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The Paradoxes of Idealism: Book Two of *The Faerie Queene*

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In writing about temperance Spenser chose to follow the plan of Book One in Book Two. He had shown the mischief that besets the self-conscious believer who is so easily deflected from faith into melancholy combat in its name. Now, counting on the reader's experience with spiritual pride, he could magnify this concern, demonstrating the very source of the problem of religious idealism or indeed of any virtue when it is exercised blindly as an abstraction. The source of the problem is the morally independent self, or, precisely, the self-conscious being who campaigns from a proud, isolated and long-suffering individualism. The urge to go it alone was Redcrosse's weakness, and the fault is repeated by Guyon in a series of adventures that are symmetrical with those of Book One. Readers of *The Faerie Queene* have observed that the symmetry is more apparent than real: signs of increasing strain are felt in the second legend, particularly when Guyon after a series of indeterminate encounters is left voyaging at the end of his story against the more satisfying memory of the completion of Book One in a betrothal and the prospect of a restored kingdom.[1] However, the strain is necessary to the reader's experience. Spenser can depict the paradoxes of idealism by rehearsing, with a significantly muted and pedestrian sense of event, the plan of the first legend, having Guyon's experience emerge as the unnecessary but compelling quest for the illusory center of the abstractly moral self.

The independent moral self: this phenomenon would have been perceived by Spenser as a new cultural style, almost as a new way of addressing the world. Certainly that is how Donne saw it in his elegy on the death of an age when

> every man alone thinkes he hath got
> To be a Phoenix, and that there can be
> None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee.[2]

For Montaigne, the injunction to "know thyself" presumed a solitary, essentialist being. In more active style, the "heroic enthusiasts" (Bruno's phrase)[3] appealed to the imagination of an era that no longer saw social peace as the natural condition of mankind but instead, with Calvin, acknowledged strife as the inevitable and continuous expression of the battle with sin. For the Renaissance, as Gordon O'Brien points out, "The dignity of man, the good of man, is finally absolute power disposed to creative ends by discipline and clear intelligence. . . . Peace (that is, calmness of mind induced by harmony and right order), though it is a necessary means to and a necessary concomitant of it, is not the essence of this objective."[4] Spenser's contemporaries idealized this heroism of the self under the name of magnanimity, a quality that Bacon recognized as "nowhere to be found in nature since the fall." "*Magnanimitas*," he says firmly, "*est virtus poëtica.*"[5] Others were not so down-to-earth. Sidney, embodying the new style for his generation, writes of "that heroic magnanimitie": "Heroicall . . . doeth not only teache & moove to a truth, but teacheth & mooveth to the most high & excellent truth."[6] Drayton says: "And though (Heroicall) be properly understood of Demi-gods, as of *HERCULES & AENEAS* . . . yet it is also transferred to them, who for greatness of Mind come neare to Gods. For to be born of a coelesstiall *Incubus*, is nothing else, but to have a great and mighty Spirit, farre aboue the Earthly weakness of Man."[7] It falls to Harvey to reveal the Zarathrustran core of this new heroic individualism: "A Lusty Boddy: & a Brave Mind: ye mighty dooers in ye world. Heroicall valour, nothing else."[8] In these sentiments, Spenser, the poet of "order excellent," would have heard simply the assertion of a hectic subjectivity against an order-free world. Poised between the medieval outlook with its confidence in "certaine bound" and the modern outlook with its denial of limit, there was a clear opportunity to contrast the old with the new attitude to experience. The contrast is staged in a confrontation between Arthegall and the egalitarian giant in Book Five. It is a summary event in the epic, and to see how differing world views influence the definition of temperance, it is easiest to begin there.

The confrontation occurs in the Legend of Justice with its metaphor of a set of scales. The metaphor will be prominent in the Legend of Temperance where it also conveys the notion that value is to be found in the weighing of extremes. There are two attitudes one can take to the metaphor. The attitude of the giant

as he holds "An huge great paire of ballance in his hand"[9] is literal: he takes the metaphor of balance at face value as a single absolute principle, and so reduces all of reality to it. Consequently, instead of acknowledging the different levels of related life in the world, he sees only things in binary arrangement on a single plane of reckoning. In other words, he takes relationships and turns them around in his mind until they emerge as a pair of symmetrically polarized opposites. Once relationships are conceived in a state of polarization, there is always a need for correction or a kind of leveling out:

> Therefore I will throw downe the mountaines hie,
> And make them leuel with the lowly plaine:
> These towring rocks, which reach vnto the skie,
> I will thrust down into the deepest maine,
> And as they were, them equalize againe.
> Tyrants that make men subject to their law
> I will suppress. (V.ii.38)

Against this reduction of the world to a sort of balance sheet, Arthegall's way of observing balance is to discern the "poyse of euery part" in a grand ecological hierarchy where "euery one doe know their certaine bound" (36). He sees in the giant's flat logic, which "rather stroue extremities to way / Th'one to diminish, th'other for to eke," a compulsion to restate any complexity, whether natural or social, as a simple competitive opposition between artificially separated parts. Where does this compulsion come from? It certainly does not come from nature, where

> The hils doe not the lowly dales disdaine;
> The dales doe not the loftly hils enuy. (41)

Arthegall suggests to the giant that the source of the compulsion is an overall attitude to experience which "misdeem'st so much of things in sight" (39). This materialism cannot measure beauty or thought, let alone validate its own premises (43). Having fragmented an interdependent world into isolated entities, it can only assert an abstract or nominal relationship between the things it perceives. Politically, the attitude which "all things would reduce vnto equality" is egalitarianism, the logical extension of a mentality which divides the world so abruptly that each piece is theoretically equal to each other piece. Egalitarianism conceals the technique of divide-and-rule when applied to nature as well as to human

community; it always puts man into a competitive relationship with his environment:

> He sayd that he would all the earth vptake,
> And all the sea, deuided each from either:
> So would he of the fire one ballaunce make,
> And one of th'ayre. (31)

Of course in this encounter Arthegall presses law and order to its conservative limit—"All chaunge is perillous," he announces, "all chaunce vnsound" (36). Nonetheless his perspective helps the reader grasp Spenser's point that a whole world view can be built on a mistaken metaphor.[10] Where Arthegall sees relationships, the giant sees only things. Where Arthegall sees patterns, the giant sees only physical detail. Where Arthegall sees self-regulation, the giant sees only divide-and-rule. Finally, where Arthegall acknowledges the fact of human life in community, the giant sees only the opportunism of the isolated self, and that may be the source of the whole problem figured in him.

To say that all this is Guyon's problem too seems to be asking a good deal from a book on one of the private virtues. Yet the Legend of Temperance effectively begins with the contrast between hierarchy and polarization in the concept of the virtue. In Ruddymane, Guyon finds a child orphaned by the loss of hierarchy between the reason and the passions, which is a loss of hierarchy in the marriage of Mortdant and Amavia themselves:

> When raging passion with fierce tyrannie
> Robs reason of her due regalitee,
> And makes it seruant to her basest part:
> The strong it weakens with infirmitie,
> And with bold furie armes the weakest hart.
> (II.i.57)

As ordered functions collapse into a single level of equivalent reaction like this, the partial solution is temperance conceived as a mean (58). The hierarchy of reason and passions cannot be wholly restored because it fell with Eden. But temperance can at least contain the damage. This is in accordance with the mottoes "*in medio virtus, in summo felicitas*" juxtaposed in the July eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*. Kathleen Williams, following Edgar Wind, points out that the mottoes state the correct relationship between polarization and hierarchy in ethical conduct: "Man must

live in his mundane life by the mean, the uniting of opposites and the balancing of extremes, but he can attain the mean only by looking beyond the temporal to the divine, from the difficult management of the opposites to their source and end."[11] And so Ruddymane is taken to a house of instruction to repair the ruin of his first parents. The process fulfills a Humanist commonplace, specifically the need to inculcate the discipline of virtue in children of a fallen world, where reason is eclipsed and the propensity to sin lurks in every generation. As Francis Thynne says in his *Book of Emblems* (1600):

> Children in youth to be framed
> in yongest years, where witt and stength doe want
> do frame the child like to the growying plant
> which yonge and tender thou maist tie and bend.[12]

Ruddymane is brought to the House of Medina in this spirit.

The trouble with the house of Medina is that it is all polarization and no hierarchy. The child does not receive from Medina the flexible power of reason that would restrain intemperance in the unforeseen circumstances where temptation may arise. Instead he receives in its place an abstract frame to be applied as an ideal to all situations. The frame has its source in a cultural convention that can be traced back to the Aristotelian metaphor of balance. Indeed, the whole house rests on a phrase from the *Ethics*, here in Wylkinson's translation: "Vertues be found in thynges that have a meane betweene extremities, which are either to much or to little."[13] Holland's Plutarch promotes the same sense of a crudely mechanical balance whose oscillation must be suppressed rather than transcended: "Even so, morall vertue being a motion and facultie about the unreasonable part of the soule, tempereth the remission and intention; and in one word taketh away the excesse and defect of the passions, reducing ech of them to a certain Mediocritie and moderation that falleth not on any one side."[14] No wonder Guyon has a difficult time in the "strange sort of fight" with Huddibras and Sansloy. Their "peace is but continuall iarre" (ii.26), much like the action of a set of scales. Since there is no higher principle to appeal to in this secular house, and since the voice of reason conveyed by the Palmer is silent throughout this canto, Guyon's only response can be a tactic of divide-and-rule. In fact, the very origin of the place lies in this expedient for handling emotional complexity:

Therein three sisters dwelt of sundry sort,
The children of one sire by mothers three;
Who dying whylome did diuide this fort
To them by equall shares in equall fee. (13)

The house of the golden mean is an abstract place inviting abstract behavior. Here any "rightful cause of difference" is immediately hardened into the state of pure opposition that can only be dealt with by "treatie" (32). This behavior is embedded in the very foundation of the house:

To them by equall shares in equall fee:
But strifull minde, and diuerse qualitee
Drew them in parts, and each made others foe:
Still did they striue, and dayly disagree;
The eldest did against the youngest goe
And both against the middest meant to worken woe.

In the encounter with the egalitarian giant, Spenser suggested the psychology of "I'm your equal" that accompanies the divide-and-rule mentality. Here in Book Two the same psychology can be seen in Sansloy and Huddibras, the escorts of Perissa and Elissa respectively. Consider the knights separately and you have opposite psychological humors—James Nohrnberg calls them "the manic and the morose"[15]—but consider them together and you have almost a single social organism. In this light, defect and excess appear not so much to be qualities they have as a relationship they are in. Whatever their original and natural complexity of being (Huddibras was once given to "rash aduentures"), they are now divided against each other and presumably divided within themselves by a mechanical state of self-control. Their existence is clearly artificial in the sense that the one's identity is achieved and confirmed by overt scorn and covert longing for the qualities of the other. To this extent they are each other's projections, thriving on the theoretically perfect sort of opposition called competition. Huddibras, suppressing the original impetuousness that lies hidden in him as the cause of his erstwhile "rash aduentures," needs to win repeated moral victories by frowning upon that rashness as it is displayed for him in Sansloy. And Sansloy, for his part, must always have a Huddibras around, since by feeling superior to Huddibras he is also feeling superior to a shrinking or "froward" passivity of temperament expressed in his own relationship with Perissa. Everything here is inverted. If as personality types the

knights answer to Aristotle's opposition of the boor to the buffoon in the *Nicomachean Ethics*,[16] this is a surface resemblance only. The amount of description given to the two knights suggests that Spenser does not see the pairing as accidental. What makes expansive and shrinking personalities seek out each other's company, and what holds them together in contention? A recent term for the state of affairs is "imaginary" relationship. This term of Anthony Wilden's describes a familiar sort of binary psychological arrangement in modern society in which an individual cultivates an artificial "self" at the expense of an "other" who is imagined to embody the very tendencies that the "self" suppresses.[17] Through this logic of negative definition, the imaginary "self" gains substance as an entity set over and against an "other," and the "other" responds mutually. In this fashion two individuals use each other as mirrors for their separated inner lives, seeking their identity in opposition and their opposition in identity.

A clearer picture of the mechanics of two individuals linked together by mutual divide-and-rule is provided in the next canto, where Braggadochio and Trompart act out an Aristotelian dilemma of excess and defect in the desire for honor. Rather than illuminating an ethical situation, the caricature seems to be shining the most light back on its source. The binary relationship that claims the two characters, as each defines his behavior as the pure opposite of the other, is the consequence of an ethical model that depends upon a metaphor of equivalent opposition. For each character is so intent upon avoiding the extreme set by the other that neither finds a middle way, and, in any case, to locate a middle way is first to make available extremes against which the mean can be assessed. The paradox of Braggadochio and Trompart therefore follows from a rational idealism in the Aristotelian method, in which a virtue rarely shines forth as a positive but instead is negatively and anonymously defined as a middle position between competing opposites. This attitude to experience makes all means elusive in theory or practice. One sees the elusiveness in Aristotle's method of defining by exclusion, with its mental tactic of divide-and-rule.

> The mean being without a name, the extremes seem to dispute for its place as though it were vacant by default. But where there is excess and

> defect, there is also an intermediate. Now men desire honour both more than they should and less; therefore it is possible also to do as one should: at all events this is the state of character that is praised, being an unnamed mean with respect to honour. (iv.4.1125b)

Braggadochio is ostensibly the excessive extreme, the "miser" Trompart the deficient extreme in this pairing. But Spenser does not seem to be confirming Aristotelian polarization so much as demonstrating its inadequacy as a framework for self-control. The binary attitude compels the moral individual to keep looking over his shoulder at someone else for comparison: indeed, the attitude may even invite binary relationships like that of Braggadochio and Trompart, for these two men do not exist as absolute essences so much as they co-exist in a state of communication—"Trompart fit man for Braggadochio"—similar to the state of Huddibras and Sansloy. The imaginary quality of this mutual predication of the self upon the other is apparent with the intrusion of Belphoebe, when the two switch personalities: Braggadochio hides in a thicket while Trompart shows a surprising boldness gained, one supposes, from his covert superiority to the boaster.

> And when he felt the folly of his Lord,
> In his owne kind he gan him selfe vnfold. (iii.9)

Another version of "continuall iarre"—it functions by the same divide-and-rule technique that generated abstract behavior in Medina's half-way house. Sansloy and Huddibras, Braggadochio and Trompart are very much social types. In fact, the stereotyping of the imaginary "other" is essential to the definition of the imaginary "self." (Even Samuel Butler's comment that "by Huddibras the Puritans are meant" asserts that whatever Samuel Butler is, he is certainly *not* one of "them.") Spenser's concern with these pairings shows that he is aware of the degree to which individuals define themselves negatively by imaginary competition with another in a kind of *dubito ergo sum*, and this habit seems to be associated with the comparative definition of the virtuous self through the rejection of extremes.

By the end of canto two we are prepared for signs of the same imaginary behavior in Guyon. Presumably he has been brought up as a child in a house of instruction like the one he took Ruddymane to, for his introductory appearance suggests an idealism and a

self-control that is merely abstract. The Aristotelian man as seen in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, if not Socratic, is certainly self-conscious, managing a virtue that seems complete from the outset. Even Brigador moves "with equall steps" ("over-reaching" is an equine as well as a human fault), and the Palmer has a strong eyes-front manner. Everything is sequestered. Yet Guyon's countenance at once "demure" and "terrible" tells us that he is not completely proof. By stanza twelve of the story he has lost his sober mood: a grief and fury like Phedon's siezes him. Much about Guyon suggests that like Redcrosse before him he is a role-player. His characteristic fault will be his inability to resist the controlled adventure, the magnanimous pardon, the *hauteur*. He is, after all, Gloriana's man, and, by extension, Belphoebe's: the knight of an unattainable perfection.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Guyon should make a mess of his first real testing with the Occasion of Furor. This has all the signs of an imaginary contest, that is, one in which an insignificant event is enlarged by paranoia into a state of outright confrontation. Guyon ought to have gone straight for Occasion, who has walked right out of the emblem books to be seized by her forelock, since she is "the root of all wrath and despight" (iv.10). But Guyon fails to discern the real event that triggers his imaginary reaction. Instead he grapples the dilemma as if from within, aggravating it by applying anger to subdue anger. His tendency to view ethical conduct as the willful management of extremes is the real problem, and beneath this imaginary polarization of qualities and directing its form is another imaginary situation in which his sense of his ethical "self" is confirmed by performance against "others" who are imagined to threaten it. His virtuous behavior is therefore so idealized that it is closed to the real information provided by time and place to which temperance (*tempus*) and moderation (*modus*) are tied even by etymology. In this real context the idealization of temperance is plainly formal. It is meaningful only to an academician like Spenser's friend Ludowick Bryskett, who could say that a man of fortitude can only be esteemed if he could "holde a mean between furie and feare."[18] How on earth can anyone in any real situation "holde a mean between furie and feare"? One can only hold it ideally, which is to say, in the absence of a real Occasion. The Aristotelian doctrine of the mean must now be looking a little tarnished, not least of all because Aristotle in the

Nicomachean Ethics is notoriously unable to identify a term except in abstract opposition to another.

> Good temper is a mean with respect to anger; the middle term being unnamed, and the extremes almost without a name as well, we place good temper in the middle position, though it inclines to the deficiency, which is without a name. The excess might be called a sort of 'irascibility.' For the passion is anger, while its causes are many and diverse. (iv.5.1125b)

Aristotle's definition has the lurching vagueness of motion that characterizes the idealist temperament, and Guyon does not escape it in himself either.

The extent to which Guyon is complicit in the behavior he confronts is spelled out through the technique of *psychomachia* in which the hero's passions are depicted objectively in the allegorical personifications of Cymocles and Pyrocles. I have called them "passions" following a long tradition enshrined in the *Variorum Spenser* with its appendix on faculty psychology[19] where the pagan brothers are seen as the concupiscible and the irascible appetites respectively. Thus, the composite psychological entity that Guyon battles throughout the middle stretches of his story is really himself undergoing a process of derangement as readily understood by moral philosophy. Le Coeffeteau describes in detail how the legitimate process of apprehension was thought to work.

> When an object has been apprehended as good, the passion of love responds, and from this in turn, springs a desire to possess the good. If the object can be procured easily, concupiscence supplies sufficient energy, but if difficulty lies in the way, the irascible inclining yields hope in support of the concupiscible and thereby enables man to strive vehemently to effect his purpose.[20]

If the faculties respond excessively to experience, then the mind is said to be in "passion" and the motions are transferred from the concupiscible power to the concupiscible acting equally with the irascible.

> For these first Motions, formed here by Representation of the Object, are afterwards continued, and communicated to the *Irascible* parts of the Soul,

> that is, the Place where the Soul is active. . . . The *Passions*, then raised, ride higher; are much more furious and ungovernable; for now indeed they are double: The first have come: and joyned them, and thus they back and sustain one another, by this Union and Mutuall Consent. (pp. 155-56)

Guyon throughout cantos three to six is evidently in this extreme state where each passion feeds the other. Together the pagan brothers make up another strange pairing like the earlier displays of "Union and Mutuall Consent" that produced Huddibras and Sansloy, Trompart and Braggadochio. But the psychological landscape is becoming cluttered now, and it is hard to separate the paired passions from the actual events they respond to. This difficulty is intended since a good deal of the activity is what we now call projection. Furor and Phaedria are as much projections of Guyon's psychological "motions" as they are real occasions of fury and mirth. By a principle of oscillation in his responses Guyon is brought to Phaedria, who simply replaces Furor in the mechanical necessities of the disorganized psyche in the same way as Cymocles, who led him there, takes the place of Pyrocles. Of course Phaedria is imagined as a reward after Fury and, the Palmer aside, no reader would deny Guyon the ease she gives. But deeper than this consideration is the fact that she has materialized out of a concupiscence that was divided off and suppressed in the earlier skirmish. Now, while Guyon is with Phaedria, the converse is true. The irascible passion is divided off—actually it is misidentified: "*Mars* is *Cupidoes* frend" (vi.35)—so that Guyon can exercise the concupiscible passion with Phaedria. When the far arm of the balance swings back and the complementary principle of fire rushes in for attention it is now too late. Pyrocles is out of control; he is in a state of runaway: "And dying daily, daily yet reuiue" (vi.45). When one aspect of emotional life is divided off so that the other can rule, the result is that mechanical oscillation which Guyon witnessed earlier in Medina's house and which he now battles in himself. But he has nothing to battle the polarization with except the concept of ideal balance that created the condition in the first place. Stripped of his horse, the advantage provided by knightly panoply, and without the wisdom of the Palmer, Guyon has to imagine assailants in order to confirm his artificial sense of himself. Significantly, his next encounter will be with Mammon, a person who is almost a mirror image of the knight's isolated melancholy

labor. To understand why this temptation is at once so unnecessary and yet so inevitable, we must take a step back from the narrative and examine another level of paradox generated by Guyon's idealism.

As modern critics living at the end of four centuries of "heroic enthusiasm," we are accustomed to the fact that much of the exploitation of the "other," whether in nature, in race, in class, in sex—indeed much of the exploitation of the emotions by the self—has come from a social code that emphasizes division and confrontation as a first principle. Yet we may not be so ready to understand how an artist living at the beginning of the same period could have seen the dangers in this imaginary attitude to reality, and could have seen deeply into the center of the illusion. For Spenser, brought up to accept hierarchical thought as natural, any instance of pure, unmediated binary opposition would have struck him almost by instinct as unnatural and grotesque. But it was not enough simply to condemn the habit; he must see the sort of misdirected heroism it invites, the sort of false reality it establishes. The metaphor of equivalent opposition was to become the defining feature of the modern attitude, particularly as it emerged in the nineteenth-century's fondness for synthesis through conflict, or "the reconciliation of opposites." Spenser anticipates the state of affairs in the encounter with Mammon but, as the overtly Aristotelian cantos of Book Two suggest, the source of the problem lay in classical idealist philosophy. To see how Mammon and the modern attitude he anticipates are continuous with that source, we must look more closely at the organizing metaphor and the mode of thought that is most conveniently identified with Aristotle.

For Aristotle, as George Boas describes him, the belief in binary opposition is fundamental. It is the working metaphor of his perception. His thinking projects a state of conflict between supposedly equivalent opposites. "Etymologically," Boas explains, "an opposite is something which is placed in a position facing in the reverse direction. If up and down, or left and right, are opposites, their opposition must be defined geometrically."[21] In other words, Aristotle takes what we would naturally think of as differing levels of order in a hierarchy and turns them around in his mind until these separate but related levels emerge spatially as a pair of opposites. An example which we have already considered is Spenser's account of the origin of the House of Medina in a

natural hierarchy of sisterhood—three sisters "of sundry sort" are apparently rotated ninety degrees and flattened into a state of opposition on a single plane: "drew them in partes, and each made others foe" (ii. 13). Wilden uses the term "symmetrization" to describe this mental technique of making differences between levels of organization appear instead as a conflict taking place on a single plane of reckoning. "It is the process through which 'unequal,' multilevel, or hierarchical relations between people, between groups, or between parts of the whole are reduced to a spurious relationship of supposed 'equality' at a single level."[22] He remarks that "the basic dimension and character of Aristotle's world view is that of a left-right symmetry between 'opposites': Fire/Earth, water/air, form/matter, unity/variety, active/passive and so on," where hierarchies of interlocking levels of scope and complexity are projected as "the 'two sides' of an imaginary and symmetrical (and usually 'either/or') equation." The result as Pascal pointed out—remarking that our faith in bilateral symmetries is "derived from the human face"—is that "we demand symmetry horizontally and in breadth only" (*Pensées*, 1670, no. 50). In the hands of early Protestant individualism, which saw the world through a kind of Ramist ledger, the root metaphor of conflict and synthesis between opposites broke free from the medieval sense of hierarchy in which it was constrained and mediated, and became the basic metaphor for most kinds of relationship. As a result, much thinking and behavior has depended exclusively upon the elevation of one value or quality over another which has been divided off and suppressed. In other words, the thinking and behavior depends on a form of imaginary confrontation. The assertion of what Wilden calls an "imaginary self" through competition with a negated "imaginary other" is another expression of this mirror game of symmetrization, and the absurd strain it puts on natural relationship is the "continuall iarre" which Spenser sees as the defining feature of idealistic behavior.

Examples of symmetrized relationship abound in Book Two. As in the character pairings already mentioned, they always appear as emblems of intemperance where they suggest something of the dead-locked quality of a pure paradox whose two terms are "striuing each th'other to vndermine," like Nature and Art in Acrasia's garden (xii.59). The type of this mirroring of opposites is the paradox of chivalric idealism taken as an end in itself, where

inevitably "loue doth raine / In stoutest minds, and maketh monstrous warre" (ii.26). The "furious louing fitts" (iv.14) of this heroism bespeak a frustrated erotic energy that explodes into combat, a combat that implodes into the erotic realm. "To slug in sloth and sensuall delights," Spenser calls it in a fine *aperçu*. Later Blake was to refer to it as "the phallic whip." The principle of *coincidentia oppositorum* which unites Pyrocles and Cymocles in fire and water re-expresses itself in the "scorched dew" of Acrasia's veil and in the way "frothy billowes fry" in the story of Jason and Medea (xii.45). When Pyrocles, trying to drown in his opposite, throws himself headlong into Cymocles' lake there is a symmetry to being "drent" and "brent" which even Archimago, to his credit, finds amusing. Such motions are natural enough when compared to the human wastage figured in Impatience and Impotence, and to Mammon's meticulous greed which gains its energy from polarizations that obtain between Sleepe and Richesse, Force and Fraud, and the do-nothing Pilate and the coveting Tantalus. In these imaginary pairings Spenser suggests that human behavior gains an artificial energy and purpose when it is divided against itself. Certainly it is in a divided state that Guyon seeks some meaning from Mammon, the one among the tempters of Book Two whom the knight resembles for his melancholy isolation.

Now one may see in the episode a demonstration on Guyon's part of the sin of *curiositas* as described in St. Augustine's *Confessions* (10.24). "Those who wish to know merely for the sake of knowing, give way to *turpis curiositas*," St. Bernard is quoted in the *Summa* as saying (2.160.2). This is the conventional interpretation of an encounter whose wholly unnecessary character can only be justified by a display of superfluous knowledge on the part of the researcher as well. However, if we remain aware of the pattern of Guyon's compulsion we may see that the episode parodies the classical descent myths and the Christian myths of voluntary trial on which it is modelled. Guyon is not seeking self-knowledge at all. His quest is really for the illusory center of his idealism contained in the figure who is the mirror of his "self." That is why the quest is so unnecessary yet so compelling to him. Spenser is therefore doing more than setting moral philosophy to verse. He is enacting the psychology from which the illusory quest for the alienated "self" begins, and Guyon in this spirit is seeking an identity with the imaginary opposite who complements his imaginary moral being. Identity found in opposition, opposition found in identity: in this respect, Guyon is giving way to *curiositas*.

Certainly this psychology explains the identity of opposites one finds in the plea and counter-plea of the passage. The arguments recoil tightly and Mammon is convincing precisely because he is a voice in the mind, a suppressed proclivity in Guyon who "with wonder all the way / Did feed his eyes and fild his inner thought" (vii.24). The tempter, who seems to know this proclivity as well as he knows the knight's elfin identity, remarks pointedly on "The thing, that thou dost craue so earnestly." But since Guyon is here to win a victory over this proclivity, the temptation becomes occasion for a long homily about knightly idealism (12-17). Mammon calls it "bitter scorn." The materialist offers a view of Civilization at its most powerful; the idealist responds with a view of untroubled Nature. The materialist offers imperial power, the idealist reacts with an apostrophe to the "high, heroic spright." The materialist holds out a vision of the future; the idealist makes a nostalgic appeal to "the antique world." Actually, they do not seem to be communicating, or, to be correct, their discourse has the symmetry of an imaginary relation. "Change thy willful mood," says Mammon, but typically Guyon almost gets into a battle with Disdain (42). It is possible that the ambition which Guyon ostensibly disdains is his also in this competition in which the knight finally "did beguile the Guyler of the pray" (64). In its overall structure, the situation oscillates between false either/or choices accepted in place of the real contexts they distort: nature *versus* civilization, past *versus* future, use value *versus* exchange value, and probably most fundamental of all, the idealist *versus* the materialist. The psychological consequence of this ideology of symmetrical opposition is a paranoia about the "other" who is perceived as competitively similar to the "self." This is the condition of the mob in Mammon's kingdom:

> Those that were vp themselues, kept others low,
> Those that were low themselues, held others hard,
> Ne suffred them to rise or greater grow,
> But euery one did striue his fellow downe to throw.
> (47)

And Guyon, who is also in a state of symmetrical competition, feels the paranoia as well. The tension is represented in the hovering fiend who suggests the impulse to sudden irrational destructiveness that matches any zealously extended behavior. By the end of

the episode we are driven to ask what it is that links the idealist and the materialist as the two go down together to examine a picture of the hell of modern civilization that is so perfectly anticipated as to be uncanny—from the pollution and "broad beaten" expressways, to the alienated labor and the fatherly blandness, the sentimental realism of the entrepreneur, whose wealth all goes to support the dream of Philotime, unhappy in her suburban garden.

I cast the episode in these familiar terms deliberately because it presents a particularly modern situation. It may be explained best by returning to the issue of the imaginary opposition between "self" and "other" that occurs in states of competition and especially to the "pride in risk" that Guyon is taking with Mammon.[23] On the surface Guyon wins, but his victories have the brief Pyrrhic radiance of one who needs to match effort symmetrically with opposition. The only way out of this paradox is to be brought to rock bottom. When the false trial between the "self" and imaginary "others" is finally transcended, Guyon is awakened into a sacramental world where fellow creatures can no longer be imagined as assailants and temptations no longer projected as contests. It is only when this happens, at the end of canto seven, that a new music is heard in the text, the music of a redemptive universe: "And is there care in heauen: and is there loue?" Then we see, perhaps for the first time, how powerfully the paradoxes of idealism determined, and were determined by, the paradox of selfhood.

It is the illusion of self-possession that brings the idealist and the materialist together. In both, the self is not an aspect of life in society. Instead it is a proudly independent, substantialized "thing-in-itself," to use the Kantian term which Sartre applied to the ego: it is practically a material entity. Perhaps only when we see Guyon in the House of Alma do we fully realize the extremity of his idealism. Though he carries the image of Gloriana on his shield, he is the Spenserian hero who is notably womanless: "Of none accompanide" is Guyon's manner. The lady and the horse figure the co-ordinates of chivalry, and their remoteness from the pedestrian knight underlines the alienated labor of the idealized self who, like Mammon, feeds privately on an inventory of past achievements:

> Yet on his way, of none accompanide;
> And euermore himselfe with comfort feedes,
> Of his owns vertues, and prayse-worthy deedes.
> (vii.2)

How unlike the medieval piety of Sir Gawain with his consumate trust in the Virgin Mary, C. S. Lewis remarked.[24] This is the new Reformation man who was to be his own teacher in the practical science of right and wrong, who would no longer submit his conscience *in foro externo* to the ecclesiastical court or *in foro interno* to the confessional, but would refer instead to handbooks of practical morality, each man his own analyst. For both the idealist and the materialist, self and soul are ultimately controllable; their relationships can be reduced to quantities that can be measured and compared—quite unlike the Genius mentioned in the Bower of Bliss who has care of unconscious, involuntary perception including warning visions:

> That is our Selfe, whom though we do not see
> Yet each doth in him selfe it well perceuive to be.
> (xii.47)

However, for the idealist who reduces his inner mystery to conscious purpose virtue involves a lonely athleticism, rather like jogging. All the Pauline metaphors overapply. Virtue is a "race to runne" (i.32). It is pursued in the spirit of an athlete training for competition (1 Cor. 9:24-27) or a soldier engaged in a campaign (2 Tim. 2:3). "I see no virtue where I smell no sweat," Quarles said. Such melancholy effort requires a proud identification of the "self" with performance. The degree to which Guyon has pressed this identification is seen in the difficulty Arthur has breaking down this identity, which is figured in a struggle with pagan knights who carry Guyon's arms. When Guyon asserts his superiority over the sort of "weake men" that Mammon entraps, and Mammon for his part announces "And vnto none my graces do enuye" (vii.8), the two are speaking the same language of the self. They anticipate Hegel's dictum that "man exists only in so far as he is opposed."

The cure is provided by the House of Alma. Perhaps this place is better called the society of the soul for, based as it is on the metaphor which from Plato on identifies the human body with society, it shows the larger organism that makes Guyon's individualism appear as less than absolute. Moreover, the knight is welcomed into a society ruled by the soul and by feelings and moods: in his welcome there he is also welcomed into his own being, which he can no longer identify merely with the skin-bound self. Now the

promise of the meeting of the knights of temperance and the true faith will be fulfilled. Temperance can no longer be reduced to academic precept or athletic exercise. Rather, it is one of the fruits of the spirit "grounded and fast setteled / On firme foundation of true bountihed" (xii.1). Saint Augustine described temperance "as that action whereby the soul with the aid of God extricates itself from the love of lower created beauty and wings its way to true stability and security in God" (*De musica*, 6.5.50). The tour of the house amplifies this security in images of a relaxed and economical self-sufficiency. One feels that forgotten calmness of mind induced by harmony and right order which heroic individualism excludes. The feeling is expressed in a clear, bright style whose meaning is "easie to be thought." The key to understanding this self-sufficiency is the principle of hierarchy which, after the tour is done, is announced as rising like a structure out of the flattening polarities of the earlier cantos: "Now gins this goodly frame of Temperance / Fairely to rise" (xii.1). In the remainder of this essay I will consider this difficult hierarchical principle.

Hierarchy refers to the differing orders of reality and change in any organization, whether social, biological or (for Spenser's day) cosmic. It requires, as D. W. Robertson has pointed out with regard to medieval literature especially, that organization is to be discerned as having a "both-and" logic of inclusion rather than an "either/or" logic of opposition.[25] The differing but not separable levels are so organized that their interrelationship acts as constraint, with particular levels enjoying a flexibility of response, or "timely offices" as Spenser calls it in the Book of Courtesy, within the limits which constraint sets, and all things co-operating in the whole, with the logically highest and most inclusive and embracing level immanent in the smallest detail. Nicole Oresme (c. 1325-1382), commenting on Aristotle's *De Coelo*, writes that just as "Each intelligence is whole and wholly in every part—however small—of the heaven that it moves" so "the human soul is whole and wholly in every part of the human body, except that the soul is in the body by information (*informacion*)."[26] Thus, even when speaking of the superiority of reason over the senses, to cite one hierarchy, the higher faculty is not to be thought of as a transcendent superimposition but rather as a whole made up of the concert of its parts: "a body, which doth freely yeeld / His partes to reasons rule obedient" (xi.2). For Spenser, unlike his contemporaries, reason has little pre-eminence in the picture of the temperate

being, but is merely depicted as the synthetizing function among the three operations of the mind. It is the sway of the soul in the body that is the real basis of temperance: reason protects that foundation (xi.2). And within this hierarchy of soul over body, and of ordered society over the individual, every other hierarchy is discerned, from the relation of female to male principles (ix.22) to that of letter and sentence in allegorical writing (33), to the relation of fantasy to reason, reason to memory, and of memory to the possession of one's history (canto x). Altogether, we are given in the House of Alma a vision of the moral individual acting in society, in history, and in nature.

Against this natural and social hierarchy is pitted that "deadliuing swain" Maleger whose very existence is a paradox.

> Flesh without bloud, a person without spright,
> Wounds without hurt, a bodie without might.
> (xi.40)

The specific form of the attack he leads becomes clear when we consider his nature as a phantasm. Does he exist as an external stimulus, a *phantasia*? Or is he a mental image fabricated by the mind out of the sensory experience he directs, a *phantasma*? In a way, both answers are possible, but they involve a larger question about the illusory quality of sense experience.

According to medieval theory as it is found, for example, in Le Coeffeteau, the sensory stimulus, once lodged in the fantasy as a replica of an external event, sets up a "motion" in the sensual appetites. Without the mediation of reason, the motion quickly enlarges itself into a state of passion in which the sensual appetites treasure the "Representation of the Object" as a thing-in-itself. In place of the logic of hierarchy that normally governs the psyche, a new logic of polarization takes over, and the victim alternates between extreme reactions, reactions which the courtly lover usually interprets as the blows of fortune and the hot and cold pangs of love. All of this signals a fixation with an interior mental object, or idol. Chaucer frequently uses the image of the mirror to describe the state of narcissistic reflection which is produced by the *phantasma* when it is exclusively cultivated,[27] and in Spenser Archimago falls into a narcissistic fondness for the "idole" or mirror image of Una which he plants in Redcrosse's fantasy (I.i.45). In our time, this *stade du miroir* of arrested perception has received similar attention by Lacan in his commentary on Freud's papers on

narcissism.[28] In both the medieval and the modern analysis, one sees the tendency of the mind in the course of sense perception to erect an imaginary thingness or "other" which divides the perceiver and which sets up a hunger in the alienated being, who must seek in the object the necessary completion of the self. For Chaucer and for Spenser after him, such idolatry was most clearly manifested in love melancholy. When Arthur, for example, is ravished by the beauty of Florimell, his fond imaginings are described as insects:

> And thousand fancies bett his ydle brayne
> With their light winds, the sights of semblants vaine
> (III.iv.54)

—like the "swarme of gnats" which Maleger directs at the senses (ix.16), to be lodged as "flyes" (51) in the cell of Phantastes, his potential fifth columnist within the fortress of the soul. Britomart suffers a malady similar to Arthur's when fantasy about her lover makes her "feed on shadows," turning her into "a shadow wexe" and so approaching, though in a benign circumstance, the condition of Maleger. In both cases the natural hierarchy of perception is subverted and reduced to an imaginary identification between the "self" and the "other." The lovers could easily say with Rousseau's Saint-Preux in *La nouvelle Héloïse*, "My soul is totally alienated in you," and imagine, with his Julie, the echoing answer, "Come back to me, and reunite yourself with yourself." This is the mental situation in which we must view the symmetrical combat between Arthur and Maleger, where the latter is the phantasmal "other" created by the fixation with sensory experience. Significantly, the illusion cannot be competed with since competition only enlarges the identity of self and other which created the illusion in the first place. Maleger cannot be beaten; he can only be dissolved.

The picture of Maleger suggests that the obsession with sensory experience is an impulse of unregenerate human nature. But the picture says more than this. One cannot escape noticing how the siege of stimuli is a concerted assault directed by a military figure with a keen sense of tactics—he divides to rule (xi.6). In other words, Maleger is presented as a social condition as well as an individual dilemma. The social condition mesmerizes the intent soul, leading to Impotence, a perversion of the ability to act, and Impatience, a perversion of the ability to endure. At one level, then, Maleger enacts the abuse of perception that ties man to the

things of this world, "of the earth, earthy." At a different level, this very fetish with stimuli is pictured as the tactical goal of a military campaign comparable to Irish rebels assaulting a Norman castle. The conspiracy has no name, no manifesto, yet it surrounds from its active source of power. When we think of the numbing effect of stimuli in our own day we think of the mass media, especially television. Like Maleger's army, it eclipses the real world so completely with images "that all the land they vnder them did hide" (5). While there is no such problem in Spenser's day, the analogy is a useful one to draw if it helps us see that the ideological preconditions for the mass media are discernible to Spenser even though he does not have concepts like "materialism" and "empiricism" at his disposal. These ideological conditions do not yet exist as a philosophy, though they will soon find expression in Bacon. However, they do exist in certain cults of behavior in which the individual allows himself to be manipulated by another individual through the imaginary projections that form on the victim's obsession with stimuli. The most notable context for this sort of narcissistic behavior is the cult of Petrarchan or courtly love. In courtly love the individual pursues through the reaches of his fantasy the cool "other" whose presence he resents, whose promise he desires. Spenser explores its tangible effect in the Bower of Bliss, where the imaginary war caused by the fetish with stimuli is shown to be the basis of idealizing behavior generally, and specifically of that idealization of the "other" which usurps the name of love.

The Bower presents itself to the literary critic as a Banquet of the Senses written in the Ovidian erotic convention fashionable in the 1590s and using as its material the episode of Armida's Palace from Tasso.[29] Beneath the surface lie traditional signs and values. Acrasia is modelled on the Circe who, under the shadow of moral allegory since the Stoics, entered the imagination of the Renaissance schoolboy as the personification of animal appetite.[30] Moreover, she represents the garden of human nature in its fallen aspect, understood since Augustine as comprising an adultery rather than the Pauline marriage (Ephes. 5:22-28) of the reason and the senses.[31] Acrasia, occupying the center of a parodied Eden of inner nature, and surrounded by what the Tudor homilists called "the outrageous seas of adultery,"[32] is the embodiment of the imaginary object. These sources for the canto need to be mentioned because in their composition Spenser makes up an anatomy

of the mind trapped in its narcissistic phase—and not just trapped but controlled through its own narcissism by an external power figured in Acrasia. She is the source of the imaginary behavior that Guyon has been battling in himself all along by projecting it outwards onto imaginary assailants. Acrasia is both cause and consequence of her condition then, and what we may see with Spenser is the way a mind is divided by a power which then presents itself as the overall solution to the dilemma it creates.

For Spenser's friend Fulke Greville, a shrewd realist with a strongly Puritan cast, this was a political question. How can the mind be persuaded to project false paradises and dwell in them? Greville saw it as a matter of forgetting the real context of action in finite time and place where action is possible only within the limits set by hierarchies of constraint. As I remarked earlier, temperance and moderation have etymological roots which suggest the virtues might be appreciated as something like "time-sense" and "place-sense." When limit is obscured by imaginary behavior, then, in Greville's words, there is "Infinite ambition to extend / The boundes of powre (which finite pow'res must weld)," which, he adds, "As vayne is, as desire to comprehend / and plant Eternity in nature's field."[33] The false eternity of the forever here-and-now is planted in Acrasia's field by symmetrization. Here everything is symmetrized "with equall crime" (xii.75) into an enervate identity of deadlocked opposites: man *versus* woman, nature *versus* art, action *versus* passion, Mars *versus* Venus, coveting *versus* combat. And in an important insight of Spenser's, developed in the fountain of the nymphs passage (60-79), the symmetrization comes as the only solution to the condition of divide-and-rule which it creates. This code of synthesis through conflict, conflict through synthesis, generates in the alienated "self" a desire for the ultimate "other" projected as a utopia "that fairer seemes, the lesse ye see her may" (74). And the utopia is then supplied to the alienated dreamer, in a Bower of Bliss full of the special effects we now take for granted as features of modern living: artificial naturalism (14, 44, 61), climate control (51), white noise (71), a consoling background sound like muzak (74-76), the hunger to consume (74), the reduction of relationship to commodity (78). One may analyze each of these imaginary events down into the false polarities that sustain them, but why bother? The overall form is clear: the Bower of Bliss is "the vision of harmony by a being of discord."[34]

The new liberal attitude which Greville sensed and which is depicted in the egalitarian giant of Book Five was not yet a surrounding presence in Spenser's day. Perhaps its incompleteness allowed insight into its supporting psychology. Spenser saw that the psyche began to be disorganized when a trick of perception was reinforced by certain contexts into a technique or habit of response. Courtly love was one of those contexts. It tended to make a fetish out of the imaginary phase of perception, sustaining the fetish with a whole code of imaginary social behavior. An example may be found in the erotic game of "Whilest louing thou maust loued be with equall crime" (75) played between Guyon and the nymphs in Acrasia's fountain, where the girls constitute themselves as objects for Guyon's perception and Guyon, in his turn, symmetrizes the event by constituting himself, or allowing himself to be constituted by the girls, as an object for their perception in a dance of activity and passivity. The encounter suggests that some imaginary behavior is natural to courtship. This may be why Spenser is careful to distinguish the natural from the artificial contexts of a normal human reflex. The contexts in which the imaginary response occurs in Guyon's behavior demonstrate that it is a legitimate human reflex, abused only when it is prolonged by the hostility of revenge or made into an obsessive game. Under the stress of aggression the mental short-cut of reducing complexity to a state of equivalent opposition has a certain survival value because it symmetrizes figure-ground separations to the perceiver's advantage: "it's either him or me." As a logic of short-term survival the reflex applies to precise states of *real* confrontation where "either/or" choices are quick and necessary. Spenser's argument with binary thinking, therefore, is heard when it has been elevated in society to a way of life, to a way of organizing *all* perception, as it is in Acrasia's bower.

Acrasia embodies the dangerous power which this abuse of perception involves. Since Guyon's last act is the dramatic destruction of her system it is important to ask how this sudden destruction comes about. Certainly it is done with fury, and if we recall Guyon's encounter with Furor we will see in psychological detail why a radical response to Acrasia is the only one possible under the circumstances because it is the expression of a natural reflex on Guyon's part. In the events of canto four, the confrontation invokes Atin, who is evidently an atavistic readiness of adrenalin—

"his in wrong and right" (22)—darting between the pagan brothers after first advising Guyon to fight or flee (39). As we have seen, it is natural in a crisis to assume a mental stance that reifies the self against the other, because the passions are released from their normal hierarchy in which "the irascible inclining yields hope in support of the concupiscible" (Coeffeteau, *Table of Humane Passions*, p. 42). Once polarized, they lend strength to each other: in Coeffeteau's words, "they back and sustain one another, by this Union and Mutuall Consent" (p. 156). Konrad Lorenz makes the same point: "Conflict between independent sources of impulse is able to produce, within the organism, tensions which lend firmness to the whole system, much as the stays of a mast give it stability by pulling in opposite directions."[35] Stephen Bateman, in his redaction of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, says of this identity-in-opposition, "And so as these qualytes preuaile and haue maisterie, the elements be called Actiue and Passiue, able to do and able to suffer."[36] Anger may be a normal component of the response. Le Coeffeteau explains that when the passions act in concert, "it may release choler and deprive the soul of contentment until the difficulty has been removed" (p. 156). This seems to happen in Guyon's case with the untying of Furor.[37] Altogether, then, canto four provides an analysis of a natural psychological event, the only problem being that it was exaggerated by an imaginary attitude on Guyon's part that was fed by the wrath and pity he felt at the story of Phedon and had its source in the fantasy of moral individualism that Archimago invoked: "Faire sonne of *Mars*, that seeke with warlike spoile, / And great Atchieu'ments great your selfe to make" (i.8). Significantly, Phedon's story was a tragedy of the animal instincts, and animal behavior is the original context of the short-lived response to a short-lived crisis. Aquinas, remarking on the proper subservience of the territorial to the procreative impulse in man, notes, "This is the reason why fights between animals are about concupiscible things, about food and sexuality" (*Summa*. I.81.2). Now the experience Guyon is subjected to in the Bower is similar to the crisis with Furor in its psychology of the organism under stress, except that where the earlier event was only an occasion, the Bower is an extended series of crises all serving gradually to make stress seem beautiful and natural. Guyon is free of his high-minded ethical independence—the false attitude deliberately drove itself into bankruptcy in

Mammon's cave—but while he now relies on the spiritual light of the Palmer, he is still as prone as any sentient being to the trickery of imaginary behavior. Indeed, it is going on in his sensuality. But the final lesson of Book Two is the fact that the attitude to experience and the world-view personified in Acrasia, based as it is on paradox, must finally self-destruct. A. C. Hamilton has pointed out that "The Bower has, in effect, destroyed itself"[38] in the mind of the reader through its imagery of successive degradation. It may be more precise to say that the Bower destroys itself through the explosion of the crisis it generates in Guyon. As distinct from Grill, who prefers the adrenalized harmonies to which he has become habituated, Guyon, from his time in the House of Alma, is spiritually directed, socially aware and, perhaps most important of all, open to the full range and responsiveness of feeling which an earlier rational virtue had divided and ruled.

It seems, for Spenser, that secular virtue, based as it is on a metaphor of equivalent opposition, makes the animal or gut reaction to a crisis uniformly predominant in human affairs. The animal reaction is continually figured in Book Two in the metaphors of chivalric idealism, suggesting that under this code the territorial impulse as represented in the knight dangerously symmetrizes itself with the procreative impulse as represented in the lady, whom it is supposed to serve and protect the way thorns protect a rose. A world view that habitually pits the isolated individual against other individuals, whether it is the lady or her enemies, is the cause of all such states of symmetrized passion. Consequently, the individual exists in a state of unnatural stress and paranoia, accepting crisis behavior as the norm. In contrast to this "heroic enthusiasm," the cool hierarchies of organized behavior proceed from the immanent authority of the soul. Plutarch says, speaking through Holland, "But in the soule, it is not possible that there bee engendred anie mirth, joy and contentment, unlesse the first foundation be laied in peace of conscience, and tranquillite of spirit. . . ."[39]

This calm is in danger of being lost in Spenser's time as an individualized moral idealism makes all responses stressful. Idealized temperance creates the very division which it seeks to quell; it presents itself as the harmonious solution to the divisiveness that it generates. One feels this stress particularly in the suffocating harmonies of Acrasia's bower, a closed system at the

point of rupture. Where artificial stress comes from a habit of mind which strips away the contextual levels of the real and replaces it with a mock drama of crisis survival, the only way out of the paradox is to widen one's horizons to include the missing levels of context in which right action is possible. This is how Arthur behaves when confronted by the paradoxical identity-in-opposition of the pagan brothers: it "forced him his ground to trauerse wide" (viii.35). The to-and-fro, trial-and-error hunt for additional reaches of context is precisely the movement of Book Two with its metaphor of sailing.

> As a tall ship tossed in troublous seas,
> Whom raging windes threatning to make the pray
> Of the rough rockes, do diuersly disease,
> Meetes two contrary billowes by the way,
> That her on either side do sore assay,
> And boast to swallow her in greedy graue;
> She scorning both their sprights, does make wide way,
> And with her brest breaking the fomy waue,
> Does ride on both their backs, and faire her selfe doth saue. (ii.24)

In his second book Spenser explores the paradoxes that result when thinking closes itself off to contexts of real action by positing elegant symmetries. He will go on next to write an exuberantly asymmetrical book in the vision of the interlocking levels of society-in-history-in-nature.

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NOTES

1 For the aesthetic rather than theological summary of the question of parallel structure, see William Blissett, "Florimell and Marinell," *SEL* 5 (1965), 87. For Book I as a critique of Protestant idealism, Sean Kane, "Spenser and the Frame of Faith," *UTQ* 50 (1981), 253-68.

2 "The First Anniversarie. An Anatomy of the World," ll. 216-18.

3 Cicada says of the "heroic enthusiast," "because he is not in the temperance of mediocrity, but in the excess of contradictions, his soul is discordant" (Giordano Bruno, *The Heroic Enthusiast*, trans. L. Williams [London: Redway, 1887], p. 61).

4 *Renaissance Poetics and the Problem of Power* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 120.

5 *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum*, VI.iii, in *Works*, ed. James Spedding et al. (London: Longman, 1857-64), II, 477.

6 *Complete Works*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1912-26), III, 24-25, cited in Michael West, "Spenser and the Renaissance Ideal of Christian Humanism," *PMLA* 88 (1973), 1013-32.

7 *Works*, ed. J. William Hebel et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931-41), II, 130, cited in West.

8 *Marginalia*, ed. G. C. Moore-Smith (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), p. 156. For Spenser, magnificence, the pursuit of deserved glory, is grounded in the various virtues which it links together and Christianizes in the figure of Arthur. This leads to a pluralism in Spenser's attitude to earthly and heavenly glory which is traced by Carol Kaske, "Spenser's Pluralistic Universe," in *Contemporary Thought on Edmund Spenser*, ed. Richard Fushell and Bernard Vondersmith (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 121-49. For the mixed classical and Christian lineage of magnificence, see Rosemund Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 57 ff. For the link between magnificence and Aquinas' conception of magnanimity as a part of fortitude, see Michael F. Maloney, "St. Thomas and Spenser's Virtue of Magnificence," *JEGP* 52 (1953), 58-62.

9 *FQ*, V.ii.30. For quotation from *The Faerie Queene* I refer to the *Works*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al., 11 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1932-57).

10 D. W. Robertson makes the relevant historical comment on this exchange in Book V: "After some argument, in which Arthegall adduces various analogous hierarchies, Talus throws the giant down from his eminence and drowns him in the sea, also dispersing a 'lawlesse multitude,' who followed the giant in pursuit of 'uncontrolled freedom.' But in spite of Talus and his flail, they were to emerge from the 'holes and bushes' to which he scattered them, and, by the second half of the eighteenth century, to begin asserting with some success a new order in defiance of the hierarchical systems of the medieval past. They brought with them not only new social and political theories, but also a new art and a new aesthetics." See *Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 3-51.

11 Williams, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: The World of Glass* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 35. See Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (London: Faber & Faber, 1958). For a different opinion on the limitations of Aristotelian continence in Book II, see Peter D. Stambler, "The Development of Guyon's Christian Temperance," *ELR* 7 (1977), 51-89.

12 *Emblemes and Epigrams*, ed. F. J. Furnivall for the Early English Text Society (London: Trübner, 1876), no. 59 (p. 45).

13 John Wylkinson, *The Ethiques of Aristotle, that is to say, preceptes of good behavoure and perfighte honestie, now newly translated into English* (1547), chap. viii. In fact, Aristotle's mean is not arithmetical or golden, and he treats a virtue as a mean between extremes "regarded in its essence or theoretical conception" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, ii, 6 & 8). In practice, one who aims at the mean must, like Ulysses (*Ody.* vii, 219-10), keep farthest from Charybdis, the more dangerous of the two extremes (ii, 9 & 13). But this subtlety is lost on many Renaissance commentators, who tend to see the Aristotelian mean as an absolute middle course. See William Fenn DeMoss, *The Influence of Aristotle's Politics and Ethics on Spenser* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1918; rpt. 1970).

14 *The Philosophie, commonlie called, The Morals* (London, 1603), p. 69.

15 *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p. 296.

16 "But those who joke in a tasteful way are called ready-witted, which implies a sort of readiness to turn this way and that; for such sallies are thought to be movements of the character, and as bodies are discriminated by their movement, so too are characters. To the middle stage belongs also tact. So then is the man who observes the mean, whether he be called tactful or ready-witted. . . . The buffoon, on the other hand, is the slave of his sense of humour. . . . The boor, again, is useless for such social intercourse, for he contributes nothing and finds fault with everything" (*Works*, ed. W. D. Ross, 12

vols. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1952-63], IX, iv.8.1128[a-b]). See Ernest Sirluck, "*The Faerie Queene*, Book II, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*," *MP* 49 (1951), 73-100.

17 The term "imaginary" (which has the sense of the French *l'imaginaire*) was applied by Jacques Lacan in 1953 to the state of identity with the image of the "other" (*stade du miroir*) through which a child passes in the course of forming its ego. Wilden first extended the concept beyond its limited context in Lacanian psychoanalysis. See Wilden's translation and commentary on Jacques Lacan, *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1981), originally published as *The Language of the Self* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968); and Wilden, *System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange* (London: Tavistock, 1972; rev. 2nd ed. 1980), pp. 1-30, 462-87.

18 *A Discourse on Civille Life, Containing the Ethicke Part of Morall Philosophie* (London, 1606).

19 II, 458-66.

20 Nicholas Coeffeteau, *A Table of Humane Passions*, trans. E. Grimeston (London, 1621), p. 42. Coeffeteau restates Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I. 81.2, in which the irascible power is described as a kind of "champion and defender of the concupiscible" (*propugnatrix et defensatrix concupiscibilis*) "since it rises up against anything that interferes with the suitable things which the concupiscible desires, and against anything which inflicts harm and which the concupiscible flees." See Zailig Pollock, "Concupiscence and Intemperance in the Bower of Bliss," *SEL* 20 (1980), 43-58.

21 George Boas, *Some Assumptions of Aristotle* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1959), p. 26; cited in Anthony Wilden, "Semiotics as Praxis: Strategy and Tactics," *Semiotic Inquiry/Recherches Sémiotiques* 1 (1981), 1-34.

22 I am grateful to Anthony Wilden for permission to quote from a draft manuscript, "Communication in Context: A Systems Approach." Symmetrization was first identified by Gregory Bateson in a study of the process of disintegration and increased polarization in social relations, which he saw as taking two forms: "complementary" patterns (in which two roles differ but coincide. as in dominance-submission) and "symmetrical" patterns (competitively similar behavior). See Bateson, *Naven*, 2nd rev. ed. (Cambridge, 1936; Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1958). See also René Girard's study of identification and rivalry in the novel from Cervantes to Proust, *Mensonge romantique et verité romanesque* (Paris: Grasset, 1961), trans. Yvonne Freccero as *Deceit, Desire and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965).

23 The phrase is Gregory Bateson's, from his analysis of a form of alcoholism which depends upon a symmetrical competition between the alcoholic's "self" and the "all others" symbolized by the bottle. In Bateson's analysis, the two adversaries co-exist in something like the "forward-froward" oscillation, reinforced by willed self-control and static temperance. When the bottle is removed from the relationship, pride in the reasserted "self" can only be confirmed by taking the "one little drink" that matches effort with opposition. The similar state that Guyon endures in his pride and symmetry can be understood by means of this analogy, where the temptation here is not to take the "one little drink" but rather the one precious "thing, that likt him best" (notice the inversion of word order). In their overall form, imaginary encounters of this sort constitute what Bateson was the first to call a "double bind," that is, a paradox made up of conflicting injunctions in which "either way the subject cannot win." See "The Cybernetics of 'Self': A Theory of Alcoholism," *Psychiatry* 34 (1971), 1-18; rep. in his *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Chandler, 1972), pp. 304-37.

24 *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), p. 53.

25 *Preface to Chaucer*, pp. 3-15.

26 Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre du ciel et du monde* (1377), fols. 69[d]-70[a], ed. and trans. A. D. Menut and A. J. Denomy (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1968).

27 When Chaucer's Troilus receives a "fixe and depe impressioun" of Criseyde, he immediately begins to "make a mirour of his mynde, / In which he saugh al holly hire figure." See D. W. Robertson, "Medieval Love in Chaucer," in *Preface to Chaucer*, pp. 463-503.

28 *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis.*

29 Robert M. Durling, "The Bower of Bliss and Armida's Palace," *Comparative Literature* 6 (1954), 335-47.

30 Jane Harrison, *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature* (London: Rivingtons, 1882), p. 82.

31 See Robertson's *Preface*, pp. 65-113, for tropological analyses of the Fall in the exegetical tradition and their relationship to medieval theories of perception.

32 "A Sermon Against Whoredom and Uncleanness," in *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of the Late Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1884), p. 108.

33 "A Treatise of Monarchy," VI, 200-05, in Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke), *The Remains, being Poems of Monarchy and Religion*, ed. G. A. Wilkes (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965).

34 Wilden's phrase, from his analysis of Lacan on the *stade du miroir* in *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, p. 174.

35 *On Aggression* (1963), trans. Marjorie Latzke (London: Methuen, 1966), p. 80.

36 *Battman vppon Bartholome, His Book De Proprietatibus Rerum* (1582), IV, 1.

37 With his iron teeth and his relationship to Atin's poisoned darts and to the pagan warriors, Furor recalls Plutarch's passage "Of Meekness, or How a man should refrain choler" in his *Morals*, trans. Holland: "And verily, some barbarous nations there are who used to poison their swords, & other weapons of iron; but valour hath no need at all of the venim choler. For dipped it is in reason & judgement; whereas whatsoever is corrupted with ire and furie is brittle, rotten, & easie to be broken into pieces" (p. 125).

38 *The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), p. 7.

39 "Of Vertues and Vices," in the *Morals*, p. 80.