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THE MYTH OF RECURRENCE: STRUCTURE AND
VISION IN THE FAERIE QUEENE

DISsertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Curtis Johnston Smith, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1975

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Professor John Gabel for assuming the duties of the adviser, but particularly for his fine sense of rhetoric, his understanding of what a writer owes his reader in the way of directions and reminders; Professor Joan Webber for her help with major problems of presentation and focus, and for helping to keep epics alive; and Professor David Frantz for his careful reading of the dissertation in its final stages.

I wish especially to thank Professor Jerome Dees, for introducing me to Spenser, for opening to me the joys of *The Faerie Queene* as narrative, for frequent conversations about my work, and for his loyalty and encouragement when my task looked hopeless, as it occasionally did.

My wife Susan I thank for her quiet confidence and for help in what we foolishly call little ways.
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INTRODUCTION

The study of The Faerie Queene presented here is the result of a lengthy journey into faery land. Although this dissertation is not intended or organized as a record of that journey, it may be helpful to expose the manner in which I came to admire The Faerie Queene, the attitudes that have guided and determined my approach to the poem, and the relation of my conclusions to those of other readers.

I first read the poem for a graduate seminar on Spenser, Books III through VI first, I and II later. And like poor Braggadocchio, I was baffled. My first response was a rather vague pleasure from the mere act of reading itself, a dreamy—certainly not an analytical—immersion in the fable. Subsequent readings of the poem have added new dimensions to my pleasure in Spenser, but they have not altered the essential joy of simply reading him.

From this experience has grown a conviction that any critical study of The Faerie Queene must acknowledge the primacy of the story, elucidating that story, explaining its structure, even adding to what we know of the poem's historical and philosophical context, but always enhancing the pleasure of the story. A critical commonplace, certainly, but one too often lost sight of in the huge, labyrinthian
body of critical material which has attached itself to
Spenser's poem.

From reading erudite and ingenious books and essays on
*The Faerie Queene* my desire grew to understand and comprehend the poem as a narrative which causes particular emotional and mental responses. In the simplest terms, I knew that I enjoyed the poem, but nothing that I read about it told me why I did. I think now that what one finally gains from Spenser—it almost sounds too obvious to need formulation—is a unique way of looking at and understanding experience, a unique mode of perception, and that it is the thoroughness and aptness with which Spenser has embodied his vision in characters and events—in story—that account for the felicity of reading *The Faerie Queene*.

I wish to suggest a method of reading Spenser's poem that will do justice to *The Faerie Queene* as a work of art, as a narrative poem, giving primary attention to its form and structure and yet allowing for its moral, ethical, historical, psychological, and mythological content. The primary distinction between what I hope to do and what has generally been done in criticism of *The Faerie Queene* lies, I think, in the assumptions with which one begins: rather than seek the meaning of the poem in whatever moral or historical lessons it may be thought to contain, I want to start with the structure of the work and let that organize and point the significance of the poem's meaning. It is
structure, after all, which organizes the fable and our experience of that fable.

Given the narrative mode of Spenser's poem—it renders experience through its fiction, its unique synthesis of commentary, images, characters, actions, and not through the techniques of discourse—the most essential meaning resides in the form or pattern which constitutes both the poet's perception of his subject and his expression of that subject's meaning. I agree with Northrop Frye that "there can be no definitive rendering of the real poetic meaning: it cannot, like the explicit meaning, be grasped in a way that makes it possible for us to say that this is what Shakespeare [or Spenser] really meant, or had in mind, or was trying to say, or whatever such silly phrase we use. Grasping the real meaning of poetry gives us an orbit or circumference of meaning, within which there is still some latitude for varieties of interpretation and emphasis."

And so I intend to examine The Faerie Queene for its "real poetic meaning," to attempt, as Frye says, "not so much to explain the poem in terms of its external relation to history or philosophy, but to preserve its identity as a poem."¹

By virtue of its dominant concern with external relationships, the body of criticism available to the student of Spenser is limited in what it can reveal about
the poem. Although extensive and varied and of genuine help for understanding particular episodes, characters, or allusions, much of it noticeably lacks a sense of the poem's wholeness and of its nature as a narrative poem. That is to say, criticism of Spenser has been surprisingly uniform at the most basic level: with but few exceptions it has dealt almost exclusively with the poem's "allegorical" meaning. Such criticism takes its task as one of elucidating the subject matter of a poem said to be an allegory; but I share Arnold Williams' scepticism: "it must be apparent to anyone who reads criticism of the Faerie Queene that 'allegory' covers several modes of writing which have little in common, except that they are not literal—and even that is a meaningless statement since no one can define 'literal.'"² In practice, however, "allegory" does seem to have a consistent use: Spenser's story becomes the occasion for reductive allegorization, and the poem itself is subordinated to whatever discursive comments it may make on morals or history.

The problem comes into clearest focus in those critics who initially reject reductive allegorization, only to employ it themselves when it can be made to serve their thematic approaches, be those historical or moral. Josephine Waters Bennett, because she wants to date specific sections of the poem to show how she supposes it was written
and rearranged, denies herself any consistent stance towards the poem's form of presentation. She argues, quite accurately I think, that "as soon as we try to fit the history of the Reformation in England into the story of Redcrosse, we encounter difficulties and begin to compromise with the chronology of events and the plain meaning of the text"; and again, that "we are free to see allusions where they seem plainly intended, without attempting to fit the whole narrative into the Procrustean bed of history." We must, that is, allow the poem to create its own form, to organize experience according to its own perceptions, unencumbered by the literal adherence to fact which distinguished historiography. Yet seventy pages later in the evolution of her argument Bennett herself compromises with chronology and the plain meaning of the text in order to fit Book V into the Procrustean bed of history. In the closing cantos of the fifth book, she argues, Spenser attempts "to describe contemporary affairs under a very thin veil of allegory" which forms "a coda to the Book of Redcrosse, bringing the English phase of the religious struggle up to date in 1595."

A. C. Hamilton, too, begins by rejecting the subordination of poem to discursive content: "what [Spenser] labors to express is an image rather than moral ideas. These may inform and sustain the image, but the image
itself is primary." He later specifies the kind of reading which he rejects: "We are told that in the episode of the Wandering Wood, the Knight is Holiness, Una is Truth, Error is obvious error, ergo, the episode means that Holiness defeats Error with the aid of Truth. We are told this by the critics, not by Spenser, who does not name the knight, nor the lady, and describes the monster in very real terms." But Hamilton too falls victim to the very sort of reading he rejected when he comes to the battle with Cymochles and Pyrocles over Guyon's unconscious body. The battle ends, the critic, not the poet, says, "with Arthur helpless, himself standing in need of grace. Grace comes in the Palmer who offers him Guyon's sword, that is, the power of reason."

Allegorization, then, leads not to the "real poetic meaning" but to a substitution of ideas for the image provided by the poem; such reading does not elucidate the narrative, but replaces it with historical or moral discourse. The misemphasis is avoided when we understand allegory, in The Faerie Queene, as a technique; "Spenser's formula 'dark conceit' is based," as Paul J. Alpers describes it, "on the rhetoricians' definition of allegory as the local device of continued metaphor," not on the sort of correspondences which we find in Animal Farm. And we need to remember that the technique of allegory
does not direct us out of the story and into a non-fictional realm. Rather, the technique places our previous historical, philosophical, or literary experience and knowledge in juxtaposition with the story at hand. The point of allegory is the tension thus created between tenor and vehicle. In The Faerie Queene particularly, but also generally, I think, allegory recreates the context in which the narrative exists, reminding us of what has gone before and pointing the direction we are now to move in.

The encounter between Belphoebe and Braggadocchio (II.3), for example, calls into play our knowledge of the meeting between Aeneas and Venus in Virgil. The disparity of tone, the contrast between the burlesque of Spenser's story at this point and the seriousness of Virgil's, recalls our previous reading and refocuses it on the new material and new attitudes which are the concerns of this new epic. We are not in the least tempted to read Spenser's episode as a careless or inept, veiled narration of the founding of Rome. The same is true of historical "allegories." The juxtaposition in Book V of Mercilla's execution of Duessa with Elizabeth's dealings with Mary, Queen of Scots, exploits the reader's knowledge of contemporary affairs to enhance his understanding of the narrative. The historical incident is neither the goal nor the veiled meaning of the fiction.
Allegory is only a technique; as such it is not the end of the poem, but one of the means to that end. It can show us how parts of the poem work, but allegory cannot show us the end to which the poem aims; nor can it show us the poem as a whole whose pieces contribute to one design. For that we need to locate the formal principle which gives to the poem its artistic structure, to determine, that is, the poem's myth. In his article "Christian Myth and Christian History," Lynn White, Jr., distinguishes two modes of perceiving and articulating Christian experience. The first is history; the second is "myth, defined as the dramatization in temporal terms of things seen from the non-temporal standpoint of eternity." Further, "a myth is not about something that once happened, but rather about something that is always happening: the narration of an eternal event . . . . Unlike the historian, the myth-maker starts not with the particular, but, by illumination of the spirit, with the abstraction of something timeless." It is the timeless abstraction, the myth, of The Faerie Queene, that gives us the form through which to read Spenser's poem. The poem's myth, however, is not some allegorical statement on morals or history, nor is it some overall, unifying "explicit meaning." It is instead a form, or formulation, of the process of experience; it is a pattern which both organizes and expresses the process of experience
and the process of *The Faerie Queene*.

Recently critics have begun to approach Spenser in ways that can do justice to the artistic, as distinct from philosophical or moral, nature of his work. Angus Fletcher, for example, argues that the poem's organization is archetypal, that two great archetypes—the temple and the labyrinth—are the basis of a "mythological grammar" which determines the form of *The Faerie Queene*. The labyrinth, the state of things outside the temple, is "a general condition of unmapped disorder." Organizing the labyrinth spatially and arresting the unbroken duration of the temporal flow, the temple is "the still point of the turning world." Fletcher accounts for the shape of the poem in what he calls "prophetic terms." The poem is said to be teleological because all depends on the unifying idea of glory, which becomes the secular equivalent of Divine Providence. Though he notes the importance of recurrence within the poem—"the periodic aspect of time in the temple"—Fletcher is finally unwilling to let this stand as the meaning of the poem and instead makes it rely on one aspect of explicit meaning, that of glory.\(^10\) We have, then, a recognition of process as central to the poem's form and meaning but there is yet a desire to subordinate that process to some kind of explicit content. To extend Fletcher's metaphor, we need not a mythological grammar
but a mythological syntax, a way to describe not only the poem's recurrent archetypes but also their relationships to each other in the grand design that is the poem.

In several recent articles Harry Berger, Jr., works towards an understanding of Spenser's poem as process, as both a description of and an event in the developing culture of which Spenser was a member. He locates for certain segments of the poem the structural character of the work which makes a whole out of Spenser's wide and spacious poem. For example, the significance of Malbecco and Helenore is found in their emergence as "a condensation into human form of a set of conventional notions and psychological forces. These notions and forces are 'eterne in mutabilitie'; like Adonis and the chaos under the Gardens of Adonis, or like Nature's mutability, they persist by continually trying on and casting off forms; this fluid process of condensation and evaporation or dissolution goes on at the level of culture and history, in the life of the individual psyche, and during the course of Spenser's poem itself." Berger's approach seeks to isolate the permanent and the stable fact behind the great variety of characters in The Faerie Queene, seeks, that is, the meaning of characters not in their thematic, historical, or classical aspects but in their existence as recurrent manifestations of eternal forces.
Berger extends the principle, in a related article, to include the chronicle material presented in Merlin's prophecy. Here we see the workings of human experience from a larger temporal perspective; it is an entire nation over hundreds of years that enacts the process of assuming and discarding—over and over again—particular embodiments of civilization. Merlin's prophecy revolves upon a tension which "characterizes the chronicle as a whole," a tension "between the actual vicissitudes and the resolving tendency imposed by the overview . . . . Of the three waves of cycles in terms of which it is organized . . . . the first two end with returns to chaos and the third with a resolving image uneasily imposed. Development from cycle to cycle is easy to show, but it is hardly millennial."13 The tension is essentially that between content and form, between the disparate and apparently chaotic events which constitute British experience and the form imposed on them by the organizing imagination of the poet.

It is along these lines that I propose to discuss The Faerie Queene: the poem will by virtue of its great variety baffle our attempts to grasp it until we can perceive the organizing form which Spenser has employed to give it shape. In a world as large and full as that of The Faerie Queene, a world which encompasses so much of man's moral and historical and literary concern, meaning turns out to be the same as structure since structure alone
can make such diversity coherent and thus intelligible. It is my assumption that only by an examination that focuses entirely on the poem as a work of art and concerns itself first of all with the shape of events and but secondarily with their content can we determine the structure of the poem, the vehicle which gives meaning to content.
Notes to the Introduction


4. Ibid., pp. 187 and 189.


6. Ibid., p. 32.

7. Ibid., p. 113.


The problem confronting each student of Spenser is the same as that for the poem's characters, "the question of what it is, what understanding or what faith, can subdue the variety of things to the quester's need; what in the pattern of things gives reason to believe that that questing or beseeching figure can derive strength and support from the world, and so go on to his perfection."\(^1\) What is it, in other words, that makes of The Faerie Queene in its infinite variety of subjects, sources, and techniques a work of the imagination with its own unique and cohesive integrity?

If the answer is in the letter to Raleigh, it is certainly "cloudily enwrapped in allegoricall devices."\(^2\) In the first place, Spenser's statements in that letter about particulars of the first three books of the poem are at times simply wrong, clear errors of fact. A fair amount of critical ingenuity has been devoted to justifying his mistakes or to explaining their origin, to discovering the reason why the poet should be wrong about obvious details of his own poem. But we are left, in the absence of external
evidence, with the fact of the errors. And given E. K.'s commentary on the Shepheardes Calender, we may at least suspect that the discrepancies result from deviltry. In any case, the presence of the mistakes mutes the reliability of the letter; more importantly, they distance the letter from the poem and focus attention on the internal working of the letter itself. The letter to Raleigh, therefore, becomes a curious document in itself, but a less than helpful introduction to The Faerie Queene.

The letter is an apology, and in this respect it resembles Sidney's Defence of Poesy. The nature of the defense made for the poem indicates that Spenser's primary concern in the letter was the Puritan attack on art as mere feigning. It is the essential nature of The Faerie Queene as story, as fiction, that Spenser attempts to justify here.

A conventional preface, the letter is addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh, a man who, by the evidence of "Colin Clouts Come Home Againe," was already familiar with the work, a man who did not need to be convinced that The Faerie Queene was worthy or profitable. The letter is "hereunto annexed," therefore, "for that it giveth great light to the reader, for the better understanding." The letter, that is, addresses through Raleigh a general readership, a potentially sceptical if not hostile audience, and serves a function analogous—in intent if not in dishonesty—to that of
contemporary book jackets. Spenser is not confident that his poem will be properly received in all quarters, for he knows "how doubtfully all allegories may be construed." He knows, that is, how suspicious some people can be of feigning and of the propriety of imaginative fiction.

The explanations and justifications offered in the letter defend The Faerie Queene as a legitimate form of serious literary expression. Sidney's three-fold classification of history, philosophy, and poetry is implicit here also. The poem is justified against discourse and historiography. The assumption must be, I think, that among the prospective readers some would argue that the intention to fashion a gentleman in virtue would best be realized by one of those two kinds.

Spenser defends his use of poetry on the same grounds Sidney used; but in the process Spenser reveals his ambivalence toward the task he has undertaken in the letter. He defends his allegory, or a dark conceit, which I take to mean here imaginative or fictional narrative, on several grounds. He begins by conceding the argument: he colors the matter of his poem with an historical fiction, "the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter then for profite of the ensamples." To those who want discipline plainly delivered, he apologizes: they "should be satisfide with the use of these days, seeing
all things accounted by their showes, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune since." It would appear that Spenser, too, is a Puritan, but that he wishes to accommodate those less noble.

But he then changes tack. Xenophon is preferred to Plato precisely because he fashioned, that is, created a fictional, commonwealth instead of plainly delivering a discourse as Plato had done. The letter moves by way of this example (doing just what it argues is best) from cynical acceptance of fiction to assertive defense. Doctrine by example instead of by rule is "much more profitable and gratious."

In handling history as a possible means of achieving his general end, Spenser again asserts the superiority of poetry, on the grounds of the poet's freedom—he can begin in the middle and move freely between past and future as it most concerns him—and on the grounds of the reader's pleasure. The technique of the poet historicall "maketh a pleasing analysis of all." And he has, of course, brought in the precedents of Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, and Tasso to defend his choice by associating their stature and the acceptance of them with his own work.

In keeping with his defense of the poem, Spenser points out the lesson available to the reader and a means of substantiating his claim that the poem is profitable.
That he is not concerned to offer an explanation of the poem as a poetic structure is clear from the carelessness with which he treats rather obvious matters of plot.

The letter to Raleigh meets and attempts to answer anticipated objections to the kind of work *The Faerie Queene* is. The explanation is not a disinterested exploration of the form and techniques of the poet; if we take it as such, we are likely to be misled. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser has ranged freely through the "zodiac of his own wit"; in the letter to Raleigh he packages the result for the Puritans among his readers. This is not an attempt to deceive but an attempt to prepare the reader to approach the poem positively, as no less sage and serious for being a fiction.

The letter, then, cannot by its very nature provide what we need: the synthesizing principle of the poem, that one thing to which and by which all else is ordered. With respect to principles of order, Elder Olson distinguishes two kinds of literature: "Didactic poetry . . . must always propound a doctrine or determine a moral and emotional attitude toward a doctrine in such a way as to command action in accordance with it"; mimetic poetry, on the other hand, is "ordered, not to a doctrine, but to a plot."

Didactic poetry seeks "to inculcate certain moral attitudes by arousing our emotions" and engages "our interest and emotions in particulars of the action in order to instruct
us generally." By contrast, mimetic poetry "makes use of our moral attitudes to arouse our emotions"; "it instructs us about particulars of the characters and actions in the poem in order to engage our emotions and interests in behalf of these very characters and actions." In essence, all the parts and pieces of didactic poetry are orchestrated to some end beyond the experience of the work itself; all the various aspects of a mimetic poem are directed inward toward itself. The most important factor in Olson's discussion is the implicit assumption that a poem of either kind is ordered, that all of its parts contribute to one end. The similarities and differences of the two kinds are clearer, I think, if we conceive of them as structural. The didactic narrative is structured to effect a change in the reader, the mimetic to effect a change in the protagonist.

The Faerie Queene is a didactic poem. If, however, such a classification is to serve our understanding of the poem, two qualifications must be made. First, though it seeks to inculcate certain attitudes in us by propounding a doctrine—seeks in Sidney's terms to move us—we must be extremely liberal in our understanding of doctrine. It is no one dogma or system of dogma that can account for The Faerie Queene. The poem seeks to lay out no nice equations between discourse and narrative. Rather, it is
the embodiment of a vision. It is didactic because it moves the reader to its vision directly rather than through his identification with a protagonist. The poem's action, characters, thought, effect a change in the reader, not in a central character in the narrative.

The second qualification to be made is that the poem is a narrative and not a treatise. Olson says of didactic poetry, and with reference to The Faerie Queene, that "such poetry is a mode of statement; everything in it is representative of parts of discourse." This view I think to be wrong. Spenser's poem is organized by a vision of human experience not at all dogmatic, and it takes the form of narrative. It represents, in its fiction, experience at all levels and of many varieties conceived of in terms of the controlling vision. The poem is didactic in that it works directly on the reader, to fashion, or make, a gentleman; but it sets about this with the tools of narrative and not of discourse.

In "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones," R. S. Crane takes up this matter of a narrative's order or organization. Although he excludes narratives "constructed on didactic principles," his description of the workings of plot elucidates the workings of all narratives, didactic and mimetic. Crane defines plot as "the particular temporal synthesis effected by the writer of the elements of action,
character, and thought that constitute the matter of his invention. It is impossible, therefore, to state adequately what any plot is unless we include in our formula all three of the elements or causes of which the plot is the synthesis; and it follows also that plots will differ in structure according as one or another of the three causal ingredients is employed as the synthesizing principle. There are, thus, plots of action, plots of character, and plots of thought.  

The two broad categories of narratives (didactic and mimetic) differ not in mode—all are, simply, narratives—but only in the location of the final resolution. In mimetic fictions, the resolution is effected in the protagonist; the reader participates in the resolution by identifying at one remove. In didactic fictions, the resolution is effected directly in the reader through his experience of the elements of the narrative. In both kinds, the resolution is achieved by the synthesis of character and action and thought, by the parts of narrative and not by the parts of discourse. Othello, for example, is mimetic, the resolution occurring for Othello himself; our identification with the character inculcates certain moral attitudes in us in relation to our experience outside the play. The resolution of The Faerie Queene occurs for the reader directly as he himself accepts the tensions created by the diversity
of the fable and the succession of protagonists, and
resolves them himself following the lead of the narrator.
Action, character, and thought—these are the elements of
The Faerie Queene as they are of Othello. In the latter,
the characters and actions of the narrative are the more
or less final and sufficient object of our emotions and
judgments. In the former, they are ordered by Spenser's
vision and constructed to move the reader to act in har­
mony with that vision.

The vision which organizes Spenser's poem is the myth
of recurrence. The Faerie Queene represents, from its view
above or beyond time, human experience as a series of
recurrent cycles, be that experience individual, national,
or cultural. The plot of the poem is the dramatization in
temporal terms of this vision or myth. All things move in
cycles, from success to fall, then through chaos to a new
success. Such is the vision which orders the multiple
actions individually and serially of the poem's plot.

Those engaged in this process, in history or in the
narrative's representation, do not see the recurrence; it
is only from the broader perspective that pattern and
meaning emerge. Temporal experience participates in the
recurrent pattern of Spenser's myth, but we must step
back to see it. The Faerie Queene teaches us that we are
part of a universal process even when we cannot see it in
our own historical experience; it does so by representing that process in "temporal terms" and providing us with the myth to comprehend it.

The myth of recurrence is both pattern and meaning, form and content, because the meaning of experience is found in its pattern. Spenser's vision, from the largest perspective, is that mankind's experience—individually and nationally—is a recurrent process of rising and falling, each repetition returning more or less to the same point; the cycle is repeated successively, in the individual life, in the history of each nation, and in the history of western civilization. The process tends, slowly, almost imperceptively, towards a more perfect civilization, expressed as marriage on the individual level and as commonwealth on the national. Whether we perceive experience as merely repetitive or as progressive depends on our vantage point, on whether we are close or far, in history or at the standpoint of eternity.

II

The two chronicles of Book II, Canto x, constitute perhaps the clearest delineation of the myth of recurrence and the tension which is the essence of Spenser's vision. The myth recognizes, on the one hand, the cyclical nature of experience and the inevitable return to discord as each
cycle completes itself. On the other hand, the myth of recurrence seeks to redeem those cycles by imposing a progressive tendency on the cycles as they are viewed from the standpoint of eternity. *Briton Moniments* embodies the negative, repetitive aspect of the cycle, while the *Antiquitee of Faerie Lond* extracts the progress which accumulates through a long term succession of cycles.

The history of the nation as represented in the form of *Briton Moniments* is a series of cycles, each of which consists of a rise from chaos, a period of stability and order, and a relapse into chaos. In Book I, the Red Crosse Knight serves truth (wholeness as opposed to duplicity and separation) and restores sovereignty to its rightful possessors, Una's parents. So too the announced pattern of *Briton Moniments* is the movement from chaos and division to the unity represented by monarchy: "of this lands first conquest [it] did devize,/ And old division into regiments,/ Till it reduced was to one mans governements" (II.9.59).

These lines describe not only the tendency of British history from the larger overview, they also capture the pattern of smaller movements as well. In Book I history is seen as the recurrence throughout time of events which reenact in new circumstances and with new details Christ's struggle to free man from oppression. Here the reenacted pattern takes similar but more specific form: disunity and
decay are redeemed by the institution of order at the national level.

History as represented in *Briton Moniments* both repeats itself and undergoes transformation; that is, the basic movement recurs, but each time it is slightly different. The chronicle which so fascinates Arthur marks off two phases of British history. The first begins with the island in its primeval state: "the land . . . was salvage wildernesse,/ Unpeopled, unmannurd, unprovd, unpraysd" (II.10.5). Its inhabitants were as savage as the land, a "salvage nation . . . of hideous giaunts, and halfe beastly men." Such "held this land, and with their filthinesse/ Polluted this same gentle soyle long time" (10.7-9). Brutus comes and builds his empire, carves a form, a nation, out of uncivil chaos. He conquers the giants and rewards his heroes with territories that still bear their names, places such as Cornwall and Devonshire. Whatever the fate of Brutus' progeny, this much at least survives of his efforts to subdue the land: it has been named.

A period of peace and stability follows upon Brutus' subjugation of the realm, which his son Locrine maintains:

> Ne was there outward breach, nor grudge in hart,  
> That once their quiet government annoyd,  
> But each his paynes to others profit still employd.  
> (10.14)

Brutus' basic achievement, the transformation of a savage
land into a realm, endures some seven hundred years. But it is unmarred by trouble, by threats to its existence, only for brief periods of time. The stasis achieved endures precariously for a while but ultimately disintegrates.

The first threat comes from a "nation straung" which invades during Locrine's reign. He defeats that foreign nation and turns back the external danger, only to become himself the cause of division:

The king retourned proud of victory,  
And insolent wox through unwonted ease,  
That shortly he forgot the jeopardy,  
Which in his land he lately did appease,  
And fell to vaine voluptuous disease.  

(II.10.17)

His wife, in a fit of jealousy, imprisons Locrine and slays his mistress. She rules well until her son's majority. The son, however, disgraces the throne, as does his successor Memprise. Ebrank "salved both their infamies"; his son Brutus rules, worthy of the name. And so it goes with alternating periods of turmoil and of peace: Brutus' achievement yet endures, but the danger of destruction, always potential, erupts frequently if not fatally.

With the coming to power of the sons of Gonorill and Regan—Cundah and Morgan—the trend of events takes a turn for the worse, culminating in the extinction of Brutus' line:
Here ended Brutus sacred progeny,
Which had seven hundred yeares this scepter borne,
With high renowne and great felicity:
The noble braunch from th'antique stocke was torne
Through discord, and the roiall throne forlorne:
Thenceforth this realme was into factions rent,
Whilst each of Brutus boasted to be borne,
That in the end was left no moniment
Of Brutus, nor of Britons glorie auncient.

(II.10.36)

The unity and order imposed by Brutus on an uncivil land
has finally been destroyed. Britain regresses to a state
of factions and competition, a state analogous to that from
which Brutus created her: the cycle completes itself. But
that state is finally only analogous and not a literal
repetition. The fact of disorder is repeated, but the
nature of that disorder modulates from cycle to cycle.

Donwallo initiates the second phase of British history
by once again reducing the nation to peace and orderly
government. In him appears a new kind of ruler, a new man
for a new age: of "matchlesse might" like his predecessors,
he also has "wondrous wit to menage high affayres" (10.37).
"Stird with pitty of the stressed plight/ Of this sad
realme," he—like Brutus before him—makes the Britons
once again "which earst were many made through variaunce"
(37-38). After the achievement of this second stasis, peace
and order continue under a fairly long line of Donwallo's
heirs, continue, that is, until the reign of Cassibalane
when Roman assaults on Britain begin.
The Romans were almost successfully repulsed, and would have been but for Androgeus, who "betrayd his countrey unto forreine spoyle:/ Nought else but treason from the first this land did foyl." The subjugation to Rome will continue until Arthur once again frees the realm.

The Roman conquest does not completely destroy the new order established by Donwallo, though again the gains are but precariously maintained. This period is filled with plagues inflicted by external enemies abetted by traitors. Romans, Danes, Picts, Huns—the invasions are frequent, apparently unending. Kimbeline, Constantine, and Aurelius manage to restore peace for relatively short periods of time, so the woe is not unmitigated; but the tendency to decay which had marked the last years of the first phase has appeared again and is irreversible. The chronicle ends with Uther's succession and we are left to hope with Arthur that better days will again return for the Britons.

Both of these phases are cyclical: they begin with disorder, establish peace and law, which for some length of time endures fitfully, and then collapse again—making a new phase necessary and determining at least part of its pattern. But significant differences between the two allow us to hope that succession of cycles is not merely redundant but progressive. The first era is marked by—and finally destroyed through—two dominant characteristics: the
royal family is the predominant unit and "the chiefe
dominion/ By strength was wielded without pollicy" (10.39). The initial empire instituted by Brutus collapses as a result of intra-family intrigues and violence. Husbands and wives, fathers and sons turn on one another. In the absence of binding laws, these disputes are resolved violently, with the strongest victorious. And thus it is that the line of Brutus ends, in a family blood bath:

... the greedy thirst of royall crowne,
Tha knowes no kinred, nor regardes no right,
Stird Porrex up to put his brother downe;
Who, unto him assembling forreigne might,
Made warre on him, and fell him selfe in fight:
Whose death t' avenge, his mother mercilesse,
Most mercilesse of women, Wyden hight,
Her other sonne fast sleeping did oppresse,
And with most cruell hand him murdred pittilesse.

Here ended Brutus sacred progeny.
(II.10.35-36)

There is no concern here for the people that constitute the nation or for the orderly rule that redeemed Britain from the dominion of giants and half beastly men.

In the second phase, though the pattern of concord followed by destruction remains, force has been replaced by law and the commonwealth replaced the royal family as the significant group. Even the one series of events that threatens to develop into a replay of the violent family intrigue that destroyed the line of Brutus is controlled
by respect for the line of descent and the rule of law, thus avoiding a similar fate. Morindus contains, at least potentially, the vices of the former line: "wrath outrageous/ And cruell rancour" (10.43). His personal failings do not dominate his reign, however, and the succession passes to his sons. Here we have the closest approximation to the situation that characterized, and finally destroyed, the first house of Britain. Morindus' five sons squabble for the right to rule but Elidure refrains from violence and thus finally preserves his own rule and the kingdom's stability: chosen to replace the deposed Archigald, Elidure instead frees Archigald from prison and restores his crown; imprisoned himself by his younger brothers, Elidure comes again to the throne upon their deaths, having patiently endured his captivity, and "ruled long with honorable state." His example evidently works positively; for "then all the sonnes of these five brethren raynd/ By dew successe" (10.43-45). Although the fatal "greedy thirst of royall crowne" which destroyed the peace of the first era recurs, it can now be contained.

Participation by the people of the kingdom in maintenance and selection of the monarch has perhaps been the key to the particular successes of this second period. Donwallo had been chosen by the people for his wit as well as for his might (37), and even during the long period of
disorder caused by the Romans and other invaders, the kings continue to rule by the will of the people. Cassibalane, King during the first invasion, "was by the people chosen" to rule until his nephews came of age; and, even during the worst period, after four hundred years of Roman wars, Constantine II is crowned "by consent of Commons and of Peares."

The primary problems of the second phase—those which intermittently threaten the stability wrought by Donwallo and finally destroy it—are the "hideous hunger of dominion," which leads Rome to attack the Britons, and treason, which "from the first this land did foyle" (47-48).

During the second period, then, the destructive abuses of the earlier phase are remedied but new problems arise with which the subsequent period—that of Uther Pendragon and Arthur—must contend. And we know, even if Arthur does not, that he will be able to do so successfully. The chronicle tells us, in describing Caesar's victory, that "thenceforth this land was tributarie made/ T'ambitious Rome, and did their rule obay,/ Till Arthur all that reckoning defrayd" (10.49).

Arthur will come as the nation's redeemer just as in the midst of Britain's woe, Christ, the pattern of redeemers, comes to mankind: Cassibalane ruled during the first Roman conquest,
Next him Tenantius raignd; then Kimbeline,
What time th'Eternall Lord in fleshly slime
Enwombed was, from wretched Adams line
To purge away the guilt of sinfull crime:
O joyous memorie of happy time,
That heavenly grace so plenteously displayd!
O too high ditty for my simple rime!
Soone after this the Romanes him warrayd.

(10.50)

The passage not only places British history in the larger context of western civilization, it offers as well an additional promise of redemption. Just as in the midst of further troubles comes the birth of Christ and the promise of his death, so too the promise of Arthur inheres in the very victory of Rome. And so, too, in the last line, comes the sorrowful reminder that no redemption is permanent, that no joy, no peace is more than a respite.

We have here in Briton Moniments the central pattern of The Faerie Queene, the poem's myth dramatized in terms of history. The myth of recurrence perceives and articulates experience on the national level as process. It gives to that process form and thereby imbues it with meaning. The nation begins as mere potential, as a chaos of unsubdued land and savage inhabitants; its history is a record of its advances from and returns to that primeval chaos. But each advance may be a little further than previous ones, and each return may be to a chaos less primeval. The impetus of each cycle and of the movement as a whole is toward unity and civilization.
But the advance is so slow, so tenuous that it is but barely perceptible and then only when the observer withdraws from the movement itself to a distance great enough to reveal the form and its repetition. This is precisely what Arthur's chronicle does, and what *The Faerie Queene* does, and what, from the greatest distance, the *Antiquitee of Faerie Lond* does.

During the same period of time that Arthur is reading his chronicle, Guyon reads the *Antiquitee of Faerie Lond*. The presentation of this second document serves almost as an antidote for the reader who has seen the pain and frustration of the British chronicle; further, the two "occur" at the same time, suggesting that their very different orderings of experience are simultaneously present even if they cannot be presented at once. Guyon's chronicle stands in marked contrast to the other historical material dispersed throughout Books II and III. Not only is it what shamefast Guyon needs to keep him moving, it also answers—in both tone and content—to the bleakness of more traditional historical material. The movement of Britain from the chaos in which Brutus finds her to the reign of law and peace and commonwealth proceeds so slowly and erratically and encounters so many cyclical setbacks that we might almost agree with Berger about the intransigence of historical facts to meaning. 7
The *Antiquitee of Faerie Lond*, on the other hand, ignores these very facts for the sake of meaning, transforming history into poetry by imposing form on the nearly chaotic content of the chronicles.

Whereas *Briton Moniments* is national in scope, perhaps even somewhat nationalistic—witness Arthur's "How much to her we owe, that all us gave"—the *Antiquitee* is racial, the narration in mythic form of man's history from creation to the yet living Glorian, whom we may happily suppose to represent in some way Elizabeth: happily, because the chronicle of the Elves is a joyous affair; in some way, because though Elizabeth and other persons living or dead may certainly be involved, the *Antiquitee* is not an allegory of any nation's history. Attempts to so construe it may coincidentally tell us much of importance about the chronicle, but the poetry itself tells us that the *Antiquitee* is a seminal image which distills into narrative form an essential truth about what it means to be human, to live in history. Its thrust is general. But it may yet permit us to comment on particular historical phenomena by allegorizing them in terms of the *Antiquitee*. We may, that is, perceive the analogy made possible by the felicity of this myth between it and any of those historical experiences of which it is the essence. And given Spenser's desire to "fashion" his reader, we
certainly should turn from poem to world. But we may not appropriate and limit the poem to any one group of particular data.

Isabel Rathborne, in *The Meaning of Spenser's Fairy-land*, argues that the *Antiquitee* is to be read "as veiled history, not as mere fancy," and that "the British and Elfin Chronicles in Book II, Canto X, are supplementary." In her view, the two together recount history from Bacchus to Elizabeth; the first segment of this history is the *Antiquitee*, and it is veiled: for Elfin we are to read Bacchus, for Elfinan Hercules; we are to see Aeneas under Elfant, Brutus under Elfinor. With Brutus we switch to *Briton Moniments* for the next historical segment, veils aside; on its conclusion the sequence passes back to the *Antiquitee*: the seven hundred princes following Elfinor in the Elfin chronicle are, in *Briton Moniments*, the ancestors of Henry VII (Elficleos in the former) and Tanaquill called Glorian (Elizabeth).

Rathborne's interpretation fits reasonably well (though it makes for tortuous reading). Bacchus was in some accounts an early civilizer like Elfin, whom "all India obayed,/ And all that now America men call" (10.72), although no such scope of dominion as this is credited to any early hero. Hercules, too, was said to found cities as his supposed counterpart Elfinan did in laying "Cleopolis
foundation first of all." Henry VII resembles Elficleos in his achievements and in his two sons, the younger of which, Henry VIII, ruled because of his brother's death. But Rathborne's equation of these two won't work because historically Arthur Tudor died before his father and left an "emptie place" only in spousal, not in dominion. Though Elizabeth, finally, like Tanaquill, succeeded by her father's "last will," so did Mary.

That is to say, the identifications made by Rathborne fit well enough to be suggestive, but neither they nor any other can be conclusively established. Nor were they meant to be. It is precisely in its suggestiveness that the value of the Antiquitee lies, in its ability to help us explain to ourselves the meaning of human experience. The Antiquitee presents in mythic form the essence of civilization's achievement, presents, that is, the story of mankind's effort to build the ideal city, and coalesces the contributions of individual nations and rulers into the single grand progress of man toward the civil perfection represented in Cleopolis. It thereby focuses dramatically the meaning of human existence which is but barely perceived when surrounded by facts.

History progresses, from the evidence of Briton Moniments, slowly, through an apparently infinite repetition of cyclical patterns, men in each reenactment fighting
for peace and stability, gaining it but for a while, suffering a return to chaos, awaiting the next turn of the wheel. The Antiquitee of Faerie Lond, by ignoring or suppressing the pain, the losses, the regressions of the historical chronicle, abstracts from history mankind's achievements to reveal them as connected, as participating in the same universal quest for harmony. For the sake of laying bare the significance of cities and heroes throughout time, all are made over into Elves serving Cleopolis, which represents, as Rathborne says, "both the Platonic idea of an imperial city and the temporal manifestations of that idea in the history of several famous cities, of which London is the last"; or more accurately, London is only the most recent city, the one which most concerns Spenser.

Cleopolis represents both the idea of the perfect city and the manifestations of that idea in history. It is the earthly vision for which Red Crosse fights and which he furthers in liberating Eden. The city of Glorian represents the civilization, the ideal of communal harmony, towards which all of The Faerie Queene moves and towards which the poem sees human history striving. Britain advances through Brutus and Donwallo from savage wilderness to a commonwealth of law; it awaits further advance under Arthur. And London, as becomes explicit during Britomart's
exchange with Paridell (III.10), is itself but the latest center in the cyclical progression of mankind through a series of national realizations, taking the place of Rome as Rome had succeeded to the achievements of Troy. Though each people, as represented in their chief city, must start from the beginning, they inherit the spiritual achievements and knowledge of their predecessors and advance the cause of civilization yet another step.

The Antiquitee places the cycles of Britain's experience (presented in Briton Moniments) within the larger context of Western history, itself advancing stage by stage, from nation to nation. We know also that this chronicle of faeries involves in some way characters and events encountered elsewhere in the poem. It begins with Elfe and Fay, "of whom all Faryes spring, and fetch their lignage right," and since the action of the poem itself is in faery land we suspect some essential relation between chronicle and the narrative generally. As Arthur's chronicle informs him of his nation and thereby transmits to him his history and heritage, so too the Antiquitee establishes the past and implies the future of faery land and the role of her heroes. That some of her heroes are not rightfully faeries is but an extension of the ambivalence of Cleopolis. Both an idealization and historical reality (if incompletely realized), its servants advance simultaneously the cause
of their nations and the cause of the ideâ of civilization as imaged in Cleopolis.

Thus the Garden of Adonis occurs here as analogue of that in which Amoret is raised; as the first mother of faeries originates here, so Amoret as wife and mother receives her education in her own Garden of Adonis. It is the same with the seven hundred years of Brutus' progeny and the seven hundred princely descendants of Elfinor. Though we have not the evidence to argue that the first is a veiled or allegorical rendition of the other, we can recognize that with Brutus and his heirs we have an historical incidence of the long rule, peace, and stability which dominates the myth of the Antiquitee. In Briton Moniments, however, the interlude is only a temporary stage in the rough and uneasy movement of a nation towards fulfillment and ends necessarily in renewed strife. The same movement is captured sans setbacks and defeats in the story of the Elfin Chronicle.

That story begins with Prometheus' creation of man from "many parts from beast deryv'd" animated with "fire from heven." In its yoking together of beasts and heaven in man's body and spirit, the account preserves the ambivalence of human nature, but it radically separates itself from the accepted historical account of Genesis, thereby marking itself as different in form. It is invention, myth, free
from the restraints and sadness of a Genesis taken to be historical, free, that is, to extract from the totality of human experience its direction and its significance. The tone of the Antiquitee of Faerie Lond is an important aspect of its meaning. The lightness, the play, the humor, are one with its vision of man's history as ultimately progressive; viewed from the longer perspective, the apparently disparate achievements of all ages, all men, all nations, are steps forward in one movement toward Cleopolis. The genealogy, as though delighting in its reduction of all history into the reign of one dynasty, plays variations on "Elf." Each successive ruler of faery land is still Elf with but a new mutation to mark him. From Elfin to Elfinor to Elficleos the chronicle progresses through a series of names frustratingly difficult to keep straight with the achievements accompanying them. Which is perhaps as it should be since the chronicle as myth gathers into itself infinitely more accomplishments and heroes than it can or wants to name.

There is, in addition, the humor of the context in which the Antiquitee of Faerie Lond occurs. "Quite ravisht with delight, to heare/ The royall ofspring of his native land," Arthur breaks forth with fulsome praise for his country, the source of "what ever good we have!": "Deare countrey! O how dearely deare/ Ought thy
remembrance and perpetual band/ Be to thy foster childe:
(10.69). Rebuffing Arthur's enthusiasm, perhaps even
undermining the nationalism of the encomium, Guyon's ob-
liviousness to his compatriot must certainly provoke a
smile: his stride and attention unbroken by the outburst,
he "all this while his booke did read,/ Ne yet has ended."
The episode also ends on a comic note. The two cham-
pions have become absent-minded scholars:

So long they redd in those antiquities,
That how the time was fled they quite forgate;
Till gentle Alma, seeing it so late,
Perforce their studies broke, and them besought
To thinke how supper did them long awaite:
So halfe unwilling from their bookes them brought.
(II.10.77)

Alma leads the recalcitrant knights away from their
intemperate indulgence in books.

The Antiquitee of Faerie Lond is no mere fancy, nor
is it veiled history. Rather, we see here the poetic view,
from the standpoint of eternity, brought to bear upon the
confusion and the meaning of historical material to lay
open its significance. That view is both comic and
restorative.

Briton Moniments reveals the shape of history; the
Antiquitee of Faerie Lond embodies the direction of history,
the movement toward perfection. In this myth, each city and
each hero contributes to the progress accumulated from the
past. The two chronicles in conjunction embody Spenser's
vision of human endeavor progressing, slowly, by successive cycles toward the ideal city.

If the two aspects of the myth of recurrence, the shape and the direction of experience, are simply placed side by side at this point in Book II, they merge in Book III. Merlin's prophecy and Britomart's exchange with Paridell reveal the concentric relationships of individual, national, and universal history. Britomart's experience constitutes one phase in the movement of her city toward perfection, just as Troynovant is itself a phase in the movement of human civilization toward a similar perfection.

In Merlin's prophecy history assumes the same shape that it has in Briton Moniments. Harry Berger isolates the two elements of repetition and advance in the prophecy that we have seen above in the chronicle of Britain. The prophecy, in Berger's description, "is ordered as a series of three recurrent cycles . . . in which elemental, hostile, and animal tendencies are sustained through history; on the other hand, each cycle differs in total character from its predecessor." Like the earlier chronicle, it delineates the individual cycles that make up a nation's history; although the content here differs from that of Arthur's book, the pattern is the same: out of discord order is created, from order discord grows. To borrow again from Berger: "against the recurrent cycles of
emergence and decline, against the apparently treadmill pattern of continual invasion, is set the increasingly complex assimilation of racial elements into political concordia.\textsuperscript{12}

The direction of the cyclical movement remains the same as in the earlier history; all moves toward unity, toward wholeness. But beyond this there is, as in Briton Moniments and Arthur's enthusiastic response to it, a conflict between the actual difficulties and defeats recorded in the chronicles and the desire to see meaning and progress. Both chronicles revolve upon a tension "between the actual vicissitudes and the resolving tendency imposed by the overview . . . . Of the three waves or cycles in terms of which it is organized . . . the first two end with returns to chaos and the third with a resolving image uneasily imposed. Development from cycle to cycle is easy to show, but it is hardly millennial."\textsuperscript{13}

In their insistence on the inevitable return to chaos and their attempt to redeem experience by organizing it and extracting meaning from it, the chronicles reflect a tension which is at the heart of Spenser's vision. It is the tension between content and form, between the disparate and unruly events which constitute experience and the form imposed on them by the organizing imagination of the poet. A. Bartlett Giamatti's comment on the
Shepheardes Calender holds true for The Faerie Queene as well: "the poem mirrors eternity in two ways. It mirrors the ceaseless change to which man and his world are subjected, while, as an artifact, it rises above the process it describes and offers itself as permanent and beyond time." Or, to return to the terms with which we began, it is the tension between two points of view. The Christian, says Lynn White, "enjoys two modes of perception, two distinct but simultaneous ways of viewing each phenomenon; he has two types of information, not drawn from time and eternity respectively, but seen from them. He likewise uses two modes of expressing these parallel perceptions: one is history; the other is myth."  

The chronicle material to which Arthur and Britomart are exposed is essentially an historical mode. Here, experience is seen from time. It is the mode of the historiographer, who, according to the letter to Raleigh, "discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions." The commitment to time limits the perspective, forces concentration on the vicissitudes of experience, and allows but a glimpse of the hoped-for goal of that experience. That glimpse is allowed Britomart and so she accepts her role in her nation's history. But it is the larger context within which her country's history and her part in it take place, articulated
in her exchange with Paridell, that most clearly endows history with a direction. Here the two modes of perception, history and myth, operate simultaneously. We see Britomart's often futile search for Arsegall and the tragedies of her nation, but we also see where they tend. This gives meaning to the pain and strife evident in the prophecy and in Britomart's quest. Her exposition of Troynovant's relation to Troy is another instance of the poem's vision, the myth of recurrence; the importance of that vision to both Britomart and to The Faerie Queene is highlighted by the ironic contrast of Paridell's failure to understand recurrence.

Paridell and Britomart are both descendants of Troy, but the meaning of the heritage varies according to the use each makes of it. That use hinges on the myth of recurrence and the individual's success or failure in perceiving the relationship of past and present. It would appear that the past recurs independently of current actors; whether the recurrence is an advance or a regression, however, depends in at least this instance on the attitudes and actions of the participants.

Paridell narrates his version of Troy's history as a maneuver in his seduction of Hellenore; he sees Troy as "now nought but an idle name"; and he is most attracted to the destructive part of that history. He remembers Helen
and Paris, but only as lovers; it is Paris from whom he descends. He is destined, by his lineage, to a repetition of their fate, and, by his memory, to a debased one. As Harry Berger puts it, Paridell "is effectually tyrannized by his ancestor: he can only reenact, in a compulsively repetitive alternation of arms and love, what these lovers did once, but fatally." With Hellenore and Paridell the events of the Trojan war recur in faery land, but in parodic form. Helen, pride of the Greeks and Trojans, becomes Hellenore, wife of a miser and mistress of satyrs; the avenging army of Agamemnon becomes Braggadocchio and Trompart; Menelaus is reduced to Malbecco; and the defense of Helen becomes the abandonment of Hellenore. History is here repeated, but its meaning has been lost to Paridell in the callous indulgence of personal appetite.

Britomart's response to Troy, on the other hand, participates in the creative and progressive working of recurrence. She interrupts Paridell's perfunctory recital of the founding of Rome:

'There, there,' said Britomart, 'a fresh appeard
The glory of the later world to spring,
And Troy again out of her dust was reard,
To sitt in second seat of soveraine king
Of all the world under her governing.
But a third kingdom yet is to arise
Out of the Trojans scattered ofspring,
That, in all glory and great enterprise,
Both first and second Troy shall dare to equalise.

'It Troynovant is hight.'

(III.9.44-45)
Britomart recalls that Brutus founded the city and Paridell fills in the details of Brutus' killing of his father and subsequent flight to Albion, thus bringing the matter of Troy to the point at which Briton Moniments starts its chronicle and completing the chronicle of Britain, which now extends from the beginning of the nation to the reign of Elizabeth.

Britomart places the history of Britain in the larger context of western history generally; once again recurrence is the controlling principle: Troynovant is the third Troy. Rome rose from the ashes of the earlier great city; so Troynovant rises from the ashes of Rome. History is for these purposes a succession of cities, each building on the former and, if we take Britomart's exuberant nationalism at face value, exceeding in glory and enterprise the previous ones. From this perspective, history is the movement towards the perfect or ideal city; it progresses by a series of actual cities which approximate, more completely as time goes forward, that ideal. The pattern is again circular: from chaos, order is created in Troy, but it falls in ruin and ashes; from that ruin and chaos a new city rises, but it too falls and thus returns to the ashes from which it came; and again a new city rises. From the pattern established by Troy and Rome the future of the third city is evident, glory and ruin—but on this the poem
is mute.

Britain, then, is a recurrence in the cyclical movement toward civilization. The pattern which defines the experience of the nation overall operates as well in smaller movements within that history, as we have seen in Merlin's prophecy and Briton Moniments. The very same pattern informs the histories of Britain's individual heroes, from the rise and fall of Brutus to Britomart's struggle for Artegall, their years of peace and stability, and her eventual loss of him.

Thus it is that Spenser perceives and articulates human experience through the myth of recurrence. The myth informs not only history but all levels of human and natural activity by a microcosm/macrocosm analogy: individual experience repeats in miniature the pattern of national experience; that in turn repeats the pattern of all cities.¹⁷

Natural forms are at the most basic of these levels. In the Garden of Adonis, the elemental processes of life are articulated by the same pattern that informs the histories of nations in the chronicle material. Again, the cycle dominates this, the ultimate microcosm. Old Genius clothes the spirits destined for earthly existence in "fleshly weeds" and sends them forth into the world "to live in mortal state." When their terms have expired
these beings return to him in the Garden, are replanted, and grow afresh to be sent again into the world. And so it goes, back and forth, from life to death, from garden to world, and back again: "So like a wheel arownd they ronne from old to new" (III.6.33). These successive cycles of life begin, as does the history of Britain, in chaos, "an huge eternal chaos, which supplyes/ The sub-staunces of Natures fruitfull progenyes" (36).

The Garden of Adonis accounts not only for the similarity of all things but for their differences as well. All individual varieties of life—and, in the whole of The Faerie Queene, all aspects of life, the cosmological, historical, and communal as well as the individual—all begin in chaos and then take on form. All varieties tend toward a common end by a common process. From the chaos of their beginning, they move cyclically, through life and towards death, victims all of "wicked Tyme": "for all that lives is subject to that law:/ All things decay in time, and to their end doe draw" (40).

In origin, in the process by which their existence moves, in their final destinies—in these elementals all things are alike. They differ in the "forme and feature" which delineates their temporal existence, in accidental. Herein lies the unity of all living processes and beings. In the terms of the Garden of Adonis, the substance of
life abides while the forms are both variable and mortal:

... substance is eterne, and bideth so,
Ne when the life decayes, and forme does fade,
Doth it consume and into nothing goe,
But chaunged is, and often altred to and froe.

The substance is not chaungd nor altered,
But th' only forme and outward fashion;
For every substance is conditioned
To chaunge her hew, and sondry formes to don,
Meet for her temper and complexion:
For formes are variable, and decay
By course of kinde and by occasion.

(III.6.37-38)

The same concept resolves the paradox of Adonis' apparent mortality and his continual existence:

All be he subject to mortalitie,
Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
And by succession made perpetuall,
Transformed oft, and chaunged diverslie:
For him the father of all formes they call;
Therfore needs mote he live, that living gives to all.

(47)

This is the process by which life defeats death, overcoming by the repetition of cycles the effect of time within the cycle.18

But there is within the language of this account an ambivalence that pervades the whole poem. The subjunctive "therfore needs mote he" is as much an expression of desire as of conviction. It is the will to believe, more than some final assurance, that forges the statement of hope. The same mood closes Merlin's prophecy. His demeanor at the end of his narration confuses Britomart and Glauce, and
they are left with their confusion. And so are we. The fit which overwhelms Merlin is the result either of the spirit's power or of the ghastliness of what he sees in the future of Britain. The cessation of the prophecy is, of course, convenient. Merlin has reached the reign of Elizabeth in his "futuristic" chronicle; to proceed would involve prophecy of a very real kind, something The Faerie Queene always avoids. But there is more to it than convenience, for Arthur's chronicle ends in the same abrupt fashion and with the same sort of ambivalent explanation: "As if the rest some wicked hand did rend,/ Or th' author selfe could not at least attend/ To finish it (II.10.68). The lack of assurance is much stronger in the histories than in the Garden of Adonis because the closer one draws to history and the further one moves from myth the harder the assertion of hope and meaning becomes.

It is, finally, a question of hope, a question of what it is possible to believe about the nature of future events, a question of Providence in history. The cycle, the ceaseless alternation of advance and relapse, creates ambivalence. Harry Levin formulates the ambivalence in Christian terms: "The Judeo-Christian tradition moves from paradise lost to paradise regained, from Eden through the wilderness to Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, and hence from retrospection to prophecy....
And when these visions shift from the past to the future, they harbor terrors as well as hopes: Anti-Christ must battle with the Messiah, and Doomsday precede the kingdom of God on earth." Thomas Roche says much the same thing with direct reference to the chronicles of Book II: *Briton Moniments* "is a history of an individual nation within the Providential scheme of Christian history"; the *Antiquitee* "is the expanding cycle of human glory."20

The view articulated by Levin and Roche settles ultimately on hope, admitting terror but subordinating it to the final goal of human history. The view assumes, that is, that the cycle will end, that they will culminate in glory and become static, that the cycles are directed by Providence. But *The Faerie Queene* is not so positive; if it embodies such a hope, it does so much more tentatively. "The tragedy of empire," the tragedy of perceiving history as providential, says Angus Fletcher, "is its affirmation of eternal cities, the sun never setting, while that very affirmation is being made in history."21

Herein lies the dilemma for Red Crosse on the Mount of Contemplation. When he sees the New Jerusalem, he longs for it immediately. But, Contemplation explains to him, he cannot enter it immediately; he must first serve Una and the Queen. If there is Providence here, it is more individual than historical. Red Crosse accepts his re-engagement, sadly, but yearns for the end of labor, an end
that exists for him not in history but beyond it. In history, there is no final stasis; the cycles do not end.

C. A. Patrides argues that the absence of a goal towards which history moves is common to Renaissance cycle views of history. The revival of such historical notions was accompanied by the abandonment of the Providential view of history. In *The Faerie Queene*, at any rate, the myth of recurrence, the poem's organizing vision, focuses our attention on the process of history at the expense of the goal of history.

The focus on history as process, as mere repetition, becomes more pronounced as the poem develops. It is in the early books that the sense of direction is strongest; direct statements of historical progress are confined to Books I to III, and even here they are tentative. No such explicit statements occur in the last half of the poem; we are left with the experience of repetition. Although the poem does not deny that history is progressive, it leaves the dominant impression that history is process, a ceaseless alternation of forward and backward movements. It is a melancholy impression, and an epic one.

III

The myth of recurrence, the paradox by which death and mutability become eternal living, operates as the principle
of order in the history material and in the image of
generation presented in the Garden of Adonis. In fact,
the vision manifests itself in all aspects of the poem,
even at times in a manner so unsystematic that it appears
to be what C. S. Lewis calls a habit of mind. Almost
everything recurs—characters, images, places, events.
The relationship between the several occurrences of a given
entity is similar to that between substance and form in
the Garden of Adonis, but it can be at this level less
systematic. For example, like substances the poem's
characters assume form, take on body and particular
features, become individuals, decay "by course of kinde and
by occasion." They are likely to appear again, reembodied
in a new and variant form. Just as in the Garden some
set number of substances embody themselves in myriad,
successive forms, so a certain kind of character may be
embodied in several figures in the poem. The relationship
is similar to that between an archetype and its sundry
representations, except that the poem's myth of advancing
cycles organizes successive appearances into incremental
ones. Paridell and Hellenore, for example, are not simple
repetitions of Paris and Helen, but transformations, new
forms of permanent types.

Although recurrence is often clearly important to the
development or structure of the poem, it is also at times
apparently coincidental, an indication perhaps of the true extent of its pervasiveness. The elemental similarities within groups of minor characters produce a kind of cohesion not unlike that created by the recurrence from book to book of particular characters. Hence, though The Faerie Queene is copiously supplied with characters, the variety—in itself an important aspect of the poem's aura—bewilders less than might be expected. Because a good number of characters are but slightly transformed manifestations of a central type, they remind us of their predecessors and assume some of their meaning by reference to earlier figures of the same type.

So it is with the substance of nobility. No matter what form or feature it possesses in a particular manifestation, it is still nobility. The variety of forms assumed by the type of the noble forest dweller gives this Renaissance truism resonance. The type occurs early and in its most positive form in Belphoebe. "A woman of great worth," she is "clad in hunters weed" and wields a boar spear (II.3). She lives and perfects her virtues in the rigor and simplicity of the forest. Her surroundings highlight her nobility and may even account for the perfection she has attained. It is as though the potential for this particular kind of virtue exists from the very beginning, but the conditions propitious for its fuller
flowering are not present until Book VI. The type occurs frequently in the last book when civility has advanced to the point at which it becomes effete and requires the reassertion of vigor that is the essential aspect of the type. Through the initial manifestation in Belphoebe the several forms which appear in Book VI are given perspective.

Tristram has not attained Belphoebe's perfection, but against her portrait we can see his potential. Like Belphoebe, he is noble born, inhabits the wild, and is similarly equipped, from his "buskins of costliest cord-wayne" to his boar spear (VI.2). Both of these individuals are remarkable for their vitality and for the clarity with which they perceive the falseness of lifeless conventions and base behavior. They have not abandoned the values of civilization but fulfill those values in a different context.

At the other extreme from the perverted chivalry of the knight slain by Tristram (VI.2), the Salvage Man exists outside of civil values and is thereby reduced to bestial condition (VI.4). The rustic noble in positive form reasserts the values of civility; when he completely rejects them, he has nothing left. The noble savage, as represented here, retains nobility only as an impulse towards the good and the helpful; he has lost the virtues as well as the
vices of the civilized world. But in his contacts with Serena and Arthur he begins to acquire those virtues, just as Timias, the squire he has replaced, inverts the process: during his exile from Belphoebe (IV.7), Timias regresses to an animal state not unlike that of the savage when he first appeared. We have, then, a fairly complete exploration of the type: the ideal statement in the introduction of Belphoebe, the almost inhuman severity of the noble savage, the savage's progress toward nobility, and, in contrast, Timias' reversion to savageness.

Prideful characters are another recurring type. Lucifera, for example, is a creature whose essential characteristic is pride: "For to the highest she did still aspyre,/ Or, if ought higher were then that, did it desyre" (I.4.11). She is a form or manifestation of the abiding substance of pride, a substance which continues to be felt throughout the poem as other characters of the same kind appear, reminding us of both the persistence of pride and the variety of forms that it assumes. We see in Braggadocchio pride in its most unfounded and ridiculous form. In Book II Philotime reminds us of Lucifera at the same time that she narrows the sphere of her pride to that of courtly status seekers; her "pompous pride" motivates those around her "to clime aloft, and others to excell" (II.7.46).
In Book VI another form appears in a character whose experience has been shaped primarily by pride. Mirabella "grew proud and insolent,/ That none she worthie thought to be her fere,/ But scornd them all" (VI.7.29). This time pride is humbled. Mirabella suffers at the hands of Disdaine and Scorne, as she says, "for penceunce of my proud and hard rebellious hart" (8.19). She is being, literally, reformed, made over into a new shape, into a new creature. She is not without pride now, but it has assumed a different form when she insists that Arthur allow her punishment to go on. No longer disdainful, her pride now is in her ability to face up to her situation and to see it out. Pride has become, in this transformation, courage.

Recurring types function for us the way recurring cities function for Britomart. They create a context within which the actions of the poem develop and by which we can direct our responses. In a world of recurrences knowledge consists of recognizing the relationship of what we see now to what we have seen in the past; this in turn allows us to perceive the substance beneath mutable forms. Britomart possesses the first knowledge by grace of Merlin's prophecy; Red Crosse acquires the second as the most important personal achievement of his quest: the same Archimago who initiated Red Crosse's misadventures is powerless against him at the end of the quest because Red Crosse perceives
the actual magician beneath the messenger's disguise. Character types like pride and the rustic noble do not appear in their various forms to any one character in the poem, only to the audience of the poem. They are, therefore, one of the means which create for that audience a superior perspective on the action. In Lynn White's terms, the protagonists—with but a few exceptions like Britomart's vision of Troynovant—are confined to a viewpoint in time; we, as audience, possess a view from the standpoint of eternity. Our superior perspective makes more readily available to us the significance of emerging patterns at the same time that the responses of the protagonists make vivid the limits and painfulness of a time-bound perspective. That is to say, knowledge accrues from book to book for us, but not for the individual knights, while the latter keep before us the limits of our perspective when we are actors in our own history.24

Unlike the knights who encounter the changing aspects of their world, each for the first time, we come to recognize various forces as recurrent and can thus anticipate their nature. Evil, like all else in The Faerie Queene, assumes a variety of forms. It can be aggressive and undisguised, like the Blatant Beast, Geryoneo, and Grantorto; or it can be subtle, as it most often is in the first four books. The subtle forms of evil pervert the
relationship between form and substance. Archimago and Duessa, for example, are dangerous because their form and feature are apparently good and desirable and thus belie the evil that is their substance. Another variety of evil involves forms that have no substance at all. Such is the House of Pride; it "cunningly was without mortar laid,/ Whose wals were high, but nothing strong, nor thick,/ And golden foile all over them displaid" (I.4.4). Pleasing form lures the senses, but the lack of substance renders devotion to such forms futile.

This form of evil recurs in False Florimell, who is all form and no substance, as we know from both the description of her making and her final evaporation. Placed next to the true Florimell, "her snowy substuance melted as with heat,/ Ne of that goodly hew remayned ought,/ But the emptie girdle" (V.3.24).

The variety of evil represented in Lucifera and False Florimell, form without substance, poses a different threat to the poem's protagonists. In Book I it was necessary for Red Crosse to learn to perceive the true substance under the deceptive forms of Duessa and Archimago; the problem here is to perceive that under the attractive facade there lies absolutely nothing, and this appears the more difficult task by the evidence of the wedding tournament: the false outdoes the true Florimell and
deceives everyone until she is made to vanish by contact with real substance. She may be less aggressively evil than Duessa, but she nonetheless manages to sidetrack a good portion of the energy of knights who should be seeking the true Florimell; she thereby frustrates the progress of good, if she does not actively destroy it. It may ultimately be that there is nothing to choose between these two kinds of evil, that they are only different forms of the same forces that hinder mankind's attempt to reach its full potential.

Such recurrences as these would seem to justify C. S. Lewis' conclusion that they are not consciously contrived, that "they show the extent to which [Spenser] left the images alone to manifest their own unity, a unity far more subtle than conscious contrivance could ever have achieved."25 These repetitions do indeed support our sense of the poem's unity, and they are one of the qualities that foster our sense of the integrity, the cohesiveness, of Spenser's fictive world. They are so frequent and so pervasive as to be necessarily the result of a habit of mind, of a way of seeing the world that invades all aspects of Spenser's composition. But that same mode of perception also functions consciously, with contrivance, imposing its vision on the very structure of the poem. Left alone to manifest their own unity, these images work in conjunction with other recurrences so tightly ordered and controlled
and directed that we perceive all recurrences of an image as integrally related to previous appearances. These more systematic recurrences become not only an expression of the poem's myth, but the very stuff of which it is created and by means of which it holds together.

In "The Structure of Imagery in The Faerie Queene," Northrop Frye suggests that two principles organize the poem's imagery: the natural cycle, that is, the progression of days and seasons; and a "moral dialectic, in which symbols of virtue are parodied by their vicious or demonic counterparts." The two principles, he says, are interdependent in that the cycles symbolize the movement of the dialectic and are therefore subordinate to it. 26

It may be more accurate, however, to see these two principles as in actuality one principle functioning on two levels. The natural cycle is equivalent, not subordinate, to the movement of the imagery. That is to say, human life is a microcosm of natural processes; the natural cycle represents, indeed images, the relationship between successive symbols because it posits natural, inevitable succession, and this captures the sense in The Faerie Queene that events follow one another organically. The process is dialectical insofar as each stage in the process generates the next, as each victory brings with it a new challenge, and as birth leads to death. Red Crosse's experience, for
example, is approximately cyclical; he moves from his alliance with Una, through desertion, to alliance with Duessa, and then back to alliance with Una. His progress and regress seem inevitable, but it seems so because of his character and the nature of events, not because of any causative effect of his relationship with either woman.

The cycle, then, is the controlling structural principle of the poem's imagery, as it is of the historical chronicles. Night necessarily follows day, but, in The Faerie Queene at least, there is no sense in which day causes night, or even that one makes the other possible. It naturally happens that the two alternate; there are times of light and times of darkness, and no state is permanent. What Harry Berger says of Merlin's prophecy is true of the poem generally: within books and between them, "development from cycle to cycle is easy to show, but it is hardly milennial." 27 The general succession of alternating day and night, travel and rest, storm and fair weather—this process dominates the poem, both structurally and emotionally. It creates, finally, The Faerie Queene's unique character.

If a dialectic is a work it can be no more than that in which new knowledge or increased awareness carries with it new problems and new responsibilities. Red Crosse differs before and after his experience in Orgoglio's
dungeon and the House of Holinesse only in his ability to perceive the true nature of such people as Duessa and Archimago and Una; he must still encounter them and, in the case of the first two, thwart their continued threat to his well-being.

Nor does Guyon benefit from his predecessor's knowledge or victory, as suggested by the ease with which Archimago engages him to fight Red Crosse on Duessa's behalf. Disaster is averted by what Red Crosse has become, represented in the bloody cross on his shield, rather than by any inherited knowledge or dialectical advance on Guyon's part. He must take up his own quest at that point where Red Crosse's has ended, but his knowledge of good and evil and of himself does not begin at the point where Red Crosse's leaves off. Though the task and his victory develop in a real sense from those of Book I, they do so organically; each quest is one of the stages repeated by all natural forms—human as well as social—in their journey from birth to death.

Good and evil alternate in a process that begins in birth and ends in decay and death. I think it is safe to say that there is always a moral dimension inherent in the process: substances seem in The Faerie Queene to seek their perfect, that is, most expressive, forms; both good and evil advance slowly and by a series of cycles to their
particular apotheoses. Further, the good and evil advance and recede alternately in terms of one another. The poem's images participate in the same cycle. For example, the scarlet mantle of Malecasta recurs in Britomart's vision at the temple of Isis when the latter's own gown is transformed into a "robe of scarlet red" (V.7.13). Britomart has encountered Malecasta early in her quest and her naïveté at that point left her open to the distorted sexuality of her hostess; she escapes, but not without a wound. Now, she has matured; her apotheosis subsumes and transforms her past experiences, both positive and negative, and it remakes the perversion of Malecasta over into a positive attribute of a woman in search of her mate. Having taken the form of promiscuity in Malecasta, desire assumes the form of creative love when Britomart sets out to rescue Artegall and the future of Britain.

The iconographic images of the naked breast express the same process, but in this case the movement is downward from the top of a cycle. The image first occurs in Book I. At the House of Holinesse, Red Crosse meets Charissa; her "necke and breasts were ever open bare" in emblematic representation of her love for those who, like her sucklings, depend on her for sustenance (I.10.30). She is the most fully realized form of love, St. Paul's charity. In Book II, the image recurs in altered form to describe a
less perfect manifestation of love. "With her tresses torn, / And naked brest, in pitty of their harmes" (2.27), Medina pleads for peace among her intemperate sisters and their companions. Her love is less fully realized because the nature of the others restricts its workings to pity; she must love under duress and not fully.

Acrasia's breast is also bare, but "bare to ready spoyle/ Of hungry eies" (II.12.68). The reminder of Charissa and Medina, implicit in the description, indicates the depth of Acrasia's perversion: frankness and love have become coyness and lust. The breast "all naked" of Amoret, on the other hand, stands in mute testimony to her vulnerability and helplessness, the weak side of the very virtues of openness and receptivity. This form receives its fullest expression in Serena, naked on the altar of the cannibals. And with Serena we come to the low point of the cycle: the love which sustained all is now the prey of all. At the same time, circumstances are ripe for a turn upward, for the creation of a context in which love may again function as charity. Calidore begins this very process when he rescues Pastorella from the Brigands and restores her to the security of her civilized home.

Images put in place by (and thus demonstrating) recurrence provide an overall context in which the more particular developments of the poem occur. Each book of
The Faerie Queene is its own cycle, just as each phase of history in Briton Moniments is cyclical. And as the several phases of the chronicle together describe a cycle in the history of civilization, so the books of the poem are together a larger cycle. It is the larger cycle that we see reflected in the structure of images like that of the naked breast. Not all of these kinds of images, however, trace the descending line of the circle, for with each loss there is a gain.

The emblem of the dragon or snake at the feet of some personage represents in a general way force held at bay. The changes in successive forms of this emblem from book to book mark the development of creative control in the poem as a whole. With Lucifera in Book I the dragon images the lawless and usurped power with which pride rules: it is "a dreadfull dragon with an hideous trayne," and it lies beneath her "scornefull" feet (10.4). When the image recurs in Book III, the terms are switched from the tyranny of pride to the tyranny of lust. Cupid, too, has a dragon beneath his feet. It is wounded, a shaft buried in each eye, just as the victims of lust throughout the House of Busyrane are wounded and pierced (III.11.48). Power manifests itself here as the control of another in order to satisfy one's own sexual desire. In Book III, when the image of the dragon occurs,
the issue is power in love, control of the loved one. The same concerns continue into Book IV and are resolved there. In the Temple of Venus, that goddess stands upon an altar; "both her feete and legs together twyned/ Were with a snake, whose head and tail were fast combyned" (10.40). Love here is not mastery or control, but complete union. The dragon no longer is suppressed beneath the feet but has become one with Venus and itself.

From Book IV and the Temple of Venus, the poem turns again to individuals pursuing definite quests; the image of the dragon again marks the place of particular actions in the larger context of the poem. In her vision at the temple of Isis, Britomart sees a crocodile which had lain sleeping beneath an idol's feet attack that idol. Beaten back, he humbles himself and they mate. In the priest's interpretation of the vision, idol and crocodile are Britomart and Artegall. Once again the issue is mastery and love. The development here recapitulates the process developed through the earlier actions of the poem: threat and power are held off so that union and productivity can become possible. The image of the dragon, then, assumes several forms, each of which transforms the previous one. The first occurrence expresses undifferentiated power; it then moves to power in love; from there to the perfection of love—and the denial of power—in Venus; and in the
last instance the ideal expression of love is realized in the individual, "historical" attempt to achieve union.

In The Faerie Queene one pattern, and thus one meaning, dominates all levels of activity from microcosm to macrocosm; at the natural level of the Garden of Adonis, the national level of Briton Moniments, and the universal level of the Antiquitee of Faerie Lond, the cycle constitutes pattern and meaning. Substance takes on form, lives, and dies, and repeats the pattern in a new form; kings redeem Britain from chaos, but the new order decays and leaves similar tasks for another king; cities rise and fall in succession. There appears to be progress insofar as each new cycle has advanced in some small fashion beyond its predecessor, has possessed and extended the essence of earlier achievements. But in the long view, whether the object of attention be nature or Britain or The Faerie Queene itself, the fact of cyclicity itself makes the strongest impression; the passing of cycles comes to seem not so much progress as the merely ceaseless alternation of terms, be they natural, moral, or historical.
Notes to Chapter One


2References to Spenser’s works are to The Complete Poetical Works of Spenser, ed. R. E. Neil Dodge (1908; rpt. Boston, 1936). I have chosen this edition because it is likely to be easily available to most readers.


4Ibid., p. 67.


7Ibid., p. 103.

10 Thomas P. Roche, Jr., *The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's "Faerie Queene"* (Princeton, 1964), suggests another rationale for the alternative to Genesis: Spenser is using "a late medieval tradition that interprets the Promethean creation as the beginning of human civilization"; Genesis, on the other hand, is the myth of the beginning of human life in the raw (p. 35). This would be in keeping with the poem's general focus on man in community, instead of man alone.


12 Ibid., p. 50.

13 Ibid., p. 42.


In The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene" (Princeton, 1967), Paul J. Alpers defines the Spenserian stanza as embodying the same process: "the basic device of the stanza is simply the continual transferring of attention to new sets of terms. The four terms listed in line 1 are metaphorically equated with four new terms, which then become the realities with which the stanza is concerned. They in turn generate four new terms and the process is repeated" (p. 68). Even the language of the poem, it would seem, participates in the myth of recurrence, simultaneously advancing and repeating.

As Humphrey Tonkin says in "Spenser's Garden of Adonis and Britomart's Quest," PMLA, 88 (1973), 410, the thousand-year cycle of time in the garden is "both temporal and atemporal. It implies time, but it implies cyclical, regenerative time."


The Kindly Flame, p. 45.


Donald Cheney, Spenser's Image of Nature: Wild Man and Shepherd in "The Faerie Queene" (New Haven, 1966), p. 195, makes a similar point, but he sees the weakness of the pastoral as failure, whereas it seems to me the inevitable result of maturation.

I have been talking about the effect of these two viewpoints on the reader. Fletcher speaks of the dual perspective as the poet uses it: "the method of prophecy is to hold the eternal and the ephemeral in simultaneous copresence, balancing stable principle against unstable reality" (The Prophetic Moment, p. 5).


CHAPTER TWO
Old Arms and a New Man

The myth of recurrence is the mode by which *The Faerie Queene* perceives and articulates experience, as I have tried to demonstrate in the first chapter. The myth of recurrence is also the principle which gives the poem its formal structure; and the myth of recurrence establishes the terms in which the poem is related to our cultural and literary experience outside of *The Faerie Queene*. From the standpoint of eternity, all experience is recurrent in nature (something always happening—again), and all experience moves fitfully toward one goal, a goal that may never be achieved.

In Book I progressive movement is more strongly felt in the cyclical alternation of terms than is true with, say, the chronicle material. As everywhere, recurrence is both controlling vision and controlling structural pattern, but Red Crosse clearly advances as a result of his cumulative experience. The pattern dominates *The Faerie Queene*: "early ascendancy followed by some kind of failure which leads to a phase of captivity, withdrawal, or exile," followed by rejuvenation which leads to a new ascendancy.¹
The Faerie Queene is never euphoric, but its first book is fairly positive. Although the journey is a recurrence of earlier journeys—for Red Crosse, for Spenser, and for us—the start is exciting because the sense of possibility is stronger than the awareness of the journey's length and its attendant fatigue—an awareness that grows more dominant in later books.

Book I contains the archetypal story of individual human experience, a detailed instance of falling and rising patterns woven together as the narrative of a man's quest for personal fulfillment. Book I also extends its myth, by allusion and reworking of sources, into the development of Western culture.²

The terms of Red Crosse's climactic battle with the dragon extend the meaning of his quest to the largest context of all—mankind's battle for freedom—by evoking the context of biblical myth. Red Crosse fights in Eden for the right to the land, for the restoration of man's original freedom and creativity. On the first day of the battle the dragon, his jaws "like the griesly mouth of hell," wounds Red Crosse severely, but he falls into the well of life. That well renews him, "for unto life the dead it could restore,/ And guilt of sinful crimes clean wash away." It renews him as baptism has renewed the descendants of Adam, the father of man's first fall.
Sorely wounded again on the second day, Red Crosse falls at the foot of the tree of life, "the crime of our first fathers fall"—the crime because it necessitated Christ's criminal death on the tree of the cross, the most memorable attempt to restore man to his pristine heritage. Like the savior of which he is a type, Red Crosse too rises on the third day to defeat his enemy. The tree from which Eve plucked the fatal apple and the tree on which Christ died is the tree by which Red Crosse is revived from what Una calls "the second fall."

Red Crosse is not, of course, either Christ or Adam. He is simply one more man seeking to make his way; he is simply one more recurrent redeemer in the long, repetitive history of mankind's defeats and new starts. Arthur functions the same way in his rescue of Red Crosse from Orgoglio's dungeon, as the type of Christ saving man and the type of everyman trying to save himself. Red Crosse liberates Eden, again, as Christ had done, and we must certainly know that there will come again a time when a new redeemer is necessary.3

This large, even eternal, context for Red Crosse's quest is established during his visit to the Mount of Contemplation by similes which place this mount in the context of other mounts. The similes indicate that Red Crosse's experience is indeed a recurrence of those that
have preceded it. Contemplation

... leads him to the highest mount;  
Such one, as that same mighty man of God,  
That blood-red billowes like a walled front  
On either side disparted with his rod,  
Till that his army dry-foot through them yod,  
Dwelt forty daies upon; where writt in stone  
With bloody letters by the hand of God,  
The bitter doome of death and balefull mone  
He did receive, whiles flashing fire about him shone.

Or like that sacred hill, whose head full hie,  
Adorned with fruitfull olives all arownd,  
Is, as it were for endlesse memory  
Of that deare Lord, who oft thereon was fownd,  
For ever with a flowing girlond crownd:  
Or like that pleaasunt mount, that is for ay  
Through famous poets verse seach where renownd,  
On which the thris three learned ladies play  
Their hevenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay.  
(I.10.53-54)

Red Crosse is a new Moses, leading Una ("as in exile")  
from captivity to the promised land and viewing from Mount  
Sinai the people's need of redemption; he is Christ on the  
Mount of Olives, the archetypal redeemer offering himself  
to save others; and he is, it may be, Calidore, later to  
bring his poetic vision of grace and civility to a world  
held, death-like, by the forces of chaos and evil. The  
chronological order of the presentation of these mounts  
hints at the progressive aspect of recurrence, as does  
Britomart's insistence that she is involved with a third  
Troy: Christ both repeats and supersedes Moses, as  
Red Crosse does Christ and as Calidore will the Knight  
of Holinesse.
Red Crosse's quest is both a repetition and a transformation in the recurrent progression of quests to liberate mankind. The falling and rising pattern remains constant; the redemption is recurrently necessary. But the nature of the fall and of the redemption modulates from cycle to cycle. The Israelites were captive in a hostile land, and their redeemer led them to the founding of a new society. The next fall is a personal one, and Christ liberates man from the evil powers that control him. With Eden in Book I the fall is again social, but the people are captive in their own land, and their redemption restores that land to them. In Book VI the redemption will again be personal and internal. The nature of the redemptive act progresses, or at least changes, in keeping with the terms of the imprisonment, from the social guidance of Moses, to the sacrificial death of Christ, the individual victory of Red Crosse, and the inspirational vision of Calidore. The Legende of Red Crosse, by focusing on the most recent redeemer, expands to include cyclical appearance of the redeemer per se.

In addition to this Christian context, Spenser also places his poem in the context of earlier literary attempts to give definitive expression to the nature of human experience, because the epic, too, recurs. Like Ariosto, he sings of "knights and ladies," of "fierce warres and
faithfull loves." Like Virgil, he sings of arms and the man, of a gentle knight "y cladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,/ Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,/ The cruell markes of many a bloody fielde."

Like St. Paul, he speaks of the armor of holiness, old arms and a new man, an old pattern and a new repetition—such is the quest of Red Crosse and such is The Faerie Queene.

There are situational as well as verbal echoes of earlier epics. When Red Crosse enters Errour's woods, he enters anew the forest of the Inferno, Tasso's woods which produce deceitful illusions, and the woods where Virgil's Aeneas encounters Venus. All of the associations are relevant: Red Crosse will descend to his own hell in Orgoglio's dungeon; he will become the prey of Archimago's illusion; and he will be with his Venus, the beneficiary of her intervention. All are relevant because Red Crosse is both the sum and the successor of all who have gone before him, as The Faerie Queene is of preceding epics.

The use of the quest theme, though it invokes Christ's struggle, is no mere retelling of that struggle but an attempt to recall to us the eternal in the particular. So it is also with the invoking of preceding epics: a retelling it is, but not merely that. Spenser creates the terms in which Red Crosse acts—he reminds us, that is, of the recurrent nature of his quest. He also creates
the literary context in which his poem is to exist, placing it in the long line of epics as a recurrence of man's attempt to perceive and articulate the meaning of experience.

Spenser treats the history of Britain—its shape and its meaning—in more detail in the chronicle material of Books II and III, but in Book I he indicates already that Red Crosse's quest embodies both individual and national experience. The *Aeneid*, concerned as it is with Rome, lives still because Virgil has chosen the man Aeneas as the vehicle for expressing his understanding of mankind's lot. Aeneas may indeed be typically Roman, but then it would seem that Romans are typically human. Concerned for his people and his duty despite the absence of any final frame of reference beyond those obligations, Aeneas gathers unto himself the trials, the burdens, the hopes, of man in history and only then of Rome in history. Nor is history static for Virgil: in E. M. W. Tillyard's words "Virgil, in turning his panegyric of Augustus into a poem on Rome, merged the present into a process of evolution."7

The Legende of the Knight of the Red Crosse functions in much the same way. Red Crosse is first of all a man stumbling through his experiences, rescued and reeducated and finally able to fulfill his duty. He is as well the recurrence of the redeemer, come to the aid of mankind
held captive. He will become, in addition, St. George, the patron saint of England. Contemplation reveals this information to him, along with the fact of his Saxon ancestry, while they are on the Mount—in the context, that is, evoked by the similes describing the mountain. Red Crosse figures, then, as the mythic hero of England, as the type of those who befriend their nation. Inasmuch as England participates in the Eden for which Red Crosse literally fights, it too experiences the cyclical progression from dearth to plenty, from slavery to freedom. And it too needs its recurrent St. Georges as the archetypal Eden needs its Christs.

Book I, then, presents the myth of recurrence in its definitive form as the story of all levels of human experience through the legend of the Red Crosse Knight, a man committed to redeeming a part of his world from chaos and the control of evil. Given shape by reference to Christ's quest, the legend encompasses everyman's attempt to liberate himself from chaos and ignorance through achieving the ability to perceive good and evil despite appearances.

If this "moral" element were the narrative's sole intention, Spenser could have named his knight "Christian," as Bunyan did. But, expanding to include communal as well as individual levels of experience, the story also contains within itself the essential pattern of national British
history, as the chronicles of Book II, Canto X make explicit. It does so by a technique more properly called analogy than allegory, by a mode of perception similar to that which animated the microcosm-macrocosm tradition, by the myth of recurrence. The technique does not allow those historical allegorizations which would explain away the narrative, one episode at a time, as veiled retellings of particular historical events. Scholarly disagreements over just what events are involved are one indication that the myth developed in Book I is larger and more flexible than such reductions admit.

The meaning of Book I is not that Henry VIII or Elizabeth, as Christ's regents, restored the true church to England (such is the stuff of history, not of poetry): Book I means rather than all human experience—national and individual—is a continuing process of fall, reeducation, and liberation.

Book I represents one such cycle of man's and mankind's experience. As such, it is preeminently the story of one man, Red Crosse, who evolves into the redeemer which Eden needs. The story of his evolution repeats in its form and direction the larger movement of human history.

Throughout Book I simple repetition is transformed by the mutation each element undergoes. Red Crosse moves through and by means of a series of recurrent events: each event is but a modification of those preceding it. The
variety created by these modifications gives experience its uniqueness and individuality, and it makes possible the changes in Red Crosse's character that are responsible for his final performance. Variety does not, however, mute the central fact that reality at the human as well as cosmic level is always basically the same despite apparent difference, eternal in its mutability. The same pattern inheres in all that Red Crosse undergoes.

Red Crosse's first adventure contains in germ the final resolution of the quest, and it establishes the pattern of each subsequent adventure. A. C. Hamilton says that "the Knight's victory over Errour is an emblem . . . of his final victory over Duessa and the dragon."\(^8\) It is an emblem because it contains the components and pattern that, when Red Crosse becomes adequate, will enable him to succeed. All is ready even here at the beginning—Una, the armor, the foe—except for Red Crosse himself. And here are the elements of which all his experiences are formed: lady, journey, detour, battle, victory, rest. Red Crosse's fall and rise result from the negative, then positive, transformation of these elements. Regardless of positive or negative content, each adventure is marked by the same pattern; each is its own small cycle; and each generates the next episode. For Red Crosse, all experience is the same so far as process is
concerned; it is the quality of the various elements which
determines whether experience is good or bad.

In the chronicle material, the presentation begins
and ends with tumultuous periods, a relative stasis sand-
wiched in between. In contrast the Error episode and Book
I, indeed each book and even The Faerie Queene as whole,
begin and end on points of stasis which contain the turmoil
and destruction of the falling phase of the cycle. The
difference results, I think, from the different methods of
historiographer and poet, the one confined to actuality,
the other free to begin in the middle and focus our
attention for the moment on the possibilities of the human
condition, rather than on the inevitable destruction, which
though present in both, necessarily dominates the histories.

The essential elements of the Error episode recur in
the same order—with few exceptions—throughout the adven-
tures which together constitute the cycle of this quest.
Red Crosse travels, with a lady, engages in a combat whose
outcome is often decided by the lady, and then rests. The
event which precipitates the next adventure occurs at the
place of rest: out of the completed pattern of one
adventure grows the next.

So it is that Red Crosse's evil dreams during the
rest at Archimago's hut lead to his involvement with
Duessa. Again, his victory over Sansfoy leads him to the
House of Pride, where he fights again, with Sansjoy. Because the latter episode is a demonic parody of the first adventure, it highlights both the pattern common to all of Red Crosse's engagements and the ultimate neutrality of forms—that is, the ability of identical forms to contain both good and evil substances. The House of Pride is a place of rest for Red Crosse; he arrives having defeated Sansfoy and won Duessa. His stop generates the next encounter when Sansjoy challenges the slayer of his brother. As Red Crosse had been inspired by Una's exhortation to victory over Error, so now he is spurred on against Sansjoy by Duessa's cry: "Thine the shield, and I, and all."

Duessa, of course, intends the encouragement for Sansjoy, but for once Red Crosse's naivety serves him well, and he takes the exhortation to heart. But his conquest here is more reprieve than victory. Duessa shields Sansjoy and prevents his death; Red Crosse has gone to lounge by the fountain of the nymph who abandoned the chase, which generates his next and nearly fatal encounter with Orgoglio.

In light of the myth of recurrence, Red Crosse fails because he does not perceive that each adventure is fundamentally a repetition of earlier ones and cannot, therefore, learn from his experience in such a way as to deal with future contingencies. The deceptive appearance of
Archimago's sprites for example, recur in the apparent beauty of Duessa, the superficial tinsel of the House of Pride, the hidden danger of the fountain; but Red Crosse does not perceive recurrence and is consequently as vulnerable to the last as to the first.

Recurrence operates not only in Red Crosse's several adventures but also between his experience and that of others in the first book. The most painful of these for the reader who desires success for Red Crosse is the story of Fradubio and Fraelissa. As Fradubio recounts the course of his own woes, the recurrent nature of experience imparts to the tale an aspect of prophecy for Red Crosse; it is, as Kathleen Williams notes, "a last warning, but Red Crosse does not see any possible parallel between Fradubio's knightly shame of fickleness and his own."9 Traveling with his lady, in the prime of his youth, and eager for adventures of love and chivalry, Fradubio met and conquered Duessa's knight. He traveled with both his original and his new mistress until the latter, Duessa, deceived him about the other's true nature. He fell for the deception and abandoned Fraelissa for Duessa. When he discovered, too late, that it was Duessa who was truly deformed, she imprisoned him in a tree next to his true love. Fradubio was the victim of his own inability to perceive true substance beneath pleasing form.
What happened to that couple is in the very process of happening again to Red Crosse and Una. Red Crosse leaves Una before the arrival of Duessa, but he does so under a similar illusion about her true nature and is deceived by Duessa's ally, Archimago. He too is in his prime and full of naïve courage. The knight's failure (or inability) to perceive the similarities between himself and Fradubio makes it all too likely that he will repeat Fradubio's tragedy. Indeed, left literally to his own resources, Red Crosse does fall victim to Duessa's wiles and will be imprisoned in Orgoglio's dungeon.

Insofar as we see the parallels between Fradubio and Red Crosse we achieve a clearer perspective on the action as it unfolds and can learn from Red Crosse's experience more rapidly than he does. And insofar as we do this, the poem becomes for us a study in the nature of experience, a study of recurrence and the essential need for clear vision, for recognizing the repetitions in any situation as the key to intelligent response.

The problem of the ambiguous relation of substance and form and the fact of recurrence are closely related, here in the tale of Fradubio and throughout Book I generally. Red Crosse must learn to distinguish substance despite outward appearances before he can go on to the completion of his quest; it is through recurrence that he
has the opportunity.

The same kind of relationship exists between Red Crosse and Arthur as between Red Crosse and Fradubio, but the parallels with Arthur are positive: Red Crosse achieves through his quest what Arthur seeks also—union with the beloved and, concomitantly, redemption of a land held by evil. Ironically, Arthur helps Red Crosse to attain what he himself must still search for, the ability to perceive true substance represented in Arthur's shield. It is appropriate that the bearer of that shield redeem Red Crosse from the result of his inability to perceive true substance.

Both knights, says Arthur in pointing to parallels between them, are examples of men trusting "in arme of fleshly might" and boasting "in beauties chaine not to be bownd." Such a man, says the prince, "doth soonest fall in disaventrous fight,/ And yeeldes his caytive neck to victours most despight" (I.9.11). Red Crosse has indeed been bound to Duessa in "beauties chaine," but he has been redeemed from the victor; Arthur is yet to pursue Florimell in the mistaken hope that she is the Faerie Queene, and he still awaits restoration of his lady. Both also await the declaration of their lineage, of their name and nation. Arthur must wait longer than his companion for fulfillment, for
tion possesses that information about Red Crosse and will soon make it known. We can see somewhat of Arthur's future in Red Crosse, as his was revealed in Fradubio.

There are also significant parallels between Arthur and Una. In Canto IX, before Arthur and the newly rejoined pair part ways, he reveals through the story of his vision and search for the Faerie Queene the qualities that have made him a highly appropriate extension of Una's love in the rescue of Red Crosse. He too awakes to find his love has vanished; he too casts "in carefull mynd,/ To seeke her out with labor and long tyne,/ And never vow to rest, till her I fynd." Una recognizes this basis of kinship and responds wistfully to his story:

O happy Queene of Faries, that has fownd,  
Mongst many, one that with his prowesse may  
Defend thine honour, and thy foes confound!  
True loves are often sown, but seldom grow on ground.  
(I.9.16)

She shares with Arthur the joy of love found, the pain of separation and seemingly vain searching; but she has by his services refound her love. Arthur, then, contains potentially the composite of Una and Red Crosse, the longing for union and the longing for identity; it is fitting, therefore, that he be the instrument for bringing to pass for this couple what he cannot yet attain on his own behalf.
To a significant degree, Book I is also the story of Una. She is present at all of the crucial points—beginning, middle, and end—and when she and Red Crosse are separated, her story is continued separately. Through recurrent falls and rises, through successive travels and battles and rests, Red Crosse’s quest comes to represent the essential shape of human experience. Through the parallels with Arthur and the echoes of the Mount of Contemplation, he becomes an archetype of the redeemer—Red Crosse, that is to say, is both Everyman and Christ. Una’s experience assumes a different shape; her pattern is that of all people in need, stable herself, but in a constantly shifting and threatening world. In terms of structure, however, her role is clearly subordinate: the pattern of her experience illuminates by its hierarchy of recurrent redeemers the deterioration and recovery of Red Crosse.

Whereas Red Crosse’s story during the separation is in one sense that of his increasingly dangerous involvement with Duessa, Una’s story centers on and is organized by the series of protectors who see her through the search for her errant knight. With Red Crosse, situations recur in a falling and rising cycle; with Una, protectors recur in cyclical progression downward from Red Crosse to Sansloy, and then upward to Arthur and Red Crosse. This progression plots the various relationships possible between Una and
those who desire her or desire to help her. In so doing, it creates a context in which to measure Red Crosse's failure in leaving her, his successive degeneration during his affair with Duessa, and his regeneration and apotheosis in the closing cantos. Thus it is that Una and Red Crosse are kept together structurally even when they are physically separated. The technique is "entrelacement," the interweaving of different lines of action in such a way that they act on one another. For example, when we return to Red Crosse in Canto IV after the narration of Una's wanderings, the character of Red Crosse and our understanding of his character have altered. His desertion of Una and his subsequent degeneration are elucidated by the intervening episodes with Una and the lion and Sansloy.

In reciprocal fashion, Una's narrative is affected by the adventures of Red Crosse which interrupt it. Red Crosse begins as Una's champion, and it is Red Crosse who finally redeems her homeland. But between the time her knight abandons her and the time they are reunited by Arthur, Una moves through a series of interim "champions." Because she has lost her true champion and because these substitutes mark a progression from natural, by way of unnatural, to a fully human champion, Una's journey apart from Red Crosse is structurally her search for the proper champion. Red Crosse is not initially that proper
champion but he does become such.

Una's first interim protector is the lion, "lord of everie beast in field." Not only is the lion the first, but he also introduces the metaphor by which the differences in each protector are measured. The lion is simple, strong, loyal, "that wilde champion" (I.3.26), much as Red Crosse is during the first episode (through the battle with Error). The lion, like Red Crosse at this point, can protect her from such simple villains as Corceca, Abessa, and Kirkrapine. But the lion is already one degree better than Red Crosse because his loyalty never wavers, even when he is outmatched and destroyed by Sansloy.

Before the lion is defeated, there occurs a parodic replay of Red Crosse's first victory. Because the episode in which Archimago comes to Una's aid is structurally the same as the first episode of the book, it reveals the depth of Una's need for a champion and Red Crosse's inadequacy at this point. In addition, it shows both Una's power and her own vulnerability to the enchanter.

As Red Crosse had mistaken the sprite of Archimago for his beloved, so Una believes the disguised Archimago to be her knight. But through the power of her appeal for help when Sansloy threatens, even Archimago begins to act as though he could become what he pretends to be; he engages Sansloy in battle. He loses badly because despite
his appearance, he is a feeble old man. Indeed, the threat of Archimago must be severely lessened for us as a result of this episode. He is the foolish victim of his own illusion, and his understanding of the situation is so meager that he has had to ask Una "what the lyon ment" (I.3.32).

Archimago displays here a naïveté and pride similar to those which lead Red Crosse to challenge Errour. Although the knight survives that battle, he is undone by his confidence in himself when Archimago's illusion challenges Una's worthiness. The lion must come to her rescue both times that these would-be champions default. In a sense, Red Crosse—like Archimago—is not yet himself, but Una will bring forth in him, as she almost does in Archimago, the necessary stature.

The lion is killed by Sansloy because "too weak and feeble was the forse of salvage beast, his puissance to withstand" (3.42). Noble and loyal as he is, the lion is not sufficient to defend Una; she requires a redeemer of much greater status.

Sansloy represents in some ways the danger Una is in without a protector. The description of him in terms of the king-of-beasts metaphor highlights his position as the opposite of the protector. Sansloy is "now lord of the field" by virtue of his victory. But he is a debased
conqueror, not the noble king of his kind, as we see from
the comparison with Una's palfrey, who—like the lion—
"would not leave her so": the horse is "more mild, in
beastly kind, then that her beastly foe" (I.3.44). The
inversion here marks the vulnerability of Una without a
champion. And the fidelity of her palfrey must surely
remind us of her knight's unfaithfulness.

Una began her journey with Red Crosse, who is to
rescue her country from the dragon. Abandoned by him, she
is aided by the lion, then by Archimago. Neither is able
to preserve her from Sansloy—the lion lacks the necessary
skill, Archimago the real commitment and the strength.

This much of Una's tale is presented, and then the
narrative returns to Red Crosse; what has happened here
since last we saw the knight elucidates and advances his
action. His separation from Una leads to his degeneration,
and that degeneration parallels the change in Una's pro-
tectors. Red Crosse is initially like the lion, naturally
noble and good, but he is then deceived, by and like
Archimago. And he is, when we rejoin him, in a state of
lawlessness like Sansloy's and a state of danger like
Una's.

Before Una returns, Red Crosse's adventures at the
House of Pride are narrated (Cantos IV and V). Una is
suspended in danger during this time: at the end of
Canto III Sansloy is threatening, and the situation is the same at the beginning of Canto VI. But there is, through the entrelacement, a change caused by what happens to Red Crosse in between: it becomes clear that he cannot yet return to Una because he is embroiled with Duessa and in his own pride.

And thus, the satyrs must, finally, rescue Una from Sansloy. In response to her cries for help, they came "from lyons clawes to pluck the gryped pray." Sansloy's slaughter of the lion took Una from a natural protector and placed her in the power of true bestiality. The satyrs now rescue her from this beast. Una yet fears her fate "to see the lyon looke so grim," but she soon realizes that she is in the hands of naturally good, if benighted, folk, folk who respond within the limits of their natures to her goodness. She has also advanced, by way of Sansloy, from the protection of a natural beast to that of a race half-human and half-beast. The movement is dialectical: Sansloy's evil both necessitates and makes possible Una's advance from the natural protection of the lion to the semi-rational protection of the satyrs. The lion had simply recognized and protected Una's goodness; the satyrs perceive the divinity in her and worship her as a god after their own pagan fashion.
She next receives aid from Satyrane, who is a degree further toward the perfect champion, a man who has conquered beasts and learned to control himself. He responds to "her wisedome hevenly rare," pities her and finally aids her escape. Although Satyrane cannot dispose of the returned Sansloy, he does fend off the latter's threat until such time as illusionless Red Crosse can arrive.

The structure of Una's experience, like that of Red Crosse's, is recurrent and cyclical. During her separation from Red Crosse and because of it, she moves from danger to protector, again and again. Early in the series, each protector is more insufficient than his predecessor; later each is more nearly adequate. She will finally complete the cycle by reuniting with Red Crosse, who will then become the champion she requires.

Red Crosse temporarily fails as Una's champion not through physical weakness but because he lacks the ability to see through appearances to reality—and because he lacks the humility and experience to recognize his limitation. Una's last interim protector is Arthur, a knight complete in both physical prowess and perceptual ability, as represented by his shield, over which

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
Nor bloody wordes of bold enchanters call,
But all that was not such as seemed in sight
Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall.
(I.7.35)
Arthur intervenes to save Red Crosse from the result of his mistakes and to restore him to Una that he might become whole again and complete his quest. In Arthur, Una has found the type of the complete champion; through Arthur she recovers Red Crosse, who will be the redeemer of her land. As Red Crosse's limitations are implicit in the lion, so his potential is prefigured in Arthur. For Una, the events have come full circle; she is now where she was at the beginning of Canto I, and the next cycle is about to begin.

The presentation of Una's adventures shares a third technique with that of Red Crosse's. For both, experience is recurrent and cyclical; for both, there are other characters and events in the book which are recurrences, sometimes parodic ones, of theirs. Duessa is the opposite of Una, yet she plays a similar role with respect to Red Crosse and she responds to the world with the same forms, if not out of the same substance. We have already remarked the similarity between Duessa's verbal encouragement during Red Crosse's battle with Sansjoy and Una's during his battle with Errour. Immediately after leaving the wounded Sansjoy in hell, Duessa returns to seek Red Crosse, who has fled the House of Pride. Thus, the parallel to Una continues, for she too seeks a flown Red Crosse. This sort of parallel is the kind that, so much threatens Red Crosse. When good and evil, when Una and Duessa, look the same and behave the same, it is damnably difficult to see one's way clear. For this the
shield of Arthur is required, and the education of Red Crosse.

In relation to Sansjoy, Duessa is even more like Una. The parallels are the more striking for Duessa's sincerity as Sansjoy's mistress. When Una thinks she has found her knight in the disguised Archimago, she feels that "a dram of sweete is worth a pound of sour[e]" (I.3.30); Duessa responds in the same way to the image of her lost lover seen in his brother Sansjoy: "I learne that litle sweet/ Oft tempred is . . . with muchell smart" (5.46). It is possible, I suppose, that Duessa is up to her old tricks and is merely using Sansjoy for her own purposes, as she has used Red Crosse. But her behavior throughout Canto IV indicates that she is truly committed. During the battle, she encourages her knight, as Una had encouraged Red Crosse during his battle with Error. And when Sansjoy is wounded, Duessa goes to great lengths to protect him and to secure him aid. Because throughout her efforts on Sansjoy's behalf she is also misleading Red Crosse, there can be no question about the evil of her nature. These parallels do, however, suggest that experience takes the same form, and feels the same, for all, both good and evil—a suggestion made on a number of occasions in The Faerie Queene.

The first phase of Book I culminates in Orgoglio's den when Red Crosse's illusions finally destroy him: he is
unmanned and imprisoned; Una is desolate. We have reached the bottom of the cycle. The second phase begins when Una and Red Crosse are reunited. The renewal, the second and rising phase of the cycle, begins with a recapitulation of the quest's purpose, just as the purpose was announced vaguely at the beginning of Canto I and of the quest. Before Arthur sets out to redeem Red Crosse, he asks Una the history of her woe. She tells of her parents, the dragon, of Red Crosse's quest to free her land, and of his undoing. In telling Arthur, Una clarifies for us the context and purpose of the quest.

After Red Crosse is freed from Duessa and Orgoglio, he and Una set out again for her homeland. The first episode is a recurrence of the adventure with Error, the first episode of the cycle. The parallels, the repeated elements, contribute to the sense that this is another beginning. As with Error, Red Crosse seeks to fight Despaire against the advice of Una; he again embroils himself in a battle beyond his powers; and Una again saves him by intervening at the crucial moment.

Red Crosse and Una are virtually reliving their earlier experience, but with two differences, differences which reveal the toll his wandering has taken of the knight. The foe is not Error this time, but Despaire, the vulnerability of the man who has already erred: Red Crosse
has been altered by the intervening action, but the form of his experience remains constant. The second variation reveals that alteration. Red Crosse comes far closer to a much more serious defeat here than before either Error or Orgoglio: from suicide there is no redemption; Una must this time not merely exhort but snatch the knife from her knight's hand to prevent his self-destruction.

Red Crosse is no wiser but he is weaker than at the outset. He requires rest and he needs to learn the lessons of his errors so that he might avoid repetition of them. For this purpose, Una takes him to the House of Holinesse.

Spenser entitled Book I "The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse or Of Holinesse." We have so far been dealing with Red Crosse's legend: in Canto X we have the legend of Holinesse. Coming upon the heels of Red Crosse's imprisonment, rescue, and nearly fatal relapse, the House of Holinesse puts him through all of his experiences in their positive form, clarifying the essential meaning of his own legend and making possible the successful completion of his quest. Canto X does not negate or exhaust the particular and individual failures and successes of Red Crosse's history; it does cast them in new form, distilling the important features and extracting the meaning from complex and at times confusing events. It enables Red Crosse to perceive the significance of what he has under-
gone and of what he will soon attempt.

The transformation is made through recurrence. The events and places of the House of Holiness are a close repetition of the events and places before and after it in Book I. Each thing that has happened to Red Crosse happens again, but in a lucid and constructive context. The pain and defeat and wandering of the first nine cantos become here the necessary and constructive progress of a man toward virtue, toward holiness and wholeness.

After Una and Red Crosse have recuperated from their toils—after, that is, the knight's physical debilitation has been ended—Red Crosse's spiritual, or perceptual, needs must be attended to. Una asks Fidelia "to have her knight into her schoolehous plaste"; thus begins the reeducation of the Red Crosse Knight. In the transformed reenactment of what he has already gone through, his first encounter is with Fidelia and "the wisedom of her wordes divine," rather than with Errour; "she unto him disclosed every whitt" of her sacred book. He enters a period of alternating despair and hope, chastized by Fidelia's scriptures, comforted by Speranza, much as he had wandered unsure during his earlier separation from Una.

To purge Red Crosse from "the cause and root of all his ill," Patience "laid him privily/ Downe in a darksome lowly place far in." Amendment, Penance, Remorse, and
Repentance "did to health restore/ The man that would not live, but erst lay at deathes dore." Red Crosse relives here in positive, curative form the negative and debasing experience of Orgoglio's dungeon. And as he had left Una and accompanied Duessa during his movement toward his nemesis, so here Una departs and leaves him to Fidelia and Speranza; as Una had been reunited with her knight as a result of Arthur's rescue, so here she rejoins him after he is "thus recover'd by wise Patience" Purged, by Arthur's exposure of Duessa, of his infatuation with that witch and thus joined in love once more with Una, he now meets Charissa after being purged of sin.

The education of Red Crosse continues; Una asks Charissa "in her vertuous rules to schoole her knight." As part of that instruction, the demonic pageant of pride and the six unequal beasts recurs, transformed, as the seven beadmen in the "holy hospitall": the destructive and selfish are replaced by charity and healing; Pride, Idleness, Gluttony, Lechery, Avarice, Envie, Wrath, are replaced by men who provide lodging, feed the hungry, clothe the poor, aid prisoners, attend the sick, bury the dead, provide for orphans and widows. There is no one-to-one correspondence between these groups because evil is rarely the mirror image of good. In this instance, evil is static, an image of corruption, while good is active and
extends itself into the world in acts of charity. Red Crosse has passed through a world which increasingly turned him inward and, reduced to dependence on himself and having lost sight of his quest to aid others, he fell prey to Orgoglio.

The House of Holinesse takes its particular form—the positive reenactment of his previous adventures—because in the recurrent nature of experience lies man's hope for understanding what happens to him and for recognizing the nature of a given situation as prelude to acting positively.

Red Crosse has thus far in his journey through the House of Holinesse regained the modest plateau from which he and Una began their quest. He is with his lady and free of those dangers which are beyond his powers of coping with; he is also wiser now by virtue of both his negative and positive experiences. Before he leaves, however, he previews the remainder of his quest. The interlude with Mercy parallels the place of the House of Holinesse in the narrative as a whole: "There she awhile him stayes, him selfe to rest, / That to the rest more hable he might bee." He becomes more able because of the action of Mercy, which transforms sin into merit as recurrence transforms his fall into his education. After he has both recovered from the past and prepared himself for the future, he will take up and complete his quest. Before he leaves on that mission, he
climbs "the highest mount" with Contemplation, ascending literally as his quest will metaphorically.

Contemplation reveals to him his name, his parentage, his nation—provides him, that is, with the identity that Arthur still lacks, with the identity that gives him both goal and context for the duties he must undertake. The vision of Lucifera, who "so proud she shyned in her princely state,/ Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdayne," who "exceeding shone" (I.4.8,9), is now negated and replaced for Red Crosse by that on Contemplation's mount:

. . . adowne he looked to the ground,
To have returned, but dazed were his eyne,
Through passing brightnes, which did quite confound
His feeble sence, and too exceeding shyne:
So darke are earthly thinges compard to things divine.
(1.10.67)

He has learned humility and he has seen the New Jerusalem, the perfect type of the earthly city he has set out to redeem.

Armed with this vision, Red Crosse defeats the dragon in both a recurrence and a fulfillment of all of his previous battles. The cycle completes itself and is contained in this closing episode. The potential evoked at the outset and at the renewal of the quest half-way through is here realized and made actual.

We are reminded immediately of earlier battles. Una and Red Crosse sight the dragon stretched upon a hill, "But all so soone as he from far descryde/ Those glistring armes,
that heven with light did fill,/ He rousd himselse full blyth, and hastned them untill" (I.12.4). The young Red Crosse wears the same armor as that in which he stood before Errour's den, but it now reflects his new strength. For in the earlier situation, "his glistring armor made/ A litle glooming light, much like a shade" (I.1.15); but now his armor approaches—if it cannot equal—the radiance of Arthur's shield, which "so exceeding shone his glistring ray,/ That Phoebus golden face it did attaint" (I.7.34). Red Crosse gathers unto himself the perfection which Arthur demonstrates in redeeming him.

And for the first time Red Crosse can successfully fight a long, arduous battle without verbal encouragement from Una, who awaits the outcome on a distant hill. As a result of his long series of failures and his reeducation, Red Crosse possesses in his own right the courage and wisdom that before had to be supplied by Una.

The battle continues for three days; three times Red Crosse must engage the dragon before he wins the victory. He falls twice, as he fell before Orgoglio and before Despayre; twice he rises as he did earlier through Arthur's aid and through that received in the House of Holinesse. The dragon, "When now he saw himselse so freshly reare,/ As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,/ He woxe dismaid, and gan his fate to fear."
And rightly so, for the victory is Red Crosse's.

Canto XII celebrates the victory. From the "too solemn sad" Red Crosse and from Una hidden under veil and black stole ("as one that inly mourned"), through separation and Sansloy's threat and Duessa's near-successful scheme, through their coming together again and Red Crosse's cure, and to the quest completed, the dragon slain and Eden liberated—the relationship of Una and Red Crosse has come full circle. Una's appearance when she responds to her father's call to be betrothed marks the end of woe and the beginning of new life. She appears,

As bright as doth the morning starre appeare
Out of the east, with flaming lockes bedight,
To tell that dawning day is drawing neare,
And to the world does bring long wished light;
So faire and fresh that lady shewd her selfe in sight:

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in May.

(I.12.21-22)

Dawn and spring come at last, but not without qualification. Archimago appears, disguised, in a final attempt to prevent the union of Red Crosse and Una. But Red Crosse perceives the evil and defeats it by careful explication of his experience; and Una recognizes Archimago beneath his disguise. Red Crosse's wisdom, his ability to perceive true substance beneath deceptive form, is even more strongly evidenced in Book II. Archimago tries again to entrap the knight,
But now so wise and wary was the knight
By tryall of his former harmes and cares,
That he descryde, and shonned still his slight:
The fish that once was caught, new bait wil hardly
byte.

(II.1.4)

Red Crosse has learned the nature of reality and the fact of recurrence.

The threat overcome, the celebration resumes. But it is not to go on forever, nor are Red Crosse and Una yet to remain together permanently. The end is spring, and so also a beginning. He must return to the Faerie Queene to pay the service that he owes her, "The which he shortly did, and Una left to mourn."

In Book I, then, the Red Crosse Knight moves through a series of encounters that are structurally the same. He takes on the monster Errour, with his lady at his side offering encouragement, defeats his foe, and then rests for the night at Archimago's hut. Subsequent battles define the progress and problems of Red Crosse's quest by alteration or omission of the elements established here as normative. Not only do encounters share common structure, but the pattern in which they occur is standard. After defeating Errour Red Crosse goes to Archimago's hut, after fighting Sansføy to the trees of Fradubio and Fraelissa, after battling Sansjoy to the fountain of the nymph who stopped "in middest of her race," after falling to Orgoglio to the dungeon, after almost yielding to Despayre to the
House of Holinesse, and, finally, after conquering the
dragon he goes to Eden—herein lies the essential rhythm
of Book I: activity followed by rest.

It is the rhythm of individual episodes, the rhythm
of the book as a whole, and of *The Faerie Queene* itself.
The narrator's closing statement fixes for us the sig-
nificance of Red Crosse's last rest for him, for the
narrator, and for us:

> Now strike your salies, yee jolly mariners,
> For we be come unto a quiet rode,
> Where we must land some of our passengers,
> And light this weary vessell of her lode.
> Here she a while may make her safe abode,
> Till she repaired have her tackles spent,
> And wants supplide; and then again abroad
> On the long voyiage whereto she is bent:
> Well may she speede, and fairely finish her intent.
> (I.12.42)

Never final, rest is always in preparation for a new task;
it is always—or should always be—restorative.

We have in Book I not mere repetition but a form given
to human experience, a form that by virtue of its reliance
on recurrence can accommodate the different experience of
later books and the communal experience of history. We
have also a form that can provide a vehicle for perceiving
the meaning of virtually all human experience because that
experience has a common shape if not a common content.

Several levels of meaning exist in *The Faerie Queene*
by virtue of the myth of recurrence which unites actions,
characters, images, and thought into a whole and unified
poem. The primary formal characteristic of each of these elements considered separately is recurrence. The dominant fact of their interaction, which creates plot, is a play on perspective, a putting into a new light, by, say, an image which places into historical context an individual, time-bound, event. The principle viewpoints thus established are the immediate and the long range, that of history and that of myth, that of participants and that of privileged observers, the temporal and the non-temporal.

We have, that is, two modes of perceiving and articulating experience. When a work adopts plot as the medium of presentation, it necessarily creates a temporal standpoint because it must be conveyed in temporal sequence. When the temporal movement is recurrent, as it is in The Faerie Queene, and when a non-temporal or mythic standpoint is also created by allusions, the two perspectives exist together and modify one another. We are simultaneously aware of the unique and the repetitive in each new event; we are aware of the painful movement of history from the participant's point of view and at the same time of the larger pattern which imbues that movement with direction and perhaps meaning.

The larger perspective that we as readers gain early in the narrative is the perspective that the characters of the poem work toward. We see, for example, the parallels
between Fradubio and Red Crosse which the latter misses; we see the similarities between Duessa's disguised hideousness and the House of Pride, whose "hinder partes, that few could spie,/ Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly" (I.4.5); and we see the cause of Red Crosse's inability to perceive the falseness of almost everything he encounters during this period—Archimago's sprites, Duessa, the House of Pride. As Red Crosse himself notes, Lucifera is "too exceeding proud," but he makes the observation not from clear perception but from his own slighted pride: she "to strange knight no better countenance allowd" (I.4.15).¹² He cannot correct what he does not recognize.

Red Crosse's perspective is limited by his pride and by his embroilment in temporal succession. Ours is enhanced by our distance and our recognition of pattern, of recurrence. The two perspectives function together to create for us the emotional experience of acting in history and the superior knowledge of where that action will lead.

These modes of perception are created by and derive their nature from the recurrence which organizes the poem's elements individually and with respect to one another. Since existence and history are conceived as the working out, in time and by a process of repetition, of man's drive to create order in himself and in his society, apparently
unique events are in fact but one more recurrence of those that have preceded it. It may be advanced or retarded in comparison with earlier types, but it is essentially a new manifestation of a recurring phenomenon, a slightly new form of an eternal substance.
Notes to Chapter Two


3 Berger notes the same tentativeness with respect to Arthur: "as a minister of grace, an imitation of Christ, [he] can redeem Britain from subjugation to the Earthly City, but Arthur is mortal and Britain will fall again" (The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book I of Spenser's Faerie Queene, Yale Studies in English, Vol. 137 [New Haven, 1957], p. 102).


5 Berger, "Archaism": "Spenser places traditional material in historical perspective by quotation and revision . . . and transforms it into something new" (p. 216).


10. The term is from Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery*.


CHAPTER THREE
"Eterne in Mutabilitie"

Book I ends with the completion of a cycle and with Red Crosse about to begin a new quest, a new cycle. Characters, narrator, reader—all have reached a temporary resting point between periods of activity. But we soon begin anew: this completed cycle generates the next and takes us to Book II and to Guyon.

Book I, we have seen, is organized by the myth of recurrence; its structure moves through the repetition of particular elements of experience to effect the transformation of Red Crosse. Book I is also one phase in the larger cycle traced by The Faerie Queene as a whole, a cycle which shares with the first book the primary feature of recurrence. As each era of history in Briton Moniments both repeats and advances the era preceding it, and as each adventure in Book I repeats and advances the preceding adventure, in the same way successive books of the poem both repeat and advance those that have gone before.

These two factors of repetition and transformation are present in the poem's vision and in its structure; together they create the tension at the heart of The
Faerie Queene. On the one hand, there is the joy of victory; on the other, weariness and desire for rest. There is the sense of accomplishment, and the necessity for going on. In one sense each quest is a repetition made necessary by the failure of the previous quest to achieve a victory of permanence. And yet, insofar as each new quest is different and transforms the previous one, each victory is a better one. The transformations allow the hope that cumulative cycles are progressive, while the repetition creates an increasingly heavy emotional fatigue.

The quest is essentially the same for each of the poem's heroes because the pattern of experience and the elements out of which experience is composed recur from book to book with but slight modifications of structure. The modifications are nonetheless significant. Virtue, destination, terrain—these do change from book to book, and the changes are the means by which the poem evolves. In tension with the sense of mere repetition, such evolution embodies the hopeful aspect of The Faerie Queene's vision: the myth of recurrence as the slow, painful progress of mankind toward the perfect city and civilization. This aspect of Spenser's poem can be seen most explicitly in the Antiquitee of Faery Lond, where the achievements of successive civilizations are stated linearly as the general progress of the race.
The progressive character of *The Faerie Queene*'s successive quests has frequently been noted. The variety of schemes proposed to characterize that progression testifies to the poem's flexibility and power, characteristics which result from the myth of recurrence. In reducing literally all aspects of human experience to one pattern, the poem lays bare the process and rhythm common to all endeavor.

Recognizing that no scheme can contain the poem—and that the more absolute our designations of the place of each book in the whole, the greater injustice we do to the poem—Northrop Frye describes the progression of books thus: human fidelity (Book I), natural fidelity (II), nature (III), natural concord (IV), human concord (V), art (VI). In addition to offering different terms for seeing the relationship between books, A. C. Hamilton places the books in evolutionary progression. "Book I outlines the poem's pattern," goes itself through the whole progression which the remaining books repeat as a whole. Of the pattern's four stages, the first is the fall from innocence: Red Crosse's defeat by Orgoglio in Book I, repeated by the whole of Book II. The second stage, Arthur's redemption of Red Crosse, recurs in Book III. The fourth is regeneration, which occurs in Book I at the House of Holinesse, and then in Book IV on the individual level through love, and in Book V on the national level through
the defeat of enemies. Hamilton recognizes that the pattern is present in both the movement as a whole, and within individual books. That is, each book takes the hero through all four stages while the "world of the poem progresses" book by book to the final stage of restoration in Book VI.2

These various delineations of the poem's structure are, as Frye says of his own, dubious; but they are valuable for giving us some notion of the poem's unifying symbolism and the relation between books.3 The ways in which they differ are finally less important than their similarities. And it is less important, I think, to attempt an exhaustive and limiting statement of the poem's content than to expose the pattern which organizes each book and binds all the books together as in some sense repetitions of each other and to recognize transformations from book to book which create the progression or evolution of the poem as a whole.

Human experience, as fashioned in The Faerie Queene, is essentially process, a continuing movement I have described as the myth of recurrence. It is present as vision in such distillations as the Garden of Adonis and the Mutabilitie Cantos; the movement is also present as structure throughout. The myth of recurrence describes the stages of experience at all levels—natural, individual, historical, religious. Thus it is that such different formulations of the poem's movement as those of Frye and
Hamilton are accurate or at least suggestive. And there are certainly others. We might read the poem as an expression of alternating and dialectical phases of excess and control and see the curbing of Red Crosse's impetuosity in Guyon's reserve, the control of exuberant love in Book III by ceremonial marriage in Book IV, and the calming of the severity of Artegall by the graciousness of Calidore. Or we might read the poem, in Christian terms, as the restoration of God and Christ to the world in Book I, which makes possible the attainment of self-knowledge in II, which makes possible union with the other in III and IV; union, then, is possible on the larger level of the nation, which allows the perfection of order by courtesy.

The readings the poem will sustain are limited only by its own conception of the nature of process and by the nature of the poem's evolution as reflected in the kind of problem and victory which recur from book to book. We are forced by the poem itself, I think, to deal with oppositions like activity and rest, energy and exhaustion, repetition and advance, with oppositions that generate endless cycles.

Since structure becomes visible only when it is given content, it is necessary to trace the development of individual books and of the poem as a whole by means of some allegorization. By allegorization, I mean the reduction of action, character, and image to principles in order to
articulate with some precision what is essentially an emotional and a fluid experience. I have chosen, in the discussion that follows, to trace and illustrate the poem's structure by means of the personal and social development of the individual as a metaphor for the evolution of the poem's vision. I have chosen this because it necessarily involves, at a basic and therefore flexible level, most of the poem's concerns—energy, control, creativity, exhaustion, maturity, decadence. The poem's other concerns—the development of the state, the movement of history—are analogous to individual progression along the lines of the microcosm-macrocosm metaphor: herein lies the hope that although a definitive reading is impossible by virtue of *The Faerie Queene's* complexity, it may be possible to illustrate the boundaries and directions of the poem's movement.

II

The critical issue of Book I is the relationship between male and female, a relationship that is, at least initially, adolescent. When the relationship deteriorates, the separate parties are endangered; when they are rejoined, progress is once again possible. Red Crosse must learn, before he can defeat the dragon, to perceive the true nature of the beloved (and of the imposter). His quest
is neither purely personal nor purely social: when he kills the dragon he frees Eden from death and sterility, and he frees himself from the same, making possible the betrothal to Una which follows immediately.

In overcoming the obstacles to his sexual union with Una, Red Crosse resolves the central problem of Book I, the anti-creativity of Duessa and of the dragon. In doing so, he in a sense generates the problems which confront Guyon in Book II. Book I is cyclical, and, as we see in the necessity for Red Crosse to leave Una and to renew his labors for the Faery Queene, the cycles are perpetual. Red Crosse achieves no ultimate victory, only the first stage in a long journey.

The next phase follows inevitably from the one just completed. The world of the poem achieves potential sexuality and creativity in Book I. In Book II that nascent energy is distorted and perverted by Acrasia, who draws off the sexual energy that might and should be directed toward productivity and fruitfulness into self-absorption, and thus into lethargy. It is Guyon's task to destroy the enervating forces of lust and free again the energy unleashed when Red Crosse frees himself and Eden from death and sterility.

Book II repeats the process of Book I but at a new stage of development. That is to say, the world of the
poem—the general state of the evolutionary movement—advances, while for the particular knight it is a matter of working out for himself the same kind of achievement reached by his predecessor. Red Crosse frees himself from misalliance, turns outward to the world. Guyon, too, must turn outward as he does in rejecting the false lures of the world at Mammon's and in accepting an active temperance at Alma's where his temperance becomes an active virtue in service to others. In the world of the poem, there is a slight advance, from exorcising personal blocks to creativity, to destroying external ones.

In Book II, completion again generates another quest. The results of Guyon's victory are only potentially possible; the immediate effect is to unleash an energy so powerful that it disrupts the normal process of things, as reflected in the altered and apparently chaotic structure of Books III and IV.

The first two books follow the pattern examined often enough already as the myth of recurrence. Like Book I, Book II begins at a modest high point: Guyon and the Palmer travel together and avoid the disaster Archimago has tried to engineer. From this plateau Guyon descends to the critical point, his faint upon emerging from Mammon's cave. Aided by Arthur as Red Crosse had been, Guyon goes to Alma's castle, where he reorients himself and rediscovers his task
as his predecessor had done at the House of Holinesse. Guyon then goes on to the completion of his quest.

In Book III, the organizing pattern shifts from that of a central character put through a series of adventures to a series of characters put through a central adventure. The primary devices of repetition and transformation are present here as in the earlier books. In conjunction with the change in structure, the world of the poem increases in scope as Book III gets under way. We see now the female side of the dilemma which was dealt with from the male point of view in the first two books. Guyon extends and recapitulates the search of Red Crosse for fulfillment; Britomart is in a similar relation to Una. It would appear that for the male the problem lies in pursuing destructive alliance; for the female, in resisting such pursuit. It is not until both halves have purged themselves and their worlds that the productivity envisioned at Eden can come to be.

The energy released by the destruction of the Bower of Bliss activates, at a number of levels which are represented by various couples, the search for a mate, for a union that can be creative and productive. Britomart, Arthur, Florimell, Timias, even Marinell and the witch's son and Hellenore and Proteus—all the characters seek lovers. Their efforts in Book III are less than success-
ful. Instead of the rise to a new high point which marks the first books, Book III gets only as far as preparing for that upward movement. In freeing Amoret and destroying Busyrane, Britomart cleanses the world of the poem so that fruition can occur in Book IV.

The problem in Book III is that people can't find their lovers. The victory consists not of actual union but of individuals freeing themselves in preparation for union. Those unions are achieved or all but achieved in Book IV. The sexual energy which Guyon freed from obsession with Acrasia is here brought under control at virtually all levels of the microcosm-macrocosm: the cosmic in the marriage of the Thames and Medway, the naturally human in that of Florimell and Marinell, the personal in the reunion of Amoret and Scudamour (this takes place not literally but metaphorically through the reexperience of first love as recalled by Scudamour in his story of the Temple of Venus), and the more pointedly historical in the case of Britomart and Artegall (in Book V).

The productive containment of energy is also reflected structurally. The temporary explosion of Books III and IV recedes and Book V returns to the more orderly structure of the first two books. Here, the control which results in marriage on the individual level is extended to the social and national level. Artegall's quest is to free a
nation to realize itself, to become creative. He begins, like Guyon and Red Crosse, at a modest plateau with his victory over Sir Sanglier, descends to enslavement by Radigund, is redeemed by Britomart and educated at Mercilla's Court, and then achieves his quest.

Into the mixed atmosphere of success and failure that marks Artegall's victory—and all victories in *The Faerie Queene*—steps Sir Calidore to pursue the quest for harmonious and productive civilization. Compared to earlier stages of *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI is both a flowering and an attenuation. The Blatant Beast seems less diabolical than Archimago, Acrasia, Busyrane, or Geryoneo at the same time that the hero appears more truly sophisticated and civilized. The serious threats to the achieved state of the human community as represented through pastoral convention are societies at precivil stages of development—Serena's cannibals and the Brigands. Through their success in destroying Meliboe's arcadian community these people pose the essential and sad dilemma of recurrence: maturity and decadence are damnably approximate.

*The Faerie Queene*, as a world of its own, evolves through personal realization to social fulfillment. Male and female are first freed from internal and external perversions, then united in marriage. After marriage, the quests move into the social realm, where the same process
is repeated at a new level. Artegall seeks to impose the order and sense of direction he has achieved personally on a community; Calidore seeks essentially the same goal, but he has advanced—as has the state of things generally—to an ordering principle internally imposed, beyond force into the poetry of conduct. The movement here parallels that in Briton Moniments, where the nation moves from control by force to control by policy, from family rule to rule for and by the commonwealth.

III

The evolution of the poem which we have been examining is created by the transitions between the individual books of the poem, transitions which place each new book in the context of what has gone before. In the beginnings of the several books we can see and trace the evolution of The Faerie Queene because the six books that constitute the larger movement of the poem each represent one phase of it. The books are tied together and the relationships between them are made manifest in the beginning of each new quest. The relationship is not one of strong causation; it is rather of natural, inevitable succession. In this sense, the structure of The Faerie Queene is organic: the books of The Faerie Queene succeed one another naturally, the concerns of one book spilling over into the next even as
each prepares for what follows.

Book II is linked to Book I in several ways. It appears at the outset that Book I is about to recur literally: Red Crosse is separated from Una; Archimago again exploits that separation to ensnare Red Crosse (II.1.2). But the situation has changed because Red Crosse is stronger, more perceptive now. And there is an almost immediate shift in focus. Because Red Crosse is invulnerable, Archimago turns to Guyon, thus marking the transition from first to second book as evil shifts its attention from old to new hero. Archimago, however, fails in his attempt to create animosity between Guyon and his predecessor; and he becomes a relatively minor threat. Here in Book II, as his evil power wanes it also comes into alignment with the major problem of the book: "For all he did was to deceive good knights/ And draw them from pursuit of praise and fame,/ To slug in slouth and sensuall delights" (II.1.23). Archimago has become a minor reflection of Acrasia; it is not the illusory sprites of the magician that Guyon must contend with, but the attempt to replace nature with art.

The Palmer makes the relation to Red Crosse explicit: "But wretched we, where ye have left your marke,/ Must now anew begin, like race to runne" (1.32). He expresses the sense—already growing in the poem—of the fatigue and
exhaustion inherent in the quest, of the insecurity of victory. His statement suggests also the sense in which Guyon's quest is both new and a repetition of the previous one. Red Crosse has liberated Eden and destroyed the foe, but Guyon must free man again, not from sterility exactly but from obsession with sexuality as an end in itself, which produces a variety of sterility seen in the languor of Verdant and the self-destruction of Mordant.

Book III begins with a similar equating and differentiating. The knights of Book II (Arthur is still with Guyon) begin in this book, as the characters of Book I opened II. Again, the last hero encounters the new. The token of Red Crosse's shield averted a disastrous meeting with Guyon; here the tilt runs its course and Britomart unhorses Guyon. By destroying the Bower, Guyon frees the energy held in suspension by Acrasia; Britomart will be the leading force of that energy in the next books; it is, as we see here, more than Guyon can handle. Temperance helps Guyon adjust to a defeat it cannot save him from:

By such good meanes he him discounsell'd
From prosecuting his revenging rage;
And eke the Prince like treaty handeled,
His wrathfull will with reason to aswage,
And laid the blame, not to his carriage,
But to his starting steed, that swarv'd asyde,
And to the ill purveyance of his page.
(III.1.11)

Undercutting the normative advice of the Palmer is the rationalization he and Arthur offer to excuse Guyon's
defeat. Something must have been wrong with his equipment, his horse, and his page, they say, so there is really no disgrace. In accepting the consolation, Guyon demonstrates, as Red Crosse had done, that he has indeed become adequate to his quest; we see also that we are now in a new world, a new stage of the struggle, that a different kind of strength is required—the aggressive power of Britomart.

Britomart assumes the progress that Guyon has made, and the world of the poem assumes the victory and the new problem generated by Book II. The reconcilement of old and new knight is stated in terms of the primary virtue of each knight: "Through goodly temperance and affection chaste" they are knit together; in the continuing struggle for freedom and fulfillment, the quest moves to Britomart. The merely passing acquaintance of the titular heroes reflects the handing down of both victory and new problem. In each book, after a short meeting the old and new knights go their separate ways, the old dropping out of sight, the new traveling on.

Book III and Britomart also assume the achievements of Book I. We are introduced to Britomart in a fashion reminiscent of our introduction to Red Crosse: she "pricked fayre"; at her side is an aged squire "that seemd to couch under his shield threesquare,/ As if that age badd him the burden spare,/ And yield it those that
I "stouter could it wield" (III.1.4). Things are still not what they seem, although the deception here is positive in intent and reflects Britomart's purposeful disguise, not Red Crosse's initial failure to be what he will become.

Britomart's first battle occurs before Castle Joyeous, a place which recalls the Bower of Bliss: it is "the image of superfluous riotize,/ Exceeding much the state of mean degree" (1.33). Red Crosse aids Britomart in fending off this threat to her chastity, this attempt to enmesh her in sensuality. They join "foot to foot, and syde to syde,/ That in short space their foes they have quite terrifyde:

(66). Red Crosse has cleared the way for creative self-fulfillment; Guyon has destroyed the most threatening distraction to the realization of that energy; Britomart passes through a recurrence of the dangers of the preceding books and receives only a mild wound because of the former victories and the aid of former victors.

The extension of Book III into Book IV is readily apparent and has been frequently noted. No new hero appears to pursue the next stage of the struggle; instead Britomart continues as the primary questor. The two endings to Book III, that of 1590 and that of 1596, highlight the difference. In the original close to Book III, Amoret and Scudamour are united, and the energies of sex, which motivate the book, are fulfilled and contained in
creative coupling. Thus, Britomart has achieved her quest as Guyon did his, not in personal fulfillment but as the agent who makes realization possible for others. The apparent finality of the hermaphrodite image in the canceled ending makes it a fitting close to Books I through III as a self-contained structure. But there is always, in *The Faerie Queene*, a new struggle to undertake.

The altered ending when all six books were published together in 1596 forestalls the fulfillment of Book III and makes more pronounced the relation of the issues of the next book to it. The primary effect of the new ending as a transition to Book IV is to double the search for the mate. Britomart must still seek, and now Amoret too searches for, a mate. The situation has altered and the problems are different. Amoret and the poem generally are free now of the control of Busyrane, which differs from that of Acrasia in that it is not voluntary but forced upon the victim. Lovers are still separate, but they are no longer imprisoned and thus can search for each other.

Book IV does not begin with the meeting of a new and an old hero, but it does begin by marking the difference resulting from the completion of the previous quest. Canto I recalls the progress of Amoret to this point as preparation for what is about to occur; beyond this, Britomart
changes from redeemer to companion. She has become like Amoret, has freed Amoret to be like herself. The first action of the new book clarifies the new conditions which are the concerns of Book IV. The two searching lovers arrive at a castle whose custom demands that those "Which had no love nor lemmen there in store/ Should either winne him one, or lye without the dore" (IV.1.9). Britomart defends her right to Amoret but then pities the knight left alone without a lady. She solves the problem of making three people count for four by exploiting her masculine disguise. She is Amoret's lover, and disguise aside, the left-over knight's lady. Here, in miniature, is the final achievement toward which Book IV moves, the pairing of lovers in creative union. The destruction of the Bower of Bliss makes the pursuit of such union possible; the destruction of Busyrane makes achievement possible. Book IV perfects and realizes the unions in the multiple marriages which are imminent at its conclusion.6

A shift occurs in the terms of the developing cycle of the poem in Book V. The fourth book marks the culmination of a phase of The Faerie Queene's evolution. The essentially individual-oriented energy released with the death of the dragon at the end of Book I is finally contained in the marriage of the Thames and Medway and the incipient marriage of Florimell and Marinell. Book V
extends the movement beyond marriage to community, moving another step outward from the individual. The new stage is again an organic development from those which precede it. Personal fulfillment is followed by an attempt to achieve reciprocal harmony and creativity in the wider realm of the community. The working out of union at this new level is both an extension and repetition of the struggle at the personal level, much as both personal and communal freedom is implicit in the original victory over the dragon. The poem follows the consequences of that victory for the individual in Books II through IV and then pursues the consequences for the community in Books V and VI.

Although less explicit and immediate, the links between Book V and the preceding books are nonetheless importantly present. Its structure, after the interlude of Books III and IV, is again like that of Book II. A series of recurrent adventures are organized around one knight; there is even the doubling of the ending with Arthur's parallel adventure freeing Belgae. Again the knight's success hinges on his relationship with his beloved, while the explicitly national context of Artegaill's affair with Britomart emphasizes the importance of community in this stage. Artegaill frees a nation from the tyranny of Geryoneo as Guyon freed individuals from
Acrasia. Further, the perfection of individuals through the wholeness and productivity represented in marriage remains a central vehicle for the expansion of the poem's concerns to a social level: Artegall achieves his own perfection through Britomart at the same time that Britomart restores order and harmony to the community of Radigund.

Out of Artegall's victory grows the quest of Sir Calidore; once again the connection is stated directly, by Calidore: "Where ye ended have, now I begin" (VI.1.6). The old and the new knight meet at the beginning of Book VI, but they do not battle as had the heroes in early transitions because the new quest is a communal rather than personal extension. Artegall's justice is not a perfection but a beginning, a beginning pursued to its perfection by the courtesy of Calidore.7

The Blatant Beast mars the success of Book V, but as the beast's nature is revealed in Book VI, the victim of his attack has left himself vulnerable. It is the vulnerability of Artegall's victory, of its ruthless methods, perhaps, that constitutes the problem which Calidore seeks to resolve. But the quest of this final book ends up being not the institution of courtesy, though that goes on, but the preservation of the essential achievement of the world of the poem by saving Pastorella from the Brigands. Meliboe's pastoral community is destroyed,
but Calidore saves this lady who embodies its essence, an essence also distilled in the vision of Mount Acidale. In both cases, the vision itself vanishes, leaving the poem, and us, to pursue it again, to begin anew the quest for personal and communal perfection.

IV

Created by the transitions from book to book, the changing nature of the poem's world is reflected and thereby made visible in recurrent sea metaphors—metaphors of the ocean voyage and the harbor, on the one hand, and of the motion of the sea itself, its ebb and flow, on the other. Here, as always in this poem ordered by the myth of recurrence, is tension, between the hopes of the voyager and the hostility of the sea on which he must travel. These metaphors give concrete form to characters' emotional responses to the changing world they inhabit; the changes in the metaphor reflect the different contingencies which must be faced as the world of the poem evolves. In The Faerie Queen life is perceived as process; that is the import of the sea journey metaphors and the associated images of day and night and of the seasons. Whatever the content of specific experiences, they all alternate between good and bad, between rest and struggle, between success and failure.
The two senses of "tide" suggest the appropriateness of the metaphor to Spenser's vision. In the seventh canto of the fourth book, Arthur takes leave of the hermit he does not recognize as Timias with the confidence that all states, good and bad, are mutable:

He left him there in languor to remaine,  
Till time for him should remedy provide,  
And him restore to former grace againe.  
(IV.7.47)

In the same stanza the narrator leaves the story of Arthur and Timias: "Which for it is too long here to abide,/ I will deferre the end untill another tide." The stanza links character and narrator in a common response to human experience, focusing on the passage of time as curative in itself. The narrator's use of "tide," in the double sense of time and a season and of the motion of the sea (s.v., OED), indicates the nature of time. History and biography, like the tide, move in cyclical progression, in waves that successively advance and ebb. At the most elemental level, natural and human processes are recurrent: as the tide ebbs and flows, so the fortunes of Timias recede and advance, the opposite state always imminent.

The frequency with which the poem's characters define their experience by means of sea metaphors suggests how basic the recurrent metaphor is to the poem's vision. And if individual quests are spoken of in terms of the sea
journey, it is always as a journey toward an indefinite, and distant though perhaps sensed, destination. The centrality of this figure as a device for organizing the emotional aspect of experience in The Faerie Queene can best be observed in the apparent indifference of sea metaphors to the moral status of the experiences they shape. There are, for example, ports of true rest and destination and false ports, ports which are not what they seem or which offer harmful escape instead of restoration and resupply. Even Archimago's response is organized by a ship metaphor, as though at base all experience is the same without regard to character or goal. "Th' enchaunter joyous seemed" as a merchant would on the arrival of his ship or as Una does on mistaking him for Red Crosse. Evil or good, success is likely to be linked with ports.

Una, for example, undertakes her long journey to find and return home with a rescuer for Eden. When Red Crosse, deceived by Archimago's spirits, abandons her, she must also journey in search of him. When she encounters Archimago disguised as her knight, she mistakenly and prematurely thinks her journey over:

Much like as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wandred in the ocean wide,
Ofte soust in swelling Tethys saltish teare,
And long time having tand his tawney hide
With blustering breath of heaven, that none can bide,
And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound,
Soon as the port from far he has espide,
His cheerful whistle merily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates him pledg around.

Such joy made Una, when her knight she found.

(1.3.31-32)

What is important here is the use of tempest and port as the two poles of experience, the two states—whether of mind or of actual, physical experience—between which Una moves. From the grief and confusion of her search for Red Crosse, to the temporary and mistaken relief she feels here, to renewed journey, to final reconciliation and destination—Una's journey moves in waves, controlled by the sea upon which she must travel, now advancing, now ebbing, now painful, now joyous.

Within the development of this metaphor, Una's journey in Book I becomes the search for the true harbor, for true rest. Her first two harbors are deceptive and dangerous ones, providing not shelter but new threats; they only seem fair. But the metaphor comes back as the final statement of what she has gained: she is restored "to native crowne and kingdom late ygoe:/ Where she enjoys sure peace for evermore,/ As wetherbeaten ship arryv'd on happie shore" (II.1.2). She has at last escaped from the sea and its constant motion.

Red Crosse's progress also follows the pattern of advancing and receding waves, and his emotional responses
are given expression by the same metaphor. As with Una, the metaphor of the sea journey, insisting on the alternation between storm and port, embodies the emotional shape of experience. Red Crosse sees and escapes the dungeon of the House of Pride—a bad place to rest—and he feels as a mariner feels when he escapes a hidden rock that he perceives only after the danger is past: "So doubly is distrest twixt joy and cares/ The dreaderse corage of this Elfin knight." Naive, stubborn, short-sighted, Red Crosse had not known his danger until it was past, nor will he yet know it in time to escape Orgoglio and Despayre. It is precisely the offer of port after stormy seas that constitutes the main appeal of Despayre's propositions, but it is a premature port; and, more damning yet, it is offered as a final port, as a final end to a journey that must not end, not yet, and not at Red Crosse's decision. For Red Crosse there are only temporary ports, only temporary disengagements.

In direct contrast to Despayre's port is that of Eden. Here there is good rest, safety, and rehabilitation. Eden renews Red Crosse for his continuing journey:

Yet, swimming in that sea of blisfull joy,
He nought forgott, how he whilome had sworne,
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
Unto his Faery Queene backe to retoure:
The which he shortly did, and Una left to mourn.

(I.12.41)
Even here he cannot stay, but must go on. It is a point worth emphasizing, a point Red Crosse himself makes earlier, at the onset of festivity and relief. Una's father would extend his own joy to Red Crosse,

> For never living man, I weene, so sore
> In sea of deadly daungers was distrest;
> But since now safe ye seised have the shore,
> And well arrived are, (High God be blest!)
> Let us devize of ease and everlasting rest.

(1.12.17)

"'Ah! dearest lord,' said then that doughty knight,/ 'Of ease or rest I may not yet devize'"—as though Red Crosse were reminding himself that he must not become enamoured of ease too soon. He recognizes the pain and strife that must precede rest and that must also be resumed after rest. Una's father responds for the entire poem: "Unhappy falls that hard necessity."

If Red Crosse leaves Eden with newfound joy, it consists largely in anticipation that he "shall hether backe retourne agayne," and it is not without the deep sense of melancholy and resignation that characterizes virtually all of the poem's protagonists. Weariness, yearning for rest—these are the key notes of *The Faerie Queene*, counter-pointed by brief—and therefore poignant—moments of joy.

Spenser's use of sea metaphors is as variable as the sea itself. When Red Crosse first confronts the dragon, the latter is like a ship; his wings are sails which beat a passage through the air by force. Eleven stanzas later,
wounded by Red Crosse, the dragon becomes as the sea, raging in his pain like a winter storm beating upon the shore "as he would eat his neighbour element in his revenge" (11.21). These metaphors place the dragon in opposition to Red Crosse in terms of the sea journey already established as a principal vehicle for expressing the quest. The dragon is both the ship that Red Crosse must manipulate and the hostile elements with which he has to contend. That is to say, the dragon is both an internal and external foe for the knight: he embodies both interior disorganization and the threat the outside world poses to the quest.

These sea metaphors recur throughout the poem, defining the individual quests as journeys through chaos toward the security of the harbor; they function as highly visual elements in the recurrent structure of the poem. As Book II begins, the Palmer—noting Red Crosse's success—places Guyon's undertaking in the same context, and gives it the same pattern: "God guide thee, Guyon, well to end thy warke,/ And to the wished haven bring thy weary barke" (II.1.32). Guyon begins energetically, again resembling Red Crosse, in youth and rashness. Guyon enters the cacophonous discord between Hudibras and Sansloy, "not like a weary traveliere," but as a tall ship making way through "two contrarie billowes" (2.23-24). The sea will take its toll, however, and wear him down as it did the first
champion.

The metaphor occurs again later in Book II. Stripped of the Palmer's aid, Guyon yet continues, a degree more self-sufficient than Red Crosse. Having lost his guide he maintains his direction like a pilot who "upon his card and compas firmes his eye" when his guiding star is beclouded. But he too eventually reaches that state of enervation which leaves him helpless. For both of these heroes, the final temptation is the same. Despayre and the singing mermaids both offer a "port of rest from troublous toyle," but a rest that comes before the task is done, a rest that does not prepare for renewed activity.

In the middle books, the sea metaphor serves a somewhat different purpose. While it still embodies the feel of weariness, it also suggests more strongly than before the absence of clearly defined destinations, paralleling the shift in structure which occurs in these books. Red Crosse and Guyon have the comfort of specific quests leading to recognizable places. Britomart and Arthur, however, must function in a much vaguer, more ambivalent, atmosphere. In describing to Red Crosse the nature and purpose of her presence in faerie land, Britomart uses the sea metaphor:

To hunt out perilles and adventures hard,  
By sea, by land, where so they may be mett,  
Onely for honour and for high regard,  
Without respect of richesse or reward.
For such intent into these partes I came,
Withouten compasse or withouten card.
(III.2.7)

Because Guyon's quest was for him sharply defined, he was said to possess and use that same compass and that same card; Britomart lacks such security and, when clouds obscure her guiding star, wanders unsure. And, of course, she hedges here. Artagall is the object of her journey, not the search for strange adventures she offers as her motive to Red Crosse. But whatever the hero seeks—Eden, the Bower of Bliss, the dimly perceived image of the beloved—experience takes a common shape, a shape embodied in the metaphor of the sea voyage with its oscillation between port and storm, home and unknown seas.

Thus it is that in their laments, both Britomart and Arthur turn to the sea and the voyage to give shape to their melancholy. Both have been frustrated in their attempts to find the beloved; they yield, for the moment, to weariness and the overwhelming desire for rest. Far from home and making no progress in her search for Artagall, Britomart feels like a ship tossed in a "huge sea of sorrow and tempestuous grief," "far from the hoped haven of reliefe." Arthur's situation is closely parallel. He too searches for a beloved seen only in a vision; he too fails to make any recognizable headway. It is the narrator who places Arthur's weariness in the context of the sea:
"like as a ship" whose lodestar is beclouded and whose pilot is dismayed, he is forced to stay his pursuit of Florimell, a pursuit motivated by his desire that she be his queen. In his own lament, Arthur embodies woe and desire in the image of day and night, attacking night on grounds so transparent that the naturalness and the inevitability of woe itself becomes apparent: "What had th' Eternall Maker need of thee,/ The world in his continuall course to keep?" (III.4.56). Night and day, storm and serenity, and elsewhere the changes of fortune—this cluster of images insists throughout The Faerie Queene that all forms of life, human, natural, cosmological, positive, and demonic, move in alternating currents.

The images in the cluster keep pace with the shifting tone that marks the process of the poem from book to book, beginning to end. In the first two books, the image of the sea voyage captures the to-and-fro movement of the quest, the obstacles met and overcome on the way to the hero's destination. In Book III, where Arthur and Britomart are at the center of activity, the metaphors from the sea cluster occur principally as a vehicle for lament. It becomes, that is, a vehicle for articulating the particular feel of the quest for an unstable goal, an almost illusory vision. As such, the tone becomes more despairing; the weariness is more devastating.
The metaphor takes a further turn in Book IV. Here, too, the metaphor is applied to the just and the unjust, in tacit recognition of the common nature of all human experience despite specific differences. As discord becomes objective—the inward pain of wandering replaced by active and external elements of strife and chaos—the metaphors of the sea focus on the physical violence of storms and the consequent threat to the ship. The struggle to navigate is replaced by the struggle simply to survive. The struggle succeeds, in The Faerie Queene's tentative fashion, as evident in the sense of resolution produced by the marriages at the end of the book. But the victory is hard won, its difficulty expressed in the sea metaphors.

The basic counterpoint to the positive action of Book IV is the behavior of the discord group—Ate, Duessa, Blandamour, Paridell. They are journeying, like the poem's heroes, but with neither motive nor destination. And, perhaps because the group lacks any commitment, friendships and hostilities arise and depart, senselessly and violently. Thus the sea metaphors draw on the very physical sensations of ships colliding at sea (as opposed to the emotional response that they highlight in the experience of earlier knights). The metaphor is brought to bear on the relationship between Paridell and Blandamour on the two occasions of their battles with each other. In the first instance they resemble "two warlike brigandines"
at sea," murderously armed and clashing with such violence "that with the shocke of their owne heedlesse might,/ Their wooden ribs are shaken nigh a sunder" (IV.2.16). The second time, Paridell and Blandamour begin fighting on the same side but in the middle of the battle turn on each other, "As when two barkes, this caried with the tide,/ That with the wind, contrary courses sew,/ If wind and tide doe change, their courses change anew" (IV.9.26).

The poem's protagonists are frequently set against the elements of the sea as the desire for rest and for journey's end is set against the storms and tempests of the sea. Paridell and Blandamour, on the other hand, are almost less than human. They actually create strife, yielding to the tempestuous sea as a ship yields to the forces of wind and water. In the emotional context established thus far, they are nearly unfathomable. The essential temptation, though it assumes a variety of forms, has been the desire for peace and stability and the premature yielding to weariness. Red Crosse drinks of the fountain of the nymph who stopped halfway through her race; Guyon faints upon leaving Mammon's cave; Arthur and Britomart lament the hopelessness of their quests. But Paridell and Blandamour look for strife. In the middle of the battle they augment the turbulence by turning friend to foe and foe to friend. Their activities, and thus their
persons, are as directionless and therefore as meaningless as the times and tides to which they yield.

The giant destroyed by Talus in Book V is of a kind with these knights who yield to chaos rather than resisting it—at least he is from Arthegall's point of view; he too is described by means of the ship metaphor. There is in the giant's case, however, a trace of ambivalence, if not of irony, in the severity of Arthegall's response to him. On the one hand, the giant proposes a leveling of all nature, from mountains and valleys to kings and peasants. He would, that is, destroy opposites rather than reconcile and balance them. On the other hand, his argument that the world is badly askew draws on the same evidence as that used in the prologue of this book to deduce the world's decay. In opposing him, Arthegall denies both the giant's description of the problem and his solution. Earth, water, air, the knight says, were balanced by the creator, "and mongst them al no chaunge hath yet beene found." But in the proem the narrator appears, in this matter, to be on the side of the giant: "Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square/ From the first point of his appointed sourse,/ And being once amisse, growes daily wourse and wourse" (V.P.1).

When Talus throws the giant over the cliff to his death, we are reminded of misfortune and maritime
disaster: "Like as a ship, whom cruell tempest drives/
Upon a rocke with horrible dismay,/ . . . / Does make her
selfe misfortunes piteous pray" (V.2.50). For the moment,
the giant is the victim of storm and misfortune, tw' 
expressions of the forces against which man strives for
victory, for rest, for civilization. And yet, his argu­
ment has been strongly attacked by the book's titular hero;
and he dies because Artegaill is so incensed at his pro­
posals. The knight's response is more than that called for
by the giant. If all is as Artegaill proclaims, the program
stands doomed on its own terms. The fervor of the counter­
attack results from the emotional nightmare it quickens in
Artegaill. "All change is perillous, and all chaunce un­
sound," he says. And since we know that change and chance
are at the very heart of the world of faery land, that
Mutabilitie does indeed rule, if not to her own ends, it
would appear that the thought of someone intentionally
and willfully adding to the chaos and ferment of existence
provokes Artegaill's severity. His own thus far unfilled
need for order leads here to an imbalance, and thus to
excess in his disposal of the giant. But the ambivalence
of the giant and of Artegaill's response to him remains: the
very stanza that likens his death to destruction by storm
and to misfortune closes by placing the responsibility
squarely on the giant for his own end: "So was the high
aspyring with huge ruine humbled" (V.2.50).  

At the end of Book V, the sea metaphors continue to shape violent experience, but the activities involved have become purposeful again. Characters are no longer ships tossed about by tide and wind; their fates are less helplessly dependent on fortune. The danger remains but the voyager once again has a definite goal and his energies can be devoted to reaching it.

In Books III and IV evil is general, labyrinthian; for Britomart and Arthur it is the chaos which frustrates the quest to give meaning to experience. Paridell and Blandamour are human embodiments of this generalized senselessness. Now that evil has again become specific, it can be attacked and overcome. When Geryoneo's monster strikes with her tail, Arthur staggers but is not dismayed, "as when the mast of some well timbred hulke/ Is with the blast of some outrageous storme/ Blowne downe, it shakes the bottome of the bulke" (11.29). He recovers and severs her tail before she can destroy him and soon vanquishes her.

Artegall goes a step farther in his climactic (and parallel) battle with Grantorto, and avoids the blows:

As when a skilfull marriner doth reed  
A storm approaching, that doth perill threat,  
He will not bide the daunger of such dread,  
But strikes his sayles, and vereth his mainsheat,  
And lends unto it leave the emptie ayre to beat.  

(12.18)
The formlessness, structural and experiential, of the middle books having past, the knights act deliberately and concretely. Man is still the voyager on unknown and threatening seas; he must still face and conquer evil, but the very specificity of the danger allows a kind of action previously denied Britomart.

As though in promise of things to come, the first use of the metaphor in Book VI breaks all precedents: there are two friendly ships at the same juncture, and the loneliness and danger of the voyage are thereby abated. Turpine beats Calepine, who seeks no more than aid for the injured Serena; he is compared to a ship long tossed by a storm, lost far from any harbor. But the salvage man "by fortune, passing all foresight" comes to his rescue; Calepine "at last some fisher barke doth meare behold,/ That giveth comfort to her courage cold"(VI.4.1.). This is the first occasion on which the sea journey metaphor holds out the promise of such aid. Previously, characters, described as ships, have survived or perished alone.

The state of things continues to improve as the poem draws to a close. Calidore comes upon Meliboe in his pursuit of the Blatant Beast and, ceasing his quest, remains in the pastoral world. It would seem at first glance that this is another instance of premature rest, like Red Crosse's dalliance beside the fountain with Duessa, or his
desire to yield to Despayre's arguments for the final rest of death. But there is a strong sense that the respite here is not only necessary but beneficial, paralleling more truly the House of Holinesse than the fountain of the nymph. So it would seem, anyway, when Calidore emerges from this respite with Pastorella and with the energy to complete his quest successfully.

The issues are again organized by sea metaphors. On his arrival in the land of Meliboe, Calidore responds to what he sees with envy, becoming almost melancholy at the prospect of such peace in contrast to the frustrations of the voyage:

'How much,' sayd he, 'more happie is the state,
In which ye, father, here doe dwell at ease,
Leading a life so free and fortunate
From all the tempests of these worldly seas,
Which tosse the rest in daangerous disease
Where warres, and wreckes, and wicked enmitie
Doe them afflict, which no man can appease!
That certes I your happinesse envie,
And wish my lot were plast in such felicitie.'

(VI.9.19)

Not since Eden at the end of Book I have we seen such a perfect possibility of solace, such an ideal haven. It is no wonder that Calidore stays:

Give leave awhyle, good father, in this shore
To rest my barke, which hath bene beaten late
With stormes of fortune and tempestuous fate,
In seas of trouble and of toylesome paine.

(9.31)

And Calidore keeps good company in choosing to refresh himself here, for even Venus, they say, "when she did
dispose/ Her selfe to pleasaunce, used to resort/ Unto
this place, and therein to repose/ And rest her selfe, as in a gladsome port" (10.9). The need to relax and
refresh affects even the gods, and with them too it is the
metaphor of the ship and the harbor that captures the need.

The vision of rest expressed here brings into focus
a number of images used to organize the experience of the
quest. Fortune, storm, fate, trouble, pain, war, enmity—
these are the givens of "these worldly seas," these
constitute the experience and the meaning of the quest as
voyage. But the voyage cannot be avoided. At best it
can be interrupted for a space as it is here for Calidore.
The necessity remains for continuing the journey, as it did
for Red Crosse who had to leave Eden to return to the
queen. The Brigands destroy the peace and the harmony
of the pastoral world and in so doing launch Calidore
again. The essence of that world is embodied in Pastorella
and they steal her away. Calidore goes to her rescue, to
save some central part of his experience there, perhaps
the knowledge and energy he has gained. For Pastorella,
his arrival in the cave marks the end of a voyage:

She sudden was revived therewithall,
And wondrous joy felt in her spirits thrall:
Like him that being long in tempest tost,
Looking each houre into deatthes mouth to fall,
At length espyes at hand the happie cost,
On which he safety hopes, that earst feard to be lost.

(VI.11.44)
She has left her arcadian foster home, passed through the dark night of the Brigands, and will shortly be restored to her true parents. For Calidore, the rescue is but preliminary to his resumption of the quest, as his entire stay is preliminary to his victory over the Blatant Beast. He has redeemed for himself, and for faery land, an essential part of the arcadian; he can now journey to the true end of his voyage.

The development expressed through metaphors of the sea combines with the evolution of the poem's world to create The Faerie Queene's unity. The individual books of the poem constitute a completed cycle, from the youth of Red Crosse to the maturity of Calidore, from newly freed Eden to the civil perfection of Meliboe's pastoral community. In this sense The Faerie Queene is complete in the form left to us. There is also a sense in which the poem is unfinished,10 but this sense is inevitable given the myth of recurrence which informs the poem. As no individual cycle of a given book is complete but generates a new cycle by its merely partial or tentative victory, so the larger cycle completed in the six books we have generate another larger cycle. It is the nature of Calidore's virtue that he cannot wield the force of Red Crosse: the Blatant Beast is chained, not destroyed, and he is loose again before Book VI can end. The communal achievement represented in Meliboe's society is vulnerable precisely
because of its success: having gone beyond force to good will, it is easy prey to the crude force of the Brigands. At the end of the poem, we have reached another beginning; in a work organized, as Spenser's is, by a vision of recurrent cycles, it will always be so. The fidelity of his vision to the world of time and process allows no end but death, no end but the Sabaoth for which the narrator prays in the last line we have of Spenser's work.

V

The possibility of evolution—and the hope that it is toward a better state—can be seen only when one stands back and abstracts pattern, as when the reader looks at the poem from such a distance as we have been doing, or when Spenser himself stands back to perceive and articulate the pattern of mankind's history in the Antiquitee of Faery Lond. During the course of experience, literary or historical, the sense of repetition dominates. We know that the quests of individual books are related to the one before, but we also know that each victory is tentative and that each quest is in an important sense as much a restart as a new one.

The sense of fatigue and despair which, in opposition to the hope we have been examining, creates the poem's tension is felt most heavily at the end of individual
quests and at the end of the poem. Each book of *The Faerie Queene* ends with victory. But each victory is qualified and threatened in the very process of its realization.\(^{11}\)

One effect of the incompleteness of the victories, I have tried to establish above, is to generate the next quest. So it appears from the large standpoint, the perspective of myth. From the temporal or immediate standpoint, the effect is decidedly more melancholy. As the poem evolves, the incompleteness begins to dominate more heavily—if not in fact, at least in the perceptions of characters and narrator. The same reservations are to be seen here as in *Briton Moniments*; Harry Berger's statement on the chronicle applies to the poem as a whole: "progress is seen, but it is slow and painful; no human being can live long enough or be strong enough to effect it by himself."\(^{12}\)

Immediately after Red Crosse is betrothed to Una in consequence of his defeat of the dragon, Archimago appears to defame his character and to threaten the final union with Una. Archimago is readily defeated because Red Crosse has himself corrected the faults of which he is accused and because Una perceives the magician beneath the disguise. Archimago is thus imprisoned and his threat removed. But only for a time. At the very beginning of the next book, Archimago is again after him. Indeed, Archimago is never destroyed and tries to subvert and mislead the questors as
late as Book III. Duessa, who has prompted his attempt
to block Red Crosse's marriage, is not herself destroyed
until Book V. In general, however, the sense of accomplish­
ment and festivity which accompanies victory is but slightly
marred in Book I.

Book II is much the same, although Guyon seems a bit
more concerned—a bit less secure perhaps—than his
counterpart. The challenge to his victory comes from
Gryll, one of the beasts returned to the manhood from
which Acrasia had transformed them. The attack here is
the more serious for coming from those whom Guyon has
liberated. A number of the bestial men are angry at
Acrasia's captivity; Gryll speaks for them when he "mis­
calls" Guyon. The knight responds, with both resignation
and regret:

Said Guyon: 'See the mind of beastly man,
That hath so soone forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth, with vile difference,
To be a beast, and lacke intelligence.'

(12.87)

There is apparently no hope, no chance, finally, for the
redemption of such depravity; the Palmer responds: "Let
Gryll be Gryll, and have his hoggish mind,/ But let us
hence depart, whilst wether serves and winde." On this
note Book II ends, faced with the fact that the immediate
beneficiaries of the quest are beyond help, necessarily
content with the hope that benefits will accrue in the
future.

The same is even more dramatically true of Book III. First, the two endings of the book indicate the general tendency to despair which marks the progress of *The Faerie Queene*. In the canceled ending of 1590, which marks the point at which we leave the poem in its first embodiment, all is well. Britomart's efforts are completely successful; the union of Amoret and Scudamour is realized—spiritually and physically—right before her eyes, and ours.

The new ending of Book III in 1596, besides providing a narrative transition to the next book, brings the close of the book into line with the increasingly tentative conclusions we have been noting. Britomart still succeeds in her quest to liberate Amoret in the 1596 version, but now when they return to find Scudamour, he is gone. The completion of the quest remains; the goal toward which the victory aims recedes into the future. Amoret is "fild with new affright" (III.12.44) immediately after she has been freed from her terror of Busyrane. No one attacks or insults Britomart here, but Scudamour will soon accuse her of violating his trust and seducing Amoret in another of the carry-overs that bind Books III and IV together.

The ending of Book IV is also tentative; Marinell and Florimell are not actually married at the end of the
book. Although they have found each other and are in love, we must wait for the narrator to "perfect" the union in another place. Our sense that union is finally possible and imminent is enhanced by the elaborate and celebrative marriage of the Thames and Medway, the occasion for Florimell's release and Marinell's commitment to her. The partial respite here from the general bleakness of earlier endings results, I think, from the realization in Book IV of potentials released at the end of Book I. The successful union of lovers reached in Book III, and then withdrawn, all but occurs here because enough victories have been won and enough obstacles removed to allow fruition. That the marriage does not actually take place at the end of Book IV maintains the usual sense of tentativeness; when Marinell and Florimell are finally joined in Book V the effect is lessened. Their marriage becomes by its position in the narrative not a culmination but a secondary action in another quest. This shift once again frustrates any feeling that complete and unadulterated victory is possible while at the same time allowing a resolution of the forces at work in the first four books as preparation for the extension from personal to communal problems in the closing books.

The tentativeness of the victory and defamiation of the hero have been most commented on with respect to Book V,
but there is really nothing new in the ending of that book. Red Crosse and Guyon have been insulted already, and Britomart's victory also fails to institute the union and harmony which has been sought. Artegall is recalled to court before he can thoroughly reform the land of Irena: again, the victory has been won; again the fulfillment is incomplete.

Although Envy, Detraction, and the Blatant Beast attack Artegall on his return, the description of the three and of their motivation reveals that the attack is unjustified: they are by nature infuriated at any success, and they are angry at Artegall "for freeing from their snares Irena thrall." Of the two specific accusations, the second—that Artegall defeated Grantorto with treachery—is utter nonsense. The first, however, strikes closer to the mark. They say,

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{. . . that he had with unmanly guile} \\
&\text{And foule abusion both his honour blent,} \\
&\text{And that bright sword, the sword of Justice lent,} \\
&\text{Had stayned with reprochfull crueltie} \\
&\text{In guiltlesse blood of many an innocent.} \\
&\text{(V.12.40)}
\end{align*}
\]

It is not accurate, because Artegall has moderated his impulse to violence and avoided bloodshed in his last victory, but it is true of his earlier activities and therefore stings more than previous attacks on heroes. Even here, however, we need to remember the core of truth in Archimago's accusations against Red Crosse.
There is, however, a real change in the ending of Book V. The attacks which always accompany victory are not new, but here they are much more extended and vicious and therefore mute the sense of accomplishment more than they do in earlier books. As the virulence and extent of such disparagement increases, there is a growing sense of fatigue and futility, a sense that has become even stronger at the end of Book VI.

The end of Book VI, and of The Faerie Queene as a whole in 1596, is notable especially for its cynicism. Not only is the victory temporary—as always seems to be the case in Spenser's poem—the reemergence of the Blatant Beast constitutes a part of the book which tells of his defeat. Even more than this, we leave the poem knowing that at this very moment that same Blatant Beast is attacking the work which tells of his defeat. The cumulative fatigue and despair of the world of the poem become immediate; they spill over from the narrative itself to affect the narrator and the perception of the world outside the poem. The representation of Envy and Detraction at the end of Book V in a sense begins this movement outward by the generality and by the felt reality of their horribleness; the presence of the world outside the poem now becomes explicit. It is not so much that reality has changed. We know from the chronicles and from the history of Troy and
Rome that things pretty much stay the same. It seems to me that instead it is the narrator who changes in a way that reflects the world of the poem. The repeated failure of any victory to become complete and permanent weighs him down. The recurrent attacks on those who strive create his despair. The necessity for renewed beginnings and the insuppressible activity of those who stand in the way exist always and recurrently. The perception of these facts is responsible for the narrator's exhaustion and cynical resignation: 13 "Therefore do you, my rimes, keep better measure,/ And seeke to please, that now is counted wisemens threaure" (VI.12.41).

VI

The tone of *The Faerie Queene*, the alternate responses of joy and despair on the part of characters and narrator, varies with the stage of the cycle in which they are caught. Generally, beginnings are a time for hope, endings a time for exhaustion and doubt. Experience is process for the narrator as for the characters. For him, the presentation of the narrative, the unraveling of the plot, never reaches a final conclusion but must always go on. Red Crosse liberates Eden and rests, blissfully; but he must resume, he must return to the Faery Queene and take up his quest again. After Calidore's victory the Blatant Beast again
needs to be restrained. Only death, it would seem, brings the final, uninterrupted rest. But of that the poem tells us nothing, for all live and all continue; the process does not cease. And so the narrator finishes the first books and rests, but he too must go on, must begin again.

The poem is its own quest—or more accurately, it manifests the teller's quest as action manifests the knight's. And it, too, is a journey, as the narrator's use of the ship metaphor for his own experience reveals. Indeed, on these occasions there is a remarkable similarity between character and narrator, a similarity essentially emotional, as both contemplate the end of an immediate task and the destination of the present journey.

The ship metaphor first occurs with the narrator at the beginning of the end of Book I:

*Behold! I see the haven nigh at hand,*  
*To which I meane my wearie course to bend;*  
*Vere the maine shete, and beare up with the land,*  
*The which afore is fayrly to be kend,*  
*And seemeth safe from storms that may offend:*  
*There this fayre virgin, wearie of her way,*  
*Must landed bee, now at her journeys end,*  
*There eke my feeble barke a while may stay,*  
*Till mery wynd and weather call her thence away.*

(I.12.1)

For both the narrator and Una this journey is about to end and the response is exuberant joy. The haven is only temporary for the teller; when wind and weather, when natural process and fortune, serve, he will embark on a new phase of his longer journey. But for Una the end is permanent—or as much so as possible in this fickle,
mutable life—and the prospect of someone, of anyone, reaching a stasis creates ecstasy for the observer. But the sense of toil and weariness intrudes. Eden is certainly a haven, but it only "seemeth safe from storms that may offend." The legend to the canto tells of trouble to come, so that even as we celebrate with the narrator we know that Duessa will again threaten the couple. Her attempt to discredit Red Crosse fails this time, but the presence of Archimago in Eden qualifies even this more permanent rest. And Red Crosse can stay only a while before he resumes his commitment to his queen. But all of this is submerged for a time—as later it will be during the wedding celebration of Marinell and Florimell—in the pride of victory, the joy of betrothal, and the hard-won respite from the quest. The wheel of fortune has settled for the moment at a high point. No one, however, can forget that it will turn again. Even as he prepares to stay, the narrator knows he must soon leave; as Red Crosse celebrates his betrothal he knows that the marriage and the consummation must be postponed.

In this context, Archimago and Duessa come to seem less of a threat to joy than does the simple necessity of continuing the quest. Red Crosse and Una are prepared now to deal with the evil, to recognize it, to name it, and thus to render it impotent. But they cannot escape the process, the pattern of human experience. It is day now and it is spring, but night and winter will come and Red Crosse will
leave his beloved for renewed struggle.

Here, at the end of the first book and the first journey, it is finally joy that dominates. Canto and book end with a reaffirmation of delight, of accomplishment, of deserved rest:

Now strike your sailes, yee jolly mariners,
For we be come unto a quiet rode,
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this weary vessell of her lode.
Here she a while may make her safe abode,
Till she repaired have her tackles spent,
And wants supplide; and then againe abroad
On the long voiage whereto she is bent:
Well may she speede, and fairely finish her intent.

The narrator can forget the imminent departure of Red Crosse and the resumption of his own task for the moment. But he will not again be able to do so; the emotional respite here will not recur. It is as though a man truly refreshed by the first pause in a long journey becomes in later stages so overwhelmed by the fact of struggle that respites but barely enable him to continue, the joy of the haven muted, if not eliminated, by the brevity of his stay and by the accumulating fatigue of continuing.

So it is especially in the middle of the quest, whether it be Guyon fainting after his visit to Mammon's cave or the narrator pushing ahead in the poem's middle books. The limits of peace and victory are more sharply juxtaposed with success and journey's end at the close of Book II, and
the narrator is not at all involved. "Let Gryll be Gryll, and have his hoggish minde;/ But let us hence depart, whilst wether serves and winde," says the Palmer; there is here already more of resignation than joy. The narrator's silence, contrasted with his exuberance at the end of the first book, suggests that the temporary respite no longer looms so large, no longer refreshes so thoroughly.

The two endings of Book III reveal the pattern most clearly. The original, canceled ending recaptures the joy of rest, of work done, of a night's rest. For Amoret and Scudamour, for narrator and reader, a fit conclusion has been reached; we are at a major stopping point and can regroup our energies. It will indeed be a good six years before we resume our journey. "Now cease your worke, and at your pleasure play:/ Now cease your worke; tomorrow is a holy day" (1590, III.7.47; p. 768).

The stopping place, however, is only temporary, and when the renewed journey becomes, in the 1596 edition, an imminent reality, the tone changes. Amoret and Scudamour are denied their ultimate union; they must reenter the world of activity, toil, strife—the world of the quest. The narrator must continue his tale. Because of the emotional weight of having to continue, the joy of the holy day, the day of rest, gives place again to resignation:
"let them wend at will, whilst here I doe respire."

It is with this same image of the seventh day that what we have of *The Faerie Queene* ends:

For all that moveth doth in change delight:  
But thence forth all shall rest eternally  
With Him that is the God of Sabaoth hight:  
O that great Sabaoth God graunt me that Sabaoths sight!  

(VII.8.2)

The joy and celebration of the original ending of the first part yields at the close to an almost desperate plea that rest will finally come, as though the narrator's need to believe in final rest but barely conquers his fear that it will never arrive. It is perhaps not so much the journey itself that wears him down as the necessity of always another journey.

But we have gotten ahead of the poem. In its middle books, havens are not near at hand and the narrator drops for this period such metaphors. Book III ends only superficially in the 1596 version: Amoret and Scudamour are still separated and they still journey in search of one another. So it is also at the end of Book IV: the union of Florimell and Marinell is left as mere promise, "to be perfected" in another place; journeys have become protracted, their ends frustrated and delayed.

The narrator has abandoned himself to the ebb and flow of events. He responds more to the misery of life than to the joys of its special moments, focusing on the
quest instead of on the occasional haven which interrupts it. He is, for example, stunned that Agape would want to lengthen the lives of her sons:

O why doe wretched men so much desire
To draw their dayes unto the utmost date,
And doe not rather wish them soone expire,
Knowing the miserie of their estate,
And thousand perills which them still awate,
Tossing them like a boate amid the mayne,
That every houre they knocke at Deathec gate?

(IV.3.1)

He responds—as storyteller—by simply holding on, by following his narrative and resigning to the necessity to continue it. Or more accurately, he flows with the narrative and is therefore not unlike Paridell and Blandamour who, in their ship metaphor, ride wind and tide and flow where the elements take them. The story of their strife, the narrator says, "by course befals me here to tell" (IV.4.2). His own journey, that is, brings him to this point, and so he tells it.

As the poem approaches its end—whether a final one or not, although it is clear by this point that no end but death can be truly final—the narrator begins to regain some of the joy and easiness he had expressed toward the close of Book I. The last canto of this last book opens, as did Book I, Canto XII, with a ship metaphor:

Like as a ship, that through the ocean wyde
Directs her course unto one certain cost,
Is met of many a counter winde and tyde,
With which her winged speed is let and crost,
And she her selfe in stormie surges tost;
Yet making many a borde, and many a bay,
Still winneth way, ne hath her compasse lost:
Right so it fares with me in this long way,
Whose course is often stayd, yet never is astra\textsuperscript{y}.

The narrator has momentarily regained his faith; he can perceive his destination and go toward it refreshed by the promise of rest. Like Britomart lamenting by the seaside, he seems to have been overcome by the "counter winde and tyde" and the "stormie surges" which have hindered his journey—not overcome to despair, but depressed, resigned. He now sees that process ensures both aspects of experience: the haven implies renewed journey but the journey also implies the haven, the attainment of the goal, just as change implies stasis and mutability permanence.\textsuperscript{15}

The structure of The Faerie Queene coincides with its tone. The structure embodies two points of view, the mythic and the historical. The characters of the poem, especially the titular heroes, cannot see beyond their own experience to the larger pattern which evolves from the succession of quests. Even the occasional vision offered them—the chronicles for Arthur, Guyon, and Britomart; the mountain visions for Red Crosse and Calidore—seem more to inspire them to continue their journeys than to render lucid the place of their individual efforts in the larger pattern. The narrator, however, does achieve a mythic understanding of the story because he is present for all of the quests and can thus arrive at an under-
standing of their experiences as part of a grand pattern. His vision is articulated in the Mutabilitie Cantos, a vision that is especially his and not that of an actor in the poem:

When I bethinke me on that speech whyleare
Of Mutability, and well it way,
Me seemes, that though she all unworthy were
Of the heav'ns rule, yet very sooth to say,
In all things else she beares the greatest sway:
Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,
And love of things so vaine to cast away;
Whose flowering pride, so fading and so fickle,
Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
Of that same time when no more change shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things, firmely stayd
Upon the pillours of eternity,
That is contrayr to Mutabilitie:
For all that moveth doth in change delight.

(VII.8.1-2)

The narrator here distills the essence of The Faerie Queene, the meaning of the poem as that meaning is embodied in its structure, the apparently ceaseless succession of cycles. This also is the most condensed statement of the myth of recurrence, a crystallization of what has been revealed through the Garden of Adonis and Briton Moniments and embodied in the poem's structure.

No phase in the cycle that is The Faerie Queene culminates in stasis; each succeeding quest leads on to Calidore and Acidale, which themselves cap preceding developments and hint a recurrence of the entire cycle. The Mutabilitie Cantos postulate an understanding of
experience quite similar to Vico's articulation; as Frye summarizes:

... history takes the form of a series of cycles of this kind, starting off with a revulsion, which [Vico] symbolizes by the fear of thunder, from a mindless and undirected existence. There comes a stage of development in history, however, at which we feel that we have outgrown certain previous stages that were cruel or superstitious, and all cyclical movements bring with them the dreary humiliation of having to return to these earlier stages. The moment of this return coincides closely with the coming of a new myth of concern to social supremacy.16

As a statement of such a return, the Mutabilitie Cantos constitute not only the end of what we possess as The Faerie Queene, but the beginnings of a new movement, a new circle, as well. An attempt is made here to come to terms emotionally with the endless and partially redundant change which dominates these six books. The House of Holinesse had offered a teleological justification for going on; that here is existential. If, as Berger suggests of The Faerie Queene, "reality is dynamic, if under the apparently fixed substantial forms of the perceived world, the ceaseless change and interchange of energy follows an evolutionary thrust, no human view of the world taken from a single moment or standpoint can be total or final."17 The difference may be as simple, and as profound, as one of perspective: a final goal there may be, but it has for the moment at least been lost in the intricately expanding progression and repetition of human experience.
All of the personages of the poem, narrator and characters, are linked in a common emotional response to experience. Their responses are alike because at the simplest, most basic level, their experiences themselves are the same. All must journey in a troubled sea and yet all reach a haven of sorts and at last. Joy turns to despair and despair to resignation. The Mutabilitie Cantos become, then, by fortunate fate, the fitting close to this mammoth journey. And that is as it should be in a world dominated by storm and calm, activity and rest, the ups and downs of the wheel of fortune. The poet could not but leave us with a prayer: "O that great Sabaoth God graunt me that Sabaoths sight!" As the narrator of John Barth's "Title" puts it, "though the seasons recur our mortal time does not; we grow old and tired."

Because it controls both structure and tone, the most important aspect of *The Faerie Queene* is its vision of human existence always moving, always being undercut but continually reviving. No state can be final; all is superseded if not destroyed. For the reader, for this one at any rate, the narrator's response becomes the paradigm for his own: in a world of incessant and perhaps meaningless change, one must accept the dominance of Mutabilitie, and, deriving whatever solace he can from the permanence of the cycle itself, go on to his perfection. We cannot,
then, speak of Spenser as propagandist for any system of ethics, for any ideology of history, or for any philosophy: the only absolute which the poem allows, the only stability from which we can derive solace, is that things are "eterne in mutabilitie." That is the meaning of The Faerie Queene.
Notes to Chapter Three


3"The Structure of Imagery," p. 77.


6Hamilton observes the same issues in Books II through IV, but he is quite negative about the value of Guyon's achievement. "The sword of temperance reduces nature, art, and human nature" to the chaos which Ate, leading the discord group, seeks to preserve. The protagonists seek "to create a new order" out of that chaos (Structure of Allegory, p. 159). We disagree only in that I think that Acrasia so reduces nature; Guyon frees it again, though the energy certainly generates confusion.
Arnold Williams, *Flower on a Lowly Stalk: The Sixth Book of "The Faerie Queene"* (Ann Arbor, 1967), p. 42, notes that courtesy is beyond "the scope, or at least the power, of justice."


Jerome S. Dees, "The Ship Conceit and the Structure of *The Faerie Queene,*" (to be published in *Studies in Philology*), p. 10, speaks of the rhetorical function of this passage: the complexity of the reader's response is increased because he is invited both to sympathize and to judge. The debts to Professor Dees, who has helped me greatly with this dissertation, are more than I can hope to document.

Frye, "The Structure of Imagery": "the six books we have form a unified epic structure, regardless of how much might have been added that wasn't" (p. 70).

From the incompleteness of the happy endings, Angus Fletcher argues (and I agree with him) that the poem's vision is developmental in an evolutionary rather than progressive sense (*Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser* [Chicago, 1971], p. 87).

This is the thesis of Dees's essay "The Ship Conceit," where it is fully explored.

Fletcher, p. 44.

Dees says that the poem ends in conflict "between a narrative image which has reaffirmed a basic pattern of heroic accomplishment in imitatio Christi . . . and a sophisticated but worried sensibility which finds itself unable to take the meaning of the pattern seriously" (p. 19). The conflict is certainly there, but within the narrator and within the pattern. It is resolved, I think, in the Mutabilitie Cantos.


A SELECT LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED


Altieri, Charles F. "Northrop Frye and the Problem of Spiritual Authority." PMLA, 81 (1972), 964-75.


Bennett, J. W. The Evolution of the "Faerie Queene." Chicago, 1924.


