TEACHING AND DELIGHTING IN THE FAERIE QUEENE:
AN ANALYSIS OF SPENSER'S USE OF THE TWO RENAISSANCE
CRITICAL IDEALS

by

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ABSTRACT

This analysis attempts to establish that the *Faerie Queene* is a poem written on the basis of the two main ideals of Renaissance criticism, teaching and delighting. It begins by showing that Elizabethan critics state the primary importance of the two ideals, but never explain how they used them as practical guides for writing poetry. Even Spenser himself, though he wrote a long preface to the *Faerie Queene*, never explains how he intended to teach and delight in the poem. Furthermore, no critics since the Elizabethan have demonstrated adequately how Spenser applied the ideals. To answer this question, the analysis seeks specific answers throughout the *Faerie Queene*. Yet all such evidence cannot add up to a complete solution of the poem, for in its thousands of lines it accomplishes many purposes and lends itself to many analyses. Nevertheless the two ideals of teaching and delighting represent one important approach which offers one basis for understanding the poem.

The analysis divides the poem into two levels, narrative and allegorical, and approaches first through the simpler narrative. The discussion begins with Canto One Book One and demonstrates that Spenser unfolds a story which ordinary readers can follow with efficiency and interest.
He sets it in a deliberately artificial world which allows incidents and persons to be both natural and unreal; He reveals its main conflict with a sufficiently brisk pace, and weaves that conflict firmly through the interaction of character and event. With this simple story-telling level Spenser therefore attempts to retain the attention of ordinary readers to his poem, and hereby reveals his conception of delighting to lie mainly in interesting his readers, in motivating them to read on. The analysis also shows that he begins his teaching within the narrative level through such obviously important instruments as his main characters, who teach because of the kinds of persons they are and the kinds of conflicts in which they become involved.

The analysis turns then to the allegory, and since this is a more complex level, attempts first to offer a simple definition of allegory. From this base, the argument shows in detail how Spenser painstakingly develops an allegorical incident. He inserts it carefully within a story sequence; he foreshadows its coming; at exactly the right moment he arranges a marked, symbolic shift from the narrative world into the allegorical and, lastly, he guides his reader into the scene by a series of intricate clues. In such ways Spenser therefore organizes the mechanics of allegory so his reader can follow him efficiently and, at the same time, so designs his clues that he motivates the
reader to want to pursue his meanings throughout the entire scene. Hence on the allegorical level, too, the poet's conception of delighting lies in capturing reader interest and here, too, he is able to use the very essence of his pleasure to accomplish his teaching. But the allegory teaches and delights more subtly, and thereby retains the attention of even the most advanced reader. To illustrate this most subtle level fully, the analysis will discuss both humorous and serious allegorical scenes.
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It is probably self-evident that Spenser had in mind the two Renaissance ideals, teaching and delighting, when he wrote the *Faerie Queene*, but this statement raises at once the far from evident question of what using these ideals really means. Most critics will admit that the *Faerie Queene* is Spenser's masterpiece and that it has been teaching and delighting us in many ways for 350 years, yet surprisingly few studies actually examine the poem thoroughly on the basis of the two ideals. We might expect that a good deal of the explanation for three and a half centuries of popularity would lie in Spenser's ability to achieve these imposing aims, would lie in the answer to such questions as whether he considered both the teaching and the delighting equally important, or how he made each contribute to the other, or what he really did, specifically, to teach and delight his readers. Fundamental as such questions are, however, they remain largely unanswered, for nowhere, neither in Spenser's time nor at any time since, does criticism explain thoroughly how these important Renaissance ideals apply to the *Faerie Queene*.

Elizabethan writers, of course, do not offer detailed examinations of particular poems. Their criticism is little more than a series of tracts, prefaces, even letters, that merely assert over and over again poetry's ideals. An early statement of teaching and delighting, for instance, comes in 1570 in Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster*, which is really a
treatise about education with only a few sections on literature. Herein Ascham first looks with dissatisfaction on the London wits around him as "rash ignorant heads" producing "lewd and rude rhymes," then blames degenerate Italian influences for this state of poets and poetry, "much by example of ill life, but more by preceptes of fonde bookes, of late translated out of Italian into English, sold in every shop in London, commended by honest titles the soner to corrupt honest maners" and as a result exhorts his fellows to turn from London to classical Greece and Rome, where Ascham can point to the ideal poet writing ideal poetry, he "who is able always, in all matters, to teache plainlie, to delite pleasantlie, and to cary away by force of wise talke, all that shall heare or read him."\(^1\)

The critics coming after Ascham then continue to reiterate the two ideals without relating them specifically to the *Faerie Queene* or to any other Elizabethan poems. Sidney, whose *An Apologie for Poetrie* (1583) is undoubtedly the best known of these essays, also maintains that poetry should "delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodnes in hande, which without delight they would flye as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodnes whereunto they are moved." He does, however, take the time to develop

each aim more fully. To him, the teaching consists of "the knowledge of man's selfe, in the Ethicke and politick consideration, with the end of well dooing and not of well knowing onely," and the delighting becomes the various advantages poetry has to attract and hold a reader's attention to this knowledge, "words sent in delightfull proportion," and "the inchaunting skill of Musicke."²

A final example is Ben Jonson. The best source for his ideas on non-dramatic poetry is no essay or preface, but rather his notebook, *Timber*, and here Jonson also ends by stating the ideals without applying them practically.

Poetry and Picture are Arts of a like nature.... For they both invent, faine, and devise many things .... They both behold pleasure and profit as their common Object ....³

It is Spenser alone who discusses the *Faerie Queene* in any detail. What he says is all too brief, yet essential for understanding the poem, because he not only asserts his allegiance to the ideals of teaching and delighting but also states his intention of accomplishing them in the poem. Actually, his earliest comments appear in the Spenser-Harvey correspondence. Modern critics often cite them as proof that

²Smith, pp. 159, 161, 172.

Harvey thought little of the poem and warned Spenser against continuing with it, but the most sensible conclusion to be drawn from these comments is that they are annoyingly brief. In April, 1580, Immerito promises to forward the Faerie Queene and asks for his friend's judgement which "I extraordinarily desire." In reply Harvey notes Spenser's looking towards Ariosto, whom "you wil needes seeme to emulate," yet feels specifically that the Nine Muses come "neerer Ariostoes Comoedies, eyther for the finenesse of plausible Elocution, or the rareness of Poetical Invention; than that Elvish Queene doth to his Orlando Furioso." In overall opinion he is similarly noncommittal.

But I wil not stand greatly with you in your owne matters. If so be the Faerye Queene be fairer in your eie than the Nine Muses, and Hobgoblin runne away with the Garland from Apollo.  

Thus his warning amounts to nothing more than a lack of enthusiasm for the Faerie Queene, and since neither he nor Spenser gives any evidence of the poem's state at this time, ten years before its publication date, Harvey's opinion may be justified.

Spenser's detailed comments appear in the "Letter to

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Ralegh." Critics, of course, disagree in their opinion as to whether it says enough about the poem to serve as an adequate introduction for the reader. Nevertheless, read carefully, it reveals on the one hand that Spenser's basic purpose was indeed to teach and delight, and on the other that failure to accept this twofold purpose causes most of the critical disunion about the "Letter" itself. Spenser begins by calling the Faerie Queene a "continued Allegory, or darke conceit," and because all allegories are easily misconstrued, states his general intention for the whole poem: "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." To make this end more "plausible and pleasing" he has coloured it with "an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profite of the ensample." For this historical colouring he chose King Arthur, whose excellence had already been established by many earlier writers, yet whose person would be free from the "daunger of envy, and suspition of present time." Here then, and at once, are his two aims. He wishes to form a gentleman disciplined in virtue, that is, virtuous both in thought and conduct, and the fiction will help primarily because it is pleasurable reading.

6"A Letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke," in Smith and de Selincourt, p. 407.
Yet a critic like Emile Legouis, for example, still claims the poem's real beauty is screened by its preface, in which the poet explains his virtuous design .... Spenser himself innocently misled the public .... He assumed the grave airs of a preacher, yet could not sustain the part unflinchingly. This admirable painter and enchanting musician posed as a professor of morals. Therefore he has given little satisfaction, except to a few unexacting souls, among those who seek doctrine in a book, and he has alienated those who read verse for pure pleasure.7

It would seem, firstly, that Legouis does not interpret Spenser's aim as twofold yet, secondly, finds him playing the double role of preacher and enchanter and then, thirdly and most surprisingly, seems to question whether the Elizabethan twofold purpose is a satisfactory one. Apparently Legouis assumes that exacting people prefer to be taught in prose and to read poetry for pleasure. Possibly also he feels Spenser is unable either to teach the lofty morality outlined in the "Letter," or to please in such a way that the reader wishes to learn the morality, although both these conclusions would have to be proven from the poem itself. At any rate, Legouis fails to admit that the "Letter" does state the twofold purpose, and, even after recognizing that the poem attempts both to

teach and delight, proceeds to castigate Spenser for doing what he set out to do in the first place. Such neglect of Spenser's stated desire to please is all too common in critical evaluations of the "Letter" and leads almost inevitably to the restricted view that Spenser was at all times serious, even solemn. Critics, who seem so fond of noting Spenser's sane mind, very often fail to appreciate that he is sane enough to practise the fundamental maxim that teaching is most effective when the learner is enjoying himself.

Another aspect of Spenser's common sense approach which writers seem loth to recognize involves Arthur. Basically, he was chosen because he would be "plausible and pleasing," that is, he would teach through virtue and delight through fiction. Spenser is then careful to reiterate this basic purpose three more times. Arthur will serve as "the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private morall vertues." Such a portrayal will promote virtue because it is always more efficient teaching "doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So have I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure." Then, most specifically, he says, "in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular, which vertue ... is the perfection of all the rest ... therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure
applyable to that vertue." However such a commentator as Tucker Brooke will still say the poet was contemplating propagandist poetry of the most flagrant kind, in which Leicester, typified as Prince Arthur, should achieve Gloriana by his matchless exploits, and then, ruling as King Arthur, should with her lead Fairyland to triumph over the Paynim King (Philip II).

In short, Brooke restricts his conception of Arthur to this one particular contemporary figure. Undoubtedly Arthur suggests Leicester at times, but he also suggests very much more. Moreover the "Letter" in no way restricts Arthur to any one contemporary man, rather it stresses that Arthur's role is so complex as to make him one of the main instruments through which the poem will teach and delight. Yet Brooke first assumes that Arthur is Leicester, then uses this limited assumption as a basis for interpreting the poem and, when he finds his interpretation unsatisfactory, concludes that "the politico-theological purposes of the poem -- is now too confused for lucid interpretation." Such a conclusion indicates that Brooke, like Legouis, fails to accept what Spenser says in the "Letter" about the teaching and delighting.

The key to understanding the "Letter," then, lies in

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8 Smith and de Selincourt, p. 407.

9 Baugh, pp. 496, 498.
remembering always that Spenser's aim is twofold. Within this completed framework, the remaining issues of the introduction also fit. First comes Spenser's reference to literary sources. He will use Homer, Virgil, Ariosto and Tasso, but he will not seek to encompass all their achievement in his one poem; rather he will imitate their conception that a super-hero should show virtue in private life and effective leadership in public life. In other words, Spenser makes no claim to writing a classical epic; he chooses one epic quality from those 'antique poets historicall,' and applies it to his super-hero, Arthur. Second is the issue of the Aristotelian virtues. Again, Spenser does not profess to absorb his whole source, to restate Aristotle in poetry. He will choose 'twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised,' that is, twelve private virtues very much like those discussed 'according to Aristotle and the rest.' These devices too will be contained first in the 'plausible and pleasing' Arthur.  

The third issue is Spenser's justification of his allegorical device. He knows 'how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed,' and he admits that to some people 'this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large ... then thus clowdily enwrapped in a Allgrocial de­vices.' To this opinion, however, we can almost hear Sidney's

10Smith and de Selincourt, p. 407.
reply that

the Philosopher teacheth, but he teacheth
obscurely, so as the learned onely can under-
stande him, that is to say, he teacheth them
that are already taught; but the Poet is the
foode for the tenderest stomachs, the Poet is
indeed the right Popular Philosopher

Indeed, Spenser argues in language almost echoing *The
Apologie* that Xenophon is always preferred to Plato and the
*Faerie Queene's* moral allegory is preferable to philosophic
prose, on the basis that the former is more "delightfull and
pleasing to commune sence."

The last issue is the narrative sequence for the total
twelve books. As the "Letter" outlines it, the story begins
with Gloriana's feast and proceeds chronologically through the
twelve separate quests. However, difficulty arises for the
reader because Spenser does not write the poem in this chron-
ological sequence.

For the Methode of a Poet historical is not
such, as of an Historiographer. For an Historio-
grapher discoures of affayres orderly as they
were donne ... but a Poet thrusteth into the middest,
even where it most concerneth him.

Spenser admits the possible danger that the "beginning of the
whole worke seemeth abrupte," but still feels justified in
his device because, "recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and

11 Gregory G. Smith, p. 167.
12 Smith and de Selincourt, p. 408.
divining of things to come" it allows him to make a "pleasing analysis of all." In other words, he is again carefully pointing out that his purpose is twofold. He does not wish merely to tell a story, he wishes to tell it in the most pleasing way possible.

Furthermore, it is the delighting which Spenser stresses most in the "Letter." With its every issue he emphasizes that his first step will be to please and his second to teach, and simply because he is sensible enough to realize that he must first please his readers before he can teach them anything. Thus he is not so concerned with how much he can take from Aristotle or how closely he can hold to chronological order. Rather he wants to insure, above all, that what he does with Aristotle and chronology will be delightful. It is this stress on delight that his critics seem to miss. They look more for what material he may be using, than for how he shapes it. But it is the reader Spenser has in mind always. It is his pleasure and his profit he stresses in the "Letter," it is him to whom he is speaking in the "Letter." The "Letter," in fact, serves as an adequate introduction for his reader, if not for his critics.

Yet no introduction tells all, and three fundamental questions remain. Certainly the "Letter" indicates the primary

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13 Smith and de Selincourt, p. 408.
importance of the two ideals, yet it offers no details as to what Spenser did with them. He makes an emphatic promise, but leaves the poem for us to read. Hence the logical place to seek answers about whether he considered both the teaching and the delighting equally important, or how he made each contribute to the other, or what he really did, specifically, to teach and delight his readers is in the 350 years of criticism which follow the *Faerie Queene*.

For 250 of those years the subject has already been treated in Robert J. Armstrong's painstaking study of "Spenserian allusions and Criticism" from 1600 to 1850. This writer organized his search into five literary periods, examined each in turn, and stopped at 1850 because the main trends of criticism "had already by 1850 been firmly established."[^1] These trends are mainly four. Firstly and most obviously is the fact that evaluation of Spenser is largely evaluation of the *Faerie Queene*. Secondly is the nature of that evaluation. In every period critics spend about nine-tenths of their time praising the *Faerie Queene* in general and about one-tenth blaming it in particulars. It is these particulars, of course, which bear the importance, for they are the actual facts of the criticism.

[^1]: "A Study of the Popularity of Edmund Spenser as Revealed by Allusion and Criticism between the Years 1600 and 1850, with an Appendix Added to Show the Extent of Spenser Study and Scholarship in Leading North American Universities and Colleges Today," (U.B.C., 1951), p. 1. All the information about criticism of the *Faerie Queene* up to 1850 is taken from this thesis.
Beginning in the period from 1600 to 1650, Armstrong finds that writers establish only two particular areas of censure, the *Faerie Queene's* antique diction and complex allegory, but these are the two main critical categories that persist, with surprising consistency, right through to 1850. Ben Jonson, for example, makes his blunt remark in *Timber* that "Spenser in affecting the Ancients, writ no language," and Sir William Davenant describes the allegory as a "Continuance of extraordinary dreams ... And these moral visions are just of so much use to human application, as painted history."

Every one of the four remaining periods, Armstrong continues, repeats a dissatisfaction with diction and allegory and usually also adds censure in a few other particular areas. For example, Dryden, a neo-classic critic, complains that "there is no uniformity in the design of Spenser," and Hazlitt, a critic of the Romantic period, claims the complicated stanza "seduced" Spenser into a "certain licence of expression."

Finally the Victorians, Armstrong notes, add further criticisms. Macaulay, for example, laments that "We become sick of cardinal virtues and deadly sins," and Henry Hallam calls Spenser's language "repulsive" and prefers stories "far more stimulating than the legends of Faeryland." Such are Armstrong's facts, and obviously the fourth main trend they reveal is that few writers in any period attempted to discuss the *Faerie Queene* in relation to those fundamental ideals,
teaching and delighting. The omission is perhaps surprising, but Armstrong's thoroughness is a guarantee that it exists.

Thus the only place left to seek specific answers as to how Spenser works toward the two ideals in the poem is modern criticism. Most recent critics still grant the *Faerie Queene* its nine-tenths, one-tenth ratio of praise and blame, but they often seem to be excessively concerned with mere mechanical problems and spend the largest part of their time analysing ever more finely the same topics that Armstrong noted, topics like diction and stanza, or the mechanics of allegory, or the sources of the virtues and sins. In 1926, for instance, Padelford studied the diction by counting words and discovering that there are four and one-half times as many compound words in Book I as in Book VI. He concluded that Spenser progressively abandons such cumbersome words to increase narrative speed.\(^{15}\) Then in 1944, for example, Stein studied the stanza by offering many detailed illustrations of how Spenser uses rhyme and alliteration to effect smooth continuity.\(^{16}\) Such precise facts, derived from rigid examination of the poem itself, constitute the largest contribution modern criticism makes to our understanding of the *Faerie Queene*. This information is invaluable, but to rest with it is to put the cart before the horse. Surely we analyse


\(^{16}\)Arnold Stein, "Stanza Continuity in the *Faerie Queene*," *MLN*, LIX (1944), 114-118.
into details to see how they are unified into a whole, and if the poem's primary aims are to teach and delight, one task facing the modern fact-gatherers is to establish specifically the extent to which teaching and delighting govern Spenser's choice of details and the ways in which they unify the poem.

When critics do base their interpretations on the poem's express purposes they too often forget, like Brooke and Legouis, that Spenser's purpose is twofold. As a result they look for what they think Spenser is trying to teach and forget about the delighting altogether. As late as 1957, for example, Guth says "There are good reasons for trying to recreate the unity of the poem by ascertaining its didactic message and then interpreting it from the point of view of its moral intention." Naturally, this stress on the morality alone allows him to argue comfortably for some time. He reduces the poem's multiplicity to the general formula of a knight exposed to problems in conduct each demanding a moral choice. But then, as he applies the formula specifically to the Faerie Queene he finds that he has to qualify it. "Even when the moral meaning of an episode is unmistakeable it is sometimes overshadowed if not contradicted by sensory and emotional appeal." In short, Guth sees the sense appeal in opposition to the morality. He points to the "lascivious languor of the Bower of Bliss" and the "mere physical thrill of Error spewing filth" as episodes which "make the reader
suspect that there are certain elements in the poet's creative imagination which are on the side of the devil without the poet's knowing it.\textsuperscript{17} Guth is responding to the poem's physical thrills without realizing that he is supposed to. He has forgotten that Spenser planned not only to tell him about morality but, more importantly, to arouse him into feeling really concerned about it. Guth's revulsion at Error and the Bower of Bliss is surely just what Spenser intended. But Guth, like Legouis and like Brooke, has forgotten Spenser's stress on moving his readers as well as informing them.

The question, then, is still open. How, in the \textit{Faerie Queene}, does Spenser teach and delight? We hear a good deal of praise, we receive a good deal of fact, but we never get adequate answers to the fundamental questions. There remains only one method of ascertaining whether Spenser considered both the teaching and the delighting equally important, or how he made each contribute to the other, or what he really did, specifically, to teach and delight his readers; that method is a close examination of the \textit{Faerie Queene} itself.

\textsuperscript{17}H.P. Guth, "Unity and Multiplicity in Spenser's \textit{Faerie Queene}," \textit{Anglia}, LXXIV (1957), 1-15.
CHAPTER I

Before any such specific examination, however, we should still pause briefly to realize the practical task Spenser sets for himself. It is insufficient to note generally that the poet plans to accomplish Sidney's two lofty aims. Nor is it even sufficient to say more specifically that he decided to overgo Ariosto—who had blended classical epic and chivalrous romance into one of the most popular, that is "pleasing," Renaissance poems—by adding to Ariosto's union English moral allegory. To appreciate Spenser's problem we have to look through such typical critical language and remember the "Letter's" emphasis on the noble reader, the learner. Everything—sources, subject matter and form—is justified in terms of the learner and his learning. Again, Spenser is very sensible, one is tempted to say modern, in this approach. A traditional view would have laid stress on the teacher, would have merely ensured that all the facts of a comprehensive moral code were placed before the reader, and then would have tried to sugar-coat the pill with rather pleasant poetry. But since Spenser's aim is to change the reader into a learner who actively wants to know, and in the end will have absorbed so thoroughly that the morality is part of his thought and conduct, it surely follows that he could not teach,
that is lecture or tell, in the traditional sense. Lecturing may be adequate for the learning of mathematics, but accomplishes little learning in morality. How then could he insure the reader's learning so well that the improvement would be noticeable in thought and conduct? The answer, of course, is that he could not insure his aim; no one has yet been able to measure such moral progress. Therefore Spenser did the only thing he could do, the thing we still strive to do today; he turned his attention to motivating his reader on the sensible basis that the more the reader wants to learn, the better the chance he will learn, and properly. Hence again the "Letter's" insistence that the first step will be to please and the second to teach.

Probably it is more useful at this point to rephrase a little and say that Spenser's general aim is to cause the reader to learn; his two specific methods are teaching, or providing adequate knowledge, and pleasing, or motivating the reader as much as possible. In this light both methods become vital; neither can be considered in any way subsidiary to the other. A specific examination of the text should therefore not seek to prove whether Spenser succeeds in his general aim, but rather should seek to find what he does with his two methods. Thus the examination should first accept Spenser's basic assumption that he had to motivate,
and then find specifically what he did to motivate. To the extent that we see, specifically, how Spenser shapes everything, whether sources, subject matter or form, in a way that motivates his reader, to that extent do we satisfy ourselves that he did, in fact, consider the teaching and delighting equally important.

Probably the easiest approach to the poem is to start simply and work inwards, as it were; to start with the narrative "fiction." Spenser is commonly accused here of being a disappointing story-teller, definitely second rate in comparison to Ariosto. Seemingly his narrative does not please because, for instance, he is too little concerned with reality, both his people and his world being more allegorical and abstract than real and appealing; because his action is slow, even in actual fighting scenes, and because the very action would seem to break down in a few places from illogical motivation or failure to complete individual stories. Such criticism notwithstanding, Spenser must have intended to please the reader, even on this simplest level; possibly he is more deft with his narrative techniques than he is often given credit for. The most practical place to start examining is at the very beginning, and for the reason that Spenser himself recognizes when he admits, while discussing his story outline and justifying his method of violating chronology, that the opening may "seemeth abrupte
and as depending on other antecedents."¹ In other words, the beginning of the Faerie Queene is the place where narrative pleasure should be most difficult to attain.

Before arriving at any estimation, however, one has to admit two fundamental story-telling conditions which Spenser sets up, the first in the preface and the second within the opening few dozen stanzas. The first is the knightly fiction of the super-knight Arthur and twelve separate great knights. Though it is obvious, one must recall that this chivalric world is two worlds at once. Each knight plays a character in the fiction and images a virtue in the morality at the same time. Thus Spenser combines his form and his subject matter, his "historicall fiction" and his "private morall vertues," his narrative and his allegory in a most efficient union. One is tempted to add, an integral union also, even without examination, since it would seem to follow inevitably that the reader cannot avoid learning morality as he reads the fiction.

Indeed, the union appears still more effective as one meets the second narrative condition. Almost immediately in the opening the reader recognizes Spenser's use of the minstrel narrator device from medieval romance, in

¹Smith and de Selincourt, p. 408.
such obvious mechanics as the introductory poem to each book, the labelling of divisions within a book as cantos, the preliminary quatrain before each canto, and the actual frequent intrusions of the minstrel into the narrative. Nor are these mechanics mere window dressing. Spenser uses the narrator device to get out of the poem, to allow the minstrel to take the work unto himself, put it in his own work and tell it in his own way. Of course, Spenser peeks through from time to time, but basically all belongs to the narrator, and the important thing to notice is that the world the minstrel creates is not the world of reality at all, but a fairy world. The reader begins with the "Faerie Queene" title, moves to the first "legende," passes through the first proem which promises "Faerie knights" in "Fierce warres and faithfull loves" from "antique rolles," and then proceeds into the first canto, where he hears about a "Gentle knight" who is an "Elfe," a "Dragon horrible and stearne" and a wicked magician. All this is reminiscent of a child's nursery tale world wherein, surely, the reader expects to meet castles and monsters and magic and ladies in distress; expects, obviously that matters will often be governed by the illogical, the surprising and the sudden.

To these qualities one must also add the minstrel's attitude, which colours the whole poem, but becomes most important when he intrudes as narrator and comments upon his
story. He speaks, in truth, with the deliberate mannerisms of a professional recounting makebelieve. One can almost see his hands gesturing, hear his voice quavering, as he adds his own personal, intense, emotional reaction to Una's mishaps.

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse
That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthy wretchednesse
Through envies snares or fortunes freakes unkind
That my fraile eyes these lines with teares do steepe
(I.iii.1.1-4, 2.3)

And it all works; it all charms. There is no disparagement whatever in saying Spenser's narrative is rooted in fairy-tale. In fact, his very makebelieve contributes much to the essential union of narrative with allegory. As Halliday notes,

In successful allegory, the story on the primary level is dominated by the story on the secondary level, and if the allegorical meaning is to be kept clear, its naturalistic counterpart must pay for it by surrendering realistic probability in one way or another ... The allegorist who admires realism is constantly pulled in two directions at once ....

Spenser has therefore neatly avoided this antagonistic pull by rejecting "realistic probability" altogether and choosing fairy tale for his "primary level." He has also once again very neatly forestalled his critics. He never

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professed to write a narrative about the real world, and thus can hardly be accounted guilty if his people and events do not hew entirely to reality. He has created his own world, a magical, flexible world, and the chances are very strong that it may also be a much more pleasing world.

At the opening of Book One the question then becomes how Spenser uses this flexible world. He uses it at once, obviously, to present an almost pictorial opening. There is the gentle Redcross knight, and the lovely, veiled lady mounted on snowy ass, leading a milky lamb and attended by a laden dwarf. To any reader, this picture is obviously a religious one. In fact, Spenser states quite plainly that this is the "Patron of true Holinesse," assigned by Gloriana, "That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond," to the "great adventure" of fighting a "Dragon" and rescuing the royal parents of this Lady Una, or "Truth." In other words, the reader knows exactly where he is in Spenser's morality; he knows the subject of the lesson though not its details. But this introduction is little more than a moving pageant, and even though it is an eye-catching one, surely no reader will enjoy the prospect of facing six "bookes" of dumb show with religious titles. He wants his narrative too, he wants these people to come alive. To the extent that Spenser can succeed in offering two abstractions as "vertuous" as Holi-
ness and Truth, while at the same time making them humanly interesting, he is indeed a flexible narrator.

Certainly the basis of making any character in narrative appear lifelike is to make it grow progressively throughout the plot. It should change, as all people do, through exposure to other characters and events, become ever more complex, ever more lifelike and ever more interesting. If the reader therefore asks himself whether he knows more about Una and her knight as individuals by the end of Canto Twelve than he did at the end of Canto One, the answer will obviously be yes. But such a general statement provides no real evidence of Spenser's achievement. Instead one should see specifically in what ways Una and Redcross are changed. To the extent that Spenser develops them through their interaction with the people and events of Book One, to that extent will they appear to live.

As a beginning, Canto One presents a surprising amount of human detail about this pageant-like pair. The sudden rainstorm drives them into the woods for shelter; an accident perhaps, but really no more sudden than the typical afternoon thunderstorm to be expected at the peak of "sommers pride" (I.i.7.4) in the very hot climate Spenser gives consistently to this never, never Britain land. There, lost, they find the mysterious cave and, at once, the knight acts with surprising rashness. Peaked with curiosity, he dismounts
hands his spear to the Dwarf and approaches the cave. This is a tactical blunder. A proper knight does not abandon both the dignity and the superiority in power and manoeuvrability that he gains on horseback to walk alone into a "darksome hole" (I.i.14.3), in the "thickest woods" (I.i.11.7), in the perilous landscape of Faeryland. Redcross is going out of his way to find trouble and he is ill prepared to handle it. Una has more commonsense. She warns him to wait, to investigate carefully first. She states the situation precisely:

Be well aware ...
Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts ... (I.i.12.1-4).

Such caution is exactly the wrong thing to say to a dashing young man who is supposed to be her protector. His reply comes quickly. A knight would be ashamed to hold back just because he suspects danger, after all, right is might. Whereupon she must grant that it is now too late to ask him to back out, since a knight such as he, once having seen a test and admitted he is going to attempt it, cannot quit without "foule disgrace" (I.i.13.3). Especially, one might add, when the admission has been made before a young lady and her servant. All she can do is advise him to beware, for this is the monster Error's den. Even the Dwarf calls out to fly. Yet in he strides, "full of fire and greedy hardiment" (I.i.14.1)
that is, full of youth, energy and boldness, greedy for "worship" (I.i.3.4), the only fame possible to a knight, that gained through many victories in many kinds of tests. Inevitably, even thus far, the reader concludes that this is a rather immature young man on his first real assignment and anxious for quick success.

Thus, in he strides, surprising Error in a "lothsom" but still peaceful nursing scene so that she gathers up her young and, in great fright, starts to retreat deeper into the cave, for she hated the world and normally stayed inside "Where plaine none might her see, nor she see any plaine" (I.i.16.9). At this point, a mature knight would have left well enough alone. But not Redcross. He must seize a victory so, sword in hand, he "forced her to stay" (I.i.17.4) and then started to attack her. Naturally, after all this persistence, he does succeed in "kindling rage" (I.i.18.2) in a monster very much larger and very much more skilled at fighting in this darkened cave than he. As the reader by this time expects, Redcross gets caught and by a very versatile manoeuvre from Error. She wraps her long tail around him so he cannot move hand or foot, cannot use his only remaining weapons, his sword and shield. He is definitely caught and he shows no versatility whatever. His military training must have been little more than conventional practice with the fixed set of knightly weapons in the fixed
movement patterns and, apparently, he has no wider battle experience to apply to this unconventional predicament. Here, again, Una shows both her greater experience and her keener ability to size up a situation. She cries out to him the only advice that will work, to draw on his reserves of superhuman strength "Add faith unto your force.../
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee." Confused and ashamed, "His gall did grate for griefe and high dis-daine" (I.i.19.3.4.6), he proceeds to strangle. However, versatile Error has another manoeuvre. She vomits revoltingly until he begins to retreat, and then she spews out all the "fowle" babies he had disturbed in the first place. There he stands, in stench and filth, no longer the "full jolly knight" of the opening tableau and, ironically, it all "him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all" (I.i.22.9).
Oh, just deserts! At last, more fearing shame than danger, he decides angrily to win or lose all in one effort, moves (possibly the reader would say sloshes) forward and stabs her. Sensible as ever, Una approaches "in hast" and lavishes praise.

Well worthy be you of that Armorie,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish, that like succeed it may.
(I.i.27.5-9)

Noticeably he says nothing to this warm speech, probably,
the reader suspects, because he is stiff with pride. Noticeably also he seems to have learned at least a little, for, on their way once more,

That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,
Ne ever would to any by-way bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them brought. (I.i.28.3-6).

But maturing is an agonizingly slow process. No sooner are they out of the woods than they meet the aged hermit. No sooner do they meet the hermit than Redcross asks if there are any "straunge adventures" (I.i.30.4) abroad. He speaks with surprising eagerness for one who has barely escaped from an embarrassing predicament and is supposedly concentrating on one main quest. The hermit maintains he knows nothing of troubles afar, but if "homebred evill" will do, why he can tell about a strange man "That wasteth all this countrey farre and neare," who, nevertheless, seems to live "Far hence" in some dangerous wilderness. "Shew the place" is the knight's eager request,

For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long
a space. (I.i.31.2-9)

Certainly this is a somewhat childish reply to what is little more really than vague information. Noticeably this time it is Una who has been silent. But she steps in now and
quickly, too, before Redcross has a chance to get underway with this new side adventure. She is also now more diplomatic in choosing just the right thing to say, that it is nearly nightfall, he must be tired from today's encounter, he needs sleep to restore his full might.

... The knight was well content:
So with that godly father to his home they went.
(I.1.33.8,9)

Spenser presents slow moving action? Not thus far, at any rate. Perhaps speed of action is better rephrased as intensity of the reader's concentration on the action rather than the number of incidents presented per lineal foot of the poem. Surely any reader will admit at the end of Canto One, Stanza 33, that he feels relieved at seeing the Redcross knight being led peacefully towards bed by Una on one side and a sage hermit on the other. Therefore what a deft bit of narrative surprise it is that Spenser has in store. The reader already knows from the introductory quatrain that the noble pair will be ensnared by Hypocrisy, but no one could be suspicious of this hermit. Rather, the reader presumes that the hermit's "straunge man" will probably turn out tomorrow to be Hypocrisy. Then, "when all drowned in deadly sleepe he findes" off goes the hermit himself to his "Magicke bookes and artes" (I.1.36.6,8). He is himself Hypocrisy and he is about to push them into another adventure.
Archimago would seem to be a genuine fairytale magician, the sort of fellow who appears from nowhere to scheme against the most good, good people he can find, for the very fitting reason that he himself is all back in all his intentions. Undoubtedly therefore the reader will greet Hypocrisy's appearance with much interest to see how Spenser uses magic in the narrative, and this interest will certainly increase when the reader sees that the poet devotes a full eight stanzas to the Morpheus incident, to what is really just Archimago's preliminary conjuring. The evident question is whether or not narrative action merely turns aside here into a relatively ornamental digression. Yet even a quick glance will reveal that Spenser prepares carefully. He begins with a bit of simple foreshadowing by innocently placing the word "Morpheus" (I.i.36.3) in the description of the virtuous pair going to sleep. Then the minstrel steps forward and introduces the scene professionally with his tense grave comments about the "bold bad man" (I.i.37.7) calling forth "Legions of Sprights" (I.i.38.2) with words so horrible "Let none them read" (I.i.37.2) and finally choosing the "falsest twoo" sprights with which to "fray his enemies" (I.i.38.5,6). This formal introduction specifically presents Archimago's mechanism, the use of sprights, and at the same time brings to a peak the dark, stealthy atmosphere which has only been hinted at before and, just because the
narrator does intrude to speak to his audience as a fairytale narrator, inevitably calls out to that audience to let its imagination run freely.

And freely the reader goes,

... through spersed ayre,
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
To Morpheus house ...
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe (I.1.39.1-4).

charmed throughout the spright's journey. Magic, after all, is a difficult tool to handle if the poet has to use it often in a narrative as long as the Faerie Queene. The problem, quite plainly, is boredom. Every time Archimago appears, for instance, Spenser simply cannot have the magician rather mechanically wave his wand until, lo, a false Florimel emerges, or intone abracadabra, light some gunpowder until poof, a genie sits on the table. Such mechanics become empty very quickly. The reader will follow magic people using magic powers in a magic world as long as there is a different how, when, where, what, why each time. The lengthy trip to Morpheus and back is thus Spenser's method of filling in rich shades of meaning and atmosphere, of particularizing this bit of black magic into a complete, interesting whole.

Spenser weaves the details quite thoroughly. This is a long journey right into the depths of the earth where it is always dark so the god can always sleep. Lofty deities
of the night like Cynthia forever watch over him. Double gates of ivory and silver, cool, pale and precious give him privacy, and watchdogs stand on guard. There is nothing intrinsically evil about Morpheus, except his association with subterranean night, in fact, the reader probably notes that the wicked spright has to steal past the dogs, through the gates and, to an extent, scheme against Morpheus by getting the special dream when the God is only half awake. Therefore, all the details become at the same time both appropriate to the God of Sleep and in keeping with Archimago's scheming against the innocent sleeping pair. The magician would have to allow ample time for them to fall deeply asleep; indeed, the beautifully appropriate sounds surrounding Morpheus could just as readily indicate the victims' sleep.

A trickling stream from high rocke tumbling downe
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne:
(I.i.41.2-5).

Whatever magic tricks he used would have to be done quietly or the victims would waken in the little hermitage. Since he is going to the trouble of getting a special dream from the very God of Sleep, the reader knows Archimago must be concocting most potent magic. Indeed, is not black magic always performed most efficiently under cover of night? And once the scheming is under way, does not the magician
always complete it in an instant, almost by sleight of hand? Hence the instant cutting of the sleepy Morpheus atmosphere the moment the sprecht claims the dream. He

Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke,
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
Im haste unto his Lord ... (I.i.44.7-9).

Whereupon Archimago instantly becomes a picture of the chuckling, hand-rubbing magician, gleefully making ready against his unsuspecting victims. In fact, he is so wickedly cheerful now that, looking upon the lady he created from the second sprecht, he is himself "nigh beguiled with so goodly sight" (I.i.45.7). No one could help but feel beguiled too by the whole incident, nor could a reader have been better prepared for the important sleep temptation scene to come. If one judges again by the measure of a reader's intense concentration, then the conclusion is inescapable that Spenser's narrative pace does not slacken even when he seems to turn quite away for a time from his hero and heroine.

Delighted or not, the reader is still waiting to see how the magic will be used, to see whether Redcross and Una genuinely react to it, and become motivated by it, as they would in the case of any other legitimate narrative event. Reaction is possibly the most accurate term to use, since subtle, suggestive temptation of Redcross is Archimago's
beginning. The magic makes the sleeping knight

... dreame of loves and lustfull play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy (I.i.47.4-6).

Most certainly therefore Hypocrisy reads Holiness as an entirely human young man and is, indeed, close enough to the reality of human experience to have guessed, along with the sympathetic reader, that Redcross and Una are falling in love. For it is in Una's assumed shape that Archimago puts the temptation. No wonder the knight starts awake; his human conscience is reacting against the emotions

.... of unwonted lust,
or wonted feare of doing ought amis (I.i.49. 1-2).

But he awakes only to find himself face to face with "Una," who is blushingly trying to kiss him. She whom he had put on a pedestal; no wonder again he reacts violently, first with the urge to "have slaine her in his fierce despight" (I.i.50.3), then with the wish to hear her story. Through sighs and sobs and tears she refers to her youth, her inex- perience, and the sad plight of her family - for all of which she turns to him for aid, saying "Let me not dye in languor and long teares" (I.i.52.7). She receives a most typical male answer, in effect, "Dear Dame, what is the matter with you, who were so sensible and steady comforting me earlier?"
"Love of your selfe, she said" (I.i.53.1). What other reply could there be, humanly or artistically. To him, all this behaviour rings a little false, but yet, "no untruth he knew" (I.i.53.6), and in this mere half-suspicion he reveals once more his lack of experience. A mature man well acquainted with the knightly, courtly world would never have been fooled by the spright's obvious overacting. Redcross is; he really believes this is Una offering herself and, by the very fact that he does believe, is he saved. Primarily it is his pride that makes him reject such "fawning love" (I.i.53.7) and say somewhat calmly, perhaps a little priggishly too, that he is sorry to have caused her secret grief, for most surely he esteems her love and consider himself bound to her service. Indeed, she really should put aside "vaine feares" and go back to sleep. Defeated, "she turnd as to her ease" (I.i.54.4,9) while he lies musing, certainly "Much griev'd to think that gentle Dame so light," but also quite noticeably concerned for himself because, if the essence of his quest is to "shed his blood" (I.i.55.2,3) in her defence, she has now lowered the quality of that quest. Magic or not, therefore, Spenser uses this dream temptation most flexibly to reveal the interplay of his hero's thought and emotion and, furthermore, to turn that hero into a young man capable of abandoning his duty, his love, and his Una next morning.
Archimago's magic is by no means finished. When did a fairytale magician ever abandon a scene without being either entirely successful or entirely routed? He alters his spright-scheming by creating another false figure, Spenser at the same time pauses to add a little particularizing colour by having the final two stages of the scheming played out before a most appropriately changing sunrise. The world is dark and silent. It is the last calm pause before dawn. Certainly the reader appreciates this brief rest! Then "chearefull Chaunticleere with his note shrill" warns the magician that time is running out,

... that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the Eastern hill (I.ii.1.6-8).

"all in rage" (I.ii.2.5), Archimago quickly sets up the guilty-looking "Squire" with "Una" and shakes awake poor Redcross, who has just fallen into his first undisturbed sleep of the night. Awakened thus, surely the knight would start up, seize his sword and run out with the old man. Surely also now Redcross' reactions are to be expected. At sight he burned with "gealous fire," then such rage that "he would have slaine them in his furious ire" (I.ii.5.6,8). And so, still the very young knight, he cannot in any way reconcile his love, his hate, his honour, his quest, and inevitably jumps to the solution that frequently beckons the immature. He runs away.
But what of Una and the other half of Archimago's scheme? She awakens to a proper sunrise and a different world. "rosy-fingred Morning faire" is glowing over the mountains and spreading her "purple robe through deawy aire." Mischief and magic have inexplicably scurried off with the darkness, leaving Una innocent and abandoned on an ironically buoyant morning. Ever the gentle, virtuous lady she weeps and wails piteously "to see that woefull stowre" (I.ii.7.1,3,9). But her emotions have a fairly sensible basis, for after all she is now completely unprotected in this wilderness. Therefore she acts positively. She rides out in the sunshine after Redcross, feeling all the time "sore grieved in her gentle brest" (I.ii.8.8), and not just because she knows he is her only protector, but primarily because, as Archimago and reader had already guessed, she loves him.

In this very first introduction to his magic world, then, Spenser has accomplished much. On the plane of character he has both revealed and motivated the hero and heroine, while on the plane of narrative incident he moves so efficiently that he refutes those critics who still persist in regarding diversions like gods and dawns as mere, mechanical, passage-of-time devices. Always it is the

3An example is Z.E. Green, "Swooning in the Faerie Queene," SP, XXXIV (1937), 127.
reader for whom Spenser shapes the narrative. For him the story opens with two picturesque abstractions, Holiness and Truth, and for him it grows quickly into an ever more complex tale of love and adventure. In terms of the poem's narrative level, at least, we can satisfy ourselves that Spenser did, in fact, carry out his promise to delight first and teach second.
CHAPTER II

Spenser so deftly brings Redcross and Una to life in the narrative that it is necessary to ask whether, at the same time, he succeeds in making all this pleasure contribute to his teaching. We have only to follow the hero and heroine throughout their tale to realize that Spenser succeeds for, both as adventure and as romance, he makes Redcross and Una's story demonstrate some important lessons in living. Together these lessons comprise a section of morality that is essential to the whole poem, that is easily understood and that is, above all, attractive to the reader. To see these lessons is to see specifically how Spenser solves the fundamental problem of making the teaching and delighting contribute to one another.

The first and most obvious advantage Spenser gains from the narrative is the very character of Redcross. From the outset he is a most welcome patron of holiness because he is humanly imperfect. Spenser never fails to keep in mind the fundamental that morality is not taught efficiently by preaching. Dull, theoretical sermons about right and wrong only reach the people who come to listen, the people who are already taught. Such people might have delighted in a conventional, perfect knight of holiness effortlessly
trouncing every wicked opponent in the twelve cantos. But
everyday, human, people-in-affairs, those who are not taught,
those who most need to know, would not be attracted at all
by such a sanctimonious preacher. When the subject is
morality, people want it approached from their point of view,
from the point of view of the Redcross knight, who wants to
learn, who has such a lot to learn, and who must learn it
all in the agonizingly slow, weak, human ways.

This human principle actually applies also to the
only perfect knight and greatest hero, Arthur. Critics have
often accused Spenser of giving Arthur too little space
in the poem, of introducing him only when necessary to ful-
fil his allegorical function and then sending him away
quickly. But could Spenser not be allowed a purpose in
these brief appearances? To put it bluntly, who wants
perfection around very much? The everyday, human person
struggling to learn the right way is certainly aware of
such superior beings, and most certainly delights to read
about them, their virtue and their easy power, but only once
in a while. Seen infrequently, they are admirable symbols;
kept around constantly, they become annoyances. A Book One
full of perfect Arthur would be just as ineffective as a

\[1\text{An example is J.W. Draper, "Narrative Technique of the Faerie Queene, PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 310.}\]
Book One full of a perfect knight of holiness. For the purpose of teaching and delighting, therefore, Arthur is more effective because the reader sees so little of him.

The second advantage arising even from the beginning of the narrative is also aligned with the ordinary, human reader's approach. It is so very obvious to say it, but still Spenser remembers to say it throughout the six books, that any work which genuinely seeks to develop in a man the private moral virtues must give an important place to woman. Is not woman integral to any man's adjustment? The fact that the two staples of recreational fiction have always been love and war is a simple reflection of this fundamental. And just because love does form the subject of so much reading for pleasure one must always remember not to regard romance in narrative too lightly, as secondary decoration, as sop for the surface mind seeking mere entertainment. Proper adjustment between man and woman is a necessity in this life. That such union is eagerly read about is no indication that the reader approaches with little desire to learn; such eagerness should rather be taken as the reader's desire to learn what he recognizes is most important to learn. In other words, Spenser is being exceedingly practical, not just pleasing, when he makes Redcross and Una come to life as lovers, for love is that aspect of morality about which most people wish to learn first. And therefore the poet is
careful throughout the narrative to develop the romance into a formal betrothal between two matured, competent adults. Certainly evidence of how seriously Spenser takes the love story on its own merits lies in the fact that their love is not made secure by Arthur's stepping forth from allegory as Heavenly Grace and rescuing Redcross from the dungeon, but really solidifies afterwards in a more subtle human change in the lovers themselves.

Una is the primary character here. For all the ability she showed at the narrative's beginning to estimate situations more practically than her knight, Spenser deliberately lets her develop one blind spot, and this obviously is the knight himself. For instance, when Archimago schemes again and appears before her disguised as Redcross, she accepts him almost at once, approaches "with faire fearefull humblesse" (I.iii.26.9), hopes she has not done anything "that ye displeasen might," and finally asks "Where have ye bene thus long ...?" (I.iii.27.2,4). His excuse is lengthy but it would have been seen through readily by the Una of Canto One. Why does she accept it here, and why her excessively humble, timid, non-questioning approach? Spenser spends two full stanzas explaining that "A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sowre" (I.iii.30,31). Una in love is blind to the past. She accepts her knight with joy. Indeed, one might very well suspect that the poet actually
created this scene just to show how much love has impaired Una. Admittedly she does have some excuse for this first welcome, but she has much less of an excuse the second time when she greets the real Redcross rescued from the dungeon. Again she is all "hasty joy" (I.viii.42.2) and humbleness. She never once reprimands him, in fact, she actually goes as far as excusing him entirely and putting all blame for his predicament on "Fortune" (I.viii.43.3). It is Arthur who has to step in and say what should be said to the young knight, and Arthur, of course, says it perfectly. He, too, is kind enough to give all benefit of doubt, for he does not reproach Redcross either, but he does add the essential warning "be wise, and ware of like agein" (I.viii.44.6). In this whole scene humble Una only manages to act once, to rescue Duessa, of all people, from death, and with what is surely an overly nice, ladylike excuse.

To do her dye (quoth Una) were despight,  
And shame t'avenge so weake an enimy.  
(I.viii.45.7,8).

Undoubtedly Una appears every inch the sweet, proper, pretty lady during this scene, but she is nevertheless impractical. Fortunately, she and her lover will be spared any consequences of thus rashly freeing Duessa, but only because other circumstances will soon force Una to temper the emotions of first love and start acting more sensibly
towards her knight.

These circumstances develop the very next time Redcross gets out of sight, by going into the cave of Despair. Is she not, to an extent, back where she was in scene one, standing by while he enters a dangerous cave? Only this time she knows how subtly dangerous the cave is, for Sir Terwin and Sir Trevisan are woeful evidence. She has also had several cantos to realize how immature her Redcross still is, and surely she must see that he is abnormally vulnerable now, still weak from his imprisonment. Yet she stands humbly and ineffectively by until the very worst has happened. Only when she sees Redcross raise the knife to commit suicide does she act, not timidly, but like the positive, sensible young woman she had first appeared to be. She snatches the knife, throws it to the ground, undoubtedly stamps her foot, and snaps at him in the way she should have long before. "Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight" (I.ix.53.1). Una has matured completely here. She has finally realized that in love, one and one must not add up to two, but a different, enlarged one; that no partnership will really succeed in any enterprise without each member actively contributing, particularly in those areas where the other partner may be deficient. If Una had actually guided Redcross earlier through some of his immature blundering she would have had her quest and her romance with
much less heartache. But she steps forth to him firmly here, "So up he rose" (I.ix.54.1) to her, realizing now how very much he needs her help, and forth they go to the House of Holiness, matured as partners and lovers at last.

Spenser deliberately designed the love story to stand complete in itself as one of the most interesting and profitable contributions of his narrative. As a teaching device, it not only begins with the area of morality in which ordinary readers are most interested, that of the relations between man and woman, but then also rigorously shows the broader lesson that maturity in one area of living affects behaviour in all others. In fact, one may say Spenser seems to agree with the majority of his readers when he suggests that a successful courtship and marriage is the preliminary step towards a successful adult life, that a man like Redcross, once "Possessed of his Ladies hart and hand" (I.xii.40.7), is "full content" with life and able to set about accomplishing the duty which he had "sworne" (I.xii.41.2,6). It is significant, for instance, that Spenser settles Redcross' love affair before sending him to be schooled thoroughly in holiness. Indeed, the poet uses aspects of love as mechanics in his very allegory. It is temptation to lust by which Archimago first separates Holiness from Truth; it is seduction through which Falsehood ensnares him, and it is the persistence of True Love, even
after many exhausting escapes from fates-worse-than, who finally puts him on the real path to holiness.

Granted, the romance is an obvious choice to help the allegory in Book One, simply because the lovers in narrative are the abstractions in allegory. Yet Spenser significantly maintains his stress on love throughout the other five books. In Book Two he moves to Temperance, which is a virtue more universal than restrictedly Christian. Expressed thus, Spenser's second virtue represents an important choice, for it is the key to the essential morality just expressed in Book One and it is about to be developed further in the rest of the poem. Furthermore this essential morality is both temperate and romantic. One might rephrase the conclusion about Redcross and Una and say that first they achieve temperance, or maturity, not just in life generally, but with each other. Only when they have become temperate partners and lovers do they proceed towards the specific Christian virtue of holiness. This lesson is illustrated almost at once in another way in Book Two. Plainly Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, is not a lover, but the first incident he faces presents Mordant and Amavia, already united as husband and wife, but nevertheless dying from love-gone-wrong. As a result, Guyon's task becomes to destroy the Bower of Bliss, the source of such evil love. Noticeably, also, the knight goes from the death scene to the
castle "of golden Meane" (II.ii.proem), an unmistakable reference to Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, another middle-of-the-road approach which also regards virtue as a sensible adjustment to life, and sins as the many emotionalized extremes of behaviour varying from this centre. As C.S. Lewis says more simply, the basis of Spenser's morality lies in a constant presentation of the norm between antitheses, between "the conflict of two mighty opposites." Book Three then presents Britomart, who is a lover and, moreover, a woman. With her, Spenser is taking a logical third step. If Book One sets up the primary importance of temperate love, and Book Two illustrates the dangers of intemperance in love, then the poet obligates himself to give a thorough expression of his ideas of love, an obligation which he tries to carry out conscientiously, and no doubt pleasingly, by sending Britomart through three full books.

Indeed, Spenser may be regarded as entirely conscientious here, for having evolved this essential, temperate-romantic morality in the first place, and then for expressing it pleasantly in narrative. In truth, he is being an efficient educator. Again one may resort directly to modern educational language and say that in his *Faerie Queene*

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the poet has created a teaching unit on individual moral
conduct and as his first step has created the basic core
of the unit, a temperate-romantic mean. Since the core
is the one fundamental which all readers have to master,
it must be presented at the poem's beginning; it must be
stated in simple terms for the average reader; it must be
repeated throughout the entire poem in this simple form; and
then, to provide for readers with very great differences
in abilities and interests, it must be re-illustrated in
very many more complex ways until it challenges even the
most competent student. Very conscientiously Spenser had
his ordinary, human reader-learner in mind when he created
the narrative to express his unit core so simply and so
interestingly. And well he might, for the great numbers
of average readers are those who most need to be taught. As
he and Sidney recognized so well, teaching the already com­
petent is the easiest education job in the world, but
teaching the great many who are not is the more difficult,
and at the same time the more necessary.

Furthermore, the poet's determination to provide for
this great many accounts for still another significant
narrative element, humour. Certainly Spenser motivates his
learners throughout his fairytale Book One by deliberately
capturing if not their real world, clearly the reality of
their experience in the world, while at the same time drawing
from their awareness of reality to formulate the very essence of his moral teaching. It is therefore natural for Spenser to portray something of the humour which is a part of every reader's experience. Furthermore, every reader would expect that the poet's reiterated promise in the "Letter" to delight would include some uncomplicated enjoyment, especially in a teaching unit as long as the Faerie Queene. Granted, Book One is the section where humour is needed least, partly because of the narrative's deliberate, strong appeal to the reader's primary interests and partly also because the learner's concentration is not so likely to lapse as he first moves into Spenser's magic world.

But humour there is, even in Book One. Much of it arises from Spenser's constant presentation of extremes in behaviour as his method of emphasizing that morality follows the temperate, middle path. Is not Redcross, for example, floundering in the filth of Error's vomit, an ironically comic picture? That he deserves this position simply makes a reader smile the more and, thereby, appreciate Spenser's real point more fully. This approach is so basic that it seeps out into little comments scattered through the entire narrative, each one of which succeeds both in producing a smile and pointing up the morality. A good example comes at the end of the Fradubio incident. Redcross and "Fidessa" listen while the talking tree recounts how he had been be-
guiled and transformed by Duessa, but, lest the knight
hear enough to realize that "Fidessa" and Duessa are one,
the witch distracts his attention by fainting. Completely
fooled, as the reader expects, the knight gathers her up
in his arms, kisses her to consciousness, and off they go
together to the House of Pride. Spenser's only comment on
Redcross is telling; he was "too simple and too trew" (I.
ii.45.7). Then again, one cannot help noting the poet's
most precise use of even a single adjective in the descrip­
tion of the seven deadly sins, where he says "Such one was
Avarice, the fourth of this faire band" (I.iv.29.9).

Indeed, Spenser goes beyond even such obviously
useful humour and introduces pure comic relief. Once more,
he expresses the humour both in little details and in large
scenes. Even the August Arthur can cause chuckles.
For instance, when Magnificence stands face to face
with Orgoglio, every reader knows who will win and sits
back to enjoy the spectacle. Spenser does not dis­
appoint. Orgoglio swings his oak tree club so strongly
that it digs up a three yard deep furrow, and then sticks in
the ground. As the giant puffs and pants to pull it out,
Arthur steps in lightly and chops off an arm, to the cheers
of all readers. And thus, boisterously, the fight moves to
its inevitable end. A whole scene with humour is Archimago's
attempt to ensnare Una by disguising himself as Redcross.
When he spies her, he spies the lion too, and for all his
magic power, he will not "for dread" (I.iii.26.3) come close, but rides to the top of a nearby hill so she cannot help but see him. In this behaviour Hypocrisy reveals his true stature; he is not a powerful creature of evil, but little more than a skilled tradesman at the magic arts who, by himself, will discomfort but never defeat the heroine, or her lion. Once more, therefore, the reader relaxes to enjoy the fun. Una, overjoyed, accepts the knight on sight; so does the lion. But no sooner is Archimago prancing along the plain looking every inch jolly Saint George than in gallops Sans-loy, frothing for vengeance from the Redcross knight. Archimago can call up no magic to help him here, although he is saved from death because of his magic. His horse, since it is one of his own creations, is so frightened at Sans-loy's attack that it retreats backwards fast enough to negate the power of the lance's thrust. Down tumbles Archimago, to the accompaniment of more cheers. Nonetheless, even for such boisterous comic relief Spenser has useful purposes. Archimago's blundering is definitely a release for the reader after following Una's sad wandering and dreary night with Abessa and Corceca. For all the burlesque, the incident nevertheless manages to reveal how very fierce a fighter Sans-loy is and how decidedly unknightly he is too, in his desire to cut off his victim's head, a decision which in turn reveals him to be a friend of the wicked Archimago. With this revelation, the reader is pushed back at once to
thoughts of Una's now most dangerous position and thus, in the end, laughter evaporates into even greater suspense.
CHAPTER III

The whole subject of Spenser's delighting has even more significance, however. It is appropriate here to ask why critics spend little time explaining how they interpret the term. For instance, when men like Legouis or Brooke or Guth meet Spenser's humour they tend to dismiss it and move on to what, they suggest, is more important, the facts of Spenser's teaching. Thus the Faerie Queene may be allegorical or historical, or Christian or Platonic, or colorful or musical, and it is invaluable, but when it is humorous it has little value. It cannot be teaching anything worthwhile. The critics adopt this overly serious attitude because they forget that Spenser kept in mind all his audience, not just the already competent. They forget that even readers as sophisticated as Elizabeth and her courtiers want their morality expressed with a sense of humour. Spenser was practical enough to see that such readers could best be reached by teaching that acknowledges how imperfect most people are and kindly points the way towards improvement. Critics forget that it is this audience which determines the subject matter Spenser must choose and the methods with which he must handle it. It is the who and the how of Spenser's teaching which are most important, not the
However critical opinion about the humour remains, on the whole it is negative, so it demands a precise answer. The problem is much more than simply pointing out how Spenser uses irony or sarcasm or comic relief effectively. Spenser only refutes the critics if he makes humour contribute importantly to his teaching. Since the primary teaching done by Book One's narrative is the establishment of the temperate-romantic morality, the primary problem in refuting the critics is to show how humour helps to state this morality.

For this purpose the best place to begin looking at humour is where the poet himself begins introducing scenes with obvious comedy. Significantly, these scenes come after Redcross and Una have separated and end just before they re-unite, in actual narrative terms a period extending from Canto Three to the end of Canto Six. This period becomes significant because of the way Spenser treats the knight and lady once he gets them apart, and the most obvious point about this treatment is that he handles Redcross entirely seriously but involves Una in comedy. Any reader would suspect this contrast must be designed to state something important about the knight, his lady, and the relationship between them. Within this serious-humoruous alternation, Una's adventures are best regarded as one con-
sistent comic sequence, beginning with her conquest of the lion and ending in her entanglement with the fauns and satyrs. There is a definite pattern here, a beginning, a moving to a climax and a conclusion. In addition, Una's sequence is frequently played against what is happening to Redcross, so that the two adventure patterns, though developed independently, often stand as silent comments on one another.

After the separation the heroine begins her heartbroken search for her knight and she moves, really, through four main encounters, or perhaps it would be more correct to say she is chased through four main encounters, because Una becomes here the typical lady in distress against whom the world seems to send ever more melodramatic misfortunes. The very first of these is the rush from nowhere of the "ramping Lyon" greedy for "salvage blood" (I.iii.5.2,3); the second is Archimago's masquerade as Redcross, which is itself put to an end by the sudden entrance of "that proud Paynim" (I.iii.35.1) Sans-loy who, in his turn, is routed by the mere appearance of that "rude, misshapen, monstrous rablement" (I.vi.8.7), the fauns and satyrs. Certainly all four meetings are misfortunes, but the preliminary point to establish about them is whether at the same time they are truly humorous. Firstly, none of the four can be taken in any way as due penalty for Una. She did not cause the en-
counters; they were thrust upon her. Secondly, and more importantly, Spenser is careful each time to present the encounter through action so exaggerated it is nothing short of burlesque. Granted, some of the scenes which arise in consequence of each meeting may have incidents with varying colour, but the main encounters themselves are primarily comic.

For example, the ramping lion is unusual. Any reader can understand it rushing with "gaping mouth" at Una's "tender corse," but to see it pause "with remorse," (I.iii. 5.5,6,8), then kiss "her wearie feet" and lick "her lilly hands with fawning tong" until her heart melts and she "drizling teares did shed for pure affection" (I.iii.6.2,9). To see this is to laugh freely with relief. In similar way Spenser is more than obvious rescuing Una from Sans-loy. Surely the lustful villain always packs his victim off bodily, then tries persuasion, then has to try force, and then surely a lady in such distress automatically resorts to that universal last weapon "thrilling shriekes, and shrieking cryes" (I.vi.6.2) until, with equal certainty, some innocent bystander runs in to the rescue at the very, very, last moment. That Una's bystander turns out to be a whole tribe of half-humans is a sight sufficiently rare to make Sans-loy bolt and every reader cheer to see the creatures with the least humanity of all then perform the
proper moral action. When the "monstrous rablement" immediately proceeds to gather around "doleful desolate" Una, sitting "with ruffled rayments, and faire blubbred face" (I.vi.9. 2,3), to pity her, and finally to salute her almost in tableau with one, solemn, united bow, that nevertheless swings backwards instead of forwards because of "their backward bent" animal-like knees (I.vi.11.9), laughter must grow louder. Indeed, it is because of such tableau effects as these encounters offer that critics so often praise Spenser as the painter of memorable pictures, but they also frequently forget to do the obvious, to pause and really look at Spenser's pictures. Certainly if they looked more often at the sort of painting he does in these four encounters they could not help being more aware of his humour.

Admittedly by itself this whole comic sequence appears a shocking one, for again, Una in burlesque is by no means the Una of Canto One. Still Spenser is careful first to warn all readers he will treat Una unconventionally, not by anything he says about her, but rather by the way he treats Redcross before Una's wandering ever begins. The knight's very first adventure, after abandoning the heroine, is with Duessa and Sans-loy. The paynim he kills with satisfactory efficiency and what he does about Duessa happens with the same efficiency, but is certainly not sat-
isfactory, for in quick successive steps he becomes her protector, her suitor and her lover. Critics frequently note this efficient seduction of Redcross and quite rightly label it as just deserts. The knight has absolutely no excuse for blundering here. There has been none of Archimago's magic directed against him. He accepts her and her "scarlot" (I.ii.13.2) appearance because, "in great passion,"

More busying his quicke eyes, her face to view,
Than his dull eares, to heare what she did tell
(I.ii.26.5-7)

- because he wants to.

However, once more those same critics frequently fail to pause and look at their evidence. Is not this a rather shocking Saint George of England and Patron of Holiness? Surely such an easy seduction of a young knight destined for sainthood should be unusual enough to make them aware that Spenser is going out of his way to treat Redcross unconventionally, and thereby should prepare them well for the unconventional, comic treatment of Una which begins right after that seduction.

Hence the question now becomes how her total comic sequence contributes to Spenser's teaching, how it helps to state the narrative's basic temperate-romantic morality. A great deal happens to Una during her wandering but the
essence of what Spenser says about her is best revealed in those four main encounters and in the final comic scene, where Spenser has her pause long enough for him to develop a full explanation. In essence there are four main steps, each contributing something precise and each interlocking deftly with the preceding step to form a sequence leading straight up to that final explanation. Obviously the lion comes first, and for all the adventures Una and the beast go through together, Spenser makes clear the significance of their relationship the minute "Lyon Lord" falls at her feet.

O how can beautie maister the most strong, 
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong? (I.iii.6.4,5)

Next comes Archimago, and through his masquerade he exposes to all readers Una's important blind spot. But he does not expose it to her, this is accomplished when number three, "beastly" Sans-loy, unmasks the magician. Thereupon this "beastly" human animal proceeds to demonstrate how completely evil he is when he slays the genuine animal, the lion, snatches Una, and "With beastly sin thought her to have defilde" (I.vi.3.4). The final step then introduces that "salvage nation" of partly human and partly animal fauns and satyrs. In other words, as Una chases through this animal-human sequence, the creatures she meets take on symbolic meaning, and therefore the problem narrows here to
interpreting what these creatures stand for.

Obviously they are typical examples of Spenser's constant playing with opposites. Once more the easiest figure to begin with is the lion. Plainly he is a genuine animal and therefore under the right conditions, in this case Una's beauty and truth, exhibits genuinely good behaviour. His only defect would seem to be that he is a lion and hence limited to animal conduct. In fact he has such ordinary animal limitations that he is quickly killed by the first properly armed man who comes along. Sans-loy, however, is not much of a man. His appearance would give him to be a knight but his conduct reveals that he is little more than an animal. He is not a genuine human being, exercising his God-given capacity for goodness nor, plainly, can he be a genuine animal. He is false no matter how he is viewed. Therefore his conduct must always be bad, and Una's beauty and truth only make it worse. If then the beast is at one extreme and the "beastly" man at the other, that "salvage nation" is somehow a median. Taken symbolically, these fauns and satyrs seem to say that most people are not all animal or all human, for even under Una's influence their conduct is sometimes good and sometimes outrageous. However they, nor any of these creatures, are important in themselves, their symbolic meaning must be related specifically to Una. After all, Spenser must have created them so Una could run against
them. Furthermore, they must serve to reveal her character, but not to change her, since she runs through them so quickly, and since they are all comically handled in large part.

What they reveal, of course, is obvious. Firstly Una, with her beauty and truth, can control the lion and use his animal behaviour for her own purposes, which naturally are good. She accepts what he is and merely directs the genuine, predictable conduct of which he is capable. At the sequence's beginning, therefore, she demonstrates very clearly again her natural ability and resourcefulness. But up comes disguised Archimago, and there is her blindspot. Thus, suddenly, she reveals to the reader that towards first love, at least, she is still very immature. Then in rushes Sans-loy, and he makes Una's position still more clear. He is named Sans-loy, or lawlessness, not because of what he looks like, or what he says, but because his conduct is lawless, and his conduct is lawless simply because he does not direct himself according to the accepted rules of human, social living, but deliberately seeks to capitalize on these rules for his own ends. With such a one Una reveals that she is entirely ineffective. Of course, Sans-loy also serves to confirm that this whole sequence is, indeed, to be taken as narrative, not just allegory, for Spenser is not
only using very real human experience here but he is also again defining morality in terms of everyday, practical living. Even though the human, non-human and partly human creatures he uses to define this morality show markedly different capacities for human conduct, they are all, nevertheless, living breathing creatures in his world, by no means dry abstractions. Plainly his proof for their real existence lies in the method by which he gets rid of them. Significantly, they eliminate one another and by an interrelated series of good, physical thumps. That Sans-loy alone remains unthumped does not gainsay his reality. The crime he was about to commit makes him real enough. He gallops away leaving Una in the midst of the strangest creatures of all. What the girl does among them provides a fitting climax to the comedy and completes Spenser's revelation of her character.

Still, the poet delays this final scene until he has sent Redcross through the House of Pride in Cantos Four and Five. Thus the reader approaches the climax not only with the three preliminary revelations about Una, but also with the knowledge of how her knight has fared. Certainly what happens to the hero in Cantos Four and Five stands as silent comment on what will happen to the heroine in Canto Six. Even more certainly should this alternation of serious-comic, allegory-narrative, statement-prediction stand as evidence of
Spenser's deftness. Redcross, of course, went into the House of Pride with the sign of his degradation, Duessa; was a bit shaken about her during his battle with Sans-loy when she called out encouragements to the paynim, not to him; and finally escaped from the castle unharmed physically but without having solved his real problem, Duessa; she simply follows him and betrays him into even worse trouble. Thus the reader will approach Canto Six knowing that Una is talented and versatile, but unexpectedly immature in common, ordinary first love, and furthermore suspecting that she will escape from the savage nation unharmed physically, although with her odd problem unsolved and likely to damage her even more in the future. Now at last Spenser's proposition becomes entirely specific. Within Una's adventures among the savage nation the poet reveals something about the heroine that in and by itself helps state his fundamental temperate-romantic morality.

On the principle that all these symbolic creatures exist so Una can react to them, Spenser's moral statement must necessarily involve what Una does with the fauns and satyrs. What she does first, of course, is to show still once more how basically competent she is, for she waits, "twixt feare and hope amazd" all during that long, awkward bow until they convince themselves they should continue offering her such respect. In other words, she conquers the
animal in them, just as she conquered the lion, and notice-
ably they, too, "Do kisse her feete" (I.vi.12.3,9) in sign
of submission. Una is safe. But these creatures are partly
human, so she cannot entirely direct them. They will not
harm her, but neither will they let her go. In effect, Una
is a prisoner of the savages. Still she notices they are
human enough to have developed a rudimentary social life
with a rudimentary religion. Indeed, to the sound of merry
pipes, and "Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant Spring"
(I.vi.14.4) they bring her before their own god, Sylvanus,
who is so impressed with her he does not "deeme her borne of
earthly brood" (I.vi.16.5). Then, to her amazement, she
realizes they not only respect her, they actually worship
her, for

The woodborne people fall before her flat,
And worship her as Goddesse of the wood;
(I.vi.16.1,2).

Lucky Una; safe and cherished, she can now pause to recup-
erate. Yet surely all readers must begin to wonder how long
her safety will last. Old Sylvanus was not just impressed
with her, he also "burnt in his intent" (I.vi.15.7). The
"woody Nymphes," when they see her, "fly away for feare of
fowle disgrace" (I.vi.18.7) and they might just as well,
because as the days go by, the Satyrs themselves

... scorne their woody kind,
And henceforth nothing faire, but her on earth
they find. (I.vi.18.8,9).
In reality, Una is treading a very thin line between safety and disaster because the minute those fauns and satyrs stop looking up to her they will start burning for her and there she will be, faced with another fate-worse-than.

But innocent Una is not even aware of this danger. She does not pause to recover; like the good, good young lady she is, she proceeds to do the proper thing, to convert these savages to Christianity. She begins, logically, by trying to teach them not to make an "Image of Idolatryes" (I.vi.19.7), not to treat her as a goddess, but as an ordinary mortal - the very thing she must not let them learn at all. Poor Una, this time she is not being chased towards a melodramatic situation, she is marching right into it all by herself. The why of her illogical behaviour, of course, is Spenser's specific point. Here, again, Una is revealing her blind spot towards love, that same immaturity which began to appear when she welcomed disguised Archimago; but here, she too has much less of an excuse, because there is none of the magician's magic directed against her. She is entirely on her own and shows herself to be just what she is, a very fine young woman, with all the capacity in the world, but one who nevertheless led such a sheltered life that she understands very little about young men her own age. She gets along extremely well with genuine beasts, but their company has obvious limitations. She fails altogether with
beastly men, and this failure is excusable. But with ordinary young men, men with good points and bad points, men like Redcross and these symbolic fauns and satyrs, she never knows quite where she is or what she should do, and she is just as likely to do the wrong thing altogether. In this particular instance, she also manages to persist in trying to do what is ludicrously impossible, to teach that horned, tailed and hooved crowd the higher things in life. Una is very much the ineffective do-gooder here, luckily for her, because

... when their bootlesse zeale she did restraine
From her own worship, they her Asse would worship fayn (I.vi.19.8-9).

However the comical danger of her position suddenly ceases to matter, because all at once from nowhere Satyrane appears. He, too, is a symbolic figure, obviously brought in so Una can react to him. The lesson of his life should be plain. He is satyr enough to have developed his strength and courage against the "wyld beasts" in the forest but man enough to have progressed beyond the satyrs and become a knight "Plaine, faithfull, true, and enimy of shame" (I.vi. 20.7), and he did it all because, unlike the satyrs, he had all the capacity for complete development in the first place. He has never made any attempt to teach them, to convert them, because he is mature enough to realize that these savages
can never be more than rudimentary human beings and that they are already as healthy and happy as it is possible for them to be. Leave well enough alone is his lesson to Una. Yet she does not see it even when she has before her the obvious comparison between this successful, ordinary man who has higher capacity and little mechanical instinct, and these very ordinary males who are largely mechanisms with little capacity. She does not see it even though he becomes one of her pupils and learns well "her discipline of faith and veritie" (I.vi.31.11). Poor Una is so ineffective now she cannot recognize a genuine knight when he stands before her, so she takes a long time recognizing what he represents for her most of all at the moment, escape.

With this escape, Spenser marks the end of his comic treatment of Una, and the completion of his full statement about her. He gives his heroine only one flaw, a very normal one by which he draws every reader's sympathy to her but through which, at the same time, he makes her appear very often humorous. Poor Una is not yet experienced in love, so she is unable to understand ordinary men, how they will react to her, and how she should react to them. She blunders with the symbolic fauns and satyrs and Satyrane and, Spenser implies, she must go back into serious narrative and blunder with the real Redcross, until she grows through experience into the maturity that will let her become an effective partner with her knight. Once again, therefore, Spenser
rigorously shows in general the broad lesson that maturity in love affects all aspects of living. Once again, he has stated his temperate-romantic morality, and this time he has done it with a comic touch. We cannot ask more from Spenser's humour. Yet, perhaps the most interesting point about this sequence is that it does offer even more, and that more, of course, is allegory. As the comedy rolls by, all readers recognize that Spenser seems to be using it to comment quickly and revealingly on so many subjects. Most of us, for example, must be tempted to believe that "Lyon lord" could also be saint George and England, that Sans-loy is typical of many young men about court; that kissing Una's feet possibly parallels kissing the blessed ring; and that the horned, tailed and hooved fauns and satyrs are a good approximation of most merry Englishmen. Spenser makes such suggestions, he makes them comically and, furthermore, he makes them contain at least a grain of truth. As we read this sequence we cannot help enjoying ourselves and we cannot help learning what Spenser wants us to learn. Thus once again he makes his teaching and delighting contribute to each other.
Spenser works so carefully that on the basis of the narrative alone we can almost satisfy ourselves about the fundamental questions of what teaching and delighting mean in the _Faerie Queene_. Yet the allegory still remains for examination. According to the "Letter," Spenser chose it as the most pleasing way of expressing the specific virtues, hence we must remember, again, to approach it as a teaching method, not as a body of subject matter, to see first how it teaches rather than what it teaches. In other words the examination of allegory, too, must first accept Spenser's basic assumption that he had to motivate his readers and then see specifically what he did to motivate.

Such an examination, of course, must carry along with it a constant realization that the allegory is designed to be a full feast, to be the level which provides for individual differences so that the ordinary reader may gain much, but the most interested and the most talented may gain very much more. The allegory is thus described as the secondary level in no derogatory sense. It should not be regarded merely as the level most complicated and therefore least valuable to an ordinary reader. Rather would it be better described as the level the ordinary reader approaches
after he understands the narrative, where he gains the fundamental conditions for understanding the other, allegorical level. Hence Spenser's task becomes to make this second level truly appealing for all his readers, to make it offer its more complex knowledge and more complex delight so efficiently that ordinary readers may move through it willingly, while advanced readers will be able to move into it ever more deeply.

The best place for examining allegory is the one to which Spenser himself moves next, the one, in fact, to which he must move after Holiness and Temperance, that part of the poem which presents Britomart. With the essence of this teaching established unmistakably through the narrative of Books One and Two, Spenser is obligated next to expose fully his temperate-romantic morality, to offer its more complex meanings, that is, he must express it more completely through allegory. Hence he introduces Britomart, in specific terms the patron of "Chastitie," but in general a complex heroine, knight, lover and woman, who struggles to complete her own love story through Books Three, Four and Five. Yet critics often complain about these three books. They say, for instance, that Spenser's subject matter is extremely complicated, that he breaks his original design established in the first two books, and that he moves altogether "with
the daring inconsequence of Ariosto."¹ But if full ex-
position of the morality is his main purpose here, then
this section of the poem should be a complex one, a rich
one, where he calls on his readers, doubtless in both narra-
tive and allegory, to go widely and deeply.

Putting narrative complexity aside for the moment,
how should we begin to examine the Britomart allegory?
Certainly with the fundamental proviso that a reasonably
conscientious reader, after a little practice, should be
able to interpret the greater part of Spenser's allegory.
To this proviso we should also add the realization that the
poet has used two allegorical methods. The first is straight-
forward personification of abstract qualities. The second
allows him to go within a character's mind, pull out various
emotions, embody them, and make them act as separate in-
dividuals in the story. Looked at separately, these two
methods emphasize the real difficulty allegory represents
for the reader. He must be able to shift constantly and
easily between persons and personifications. Once more
Spenser's deftness becomes evident, for he has very decidedly
helped his ordinary readers with this problem by conditioning
them in a preliminary narrative that is in itself a shifting,

¹Ernest de Selincourt, "Introduction," The Poetical
magical world. Looked at separately the two methods also reveal the possible strength of the allegory, a key strength that tends to forestall the blight of dreary, moral lecture by its essentially dramatic presentation of moral facts as humans interacting. Again Spenser would seem to have skillfully smoothed the way for his readers. Since he appeals so strongly to real, human experience in his non-real narrative world, the conclusion is inevitable that he will also capitalize on the dramatic possibilities in his non-real allegorical world to bring its morality to interesting, significant life.

Returning to the narrative for the moment, we have to begin the examination of Britomart allegory with Britomart herself, for what she is in the narrative sets out the fundamental conditions for understanding her in the allegory. What she is above all is the knight dominating the great middle sections of the poem, hence Spenser's most important character and his ideal lover. In essence, the key to understanding Britomart in narrative is the very same key to understanding her in allegory, for in both worlds she portrays the ideal, chaste lover. Her romantic quest for Artegall in story is the very stuff to be taught in allegory. Here, for the purpose of full exposition, Spenser introduces a character who well nigh unites, as neither of the preceding heroes do, the poem's two levels.
From the point of view of allegory, both earlier adventures serve to externalize, to make more clear their heroes' struggle towards a complex, theoretical virtue. For instance all Redcross' encounters with giants and dragons, though rousing battles in themselves, must nevertheless be interpreted as standing for something quite different, his soul struggling towards holiness. Guyon, on the other hand, because his temperance is much more practical, often experiences adventures that are closer to the specific virtue to be taught in allegory. For example, the three scenes climaxing his quest, the temptation in the cave of Mammon, the schooling in the House of Alma and the destruction of the Bower of Bliss, in themselves more nearly suggest his rejection of worldly gain, his acceptance of "reasons rule obedient" (II.xi.2.2) and his opposition to "lust and pleasure lewd" (II.xii.73.8). But Britomart is the final step. Through her Spenser comes as close as possible to uniting allegory with narrative, and therefore his full exposition can hardly help but be adequate, for with both levels directed towards the one purpose he has the best chance of accomplishing much, of accomplishing it with every reader, and of accomplishing it all very pleasantly, too.

If, then, Britomart unites both roles, the remaining conditions necessary to understand her must derive from her
unifying chastity. Her primary requirement is so obvious, and she meets it so extremely well, that we tend often to forget how very skilled Spenser was in choosing, first and foremost, to make the patron of "Chastitie" a woman. The choice reveals once again his drawing from the experience of real life, for by thus distinguishing Britomart, he is being sensible enough to apply this world's universal, double standard of sexual freedom even among the super knights of faery land. Indeed, he is quite consistent in grouping all the male heroes into the second half of his standard, so that Redcross is seduced by Duessa, Guyon has to be "rebuked" (II.xii.69.2) about lingering with the "naked Damzelles" (II.xii.63.6) in the pool before the Bower of Bliss, and Satyrane, we are told specifically, proves ineffective against Ollyphant because that giant does not fear him, but only

... Britomart the flowre of chastity;
For he the powre of chast hands might not beare

(III.xi.6.2-3)

The choice also very plainly embodies in Britomart Spenser's most significant lesson on love, the one the poet works thoroughly into all the main romances developing around her, the one wherein he gives the real importance in any love affair to the woman. She it is, says Spenser again and again, who is the centre of love, who is the very object that
arouses love, who is the person actually to whom love is made. In short, as she goes, so goes the courtship. Hence this is the part of the poem where Spenser's women reign supreme. Even august Arthur appears ineffectual for the first time here; he cannot catch the fleeing Florimell and has to spend the night outdoors, cold, sleepless and tormented with thoughts of the Fairy Queen (III.iv.61.1-2).

But however logically Spenser's choice hews to the facts of human nature it nevertheless presents him with one fundamental, difficult problem. If he poses as the dominating influence for the middle half of the poem firstly a woman, and secondly a woman chaste at all costs, then he has the inescapable obligation to make her as interesting as possible. Otherwise he will turn away most men readers, in fact, most readers altogether. This reaction, too, is one of the facts of human nature. Spenser, of course, does the proper thing and by means of another choice we tend often to take for granted, that of putting Britomart in armour and making her as good a knight as the rest of them. She is a doer, an accomplisher among men; in her first twenty-nine stanzas alone she unseats five knights and forces two to surrender, but yet she is entirely feminine, a "silly Mayd" (III.ii.27.7), pining for her lover, and an outstanding beauty whose "angels face," (IV.vi.19.5) when they first view it, sends Scudamour and Artegall to their knees.
Therefore as super warrior and super woman she is once more a unifying figure, this time the heroine who combines the outstanding qualities of both sexes, the heroine who is bound to strike interest, or opposition, wherever she goes. Few combinations of qualities could be more interesting in narrative or allegory.

This union of woman-man gives even more interest to Britomart, for just as soon as Spenser poses a heroine verily weeping for love, and sends her into the world disguised as a man to look for love, does he rouse a smile in most of his readers. Furthermore because this is Spenser, whose heroines always win in the end, once again all readers may relax and enjoy themselves. And Britomart is meant to be enjoyed. This is why Spenser is careful to postpone the detailing of her background and quest until Canto Two, and to introduce her as already in action, in a Canto One that seems to have been designed especially to unreel a succession of comic events. First comes Guyon, so thoroughly tossed and so thoroughly angry that Arthur has to calm Temperance with the straight-faced lie about his horse swerving and his saddle not being tied on tightly. Then in, or rather past, gallops Florimell, pale, frightened, silent, a perfect moving tableau of the maiden pursued by lust, whose melodramatic misfortune arouses Arthur, Guyon and Timias to spur to her rescue as fast "as they mote fly"
Next appear Malecasta's six champions, whom Britomart defeats singlehandedly in ten brief lines, and thereupon enters the Castle Joyous itself. Here she undergoes a scene of outright burlesque, Malecasta's "panting soft," slipping into bed beside her, and then shrieking the whole castle awake in the fright of discovery. Most certainly Spenser deliberately planned to introduce Britomart through comedy, but he is not by any means implying with Canto One that his heroine shall be entirely humorous. Neither Spenser, nor any one of us, would ever attempt to claim that virtue is anything but a serious matter and so he has his heroine encounter tragic situations. Yet he is obviously stressing in this first canto that necessary, basic humour which must underly Britomart's character. And so he should, for is this humour not another reflection from the experience of real life? His is the sensible attitude, the mature attitude, that allows him to look at young Chastity with kindly humour and then send her through adventures varying from the comic to the serious. That most of the world loves to read about such a lover hardly needs stressing.

Britomart is frequently sent into humorous action, then, and largely to make her appealing to all readers. So the problem at the moment is to begin to understand how Spenser capitalizes on her humour in the allegory. If she
represents love on both the poem's levels, and if the allegorical level bears the more complex teaching, the easiest beginning would seem to lie in understanding how Britomart affects the main love affairs arising round her, affects their real, allegorical significance, not their surface turmoil. The one characteristic that lets her react with all these differing lovers is the basic incongruity of her disguise, that is, of her ability to act both as woman and man. In other words, Spenser is again building his humour on the conflict of opposites. Thus as vigorous Britomart touches a pair of lovers in narrative, she stirs up complex interesting turmoil, but as she touches them in allegory, her effect is much more subtle, indeed it only really becomes clear in terms of what the lovers actually stand for and how Britomart alters this allegorical meaning.

For example, the first main love story she becomes involved with is that of Florimell and Marinell. In narrative this story consists of a long series of fights and pursuits and captures which the hero and heroine suffer until they are united happily in Book V. In allegory, of course, the action still speaks of love, and derives really from the characters of the lovers themselves rather than the external obstacles met in story. It is not the godly prophecy or the imprisonment in the "Dongeon deepe" (III.viii.
41.8) that cause the separation; not any such hindrance from without, but rather a hindrance from within, and to grasp this more subtle hindrance one has to interpret exactly what this knight and lady represent in the allegory. Most readers can see with little difficulty that Florimell is an admirable young lady from the court, wooed by many knights yet mature enough to decide for herself the one she wants. Marinell, on the other hand, though extremely well-born, extremely rich, and an extremely fine knight, does not want anybody, for he is the only son of a powerful mother who fussed over him, obtained a prophecy that a young lady would one day do him great harm (III.iv.25,26), and thereupon persuaded him to avoid all young ladies. Thus Marinell is another immature young man, specifically immature in that he is fearful about, and is trying to avoid, love. But Spenser maintains, and all readers will agree with him, that he who tries to avoid love only postpones the inevitable, and so inevitably Britomart appears. Marinell accosts what he believes to be a strange knight on his "rich strond" (III.iv.20.8) and for his proud pains receives a wound that brings him eventually to Florimell's dungeon where, weakened and chastened, he falls in love merely from hearing her "her great misery bemone" (IV.xii.12.9). Therefore full justice has been dealt and it has been dealt by Britomart. She only has to touch the love story of Florimell
and Marinell once, but that once is a delicious thump which sets off a whole pattern of contrasts. Her disguise produces the narrative wound and fulfills the prophecy, but the wound is also allegorical, and on this level too it acts to change Marinell from an overprotected young man depending on his mother, to a normal young man, deeply in love and depending for his very life on the presence of his beloved lady. No reader can help enjoying Britomart's demonstration of the universal truth that love conquers all, and Spenser's reiteration that a mature attitude towards love is prerequisite to maturity in all living. Spenser has indeed capitalized on Britomart's unifying position to put morality efficiently and appealingly.

It is appropriate to ask now whether he also offers a genuinely full feast in allegory, whether he provides much for the ordinary reader and much more for the advanced, and whether he helps all readers to move easily among persons and personifications. One of the most unmistakably allegorical occurrences among Britomart's adventures is the Mask of Cupid, which appears at first sight a rather mechanical, artificial device, but since it presents the serious Britomart dealing with married love gone wrong, it is an excellent place to see specifically what Spenser does with allegory.

Obviously his first step is to prepare for the Mask
very carefully. He starts well towards the beginning of the preceding canto when, in fact, Britomart first meets and talks with Scudamour. Though the knight seems to feel sincerely the loss of Amoret, he appears an excessively ineffectual husband, unarmed, "groveling" (III.xi.8.1) on the ground, and hopelessly relating his sad story. Vigorous, practical Britomart will have none of it. She tells him crisply,

That all the sorrow in the world is lesse,
Then vertues might, and values confidence,
(III.xi.14.6-7).

then stands him up, gathers his arms, buckles them on, catches his horse - in short, takes him off to where Amoret is imprisoned.

The castle of Busirane turns out at once to be unusual, for it has no proper gate with porter, but an entrance guarded by flaming, sulphurous fire. Dismayed, since this will evidently be no simple rescue accomplished by straightforward military attack, practical Britomart turns to Scudamour, not for physical help, but for information about what procedure to follow, "And how we with our foe may come to fight" (III.xi.23.4). The knight merely reiterates that his and Amoret's positions are hopeless. Thereupon Vigorous Britomart turns her back on him and strides right at the
flames, which mysteriously separate to let her pass. At this sight, Scudamour finally comes to life. "With greedy will, and envious desire" he orders the flames to yield him way, but they only rage more fiercely and drive him back "all scorcht and pitifully brent" (III.xi.26.3.9), whereupon he flings himself on the ground, beating his head and breast. Yet Spenser is careful at this point to remark that Scudamour is tormented not from the pain of burning, but rather from "great sorrow, that he could not pas" (III.xi.27.2) successfully with Britomart. From this information, the reader must conclude that there is something quite unusually significant about this fire. And of course there is; it cannot be a real fire at all, at least, a fire that burns physically. Still it is a barrier that repels Britomart for a while but, once she turns away from Scudamour and acts directly on her own, admits her to the place where Amoret is. But then it increases to repulse Scudamour when he uses similar, direct entrance tactics. Why is he denied admission to the place where Amoret is? The reason evidently lies in the pattern of his emotional reactions, and the key to his reacting as he does lies in the allegorical significance of that fire. By now Spenser has led the reader to the only conclusion possible. The fire is Amoret herself, or at least that part of Amoret's thoughts and feelings which separate
her from her husband. This must be another example of married love gone wrong, and surely the only person who can help Amoret with her problem is another woman, especially a woman who exemplifies wholesome love. Surely, also, the only person who cannot help is the husband and surely, once more, every time he tries would he not end up shouting and demanding, and then be rejected ever more angrily? Certainly he would. And just as certainly would a real or allegorical Britomart become determined to help him. Spenser's specific preparation for the Mask therefore consists of letting the reader approach it through a series of clues, given first in the external narrative and then, more importantly, in the thoughts and feelings of Britomart and Scudamour. These two approaches coalesce at the fiery door, which becomes the main clue, since with it Spenser indicates he is about to lead the reader off into allegory at the very moment when the reader can predict how Britomart will attempt to help Amoret, or can predict at least the general psychological essence of Britomart's attempt, even if he is not yet aware of the specific allegorical mechanics Spenser will use to express this help. In other words, the poet has taken very great pains through these preliminary steps to help his reader make that always necessary and always difficult shift from narrative to allegory.

As Britomart steps through the flames, then, she
takes the reader into Spenser's allegorical world. Again one must ask what the poet actually does with this world, and again the answer seems to be that he uses it first to prepare for the Mask. He is preparing the reader, of course, not Britomart. What happens to the heroine is simple narrative action hardly worth mentioning, so simple that the reader has already guessed. As a mature woman with a calm, direct approach, she first dispenses with the emotional husband, and then gains the confidence of the upset wife. For some time now she will have to listen as Amoret calms down and gradually tells her side of the entangled story. At the same time Britomart will have to console, to plan some action and finally get Amoret to agree to the action. Spenser has so managed his clues that no other conduct would be feasible. And is he not also wise in by-passing this section of narrative? No reader would concentrate for long on such dreary feminine speeches leading up to the foregone conclusion that Amoret will accept Britomart's help and go off with her for a time. The important, and therefore interesting, element in the whole interchange is Britomart's synthesizing of the facts related by Amoret, the information the girl reveals unconsciously as to her emotional state, and the various attitudes already displayed by Scudamour into a complete interpretation of what is really wrong with this entangled marriage and what can be done about it.
Spenser's specific problem thus becomes to arrange the allegory so that his reader will be able to follow and will want to follow the subtle workings of Britomart's mind as it moves to this interpretation.

The interesting question which arises at once is how the human mind works, or rather, how Spenser will portray it as working. He leaves no time for doubt but begins as soon as he has Britomart through the door, with two lines which contribute little information but a great deal of meaning.

The utmost rowme, and past the formest dore,
The utmost rowme, abounding with all precious store (III.xi.27.8-9).

The significance here lies in the repetition of the first three words, and the repetition of the slow, soft sounds throughout both lines and, in fact, at the end of the preceding line and the beginning of the following one. Read aloud, these two lines murmur very much like one of Archimago's incantations, and thereby of course Spenser immediately gives his necessary, preliminary clue. Britomart's mind will work like a mind in a dream, slowly, quietly, with few words but many scenes, that is, altogether irrationally. Thus, through this choice of a dream semblance, Spenser has very neatly led his reader into an entirely
imaginative, allegorical world yet at the same time made that world extremely real and understandable from the very fact that the reader's mind has been there many times before. Probably one should note here that the poet seems about to capture the reality of human experience even in his dream-like allegorical world.

Presuming then that the reader and Britomart have slipped into the same dream, what is to be seen in it and deduced from it? Britomart notes first that the walls are covered with rich, goodly tapestry, "Woven with gold and silke," which nevertheless shine "Like a discoloured Snake" (III.xi.28.3,8). The reason for this unattractiveness seems to lie in the many pictures woven therein, which were "all of love, and all of lusty-hed." Would the reader not want to conclude that here Britomart is confronting Amoret and forming as a first impression that the girl has all the trappings of a courtly lady but that "lusty-hed" or "Cupids warres" (III.xi.29.3,5) in some form seem to be her problem. Having established this general premise, the heroine would certainly then ask Amoret directly what is wrong, and undoubtedly the answer would be a long, emotional outburst during which Britomart could do little but listen quietly. This outburst, in fact occurs in the form of the seventeen stanzas of digression about the scenes on the
tapestries. At the same time nevertheless, this digression indicates that Britomart's mind is not idle, for there is a consistent theme reflected in each one of these flickering impressions, the theme that Cupid attacks all the gods, lords and ladies, and even the "vulgar sort" (III.xi.46.2) until they all taste his "sweet consuming woe" (III.xi.45.4). Judging by this reiterated theme, then, Britomart is paying strict attention to Amoret, but a careful reader will also deduce from these reflections that Britomart goes a step further than Amoret, considers Amoret's statements too simple an explanation, and places another, more complex interpretation on the long outburst. Chastity's mind agrees that Amoret is a thrall of love, but insists, in every single reflection, that this is a particular kind of love. It is Cupid's love, the love marked, for instance, by Jove disguising himself like a ram, "faire Helle to pervart" (III.xi.30.5) or Neptune becoming a dolphin "To snaky-locke Medusa to repayre" (III.xi.42.8). This love, in short, is closer to temporary lust, or perhaps degenerate courtly love, than to Britomart's chastity. The double interpretation comes to a focus in the statue of Cupid, which appears next and marks as it were, the end of the long, preliminary outburst. At this point, then, Amoret and Britomart both agree that love has gone wrong, but disagree in their definition of love.
After this long, preliminary sweep the pattern of reflection changes. There is still silence and description, but words begin to appear also. Underneath the statue Britomart reads a motto, "Unto the Victor of the Gods this bee," adds the remark that all the people of this house worship Cupid with "fowle Idolatree," and then stands through four lines "amazed," wondering, with "her fraile sences dazed" (III.xi.49). Any reader can probably deduce that, with Amoret now calmer, Chastity is beginning to ask a few questions and will undoubtedly feel rather amazed at some of the replies. The first answer is reflected in the motto and the comment, which seem to add up to Britomart's conclusion that Amoret actually believes in this kind of love. Next comes the phrase "Be bold," which Britomart sees as she turns around backwards and looks at the room's entrance; whereupon she stands staring at the words, through five lines this time, and also wonders what is meant. Then she seems to interpret the meaning of the phrase, because she moves forward into the next room "with bold steps" (III.xi.50.9). This room is much more ornate, in that it is overlaid with real gold. The walls still display scenes of love in a "thousand monstrous formes" (III.xi.51.7) but in addition are hung with the shattered weapons of famous conquerors who had been caught by love and "wrought their own decayes" (III.xi.52.5). Undoubtedly this sequence in-
dicates that Britomart, amazed at Amoret's conception of love, boldly steps closer to the heart of the matter and asks another question. The reply wallows ever deeper in false love. Perhaps there is also a hint of defence in the fact that the famous of this world have also been slaves to such love. At any rate, the reply is sufficiently upsetting to make Britomart stand, through a whole stanza this time, and wonder on the "wastefull emptiness" (III. xi.53.6). At this frustrating point, the same phrase "Be bold" begins to appear all over the door and walls, in the typical jumbled repetition of a dream. Then "Be not too bold" appears on another door which itself appears at the upper end of this second room. Britomart seems confused; she does not know what to do; she "could not construe it" (III.xi.54). After all, how can she proceed to straighten out Amoret? She must persist, but not too emotionally. Practically, mature Britomart follows the only possible course. She pauses; she waits "untill eventyde," always alert and, with "her welpointed weapons" (III.xi.55.1,9) at the ready, she carefully thinks her way through to the right method of helping Amoret. This right method, one might also note, whatever its particular details, seems to involve a reversion to Spenser's essentially calm, mature approach to the solving of moral problems.

The first point the reader will probably notice about
Britomart's method is that "chearelesse Night" (III.xii.1.1) has nothing to do with real night, or a day and night sequence, or even with any fixed period of time extending between day and night. Anyone who has been in a dream knows that day, night, time mean nothing in themselves; they, too, are indicators. What then could they indicate? Undoubtedly, for one thing, that Britomart is waiting patiently, "stedfast," (III.xii.2.9) and yet feeling depressed. The depression can be accounted for in the position to which she has arrived with Amoret. The girl is seriously entangled by false ideas of love, and Chastity is sensible enough to know that it is impossible to lecture morality quickly, to maintain heatedly that, "I am right and you are wrong, so you be quick and do what I say." Indeed, Scudamour had been trying such methods and had only succeeded in making matters worse. Sensible Britomart patiently reverts to the only effective method, to what is really Spenser's method of allowing ordinary, imperfect humans to learn by doing, to work their own way towards morality, but always with the condition that expert guidance must be near when the learner realizes the need of it. Britomart then must be content to wait and watch as Amoret herself works towards a full awareness of her own situation. The only active step Chastity can take is to ask the important question that will
start Amoret talking and thinking and feeling, and then hope that the girl will achieve a sensible answer before long. That question is undoubtedly reflected in the "shrilling Trompet sound," which noticeably, for perplexed Britomart, may indicate either "nigh battell, or got victory" (III.xii.1.5-6).

The total course of Amoret's struggle is obviously reflected in the Mask itself, and this struggle begins, as armed Britomart has expected, not with any logical thoughts, but a "hideous storme" (III.xii.2.1) of wind and smoke, a violent storm of painful emotions, which the Britonesse must endure patiently. Yet the emotions do finally wrench open the innermost door, whereupon Amoret produces her first recognizable thought in the image of the "grave personage" (III.xii.3.6) who significantly holds a laurel branch, certainly a victorious sign that negative emotions are spent and Amoret is at last beginning to think positively. The actual stuff of the Mask, its characters and their actions, therefore embodies Amoret's thoughts. Certainly the reader will interpret the symbols as reflecting a detailed statement about courtly love. Indeed, the very labels Britomart's mind attaches to each figure lead the reader unmistakably. Does not courtly love begin with "Ease," to the accompaniment of joyous "Minstrals"? And are the first steps not "Fancy" and "Desyre," intermingled with "Doubt," "Daunger" and "Feare"
followed by some "Hope," "Dissemblance," "Fury" and "Pleasance"? Certainly by this stage any "faire Dame" would have become irrevocably entangled, and so the personification of captive Amoret appears, with breast slashed and heart exposed to express that "her dew honour was despoyled quight" (III.xii.20.4). Cupid rides gloating behind her and proudly leads forth all the final consequences of courtly love, culminating in a "rude confused rout" of which the end is "Death with infamie" (III.xii.25.1.9). On the other hand, the beauties of this Mask, its colours, its movements, its variety, its very figures are all Britomart's, and once more all the evidence adds up to another more complex interpretation. No reader could miss the revulsion and, finally, outright horror in Chastity's mind as the pageant develops towards the ghastly embodiment of Amoret and then subsides with the prediction of eventual death. Nevertheless, despite this horror, the important fact for both women is that Amoret's story is now out in the open where something can be done about it.

However, maturity never occurs quickly. Chastity must still wait patiently until Amoret herself decides first, that she must break with courtly love completely and second,

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1 These names come from the first lines of Stanzas 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19.
that Chastity is the one to help her. The first decision arises the very next moment the girl feels able to begin talking again. As soon as Amoret opens up her mind, Britomart strides boldly through this last, inmost door and obviously asks the final, and most important question. That their situation has reached its last, either-or stage is represented in the horrible tableau of Amoret dying in bonds, dabbling in blood and Britomart standing with raised sword. Here the only alternative facing Amoret is death with courtly love or life with Chastity. What a final decision it is, and not reached with ease, either, for Britomart is wounded in its making. But Amoret makes the right choice and Britomart captures Busirane. Nevertheless, as Britomart had noted significantly at the Mask's beginning, only she with "feeble senses" and a "fraile soule" (III.xii. 6.4,5) falls so readily into such love. Amoret is by no means cured; she cannot even agree to Busirane's execution, only his imprisonment. Therefore, as the final part of the rescue, ever-sensible Britomart decides to stay with Amoret until the girl is properly schooled in the significance of chastity, a schooling that needs nine full cantos and the additional help of Arthur for completion.

We may now see that Spenser handles his allegory with as much flexibility as he does his narrative. Most certainly in the Mask of Cupid he capitalizes very skilfully on
the basic dramatic possibilities of allegory. Surely no lecturing method would have induced quite the same emotional appeal here as the figures marching through Britomart's mind or, for that matter, would have expressed quite as much morality so concisely. In truth, the Mask of Cupid is a full feast where the reader may simply choose the externals of a very real, exciting dream cast as a knightly adventure or may spend much time working out the implications of all its characters and symbols. In a broader view, any reader will probably find such complex allegory with its fuller offering even more interesting than the simpler, one-plane narrative, and not merely because there happens to be more morality there. Whenever did advanced moral theory attract many readers per se? Rather Spenser interests by the way he handles allegory, and the key to this handling is dramatic in a special way. Granted his ideas crystallize into persons, images, even monsters who act and who talk, nevertheless, they never reveal everything directly. Essentially the more complex ideas must be worked out by the reader himself, even on this most advanced teaching level; therefore, the emphasis is centred squarely on the reader-learner. In one way, Spenser presents an enticing moral puzzle, and whenever did a detective story not attract many readers per se? That many of Spenser's readers do persist in interpreting even unto his allegorical level
is surely unquestionable, and surely this persistence is evidence of his success both as moral theorist and storyteller, as teacher and delighter.
CONCLUSION

Spenser is, then, both teacher and delighter, but when we attempt to come to a balanced understanding of the poem as a whole it is the delighting we must remember to look for primarily, and simply because, as Spenser himself realized so well, the teaching cannot be successful unless it is accompanied by, and indeed expressed through, the delighting. Certainly we all acknowledge both the ideals, but possibly because we bear ourselves too seriously as evaluators approaching a poetic masterpiece, we tend to look only at the Christianity, or the politics, or the glowing poetry, and seldom take systematic stock of the comic relief, the irony, the love interest, the fallible heroes—of all the interesting events Spenser deliberately puts everywhere in the narrative. Yet these events do not stand as mere sugar-coating for his lesson; rather they become a genuine part of that lesson for they present man as he really is, morally. Perhaps once again Spenser proves more modern and progressive than most of us, for in this poem, which sets out to form us in virtue, he succeeds in showing us that the so-called frills in learning may be very definite contributors.

At least, he id demonstrably more progressive than
many of his modern critics. They have spent a large part of their time drawing from within and without the poem a most interesting and most useful body of facts. Yet such information takes on even more significance if the facts are explained as contributing to the poem's underlying purpose, and the modern (critics) disappoint here, because they tend to remain conservative, to ignore Spenser's delighting, and hence rarely to push their analyses of fact through to an adequate explanation of the poem. For example, we would prefer them to be a little less mechanical in their approach to Spenser's diction, the diction with the imitative, antique flavour that seems to have aroused controversy always. Possibly they might push more often beyond simple analysis of the kinds of words he uses to a more meaningful explanation of how those words contribute to the ordinary reader's pleasure. Granted, they have proven that a page of the *Faerie Queene* presents few real vocabulary difficulties, and they have explained that Spenser varies his words to fit varying purposes, but they have not shown any real concern for whether that overall, antique diction is a pleasing vehicle for the knightly tales or whether the various changes in diction operate to make the poem more delightful to ordinary readers, not critics.

Certainly many modern critics have attempted to work
broadly and organize their interpretations of this poem by analysing its underlying purpose, but too frequently they accept the one purpose, teaching, and ignore the delighting altogether. As a result, they look for what they think Spenser is attempting to teach, not for what he wishes to teach, forgetting that his choice and presentation of subject matter are determined by the reader-learner, not the depth of available subject matter. Usually their only concession to delighting is an admission that Spenser condescended to embody each virtue in a knight who must struggle through worldly temptations to condition himself in that virtue. In other words, the critics offer little more than a general definition of an allegorical figure, and leave to us the whole question of how Spenser makes each knight human, valuable and interesting, both in narrative and allegory. Yet all the delight is there, and the critics cannot help at times meeting it; when they do, far too often they become annoyed. Theirs is the overly conservative view, that when a passage is obviously moral, or political or poetically beautiful, it is good stuff, but when, for instance, it is obviously humorous, it is poor stuff, at least, in a poem seeking to form us in virtue.

Nevertheless we have little excuse for neglecting Spenser's delighting, for we could not have a more emphatic introduction to the poem than the "Letter to Ralegh." Herein
Spenser states repeatedly that he chose every element to make his end more "plausible and pleasing." He therefore drew only what he needed from Homer and Virgil and from Ariosto and Tasso, and then blended it with stories about British knights, most importantly the legendary Arthur, to produce an historical fiction which his particular readers would want to follow for outright pleasure as well as profit. He even altered narrative chronology, by starting the first story in the middle of the year between Gloriana's feasts, to give the fiction more interesting variety. His specific moral virtues, too, were evolved with delighting in mind. They are not pure philosophy, pure Aristotle. They are much like the virtues Aristotle discusses, but, in knightly allegory, they appeal much more to the reader's common sense. Thus Spenser reveals repeatedly in the "Letter" that he used both teaching and delighting when he put the poem together, that he considered both ideals absolutely essential, but that, of the two, he probably stressed the delighting more, simply because he was progressive enough to realize that his readers-learners would gain little profit from his morality if they did not first gain from it a good deal of delight.

Therefore he introduces the delight immediately at the very opening of the *Faerie Queene*. Indeed the whole
narrative development with Redcross and Una is an unmis-
takable attempt to catch and retain the reader's interest. This beginning, of course, presents Spenser with the great problem of handling both the narrative level and the allegorical level, of allowing each to run its independent way and make its own contribution, and yet of uniting both in his characters, who must be able to live believably in both narrative and allegorical worlds. Hence immediately he puts Redcross and Una into a magical setting, where the probability of real life does not matter, so that his hero and heroine, and all his readers, may move freely from the one magical level to the other, from the narrative world to the allegorical. Yet Redcross and Una are no mere life-
less figures. Spenser makes them appear as two inexper-
enced young people who grow through very human mistakes into mature lovers and partners, and in this way, through their simple narrative adventures, he makes them not only attractive to every reader but also valuable as teachers of practical moral conduct. He even puts them in outright comic relief, and again not merely for the reader's enter-
tainment, but as a genuine reflection of the experience of real life. Surely pure fun plays a delightful and useful part in all our lives.

Spenser also both teaches and delights in allegory. The great middle section of the poem, recounting the ad-
ventures of Britomart, is a good example because it is here that the practical, romantic morality begun in Book One's narrative receives to full, allegorical expression. Spenser's obvious first problem is to smooth the way for all his readers, not just the most serious and most competent, into Book Three, Four and Five allegory. To this end he chooses Britomart for the dominating figure in the three books and makes her portray ideal love on both levels, narrative and allegorical. But Spenser also makes her a most humanly interesting young woman in pursuit of her knight, Artegall, and a basically humorous one besides. In this way she is an outstanding example of his delighting. Yet above all, in allegory, she is an efficient instrument for his most advanced teaching, and even here, in the most complex scenes, Spenser does not forget his ordinary reader-learner. He never once resorts to dreary moral lecturing, rather he introduces Britomart, and the experience she is portraying allegorically, through a series of tantalizing clues that arouse all readers to work out the moral message and inspire the most serious and the most competent readers to persist until they have worked out his most subtle teaching. Thus, in the end, Spenser succeeds in delighting even the most demanding readers.

We cannot of course prove that Spenser is always effective, or that, having challenged us, he succeeds in
motivating us to learn. But we can show how much he actually shapes his narrative and allegory to promote learning. Probably his essential purpose behind all the shaping is to show how his characters have to learn their morality by living it. His essential problem in teaching us is to make us participate in the poem, make us live through its experience and grow with its characters into virtue. As Sidney notes, we are to be led towards self-knowledge, with the aim of "well dooing" and not of "Well knowing onely." This is why, above and beyond all technique, all narrative, and all allegory, Spenser takes us into a world of poetry, without question the most magical world of all, the one world to which all of us must inevitably surrender. Thus he is more than teacher and delimiter, primarily he remains Spenser the poet, and the most fitting summation of his effectiveness in the Faerie Queene lies in the Apologie.

... and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the Chimney-corner ....

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PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES

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