SPENSER'S SPIRITUAL VISION:

THE FAERIE QUEENE AS A TELEOLOGICAL ROMANCE

by

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ABSTRACT

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A recent trend in Spenser studies that relies heavily on materialist thinking either undervalues or misses altogether *The Faerie Queene*'s inherent spiritual quality along with the irreducible interaction and ultimate reciprocity of earth and heaven. This thesis argues that Edmund Spenser's spiritual vision in *The Faerie Queene* expresses itself in a teleological romance that assumes a condition of mutability over stasis in the temporal earthly realm, as its first three heroes ascend a ladder of perfection that evokes the heavenly and eternal, while at the same time heavenly glory reaches down into the story "romancing" the characters and exerting its own influence on the action.

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Introduction

A recent trend in Spenser studies that relies heavily on materialist thinking either undervalues or misses altogether *The Faerie Queene's* inherent spiritual quality along with the irreducible interaction and ultimate reciprocity of earth and heaven. This thesis argues that Edmund Spenser's spiritual vision *in The Faerie Queene* expresses itself in a teleological romance that assumes a condition of mutability over stasis in the temporal earthly realm, as its first three heroes ascend a ladder of perfection that evokes the heavenly and eternal, while at the same time heavenly glory reaches down into the story "romancing" the characters and exerting its own influence on the action.

Materialist thinking that concentrates on the tangible to the neglect of the spiritual dominates recent Spenser studies. This materialism effectively obliterates the divine in the work, explaining away the spiritual in terms of earthly effects. Evidence of Spenser's spiritual vision in *The Faerie Queene*, however, serves to emphasize not only the role of the divine in the work, but the reciprocal relationship between the earthly and the heavenly whose interactions yield an intimacy but never an assimilation of one in terms of the other. Materialism, an overemphasis on the tangible, corporeal, and physical, subsequently trivializes and explains away the spiritual in material terms. Such materialist studies do violence as they attempt to redefine a work like *The Faerie Queene* apart from the pervasive spiritual values that shape and give meaning to the entire literary invention. This thesis proposes that Spenser's spiritual vision inherent in *The Faerie*

Queene resists assimilative treatments of materializing critical narratives. It shows that while Spenser mingles earthly and heavenly values, he never fuses or confuses those values, but counterpoises them in a series of suggestive *penchés* or intimate interactions in which neither one can be reduced to the other.

Chapter One will examine Spenser's teleology, delineating its Aristotelian qualities and grounding it in the Elizabethan world view. An assessment of each knight's awareness of his purpose helps establish the spiritual vision that resists modern reductionism. Chapter Two explores the relationship between Spenser's use of the romance genre and his spiritual vision. Various strains of romance and their synthesis in Spenser's work are examined, leading to an explication of this mode as a full-scale philosophy of life. Chapter Three casts *The Faerie Queene* as a teleological romance in which allegory is used, through the romance genre, to juxtapose Spenser's knights and ladies with the divine. The combination of allegory, romance, and teleology sets the stage for the cosmic dance employed by Spenser, a *grande pas de deux* in which the divine reaches for man, and man learns his steps.

Chapter One Spenser's Teleology: An End that Isn't the End

Spenser's spiritual vision in *The Faerie Queene* radiates through the lens of teleology. Teleology holds that all things are designed or directed toward a final result; it implies an inherent purpose or final cause for all that exists. Teleology says that all living things move and are moved for the sake of something, the limit of their movement or their end. This branch of philosophy embodies the concept that an explanation of the universe is impossible without a consideration of final causes.

The Faerie Queene has Aristotelian qualities, clearly seen in its teleological nature. A discussion of Aristotle's four causes lays the foundation for his teleology: material cause, efficient cause, formal cause, and final cause. The material cause of an object concerns the explanation of causes to the parts; in discussing the material cause, one details the bodily constituents of which something is comprised. The efficient cause involves the agency by which it was prepared; a discussion of efficient cause concerns the object's maker. The formal cause identifies what the object is; a discussion of an object's formal cause encompasses its definition, essence and form. The last cause, the final cause, echoes teleology's "for the sake of which"; it is the purpose or end for which the object was made. These four causes provide a philosophical analysis of the necessary conditions for an object's creation. Aristotle states that the philosopher should be concerned with all four causes, but his support of the fourth cause, the final cause, is what casts Aristotle as teleological. The final cause renders the truest explanation of the object

as its purpose is realized. Aristotle's teleological thought holds that everything is changing and moving and has some goal or purpose (Edel 61-62). A work written with teleological considerations would derive meaning and value from its goal; its goal would be a future consideration, as yet unrealized.

Standing in opposition to teleology is mechanism, which eliminates end, purpose, or goal from consideration. Mechanism seeks to use mass and motion to explain occurrences and objects as physical and chemical facts. Motion and change are not end-oriented, so no vestiges of ends and final causes are found in discussions of mechanism. This "cosmological theory [. . .] holds that all phenomena in nature are reducible to simple phenomena in such a manner that the ultimate realities of the material world are mass and motion" (Munnynck 4). Modern mechanism can be traced to Descartes, who posed the theory in opposition to the errors and excesses found in ancient and medieval thought. A natural outgrowth of mechanism is materialism, which espouses that "every incident in the history of the universe is the inevitable outcome of the mechanical and physical movements and changes which have gone before" (Maher 1). Modern science, following the lead of Descartes and others, espouses the concept of causality as simply sequence; the events of one instant are the cause of the next, so that all things may be both cause and effect. The goal of science is to gain knowledge of the conditions of the existence of certain phenomena, and "this is strictly pursued by observation, experiment, and the application of mathematical methods" (Aveling 14). A discussion of the nature of causes, as Aristotle employed, is considered not science, but metaphysics. Discourse on goals, ends, and purpose had a much greater significance in Spenser's day than it does today.

Edmund Spenser's concept of teleology was absorbed through the Middle Ages and shows the influence of St. Thomas Aquinas, whose writings spoke of natural desire and natural inclination, implying a directive principle found in every being. Creatures are directed to their ends as "the Divine plan of creation is carried out by the various beings themselves acting in conformity with their nature" (Dubray 2). Aquinas shared Aristotle's view that these beings are moved by the final cause. Aristotle writes of the final cause in Metaphysics 12.7: "Thus it produces motion by being loved, and it moves the other moving things" (Barnes 1694). In *Physics* he speaks of the prime mover as "eternal [. . .] one mover, the first to set in motion stationary things, and this being eternal will be the principle of motion for all other things" (259a 7-14). So those of Spenser's era saw the world as set in motion by one mover, through love. This was an eternal mover, the eternal being who set the world in motion. The world was directed by this divine being toward a final result, and there was an inherent purpose or final cause for all things. Living things moved and were moved for the sake of their end, goal, and purpose. To truly understand the teleological nature of *The Faerie Queene*, one must step inside the world of the author.

Spenser's England was a theocentric society united by common assumptions. E.M.W. Tillyard provides an account of Elizabethan order in *The Elizabethan World Picture*, recounting notions that were "taken for granted by the ordinary educated Elizabethan; the utter commonplaces too familiar for the poets to make detailed use of except in explicitly didactic passages, but essential as basic assumptions and invaluable at moments of high passion" (vii-viii). Reading Spenser with the Elizabethan world view reveals allusions that expose the teleological nature of his spiritual vision.

The characteristics of a medieval model still permeated Renaissance writings. C.S. Lewis, in *The Discarded Image*, confirms that the earlier model was foundational by illustrating its elements with the works of later writers. This medieval model was not "totally and confidently abandoned till the end of the seventeenth century" (13). It is crucial to realize that the Renaissance was not a purely secular age; the use of a medieval model in Renaissance works evidences a struggle between the two worlds. Spenser effectively reconciles that struggle, however, as he reaches across the eras and blends elements of classical, biblical and medieval romance, crafting a work that shows human endeavor under divine design.

Tillyard describes the Elizabethan world as "an ordered universe arranged in a fixed system of hierarchies, but modified by man's sin and the hope of his redemption" (5-6). A sense of cosmic order permeates *The Faerie Queene*, setting up a harmony with the universal order. Part of this universal order is a set of beliefs about sin and salvation. Tillyard categorizes this belief set as paramount; it included "the orthodox scheme of the bad angels, the creation, the temptation and fall of man, the incarnation, the atonement, and regeneration through Christ" (18). Such beliefs were pervasive in the Elizabethan age and were accompanied by the assertion that things were once better. Before the Fall, life in Eden was perfect; man lived in communion with God. Spenser's readers understood their fallen state, but the teleological aspect of Spenser's vision allowed man to see his end in both a fully redeemed and glorified state and to move toward it. Man's contention that things were once better led not to doom and gloom but to the reminiscence of past splendor and the anticipation of future glory. The Elizabethans were thus able to combine pessimism and optimism while still regarding their journey through

life as worthy. As Tillyard points out, "Yet it is the same man who can see the glory of God not merely in abstraction from secular life, in the contemplation of the divine presence, but *per speculum creaturarum*" (24). Those of Spenser's day saw the glory of God in all. Even with his strong proclivity toward order, Spenser saw the value of mutability in nature. Just as the wind is constant in its never failing variability, mutability of the earthly order is part of the larger cosmic stability. Spenser's conjoining of such concepts evinces "his overmastering passion for order and the old double pull to relish the world and to despise it" (Tillyard 17). The medieval model is also conjoined with the Elizabethan mind in Spenser's encyclopedic interests. He is writing epic, after all. While the story's spirit and purpose are romance, a large part of the form of the epic remains. Tillyard captures Spenser's attitude toward reconciling disparate interests and competing sensibilities as he states that the Elizabethan mind reflects "sufficient optimism and sufficient pessimism to satisfy the different tastes of the varied types of man and the genius for inconsistency and contradiction that distinguishes the single human mind" (21).

Works handling so much complexity are not well served when they are explained reductively by some single postmodern theory or another. An age which has rejected the supernatural, the metaphysical, the moral, and even the authorial does little to shine any appreciable light on what an author like Spenser is doing. Paul Gifford examines how Barthes and Foucault advocated an abandonment of the authorial subject, and in the 1960s and 1970s, both the author and the subject were annihilated by a structuralist demand for "synchronicity and system, multiplying the cumulative effect of all possible deconstructions" (53). Such thinking denies the world view, mindset, and influences of

the author who held the pen in favor of advancing a structural criticism and textual deconstruction that holds that there will be no final end result or outcome. It disregards purposive intentionality and discounts the historical moment and context of the work. As Gifford states, "Anti-teleological animus does also lead its radicals to abolish the historicity of the writing act, along with all subject-related purposiveness" (57). In their reductionism, certain critics are missing the context and intent of the author. Such critics inflict their own "logic of inquiry borrowed from [their] own methodological embarrassments, [their] own aesthetic preferences or [their] own instinctual drives, and especially, from [their] own ideological refusals" (Gifford 58). Gifford says that "knowledge is adequate conformity of knowing mind to object of knowledge (in all its reality). Where this defining statute of the critic is forgotten, we transgress [. . .] on pain of partiality, futility, irrelevance and final solipsism" (58). If we neglect the author's understanding of his world and his purposiveness in creating the work, we fall short.

Paul Stevens disregards "the defining statute of the critic" in his article, "Spenser and the End of the British Empire" as he attempts to "enlist Spenser's aid in coming to a fuller understanding of what we might mean by empire" (5). Stevens looks at Spenser's statements about mutability and interprets them merely as a longing for cultural permanence. He establishes an interpretation of grace in the Bible as something only possible through faith, but a faith that he insists Ephesians equates with strength. Only one who is "strong in the Lord' and "puts on the whole armour of God" can receive the grace that will enable him to stand. Stevens writes, "Grace, it is implied, is a surplus of explicitly military power coming to the rescue [. . .] grace has become a matter of shock and awe" (12). Spenser's representation of grace, Stevens writes, "has another more

important insight to offer. Not only does it stimulate the English to expansion, but even in its very virtue it insulates them against difference and cultural mutability" (16). Stevens feels this is seen most clearly in "the final cantos of the poem where the very real horror of change, death, decay, and difference is *aestheticized* by grace from the outset. In the very act of allegorizing mutability her threat is *anaesthetized*. [. . .] Clearly, Jove's empire and maybe all empires have something to do with the longing for cultural permanence" (18). Stevens's misunderstanding of Spenser's longing for permanence clearly shows the importance of an understanding of the poet's world view. Spenser longed for permanence, but it was an immutability that only eternity would provide. He speaks in the Mutabilitie Cantos of a time when "…all shall changed bee, / And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see" (VII. vii. 59.4-5).

Jeffrey Knapp's article, "Spenser the Priest," stands in direct contrast to Stevens's misinterpretation. Knapp intends to show "how religion helped beget the idea of the poet that helped beget England's literary renaissance" (63). He writes mainly about Spenser's supposed desire to profess himself a priest through the fiction of Colin in *Colin Clout Comes Home Againe*. After setting forth the arguments of Helgerson and Rambuss that Spenser's reticence to identify his true calling evinces some restraint imposed on his ambitions, Knapp characterizes Spenser's unwillingness "to profess as a choice, not an imposition – a divinely inspired choice that launched and defined his career" (63). He feels Spenser's allegory allows him to "stoop to his readers' capacities without surrendering his lofty purposes" (68). After all, in his Letter to Raleigh, "Spenser represents concealed messages as the ones a good shepherd delivers to edify the broadest range of his flock" (68). Knapp makes the point that "*The Faerie Queene* [. . .]

differentiates the power to preach from professional clergymen" (70). He points out that there are two "positive scriptural preachers in the Book of Holiness [. . .] both women, Una and Fidelia, even though in Spenser's day, of course, the established church did not ordain women" (70). Knapp affirms that religion helped beget Spenser the poet; whether or not Spenser saw himself as a priest, it is clear that he embraced faith and its effects on the lives of mankind.

The critical focus shifts abruptly from the spiritual and aesthetic to the scientific and material when one considers William A. Oram's "Spenserian Paralysis," which asserts a "furious helplessness" that "results from his [Redcrosse's] laboring desperately in the ford without being able to do anything" (50). Oram feels that Spenser uses the "violent stalemate" to shape "his battle scenes to stress their frustrating indeterminacy" (50). Blinded by the trees of materialism, Oram misses the teleological forest; he does not see Spenser's end or purpose. Spenser helps his knights bypass stalemate through a reciprocity between earth and heaven that moves them closer to glory. That reciprocity resembles a *grande pas de deux*, a two-way cosmic dance evincing the relationship of man to the divine. Instead of a simplistic battle schema in which one wins and one loses, Spenser paints for us a complex ballet with spins and swerves, whose movements continue on into the future for as far as his vision takes us. Heaven has taken the lead in this cosmic dance, and Spenser's spiritual vision depicts man learning his steps as he moves in time with the divine. But it is heaven's active participation in the story, its divine reaching toward man, that completes the *grande pas de deux*. The divine provides aid in the form of other characters of virtue, a divinely-created nature, and the protection of holy armor. Moved by divine love, these knights in turn move others. Each of

Spenser's first three knights seeks Gloriana's fame and glory in their quests; they are united in that glory, and, in turn, they manifest heavenly light in their thoughts and actions. Rather than victims of "violent stalemate," these three knights are on a journey toward glory. All three are moving toward their final redeemed and glorified state, they grow as a result of their quests, and they actually capture glory in a greater measure with each trial and ensuing restoration. As they reflect their creator's goodness, they climb heavenward and become living examples of his glory. Spenser narrates a heavenly "wooing" in his tale of knights and ladies. The creator, ever present in nature and in an element of each knight, works to draw his knights toward himself. In their living out of virtue, their desire is to show his goodness, the knights are drawn to the divine and, in turn, show their love and allegiance to him. Their aspirations toward an idealized life and their conquests, rescues, and adventures lead to the fusion of teleology and romance.

An understanding of Spenser's unified spiritual vision, a two-way "cosmic dance," negates the view of two distinct matrices proposed by John S. Pendergast in "Christian Allegory and Spenser's 'General Intention.'" Pendergast concurs with Sean Kane, who sees "Spenser's challenge as the need to negotiate between two commonly held yet often contradictory strands of humanism, one which strove for perfection on earth, the other which strove for a perfection outside of earthly desires" (272). I argue that Spenser did not strive to negotiate; he rather created a teleological romance that coordinated the two, making them part of the same dance. Pendergast further fragments Spenser's intent by stating that the text "includes an interpretive safety valve aimed at furthering the poetic image the queen favored" (273). This kind of criticism rents Spenser's intent in order to analyze it, making Spenser more the sycophant than the artist.

I argue that *The Faerie Queene* is more fairly treated and fully realized when seen thematically, in a metaphysical reading, as a unified spiritual vision.

As Spenser's spiritual vision unites the earthly and heavenly, it predisposes his characters for romantic triumph. Such triumph is easily misunderstood in light of binary thinking, as evidenced in Joanne Craig's "All Flesh Doth Frailtie Breede." Craig states that "*The Faerie Queene* ends in a prayer for release from change, over which the female figure of Mutabilitie presides, but the prayer is in itself an expression of defeat. The productions of eternity remain implicated in the corporeal productions of time, and the doomed struggles to substitute one model of creation for another generate the energies of the poem" (26). The struggles of the poem are anything but doomed in light of teleology. And the energies of the poem are generated not through "struggles to substitute one model of creation for another" but through the reciprocal nature of the *grande pas de deux*. Heaven, through various emissaries, reaches for man and man reciprocates, moving closer to perfection as he reflects the glory of divine perfection. Man perfects his steps as he moves in concert with the divine.

Spenser advances that unified spiritual vision by using knights who are stock romantic characters; his sense of teleology is evident in the creation of these characters and the paths they travel. He fashions Redcrosse as a knight of holiness, but Redcrosse does not manifest this characteristic unfailingly. Redcrosse is, as Spenser's other knights, on a journey that moves him closer to glory. Just as teleology holds that all things are designed for or directed toward a final result, Redcrosse's battles, falls, and restorations serve to move him toward his glorification and eternal perfection. His falls as well as his successes serve as catalysts that propel him further along his journey. Spenser's Letter to

Raleigh identifies Redcrosse as wearing "the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul in Ephesians" (Spenser 717). Redcrosse's purpose must be clear to him from the very beginning as he is outfitted with the whole armour of God explained in Ephesians 6:10-17. That armour includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit; such armour enables him to "take [his] stand against the devil's schemes." With this armor, he is aware of his purpose. The knight of virtue seeks to fulfill that purpose as he embodies truth, exemplifies righteousness, and brings peace; through faith he acquires salvation and a spirit that is in concert with the divine. His deeds and his armor both reflect the glory of the divine.

Spenser's knights display a purpose that permeates the quest, even in the face of hardships. In Book I, rain forces Redcrosse and Una into a wood where they are threatened by Error. Redcrosse defeats Error after a struggle, but it is obvious that both hardship and victory play a part in this cumulative quest; all experiences work together to move Redcrosse on his journey. After his principal downfall, a liason with Duessa after which he partakes of a charmed spring, Redcrosse is taken to the House of Holiness where Contemplation shows him the New Jerusalem. More aware of his end than ever after seeing this vision, Redcrosse is restored and ready to resume his quest. When his quest to free Una's parents is fulfilled, he is betrothed to his lady love, but forgets not his end. His duty to the Faery Queene calls amidst the joy of betrothal:

> Yet swimming in that sea of blisfull ioy,
> He nought forgott, how he whilome had sworne,
> In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,

Vnto his Faery Queene backe to retourne. (I.xii.41.5-8)

Redcrosse is a knight aware of his end and purpose. He is not a perfect creature but is on a journey that reveals a complex character. In Redcrosse we see human nature juxtaposed with a Christ-like willingness to risk death in order to serve others; both are elements of one on a journey of salvation. Spenser uses Redcrosse, a knight aware of his own end and purpose, to realize the teleological nature of the work.

Sir Guyon, as well, displays a teleological nature. Aware of his chivalric duty to defend the orphan Ruddymane, he embarks on his quest; he knows his end and purpose:

Such and such euil God on Guyone reare,
And worse and worse young Orphane be thy payne,
If for through dew vengeance doe forbeare,
Till guiltie blood her guerdon doe obtayne. (II.i.61.5-8)

Guyon also demonstrates his knowledge of his purpose as he flees Occasion, ignoring her taunts in Book II, canto v. Heeding the advice of the Palmer, Guyon avoids worldly self-sufficiency. Aware of the long view of his quest rather than a temporary human victory, he departs and moves on in his quest. Discovering the Bower of Bliss, a monument to artifice and the deadend pleasures of an earth divided from heaven, Guyon fulfills his quest by ensnaring Acrasia and destroying the bower. Once again, Guyon's perception of the purpose and end of living things is revealed as he destroys a perversion of nature. As he and the Palmer restore the men who have been turned to animal form – reinstilling their humanity with again with a spiritual nature – they evince an ability to see things as they are in the fallen world of the Elizabethan ethos: "Sad end (quoth he) of life intemperate, / and mournefull meed of ioyes delicious" (II.xii.85.6-7). Guyon recognizes

the perversion of man and nature and, with properly moderated wrath, he restores the bower so that it will move toward its given end.

Arthur is made aware of his purpose and end through a vision that compels his quest. Glimpsing Gloriana in a dream, Arthur is awakened to his quest to find her. Spenser's Letter to Raleigh tells us that he chose Arthur to be "the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve priuate morall vertues" (Spenser 715). As Arthur interacts with other knights in the poem, he works to both display and impart glory. He constantly interrupts his own quest to aid others, evincing his understanding of the teleological nature of life, as long-term, overarching goals are cherished over temporary, selfish gain. As each knight encounters and is aided by Arthur, he is moved to become more fully what he represents as an allegorical ideal in the process of being realized.

Arthur's accoutrements speak of a long view of life, teleological in nature. His sword was forged in Mount Aetna by Merlin and tempered in the River Styx. Arthur's diamond shield displays eternal qualities; it cannot be broken and shines like the sun, calling divine grace to mind. His shield, ever sure of its purpose, vaporizes enemies. Its cover is removed only twice; its blinding power calls to mind the God that Moses could not look upon. Arthur's sword, too, has a clear purpose and end in the poem, for it can never be used against its owner. Arthur's quest seems to show the same unbroken qualities, even when interrupted. He surfaces again and again as that "good gouernour and vertuous man" about whom Spenser writes in his Letter to Raleigh: "In the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular, which virtue for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) is the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure applyable to that virtue,

which I write of in that booke" (Hamilton 716). Spenser's end is in mind as he uses Arthur to embody magnificence. Aristotle speaks of magnificence in Ethics as the generosity and liberality with which great and noble deeds are done, resulting in honor. Arthur knows and evinces his purpose well as he interacts with other characters, lending aid along the way. He is never deterred, however, from his original quest for he knows his end and purpose. As Arthur's quest is to find Gloriana, his constant reappearances refocus the poem on glory – his hope of glory in finding the one whose name is associated with the words "great," "glorious," and "grace." When Arthur's quest is realized, he will acquire glory and divine grace. Glory is a crucial part of the journey of each knight, as he reflects and retains glory, climbing ever higher up a ladder that evokes the earthly and heavenly reciprocity vital to a teleological understanding of Spenser's work.

Chapter Two Spenser's Romance: Life as a Quest

The Faerie Queene is traditionally understood as standing squarely in the romance tradition, with its conquests, rescues and adventure, preternatural beings, mystery and revelation, and its aspiration toward an idealized life. Romance is a triumph of the ideal, the spiritual, over the material, the real. Spenser's choice of narrative mode is not merely a literary convention, but is developed in the work as a full-scale philosophy of life. Spenser uses the genre of romance to capture his teleological world for the reader.

Various strains of romance are inherent in *The Faerie Queene*. Biblical romance is evident from the beginning as the two major quest patterns of the Bible appear are shadowed in Redcrosse's quest. The first quest pattern begins with the first couple's loss through the Fall of Eden (with its Tree and Water of Life), to the wilderness of wandering and error, to the regaining of the Paradise through Christ. The second continues with the Exodus, a time of wandering interrupted by the vision of a Promised Land guarded by Anakim. More wandering ensues until Israel enters the Promised Land led by Joshua, but Israel's wandering from God continues until its deliverance by Christ the redeemer. The new nation continues to fall into error and wander, but anticipates a New Jerusalem at the apocalyptic Second Coming of Christ. These biblical quest patterns are recalled as we see the wandering of our knights and the hope of Gloriana's court. Perhaps the most significant model of biblical romance employed by Spenser is Revelation's apocalyptic

conflict between good and evil, which involves a dragon-killing motif found in Redcrosse's adventures as well. That dragon-slaying adventure ultimately results in the restoration of Una to her parents, Adam and Eve, just as the apocalyptic biblical story restores the true church to Christ. Hamilton writes that "biblical romance is important for Spenser because it envisages something ultimately beyond the romance world, just as the New Jerusalem Redcrosse yearns to enter [. . .] represents something higher than the earthly Cleopolis for which he still toils" (610).

Spenser's inspiration simply begins with biblical romance; classical romance elements permeate his work as well. Spenser's debt to classical romance is mentioned in his Letter to Raleigh in which he names "his models in this enterprise as being Homer [and] Virgil" (Moore 321). Classical romance elements such as interrupting adventures that delay the culmination of the quest are used by Spenser to elucidate his sense of mankind's panorama; Spenser dealt with the timeless nature of mankind's flaws, foibles, and his desire to rise above them, and his use of ancient elements only serves to emphasize this. Odysseus's adventures provide a journey through enticements and difficulties not unlike the journey of Spenser's knights, and one cannot help but glimpse shadows of Odysseus and Circe in the characters of Guyon and Acrasia. In his endeavor to fashion for his readers a virtuous gentleman, Spenser calls upon the work of the ancients, melding and blending to suit his purpose. Virgil's *Aeneid* merges the epic seen in the *Iliad* with the romance of the *Odyssey*, and Spenser uses his romance to model this combination of the "public (Iliadic) and the private or ethical (Odyssean) virtues" in the heroes of *The Faerie Queene* (Hamilton 611).

The blending of biblical and classical romance needs a perfect medium, and the romance genre provides this for Spenser as it merges these elements into the quest of the knight. Ronald Crane considers medieval romance one of Spenser's richest inspirations, writing that "both in the general conception of his epic and in the detail of its episodes and imagery [Spenser's debt] was to Malory; but he adapted to his own purpose also material from Bevis of Hampton, Huon of Bordeaux [. . .] and doubtless others as well" (26). Crane contends that Spenser handled this material just as he did the material of the ancients, as "never content simply to retell a story he had read, he fused together elements from different sources, heightened some details and suppressed others, until the result was essentially a new creation" (26-27). Rosemary Freeman calls chivalric action "a device to carry allegory" and illuminates the prominence Spenser accorded to the life of action as she writes, "The Red Cross Knight is not allowed to remain on the Mount near the House of Holiness gazing at the vision shewn him by Contemplation but is required to return to the world and fulfill his quest" (43-44). Medieval romance, with its questing knights focused on their end, provides an ideal medium for Spenser's teleological romance.

Spenser's blending of biblical, classical, and medieval romance presents a spiritual vision that is supported in Northrop Frye's study in *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Frye attributes the mythological or imaginative universe to the structure of the Bible, which "provided the outline of such a universe for European literature" (vii). Myths, according to Frye, hold together and create a mythology, "a large interconnected body of narrative that covers all the religious and historical revelation that its society is concerned with" (9). One of the functions of this

myth is to "tell that culture what it is and how it came to be, in their own mythical terms. Thus they transmit a legacy of shared allusion to that culture" (9). Frye considers the Bible the consummate example of how myths come together to make up a mythology, as writes, "The Bible is the epic of the creator, with God as its hero. Romance is the structural core of all fiction; being directly descended from folktale, it brings us closer than any other aspect of literature to the sense of fiction, considered as a whole, as the epic of the creature, man's vision of his own life as a quest" (15).

The conditions of romance provided Spenser exactly what he needed to create such a questing narrative. Kathleen Williams describes romance as "owing no allegiance to the world of external reality" (558), a condition that freed Spenser's imagination. Particularly in the Renaissance, not all valued this distinction and some criticized romances, Crane writes, as their "remoteness from reality, their improbability, their extravagant idealism were bound to offend taste formed on the literature of antiquity" (20). But Williams argues that because romance is not fettered by any cataloguing of physical fact or even logical cause and effect, it has the freedom "to be faithful to the truth of the mind, so that its strangeness can give a remarkably lifelike impression" (558). The romance genre's imaginative quality and spontaneity provide for the mysterious moving of unknown forces within the hero and the reader, a perfect climate for Spenser's unmoved mover to initiate the *grande pas de deux*. In addition, the reader of romance could always rest assured that its ending would be affirmative, and this holds true as well in Spenser's view of life as a quest; for one day "all shall changed bee" (VII.vii.59.4.). Frye confirms this as he explains romance as "normally comic in the sense that usually the heroine's wiles [. . .] are successful and the story ends with marriage or some kind of

deliverance. Tragedy or pathos comes from some obstacle or accident which frustrates this conclusion" (92). The twists and turns characteristic of romance gave Spenser the perfect platform on which to stage the growth of his knights. As his romance is the story of knights ascending a ladder to perfection, the obstacles in their paths serve as rungs on the ladder to a goal.

The characteristic worlds of romance, complete with pitfalls and snares, were the perfect setting for Spenser's examples of virtue. In medieval and Renaissance romances, knights moved from the known heroic world to "remote castles, each with its own bizarre 'customs' and taboos. With the intrusion of the stranger from the outside and the beyond [. . .] into the protected and festive milieu of the court, the knight of the quest, isolated from his fellows, is on his own" (Steadman 98). The land of romance is peopled by monsters, ogres and enchantresses; its landscape is dotted with magic wells and talking trees. The traditional world has been left behind and it is up to the hero to use his virtue to survive and complete his quest in such a world. In Spenser's teleological world, when the knight errs, wanders, or falls short, the divine hand is there to invite the knight to partner once again in the cosmic dance. The reciprocal relationship of the earthly and heavenly is naturally typified in the romance world of *The Faerie Queene.*

Spenser's romantic hero evinces a relationship to the world around him as well as a reciprocity with the divine, underscoring the importance of the temporal and heavenly realms. Earthly and heavenly values are balanced, not assimilated in this work. Spenser's knights, at their best, reflect the glory of God but they never become God. Frye typifies the hero of romance as superior in degree to other men. Although this hero is a human being, he is capable of extraordinary action and performs great deeds,

courageous marvels and feats of endurance (Frye 33). In the romantic hero's world, the ordinary laws of nature are not completely overthrown but deferred; animals speak, weapons are enchanted, and ogres and giants abound. Such romantic wonders are a natural vehicle for Spenser's work, as all of these elements combine into a natural world and a divine realm that work together to aid in the knight's quest. As Spenser's first three knights fulfill Frye's specifications, they also manifest Spenser's spiritual vision. Each hero's purpose is connected to his quest and wrapped up in a movement toward glory; compelled by the unmoved mover who extends his hand, each hero learns to move in concert with the divine. Each knight is aided by some metaphysical good as the divine reaches down repeatedly to help move the hero up the ladder. The ultimate triumph in the story is unseen as Spenser's work is unfinished, but it is shadowed in the fulfillment of each knight's quest. And Spenser's parting words to the reader in the Mutabilitie Cantos speak of the ultimate, unrealized triumph, "when all shall changed bee" (VII.vii.59.4).

While romance provides the unity of the work through its distinctive quests, allegory broadens both the scope and the depth of the work, allowing Spenser various means of expressing his spiritual vision. C.S. Lewis sees *The Faerie Queene* as a synthesis of medieval allegory and romantic epic as he writes, "the multiplicity of the stories, far from impairing the unity, supports it; for just that multiplicity, that packed fullness of 'vehement adventure,' is the quality of Faerie Land" (380). To Lewis, the "allegorical core" of each book bolsters the primary structure of romance, supported in addition by the idea of Arthur's quest for Gloriana, which moves across the entire poem. Arthur, allegorically, is Magnificence, and he relates to Aristotle's Magnanimity, which

implies the height of honorable conduct. Arthur's quest is to find Gloriana, who is glory itself allegorically speaking. In his Letter to Raleigh, Spenser reveals that Gloriana represents glory in his general intention and, particularly, Queen Elizabeth and the glory of her reign. John Hankins writes that Elizabeth must embody not only glory but also those abstract virtues that augment her glory, assuring us that glory is available to peasant as well as queen as it "may be won by those in all walks of life," quoting Romans 2:7, 10: "[God] will give to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life [. . .] glory, honour, and peace to every man who worketh good" (54). Hankins writes that this verse provides a "shimmering vision of an ultimate glory from the virtuous performance of the daily task" (54). In their daily romantic deeds and endeavors, Spenser's knights reflect both their queen's glory and, above her, the Christian glory accorded to God.

Reflecting divine glory and honor may be difficult concepts to conceive in modern times, but the word "magnificence" is early defined as "fortitude; one of the 'cardinal virtues' recognized in scholastic ethics" and "one of the seven steps of virtue" (OED). Gavin Douglas's poem, The Palice of Honour, addresses the question of true honor. When the palice is finally found, set squarely on the bedrock of moral virtue, it is surrounded by officers named Charity, Conscience, and Justice. Honour, glimpsed only momentarily, is God. His glory blinds the onlooker as does the glory of God so often in biblical accounts. In Douglas's Palice, true honor is embodied in a vision of God. So a knight of glory or magnificence moves us, as an image or shadow of divine glory. Gavin's poem shows a common attitude toward mankind in sixteenth century England: the glory of God radiates down the Chain of Being, through his regent on earth, to all

humanity and the rest of creation. But the position each human occupies on that Chain is not static. We can always lower ourselves by indulging our base passions or raise ourselves by seeking virtue and right reason. Spenser's romance moves us, as we follow his aspiring heroes on their quests, toward that divine glory.

Our heroes' quest for divine glory is essential to an understanding of Spenser's vision of life as a quest. Elizabeth Spiller's misunderstanding of Spenser's inherent spiritual vision as it relates to the romantic quest is evident in "Poetic Partheno genesis and Spenser's Idea of Creation in *The Faerie Queene.*" She discusses how recent scholarly accounts stress the "power in self-creation" and states that Spenser "defines the romance quest as a search that creates new life" (65). Spiller agrees with other critics that *The Faerie Queene* "is an epic production in which knights, readers, and the author participate in forms of self-actualization" (65). As evidence, she draws a parallel between Arthur's and Chrysogone's slumbers, suggesting that both result in reproduction" (73). Spiller calls the story of Chyrsogone's twins a creation narrative; as Chrysogone reclines on the grass and is impregnated by the sun, she gives birth to twins. Spiller also qualifies Arthur's dream as a generative act as he produces an idea. Spiller chooses words like "rauisht" from Spenser's narrative to show that Arthur is "emasculated by Gloriana's charms," resulting in a "loss of male power" (71). Arthur is anything but diminished by his vision of Gloriana; in fact, he vows not to rest until he finds her. He is given a sense of purpose by his dream, and its result is not only material or physical as are Chrysogene's children; the result of Arthur's dream is played out on both material and spiritual levels as he pursues his earthly quest and imparts and shares glory by helping others. Arthur's quest is not, as Spiller has qualified it, "a search to

create new life" but a quest intended to both bring and impart divine glory. Arthur's dream is not self-created, but is given by the divine hand. In recalling his nocturnal vision of Gloriana, he mentions that his quest may have come by "fatall deepe foresight" (I.ix.7.1). The sense of Arthur's *telos* is further strengthened when we are told of his quest in I proem 2, and he is recognized the destined king of the Britons. Arthur's dream, in keeping with Spenser's spiritual vision as expressed through romance, is providential; he is being urged, reassured, and led on toward his goal as he moves toward the center of Faeryland. Rather than a moment of self-actualization devoid of the spiritual, this is a movement of the divine as, in keeping with Spenser's vision of the *grande pas de deux*, Arthur is encouraged and reassured upon his quest. Spiller attempts to explain the spiritual in terms of exclusively material effects, and in so doing, misses Spenser's spiritual vision.

Spenser's vision of life as a quest is embodied in the characteristically unpredictable romantic adventures of his knights as their quests show the path of most men – momentary success followed by instances of wandering and error. Dolven writes that the "romance narrative affords a literary space for testing [. . .] its generic habit of subjecting settled ideas to the disruptions of error and marvel makes it something like a mimesis or empiricism, full of the 'proving' and testing' that are already native to the chivalric vocabulary" (134). These times of testing and proving are not simply the series of battles one would expect from the chivalric setting; each knight experiences internal conflict as well. John Steadman writes that Spenser succeeds in adapting the conventions of Renaissance chivalric romance to the spiritual realm by "assimilating them to a different tradition: the spiritual combat against the world, the flesh and the devil" (142).

Frye, who sees romance as "the structural core of all fiction [. . .] the epic of the creature, man's vision of his own life as a quest" (15), would likely view the romantic and spiritual realms as already linked. Steadman sees Spenser's Redcrosse Knight as an exemplar of this inner battle, as he is "subject to sin but also repentance, in the process of becoming the perfect man, the saint. [. . .] [He] portrays the hero's progressive, though unsteady, growth and development toward Christian perfection: the renewal of the divine image in the inner man" (Steadman 143). His goal is not achieved instantly or easily; as typical of the romance quest, his path is filled with wandering and error, but ultimately, his goal is achieved. Spenser formulates his romance so that the reader sees the balance of virtue and the divine hand.

The goal of a given quest is often delayed in romance, and this serves Spenser's purposes well in *The Faerie Queene*. The courage and magnanimity required for a quest imbues the story with a sense of moral worth, as Spenser's knights strive to live as examples. Although Arthur does not arrive in Gloriana's court in the unfinished work and Redcrosse and Guyon take winding paths through caves and woods and face giants before their goals are achieved, their journeys show their desire is for a perfection not found in the created universe, nor even in Faerie Land. The path, well executed, is a path of glory that leads to life's finale for Spenser and his knights, and they are helped along the way by the divine. As they undertake virtuous acts they reflect divine glory to others; when they stumble and fall, divinity reaches toward them. Occasions of reciprocity in the knights' adventures show Spenser's spiritual vision at work. We shall examine three such occasions in the stories of Redcrosse, Guyon, and Arthur.

Evidence of this reciprocity referred to as a *grande pas de deux* is seen in the contribution of the word of God to Redcrosse's triumph in Book I. Thomas Dughi sees Book I as "inspired by the great dream of the Reformation: that the words of a book possess the power thoroughly to transform the soul's deepest structures" (22). Dughi writes that Redcrosse's falls and restorations show how "God's Word works its transforming magic" (22). When Una, whose name recalls the one truth, informs Redcrosse that his success depends upon bearing his full armor, we are reminded of the full armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-17. Redcrosse's journey can be seen as an allegory of the fashioning of a saint; Redcrosse is separated from the Christian truth and experiences a fall into sin. He is later restored and is then seen by A.C. Hamilton as showing "conformity to the image of Christ" (588). His fall is part of the teleological romance as it leads to restoration that reflects Christ's glorified state.

Spenser's teleology is revealed as Redcrosse overcomes the romantic obstacle of inner struggle and triumphs through the help of others and a vision of the New Jerusalem. Duplicity is outwardly personified in the characters of Archimago and Duessa; Redcrosse is deceived by Archimago and summarily deserts Una, only to be enthralled by the false Duessa who calls herself Fidessa. He stands firm against blatant attacks, but is easily deceived by pleasing appearances. He falls prey to pride and, laying his armor aside, succumbs to Duessa's seeming charms. Redcrosse's resulting enervated condition and the loss of his shield of faith result in his captivity by the giant Orgoglio. Spenser's knights often face the nemesis of rest and stagnation as Redcrosse does in Book I. His missteps are remedied by the provision of Arthur who, interrupting his own quest, restores Redcrosse to the care of Una. Accompanied once again by truth, Redcrosse is

led to the House of Holiness to begin his restoration. He ascends the highest mount, reminiscent of the mount of vision to which John was carried for his vision of the New Jerusalem (Hankins 116). It is there, in Redcrosse's vision of the New Jerusalem that he finds strength and inspiration to complete his quest. Reminded once again of his end, Redcrosse embarks on his teleological journey of romance, moving in step with the divine with renewed aspirations.

Redcrosse's participation in the *grande pas de deux* is seen earlier as well in his battle with Error as he responds to a gift of grace. He finds himself "Resolv'd in minde all suddenly to win" (I.i.24) after Spenser's reference to a "gentle shepherd" (I.i.23), signifying the granting of grace that enables Redcrosse to win over Errour. This bestowal of grace is a step taken by the divine in the *grande pas de deux* which Redcrosse reciprocates as he then slays Error and later slays the dragon. His adventures further evince the priority of the spiritual over the material as he is renewed by waters in a "well of life." This well is not to be valued for its liquid stream, but for its spiritual reality – the grace it offers, yet another hand from the divine.

Redcrosse's romantic striving toward an ideal life clearly marks him as a hero. His successes, falls, and subsequent restoration are evidence that meaning is to be found not only in momentary episodes, but in one's end or purpose. Despite folly and error, Redcrosse moves on toward that idealized goal. He is not the infallible knight of holiness throughout the book; as any Christian moving ever closer to holiness, he is often blinded by deceit masquerading as truth. Redcrosse's falls and restorations gradually bring him to a holier state, a state nearer perfection. Until he is able to comprehend its full measure, Redcrosse sees truth in part, evidenced by Una's veil which is not removed until their

betrothal (Hankins 121). Then as Redcrosse defers his marriage to Una until his service to glory is fulfilled, we see the knight's view of life as a quest in which the spiritual triumphs over the material. He is, literally and figuratively, moving toward glory.

The reciprocal relationship between the earthly and the heavenly is seen in the adventures of Guyon as well. This knight embodies the virtue of temperance, the internal struggle of self-control, in his quest is to vanquish Acrasia for her part in the deaths of Mortdant and Amavia. Guyon is providentially provided the Palmer, and when he stays in the company of the Palmer's prudence, his virtue is supported. When separated from the Palmer, Guyon finds himself subject to temptation. Rosemary Freeman interprets Guyon's aid from the Palmer as proof of Spenser's belief that "human nature cannot achieve total success without help from others," (154) as his swoon is an indication of the limits of Guyon's heroic success; this is not unlikely, but Guyon's need for assistance actually reveals more. His adventures and temptations show the necessity of Christian temperance, but they present temperance as a virtue not perfected on earth, evincing once again the romantic and teleological concept of an idealized life. Guyon's assistance from the angel and the Palmer underscores Spenser's concept of a world directed by a divine being who reaches down to assist its heroes.

Spenser elucidates Guyon's growth through the twists and turns of romance as Phaedria, followed by Mammon, interrupts his quest. Without his Palmer, Guyon is subject to the folly of self-sufficiency; Phaedria offers a life of ease, lulling men into a false security, and when a spiritually-weakened Guyon leaves the lake, Mammon is waiting to escalate the temptation. Without his Palmer and steeped in self-sufficiency, Guyon sallies forth:

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

Full of "his own vertues, and praise-worthie deedes," Guyon's next lesson in temperance takes place over the span of three days in Mammon's cave. Mammon tempts Guyon first with wealth and power, but when Guyon's temperance wins this battle, Mammon tries yet another tact.

Spenser casts the next temptation in a teleological light as he uses it to reveal Guyon's awareness of his end. Just as Satan challenged Christ to prove his godhood by casting himself down so that his angels would save him, Mammon tempts Guyon with the hand of his daughter Philotime who controls the ladder men mount to renown. Guyon's reply implies that a marriage to Philotime would make Guyon as a god:

'Gramercy, Mammon,' said the gentle knight,
'For so great grace and offred high estate,
But I, that am fraile flesh and earthly wight,
Unworthy match for such immortall mate
My selfe well wote, and mine unequall fate.' (II.vii.50.1-5)

Hankins writes that temperance requires that he decline (131-134). Guyon shows more than temperance, however, as he recognizes his "fraile flesh and earthly wight." Spenser again emphasizes Guyon's awareness of his rightful place and his end.

The divine clearly reaches toward Guyon after he wrestles with Mammon's last temptation. Mammon implores Guyon to partake of golden fruit, but he refuses, and his temptation is ended. Rosemary Freeman calls Guyon's ability to reject temptation "a tribute both to his will and to his intelligence. For him, Temperance is a stabilizing quality, and his merit rests upon his consistent adherence to it" (152). His own temperance is not enough to sustain Guyon, for he staggers from the cave and faints from exhaustion and hunger, and an angel (God's providence) appears to guard him. The Palmer soon arrives and the angel departs. Not only is Guyon's temperance once again bolstered by the Palmer's reason, but Arthur, representing faith, is close at hand to aide him by fighting off Pyrocheles and Cymocheles. The divine, ever orchestrating Guyon's journey, has provided providence, a Palmer, and Arthur to help move Guyon ever closer to glory. Guyon's lessons in temperance have taken him a step higher toward the ideal of glory, but restoration awaits at Alma's castle. That divine reaching toward man, urging him toward his teleological end, takes yet another step in the *grande pas de deux*, that reciprocal cosmic dance.

That reciprocity is ignored in David Landreth's "At Home with Mammon: Matter, Money, and Memory in Book II of *The Faerie Queene*." His assessment is that Spenser is "more interested here in how – or indeed whether – the malleability and the fungibility of silver and gold may be circumscribed within the world of matter and sense" (245). His statement that "Sir Guyon espouses only a pagan virtue in this canto" is short-sighted in light of his subsequent visit to the castle that represents the soul. The use of Arthur as an emissary of providence that provides succor to Guyon is disregarded as well. This object-oriented criticism evinces the materialist thinking that concentrates on the

tangible to the neglect of the spiritual in Spenser's world. Landreth believes that "Spenser is indeed grappling with theories of matter's temporal existence" but he does not perceive that these theories are enveloped in a sense of the spiritual. The inherent spiritual quality of Spenser's work is discounted as Landreth posits that "Guyon's explication avoids Christian paradigms in favor of the classical *topos*, so that although 'pride' and 'avarice' are inevitably Christian sins, they are placed here in a worldly and material history uninflected by the transcendence of theology" (257). Theology clearly transcends Guyon's mortal self-control as, after resisting in his own strength, he exits the cave and lies in a faint. In his triumph he has failed, for Guyon travailed in his own strength; he forsook that reciprocity so central to Spenser's spiritual vision and set out on his own. Heavenly glory reaches down in to the story as undeserved grace arrives in the form of a ministering angel. With his Palmer, right reason, restored to him, and Arthur, representing faith, by his side, he is able to continue to the castle. Only a pairing of the earthly and divine in concert with one another moves Guyon forward.

Spenser moves the romance narrative a step closer to its triumphant ending as Arthur aids Guyon and is renewed as well in Alma's castle. In Alma's castle, a house of symmetry and harmony that allegorizes the triparte soul, all parts fit together castle in measure and balance. Hankins writes of the culmination of virtue in this place: "Heavenly grace, holiness and temperance are companion impulses within the soul of man, bound together by the golden chain which links all the virtues" (57). It is here that Guyon regains the moderation and strength necessary to resume his quest. Just as Redcrosse was rescued and restored to Una, the one truth, and is once more made aware

of his goal and purpose, providence again offers a hand in the form of Arthur's aid, encouraging Guyon to take his place in the cosmic dance.

Guyon's romantic quest is realized as he enters the Bower of Bliss, and Spenser uses Guyon's action not only to add to his heroic dimension but to emphasize the priority of the spiritual over the material. The Bower of Bliss is a place of artifice, absent time and decay. A subversion of nature, the bower embodies the material and stands in opposition to the ideal. Guyon's actions in the bower turn it from artifice to its original state. Spenser tells us Guyon "defaced" the garden, and their "arbors spoyle[d]." The picture of a ruined garden seems rather bleak, but the Christian doctrine of fallen man lends hope to this image. Just as a forest fire renews the forest, making way for new growth, Guyon's destruction of the bower began a new cycle of life – not artificial, but real. Cheney writes that it is the "mood of stagnation which dominates the passage as a whole, the sense of futility, which argues most conclusively for Guyon's decisive action" (100). Spenser is affirming mutability in the temporal realm here as part of a teleological design; his hero destroys an artificial, stagnated arbor in favor of the changeable qualities of nature that are divinely intended. Guyon frees the bower to be what it was intended to be so that it can move toward its intended end. He ignores the seeming enchantment of the temporal, the physical, in favor of the ideal. His quest, after all, is an idealized one that pursues the divinely created ideal.

Spenser's romantic ideal is not achieved without a reciprocity between earth and heaven, and our third knight, Arthur, often provides the link necessary. Spenser's spiritual vision is more fully realized through Arthur, as he represents a desire for Perfection beyond the created universe. Arthur represents magnificence, the perfection

or completion of all the other virtues. Dobree, Davis, and Wilson write that magnificence "means [allegorically] Aristotle's Magnanimity. [Arthur] is seeking Gloriana who is glory and glory is honor, the goal of Aristotle's Magnanimous Man. We know, if we are Christians, that glory is what awaits the faithful in heaven [. . .] Earthly glory would never have moved us but by being a shadow of *idolon* of the Divine Glory, in which we are called to participate" (382-83). Although his quest is to find the Faerie Queene, Arthur enters the narrative at various times, always assisting, and his appearances serve as a link between the knights and their virtues. Spenser writes in Book I, canto ix 1 of a "…goodly chayne, wherewith yfere / The vertues linked are in louely wize." Arthur acts as a link of heavenly grace when he comes to another's aid. As Redcrosse and Guyon experience pitfalls and momentarily lose sight of their characteristic virtues, Arthur appears to rescue them just as heavenly grace appears in the life of the Christian. It is clear that man cannot stand in his strength alone; the victory over sin can be won only through the grace of God. Arthur never leaves Faeryland, as heavenly grace does not depart from the soul of the Christian. It remains at the ready to be used in the battle against sin. The quest of life that Spenser lays before us is not realized without a link between heaven and earth.

As each knight is assisted by Arthur, he moves closer to a fulfillment of what he represents. Arthur calls to mind an interactive relationship between all of Spenser's virtues, reconciling them to one another and to their creator. Named a "governor" in his Spenser's Letter to Raleigh, Arthur governs not only the narrative as he moves in and out to help the knights accomplish deeds, but as he links the knights to Spenser's pursuit of glory. As Arthur continues his idealized quest, he displays glory by administering aid

and moving others closer to their goal. He assists Redcrosse, and deception is unveiled; he reconciles Guyon and Britomart in Book III and compels seven knights to ride together, united in Book IV. He often appears as the impetus for the *grande pas de deux*, a teleological emissary for the divine who moves in the lives of the knights.

It is this element of reconciliation that most clearly underscores Arthur's link to Spenser's concept of romance. Arthur reconciles knights to each other and to their original goals, but his life is also the picture of a reconciled life. Although Arthur has an idealized quest of his own, he is quick to stop and aid others on his way, exhibiting a balance between the earthly and the heavenly. Arthur never loses sight of his goal but he often defers it, valuing the ideal over the physical; for these knights, the quest, a life striving toward the ideal, takes precedence over momentarily grabbing the brass ring. Ever aware of his purpose, Arthur balances the journey and the end, the present and the future. He does not set his face toward the Faerie Queene and ignore all that goes on around him. He instead exhibits a practical idealism; he never loses sight of his goal but is willing to interrupt his quest repeatedly to intercede on behalf of the divine and to influence daily life. We never see Arthur reach his goal, but that does not detract from our understanding of him; in fact, it may reveal even more as we see that his goal lies always just beyond the horizon, for character and reader. The value of the ideal is seen through Arthur as along the journey he fulfills his purpose, showing honor and exemplifying glory. His life is, indeed, a triumph of the ideal, the spiritual, over the material, the real.

Recent Spenser studies that emphasize materialism discount the ideal or mark it up to the effects of material power structures at work, as evinced by Wendy Beth

Hyman's "Seizing Flowers in Spenser's Bower and Garden." Hyman shows how indebted materialist critical studies can be to binary thinking. In fact, in a materialist economy one object or body can only occupy one space at one time; in a spiritual economy, many thoughts, ideals, or even spiritual forces can occupy a single place at a single time. The former is committed to an intransigent logic of either-or; the latter opens itself to manifold interactions and interminglings. In her article Hyman pits time against eternity, addressing time in *The Faerie Queene* as wicked and stasis as good. Instead, Spenser advocates time as a necessary part of the created order and the decay that accompanies it as a necessary part of the fallen nature of man. A poet who knows his end, Spenser seeks to convey that teleological truth to his reader as Guyon acts upon it.

Spenser artfully balances love of and responsibility for both earth and heaven in the characters and deeds of his first three knights. For all this talk of heavenly aid, *The Faerie Queene* never embraces a "contemptus mundi" outlook in which earth is rejected in favor of heaven; instead, as Spenser's first three knights fulfill their earthly obligations, they are transfigured under heaven's love and light to become more fully themselves as realized characters in the story and as more complete human beings in both moral and experiential terms. Spenser's choice to craft *The Faerie Queene* as a romance enables the work to develop a full-scale philosophy of life. Spenser captures his teleological world for the reader through the genre of romance, carefully coordinating the interaction between earth and heaven, evincing the priority of spiritual over material, seizing both earth and heaven in one embrace – a *grande* cosmic *pas de deux*.

Chapter Three Teleological Romance: *The Faerie Queene*, A *Grande Pas de Deux*

The Faerie Queene, as we have seen, is a teleological romance that depicts life as a quest and is developed on two levels – the material and the spiritual. The material plane is evidenced as each knight addresses his goal and takes earthly action to move toward it while the spiritual level is revealed as the divine reaches down, placing man on a journey toward his end. Spenser aptly depicts the dual nature of the universe through allegory, a method of "other speaking" that confers abstract concepts adjacent to the literal sense of the narrative. The levels of Spenser's work are conjoined through allegory that portends the *grande pas de deux* in which man moves upward toward his ideal and the divine reaches down. Spenser's story, in a word, is the intersection and joining of the material and the spiritual, the human and the divine, and the narrative and the allegorical.

Allegory has a history relating back to late antiquity and the Middle Ages when its varieties of interpretation were fused into several methods of scriptural exegesis. Concern that this resulted in a fractured analysis of the sacred text came to fruition, according to Jon Whitman, when Reformers "broadly repudiate[d] allegory according to the fourfold method and invoke[d] a simple or literal sense of Christian scripture" (12). Allegorical interpretation of ancient mythology flourished, however, in the Renaissance and Kenneth Borris states that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was "generally considered a definitive formal ingredient" (4). Even though some aligned Renaissance allegory with "fading medievalism," it gained acceptance with increased

access to Greek allegories; the works of Plato and Aristotle rejuvenated conceptions of allegory as literary theorists integrated new influences, and new trends developed. The value of utilitarian aspects of literature coupled with a sense of moral seriousness found in English Protestantism encouraged literary allegory during the Renaissance (Borris 4, 39). Eighteenth-century Neoclassical preoccupations with a rational model, however, diminished allegory's significance to an ornamental stature. The critique of allegory has grown from the nineteenth century to the present, as in Romantic literary theory, Goethe and Coleridge reduced the term to an arbitrary method of signification. Whitman writes that the criticism of allegory escalated as "Frye in 1957 and Fletcher in 1964 argue that all commentary is in some measure allegorical, but by 1967 it is unclear to what degree this claim will be accepted" (13). Whitman goes on to assert that up until several decades ago, allegorical composition and interpretation were treated as "a kind of *alieniloquium*, a somewhat alien form of discourse"; as recent critics theorize about a sense of "other" texts and times, however, "other-speaking seems to speak their language" (15). The earlier assertion that all commentary is somehow allegorical does not dominate current scholarly practice, according to Whitman. Those like Spenser who used and advocated allegory would be shocked by a definition that encompasses all commentary, for they saw allegorical interpretation as an understanding that is "other" than the literal or apparent sense.

It is this "other" sense that renders allegory such a perfect vehicle for Spenser, whose narrative largely concerns the interaction of two levels. The material level is rendered in the form of romance, which involves the daily quests of knights who are seeking glory. Their idealized quests project an upward movement, as the knights seek to

better themselves and Faeryland. As they overcome each obstacle, they gain knowledge and glory; their human efforts evince man's striving toward the divine. The spiritual level is rendered through allegory, the "other-speaking" that animates Spenser's teleology. We have established *The Faerie Queene* as a teleological work with a future goal that is not yet realized. Allegory exists to reveal the integrating purpose and cause. Spenser's allegory purposefully unveils the synchronization of the human and the divine as eternity reaches down, touching man in his mutability, moving him toward his *telos,* in his purposive quest. Kathleen Williams reiterates Spenser's sense of intention as she characterizes him as "aware that [his form's] characteristics are not fortuitous but purposive, [and] he is able to develop the kind of meaning that is inherent in it, and to merge two medieval skills, the romantic and the allegorical" (557).

Allegory is moral in nature, a method of expressing the inner life; in *The Faerie Queene* the allegory also further articulates the striving of that inner life toward the divine. Williams underscores Spenser's synthesis of romance and allegory as she writes, "The knightly quest can come close to the soul's journey of moral allegory, and Spenser draws them gently and easily together" (557). Williams uses the example of Redcrosse and Una's early human error of taking things too easily. The duo is in a state of relative ease and pleasure when suddenly the monster Error arises and confronts them with their neglect of a moral consideration. Williams calls this the "apparent lawlessness of romance [. . .] expressing the inexorable laws of moral existence [. . .] the way into the elaborated organized inner world of the poem; romance leads imperceptibly and enjoyably into allegory" (558). Allegory proves a natural tool for Spenser to express his spiritual vision as Redcrosse and Una see the error of their preoccupation with temporal

things. As the reader enjoys the narrative element of the poem, he is drawn to its allegory as "allegorical meaning, like heroic purpose, helps in the task of making serious the narrative pleasures of romance" (Moore 321). Spenser's sense of his end, his *telos,* is also supported by Northrop Frye's view of traditional romance in which "the upward journey is the journey of a creature returning to its creator" (157). Spenser's allegory reveals heavenly permanence set in relief against the ever-shifting landscape and unpredictable plot twists of his romance.

John Steadman's analysis shows that romantic elements such as indeterminate time scheme and "the very indefiniteness of Spenser's Fairyland – apparently without fixed coordinates in time or space – enhances the clarity and distinctness of his moral categories" (91). We have said that allegory is moral in nature, expressing the inner life; Spenser alludes to the striving of that inner life as he sets his tale in an indefinite Fairyland. The imaginary land of Fairy stands apart from the real world; that is, it is peopled with monsters and creatures not indigenous to Renaissance times. It does, however, shadow the real world in some ways. Steadman asserts that "the sites and locations of the half-fabulous events described were real places, or believed to be real by the poet's audience" (91). This use of loci that exist in the mind adds to the idealistic dimension of the romance. *The Faerie Queene*'s allegorical terrain provides for lands not yet realized. In the proem to Book II, Spenser writes of undiscovered and newly-discovered lands:

> Many great Regions are discouered,
> Which to late age were neuer mentioned.
> Who euer heard of th'Indian Peru?

Or who in venturous vessel measured

The Amazons huge riuer now found trew?

Or Fruitfullest Virginia who euer did vew? (II.proem.2)

Even the newly discovered America, here designated Virginia for the Virgin Queen, was a land not seen by Spenser's readers. Spenser's use of such lands shows his romantic idealism by shadowing two worlds – the real Renaissance world and the world man is striving toward. A land not yet seen alludes to Spenser's *telos,* his conception of man's true end, and calls to mind the closing lines of the poem which speak of a time when "[. . .] all shall changed bee, / And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see" (VII.vii.59.4-5). The shifting landscape of Faery serves to unite romance and allegory as it shadows man's striving toward his end.

Maureen Quilligan uses the same setting to launch a materialist criticism that asserts a "contrast between knightly freedom and the ignoble slavery of the thrall" (54). Her interpretation of the proem to Book II includes an exploration of Spenser's mention of Peru, the Amazon river, and Virginia. After questioning Peru's inclusion aside from its rhyming properties, she proclaims the other newly-discovered lands to be allegorically resonant. The Amazon river carried "the entire gendered script of Artegall's imperialist conquest of Radigund's kingdom in Book V," and Walter Raleigh was complimented by the use of Virginia, so this was "a proper set of places to be mentioned at the outset of Guyon's imperialist voyage to suppress a threatening feminized space" (47). After expounding upon Peru's significance as the site of drastic economic change when Andes silver mines were discovered, she states that Spenser is concerned with "his vision of the demonic labor which is the source of the gold Mammon shows Guyon" (48). Quilligan

casts Guyon's interchange with Mammon before entering the cave as a reflection of the "new, non-feudal conditions." While she claims her desire is not to turn this into an economic allegory, she asserts that Guyon is not interested in the gold's value but its origin. Guyon is given a glimpse of Mammon's slaves, and Quilligan equates the scene he views with a picture of New World conquest, using this to discuss not only the diminishing aristocratic fortunes based in land but Guyon's knightly freedom from such slavery. This kind of materialist criticism, with its preoccupation with the tangible, diminishes the divine in the work and attempts to explain the allegory solely in earthly effects, ignoring the reciprocal relationship between the earthly and heavenly that is seen in Guyon's adventures. Seen in the light of Spenser's spiritual vision, however, the allegory in this case is clear. Guyon withstands temptation, turning away from the temporal and toward his quest; he emerges victorious from Mammon's cave, but he is reduced to the limits of his human heroism. His virtue, temperance, has not yet been perfected, as allegorically speaking, the Christian's virtue is not perfected on earth. Guyon regains consciousness as he is provided assistance from an angel, the hand of the divine reaching toward his knight. Spenser's allegory here joins the romantic and teleological concept of an idealized life as Guyon emerges victorious, climbing ever upward, aided by a divine hand. Rather than providing commentary on the feudal system and slavery, this scene instead stresses Spenser's vision, portraying a world enjoined to a grand cosmic dance.

Spenser doubles back once again to display the reciprocity of that intended dance as he wraps his narrative around a sense of historical fiction that allegorizes the divine. His imaginative fiction of Gloriana's twelve-day feast and the quests surrounding it is

validated, according to Steadman, by "shadowing contemporary or near contemporary persons and events through the resources of what is generally labeled historical allegory" (164), as he figured events and people of his own time allegorically into his myths: the Elizabeth – Mary Stuart rivalry, the Reformation in England, the Spanish Armada, Anglican and Roman Catholic controversies, warfare in Belgium, and other contemporary events. In his Letter to Raleigh, Spenser provides two different definitions of Gloriana: glory in general, and in particular, England's sovereign, Elizabeth. Historical allegory leads to moral allegory as we consider the person of Gloriana, who Spenser uses to signify the *telos*, the end, of divine glory. As has been established, Gloriana represents glory in his general intention and, in particular, Queen Elizabeth and the glory of her reign. In their romantic deeds and ventures, Spenser's knights reflect both their queen's glory and, above her, the Christian glory accorded to God. This ascending and descending staircase of signifiers is a veritable Jacob's ladder of glory. Ronald Horton states that the "structure deriving from the moral allegory – those explicit in the Letter to Raleigh and apparent in the poem – are both a necessary and sufficient cause of its unity" (188-89). As he contends that the "poetry of every age has its lessons," Horton speaks of the modern reader's difficulty to "conceive of the validity in any age of a view of the world and of human experience very much different from his own" (187). This difficulty may lead a modern reader of the poem to understand it as simply a picture of Elizabethan society, but Borris contends that *The Faerie Queene* is much more than a celebration of English society as "the poem allegorically promotes Christian heroism to an extent that it questions human social arrangement in general" (164). Borris goes so far as to argue that *The Faerie Queene* shows the standard of

heroism to be spiritual virtuosity rather than noble birth, skills in battle, or courtly achievements. This calls into question conventional class and status distinctions and brings forth, according to Borris, "an ideal of an imagined community based upon meritocracy of virtue [. . .] by definition, the earthly realm can only partake partially and provisionally of that idea, but shadows its ongoing development and ultimate fruition" (165). Borris calls to mind the Book of Revelation that values Christian salvation over social distinctions, as "Christ makes all the faithful 'King,' who receive 'the crown of life' and 'reign for evermore,' sitting with Christ in his 'throne'" (176-77).

As Spenser moves from the historical allegory into the moral allegory, the heart of the work that exemplifies glory, he evinces the priority of the spiritual over the material. Spenser's first three knights allegorically embody holiness, temperance and magnificence, qualities that cannot be explained exclusively in terms of material effects. The spiritual takes precedence through allegory, as the knights and ladies of the romance genre participate in a chivalrous story with a clear and distinct overlay of the supernatural. And as they participate in the grand dance, the knights not only acquire a bit of glory, they share it with those around them. Any glory achieved by our knights has a ripple effect as does a stone in a pond. That glory is not only for self, but extends to lady, queen, homeland, heaven, and God, undulating divine glory up and down, all the way to the fringes of the universe. The dual nature of the universe is seen as the divine reaches for Spenser's knights, the exemplars (or exemplars-in-process) of earthly achievement, whose earthly accomplishments are entirely carried out under heaven, subordinated under its higher rule, and given to divine glory. As Redcrosse Knight,

Guyon, and Arthur reach toward divine glory, their roles and the role of the divine in the *grande pas de deux* between earth and heaven are realized.

This *grande pas de deux* is cosmic in scale, the very picture of reciprocity between earth and heaven, as God leads and tutors while man follows and learns his steps in the cosmic ballet. Spenser's knights are learning their steps, just as they are on their way to becoming exemplars. They gain a bit of glory but remain human; therefore, they need divine assistance to attempt the next movement. Their subsequent falls are ministered to by the divine as he reaches down to aid and succor. Although the glorious coda remains in the distance, there is joy in the idealized quest for these knights, as they are aware of their teleological nature and the end to which they are striving. Since they regard life as a quest, they see its value in spiritual, not material terms. The dance itself, the cosmic interaction between the hero and the divine and the glory it displays, gives life and meaning to the quest.

This *grande pas de deux* is wrapped in a "continued allegory," Spenser's own words which imply unmined meaning that, once unearthed, reveals his teleology. He knows his end, his *telos*, as he states a distinct purpose for the work; it is intended to "fashion" its readers in "vertuous and gentle discipline." The use of allegory and Spenser's stated intent call the reader to action, for if there is meaning to uncover that will "fashion" the reader in a certain way, the reader cannot remain passive. Perhaps Spenser is inviting the reader to take part in that cosmic dance he so cogently evokes. Spenser's vision is panoramic as he embraces the past, the present, and the future; the past is seen in his classical models and allusions, the present in his historical allegory, and the future in his hope of eternal glory.

Spenser uses that "continued allegory" to further illuminate his hope of eternal glory. This is seen explicitly in an examination of our heroes' iconography. The description of a hero's weapon, Borris asserts, "becomes a means of representing their heroic ideals, the nature of the power allegorically brought to bear against opponents" (96). These symbols serve not only as representations, but they affect the narrative as they are perceived by the knights, reminding them of their future hope. For example, when Guyon, preparing to charge the Redcrosse Knight, spies "The sacred badge of my Redeemers death / Which on your shield is set for ornament" (II.i.27.6-7), he stops short and appeals to both God and Redcrosse Knight for forgiveness. The badge of the knight's "Redeemers death" not only signifies Guyon's recognition of a Christian framework for the virtue of temperance, but it also precludes a deadly clash between two virtuous knights. In like manner, Gloriana's likeness on Guyon's shield leads to a discussion between Guyon and Arthur as to the glory of her service, and his quest to find and serve Gloriana is renewed as he learns more of her from Guyon. Arthur and the reader are reminded of his quest for glory. His weaponry reminds us of the hope of glory, as well. His dragon crest initially raises questions proposed by Susanne Wofford: "Can Arthur use the dragon as his symbol without in some fashion becoming himself like the dragon, as if his own puissance as a knight must somehow be connected to the forces of primitive violence symbolized by the dragon?" (149). She concludes that it may indeed point to the very danger that a chivalric knight must face, as he performs knightly battles in the name of grace; it may stand for the ubiquitous nature of original sin in human affairs; or it may sanctify Arthur, set him apart as one who remains alienated from the society he enables. We have previously established Arthur's role as a governor who

assists the other knights in their quests; his actions are those of heroism and love, as he acts on behalf of others. He is not divine, however, and it may be that the dragon crest on his helmet serves as a reminder of his human nature; Arthur is, at once, the "old man" of sin and the "new man" of grace alluded to in Scripture. He is on his way to a glorified state, and Spenser's symbolism reminds us of the quest that will end in glory.

The glory at the end of the quest is spiritual not material, and Spenser's allegory reminds us of the prevalence of spiritual over material. When Arthur recalls his vision of Gloriana in canto ix of Book I, Una, allegorical representation of the one truth, remarks, "True loues are often sown, but seldom grow on ground" (I.ix.16.9); her allusion is to a love that transcends earth. Arthur consequently points to that transcendent love as he acts in service to its glory. His assistance to Redcrosse in the battle with Orgoglio is but representative of his role as a knight of magnificence; he acts once again heroically, on behalf of love, freeing Redcrosse. S.K. Heninger, Jr. details an allegorical synthesis in the Orgoglio incident as classical mythology, the Book of Revelation, and Elizabethan politics all converge, noting that "…in each he [Spenser] found the same archetypal pattern of evil predominating for awhile, but finally being overcome by Divine beneficence" (602). The prevalence of that divine beneficence is also seen in Guyon's guarding angel at the mouth of the Mammon's cave. The narrator asks if there is care in heaven and answers himself thus:

> But O th'exceeding grace
> Of highest God, that loues his creatures so,
> And all his workes with mercy doth embrace,
> That blessed Angels, he sends to and fro,

To serue to wicked man, to serue his wicked foe. (II.viii.1.5-9)

Indeed, the care of heaven has been displayed through the advent of an angel who guards until the Palmer returns to aid Guyon. Nicholas Canny asserts in "The Social and Political Thought of Spenser" that Guyon does not benefit from the provision of a squire type in the Palmer. He sees this provision as a teacher of sorts, but feels that the "knights' persistent meandering from these paths [. . .] suggests that Spenser, while accepting that education could prove efficacious in guiding people towards better behavior, did not believe that it alone would provide a guarantee of correct conduct" (110). Spenser would agree with Canny that education alone would not guarantee correct conduct, for this is confirmed in his understanding of fallen man. Correct conduct would never be guaranteed as long as Spenser's knights walked this earth. Guyon's faint reiterates man's need for a combination of earthly virtue and faith. The fact that his regeneration cannot be accomplished without spiritual help establishes its prevalence over the material, the physical.

Spenser underscores the priority of the spiritual over the material as he uses the physical world in his allegory. Nature appears as a character only in the Mutabilitie Cantos, where we hear Mutabilitie's words: "Sith heaven and earth are both alike to thee, / And gods no more then men thou doest esteeme; / For. even the gods to thee, as men to gods, do seeme" (VII.vii.15.7-9). In *The Allegory of Love*, C.S. Lewis relates the modern reader's temptation to ask if Spenser equates God with nature, which he resolves by reminding us that Spenser was not a pantheist, but a Christian. He goes on to make the point, however, that Spenser's contemporaries would well have understood his "practice of using mythological forms to hint theological truths" (355). If this same nature is at

work throughout *The Faerie Queene*, we can clearly see the divine romancing of Spenser's characters by a hand extended through nature. In Book I, rain forces Redcrosse into the wood where he subsequently vanquishes Error, whose den is described as a place of peril. At first glance this detour and its resulting battle seem like obstacles in the knight's path, but when considered as evidence of Spenser's *telos,* it is clear that these encounters strengthen and teach Redcrosse, enabling him to climb another rung on the ladder of perfection that leads to glory. Similar purpose is seen in Redcrosse's encounters with Orgoglio and Despair, as the narrator reminds us:

> Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
> That thorough grace hath gained victory.
> If any strength we haue, it is to ill,
> But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will. (I.x.1.6-9)

Redcrosse's victories cannot be ascribed to his skill alone, but to God's grace. The rain that precipitated his detour into that very wood prompted him to fight, vanquish, reflect God's glory, and climb yet another rung, compelled by the divine.

At times in the narrative nature protects, and Spenser's sense of teleology is evident in this provision. Una is protected by nature when she finds herself separated from Redcrosse but guarded by a lion who subsequently slays Kirkrapine. In addition, when she is pursued by Sansloy, fawns and satyrs of the forest frighten him away. During Redcrosse's battle with the dragon, his dramatic restoration occurs at the hands of nature, and he is given power through providence as he lands in the Well of Life. The divine provides a well that "vnto life the dead it could restore / And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away" (I.xi.30.1-2). Heaven's hand is extended toward Redcrosse as Una

prays all night and Redcrosse finally emerges from the well as a phoenix rising from the ashes; he is, in fact, labeled "a new-borne knight." He battles on and when he falls again, this time he lands by "a goodly tree." "Great God it planted in that blessed stedd / With his Almighty hand, and did it call / The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers fall" (I.xi.46.7-9). This element of nature, placed there by a divine hand, had seen the "crime of our first fathers." Yet God, in his grace, reaches down to provide from that tree a regenerating balm that restored Redcrosse, who emerged victorious over the dragon. Spenser attributes nature's protection to God as he states:

> It chaunst (eternall God that chaunce did guide)
> As he recoiled backeward, in the mire
> His nigh foreweried feeble feet did slide,
> And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore terrifide. (I.xi.45.6-9)

Just as "eternall God" provides guidance for Redcrosse, he uses nature to assist Arthur in his battle with Maleger. The creature regenerates each time he touches the earth, so Arthur looks for another way to vanquish him. Nature's provision of a standing lake serves well as "Him thereinto he threw without remorse / Ne stird, till hope of life did him forsake" (II.xi.46.7-8). Spenser's interaction between man and the divine is clearly shown through the allegory of nature, evincing the *grande pas de deux.*

The allegory of the Bower of Bliss, a perversion of nature, underscores *The Faerie Queene*'s priority of the spiritual over the material. The Bower, a monument to artifice, is the embodiment of the material. It has, as Sean Kane writes, "the dead-locked quality of a pure paradox whose two terms are 'striving each th'other to undermine'" (66). As Guyon confronts this paradox that distorts nature, he approaches the task free of

the false independence he exercised when he entered Mammon's cave, and the spiritual triumphs. Now strengthened by his Palmer and by his instruction in the house of Alma, and he is "spiritually directed, socially aware" (Kane 77). Kane rightly names the garden of Acrasia and other false paradises "worlds that seek to contain human final ends" (219). These artificial, material settings resound with the temporal; Guyon's destruction of this bower returns the bower to its natural state, "the excellence of his creation," extolled in Book II, canto vii:

> The antique world, in his first flowring youth,
> Fownd no defect in his Creators grace,
> But with glad thankes, and vnreproued truth,
> The guifts of soueraine bounty did embrace;
> Like Angels life was then mens happy cace;
> But later ages pride, like corn-fed steed,
> Abusd her plenty, and fat swolne encreace
> To all licentious lust, and gan exceed
> The measure of her meane, and naturall first need. (II.vii.16)

Spenser's praise of the natural, which issued from the divine, is clear. His use of nature, the "excellence of his creation," is part of the *grande pas de deux* that romances his characters toward their end.

The preeminence of the spiritual over the material is clear in Spenser's work, for the pervasive spiritual values that shape and give meaning to *The Faerie Queene* cannot be ignored. Spenser coordinates the interaction between earth and heaven and successfully seizes both earth and heaven in one embrace, linking eternity to temporality.

That interaction is negated by materialist criticism that seeks instead to divide. Helen Cooney speaks of "the doubleness that is at the heart of the allegorical mode." Although she acknowledges allegory's foundation as a system of correspondence between various levels of being, she lapses into irreconcilable binaries as she states that "while this has traditionally been thought of as an endorsement of likeness or correspondence, critics such as Paul de Man and Gordon Teskey have recently pointed out it also suggests the differences that exist between the two terms in a similitude" (192). Acknowledging that Aristotle remarked of metaphor's dependence upon likeness, she is quick to employ Augustine's concept that since the Fall, "this universe [has] become a region of *un*likeness." Cooney goes on to expound that "the tension in modern critical studies of *The Faerie Queene* between those (essentialist) readings which seek to discover its meaning and those (existentialist) ones which stress the radical alterity of the text is an inevitable consequence of the inescapable doubleness of allegory itself" (192). When Spenser's unified spiritual vision is clear, however, the futility of analyzing such a work by using binary opposition is also apparent. Spenser's vision allows for the difference between earth and heaven; it never assimilates the two. *The Faerie Queene* simply provides a bridge between the two through the fusion of romance and allegory. The romance narrative moves from time upwards, ever questing and reaching toward an ideal, the eternal. The significance of the work is displayed through allegory that shows eternity reaching down into time, placing man on a purposeful journey toward heaven. Rather than the alienation that binaries suggest, Spenser provides a link, an ellipse that moves from eternity to temporality and back, from narrative to meaning and back, as it moves from romance to allegory and back again.

Harry Berger, Jr., speaks of concord and discord in "The Spenserian Dynamics," negating Spenser's spiritual vision early as he speaks of Spenser's landscape. His sense is that Spenser's world and settings "emerge out of the problems and actions of his characters [. . .] Spenser's [landscape], as it materializes, is for the most part 'horizontal'; where Dante's cosmos is hierarchically organized in terms of *up* and *down*, the dominant Spenserian vectors are *in* and *out*" (5, 6). Unaware of the action of the divine toward man in *The Faerie Queene*, Berger sets up a critical universe that ignores any reciprocity. As he discusses *discordia concors* as the core of the first two books, he finds "various forms of division, fragmentation, and regression are explored in the experiences of Redcrosse and Guyon, most of which center on the discord between the order of the macrocosm and the order perceived by the microcosm, and on the interior discords which cause or result from this disrelation" (16). Spenser's work clearly displays two levels and certainly does not assimilate the earthly and heavenly, but his fusion of allegory and romance provide a link, an interrelationship between the earthly and the heavenly that cannot be denied. Despite his nuanced reckoning of discord, Berger's analysis never connects it to Spenser's spiritual vision, which calls for both a horizontal and vertical cohesion.

That horizontal and vertical cohesion spans across not only space, but time and story, providing a teleological panorama. In *The Secular Scripture*, Northrop Frye writes of bringing the past into the present, asserting that such a process must entail "bringing something into the present which is potential or possible, and in that sense belongs to the future. This recreation of the possible or future or ideal constitutes the wish-fulfillment element in romance [. . .] Thus the recreation of romance brings us into a present where

past and future are gathered" (179). Spenser accomplishes such a gathering of the ideal in this work, as allegory and romance forge a link to the eternal. This panorama extends to a gathering of story, as well. Frye recalls J.L. Borges's story, "The Gospel According to Mark," which tells of the two stories retold by generations of men – "that of a lost ship which searches the Mediterranean seas for a dearly loved island, and that of a god who is crucified on Golgotha" (15). Borges' suggestion is that romance "provides a parallel epic in which themes of shipwreck, pirates, enchanted islands, magic, recognition, the loss and regaining of identity, occur constantly" (15). These two stories end differently; the biblical story ends in the Book of Revelation replete with "gallant angels fighting dragons, a wicked witch, and a wonderful gingerbread city glittering with gold and jewels" (30). But the other story continues to wander, and Frye acknowledges the validity of that wandering with this statement: "I have a notion that if the wandering of desire did not exist, great literature would not exist" (30). Spenser's work provides for that wandering with an expansive allegorical romance that links past, present, and future. This is a story for all time and all mankind; its universals reach across time, space, allegory, and romance to paint a teleological panorama.

That panorama displays a greater vision of glory, as Spenser woos his readers up the Chain of Being, bringing them closer to a grander, more magnificent concept of virtue and love of the divine presence. Spenser engages his readers with allegory, an interactive design that draws them into his concept of purpose. As allegorical meaning builds upon meaning, Spenser creates a second nexus of reciprocity between author and reader that can imbue the reader with a high sense of purpose and a greater understanding of how to achieve that purpose. Spenser must have had in mind the words of his friend Sidney who

wrote of poetry that it "worketh not only to make a Cyrus, which had been a particular excellency…but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world, to make many Cyruses" (189).

Spenser's homage to the future is seen as he reiterates the *grande pas de deux* in the Mutabilitie Cantos. He closes his work with a description of the dance that illuminates the relationship of man to time and change, to earth and heaven:

> I well consider all that ye have sayd
> And find that all things stedfastnes doe hate
> And changed be; yet being rightly wyd;
> They are not changed from their first estate;
> But by their change their being doe dilate:
> And turning to themselves at length again,
> Doe work their owne perfection so by fate:
> Then ouer them Change doth not rule and raigne;
> But they raigne over change, and doe their states maintaine (VII. vii. 58).

These lines bespeak the *grande pas de deux;* no dark, bold lines mark the boundaries of binaries here. Earthly mutability results ultimately in order and harmony, as mortal beings and their world find their redeemed, glorified state – Spenser's conception of man's true end. Spenser foresees the time when our three knights, by grasping the proffered hand of the divine, have ascended that ladder. Only through Spenser's spiritual vision, expressed in his *teleological romance,* can one understand his knights' quest for glory – a quest that is ultimately realized when "… all shall changed bee, / And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see" (VII. vii. 59.4-5).

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