the metaphysical implications elsewhere attached to it: it is seen as the love poets see it, a witty conceit or a sexual metaphor: the focus for a highly deliberate play of fancy at the end of Venus and Adonis, a counter for sexual freedom in Marlowe's throwaway account of the loves of the gods in Hero and Leander. In the context of the age, this is a reductive view to take of metamorphosis. For all that erotic experience fills the world of

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1. For a representative of the earlier point of view, see A.J. Axelrad, Un Malcontent Elizabethain (Paris, 1955), pp. 27-32; for the later, W. Keach, Elizabethan Erotic Narratives (Hassocks, 1977), pp. 134-61
 2. Keach, who explores the complexities of the genre, concedes the impossibility of including Chapman or Drayton within his terms of reference: op. cit. p. xviii

the epyllia, and must expand to fill it, they do not display the Petrarchan or Ronsardian sense of love as an agent of continuous and comprehensive transformations. A bastard version of the epyllion, Tailboys Dymoke's Caltha Poetarum (one of the books called in with Marston's¹), demonstrates the extent of the reduction possible. This entertaining account of love amongst the flowers in a garden dedicated to Venus converts Ovid to a medium for anacreontic fancy: it is full of transformations. But the transformations, though elaborately described, are no more than part of the poem's succession of witty and indecent sexual conceits, started off by the activity of the hero, a bee, among the flowers.²

At the same time, the vogue of the Ovidian love-elegy in Marston's own Inns of Court milieu³ presents a completely different view of Ovid the amorist: urban, realistic, and supremely unsentimental. Carew, who said of Donne that he had banished myth from poetry, himself shows some nostalgia for 'the silenced tales i' th' Metamorphoses':⁴ but he does suggest the importance of Donne's kind of erotic poetry as a counter-current to the fantasies of the epyllia. Yet the libertinism of the love-elegy, of course, attracts criticism just as much as the sensuousness of the epyllion. Ovid's uncertain standing may be seen in the ambiguous attitudes of Jonson's Poetaster, where he is both hero and villain, very much the young man at one of the Inns, at odds with his father, irresponsible, conceited, but a poet.

Against this background, we can see Marston's Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image as a parody, exaggerated yet wooden, of the kind of 'Ovidian' poetry to be found in the epyllia: and as it is a satire of lust, so is it a satire of transformation. It mocks not only the sensual obsession of the besotted Pygmalion, but also the whole conceit of erotic metamorphosis.

1. See Arber, Transcript iii.677-8. Caltha Poetarum was printed in 1599 as by a T.Cutwode: Leslie Hotson, in 'The Marigold of the Poets', Essays by Divers Hands, Trans. Royal Soc. Lit. n.s. xvii (1938), 47-68, shows the author to be Dymoke.
2. Cf. Caltha Poetarum (London, 1599), stanzas 57-60.
3. See J.Carey, The Ovidian Love Elegy in England (Diss.D.Phil. Oxford, 1960), pp. 349-77.
4. T. Carew, 'An Elegie upon the death of Mr.Iohn Donne', 63-7.

If an Ovidian poem as impoverished as Pigmalion would have seemed a sad start to the literary career of a witty young man resident in the Middle Temple, a parody would have been highly appropriate, Marston's fellow Middle Templar Sir John Davies's Gullinge Sonnets¹ are written from the same impulse, though they are more immediately recognizable as parody because Davies plays upon the verbal, rhetorical tricks of the love-poets, producing witty and ridiculous effects. Yet, as Davies notes in his dedication to Sir Anthony Cooke, even these poems may be taken seriously by some, which is why he sends them to Cooke with an explanation:

if some rich, rash gull these Rimes commend,
Thus you may sett his formall witt to schoole,
Use your owne grace, and begg him for a foole.²

In the ironic preliminaries to his work, Marston dedicates it to 'the worlds mightie monarch, Good Opinion', and provides a paradoxical encomium of this deity 'Whom fleshly Epicures call Vertues essence'. He speaks of the errors and imperfections of the work, and threatens to expose the partiality and superficiality of his 'patron' unless he protects Marston's - by imputation, undeserving - poem. This is followed by an address to a more than usually fictitious mistress, who is to inspire Marston's 'wanton' and 'dulled' Muse:

Thy fauours like Promethean sacred fire,
In dead, and dulled conceit can life inspire.
Or like that rare and rich Elixar stone,
Can turne to gold, leaden inuention: (Poems, p.51)

It is precisely this 'leaden inuention' that Marston is at pains to stress. In contrast to the rich and conceitful elaboration of the most prominent epyllia of the 1590s, Pigmalion is flat and uninventive, limited to the bare facts of the classical story, and domestic rather than romantic in its images.

The story of Pygmalion stands out amongst the tales of unnatural lust in Ovid's tenth book because of its happy ending: transformation is a means to

1. These have been edited from ms. by Robert Krueger in his edition of Davies's Poems (Oxford, 1975). Krueger conjectures their date to be around 1594, shortly after the Epigrams published with Marlowe's Elegies.
2. Poems, ed. Krueger, p.163.

consummation. Among so many myths, in the Metamorphoses as a whole, of the petrification of living human beings as punishment or escape, this myth of the animation of marble presents the dream of the artist as miraculously possible and real. Pygmalion himself, as both artist and lover, becomes a potent type of the creator and animator: by loving his art he brings it to life. The most remarkable use of the Pygmalion myth, in all Elizabethan writing, is in the end of The Winter's Tale. Elsewhere, this myth of the transformation of a marble statue becomes part of the rhetoric of love. In 1568, William Fulwood¹ used the myth for a model poem from a lover to his hard-hearted mistress: the result is a wooden and often risible effort sometimes anticipating Marston's protestations to his mistress:

Oh would I might Pigmaliions part
 In some respects now fully play:
 Her to imbrace that hath my hart,
 And sometimes in my bed to lay,
 I should fynde better pastime sure,¹
 Than poore Pigmalion could procure.

Daniel's sonnet in Delia (1592) 'Behold what hadde Pigmaleon had to frame'² is, of course, much better known. Daniel's employment of this metamorphosis myth as a love-conceit reflects the influence upon him of French poets like Du Bellay and Desportes,³ though this particular sonnet does not seem to be plagiarized. It displays, however, many of the faults that attract Davies's ridicule in the Gullinge Sonnets, ending with an unhappy comparison between the fortunate Pygmalion and the frustrated lover:

O happie he that ioy'd his stone and arte,
 Vnhappy I to loue a stony harte.

The possibility of Daniel's poem having been in Marston's mind is interesting because of his reference to Labeo's complaint in "The Autuour in prayse" ('So Labeo did complaine his loue was stone,/Obdurate, flinty, so relentless none'), and when one notes the strong possibility that the love-poet satirized by Hall

1. William Fulwood, The Enemie of Idlenesse (London, 1568), f. 141^r.
2. Sonnet XIII. See Samuel Daniel, Poems and A Defence of Ryme, ed. A.C. Sprague (London, 1950), p.17. The sonnet had in fact been published earlier, in 1591.
3. See C. Ruutz-Rees, 'Some Debts of Samuel Daniel to Du Bellay', MLN xxiv (1909), 134-7, and A.L. Prescott, French Poets and the English Renaissance (New Haven, 1978), pp, 58-60, 146-8.

under the name of Labeo was Daniel.¹

While the metamorphosis of Pygmalion's image may thus have seemed to love-poets a metaphor for sexual fulfilment and artistic triumph,² this obsession with a statue of which he is himself the maker could also appear to be idolatry of the worst kind. Precisely this ambiguity is at the heart of Jean de Meun's supremely ironic treatment of the myth towards the close of the Roman de la Rose.³ Pygmalion's infatuation with an 'image' indeed points up the worst follies of courtly love. And yet - here we have the difficulty at the heart of the tale - Pygmalion's idolatrous and unnatural love is successful, he wins his mistress and enjoys her. For Jean de Meun this is the result of a resolve implicit in the courtly love ethic: the determination to enjoy the fruits of love, however elaborate and time-consuming might be the rituals of approaching them.

Philip Finkelpearl believes the successful conclusion of Pygmalion's love in Marston's poem to be the Ovidian answer to a Petrarchan parody.⁴ There is little purpose in dividing the Ovidian myth in this way: Marston's poem, like other earlier treatments of the myth, simply demonstrates the stages in a process which has always had sexual fulfilment as its goal. What makes such a process a proper subject for ironic or satiric treatment is the degree of infatuation or 'idolizing' that makes it the lover's sole object in life: not the Petrarchan 'idealization' of the beloved to a type of beauty or grace, but sensual obsession of a dangerous and all-exclusive kind.

The possibility of misinterpretation arises, I think, from the nature of the myth itself, which represents the lover's success rather than his frustration. But by employing such a myth Marston is trying to make a point about this sort of erotic success, and its presentation in terms of mythical

1. Cf. Collected Poems of Joseph Hall, ed. cit., pp. XLIX-LVIII, esp. LIX-LX.

2. Cf. Petrarch, Rime 78

3. Roman de la Rose, 2087 - 21194, in ed. of E. Langlois, (Paris, 1914)

4. 'From Petrarch to Ovid: Metamorphosis in John Marston's Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image', ELH, xxxii (1965), 333-48, and John Marston of the Middle Temple (Cam. Mass., 1969), pp. 94-104.

metamorphosis. His difficulty coincides with that of a later satiric poet, Richard Brathwayt, who in Natures Embassie (1621), recounts the story of Pygmalion explicitly as an example of Dotage, and persistently stresses how idolatrous and unnatural his passion is. Nevertheless, at the end he is forced to grant Pygmalion's happiness:

blest in enjoying and possessing that,
Which doth include true Loues felicitie¹

and his joy and satisfaction are fully recorded. On the ever-green island of Paphos is a shrine consecrated to Pygmalion's love. It is difficult at this point to recall that Brathwayt is writing an explicit 'Satyre'; the ambiguity in his poem is just as great in its way as that in Marston's.

The deflationary techniques of Marston's poem are largely a matter of tone. Pigmalion's first infatuation with an image of his own making is described virtually as a process of yielding to the clichés of love-poetry: this impression is reinforced by the narrator's ironic qualification that his mistress is fairer than Pigmalion's statue, and by the apt circumstances of Pigmalion's conversion from misogynist to idolator:

naked as it stood before his eyes,
Imperious Loue declares his Deitie.
O what alluring beauties he descries
In each part of his faire imagery! (Pigmalion, stanza 4)

Pigmalion's unhindered 'viewing' of his statue's perfections, and the unchasteness of his thoughts while doing this, arouse a tongue-in-cheek envy: 'O that my Mistres were an Image too,/That I might blameles her perfections view.' (stanza 11).

The next six stanzas, 12 to 18, are the most satirical in the poem; Pigmalion (in what may be a reference to Chapman's Ouids Banquet) prefers his creation to Ovid's Corinna, attempts to dally with his 'dull Image', and realizes at length that it cannot feel or hear him. Although, of course, love-poets commonly speak of their mistress's stony indifference, her coldness or coyness, Marston seems fully conscious that the joke in Pigmalion's

1. Natures Embassie: or The Wilde-mans Measures (London, 1621), p. 104.

situation is that his mistress is marble. Pigmalion himself, using all the clichés of the despairing lover lamenting the hardheartedness of women - 'are they all like mine? relentless stone' - is comic precisely because these epithets are in his case uncommonly apt.

Having made the stock prayer to Venus (again, in the vaguely neoplatonic terms favoured by the love-poets) Pigmalion jumps into bed with his statue - the episode cannot be described in any more dignified terms - and discovers that his prayers have been answered. What had until now been conceit is but

shadow of that blisse
Which now my Muse striues sweetly to display
In this my wondrous metamorphosis.
Daine to beleue me, now I sadly say.
The stonie substance of his Image feature,
Was straight transform'd into a liuing creature.
(Pigmalion, stanza 28)

Marston's ironic purpose is clear enough as he makes the now familiar comparison between his state and his hero's:

O wonder not to heare me thus relate,
And say to flesh transformed was a stone.
Had I my Loue in such a wished state
As was afforded to Pigmalion,
Though flinty hard, of her you soone should see
As strange a transformation wrought by mee.
(stanza 32)

Marston's narrative manipulation of his reader's response, evident throughout the poem in the extent to which Pigmalion is kept, as it were, in the third person, an object of curiosity rather than a subject of sympathy, rises to a peak at the close. Having toyed with 'Salaminian titillations' through his descriptions of Pigmalion's dalliance with his unclothed artefact, he makes at the end a notable, and fully conscious, display of what Axelrad describes as 'l'hypocrite réserve':

Who knowes not what ensues? O pardon me
Yee gaping eares that swallow vp my lines
Expect no more. Peace idle Poesie,
Be not obsceane though wanton in thy rhimes. (stanza 38)

Marston's contempt for these gaping ears is evident in the game of titillation he has just played with them, implying graphically enough what Pigmalion does

with his statue while protesting his reluctance to provide an 'amorous description': at the same time, as Axelrad notes 'le vocabulaire amoureux, libertin et même licencieux, est malgré tout limité'.¹

These features of the poem - the attribution of conventional love-rhetoric to Pigmalion, the 'wanton' descriptions introduced as a kind of extended aposiopesis, the frequent comparisons with the poet's mistress - are parodic enough. More damning is the deliberately deflating style, the narrator's continual demands on our judgement by mediating Pigmalion's actions to us in a flat, and often risible account: the myth is reduced to a tale. But what Marston seems to want to parody, most of all, is the whole idea of erotic metamorphosis. The story of Pigmalion, obviously, can serve as a metaphor for the traditional process of softening the hardhearted mistress. But conversely, as in Marston's poem, the comedy of Pigmalion's antics with an actual statue may suggest the absurdity of the metaphor of stone become flesh. Moreover, the more serious implications of the poem stress the sensual obsession at the root of such rhetoric; it is an obsession with the flesh that achieves a fleshly consummation, for all Pigmalion's talk of 'celestial fire'. Pigmalion's wooing is remarkably single-minded, and its end is wholly appropriate; that is to say, the 'miracle' turns out to be scarcely a miracle at all. Marston seems fully aware, at the critical point, of the triviality of his 'wondrous metamorphosis'. And since this metamorphosis coincides more or less with sexual consummation, we can, as in the love-poets, take one as an image of the other - but in a sadly reduced, virtually ridiculous sense. Marston's purpose in the poem is not only to deflate the exaggerations of the erotic epyllia, but also to show up the mythical fantasies that dignify lust in the vocabulary of the love-poet.

1. Axelrad, Un Malcontent Élizabéthain, p. 29.

II. Epyllion into Satire

Perhaps as a result of the publication on the one hand of Chapman's gravely moral, and tragic, conclusion to Hero and Leander, and on the other of Marston's banal parody, we can see the mythological poem of immediately succeeding years choosing increasingly extreme ways of escape from such criticism. In the two most notable poems of this period, Weever's Faunus and Melliflora¹ and Francis Beaumont's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus,² there is a development in the direction of an even greater element of fantasy, or erotic freedom, bolstered by correspondingly greater 'balancing' elements of satiric or realistic ballast. Faunus and Melliflora is undoubtedly to some extent a reply to Marston's diatribe against Ovidian poetry: Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, on the other hand, continues the Marlovian tradition of ironic vulgarisation of deities while romanticising mortals, but admits into its frame, under this guise, satire of the court of the aging Elizabeth.

Plagiarism, in Weever's poem, has become a literary device of some importance. Sidney's Arcadia, Hero and Leander, and Venus and Adonis provide imaginative sources for a remarkable mythological fantasy. But at the same time Weever constructs a mythological genesis for satire which displays with considerable clarity the direction which erotic poetry has taken in his day. That this should be presented in the terms of an Ovidian metamorphosis is perhaps indicative of the ambiguous relation of the epyllion with satire.

In Weever's poem, Diana, angry at Faunus' successful courtship of one of her nymphs, Melliflora, transforms Melliflora's unborn child into a monster. This monster is the satyr ('So cald because they satisfide her ires',³ says Weever, in a mock-etymological parenthesis) and it, with its descendants, is a foe to love and pleasure:

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1. John Weever, Faunus and Melliflora, or The Original of our English Satyres (London, 1600). The poem is edited by A. Davenport (London, 1948), and this is the edition I cite.
 2. Francis Beaumont, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (London, 1602) repr. in N. Alexander, ed. Elizabethan Narrative Verse, pp. 168-191. For a recent discussion of the attribution, see P.J. Finkelpearl, 'The Authorship of "Salmacis and Hermaphroditus"', N. & Q., ccxiv (1969), 367-8.
 3. Faunus and Melliflora, 1068, ed. cit., p. 42.

vtter enemies,
To louers pastimes, sportfull veneries.

. . .
As we may see within our Faerie land:
The Satyres ierking sharp fang'd poesie,
Lashing and biting Venus luxurie,
Gauling the sides of foule impiety,
Scourging the lewdnesse of damnd villany,
Shooting out sharp quills in each angry line,
Through heapt-vp vices like the porcupine.¹

Interestingly, the very structure of Weever's 1600 volume reflects the abrupt and interruptive nature of this metamorphosis. The first part of Faunus and Melliflora breaks off with the birth of the satyr and its arrival, as satire, in England. Some satyrs, Weever explains, were left behind in Italy when this emigration took place, and he proceeds to show their 'enmitie' by translating satires from Horace, Persius and Juvenal. The third satire, a version of Juvenal's first, is however interrupted by Venus; she is indignant that she, the patron of Aeneas, should be so attacked in Italy, and converts the Italians to amorists. She then flies to England, sees herself being abused by the English 'Satyres', and embarks on a systematic campaign of corruption of the public taste

Thrusting her selfe in boudy elegies,
Polluting with her damned luxury,
All eares which vovd were vnto chastity,²

until she prevails upon her followers to sacrifice the Satyres to her in a fire. This - obviously a reference to the burning of satirical books in 1599 - having been accomplished, she leaves England, never to return. Weever exhorts the 'Satyres' to torment her if she should happen to come over again from Italy:

You know her malice plainely, as you see
Your true discent, and lineall Pedigree.³

This 'true discent' which Weever has outlined for satire makes it, clearly enough, not simply a product of Diana's wrath against Venus but also

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1. Faunus and Melliflora, 1069-70, 1072-78, p. 43. A reference to both Marston, The Scourge of Villanie, and to Hall, Virgidemiae V.iii.1-2.
 2. Faunus and Melliflora, 1665-67, ed. cit., p.65. The 'boudy elegies' may refer to Marlowe's translation of the Amores.
 3. Ibid., 1684-5.

a transformed and much-wronged descendant of Venus herself: the offspring of a lust she had kindled, but turned against her by its monstrous birth. This witty aition provides a remarkably perceptive reading of what had been happening in Elizabethan poetry over the past three years. Interestingly, Weever's own attitudes towards these developments remain ambiguous. Venus, having accomplished the burning of the satyres, had decreed that 'from their Cyndars should a Satyre rise,/Which their Satyricke snarling should despise'. This satire against satires is provided by Weever in the last part of his volume. It takes the form of an ironic millennial prophecy: all the vices hitherto attacked by satire would be overcome by a resurgence of virtue this first of January 1600, the commencement of a Platonic Great Year.¹ Pretending to censure satirists for bringing private vices to public notice, Weever recapitulates their most sensational complaints. On a satiric journey through a reformed London, he notes the disappearance of precisely those vices so vividly attacked by Marston.² This technique of reproving the reprovers is adopted, as Davenport notices, from Hall:³ but it is also true that Weever does point out some of the problems - indeed, defects of contemporary satire. He notes its inevitable obscenity, its stirring of muddy waters to little purpose, its painful reminders of sins better passed over in silence. These realizations are wholly consonant with the fact that Weever is in all probability the author of the pamphlet The Whipping of the Satyre, published the following year.⁴

Arnold Davenport, editing Weever's 1600 volume, suggests that it was hastily cobbled together from several unrelated pieces of work, an Ovidian poem and a few satires, when the prohibition of 1599 was enforced.⁵ But the

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1. 'A Propheisie of this present yeare, 1600', in Faunus and Melliflora, ed. cit. p. 66.
 2. Ibid., p.67. Weever makes use of Marston's characters and in ll.59-60 ironically answers his offer of 'a kingdome for a man' (The Scourge of Villanie II.vii, Poems, p.140).
 3. Virgidemiae vi.i - see Faunus and Melliflora, ed. cit. p.v.
 4. See A. Davenport's introduction to his edition of The Whipper Pamphlets (1601) Part I: The Whipping of the Satyre (Liverpool, 1951).
 5. See Faunus and Melliflora, ed. cit., p.vi.

mythological account of the birth of 'Satyres' from the rivalry between Venus and Diana, and indeed the paralleling of the metamorphosis in the metamorphosis of Weever's own poem, from epyllion to 'The first Satyre of Horace' makes an important and ingenious point. Weever's own transformation from Ovidian poet to concealed or indirect satirist is an interesting parallel to the course Marston takes: his poem is significant in displaying so clearly the course of contemporary events. We may suppose him to be saying that satire is the metamorphosis of Ovid. (Gascoigne, who is sometimes regarded as the first Elizabethan satirist, provided an equally elaborate Ovidian aition for the origin of satire in The Steele Glas (1576): and Tailboys Dymoké, the author of Caltha Poetarum, appears to have attempted something similar in a poem called 'Faunus his Four Poetical Furies' for which he was sued by the Earl of Lincoln in 1590.¹)

III. Satire

The harshness of late Elizabethan satire is, it has been argued, traceable to certain definable assumptions about the name and nature of the genre. The two most notable of these assumptions are the false etymology that connects satire and satyrs,² and the association of satire with the melancholy temperament, born under Saturn,³ One common and important element is the view of the satirist as a disturbed personality, warped by his sense of the world's defects. Indeed this personality succumbs to complete schizophrenia in Jonson's Every Man out of his Humour. Asper-Macilente displays both sides of the Saturnist personality: the 'ingenious and free spirit', Asper, 'falls into such an envious apoplexie...that he growes violently impatient of any opposite

1. See L. Hotson, art. cit., p.53.

2. Derived from Donatus: see Aelii Donati Commentum Terentii (Stuttgart, 1902) i.16-17: repeated, e.g. by Scaliger, Poetices libri septem (Lyons, 1561) p.19; Lodge, Reply to Gosson, p.36 in Works ed. E.W. Gosse (Glasgow, 1883) vol.i; Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie I.xiii, in Elizabethan Critical Essays ed. G. Smith (Oxford, 1904) ii.32. The falseness of the connexion was pointed out by Isaac Casaubon, in De Satyrica Graecorum Poesi & Romanorum Satira (Paris, 1605). The 'satyr' personality is stressed in A. Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven, 1959).

3. See M.C. Randolph, 'Thomas Drant's Definition of Satire, 1566' in N. & Q. clxxx (1941) 416-8, and B.G. Lyons, Voices of Melancholy (London, 1971), esp. pp. 58-76.

happiness in another' as Macilente.¹ Macilente's emaciating envy is obviously a more singular form of the universal discontent which fills

Marston's Malevole:

one of the most prodigious affections that ever conversed with nature; a man, or rather a monster, more discontent than Lucifer when he was thrust out of the presence . . . His highest delight is to procure others vexation, and therein he thinks he truly serves heaven; for 'tis his position, who-soever in this earth can be contented is a slave and damned; therefore does he afflict all in that to which they are most affected. The elements struggle within him; his own soul is at variance within herself. His speech is halter-worthy at all hours.²

The conversion of Asper into Macilente, of Altofronto into Malevole, is a necessary prelude before they can effect their savage and reductive conversions of their victims. In drama, this 'transformation' of the satirist is one means of coping with the problems of the satirist's material, but it is not a fully adequate one, and it is especially inadequate in verse satire.

No single view of the satiric personality as created in Renaissance poetry, nor of Marston's personal obsessions, can explain the character of Marston's formal satires. Earlier critics tended to stress Marston's own personality, which inevitably appeared unpleasant and rancorous: later critics have suggested the presence of satirical persona. The second approach has been the more valuable one, but it is undeniable that Marston's satire is still distinguished by a highly individual tone, and that its Juvenalian vigour is communicated in markedly peculiar accents. Indeed the persona argued for by Kernan³ may be seen as being actively rejected by such satirists as Donne and Hall, who show some distaste for the adoption of a base and ridiculous mask. Donne especially, and Hall in a slightly different way, create instead an ultimately more influential character, the sober, honest and even reluctant satirist, plagued by rogues and fools. Such a

1. Works, ed. Herford & Simpson, iii.423.

2. The Malcontent, I. ii. 16-27, ed. B. Harris (New Mermaids, London, 1967)

3. Op. cit., note 2 p. 287 above.

character - granted that it is largely derived from Horatian models - may be seen as these satirists' projections of their own personalities, or at least of an authoritative alter ego.

Marston's self-projection in his satires is more theatrical and capricious. His satiric character is defined by its antipathies, by its almost universal scorn (not least for the very medium it has chosen to convey this scorn) and by its eccentric vehemence. It is not identifiable with a generic type-persona: Marston is well aware of the roles of the satyr-satirist, melancholy railer, scourger and physician, making deliberate and extreme use of them, but at any moment he can also withdraw from the demands of such a role, drop his 'mask', and criticise his performance

Now Satyre cease to rub our gauled skinnes,
And to vnmaske the worlds detested sinnes.
Thou shalt as soone draw Nilus riuer dry,
As clense the world from foule impietie.
(Certaine Satyres, II.157-60)¹

His tones are made more ambiguous by the identity of the terms for satire and satyr, so that he seems often to be personifying the poem, rather than creating a persona. Marston's retreat from the sordid necessities of vituperation sometimes involves a melancholy heightening of tone: 'Returne, returne, sacred Synderesis,/Inspire our truncks, let not such mud as this/Pollute vs still': at other times he drops into the easy familiarity of

Donne:

For pre-thee Ned, I pre-thee gentle lad,
Is not he frantique, foolish, bedlam mad,
That wastes his spright, that melts his very braine
In deepe designes, in wits darke gloomie straine?
(The Scourge of Villanie X 'Satyra Nova' 9-12)²

Towards his poetry, moreover, he exhibits an ambivalent indifference, repeatedly protesting its small worth ('Hee that thinks worse of my rimes then my selfe, I scorne him, for he cannot, he that thinks better, is a foole),³ but anxious,

1. Certaine Satyres is hereafter referred to as CS.

2. The Scourge of Villanie is hereafter referred to as SV. This poem 'Satyra Nova', is addressed to Everard Guilpin, Marston's cousin and the author of Skialetheia (1598): he is also addressed in a poem by Donne, The Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters, ed. W. Milgate (Oxford, 1967), p.64.

3. SV 'To those that seeme iudiciall perusers': Poems, p.101.

nevertheless, to attract the 'true iudging eyes, quick sighted censurers' to its perusal, Marston's ostentatious courting of literary oblivion, his expressions of contempt for almost everything he wrote, are summed up in the inscription on his tombstone, Oblivioni Sacrum. There was, of course, some traditional uncertainty as to whether satire was poetry, and the Roman satirists make ironic professions of the unworthiness of their medium; Marston adopts Persius' disclaimer as a motto for the title-page of The Scourge of Villanie.

As we see for example in this case of the disguised Altofronto-Malevole in The Malcontent, Marston is strongly conscious of the satirist's necessary disjointment of personality, his adoption of extreme and violent attitudes incompatible with normal social existence. But at the same time he tends to assert the individuality of his satire as opposed to that of others: 'Spight of despight, and rancors villanie,/I am my selfe, so is my poesie':¹ and he speaks of his 'respectlesse free-bred poesie' without any wish to disown it. That is to say, Marston is aware that the satirist cannot be himself in his satire, and yet is highly self-conscious.

Another important element in Marston's satiric personality is stressed by Louis Lecocq in his recent study of Elizabethan satire,² and this is the legendary and misanthropic figure of the Cynic Diogenes. Not only does the Cynic ideal contribute to the persistent canine metaphors of Marston's satire (Ye changing Proteans list,/And tremble at a barking Satyrist.);³ the characteristic suspicion and pessimism of Diogenes helps, as much as any Elizabethan theories of the melancholic temperament, to create the malcontent figure of Marston's satire. The canine imagery and public indecency of this element is brilliantly satirized in the Second Return from Parnassus:

1. SV 'To Detraction', Poems, p.95.

2. La Satire en Angleterre de 1588 à 1603 (Paris, 1969), pp.291-296.

3. The Three Parnassus Plays (1598-1601) ed. J.B. Leishman (London, 1949), p.241.

'What, Monsier Kinsayder, lifting vp your legge and pissing against the world?'¹ It is the 'Cynicke dogge' who roams the streets of Marston's London: Jonson, adroitly converting this idea, like other elements of Marston's Circean vision, to individual dramatic use, shows us Macilente poisoning Puntarvolo's dog towards the close of Every Man Out in what is virtually a cathartic action.

Marston's 'barking Satyrists' is unleashed upon a satiric world also persistently conceived in animal metaphors. Like Carlo Buffone in Jonson's Every Man Out, that 'Publike, scurrilous, and prophane Iester; that (more swift then Circe) with absurd simile's will transforme any person into deformity',² Marston too, in darker and more savage terms, transforms his satiric victims. This is not characteristic of other satirists of the period, and it is not simply a case of the usual language of violent abuse: the world presents itself to Marston's imagination as populated by beasts and monsters which the satirist must exhibit and scourge. The vision is not dissimilar to Chapman's, but whereas Chapman retreats into Stoic melancholy, Marston adopts more violent and contradictory attitudes. Indeed in the energy and vividness with which he pursues his satiric functions, Marston is comparable to his two greatest satirical contemporaries, Nashe and Jonson. Both share something of this view of the world's deformities, the 'monsters of nature' which constitute the subject of satire. Jonson I shall consider later, but Nashe, though a highly important figure in this period, is not really like Marston. His imagination, instead of reducing and destroying the objects of his satire, blows up and inflates them: he creates grotesque and enthralling creatures by a sharp eye for realistic detail. It is not that he sees men as transformed so much as they are transformed in his sight. His imagination does not dwell upon a process of metamorphosis, or on mythical transformations as symbol or allegory; his enormously vital, comically

1. The Three Parnassus Plays (1598-1601) ed. J.E. Leishman (London, 1949) p.241.

2. Jonson, Works, ed. cit. iii.423.

violent prose creates grotesque images which alter our perceptions of reality, present us with a world which has unremittingly to be seen in a particular way to be thus understood.

Nashe's art, of course, is related to popular culture in a way that Marston's is not, and he touches upon the stories of prodigies, transformations, deformities and monstrous/^{births} that are reported in the frenzy of the plague years: moreover, in Christs Teares he has conventional descriptions of the debasement of men 'as wee apparraile our selves in Beastes skinnes, in selfe same sort we clothe our soules in theyr sinnes'.¹ But his true interests are elsewhere. Nashe's writing, and the Elizabethan pamphleteers' obsession with freaks, monsters and vices, are not profitably understood within the context of a study of the literary symbol of transformation. Neil Rhodes's excellent book, Elizabethan Grotesque, treats these subjects under a far more apt head, and offers an approach to the satirists of the 1590s which complements my own.

Marston's imagination, however, is obsessed with transformation, and he sees it as a symbol of moral degeneration. What is compelling about his satiric world is the unequivocal picture it presents of the decay of man's nature, the completeness of his bestialisation. Marston's satiric duty is conceived in deep pessimism: ironically he addresses the 'God of sleights', Mercury:

Be then appeas'd, I'le offer to thy shrine,
An Hecatombe, of many spotted kine.
Myriades of beastes shall satisfie thy rage,
Which doe prophane thee in this Apish age.
(SV, V.113-6)

In contrast to the 'vizarded-bifronted-Ianian rout', the satirist declares his own constancy, his lack of a 'camelion muse'; yet in fact, of course, the necessities of the satirist's role impose upon him a protean quality corresponding to that of his victims. Thrusting himself everywhere, snarling at secret sins, seeing himself as a 'second Theseus' dragging out the monstrous Minotaur from the Cretan labyrinth, the satirist presents to us the

1. Works, ed. R.B. McKerrow, corr. F.P. Wilson (Oxford, 1958), ii.113.

protean shapes of vice:

Ambitious Gorgons, wide-mouth'd Lamians,
 Shape-changing Proteans, damn'd Briareans,
 Is Minos dead? is Radamanth a sleepe?
 That yee thus dare vnto Ioues Pallace creepe?
 (CS, v.1-4)

This satire, the fifth in Certaine Satyres, uses allegories of classical myths of metamorphosis (largely derived from Ovid and from Comes' moralized accounts in the Mythologiae) to attack the vices of the great. Prometheus' one theft, made to uplift and humanize man, is savagely punished, while the thieving Mercury is a god; Actaeon is transformed and killed for his 'ventrous eye', but the lustful Hercules is deified; Jove's many rapes and incests are celebrated, while the truth-telling Sisyphus is tormented. The petty objects of the gods' wrath meet with terrible punishments; Orpheus is torn to pieces like Acteon, Gallus is transformed to a chauntecleer, while the great follow Jove's example in riot and luxury. Ultimately this is a satire on lust, on public and unreproved vice in the manner of Juvenal. Marston ends with an ironic reversal of values: he has been taking right for wrong and virtue for vice, the age is too good to merit reproof. This idea, of course, is borrowed from Hall's last satire, and we have already seen how it is later employed by Weever in his millennial prophecy.

This sort of use of classical myth is typical of Marston's satire. He is constantly indebted to Comes, as Davenport's careful citations show: his much-cited list of a poet's handbooks ('Imagines Deorum. Booke of Epithetes Natales Comes, thou I know recites, /And mak'st Anatomie of Poesie')¹ reflect probably personal preference rather than an opinion of Hall's practice. Comes is the most important of these; there is no specific evidence of Marston's using Cartari or Ravisius Textor. Marston uses Comes' moralizations of metamorphosis, but essentially, his debt to such treatments is not profound.

1. CS II.27-9. Marston is probably referring to Verderius' translation of Cartari's Le imagini, published as Imagines deorum in 1581; and to Ravisius Textor's Epitheta, first printed in 1518

Comes is absorbed into a more sweeping indictment of human sin and folly; the myths of transformation become part of Marston's terms of abuse, and his vision of a sin-drowned world, almost as they, in a completely opposed sense, had become an integral part of the vocabulary of the love-poets. Appropriately - and characteristically if we recall the inversions of Pigmalion - the satire of lust, growing out of erotic poetry, inverts its terms. Abuse of this sort is to be seen in Stephen Gosson's Apologie

Al these whome the Poetes haue called gods and goddesses,
for the most part, were bastardes begotten in adulterie,
or very lewd liuers, which had no sooner defiled their
beddes, but they were snatchte vp to the skyes and made
starres, in so much that Iuno crieth out in Seneca, Tellus
colenda est, pellices coelum tenent; Lets dwel in earth,
for heauen is full of whores.¹

But while Gosson, hostile to all myth, sees the stories as themselves corruptive, Marston takes the myths as allegories of corruption. This is not novel - what lends force to his use is the satiric vision of all men as transformed by their vices, cut off from the possibilities of their human nature, irredeemably petty and irredeemably protean. Marston's use of this last adjective - and he makes frequent use of it - is at the opposite end of the scale from Pico's: man, here, is condemned by his changeability. 'His glassy essence, like an angry ape/Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven/As makes the angels weep.'

One of Marston's constant satiric targets, hypocrisy - attacked for example in the first two poems in Certaine Satyres, the first satire of The Scourge of Villanie, and incidentally almost everywhere, is particularly aptly imagined under images of transformation:

Ixion makes faire weather vnto Ioue,
That he might make foule work with his faire loue,
And is right sober in his outward semblance,
Demure, and modest in his countenance;
Applies himselfe to great Saturnus sonne,
Till Saturnus daughter yeeldes his motion.
Night-shining Phoebe knowes what was begat,
A monstrous Centaure, illegitimate. (CS, I.55-62)

1. An Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse (1579) in Markets of Bawdrie, ed. A.F. Kinney (Salzburg, 1974), p.125.

Moreover, the 'outward semblances' of gallants and travellers, their aping of outlandish styles in speech and dress, consistently parodied and attacked in Elizabethan literature (Ascham, for instance, has a notable passage upon English travellers in Italy being transformed like Circe's swine)¹ make Marston's satiric procession of characters even more a shadow-world. The harsh, market-place vividness of Marston's description is not paralleled by other satirists of the period. The typical collection of victims, identified by classical names and probably including more than the actual sins of his contemporaries, is converted by Marston to a menagerie of monsters defined by their obscene lusts, disguises and indulgences: transvestitism, incest, homosexuality, zoophilia are fastened on one figure after another to produce a picture of complete corruption.

The satire of lust receives its most remarkable image in this vision:

I thinke the blind doth see, the flame God rise
 From Sisters couch, each morning to the skies:
 Glowing with lust. Walke but in duskie night,
 With Linceus eyes, and to thy piercing sight
 Disguised Gods will show, in pesants shape,
 Prest to commit some execrable rape. (SV, II.21-26)

This view of the whole universe, the celestial bodies as well as man, consumed by animal lust, provides the frame for Marston's attack on love-poets in the eighth satire of The Scourge of Villanie. Here too classical myths are heaped one on another: Hercules' enslavement to Omphale, the transformation of Jove, described virtually in the tones of Gosson:

Tush, guiltles Doues, when Gods to force foule rapes,
 Will turne themselues to any brutish shapes.
 Base bastard powers, whom the world doth see
 Trans-form'd to swine for sensuall luxurie;

...

Thrice sacred gods, and o thrice blessed skies
 Whose orbes includes such vertuous deities! (SV, VIII.149-64)

Lust, as Marston makes clear, has confounded all. The soul has left the defiled body and retreated to its proper home: man is left to the possession of that body he has so spoiled.

1. Whole Works, ed. cit. iii 148 ff.

The longest and most coherent of Marston's satires is the seventh of The Scourge of Villanie, 'A Cynicke Satyre': it also states with the greatest force and comprehensiveness the sense of man's complete loss of his proper form. The theme is Diogenes' reputed search through Athens for a man: Marston, repeating the search, finds that 'Circes charme hath turn'd them all to swine'.¹ Pythagorean transmigration has reversed its direction (rather as in Donne's Metempsychosis) and the souls of swine inhabit human bodies. The men one sees are only shadows:

Ignes fatui, Glowormes, Fictions,
Meteors, Ratts of Nilus, Fantasies,
Colosses, Pictures, Shades, Resemblances. (SV, VII.14-16)

The customary tour of London's streets follows, with type after type being pointed out and identified as a hollow apparition, literally eaten away inwardly by vice. Marston crowds a succession of animal images into the list; a flatterer is a water-spaniel, a dandy an ape, a 'Ganimede' a beaver, another is an ass or an ox. London becomes a zoo. As Davenport notes, the train of thought in this satire seems to be suggested by Comus' allegorisation of the transformations of Circe. The soul is naturally incorruptible; but if the humours are allowed to dominate, they may initiate bestial vices in the (lower) soul: 'Pro flagitiorum igitur natura, ad quae quisque erat propensus, in varias animalium brutorum formas vertebatur.'²

Ultimately, again, Marston suggests that the soul has left the body: in a Senecan image,³ he describes human souls as once having flowed from God 'as't were by pypes', but filth has now choked these conduits, leaving us no better than brute creation: 'Beasts sence, plants growth, like being as a stone,/But out alas, our Cognisance is gone.'

It is possible to multiply these images of bestialisation and reductive metamorphosis, but this is little to the purpose once the chief emphasis is

1. ll. 4-5 Poems, p.140.

2. Comus, Mythologiae VI. 6., ed. cit. p. 379.

3. Epistulae Morales, cxx.14.

clear. The plumbing metaphor we have just looked at provides a convenient point from which to begin examining the general body of philosophical thought - if any - into which these ideas may be fitted. As I noted, the pipe metaphor is borrowed from Seneca, and this whole passage is used by Anthony Caputi in his study of Marston virtually as proof of Marston's deeply-held Stoicism.¹ Arnold Davenport, on the other hand, argues in the Introduction to his edition of Marston's poems that Marston was a convinced Calvinist.

There are several other possible anchors for Marston's beliefs and opinions which I shall come to in a moment: but before proceeding it may be worth looking briefly at some of the implications for my argument of Caputi's and Davenport's views. Both, it must be said, have some basis for their assumptions. Marston signs himself Epictetus at the end of the last poem of Certain Satyres, and 'honours' him in the Proem to the second book of The Scourge. He frequently uses terms employed by the Stoics - though the word synderesis, more correctly synteresis, or the guiding conscience, much emphasized by Caputi in his argument, is derived from the Christian mystics² and he uses images borrowed from Epictetus and from Seneca. Juvenal was a Stoic, though the angry vehemence of his satires reflect very little of the prescriptive Stoic calmness and imperturbability: Marston also may have felt that Stoic beliefs need not hinder the impassioned denunciation of vice.

Arnold Davenport argues equally seriously and thoughtfully for Marston's possible Calvinism. Marston's conviction of human corruption is absolute; he does not think it remediable by human means. Man is a poor, weak, and fallen creature; lust and pride are his most deep-rooted sins, and Marston expressly forbids him any reliance upon works, proposing instead a total submission on God and his freely given, unmerited grace: 'Sure Grace is

1. John Marston, Satirist (Ithaca, 1961), pp. 66-68

2. Ibid. p. 60.

infus'd/By diuine fauour, not by actions vs'd./Which is as permanent as heuens blisse/To them that haue it, then no habite is.' (SV, IV.117-20).

Indeed in this satire, 'Cras', Marston attacks the pride of the Stoics and points out the inconsistency of believing at the same time in absolute necessity and in individual capacity to acquire virtue. It should be noted that he here virtually identifies the philosophical thinking of the Stoics and the Cynics: both are guilty of presumption.

Marston could certainly have been exposed to Calvinist influence at the Middle Temple,¹ though the exact sources and proportions of it during the period of his residence there are impossible to determine. But while there is no reason to think Marston a neo-Stoic - his Stoic ideas are such as could be acquired from reading the ancient Stoic thinkers, and such reading was part of the intellectual equipment of most educated men - his doctrinal Calvinism may also be doubted. Belief in predestination and in unmerited grace are orthodox Christian ideas: and while Marston stresses these doctrines strongly enough in the satire 'Cras' (SV.IV) to suggest a Calvinist bias, he elsewhere professes different views, and in the plays, especially, comes close to adopting a libertine standpoint.

Given the satiric exaggerations and extreme views of Marston's poetry, and the necessary dispersal of his opinions amongst different characters in the plays, it is, I think, impossible to assign to Marston a fixed body of belief - except certain negative beliefs. It is not that Marston is reluctant to offer intellectual opinions: he offers many. But these, though seriously put forward, serve particular functions in their contexts, and are qualified by other tendencies in his writing. Marston ended his life as a priest, having, in the middle of a successful literary career, left London to study for the priesthood at St. Mary Hall in Oxford.² We do not know anything of Marston's later theological views, or even the reasons for his

1. Cf. P.J. Finkelpearl, John Marston of the Middle Temple, 62-4.

2. Most of the evidence regarding Marston's life was collected by R.E. Brettell, in John Marston, Dramatist: A Bibliography and Life (Diss. Oxford 1927) 2 vols. See Vol. ii. 286-8 for Marston at St. Mary Hall.

abandoning the drama. It is, in fact, not very useful to speculate on Marston's philosophical beliefs as a fixed body of thought; we should note, rather, that all the different opinions which he at different times professes could have existed together or successively in the mind of an alert, responsive writer in this troubled period.

What Marston does express in his satires, whatever the terms he chooses for it, is a radical pessimism, an unremitting sense of the sin and folly of man. This sense is often embodied in extreme pronouncements on the decay of morals and the public exhibition of vice; but shorn of its satiric dramatizations, this view is not eccentric or even unusual. Marston adopts the idiosyncratic tones of 'cynic' satire, employing its strongly worded misanthropy to communicate a consciousness of man's foulness and littleness. He uses the personality of Diogenes, I think, in order to convey his sense that the satiric world he presents must 'turn his Muse into a Timonist'.¹ Timon and Diogenes are two figures almost constantly present to satirists at the end of the century: both profess a settled hate of the human race which stems from absolute conviction of its depravity, and more strongly, its lapse into bestiality.

I have stressed the passages where Marston energetically exhibits the grotesque animals, the misshapen products of mythological lust and venery, which he chastises with his appropriately barbarous implements. Equally important, of course, are the places where, in more personal and individual tones, he laments man's loss of his form, which is his soul. Man's imprisonment in the body is total; the weight of his corruption is so great that Marston cannot even credit that the immortal soul can still inhabit such a body.

Our aduerse body, beeing earthly, cold,
Heauie, dull, mortall, would not long infold
A stranger inmate, that was backward still
To all his dungie, brutish, sensuall will: (SV. VIII.185-8)

1. The quotation is from Dekker's Satiromastix V.ii.195. Works, ed. F. Bowers (Cambridge, 1953) i. 379.

In essentials this melancholy conviction of human corruption is not very different from Chapman's; but Marston is writing explicit satire, his tones are more urgent, violent, and aggressive, and - most importantly, in the poetry at least there is nothing to balance this view. Chapman has at least room for the expression of an ideal, which, however agonizingly distant from present reality, can still be intellectually conceived and poetically expressed. Marston has the opportunity for such an expression in his plays, but apart from the antique Roman virtue celebrated in Sophonisba, there is nothing that could balance the pessimism of the satires. And Sophonisba, for all that it is praised by Eliot as the best of Marston's plays,¹ is devoted to the expression of a virtu literally suicidal: Stoic in the best sense, but also in the sense least possible in the world.

A final philosophical influence upon Marston, though ultimately the most disorderly and disruptive, may suggest a way of looking back on the inconsistencies of his early opinions. The Dutch Courtezan, written in 1605, shows the extensive use of an essay by Montaigne 'Upon some verses of Virgil' then newly translated by Florio.² It must be said that Marston has not hitherto shown any acquaintance with Montaigne; but he was clearly strongly affected by this essay, and attributes to Frevill in the play many of the commonsensical, but in contemporary terms libertine and even naturalist views propounded by Montaigne in the essay. Marston does not write with Montaigne's good humour or tolerance, and the play moves to an alarming and cruel climax before a finally happy resolution. Nevertheless, his adoption, in this play at least, of Montaigne's sceptical and hence libertine attitudes about human nature is an interesting development. Montaigne too moved from Stoic opinions

1. Selected Essays, ed. cit., p. 230.

2. See the discussion of this debt in G. Cross, 'Marston, Montaigne and Morality: The Dutch Courtezan Reconsidered', ELH, xxvi (1960), 30-43, and P.J. Finkelpearl, John Marston of the Middle Temple, pp. 198-201.

in his youth to scepticism in age; Marston's darker and gloomier works may present a similar development, but it must be noted that if he adopts Montaigne's libertinism, he may have been influenced by Montaigne's view of human nature - as expressed in the Apologie de Raimond Sebond - as essentially inconstant, changeable, cursed by its protean shifts from attitude to attitude, lacking rest and lacking nobility. Man is no better than the animals - he may be more unfortunate than they are.

In The Whipping of the Satyre, Weever's censure of Marston is phrased in an appropriately animal image, a parody of a famous Virgilian line 'nec vox hominem sonat: O fera certe'.¹ Weever attacks Marston's satiric imbalance, the feral savagery with which he denounces brutish vice. A defence of Marston could be provided from John Davies of Herford's epigram:

As conterfet coyning is put upon Alchymists,
So libelling lightly is set upon Satyrists:
But as the one makes Lead, Silver at least:
So the other would make a Man of a Beast.
By heat of strange Fires,²
They seeke their desires.

The strange fires of Marston's satire, however, perform only the reductive part of the alchemist's operation: they do not sublime or exalt his base coin.

1. The Whippur Pamphlets (1601) Pt. I, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool, 1951), p. 26.

2. 'Of Alchymists and Satirists', The Scourge of Folly, in Complete Works (London, 1878), i.5.

Epilogue: Jonson

Jonson's work would have demanded major treatment if I had continued this study substantially into the seventeenth century. The purpose of this brief epilogue is to suggest the directions such an investigation might have taken.

The idea of transformation is constantly present to Jonson's imagination, both in the plays and in the masques. The radical differences between these two parts of his work make it unusual for them to be considered together: the satirical dramatist is uncomfortable company for the high-minded neo-platonic deviser of compliments for the great. This is probably damaging to our sense of Jonson's primary interests, which are not so various or indefinable as, let us say, Shakespeare's. If the plays and the masques are not alike, they are, in their use of the image of transmutation, complementary.

The two plays most dominated by this image are probably Volpone (acted 1605) and The Alchemist (acted 1610). In other respects too they strongly resemble each other. The plot of The Alchemist provides, obviously, a perfect metaphor for the real or delusive transmutation of the self which engrosses Jonson's satiric imagination throughout his earlier plays: but alchemical metaphors operate everywhere in his work, and are extremely important in Volpone. The art of transmuting metals, like the more extravagant claims of Paracelsan medicine, mirrors in every detail of its frauds, deceptions, and grandiose dreams, men's anxiety to become or appear what they are not, their greed, folly and delusion. Above all the literature of alchemy mythologizes, for Jonson, men's inordinate desire for money, which to the imagination of the covetous becomes a means for extraordinary freedom, a release, indeed, of the Protean self. But while the characters seek to transform themselves, and lose themselves in Protean imaginings while pursuing the elixir, the wealth, the stone, that will make them young, rich and potent, Jonson's language also transforms them into a collection of monsters

or beasts, the freaks on show in Every Man Out or Bartholomew Fair, swollen and distorted by obsession or appetite. The result is a satiric inversion of the Renaissance dream of Protean freedom.

Volpone's hymn to gold (I. i. 3-27)¹ ironically converts alchemical terms to the uses of avarice: the traditional gold-Sol equation, and the parallel of macrocosm with microcosm, makes gold itself the anima mundi. Riches, like the philosophers' stone, make men what they will. Volpone, moreover, exists in a parody of the golden age: he uses no tilth or husbandry, 'no trade, no venter'. More successful than Subtle, he has been able to capitalize men's hopes, 'coyne 'hem into profit', while they seek to perform an alchemical operation upon him, to multiply their investments or 'engrosse' him whole.

This transmutation depends of course on Volpone's own capacity to be all things to all men: he is what his hopeful heirs presumptive wish him to be, and they are what he makes them. Like the pantomimic Proteus of Lucian's account,² Volpone is actually a quick change artist (and a dancer, having acted yong ANTINOVS', III.vii.162), slipping into each disguise as skilfully as any veteran of the stage. Grotesquely raddled and decayed for Corvino's benefit, he receives from Mosca the abuse that is a tribute to his art:

Those filthy eyes of yours, that flow with slime,
Like two frog-pits; and those same hanging cheeks,
Couer'd with hide, in stead of skin: (I. v. 57-59)

At the end of this scene Volpone's disguise has become 'mine owne shape', a façade he must preserve while adopting 'some disguise' to court Celia. In effect he has no shape of his own.

Volpone is a more Paracelsan play than The Alchemist, a fact emphasized in Volpone's disguise as the mountebank, undertaking 'by vertue of chymicall art' to restore youth, health and beauty: 'it is the poulder, that made VENVS a goddess' (II. ii. 235). His promises (as Peregrine notes, 'but Alchemy')

1. All citations are from the Herford & Simpson edition of Jonson's Works, already cited.

2. Lucian, The Dance, 19, in Works ed. A.M. Harmon, vol. v (Loeb, London, 1936)

are related to one persistent theme of the play, that of mortal decay ironically viewed as a condition of which gold is both outcome and remedy. Volpone's assumed and grotesque infirmities multiply his riches and incite the avarice of his 'heirs': there is an ironic parallel with the alchemical cycle which proceeds through putrefaction to exaltation, multiplication, and projection. In this respect Volpone is himself the alchemist's base matter, while Mosca - Jonson would have been conscious of this analogy - performs the functions of the philosophers' mercury: the parasite is master of Volpone's protean shifts, through various stages of degeneration, to the perfection of wealth.

At the same time, the result of this operation, for the alchemists, is not common gold but 'our gold', aurum philosophorum, a perfect metal that is not really distinct from the stone itself, which cures all defects of material substance and can thus - according to Paracelsan medicine - operate as a sovereign remedy. For the characters of the play the riches they dream of are an antidote to all physical infirmities. Corbaccio, himself an old man, brings Volpone aurum palpabile: 'true physic, this your sacred medicine, / No talk of opiates, to this great elixir', and the mountebank recommends it as a universal remedy: 'when a humide fluxe, or catarrhe, by the mutability of aire, falls from your head, into an arme, or shoulder, or any other part; take you a duckat, or your cecchine of gold, and apply it to the place affected' (II. ii. 90-93). Corbaccio hopes to regain his youth when he gains Volpone's riches:

flatters his age,
With confident belying it, hopes that he may
With charmes, like AESON, haue his youth restor'd:
And with these thoughts so battens, as if fate
Would be as easily cheated on, as he,
And all turnes/aire! (I. iv. 144-159)

Mosca, attributing to Celia the properties of the sovereign metal, 'Bright as your gold! and louely, as your gold!', makes another important connection, that between gold and sex. As Mosca puts it to Corvino, Celia

is to remedy Volpone's sickness and raise her husband's expectations of wealth: Volpone's self-magnifying lust invests her with the hyperbolic virtue of the 'magisterium, our great worke, the stone':

thy beauties miracle;
'Tis thy great worke: that hath, not now alone,
But sundry times, rays'd me, in seuerall shapes,
. . .
In varying figures, I would haue contended
With the blue PROTEVS, or the horned Floud. (II.vii.146-153)

In this, the most important scene of the play, Volpone's imagination - like that of Mammon in the later play - loses itself in a dream of what infinite wealth and its concomitant, potency, can bring. That this should take the form of Ovidian transformations is important. Volpone's whole existence, of course, is acting; his survival depends on his capacity for disguise. But his histrionic imagination, at this point, transcends the subterfuges of his trade: lust, gluttony and avarice, infinitely magnified and feeling the promise of infinite satisfaction, create a world of free, voluntary and pleasurable metamorphoses:

Whil'st, we, in changed shapes, act OVIDS tales,
Thou, like EVROPA now, and I like IOVE,
Then I like MARS, and thou like ERYCINE,
So, of the rest, till we haue quite run through
And weary'd all the fables of the gods.
Then will I haue thee in more moderne formes,
. . .
And I will meet thee, in as many shapes:
Where we may, so, trans-fuse our wandring soules,
Out at our lippes, and score vp summes of pleasures,
(III.vii.221-235)

Freedom is equated with transformation. Through the alchemy of money and sex, Volpone sees himself as being released into a state of absolute flux, in which he can satisfy all the libertine impulses of his nature through successive metamorphoses. In The Alchemist, it is the philosophers' stone itself that is to procure to Mammon the substance of his grotesquely refined visions of physical pleasure. Volpone's promises to Celia of exotic food, jewels and costume plays are even further magnified in Mammon's speech to Surly:

my glasses,
 Cut in more subtile angles, to disperse,
 And multiply the figures, as I walke
 Naked betweene my succubae. My mists
 I'le haue of perfume, vapor'd 'bout the roome,
 To loose our selues in; (The Alchemist, II.ii.45-50)

Mammon, interrogating Face about the 'colours' he has seen in the furnace, 'the pale citron, the greene lyon, the crow,/The peacocks taile, the plumed swan .../the flower, the sanguis agni' (II.ii.26-8), dreams of an even more wonderful universal transmutation. He will at his pleasure turn the age to gold, create a world of supremely gross refinements, and satisfy an Herculean lust. The satirical humour of Subtle and Face sets him to court, not a Celia, but Doll Tearsheet: but this courtship too is to be conducted in golden terms: 'Raine her as many showers, as IOVE did drops/Vnto his DANAE'. Subtle's alchemical transmutations are merely instrumental; Mammon hopes for a more comprehensive metamorphosis through the power of the stone, a transformation of self and world.

Mammon is only capable of imagining this as a world of enormously magnified physical apprehensions, of ballooning sensuality; 'a perpetuitie/ Of life, and lust'. The stone is also an elixir, capable of making him like Solomon, or Hercules, 'to encounter fiftie a night'. The other sense of stone, often employed in a bawdy joke against alchemists,¹ is absorbed into this rapturous vision, as into the play's larger associations of money with sex:

Where I spie
 A wealthy citizen, or rich lawyer,
 Haue a sublim'd pure wife, vnto that fellow
 I'll send a thousand pound, to be my cuckold. (II.ii.53-6)

Mammon is capable of providing the usual alchemical interpretations of classical myths of metamorphosis: 'MEDEAS charmes ... IOVES shower, the boone of MIDAS, ARGUS eyes' (see Appendix II), but finally he is interested only in a personal fantasy, a mythologization of his own appetites, through

¹. See the passage cited from Lyly's Gallathea (V.i. 18-26), p. 122 *supra*.

the protean powers of gold.

At the same time, Mammon's dreams of setting foot 'in nouo orbe' parody the Elizabethan hope of infinite riches to be gained from the New World, the expectation, part delusive and part substantial, of argosies of gold. Another kind of parody is provided by Subtle's Puritan clients. Tribulation, like so many of the other characters in the play, is adept at using alchemical processes as a mirror of personal concerns. The spiritual transformation which was seen as the true secret and end of alchemy by such writers as Dorn, Khunrath, and John Dee¹ is travestied by Tribulation's 'pious' hope for Subtle's transformation: 'When as the worke is done, the stone is made,/This heate of his may turne into a zeale,/And stand vp for the beauteous discipline' (III. i.30-2). This expectation of course is superficial: what Tribulation and Ananias are really about is gold, money to bribe 'the ciuill magistrate' and bring themselves to power. In spite of Subtle's promises regarding the stone's divine powers 'the art of Angels, Natures miracle' (III.ii.103), the Brethren are more interested in becoming 'temporall lords'.

Although, of course, Subtle's fraudulent piety, his cozening experiments, and the general greed and concupiscence of his clients satirize the scientific and spiritual claims of the alchemists, the play is not really about alchemy at all. As in Volpone, Jonson's interest is in human avarice and self-delusion: most of all, in men's hopes of becoming what they are not, their pursuit of social mobility, power, status, and wealth. Whether amongst the decaying Venetian nobility or amongst London citizens, Jonson presents a world on the make. Satirically anatomizing the fluidity of contemporary society, and the secret of that fluidity, money, The Alchemist brings its characters together in their common pursuit of the means to a transformation of their various selves. The young druggist, the churlish youth, the self-seeking Puritan, the epicurean knight, Face, Subtle, Doll, Lovewit, self-deluded or deluding opportunists, are moreover involved in all kinds of

1. See Chapter II above: Alchemy.

disguises and costume-deceptions, pretending to be what they are not.

Volpone and Mammon, as we have seen, dream of being released through the products of material transmutation into a world of free and pleasurable metamorphoses, a world of Protean possibility brilliantly conceived through a mist of lust, gluttony and avarice. The dream is betrayed by the corrupt vision: but more to the point, the world of the comedies itself reveals that what is actually available to man is a mere shiftiness, a slipping on and off of disguises. The two most truly 'mercurial' characters in the plays, Mosca and Face, exemplify by the very brilliance of their plot-devices how completely the Protean powers of Renaissance man have been reduced by Jonson to mere cunning. Mosca apprehends this quality of his with proper self-regard:

I could skip
Out of my skin, now, like a subtill snake,
I am so limber. O! Your Parasite
Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
Not bred 'mongst clods, and clot-poules, here on earth.
(Volpone, III.i.5-9)

Revelling in his capacity to be here 'And there, and here, and yonder, all at once;/Present to any humour, all occasion;/And change a visor, swifter, then a thought!' (III.i.27-9), Mosca in fact embodies a deviousness no less impressive than Volpone's own. Moreover, it is a purer embodiment: Mosca has no personality, we never know him as we know Volpone.

A harsher satiric judgement is explicit in the naming conventions of the play. Here, as in Marston, we have the satirist as zoologist. The fable of Aesop upon which Volpone is based is brilliantly converted to a means of moral exposure: the vulture, crow and raven converging upon the 'dying' fox, while the fly buzzes overhead, becomes increasingly the characters' perception of each other, while the disguised Peregrine puts the parrot-like Sir Politic into a tortoiseshell, and even the stupid Lady Would-be is 'my shee-wolfe'. As most commentators have noted, the play is full of images of animals, either as victims, predators, or symbols of stupidity. Men are consistently dehumanized: towards the end of the play the characters are referred to as

fox or vulture or fly rather than by their 'names' - and the other images, of rapacious eating or drinking, disease, torture, reinforce this sense of a world inhabited by monsters and beasts.

The skit produced by Nang and Androgyno in the second scene of the play, under Mosca's direction, wittily reduces this perception of society to a Pythagorean parable. The idea of this parallels Donne's unfinished Metempsychosis, but Jonson's version is much more sharply focussed on degeneration. Pythagoras' own soul, received by him through various transmigrations from Apollo, passes in succession to a whore, a philosopher, through the different estates of society, to ox, ass, camel, mule, goat, and badger, and then to the still more debased figures of 'reformed' society, until it comes to rest in the hermaphrodite Androgyno. This state is proved to be the most blessed. Jonson is obviously drawing on Lucian's satire, and on the popular form of the paradoxical encomium. But he is not actually, as Lucian does in The Cock, or Erasmus does in The Praise of Folly,¹ using paradox to enforce a moral lesson. His purpose is descriptive: human folly and human degeneration into bestiality or deformity is precisely what is to be the subject of his play, and although these vices are severely punished at the end, there is little hope that moral lessons are being learnt. Instead, vice is studied:

Let all, that see these vices thus rewarded,
Take heart, and loue to study 'hem. Mischiefes feed
Like beasts, till they be fat, and then they bleed.
(V.xii.149-51)

Similar reductions are available in The Alchemist, chiefly through the language of alchemy itself. Subtle uses one of the most popular analogies for the alchemical process, while referring also to the process itself, when he tells Face that he has taken him out of dung to sublime and exalt him (I.i.64-71). Images of excrement and putrefaction - both necessary to the alchemist - are multiplied. Surly attacks the outlandish terms and filthy

1. For Jonson's debt to these two works throughout this episode, see Herford & Simpson, Works, ix.691-4.

materials of the art 'pisse, and egge-shells, womens terms, mans bloud, /
 Haire o' the head, burnt clouts, chalke, merds, and clay' (II.iii.194-5).¹
 For all their hoped-for transmutations, the characters remain in darkness,
 in the alchemical state represented by putrefaction, nigredo.

Jonson's characters do not, of course, seek spiritual transformation. What they are after is some miraculous alteration of status, wealth or possessions which will remove all constraint from appetite, release them — at least in the imagination of a Volpone or a Mammon — into the prospect of varied and infinite satisfactions. This alteration is imagined as metamorphosis: as Mosca says of his patron's gold

It transformes
 The most deformed, and restores 'hem louely,
 As't were the strange poeticall girdle. IOVE
 Could not inuent, t'himselfe, a shroud more subtile,
 To passe ACRISIVS guardes. (Volpone, V.ii.100-104)

Unceasingly, they are deceived by the facility of certain kinds of material transmutation — the ease of disguise, the currency of money — into believing that they too can become, as it were, current. This belief is contradicted finally by the strictness of the plans Jonson has for them: the formal rigour, underlying the immense human and verbal variety, of the comic satire. The rigour of this dispensation tends to fix the characters in the deformities they have grown into: they have no hope of change. Volpone at the end of the play is put into irons to acquire the deformities he had feigned: his suppleness, like Mosca's, is to be removed through perpetual imprisonment and imposed diseases. More absolutely, Jonson's view of all his characters is itself rigid and unalterable: they are fixed because he has fixed them.

The end of The Alchemist appears to be more charitable than that of Volpone, though it is certain that Jonson's view of man here is darker, in the respect that there are no good characters in The Alchemist. Nevertheless, Subtle is allowed to evaporate with his dubious profits, leaving behind him

1. Cf. Chaucer, The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, 253-4.

only the filth of his materials: and Face and Lovewit are reasonably better off: they have profited by experience, capitalized it.

In his satire Jonson does not view human nature as noble - perhaps not even as capable of nobility - but finally, like Montaigne, he does grant to it a certain intrinsic value. This is best seen in the late Bartholomew Fair. Jonson here returns to the loose structure of his early humour comedies, and even to the freaks displayed so brilliantly in Every Man Out. Here, however, the freakishness of the world, its madness and oddity, its unredeemed physicality, are to be accepted and not despised. There is no Macilente in Bartholomew Fair, and even Adam Overdo is reconciled to the amorality of the Fair's goings-on at the last. The play's supreme images, as Rhodes emphasizes,¹ are those of fatness, pregnancy and food.

It would be too simple to say that Jonson here asserts Nature's triumph over human ambitions and over the distorting frame of moral satire, but this is partly what happens. The moral freaks who visit the Fair and the physical freaks who inhabit it present a view of men as inescapably flawed, inconstant, and deformed: misshapen through appetite, warped by humour, and yet triumphantly themselves. Corporeal grossness, psychological imbalance, can neither be rejected nor cured. Again, the view of the characters, essentially, is determined and fixed: men have been changed, altered to grotesque proportions, but they cannot be changed - or change themselves - further. Nevertheless, this fixity is overlaid by the extraordinary kaleidoscope of the Fair itself, its sheer abundance of physical vigour and human variety. The world appears a shifting, various and fascinating place simply because there is so much in it.

Bartholomew Fair is a late play and an odd one: its view of man is at once the most reductive and the most affirmative in all Jonsonian comedy. Jonson is using, here, a late Renaissance paradox, successfully exploited by Montaigne and by Rabelais: he asserts the predominance of man's lower or baser appetites, which threaten to engulf and transform him, and make him a

1. Elizabethan Grotesque, pp. 141-55.

grotesque and ignoble creature. But in doing so he exhibits - and develops - such an interest in him, in this very freakishness, oddity and changeability, that these qualities become positive ones, no less a mark of uniqueness, and a basis for a truer assessment of human nature. The comic presentation of these qualities exaggerates and isolates them, but it nevertheless bases itself on a sort of reality, rather than on the necessarily frustrated Renaissance dream of potentiality.

I shall make my points regarding the masques more briefly. They approach the problem in different terms, and propose a solution which cannot enter the world of the comedies. Transformation in the masque - not simply in Jonson's masques - is a structural device. The change of the scene promises an alteration in human conditions. Structurally, the masque is able to represent the process of transformation only by splitting it up: the antimasque is replaced by the masque, darkness by light, one set of figures or scenes by another. The visual metaphor, however - especially if we think of the stage machinery, the marvellous sets and contrivances provided for Jonson by Inigo Jones - must have been supremely effective.

Perhaps because of this precondition of structure, masques are frequently about physical metamorphosis as well. Frances Yates discusses in detail¹ one of the great Renaissance entertainments, Beaujoyeulx's Ballet comique de la Reine, performed for the Joyeuse wedding in 1581: this used the myth of Circe. Drawing on Comtes' physical and moral explanations of the myth, the Ballet comique shows corruption being overcome both on the natural and the spiritual level: and the final agent of victory, although the war is fought by Jupiter, Minerva and the virtues, is royal power as represented in the audience. Nothing so elaborate as the Ballet comique is to be found in sixteenth-century England, but we can note that its premises are basic to the court masque wherever we find it. Essentially, the masque refers itself outwards,

1. The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century, Stud. Warburg Inst. xv (London, 1947), pp. 237-251.

to the presiding figure in whose honour it is performed. We may think, for example, of the Gray's Inn performance at court (1595) of Proteus and the Adamantine Rock, where the defeat of Proteus, a symbol of mutability, is accomplished by the simple presence of the sovereign.¹ When the sovereign is not present, the structure of course can be freer: William Browne's Inner Temple masque of Circe (1614)² presents us with the Homeric goddess as truly mistress of her stage, subject to no external constraint, and transforming Ulysees' companions back to men at the close in an act of mercy.

In Jonson's masques, transformation enters into a complex of changes defined by images of light and darkness, white and black, day and night, order and chaos, deformity and form - the masque and the antimasque. The pattern is that of deformity or darkness being cancelled by royal light and favour. Interestingly, Jonson is seen adopting his very conceits, not simply their solutions, from the requirements of royalty: the Masque of Blacknesse (1605), for example, uses the conceit of the daughters of Niger being transformed to fairness ' (Because it was her Majesties will, to have them Black-mores first) the invention was derived by me.'³ The queen's pleasure had again to be satisfied in the physical transformations of the Masque of Beautie (1608).⁴ Jonson's continuous awareness of his audience and its political or social requirements is to be seen in virtually all the masques involving metamorphosis: the Masque of Queenes (1609), The Golden Age Restor'd (1615) and The Gipsies Metamorphosed (1621). This last work contains satire of an implicit kind, in its reflection upon Buckingham and his relations, a ruffianly crew until they are transformed by royal association. In spite of the 'rowdy good humor'⁵ of this piece, however, and although Jonson's masques

1. Ed. by W. Greg, in Gesta Grayorum, 1688 (Malone Society, Oxford, 1914).

2. See The Poems of William Browne, ed. G. Goodwin (London, 1894), ii.165-90.

3. Works, vi, p. 169.

4. Ibid., p. 181.

5. S. Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque (Cam. Mass. 1965), p.80.

are very various, the form is essentially decorous. There are certain absolutes which must be accommodated, and the pattern cannot be varied.

It may be this very predictability of form, the absolute precondition of a well-turned compliment, that allows Jonson to put into this rigid frame what he had excluded from his comedies: the fluid ambitions of human nature reaching their hoped-for perfection. The process of the masques is that of positive metamorphosis: the royal favour which accomplishes it is, in the arbitrary force of its operation, like divine grace. The transformation achieved is not religious - Jonson is notably unaffected by religion - but it is spiritual. Jonson, we may say, enjoys placing these ideas in the ephemeral and external vehicles of the masques precisely because the ideas thus remain ideal: they need not suffer the damaging weight of life in the comic world. I do not mean by this to imply that Jonson takes transformation less seriously in the masques: these are some of his most carefully thought out, complex, and serious works. Metamorphosis is integral to them: it is symbolic here in a way that it cannot be anywhere else. With remarkable clarity and point, it can be used to demonstrate the possibility of betterment, a change in the human condition which restores innocence, integrity and happiness, and to present an absolute identity of inward virtue with outward form.

Jonson is a good point on which to conclude this study because he presents, in the two parts of his work, the two images of metamorphosis I have been trying to trace throughout, the positive one and the negative one. In the comedies, man's protean qualities are of a merely petty kind: he is capable of some superficial shifts and devices, and is changeable and inconstant in temperament, but he is more seriously flawed by some defect of humour, vice or obsession which removes from him all possibility of real change for the better. In the masques, metamorphosis is a positive process: it actually, and miraculously, accomplishes extraordinary alterations of spirit and state. The change achieved is complete and fundamental: evil

becomes good, defect perfection, vice virtue. Jonson is not required here to examine whether such alterations are in fact available to man: he is presenting the process in its purity.

Yet, at the close of my discussion of two of Jonson's plays, I said that Bartholomew Fair provided a further, and potentially more interesting development. For all that the pattern of the masques is so rigid and self-determining, there is one I would like to place beside Bartholomew Fair, and that is Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists (1616). Here too we have images of deformity ('the second Antimasque of imperfect creatures, with helmes of lymbecks on their heads'¹) and of constraint and perversion succeeded by a triumphant display of form and the nobility of a reinstated Nature:

Nature is motions mother, as she is your's.
The spring, whence order flowes, that all directs,
And knits the causes with th' effects.²

Nevertheless, the emphasis of this masque is not purely on this pattern of deformity yielding to form, but upon the volatile and long-suffering spirit endlessly tortured and imprisoned by human endeavours, Mercury. Mercury is finally allowed his proper place by Nature, to reach a natural kind of perfection, not one forced or flawed by art. Jonson would have been fully conscious of the analogies of this alchemical allegory with the plight of mercurial man.

1. Works, vii, p. 414.

2. Ibid, p. 416.

Appendix I

Spenser, the Tabula Cebetis, and Vives

The frontispiece to Thomas P. Roche's The Kindly Flame (Princeton, 1964) reproduces the title-page of Conrad Gesner's Lexicon Graeco-Latinum, published at Basel in 1545. The illustrated border is by Hans Holbein the younger, and presents an allegory of human life. Roche did not recognize this as a representation of the Picture (Πίναξ) or Tabula attributed to the Theban philosopher Cebes, the friend of Socrates, but he rightly points out its interest and vividness; in this he is echoed by J.E. Hankins, the best of recent commentators on Spenser.¹ At the foot of the picture are a crowd of naked babies holding out their hands to an old man, Genius, who presides at the gateway to the first of three walled enclosures which show the course of human life. This scene vividly recalls Spenser's description of Genius presiding at the gates to the Garden of Adonis.

A thousand thousand naked babes attend
About him day and night, which doe require
That he with fleshly weedes would them attire:
(F.Q.III.vi.32, 3-5)

Warton and Upton, Spenser's earliest commentators, had already noted the influence of the Tabula upon Spenser's conception of the Geniuses at the entrances to the Garden of Adonis and the Bower of Bliss.²

The Tabula Cebetis, which is a Stoic allegory praised by Lucian³ and perhaps belonging to his period, describes a picture 'very strange, conteining in it certaine fables and stories'⁴. A crowd of men stand in front of a triple enclosure (human life); at the gate an old man, identified as Genius, instructs the entrants. Immediately within the first circle sits a beautiful woman, called Deceit⁵; she compels all who enter to drink from a cup she holds, containing

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1. See discussion in Roche, ed. cit. p. 121; and Hankins, pp. 35 and 269.
 2. See Var FQ II. pp. 374, 380; III. p. 256.
 3. Lucian, Rhetorum Praeceptor, 6, in Works, iv, ed. + tr. A. M. Harmon (Loeb, London, 1925), p. 14-1.
 4. The Table of Cebes the Philosopher [and other works] trans. Syr Frances Poyngz (London, ?1530), sig. A2^r. All quotations are from this translation.
 5. In Holbein's woodcut, and in other pictorial representations of this subject, the figures are identified by their Latin names, Deceit being called Suadela. These Latin names are probably taken from the Latin version of the Πίναξ, the Tabula Cebetis translated by Lodovico Odasso, printed by Singrenius at Vienna in 1519 and by H. Viator at Cracow, 1524.

Error or Ignorance. The entrants then proceed upon an allegorical journey through the three circles, being waylaid by many temptations and vices (the gifts of Fortune, Incontinence, Luxury, Avarice, False Learning), but if they persevere, they may come to truth and true learning, and enter at last the third circle, where they are instructed by the Virtues and crowned by Felicity. They can then return to ordinary life, but secure in knowledge, fortitude, and peace of mind. The old man who expounds this picture, a votive offering in the Temple of Saturn, to the narrator and his friends, concludes with a lengthy exposition of the nature of true knowledge, good and bad learning, the danger of trusting in Fortune, and how life may be both good and evil.

The Tabula was a book commonly used in Renaissance schools, usually one of the first Greek books to be read in the upper forms.¹ Milton, in the seventeenth century, is still recommending it, to 'win them early to the love of virtue and true labour ere any flattering seducement or vain principle seize them wandering, some easy and delightfull book of Education would be read to them; whereof the Greeks have store, as Cebes, Plutarch, and other Socratic discourses'.² It had been translated into Latin³, and was twice translated into English by the early seventeenth century: Poyngz' translation was professedly for his younger brothers⁴.

The British Museum has a very early woodcut illustration of the Tabula, dated 1519 and published by Hieronymus Vietor at Cracow (as a full-page woodcut, not a title-border)⁵. The entrants at the gate (unlike Holbein's naked children) are of all ages and various nationalities, some in Turkish, Hungarian and Slavonic costume. Vietor published the Latin Tabula Cebetis in 1524.

Later representatives of the Tabula, in woodcuts and painting, are described in

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1. T.W. Baldwin, William Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke (Urbana, 1944), I.348, 417, 535; the curriculum (c. 1570-76) of Rivington School prescribes the Tabula Cebetis as the first Greek book in the upper school it is prescribed for Norwich Grammar School, 1566, and is amongst James VI's schoolbooks.
 2. Of Education, in Prose Works, iii (Yale edn., New Haven, 1959) 383-4; quoted by Baldwin, I.p.54C.
 3. See above, note 1.
 4. The Table of Cebes, ed. cit. sig. Al^v.
 5. Campbell Dodgson, Catalogue of Early German and Flemish Woodcuts preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Vol.II (London, 1911) pp. 271-2. See also W.H. Willshire, A Descriptive Catalogue of Early Prints in the British Museum, Vol.I (London, 1879), pp. 306-8.

Schmitt's Reallexikon¹: almost all are indebted to Holbein.

Holbein's remarkable design, perhaps inspired by Erasmus, exists in four versions, first seen in books published in Basel around 1521-2, by Froben, Cratander, and Curio.² There are slight differences between the versions, but they agree in all essentials. The two most important books bearing this design upon the title-page are Erasmus' New Testament (Froben, Basel 1522) and St Augustine's De civitate Dei with the commentary of Juan Luis Vives (Froben, Basel 1522). [See Fig. 2]

It is this latter book which I would like to place in the context of Spenser's reading. It has only once been mentioned in connexion with Spenser's studies, by E.C. Knowlton who cites Vives' note on Genius;³ and its remarkable title-page border has escaped attention. I think it very likely that Spenser had seen the Holbein design and was remembering it when he wrote of the naked babies 'attending' on Genius in the Garden. He would probably have read the Tabula at school, and would certainly have known it by the time he left university. The pictorial representation may have stuck in his memory. But it is particularly interesting if he saw Holbein's design while reading one of the great humanist commentaries, that of J.L. Vives on The City of God.

This was a very important Renaissance book, beautifully printed by Froben and embellished with further page-borders and carved initials by Holbein. It was dedicated to Henry VIII of England, who replied graciously to Vives, 'doubting' whom he should most congratulate:

either you, by whose so learned labour, so choise a Worke is finished; or Saint Augustine, who long time imperfect and obscure, is now at last brought from darknesse to light, and restored to his ancient integrity; or all posterity, whome these your Commentaries shall infinitely profit.⁴

A later editor of the De civitate Dei, Hieremias Mylius, speaks admiringly

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1. Otto Schmitt et al., Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunst-Geschichte (Stuttgart, 1954), Vol.III. cols. 383-90.
 2. Die Malerfamilie Holbein in Basel: Ausstellung im Kunstmuseum Basel zur Fünfhundertjahrfeier der Universität Basel (Basel, 1960) pp. 300-2.
 3. E.C. Knowlton, 'The Genii of Spenser' SP xxv (1928), 439-56.
 4. 'From our Court at Greenwich, the XXIIII of January M.D.XXIII', in the translation by John Healey of Saint Augustine of the Citie of God: with the learned comments of Io. Lodovicus Vives (2nd. ed. London, 1620) sig. 4r.

of St. Augustine's greatest editor and his most learned commentator:

Inter hos non postremum locum obtinent, viri acerrimo iudicio & doctrina incomparabili praediti Erasmus Rotædamus, & Lodovicus Vives: quorum ille inter alios Patres integrum Augustinum, hic vero nosce de Ciuitate Dei libros quasi ab orco reuocauit, & doctissimis Commentariis illustrauit.¹

Vives' commentary brings to bear upon the great mass of miscellaneous information and doctrine in The City of God a variety of citation from classical and patristic writers. The most notable and exhaustive comments are on various aspects of Platonic, Stoic and Neoplatonic thought in the early books, and those in Book XVIII, providing virtually a mythological compendium. Indeed, at the start of Book XVIII Vives complains eloquently of the obscurity and difficulty of his material, in terms recalling the travails of the wayfaring knights and ladies in The Faerie Queene:

Quod si ita est, quanto aequius erit mihi ueniam dari, si quando forsan aut casu quippiam, aut ignorantia in auium aliquod concessi, aut uillas aliquas & pagos ignobiles homines, que obscuros praeterij nec salutatos, nec uisos, profectus per loca ut plurimum deserta, nullis subnotata signis, inuentis per quam raris, e quibus quaererem, aut quibus ducibus uterer.²

Robert Ellrodt, and most critics after him, have stressed Spenser's dependence upon Augustinian notions in the Garden of Adonis canto.³ They refer mainly to one particular Augustinian theory, that of the rationes seminales of which the Garden may be seen as the storehouse; but it is indisputable that such an enormous compilation of classical ideas and Christian doctrine as The City of God would have influenced Spenser in many other particulars. Vives' notes are a further source of curious learning. The 'seminal reasons' are mentioned in The City of God, but of course Spenser would have had to know the De Genesi ad litteram for any coherent conception of them. In the Pembroke College Library at Cambridge is the 10 volume edition by Erasmus of St. Augustine's Opera published at Basel in 1528-9, of which Vol.V is replaced by the 1522 De ciuitate Dei with Vives'

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1. D. Aur. Augustini Hipponensis episcopi, De ciuitate Dei libri XXII ad priscae uenerandaeque uetustatis exemplaria iam iterum post uirum unde quaque doctissimum Ioannem Lodovicum Vivem summo studio collati, ac eiusdem Commentariis eruditissimis illustrati (Basel, 1570), sig. 1^r.
 2. Vives, ed. cit. p. 550, on De ciuitate Dei, XVIII.i.
 3. Robert Ellrodt, Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser (Geneva, 1960), p.77ff

commentary and the Holbein title-border. De Genesi ad litteram appears in Vol.III of this edition. These volumes appear to have been given to the library by one Thos. Patenson about 1545¹, and may have been the very ones which Spenser read.

I do not think it possible to establish for the Vives commentary the sort of indisputable verbal links with passages in The Faerie Queene which Lotspeitch does for Comes' Mythologiae.² This is because, although I believe Spenser to have used this book at Cambridge and remembered it, it probably would not have been to hand, as Comes was, when he was writing his poem. Nevertheless, it is likely to have been the source of many ideas and statements of belief in The Faerie Queene.

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1. I am grateful to Mr. W.S.Hutton, Assistant Librarian of Pembroke College, Cambridge, for this information.
 2. H.G. Lotspeitch, Classical Mythology in Spenser's poetry (Princeton Studies in English ix, Princeton, 1932).

Appendix II

Jason's fleece: the source of Sir Epicure Mammon's allegory

Jonson's close reading of alchemical texts and his accurate use of them in The Alchemist scarcely needs further confirmation. The labours of C.H. Herford and the Simpsons, and earlier of Edgar Hill Duncan,¹ have identified several works to which he is substantially indebted: in particular, Arnold of Villanova's Rosarium Philosophorum, Martin Del Rio's Disquisitiones Magicae (Louvain 1599-1600) and Robertus Vallensis' De Veritate & Antiquitate Artis Chemicæ (Paris, 1561: printed in Lazarus Zetzner's collection, the Theatrum Chemicum of 1602).

I would like to add another piece of alchemical writing to this list of definite sources: the preface by Chrysochonus Polydorus² to a collection of treatises entitled De Alchemia and published from Nuremberg in 1541 and 1545. This collection contains the Latin works of Geber, and, among other texts, the Speculum Alchemiae attributed to Roger Bacon and the Tabula Smaragdina with Hortulanus' commentary. As Jonson's editors have noted, certain lines in The Alchemist appear to be derived from Geber's Summa perfectionis metallorum.³

Chrysochonus, in his preface, asserts that the ancient poets treat enigmatically of the philosophers' stone under a veil of fable. He cites Suidas' explanation (Lexicon, s.v. ΔÉΡΝΣ) of the golden fleece sought by the Argonauts as an alchemical treatise written on vellum, concerning the making of gold. He then goes on to offer a detailed alchemical interpretation of the whole story. Jonson borrows this allegory for the speech of Sir Epicure Mammon in Act II scene i of The Alchemist, where Mammon is attempting by various means to convince Surly of the truth and antiquity of the chemical art:

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1. Ben Jonson, Works ed.cit. x.46-116; E.H. Duncan, 'Jonson's Alchemist and the Literature of Alchemy', PMLA lxi (1946), 699-710.
 2. This must be a pseudonym -- an apt one for an alchemist.
 3. Works x.82, on The Alchemist II.iii.183.

I haue a peece of IASONS fleece, too,
 Which was no other, then a booke of alchemie,
 Writ in large sheepe-skin, a good fat ram-vellam.
 Such was PYTHAGORA's thigh, PANDORA's tub;
 And, all that fable of MEDEAS charmes,
 The manner of our works: The Bulls, our fornace,
 Still breathing fire; our argent-viue, the Dragon:
 The Dragons teeth, mercury sublimate,
 That keeps the whitenesse, hardnesse, and the biting:
 And they are gather'd, into IASON's helme,
 (Th'alembeke) and then sow'd in MARS his feld,
 And, thence, sublim'd so often, till they are fix'd.
 Both this, th'Hesperian garden, CADMVS storie,

.....

All abstract riddles of our stone.

(II.i.89-104)

I give the appropriate passages from Chrysogonus, italicising the lines Jonson uses. Chrysogonus begins by translating Suidas' explanation:

Id est, Hoc autem non ut fictitie dicitur, sed liber erat, in uelleribus conscriptus, continens quomodo per Chemiam fieri debeat aurum ... Caeterum, periculosa nauigatio, difficultatem indagandae materiae lapidis philosophorum (ut uocant) indicat. ea, quia telluris uicem obtinet, & metallica est, a Marté metallorum deo, Ager martius appellatur: & quia in igne purganda, praeparanda, & perficienda est, ut sit idonea ad recipiendum semen, fingitur a Tauris ignem spirantibus exaranda & excolenda. Hi Tauri fornaces sunt, qui nisi rite constructi fuerint, & ignem continuum debita quantitate exhibuerint, aut materia corrumpitur, aut uasa destruuntur, & artifex odore noxio afflatur, aut incendio etiam perit. Deinde Draco peruigil Argentum uiuum est. Dentes Draconis, sunt Mercurius sublimatus, eo quid eboris candorem, ossium duriciem, & incredibilem mordacitatem, non sine ueneno possideat. Is dum sublimatur, in uase uitreo, galeae simillimo (Arabes alembicum uocant) excipitur: itaque dentes Draconis Iasoni in Galea afferuntur, ut seminis eos loco in agrum martium spargat. Nam Mercurius ex ea terra toties sublimari debet, donec in ea figatur. ... Porro quia idem lapis philosophorum, etiam corporibus humanis mederi, eaque sana et incolumia usque ad uitae extremum conseruare dicitur, ideo Medea, patrem Iasonis in iuentutem restituere fingitur.¹ Hanc artem, & horti Hesperidum, & Cadmi fabula insinuant, & Cadmus immensis opibus ex ea quaesitis, Thebas Aegyptias condidit.²

The other mythological references in Sir Epicure's speech ('PYTHAGORA's thigh, PANDORA's tub; ... IOVE'S shower, the boone of MIDAS, ARGVS eyes, / BOCCACE his Demogorgon') are accounted for by Herford and the Simpsons out of Robertus Valtensis and Del Rio: Chrysogonus supplies the rest of the allegory. It should of course have been noticed that both Apollonius³ and Ovid compare the bulls to furnaces; Chrysogonus may have been influenced by these Ovidian lines:

1. Another example of the effects of 'Medea's charmes'.

2. De Alchemia (Nuremberg, 1541), 'Chrysogoni Polydori Praefatio ad Lectorem', aa3^r-v.

3. Apollonius Rhodius, Argonautica III.1299-1303.

utque solent pleni resonare camini,
aut ubi terrena silices fornace soluti
conciunt ignem liquidarum adspergine aquarum,
pectora sic intus clausas volventia flammis
gutturisque usta sonant;

(Metamorphoses VII.106-110)

Chrysogonus' detailed and careful allegory is an interesting example of the alchemists' desire to read their endeavours into the fables of the ancients. This tendency is by no means remarkable: it is a product both of the alchemical fondness for veiled and figurative terms, and a long tradition of elaborate allegory of classical myth. Barthélemy Aneau, in his important allegorising preface to the Trois Liures de la Metamorphose d'Ouide, refers to Chrysogonus in a dismissive parenthesis:

Ie ne l'ay aussi adaptée à l'Alchimie (ce que sont aucuns comme Suidas Chrysogon Polydor & autres. La conquete de la toison d'or) pource que ie confesse volontiers ne l'entendre pas, & n'ay leu ancien auteur Grec ne Latin qui en tel sens l'ayt prinse, & ne say si Ouide, & les vieux Grecz d'ond il a deduict son oeuvre, iamais y penserent.¹

1. Trois Liures, ed.cit. c5^r.

List of works consulted

This is a selective list. It does not include standard works of reference, works cited only incidentally in the text but not used extensively, and secondary works which do not contribute to or affect my discussion. I have been particularly selective in the case of secondary works on Spenser. On the other hand, I have included works cited only briefly in the thesis or not at all, but to which I feel indebted for information or ideas.

The List is divided into the following categories:

(A) Manuscripts

(B) Dissertations

(C) Printed works:

(i) Primary - including Renaissance commentaries.

(ii) Secondary - (a) books (b) articles

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