

EXEMPLARS OF INTEMPERANCE IN BOOK II OF  
EDMUND SPENSER'S FAERIE QUEENE

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF TEMPERANCE

Temperance, an elusive and difficult-to-understand concept, is perhaps best defined as the balance point, or golden mean, between the extremes of passion or excessive emotions and total insensitivity or brutishness. It is the quality which allows man to live his life with self-restraint and dignity, for temperance enables him to live with and to control his passions while he lives on the earth. As a quality, it provides man with the necessary tools of reason for balancing his physical nature and his spiritual side. Temperance is thus the moderating or self-constraining principle within man's reach that makes possible man's control of himself and all aspects of his nature while he is on the earth.

The golden mean has become a part of both classical and Christian thought during the past two thousand years of man's history to the point that both systems of thought have incorporated the idea that man must control his emotions. However, the basic difference between the two systems of thought is that the classical philosophers focused their discussions on man himself, while Christian theologians centered their discussions on man's relationship to God, not

on man himself. Christianity thus developed temperance into a necessary part of religion and later into a crucial part of salvation, with man's ability to control his own life being second to God's ability to control man on the earth. The later Christian view of temperance differed markedly from the earlier concepts, and to understand the changes and adaptations that occurred, we must examine temperance as it has come down to us from early man's thought.

The Greek and Roman philosophers brought the study of man's existence into focus. One of the greatest of all philosophers, Aristotle, can be taken as the starting point for this discussion because the Ethica Nichomachea<sup>1</sup> first synthesizes a system of moral philosophy which attempts to reconcile man's spiritual nature and physical nature. Herschel Baker speaks of Aristotle's position as a master philosopher:

Because Aristotle places man in his proper context at the middle of the scala natura, he is able to formulate an ethics that requires not only the fullest exploitation of man's reason but also the gratification of those lower faculties without which he<sup>2</sup> would cease to be man, and become something else.

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<sup>1</sup>Trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1943).

<sup>2</sup>The Dignity of Man: Studies in the Persistence of an Idea (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 68.

Because Ethica Nichomachea deals with all aspects of man's emotional nature, from his internal morals and will to his involvement with the state, the work of Aristotle is a starting point in this study of temperance and its enemies. Aristotle first compiles many ideas and systems of thought on man's peculiar position in the universe and says that one of the facets of man is found in his ability to reach the golden mean in all areas of his life.

Aristotle explains that man's nature is dual, that is, both physical and spiritual. He looks upon reason as the governing principle in the universe and also sees reason as the faculty which will allow man to gain the temperate balance necessary for life. For Aristotle, temperance deals primarily with the abstention from pleasure, but it also deals with such things as the use of money, the achievement of honor, the control of anger, and the perception of truth.<sup>3</sup> The enemy of the temperate balance in man is excess or extreme deficiency in any area of man's existence.<sup>4</sup> For example, man should not be excessively frugal, because the extreme state of frugality would lead to miserliness. If he practiced excess, however, he would soon waste his resources and become a spendthrift. By balancing the tendencies of miserliness

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<sup>3</sup>Aristotle, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup>Aristotle, p. 109.

and wastefulness, he can arrive at a balance point where he will spend a moderate amount of money when it is necessary and restrain himself from spending money when it is not necessary.

In regard to bodily pleasures, man may exercise temperance or he may go to either extreme excess or extreme deficiency. If a man is self-indulgent in excessive bodily pleasures, he participates in a voluntary state of excess<sup>5</sup> which may resemble childish faults<sup>6</sup> because he, like a child, willfully does not exercise mature judgment; thus self-indulgence is more opposed to temperance than incontinence is,<sup>7</sup> because the incontinent man is simply weak and the self-indulgent man voluntarily makes his choice to indulge in excess. However, both are controlled by passion instead of reason.

Aristotle's view of temperance as the median between emotional excess and deficiency can be seen in the writings of Seneca, whose view of temperance is undoubtedly influenced by his Stoic background. Seneca feels that it is almost impossible to control one's passions if they are indulged in the slightest; he advises man to follow a straight course

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<sup>5</sup>Aristotle, p. 183.

<sup>6</sup>Aristotle, p. 185.

<sup>7</sup>Aristotle, p. 109.

by retreating from the objects which allure him.<sup>8</sup> He further says that no emotion is harmful when it first begins but that the emotions grow in intensity until they control man completely. He advises man to use reason instead of the senses to control his life;<sup>9</sup> if man will use reason in this manner, he will gain an understanding of the Supreme Good which can exist only when virtue and honor are upheld by reason.<sup>10</sup> Thus temperance for Seneca is a strict control of the passions by reason which is, in effect, a total subduing of the emotions in favor of reason.

For Seneca, the Supreme Good in man is the free and upright mind, which subjects other things to itself and itself to nothing. It is only through the mature exercising of this free mind that man is able to judge evils. Seneca believes that this perfect reasoning lies within man if he can control his selfish nature and his passions. If man subdues his emotions, the exercise of reason will so sharpen his mind that he will control his vices and will become able to shake off his faults.<sup>11</sup> Thus Seneca emphasizes that man's ability to balance all aspects of his

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<sup>8</sup>Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, ed. E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, trans. Richard M. Gummere (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1924), p. 433.

<sup>9</sup>Seneca, p. 437.

<sup>10</sup>Seneca, pp. 437-39.

<sup>11</sup>Seneca, p. 337.

being through the exercise of reason depends on man himself.

In a similar manner, Marcus Tullius Cicero maintains that reason is essential to the perfection of the universe. He sees reason as being an integral part of the divinity of the stars and of everything within the universe, including man.<sup>12</sup> Reason is that faculty bestowed on man alone by the gods which enables him to weigh all aspects of problems. Man is alone in the exercising of this gift, for he basically has free will in determining the course of his life. However, only the virtuous use of reason is beneficial to man and the universe, for man has been given a great boon by the gods<sup>13</sup> and he is able to use this to better and further his aims. He has been given a fine gift which will enable him to order his life, but the gods may be indifferent to his use of it. Therefore, it is his responsibility to rationally use this divine gift. Since man is both body and spirit, reason will aid him in finding the balance point, or temperate mean, between the two sides of his nature.

At the end of the classical period of learning, temperance was the golden mean between man's passionate nature and his intellectual nature. Man was essentially

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<sup>12</sup> De Natura Deorum, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1933), p. 141.

<sup>13</sup> Cicero, p. 351.

free to mold his character, but he could not understand his own life or his purpose in living if he did not exercise reason in order to develop the free, clear-thinking mind. If he did not use reason, the emotions would drain his ability to control his own life from him and he would become weak, torn by the storms of his passions.

During the medieval period, however, temperance was assigned a slightly different position in Christian thought. Thomas Aquinas, writing in his Summa Theologica, a monumental work which examined God's existence in the universe, the angels and their functions, and man's spiritual and physical nature in relation to the universe, places temperance in the position of a cardinal virtue, for no other virtue can exist without it.<sup>14</sup> Temperance is an elusive balance point in man's emotional and rational life, and this balance point in the emotions is necessary before man can master such virtues as honesty, chastity, purity, and truth. He must overcome the selfish control of his emotions by the passions before he can learn and exercise such virtues. He says, in a vein quite similar to that of the ancient philosophers, that temperance allows man to use reason as a flexible rule in doing what is best for all others as well

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<sup>14</sup>The Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, revised Daniel J. Sullivan (Chicago: William Benton, Publisher, 1952), Volume II, p. 56.

as himself. In this type of logic, reason is subordinate to temperance. In many other respects, Aquinas holds the classical view that temperance restrains man from passionate acts. It does not mean that man is insensitive; he simply rules his own senses by the action of reason. Aquinas further states that temperance has two parts: shamefacedness, or recoil from what is disgraceful, and honesty, that facet which bestows a beauty of man.<sup>15</sup> Aquinas divides habits of man into the categories of virtues and vices, with such qualities as chastity and gluttony to demonstrate the respective categories. He then discusses the relationship between continence and temperance and shows that temperance is a positive control of the senses by reason and that continence is the harsh or strict control of the unwilling senses.<sup>16</sup> Thus he shows that temperance blends both aspects of man's existence into a healthy, contributive force which allows him to fully utilize his potential while remaining in full control of himself.

During the Italian Renaissance, the Florentine Platonists basically maintained the classical and medieval concept of temperance. Catholic doctrine felt that man had fallen after succumbing to temptation in the Garden

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<sup>15</sup>Paul Glenn, A Tour of the Summa (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Hurder Book Company, 1960), pp. 274-76.

<sup>16</sup>Glenn, p. 282.



of Eden; however, he was not totally corrupt, but instead stained, and his salvation would come from God after he had lived a temperate, well-balanced life. According to medieval theologians, man's reason had been darkened by the fall,<sup>17</sup> so that perfect temperance, the goal of the classical world, was impossible in the Christian world. The earlier classical view had placed man in a more prominent position as the controller of his own universe. The major concern of the humanists was an educational program based on the Greek and Roman classicists. To the humanists, the classics represented the highest level of human achievement and therefore created a desirable type of human being.<sup>18</sup> Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, two of the most famous of all humanists, worked within the classical framework to support their ideas on the dignity of man as an individual in a mortal world who controlled his own existence and destiny. Yet this physical world cooperated with the spiritual world. Man had the ability to work toward perfect temperance, if he so desired, and thus to come to as nearly perfect an existence as

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<sup>17</sup>Paul Oskar Kristeller and John Herman Randall, Jr., "Introduction," in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp.3-4.

<sup>18</sup>"Introduction," in Books I and II of "The Faerie Queene": The Mutability Cantos and Selections from the Minor Poetry, ed. Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1965), p. 57.

was possible in an imperfect world. Ficino celebrated the power of the mind in controlling man's life because reason, coming from the highest authority in the universe, enables man to move toward God, that infinite and eternal Entity. The soul strives to fulfill both sides of its nature, both intellectual and willful. However, the intellect is more perfect than sense, for its exercise of reason, through the guidance of free choice, enables man to rationally choose that way which is best for him. This way, of course, is the temperate mean in life which keeps man from being led astray by his senses while he continues his journey to the highest perfection, God.<sup>19</sup>

Man is therefore somewhat like Prometheus, for he is in constant turmoil. He rarely experiences peace, for both sides of his nature are active and powerful. But in conforming with the righteous will of God, man moves toward the infinite.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola reaffirms Ficino's belief that man exists on the earth with free will but develops the idea further by saying that man is the molder and maker of himself. Man must closely and carefully guard his

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<sup>19</sup>Marcilio Ficino, Five Questions Concerning the Mind, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. Cassirer, Kristeller, and Randall; trans. Josephine Burroughs (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 194-95, 201-207.

position on the earth by emulating the angels. This emulation must involve the control over his passion as well as his reason by the action of the mind. In this manner, man can wash away ignorance and sin so that his passions may not rave at random or his "reason through heedlessness ever be deranged."<sup>20</sup>

Pico desired to combine the classical schools of Aristotle and Plato because he saw a certain harmony between them. Renaissance writers saw Aristotle's doctrine as being a system of ideas which proposed a supremacy of natural reason, a denial of creation, personal immortality, and a unity of the intellect. However, humanists such as Ficino upheld the concept of personal immortality while trying to show the harmony between Christianity and Platonism, because both systems were comparable since they dealt with universal principles.<sup>21</sup> Pico attempted to reconcile the two systems of thought for the same reason, and said that man, in his freedom to choose what style his life could have, could elevate himself toward the angels. This elevation would

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<sup>20</sup>Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man, trans. Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, p. 229.

<sup>21</sup>Josephine Burroughs, "Introduction," in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, p. 187.

occur if man could tame his passions, cleanse his soul, and practice piety in his life.<sup>22</sup> Thus Christian ideals of a pure and pious life were combined with the classical ideal of the taming of the senses by reason to produce a system which gave man dominion over his own existence. Man was free to choose his own destiny.<sup>23</sup> Unlike Cicero, who degrades the concern of the gods for man,<sup>24</sup> Pico acknowledges the interest of God in man and says that the soul strives through reason to come into harmony with God, but he reserves some control for man by saying that man has free will in his own sphere; that is, man himself controls the pleasure and passions by reason. Man must consciously make reason operate within his life; the responsibility for its effectiveness lies with him alone. Once the exercise of reason occurs, temperance will bring health to the physical and spiritual facets of man's total existence.<sup>25</sup>

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, the nephew of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, maintains the belief that

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<sup>22</sup>Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Introduction," in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, p. 229.

<sup>23</sup>Paul Oskar Kristeller, The Classics and Renaissance Thought (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 60.

<sup>24</sup>Cicero, p. 357.

<sup>25</sup>Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, p. 248.

reason is important for man's examination of the world about him. Gianfrancesco Pico emphasizes the importance of reason as the controlling agent over man's imagination.<sup>26</sup> If man's rational judgment is defective, it is so because his imagination has irrationally controlled him to the point that reason cannot be fully exercised, and thus his imagination, working through his senses, has led him astray.

Pico further says that irrational men are responsible for the transmission of many incorrect conceptions of man<sup>27</sup> (which we will later see quite dramatically in Spenser), and in accordance with the views of his uncle and Aristotle, he states that reason keeps man from acting rashly when he feels that he has been injured. Thus for Gianfrancesco Pico the soul dwells on the border between the higher world of eternal reason and the lower world of sense and feeling. Man must balance himself between these two worlds so that he will turn toward the eternal while remaining unimpeded by the overwhelming power of his imagination.

The two Picos, with Marsilio Ficino, were leading figures in the Italian Renaissance. Their works greatly influenced many persons in Italy and in other European

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<sup>26</sup>On the Imagination, trans. Harry Caplan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), p. 47.

<sup>27</sup>Gianfrancesco Pico, p. 65.

countries, and their treatises, along with those of the ancient philosophers, were avidly read and studied during the English Renaissance.<sup>28</sup> Because these humanists were so widely studied and debated in English universities, their philosophical ideas were incorporated into English thought.

One critic presents the relationship between Ficino and Colet as that of two scholars who exchanged ideas. Colet was basically an Aristotelian in that he liked the practical man of action; Ficino was the ultimate authority on Platonism.<sup>29</sup> Colet felt that:

From the soul's desire for the body came about the ruin of the soul . . . to scorn the body and hold it in contempt is to set out on the road back to life and to the incorporeal world from which souls originally come.<sup>30</sup>

Colet did, however, see temperance as a virtue, opposite lust, which helps man in controlling his desires through the exercise of appropriate reason.<sup>31</sup> Reason is the stable entity while the passions are active,<sup>32</sup> and this correct use of reason leads up to God, not down to the bodily

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<sup>28</sup>Kristeller, The Classics and Renaissance Thought, p. 60, and Sears Jayne, John Colet and Marsilio Ficino (Aberdeen: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 40.

<sup>29</sup>Jayne, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup>Jayne, p. 69.

<sup>31</sup>Jayne, p. 99.

<sup>32</sup>Jayne, p. 112.

desires. Colet further maintains that desire and will are opposed to Christian law and make men evil and wicked because they are slaves to their bodily desires.<sup>33</sup> In comparison to Ficino, "Colet had relatively little confidence in man's ability to reach God by intellectual means."<sup>34</sup>

English Renaissance philosophers such as Colet and Hooker had reversed the stand on the dignity of man as an individual; they did not see man as the controller of his daily life and his ultimate destiny. Some of the attitude can, of course, be traced to Calvin and his Protestant zeal, but other facets of it can be traced back to the Stoic philosophers and the Ascetic tradition. Whereas the Catholic view of man held that he was diseased, the Protestant view was that man was totally corrupt. Much of this current of thought can be traced through philosophy back to ancient India.

Asceticism, which entered Western philosophy around the end of the sixth century B.C., emphasized the idea that man must turn away, either partially or completely, from his desires.<sup>35</sup> The early Stoics thought that emotion was

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<sup>33</sup>Jayne, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup>Jayne, p. 124.

<sup>35</sup>Carl Wellman, "Asceticism," in Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 171.

irrational desire; in developing this idea, many medieval theologians laid the foundation for asceticism which greatly influenced Western philosophy until the Renaissance. The primary belief of these medieval theologians was that man should subdue the desires of the flesh to achieve moral virtue.

The Institutes of Jean Calvin show the influence of Stoic philosophy on his work. In "Dedication of the Institutes of the Christian Religion," Calvin maintains that man is so depraved that the knowledge of God is corrupted and extinguished within him. Man may seek God and a better life for himself on the earth, but he will not reach his goal because the cloud of original sin has obscured his sight. In Calvinistic thinking, man possesses no inherent strength that enables him to deliver himself from evil. That is, in opposition to the Catholic view that man is diseased, Calvinism vehemently affirms that man is totally ruined and that he is saved by the grace of God alone.

In many ways, Calvin bears a striking resemblance to Seneca, for he urges man to vigorously oppose the evils which overrun and are natural to the world.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Jean Calvin, "Dedication of the Institutes of the Christian Religion," in Prefaces and Prologues to Famous Books, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1910), p. 42.



His type of temperance, then, is the strict control that man exercises over his passions; he does not believe that the passions can be amicably controlled by reason, as Aristotle does. A part of his philosophy may be colored by his literal interpretation that Satan stirred up the power of men to suppress the truth by violence at its first appearance and that Satan later resorted to subtlety.<sup>37</sup> That is, Satan at first was content to move man away from God by violent acts, but later, as man grew more skillful, Satan moved to deception and trickery to pull man away from God. Such a statement may have influenced Spenser's division of adversaries in Book II of The Faerie Queene, for the violent enemies of temperance are Guyon's earliest foes; the subtle ones, which are even more dangerous than the violent ones, are placed later so that Sir Guyon may gradually build his virtue into a solid paragon of temperance. For Calvin, such a force of virtue could be built only with God's help.

Calvin felt that the will must conform to the direction of reason<sup>38</sup> and that man could not discern between good and

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<sup>37</sup>Calvin, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup>James MacKinnon, Calvin and the Reformation (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), p. 228.

evil because his reason had been clouded through Adam's corruption.<sup>39</sup> Thus man cannot rely upon himself to gain union with God:

We must eschew the temerity and curiosity of reason and keep strictly to the word, which . . . contains all that is legitimate to know on the subject.<sup>40</sup>

Calvin had intended to destroy man's last vestige of confidence in himself. In juxtaposition to Calvin is Thomas Hooker, who, although he held some of Calvin's views, nevertheless opposed others. Hooker's sermons represent the best of Puritan religious thought.<sup>41</sup> Along with many Renaissance thinkers, Hooker clung to the idea that reason was superior to the will, although the will was "the nexus between judgment and sensation."<sup>42</sup> That is, man's desire to control his own life was important in coordinating the sensations he received from the outside world and his judgmental faculties. But even though this elevation of reason gave him some control over his mortal existence, man's salvation was even more crucial and further removed

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<sup>39</sup>Calvin, Institutes, as quoted in MacKinnon, pp. 232-33.

<sup>40</sup>Calvin, Institutes, as quoted in MacKinnon, pp. 247-48.

<sup>41</sup>Everett H. Emerson, "Introduction," in Redemption: Three Sermons by Thomas Hooker (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Fascimilies & Reprints, 1956), p. viii.

<sup>42</sup>Baker, p. 290.

from his control:

Salvation could only be discovered through knowledge based upon facts and not by opinions founded upon "those imperfect notions of truth held by natural man."<sup>43</sup>

In spite of man's inability to perceive the ultimate truth, Hooker maintains man does have the choice to either accept or reject conversion because it is mandatory for his soul's salvation. However, he does not involve himself in God's new covenant with man, for only the spiritual or faith-receiving part of man's nature is involved in it. Hooker rejects man's knowledge as a way to salvation or understanding of the world and his place within it; only grace can give man the perfect knowledge.

Thus Calvin and Hooker, both prominent figures in the Protestant Reformation, de-emphasized man's ability to control his own life and certainly to determine his final destiny. Unlike the ancient, medieval, and Italian humanist thinkers, who held that man's free will and superior position placed him above the animals in a position to live a temperate, balanced life through the exercise of reason, Hooker and Calvin saw man as the totally depraved being who is saved and enlightened only through grace.

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<sup>43</sup>Frank Shuffelton, Thomas Hooker 1586-1647 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 62.

Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene deals or was to deal with numerous virtues, among them temperance, which is exemplified in Book II. To understand the organization and meaning behind Book II, it is necessary to examine it in the light of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance discussions of temperance, for these earlier writers and philosophers were read, studied, and used as models in Renaissance compositions.<sup>44</sup>

Vergil K. Whitaker states that Spenser accepted both Catholic and Protestant views of man within the typical traditional Christianity, which, of course, had its basis in ancient philosophy. According to Whitaker, all Renaissance theologians agreed that after the fall:

. . . the reason was beclouded, and although it still naturally chose what seemed good, it was not incapable of distinguishing clearly between a real and an apparent good, and the soliciting of the appetites or a false choice of a lesser good might lead to sin.<sup>45</sup>

According to Whitaker, Spenser is the first literary representative of the via media,<sup>46</sup> because he subscribes to elements of both Catholicism and Protestantism with a knowledge of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance philosophers.

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<sup>44</sup>Kristeller, The Classics and Renaissance Thought, pp. 39-40.

<sup>45</sup>The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought (New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1966), p. 35.

<sup>46</sup>Whitaker, p. 70.

He does not look on man as being totally depraved, but he does recognize the importance of God's grace in guiding his actions.

Thus Spenser, in relating the story of Sir Guyon, draws on ancient, medieval, and Renaissance philosophers to provide us with his unique amalgamation of ideas. This thesis will analyze Guyon's quest as it relates to philosophical thought and will show that Guyon, in exercising temperance, is practicing free will and moderate Stoicism while providing himself and us with the opportunity to see that man, if he uses reason, can bring about divine, or almost divine, perfection on the earth. The thesis will examine each encounter that Guyon has with exemplars of intemperance in the light of philosophy, and it will show that each incident is a means of negatively teaching the value of temperance.

## CHAPTER II

### A MOTIF FOR TEMPERANCE AND FOR GUYON'S QUEST

Sir Guyon, the hero or exemplar of virtue in Book II of the Faerie Queene, meets various obstacles during his journey to the ultimate threat to man's delicate balance of temperance, the Bower of Bliss. These obstacles, which represent threats to man's precarious balance of life between his emotional excesses and his intellectual power, can be divided into two categories: those which are violently excessive and which deal with emotional surplus, and those which are subtly deceitful. The intemperate excesses of the former are easily dealt with on a physical level; those of the latter must be dealt with through skillful reason and much intellectual exercise.

Soon after Sir Guyon sets out from the fairieland of Gloriana in order to exercise his virtue, he comes upon three characters: Mordant, Amavia, and Ruddymane. Although Guyon already possesses his virtue, the purpose of his journey is that he must learn how to utilize his virtue so that it will exert a beneficial effect on his life. The incident involving the unfortunate couple and their son, one of the earliest in the book, provides a motif or theme for the entire work, for their previous actions, related to

Guyon, present both Guyon and the reader with a model for man's predicament in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Mordant, who has drunk from the cup of Acrasia, dies in fulfillment of the curse which condemns to death those men who stoop to excess. Amavia, who has dressed in the clothing of a palmer to search for her errant husband, commits suicide soon after Mordant's death. And Ruddymane, the fruit of their union, bathes his hands in the blood and symbolically bathes his soul in the excesses of his parents.

This episode in Book II divides the passions into the irascible and the concupiscible, symbolized by Mordant and Amavia, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Acrasia's Bower of Bliss, the recurring symbol of extreme and deceit, is also present.<sup>3</sup> It is here that the value of temperance in man's life is first explained and demonstrated.

According to Judith Anderson, the Palmer uses the Ruddymane incident to present a story in which the opposites

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele, "Introduction," in Books I and II of "The Faerie Queene": The Mutability Cantos and Selections from the Minor Poetry (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1965), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Vergil K. Whitaker, The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought (New York: Gordian Press, 1966), p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis H. Miller, Jr., "A Secular Reading of The Faerie Queene, Book II," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 313.

of passionate lust and frigid purity, neither of which offers salvation, are shown.<sup>4</sup> Alistair Fowler notes that the episode of Mordant, Amavia, and Ruddymane may be a theological interpretation of the ability of moral virtue to regenerate life. He feels that Mordant is the flesh, that Amavia is man's inward conscience, and that the fountain symbolizes "the various phases of repentance and regeneration."<sup>5</sup> Thus Ruddymane is baptismally regenerated by bathing in the fountain even though he retains the old identity of the fallen man.<sup>6</sup>

Although I would agree with Fowler's interpretation of Ruddymane, I disagree strongly with his allegorical interpretation of Amavia and Mordant. On the allegorical level it would seem best to interpret Mordant as being representative of the higher powers of the soul and Amavia as being representative of man's generative and emotional elements.<sup>7</sup> Fowler's strict theological interpretation would neglect the damage done to man's intellectual faculties by

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<sup>4</sup>"The Knight and the Palmer in The Faerie Queene, Book II," Modern Language Quarterly 31(1969), 160-79.

<sup>5</sup>"The Image of Mortality: The Faerie Queene, II.i-ii," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 143.

<sup>6</sup>Fowler, p. 143.

<sup>7</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 56.



passion and would negate the idea that a collapse of the mental faculties would also lead to an eventual destruction of man's entire existence.

Thus the entire incident fits into the framework of man's intemperance by divorcing one part of his existence from another. Mordant is lured into the Bower of Bliss through excess, an excess that destroys him, and Amavia commits suicide when she allows the emotional elements of her soul to overcome her rational faculties (which have died in Mordant). Their infant, in bathing his hands in the blood, shows that he is subject to the effects of original sin but is not totally depraved; this guilt transference is shown in the inability of Guyon to wash his hands clean, and the absence of total depravity is shown by Guyon's taking the child to the castle of Medina.

In this respect, then, Ruddymane is the man who has inherited the defects of the soul from his parents, who were cursed by their fall from grace. He is not, however, totally corrupt in the Calvinistic sense; if he were, Guyon, who recognizes himself in Ruddymane, would not take Ruddymane to the Castle of Medina. Guyon shows that man is not totally corrupt because he can still learn the way of God and reach within himself to find the temperate balance necessary for life. Thus Spenser shows that Guyon, through the knowledge of what man's actions will be if he does not

exercise temperance, recognizes that Ruddymane must be taken to a place where he can learn how to balance the two sides of his nature. Medina herself, who will teach him to live in a temperate and well-balanced life, symbolizes the golden mean or balance between excess and deficit and is thence a symbol of the classical view of temperance, that virtue which man learns by balancing all sides of his nature, both intellectual and physical.

If Spenser meant for this incident to be interpreted in the Calvinistic sense, grace or a figure allegorically representing it would be present. Although grace does come into play later, it is not seen here as the single means to salvation, as Calvin would have it. Here, temperance is the saving virtue because it helps man live with himself in the world. It also allows man to remain in control of his life. Temperance enables man to decide what type of life he will lead. Thus, he must actively choose his lifestyle. This opinion would be in opposition to that of Calvin, who held that man is so corrupt that he is unable to decide on a course of his life without the grace of God.

Since the Mordant and Amavia incident is the motif or outline for the entire book, we can divide the other incidents into two categories of intemperance, those which contain characters who are intemperate in their emotional

excesses and those which contain characters who are intemperate in their cunning deceit. In the former category are Huddibras, Sansloy, Braggadochio, Trompart, Occasion, Furor, Phedon, Atin, Pyrochles, Cymochles, and Maleger. In the latter category are Phaedria, Mammon, Maleger (to some extent), and Acrasia. Those characters of the former category are distinguished by the forthright, obvious, and deadly attacks they make through seemingly reasonable arguments. However different these two groups of adversaries seem to be, they are nevertheless equally dangerous; they differ only in the method of attack. Thus we see that Guyon is confronted with every imaginable type of intemperance to insure that his test will be thorough.

Spenser is not concerned with Book II to give man the final victory over excess. He is concerned here only to present the steps that man must take to remain temperate. Sir Guyon, at the opening of Book II, already possesses his virtue, for he is simply the untried knight. He is guilty of excess and defect from time to time, particularly when he allows himself to listen to Archimago and Duessa, but he never completely succumbs. The entire purpose of his quest is not to find temperance but to exercise it so that he will know how to utilize the virtue when he needs it. In this respect Spenser follows the Puritan idea of active rather than contemplative virtue, for Guyon has to

practice and daily use his virtue before it can be returned to him beneficially by the fruits of his actions.

When Guyon first sets out from fairieland, he is leaving a symbol of perfection--the homeland of Gloriana and the philosophers. He must leave this domain because his virtue must be tested; that is, no virtue is good until it has been tested and actively used in the face of adversity. Because he must be tested, Guyon sets out with his Palmer, who symbolizes reason; Spenser here shows us that reason guides man toward the golden mean.

There is a long-standing philosophical basis for the juxtaposition of reason and temperance. Throughout history, philosophers have recognized the importance of reason in man's life, particularly in his control of his life. Aristotle confirms that man has two facets to his soul, the rational and the irrational.<sup>8</sup> Practical wisdom, which is the capacity to act with regard to human goods, is a state brought about in man by virtue of his reasoning power.<sup>9</sup> This practical wisdom, because it relies on reason, creates a continent and temperate man.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ethica Nichomachea, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1934), p. 329.

<sup>9</sup>Aristotle, p. 329.

<sup>10</sup>Aristotle, p. 425.

Seneca asserts that reason, not the senses, is the governing element over matter.<sup>11</sup> A child, to him, reaches the true Good only when he attains reason; that is, reason is the exercise and sharpening tool by which man can climb to the supreme Good of a free and upright mind which subjects other things to itself and itself to nothing.<sup>12</sup> Thus to Seneca, perfect reason lies within man if he will simply use it.<sup>13</sup> On the subject of man's limitations, Seneca says that the "real reason for failure is unwillingness, the pretended reason, inability."<sup>14</sup> Man is unwilling to change because to change would require controlling his emotions and disciplining his will.

Cicero says that man derives his reason from the universe and that reason is essential to the perfection of the universe. Man's gift of reason is divine and is bestowed on man alone for his virtuous use.<sup>15</sup> That is, reason is not an end in itself but a means that man can use

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<sup>11</sup>Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, trans. Richard M. Gummere, ed. E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1925), p. 437.

<sup>12</sup>Seneca, p. 445.

<sup>13</sup>Seneca, p. 443.

<sup>14</sup>Seneca, p. 337.

<sup>15</sup>De Natura Deorum, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1933), p. 141.

to better himself toward a virtuous end. On this point, Aristotle also says that some people identify perfect reason as God, Who holds the world together and Who is all-pervading.

Thomas Aquinas, in Summa Theologica, says that reason imposes on us a general rule by which we use pleasure to preserve our lives.<sup>16</sup> Aquinas thus sees reason as the controlling factor in man's life.<sup>17</sup> Ficino sees reason as the tamer of the senses, although man is a Promethian figure; he cannot ever rest from his vigil.<sup>18</sup> Gianfrancesco Pico says that reason frees man from defects of the imagination; reason aids and guides man in determining truth.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, then, reason is the guiding principle behind virtue but is not virtue itself. This idea is demonstrated in the role of the Palmer in Book II of The Faerie Queene. Sir Guyon already possesses temperance; he must have reason beside him to guide him in the most virtuous use of his temperance. Although the Palmer is physically present in

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<sup>16</sup>Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas of Aquinas, trans. L. K. Shook (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 295.

<sup>17</sup>Paul J. Glenn, A Tour of the Summa (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Hurder Book Company, 1960), p. 279.

<sup>18</sup>Five Questions Concerning the Mind, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 207.

<sup>19</sup>On the Imagination, trans. Harry Caplan (New York: Yale University Press, 1930), p. 65.

several parts of the allegory, Sir Guyon, as he incorporates the use of his virtue, shows us that he is quite capable of later exercising the virtue alone; that is, he learns how to incorporate reason into his own character so that it does not have to be infused at particular points, and he learns to draw upon his own storehouse of reason to analyze and interpret situations.

In the beginning of Book II, however, Guyon is confronted with several excesses without the aid of seasoned rationality. He first meets Archimago, the master of hypocrisy, who tells him of a heinous crime committed against a lady, who happens to be Duessa. Because he does not see the evil and does not know how to direct anger to the good, Guyon nearly annihilates Red Cross. Anger overcomes his reason to the point that he cannot recognize a fellow knight. Thomas Aquinas says that anger can be good if it is carefully directed.<sup>20</sup> Guyon, like all other men, is capable of anger, but he has not learned how to control his anger by reason. He bears some resemblance to the rash man in not analyzing a situation before acting. It is ironic that in his blind passion he recognizes Red Cross only by his horse. This situation develops because Guyon recognizes events by the accompanying or surrounding objects, not by the central

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<sup>20</sup> Gilson, p. 229.

focus itself. Guyon does not possess practical wisdom, for he does not have the reasoned and true capacity to act with regard to human good until he has mastered his emotions by temperance.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike Seneca's holder of the good and the upright mind,<sup>22</sup> Guyon still subjects his reasoning power to only slightly-bridled passion, and he almost breaks the chivalric code of conduct in this manner. As Kellogg and Steele have said, Red Cross, who represents Holiness in Book I, has not had the same battle that Guyon must fight in Book II. Red Cross's enemy was hypocrisy, which deals with enemies of the soul; Guyon's enemy is intemperance (irrationality), a much more devious foe which is the enemy of rationality.<sup>23</sup>

Thomas Hooker says that man's spiritual depravity removes him from the sight of God, yet Hooker demands that man take responsibility for his spiritual state at the same time. Hooker's doctrine of means, if it can be taken as a counterpart to the process that Guyon will go through to exercise reason, provides for the reconciliation of

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<sup>21</sup>Aristotle, p. 329.

<sup>22</sup>Seneca, p. 443.

<sup>23</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 54.



irrestible grace and reason.<sup>24</sup> Thus Hooker shows that all paths, both classical and Christian, can lead man compatibly to his desired end. In combining these two paths, Spenser shows his amalgamation of classical and Christian influences on man.

After Guyon finishes hearing the story of Mordant and Amavia, the motif for the entire book, he realizes that the innocent Ruddymane must be directed in his growth by a competent spirit, Medina. Medina represents the golden mean between the highly visible extremes of her sisters, Elissa, man's withdrawing tendency, and Perissa, man's worst excesses. Kellogg and Steele suggest that Medina is "an embattled virtue continually exerting the strength of her reason to calm the opposites between the extreme elements of her house."<sup>25</sup> Medina represents virtue as it must actively be practiced in the world; she is a mediator who is forever making peace among the warring elements of her house.

Medina's continuous mediating position among the hostile figures within her house reflects Seneca's idea

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<sup>24</sup>Everett H. Emerson, "Introduction," in Redemption: Three Sermons by Thomas Hooker (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1956), p. xiii.

<sup>25</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 59.

that we know the good only if we are fortunate.<sup>26</sup> Man learns of good only after long and painful concentration and study. The pursuit of man's mean, as Medina's position shows, is a never-ending battle within man that, like the intellect, ceases to actively function only upon man's death.

James Carscallen says that in the Castle of Medina Spenser is showing "something closer to the everyday surface of intemperance."<sup>27</sup> Although Carscallen says that with the Castle of Medina, intemperance grows with subtlety until it reaches the Bower of Bliss, I feel that the true division occurs before the episode of the Cave of Mammon because Guyon faces monumental, enticing temptation for the first time when Mammon offers him riches, power, and the hand of Philotime. Carscallen also suggests that courtesy is a metaphor for temperance and that the two sisters, in their sullenness toward Guyon and their urging of Huddibras and Sansloy to attach Guyon for no logical reason, show their intemperate natures. Perissa also represents one of the two aspects of discourtesy (the other

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<sup>26</sup>Seneca, p. 443.

<sup>27</sup>"The Goodly Frame of Temperance: The Metaphor of Cosmos in The Faerie Queene, Book II," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 349.

is obviously represented by Elissa in her sullenness and hostility), for she does not control her emotions.<sup>28</sup>

According to Kellogg and Steele, Huddibras and Sansloy represent the tendencies of the irascible and concupiscible powers since the fall of man;<sup>29</sup> that is, their emotions cause them to disregard their intellectual faculties and to wallow in their desires. Perhaps a further examination of their characters will show something about Spenser's idea of man. Unlike Mordant and Amavia, whose problems occurred primarily out of ignorance rather than out of violence on their own accounts, Huddibras and Sansloy follow their unbridled passions to the fullest. Since these two knights are urged to fight by Elissa and Perissa, it would seem that they are Satanic counterparts; they stir up the power of men to suppress truth by violence.<sup>30</sup> Through Adam's corruption, the light of reason has been darkened and almost entirely suppressed so that the succeeding generations are in a far worse state than their forebears were. Their wills are in bondage to their sinful natures

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<sup>28</sup>Carscallen, p. 351.

<sup>29</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 59.

<sup>30</sup>Jean Calvin, "Dedication of the Institutes of the Christian Religion," in Prefaces and Prologues to Famous Books, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1910), p. 47.

so that they cannot discern the truth under the influence of Elissa and Perissa.

A comical interlude occurs in Book II when we are shown the two obvious exemplars of intemperance, Braggadochio and Trompart. Like Huddibras and Sansloy, the two are totally under the direct control of their selfish, cowardly natures, and the meeting with Belphoebe, who "symbolizes the full circle of love, both up and down, the divine Grace and the human endeavor,"<sup>31</sup> emphasizes their artificiality and weakness of character. Braggadochio, in addition to being anti-Guyon, "parodies the artificiality of the Palmer's rationalizations"<sup>32</sup> because the Palmer's rationalizations are based on the desire to guide Guyon toward perfect temperance; Braggadochio's rationalizations are based on the desire to avoid perfect temperance.

Braggadochio's being easily deceived by Archimago reveals that the light of reason has been corrupted in him and that his anger is easily misguided. His cowardice and his rationalizing with Trompart show him to be foolish. The actions of the two characters indicate that they are little better than beasts. They are unable to use the

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<sup>31</sup>Maurice Evans, "Guyon and the Bower of Sloth," Studies in Philology 61(1963), 140-49.

<sup>32</sup>Anderson, p. 164.

God-given gift of reason, the quality that man alone possesses, and so they are driven, as the animals are, by the vacillating currents of their emotions.

Braggadocchio and Trompart may be interpreted in the light of Ethica Nichomachea, for their faults bear a striking resemblance to childish failings. Their self-indulgence, more voluntary than their cowardice, reveals that they are emotinally immature. Unlike Seneca's wise man, who learns the good in later life through toil and study, Braggadocchio and Trompart have neglected the proper exercise of virtue.

Belphoebe, the beautiful huntress who urges the pursuit of virtue and truth through following a difficult way of life, exhibits a lifestyle that echoes the Stoic ideal of life. Seneca suggests that man oppose the alluring and the threatening by rousing to attack them or by retreating from them.<sup>33</sup> His plan for avoiding these entrapments leaves a basically harsh attitude toward the pleasures of life and a strict, stringent attitude toward life that is echoed in Belphoebe's speech.

Kellogg and Steele point out that Belphoebe and Guyon parallel Aeneas and Venus.<sup>34</sup> That is, Guyon, the British

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<sup>33</sup>Seneca, p. 433.

<sup>34</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 61.

Aeneas, is journeying forth in search of his own identity. Guyon becomes like Aeneas in that he is also seeking experience as well as his safe harbor or home. Also like Aeneas, Guyon is exercising his powers of virtue so that his experience will provide him with a practical education.

Immediately upon leaving Medina's castle, Guyon meets Occasion and Furor, later followed by Pyrochles and Cymochles. Guyon's enemies chiefly represent irascible power,<sup>35</sup> and the cantos which conclude with their defeat by Guyon close the sections of Book II which chiefly deal with obvious enemies of temperance. Furor, who has deceived Phaeton, is aided and abetted by Occasion; allegorically, Spenser thus avers that man is prompted to fruitless anger by allowing his passions to race. Despite Thomas Aquinas's statement that anger may be good,<sup>36</sup> Furor arouses anger to deceive and to conceal the truth and thereby misguides men who are possessed by it.

By allowing himself to believe that Claribell is unfaithful, Phaeton establishes the foundation for later anger and uncontrolled fury. He has seemingly dismissed Seneca's warning that we must not allow emotion to control us at all,<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 61.

<sup>36</sup>Gilson, p. 299.

<sup>37</sup>Seneca, p. 429.

for once he allows himself to stoop to anger, his emotions control his life entirely until Guyon rescues him.

The experience of fighting Furor educates Guyon as well, for Guyon comes to recognize only after toil and much difficulty that he cannot fight Furor with anger and the excess of the occasion. He must control his actions through his reasoning power if he is to overcome Furor, and once he learns this control, Occasion is silenced and Furor is defeated.

Guyon at this point is introduced to Pyrochles and Cymochles, whose temperaments in some respects mirror those of Elissa and Perissa. Pyrochles fights through a pathological excess of anger; that is, he is totally controlled by his intemperate anger and is without hope of being cured. As Kellogg and Steele have noted, the lake which cleanses Pyrochles' armor cleanses him externally but not internally.<sup>38</sup> Thus the internal change is the only change that will significantly affect and alter man's life.

Cymochles, however, is given to excessive sensual pleasure, and he can be lured out of the Bower of Bliss only by Atin's insulting remarks. Although Cymochles is a slave to his passions as Pyrochles is, these passions do not destroy him internally; they simply cause him to be governed

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<sup>38</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 64.

by his vacillating desires.

It is an indication of Cymochles' lack of internal order through his reasoning power that Atin is able to move him by insults and accusations. Since Cymochles cannot control his will, he is vulnerable to any outside influences, including those of Phaedria, and he is truly a puppet in the hands of those persons around him.

Josephine Waters Bennett identifies Guyon's struggles with Pyrochles and Cymochles as the central part of the book illustrating temperance;<sup>39</sup> however, I disagree that this is the central part of the book, for not all types of intemperance are included in this one episode, and the effects of intemperance shown here are not as fully illustrative of the vice as the episode of Mordant and Amavia is. I would suggest that the struggles of Guyon with Pyrochles and Cymochles are the culminating examples of obvious intemperance and that they overlap with Guyon's more formidable enemies who practice intemperance through deception and subtle trickery, as evidenced here through Phaedria.

Guyon must later overcome Pyrochles and Cymochles with the aid of Arthur, who symbolizes the magnanimous man, and this dual battle shows that practical temperance in man will

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<sup>39</sup>The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene" (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 126.



overcome intemperance with its own weapons. Lewis H. Miller suggests that when Pyrochles clutches the sword of Arthur and the shield of Guyon, the two men are allegorically possessed by Pyrochles, for they first attempt to fight Pyrochles on his own terms.<sup>40</sup> The two, Arthur and Guyon, must overcome intemperance and use skillful reason, a product of the intellect, before they are able to act properly and to overcome intemperance.

In summary, Guyon has learned to exercise temperance in dealing with its obvious enemies. He has traveled through many situations in which the enemies have demonstrated obvious intemperance and has come to an understanding of the value of reason in ruling man's life; however, his greatest challenge to intemperance, that of the destruction of the Bower of Bliss, must occur only after he has exercised temperance on a totally different battery of intemperates: those men who fight temperance through deception and artificiality. Like the enemies of holiness in Book I, the enemies of temperance seem to be temperate through their actions; nevertheless, a close examination will show that they have based their systems of action and value on subtle trickery.

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<sup>40</sup>Miller, p. 309.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE CAVE OF MAMMON AND THE HOUSE OF ALMA

Sir Guyon, after mastering the enemies of intemperance who are unable to control their lives because they are incontinent and are unable to make deliberate choices, comes upon his first monumental challenge, the Cave of Mammon. Because he has dealt with obvious practitioners of intemperance who have not appealed directly to his own weaknesses, he has overcome such exemplars of intemperance as Furor and Occasion, but in the Cave of Mammon, he will be tempted with excess on the scale of Christ's temptation by the Devil.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Cave of Mammon is Guyon's most difficult challenge before that of the Bower of Bliss, a challenge that prepares him to resist in classical and Christian terms the temptations found in the bower.

Although Guyon will later have to deal with characters such as Pyrochles and Cymochles, who are intemperate because of imbalances in their bodily humors, a major change occurs in his enemies when he reaches the Cave of Mammon; the intemperance found here as well as in the bower is wrought by subtle deceit and trickery or by conscious choice. Mammon, like

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<sup>1</sup>Patrick Cullen, "Guyon Microchristus: The Cave of Mammon Re-examined," English Literary History 37(1970), 154.

Acrasia, offers Guyon many tempting things because he wants Guyon within his power. During this time of trial, Guyon will undergo a tempering of his will so that he will be able to resist the even greater temptation of Acrasia's bower; that is, the lesson of temperance that he will exercise in Mammon's cave will aid him in resisting the more enticing offers of the Bower of Bliss.

As Guyon approaches the place where he will meet Mammon, he "evermore himself with comfort feedes of his own vertues and praise-worthie deeds" (II.vii.2.4-.5). That is, he is continuously reassuring himself that his virtue, without the presence of the Palmer, is so strong that he can overcome any temptation. This passage demonstrates that virtue is within man's power; it is not an external force but an inner, self-regulated power.

When Guyon meets Mammon, we are given a vivid description of the repulsive, ugly creature and then the strange, rare riches of his cave. Allegorically, Mammon is unpleasant to look at because he is symbolic of vice and the Devil's temptation; under this level of symbolism, outward appearance mirrors the person's inner state and thus Mammon's inner vices are revealed by his physical visage.

Guyon's first advance toward Mammon is rash and bold; because he catches Mammon by force, even Mammon himself sees that Guyon, underneath the trappings of a fairy, is still

imperfect. If he were able to recognize Mammon by past experience, he would not allow himself to be tempted by the offer of seeing the wealth. Knowing that Guyon is still inexperienced, Mammon says, "I read thee rash and heedless of thyself/ to trouble my still seat and heaps of precious pelf" (II.vii. 7.8-.9). Thus Mammon openly states that Guyon is rash and bold; the knight does not draw back but instead listens to Mammon's tempting offers. Harry Berger says that Mammon's tempting of Guyon occurs through playing on Guyon's curiosity and desire for novelty.<sup>2</sup> The first offer is of gluttonous wealth, with which Christ was tempted by Satan. Guyon turns down this offer by stating that they are the root of all evil and that riches often lead man to treasonous acts. He presents the idea that gluttonous wealth can lead to revolution and murder when treasonous acts are performed for wealth. However, he says that armor and fair steeds please him and immaturely gives Mammon another tool to use in tempting him. Mammon, of course, responds by telling Guyon that riches can be his in a moment and further elaborates on the power of money to make a ruler from a lowly man.

Historically, the offer by Mammon is tied in with the

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<sup>2</sup>The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p.20.

fear that medieval and Renaissance people had with revolution,<sup>3</sup> and I would suggest that the "purple robe gored with many a wound" (II. vii.13.7) would refer to the tumultuous Roman Empire. Guyon thus understands that the greed of riches and possessions (such as the kingdom) causes man to covet property; by coveting wealth and possessions, men become intemperate and forget the temperance and beauty of nature and man in the Golden Age. To contrast with the vicious intemperate world, he presents a picture of this pristine age when man was like an angel on the earth; man graciously accepted God's gifts and was happy. But lust for wealth and pride unbalanced the world and man, through Mammon, robbed the world that had sustained him of its treasures. Therefore, in relating this tale, Guyon has presented us with the intemperate excesses that the desire for wealth brought to the world.

Mammon, in an effort to control Guyon, responds to this tale by stating that Guyon is living in an age when he must work for a living; unlike the ancients, Guyon has a practical need for gold, so Mammon wants him to forget the abuses of the ancient times and take what he wants. This

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<sup>3</sup>Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele, Books I and II of "The Faerie Queene": The Mutability Cantos and Selections from the Minor Poetry (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1965), p. 302, note 13.1-.9.

invitation by Mammon, of course, is a subtle offer of wealth that is not Guyon's to take; Guyon recognizes that it is not his possession and refuses to take any of it, but Mammon assures him that it is safe from God's sight.

Mammon brings in the idea that the cave is removed from God's sight to assure Guyon that he need not fear God's wrath, but Guyon correctly realizes that an omniscient God cannot be blinded by the idea of a secret cell. However, at the end of the exchange, Mammon, to prove that something can be hidden from God, takes the fairy knight down into his cave which holds, in addition to the tainted riches, all the allegorically presented vices of man. Revenge, Hate, Treason, Jealousy, Fear, Sorrow, and Horror, all physically repulsive, teem and surge in torment within the cave; to bring in a final vision of ugliness, Caleno, a harpy, is presented also in an unpleasant underworld setting. The cave itself, strong and enormous, perhaps represents the magnitude of the vices of man as well. Every evil is presented within its own cycle of torture, and we are given a picture of the unpleasant internal struggle which vice brings.

Mammon, even watching for a sign that his guest will accept a gift, purposely takes him by immense riches, but Guyon refuses the wealth because he realizes that man is enslaved by his wealth; Guyon wishes to find his happiness

in battle and heroic achievements in which he will demonstrate his control over worldly things. If he allows riches to control him, he will lose his ability to control his own destiny and will become a slave instead of the master.

Mammon, not to be daunted, immediately offers the furnace's ores and then the hand of Philotime, his daughter, to Guyon. Philotime, who sits on a throne in the middle of a beautiful room, holds the end of Ambition's chain and gathers around her men who wish to climb the chain not through dignity and righteous reward but through the power of wealth and self-concerned greed. She is herself representative of the power of evil to deform man, for she was once beautiful but is now ugly and deformed. Mammon realizes that the underworld has dimmed her beauty, but he rationalizes her apparent expulsion from heaven by saying that the gods envied her beauty and thus thrust her from heaven. I would suggest that the true reason for her expulsion was that she herself is representative of vice and therefore does not belong in heaven.

Guyon rejects her hand by playing on his weakness as a mortal and on the idea that he is already pledged to another. Although Mammon is again inwardly vexed by his answer, he nevertheless continues to lead Guyon on to the regions where Tantalus and Pilate are held. Both Tantalus and

Pilate were men who were guilty of pride in their existence on the earth. Both thus distrusted God, who is symbolic of the perfection known only in the eternal world, so their actions are parodies of the ritual man practices in remembrance of God's acts. Both men were intemperate in their acts while on the earth, and they must now be an example of intemperance to those men who would not actively attempt to gain a temperate balance in their lives.

In being unable to eat or drink, Tantalus provides us with a parody of the Eucharist. Pilate, who cannot wash the soil from himself, is a parody of Holy Baptism.<sup>4</sup> Together, "Tantalus manifests a distrust of justice, Pilate a distrust of divine mercy."<sup>5</sup> Thus both men are fit inhabitants of Mammon's cave because they practiced intemperance in their treatment of others; now both pay with inner and outer torment.

After seeing Pilate, Guyon is quickly offered food and rest by Mammon. Although the offer is tempting, Guyon recognizes the implied intemperance of such an act, for the "temptation in the Garden of Proserpina to eat the apples and sit on the stool is surely the temptation to the flesh."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Cullen, p. 166.

<sup>5</sup>Cullen, p. 165.

<sup>6</sup>Cullen, p. 165.



He has been in Mammon's cave for an extended period of time without sustenance, but he correctly realizes that to eat and rest would be to succumb to Mammon's temptation; he refuses and so forces Mammon to lead him out of the cave. Physical survival for a long period of time is impossible in the underworld because it is the place of souls and the tormentors of the soul.

After reaching the air, Guyon, who has been tired by the experience, faints; his faint occurs not because he has succumbed to temptation but because he has reached the end of his mortal ability to resist sin. He has faced temptations on the order of Christ's temptation by the Devil; to conquer them, he would need superhuman strength which he does not possess. Within his power is the ability to resist temptation through the practice of temperance; although this is a limited virtue in eternal terms, it is nevertheless a virtue that aids man in controlling his own life. Guyon has exercised this inner and outer control in his refusal of Mammon's offers. Although Temptation will always be present, man can learn how to live with and to master, as completely as possible, his own body and his inherent weaknesses so that he will rule himself on the earth.

Some critics feel that Guyon's faint shows a succumbing to temptation, but it actually demonstrates two things:

the limit of human virtue<sup>7</sup> and "a measure of Guyon's struggle to control the excessively strong desires of his soul."<sup>8</sup>

Guyon cannot totally conquer temptation, but he can internally subdue and control the temptations. Unlike Christ, Guyon cannot obtain for himself and for all other men the gift of salvation from sin, but he can provide for himself (and thus as a model for others) a means of overcoming sin as far as it is humanly possible; this temporal victory is a refusal to become controlled by his desires.

Kellogg and Steele feel that Guyon has neglected his legitimate needs for so long that this neglect is analogous to a death to the world.<sup>9</sup> That is, Guyon has foregone food and drink for so long that his faint shows a total denial of the temptations which are in reality worldly pleasures. In addition, I feel that the faint shows the limits of man's abilities; because he does not have the power to withstand superhuman temptation forever, he can only exhaust his body and spirit in resistance.

Thus we have the triple temptation of Guyon: "lust

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<sup>7</sup>Cullen, p. 168.

<sup>8</sup>Berger, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele, "Introduction" in Books I and II of The Faerie Queene: The Mutability Cantos and Selections from the Minor Poetry (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1965), p. 67.

(or gluttony), avarice, and vainglory."<sup>10</sup> Guyon has been offered riches and power, the hand of Philotime, and the golden apples, but he has resisted all offers and has demonstrated the virtues of humility and courtesy, which come only with the understanding of temperance, in refusing the offers. Cullen also suggests that "Classical temperance can restrain the flesh, it can hold the Devil at bay; but only through Christ can the Devil be defeated."<sup>11</sup> Guyon has shown us his active exercise of classical temperance in this manner, and immediately after his faint, another aspect of man's existence comes in to help him.

The concern of God for man is shown by the presence of a guardian angel, who watches over Guyon while he is unconscious. We see that God has watched this travail and that His concern for Guyon is demonstrated by the sending of the angel. The presence of the guardian angel also establishes the compatibility between classical virtue and Christian virtue. The two kinds of virtue have worked together to keep Guyon from harm; the Christian or supernatural virtue supplements and extends the classical virtue. This supplementation is demonstrated by the power of the angel

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<sup>10</sup>Cullen, p. 154.

<sup>11</sup>Cullen, pp. 169-70.

until the Palmer takes over. The angel charges the Palmer to defend Guyon from evil and also warns the Palmer that evil is still at hand, waiting to snare Guyon in its deadly trap.

At this point, a negation of Cicero's idea that the gods are indifferent, although they may still care for man, is evident in Spenser's thought.<sup>12</sup> The presence of the angel while Guyon is still unconscious demonstrates the concern of Providence for man's condition on the earth; however, the ineffectiveness of the Palmer may exemplify the shortcomings of the classical virtues to deal with evil. Classical virtues can suppress evil, but they do not have the power to overcome it entirely.

Because the Palmer realizes that he does not have the power to overcome evil entirely, he is frightened when he is left alone with Guyon and so he attempts to reason with Pyrochles and Cymochles; they refuse to listen to him and steal Guyon's armor in a shameful violation of the chivalric code.<sup>13</sup> Pyrochles and Cymochles, who have been aided by the arch-villain Archimago, then attack Arthur after stealing from Guyon. They very nearly kill Arthur;

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<sup>12</sup>Cicero, De Natura Deorum, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1933), pp. 375-79.

<sup>13</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 321, note 16.4-.5.

this time may be the turning point in the power of the two insane brothers, who now represent the Satanic forces which are stronger and more formidable than those of classical virtue.<sup>14</sup> Since Arthur's sword has been stolen by Braggadochio, he is given Guyon's sword to fight the two brothers; the man and his borrowed sword together represent the compatibility of classical and Christian virtue. However, as Arthur's victory over the two brothers, who have Satanic associations, is representative of Christ's victory over sin and Satan,<sup>15</sup> we can see that classical virtue is limited. Guyon's sword, symbolizing the power of classical temperance, is victorious in the hands of Arthur only because it is coupled with divine power. As Arthur's magnanimity is the crowning virtue of Aristotle's Ethics,<sup>16</sup> Christian virtue and the power of Christ's actions have been expressed in classical terms.

After slaying Cymochles, Arthur turns on Pyrochles. He offers Pyrochles his life provided Pyrochles serve him, but Pyrochles refuses and Arthur regretfully kills him. Kellogg and Steele see Arthur's destruction of Pyrochles as

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<sup>14</sup>Kellogg and Steele, "Introduction," p. 61.

<sup>15</sup>Kellogg and Steele, "Introduction," p. 68.

<sup>16</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 323, note 23.9.

the triumph of Christ over the Devil,<sup>17</sup> and although Guyon alone could not master Satanic forces, the allegory is not intended to fault classical virtue; as classical virtue controls man on the earth, it is the guide he should use in his life. The greater victory must be obtained by higher powers.

Soon afterward Guyon and Arthur succeed in gaining entrance into the House of Alma, which is beset on all sides by Maleger's forces, who are deformed, ragged, and ugly; they represent the seven deadly sins and other vices. Alma herself allegorically demonstrates perfect rational order within man. She is continually under attack from the villains and wretched creatures who symbolize the vile, base passions in man. These wretches have no true substance, and perhaps this lack of substance again demonstrates Aristotle's definition of the incontinent man. Because they are at the mercy of their passions, they are little better than beasts. Their lack of substance is undoubtedly a lack of true humanity, for they surge against the wall of Alma's house as the waters of a flood surge against a wall. They act randomly and mindlessly.

Alma, herself representative of perfect internal order, reigns over a house which is perfectly ordered and thus safe

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<sup>17</sup>Kellogg and Steele, "Introduction," p. 68.

from the excesses of the outside world. Every figure within her house allegorically represents some facet of virtuous temperance; her mind harmoniously controls all passions. She herself is free from passion, wise, generous, and courteous. The house, representative of the body, is perfectly proportioned, and the inhabitants, who represent the internal working facets of the body, are governed by reason and are motivated by honorable desires. The three wise men who control the mind, allegorically represented by the highest point in the castle, are imagination, judgment, and memory. Together, all three balance the house as they balance the mind; all three contribute to the rational faculty within man. The mind is also governed by choice, or man's desire to control his life through temperance, and this lesson of choice is politically demonstrated in the elfin chronicles which Arthur reads to Guyon.

Although Spenser fulfills his promise to show Queen Elizabeth her ancestry, the true purpose of the chronicles is to demonstrate that political temperance can bring action and that intemperance in any facet of man's life can bring about his personal and political ruin. To illustrate this lesson on temperance, Spenser describes Diocletian's daughters, who brought monsters into the world through their lustful excesses. Stanza 17 of Canto x stresses the

example of King Locrine, a king who fell into excessive ease until he was conquered.

These passages illustrate the Senecan warning that man must retreat from those objects which allure and must rouse himself to meet the objects which attack.<sup>18</sup> After defeating the invaders, Locrine returned proudly from his triumph and immersed himself in idle pleasures; this immersion in adultery and diseased excess set the stage for his defeat by the daughter of Corineus.

In using Seneca's Stoic philosophy, Spenser is saying that the highest ideal to which man may aspire is the heroic life; he obtains this level by denying his desires and by participating in virtuous acts, preferably in battle, where he will display his courage. By withdrawing from heroic acts, he weakens; his fortitude slips and he becomes intemperate.

Reading from the chronicles, Arthur gives the example of King Lear to Guyon. Blinded by passionate pride, King Lear learned "that love is not where most it is professed" (II.x.3.1-.2). King Lear learned that true love, like virtue, was not overly demonstrative and vocal, but quiet and steadfast. True love, as he would learn, could not be

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<sup>18</sup>Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, ed. E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse, trans. Richard M. Gummere (London: William Heinemann, 1925), p. 433.



encompassed or qualified. Because he was intemperate in his desire for flattery instead of desiring genuine love and concern, he committed errors in judgment for which he lost his kingdom.

Thus temperance is exercised in passionate acts when mortals become controllers of their lives; the senses do not rule over reason if man controls his passions. The tribute to Gloriana, a thinly-disguised compliment to Elizabeth I, emphasizes not only her physical beauty but also her grace and intellectual skill. Temperance is a learned virtue; Gloriana has learned from her ancestors to exercise temperance in ruling. That temperance can be exercised is the lesson that Guyon also learns in reading the elfin chronicles. In the Renaissance, history was studied for its moral and political lessons. Thus Guyon learns from previous times that temperance is a virtue which must be exercised personally and politically.

However, he will not have the opportunity to witness the assault on reason by Maleger's troops; he has been sent away to deal with a more formidable enemy, Acrasia. Guyon's absence in this battle is not intended to fault him. As he has journeyed to learn how to exercise temperance, he must go on to the greatest challenge to temperance, Acrasia's bower. As Arthur represents the magnanimous man, he alone is able to successfully overcome the seven deadly sins.

Because Arthur also represents a type of Christ,<sup>19</sup> he defeats Satan in this battle and clears the way for Guyon to overcome Acrasia through human abilities.

The ensuing battle between Arthur and Maleger's gruesome crew of sin-bound slaves allegorically shows the attack of the seven deadly sins upon reason. It is appropriate that Arthur wage this war; his opponents, who symbolize the seven deadly sins, are perfect enemies for him to overcome in this battle. It is interesting to note that beauty (with money) assaults Alma's fortress, for beauty here is associated with conceit and evil. Despite the associations of beauty with virtue, beauty, if it is not controlled and contained by reason, can cause sin and a multitude of other offenses. If beauty mirrors the genuine virtue found in man, it reflects nature instead of artifice and deceit. Temperance and reason, working with nature, can create the controlled beauty which compliments, instead of destroying, man. Thus classical virtue can compliment nature, but an imbalance of evil can trap man and nature as well.

Maleger himself mirrors the transformation wrought in Philotime; her beauty was dimmed by her residence in Mammon's cave. Each has become ugly and deformed because of allegiance to man's basest passions. Maleger has grown

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<sup>19</sup>Kellogg and Steele, "Introduction," p. 71.

into a monster through his excesses, while Philotime has become ugly because she represents the love of honor instead of honor itself; the love of honor degrades man and this degradation is shown in the transformation that occurs in her.

Impotence and Impatience are Maleger's closest allies; Maleger and these two old women suggest the overpowering evil that assaults man; as representatives of Satan and evil forces, they keep man from union with God.

In Stanza 30, Spenser elaborates on man's position on the earth:

So greatest and most glorious thing on ground  
May often need the help of weaker hand;  
So feeble is man's state and life unsound  
That in assurance it may never stand  
Til it dissolved be from earthly band.  
Proof be thou prince, the prowtest man alive  
And noblest born of all in Britain land;  
Yet thee fierce Fortune did so nearly drive  
That had not grace thee blessed, thou shouldst  
not survive. (II.xi.30.1-.9)

Man's life is so insecure because of the passions that it can find permanence only in God; while he is on the earth, he must use temperance in every facet of his life to control and order his life. Temperance will provide him with order and peace while he is on the earth; it will insure that the passions will not violently storm within him. If man avoids excess on the earth, he will gain the entrance into heaven. Thus a connection between classical virtue and

Christian doctrine is established because the practice of the classical virtue of temperance is a prelude to the perfect temperance found in heaven. Bondage to sin insures that man will be eternally bound to the earth and that he will consume his soul in the evil there.

In winning the battle against Maleger's troops, Arthur symbolizes the triumph of man over evil--temporarily. He does not conquer the deceptive evil, the far more dangerous adversary, but he overcomes the deadly sins of evil which assault Alma's castle. These seven deadly sins are pride, envy, anger, avarice, sloth, gluttony, and lechery. Arthur's victory, like Guyon's, does not mean that man is free from sin, because man is still susceptible to temptation. The victory provided by Arthur and Guyon is a victory over impossibility; that is, their actions show that human perfection and heavenly grace are possible on the earth. It does not mean that evil is vanquished from the earth, but the ability to subdue it is definitely present. Temperance, Guyon's virtue, simply provides a means for man to remove himself from succumbing to temptation.

Guyon, having traveled with the Palmer, makes his way to the Bower of Bliss, which we have known since Canto I as the place of his final, and greatest, challenge. The way to the bower, however, is not easy; it is fraught with numerous dangers, and we are given a picture of his travels

in descriptive passages which are reminiscent of the underworld and the evil within Hades.

The voyagers pass by the Wandering Islands, and it is here that we receive from the nature presented the first example of perverted nature. The alluring blossoms that appeal to man seem to be fair and fertile, yet any man who responds to the invitation is perpetually ruined by being forced to wander for the rest of his life. Immediately after the lesson from the Palmer on the dangers of the Wandering Islands, we are introduced to the type of woman who inhabits such a place. Phaedria, with loosened hair, is forward, raucous, and immodest. She calls out to the voyagers and then drives her boat out to their craft, where she makes lewd advances and flirts with all men on board. Although the Palmer chastizes her, she does not heed his rebuke and simply departs.

This little incident is in itself a microcosm of the evil which Guyon will face in the Bower of Bliss. Phaedria pursues her pleasures simply because she does not want to do otherwise. Although she is a victim of her own desires as much as anybody else is, she, like Acrasia in her Bower of Bliss, engages in her actions because she is convinced that she should engage in them. She is self-indulgent in her acts, although she surely realizes the intemperance of her actions. She prefers to lead an intemperate passionate

life because her twisted nature does not wish to be controlled by reason. She could change if she so desired, but she is unwilling to do so.

The boatman who ferries Guyon and his Palmer past the dangers of the Wandering Islands takes on many of the attributes of the Palmer, for he demonstrates active temperance. Although he is tired, he does not succumb to the desire to rest from physical exhaustion in the seemingly sweet pleasures found on every shore. When Guyon wishes to comfort the seemingly distraught maiden, the Palmer calmly assures him that the maiden is dangerous. That Guyon follows the warning and willingly accepts the advice of the Palmer suggests that he listens to reason and is willing to use reason to guide his life; now, having weathered many temptations, he is ready to destroy the Bower of Bliss and all that it represents. Although his senses are tickled by the song of the sirens, reason will immediately change his request. His ability to listen does not constitute sin; it only shows his humanness.

Thus Guyon, upon entering the bower, is completely ready to destroy Acrasia's carefully-constructed web. Having overcome the temptations posed to him in the Cave of Mammon, he is ready to resist the charms that will reach out to trap him. Since he has seen the example of temperance in Alma's house and the viciousness of Maleger's rabble outside her

house, he can understand the threat which intemperance, particularly that of Acrasia's bower, symbolizes to man; he is committed to destroying the bower and to providing for man an example of active temperance and reason.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHALLENGE OF ACRASIA'S BOWER

The Bower of Bliss, contained in Book II, Canto xii, of The Faerie Queene, incorporates all the elements of subtle deceptive intemperance into one metaphorical setting. Through the use of allegorical figures, descriptions, and actions, Spenser gives us a veiled example of the intemperance that will rob man of his humanity; therefore, a close analysis of each element contained within the canto is necessary to reveal the full significance of the Bower of Bliss.

At the moment Guyon and the Palmer enter the area of the bower, we are given a general description of the place:

A place picked out by choice of best alive  
That nature's work by art can imitate;  
In which whatever in this worldly state  
Is sweet and pleasing unto living sense  
Or that may daintest fantasy aggravate,  
Was poured forth with plentiful dispense  
And was made there to abound with lavish  
affluence. (II.xii.42.3-.9)

Our key here is the word choice, for the principle of free choice has begun to operate here as well as in other areas. The intemperance is a chosen vice, signifying in Aristotelian terms that those people who inhabit the bower do so because they are convinced that their choice is right. They are not



weak-willed and thus incontinent men; they are self-indulgent and thus become for Guyon, the typical man, all the more dangerous. The evil they possess is not easily overcome because, unlike Trompart and Braggadochio, they are firmly fixed in their wicked pathways. They practice an evil which will rob men of their ability to control their lives. Therefore, the Bower of Bliss contains the element of chosen evil and becomes the most formidable enemy that man must fight. Those men who practice this intemperance are Satanic counterparts of virtuous figures such as Alma and Medina, and so the allegory becomes applicable to the most virtuous and vice-ridden of men. The Satanic figures are those characters who try to keep man from practicing temperance; they rob him of his humanity and keep him from a knowledge of the divine realm.

The imitation of nature by art is given in the general descriptive passage and later culminates in a metaphor. However, during the incident in the Cave of Mammon, nature, or nature imitated by art, was first presented in the golden apples offered to Guyon by Mammon:

Their fruit were golden apples glistering bright,  
That goodly was their glory to behold.  
On earth like never grew, ne living wight  
Like ever saw but they from hence were sold.  
(II.vii.54.1-.4)

The point here is that the apples are not the work of nature, but a carefully-contrived artifice that seeks to fraudulently

supplant a natural object. The apples offered to Guyon for sustenance are inedible things; Kathleen Williams notes that they are not like the natural fruits found on the earth.<sup>1</sup> The description itself suggests that no mortal sees such fruit unless he is taken away from the natural world, as Guyon has been taken by entering Mammon's cave.

Patrick Cullen has suggested that "the temptation in the Garden of Proserpina to eat the apple and sit on the silver stool is surely the temptation to the flesh."<sup>2</sup> That is, the fruit offered to Guyon is analogous to the fruit which brought about man's downfall. The association is with the fruit which was offered in the Garden of Eden; by eating the fruit, Adam and Eve succumbed to the desires of the flesh. If we continue in this train of thought, we can make similar associations with the nature initiated by art that is found in the Bower of Bliss. In the bower, the art deceives and disguises inherent evil. The fruit from which Excess fills her cup is not described as natural fruit should be; it is beautiful, but hard, and it glisters as gold, not natural fruit, should. To continue, we must examine Stanza 42

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<sup>1</sup>"Spenser and the Medieval Romance," in Edmund Spenser's Poetry, selected and edited by Hugh MacLean (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 561.

<sup>2</sup>"Guyon Microchristus: The Cave of Mammon Re-examined," English Literary History 37(1970), 155.

more closely:

. . . whatever in this worldly state  
Is sweet and pleasing unto living sense,  
Or that may daintest fantasy aggravate  
Was poured forth with plentiful dispense  
And made there to abound with lavish  
affluence. (II.xii.42.5-.9)

This description suggests fruit and fruitfulness, but the fruit is artificial and is only imitative of nature. I would further interpret this as showing, in a manner similar to that within Proserpina's garden, the temptation to the flesh which underlies and supports the total picture of intemperance found within the Bower of Bliss because the desire to turn toward the flesh is one of man's inherent and most insidious weaknesses.

The description of nature bears further consideration because of the relationship between art and nature. Whereas art benevolently imitates nature under normal conditions, a sinister side of art is shown because it deceives and disguises genuine evil. It excessively aggravates normal sensual responses to beauty by heightening and exaggerating traditionally attractive natural things. As intemperance is synonymous with excess, these imitations demonstrate that intemperance extends not only to man but also to nature if man wills it. This is not to say that nature takes on animate abilities but simply to show that in the hands of the intemperate, nature can be so wrought to mirror the

excessive behavior around it.

On the subject of the contrived aspect of nature, Millar MacLure says that the sinister aspect of art lies in its power to counterfeit nature<sup>3</sup> and comments on the power of this artifice by saying that the beauties of the bower wind themselves into the passions through the senses so that the natural and the artificial are confused.<sup>4</sup> That is, concomitant with this counterfeit is a trap for man; once he accepts the beauty of the bower as being natural, he entraps himself because he is no longer able to differentiate between reality and artifice through the use of his senses. If his acceptance of the bower occurs, he will be more inclined to intemperance because his judgmental faculties will have been blunted.

Seneca speaks on the subject of artifice by discussing the evils of making the senses man's governing faculty instead of making reason the governor of his life.<sup>5</sup> Because those people who enter the bower discount the benefits of reason, the senses take over their judgmental faculties until

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<sup>3</sup>"Nature and Art in The Faerie Queene," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 175.

<sup>4</sup>MacLure, p. 179.

<sup>5</sup>Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, ed. Capps, Page, and Rouse, trans. Richard M. Gummere (London: William Heinemann, 1925), p. 437.

the dividing line between truth and fantasy becomes very blurred; the blurring of reason is the evil which results in intemperate ways. Unable to see the difference between art and nature, man subjects his mind to the whim of his senses. Only a man who has exercised and sharpened his reason can distinguish between reality and fantasy; one who inhabits the Bower of Bliss cannot use reason because his senses have taken over control of his body. Also, nature aids in entrapping him.

C. S. Lewis, who has said that Spenser uses art in suggesting the artificial in a bad sense,<sup>6</sup> also says that "the opposition of natural and artificial, naive and sophisticated, genuine and spurious, meets us at every turn."<sup>7</sup> Lewis also interestingly describes the bower as having the vices of sterility and death;<sup>8</sup> these two nouns give us another key to understanding the threat the bower poses for man. Philosophically, if man becomes sterile in his thought, he cannot grow in his understanding of the world. He becomes dead to the idea that he can control his own life. Because man becomes a slave to his passions, he slips to the level

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<sup>6</sup>"The Faerie Queene," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup>Lewis, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>Lewis, p. 7.

of the beasts on the earth; thus the bower has intellectual and moral death in store for those men who succumb to its idleness. Men who are trapped in the bower do not necessarily suffer physical death as Mordant, Amavia's husband and Acrasia's first lover, did, but their intellectual and spiritual growth halts when they weaken to the charms of the bower. Because they give in to physical passion, they lose the ability to use reason in their lives; the emotions gain control of them and the storms of passion instead of reason and temperance move them. They also become concerned more with themselves than with the world around them.

Lewis summarizes nature in the bower by saying that:

. . . most commonly he understands Nature as Aristotle did--the 'nature' of anything being its unimpeded growth from within to perfection, neither checked by accident nor sophisticated by art.<sup>9</sup>

Thus art restrains nature from its maturity, and in a similar manner, man--if he is intemperate--will not mature mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. This is not to say that art in general is bad, but if it is used to deceive man and conceal intemperance in the form of wantonness, it has the ability to convey and support evil.

The garden itself is enclosed by a weak fence which makes the pretense of holding in the victims, but it does

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<sup>9</sup>Lewis, p. 10.

not protect them from the outside world; they fear nothing except the power of wisdom and the might of temperance, and all forms of incontinence are welcomed. James Nohrnberg says that:

The beasts of Spenser are barred from the Bower of Acrasia by a fence, which is weak; incontinence apparently has only superficial objections to more bestial or violent passions.<sup>10</sup>

However, I would carry this association further by saying that the animals around the bower are symbolic of man when he stoops to the level of the lower animals. Therefore, the fence exists only as a pretense, and this air of artifice mimics the art found within the bower.

The fact that the bower fears only wisdom and temperance and that it is more involved in drawing men in than in defending also speaks about the nature of man. If temperate men often assaulted and attempted to destroy the fortress, the fence would be strong; its weakness shows that men regularly succumb to temptation rather than attempting to overcome evil and passion; it is easier to let the passions rule than it is to rule them.

This succumbing to the passions is illustrated to all visitors through a description of the gate:

It framed was of precious ivory,  
That seemed a work of admirable wit;

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<sup>10</sup>The Analogy of The Faerie Queene (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 495.

And therein all the famous history  
 Of Jason and Medea was y-writ--  
 Her mighty charms, her furious loving fit,  
 His goodly conquest of the golden fleece,  
 His falsed faith, and love too lightly flit,  
 The wondered Argo, which in venturous piece  
 First through the Euxine seas bore all the  
                     flower of Greece.     (II.xii.44.1-.9)

Kellogg and Steele note that "Jason is a type of heroic man overcome by the magic of a passionate woman,"<sup>11</sup> and the very adjectives used to describe the couple and their actions demonstrate that their story is a motif for the pattern of man's fall; Medea's charms, being mighty and furiously passionate, reduced Jason's heroism and vigor to deceived weakness and sorrow at the loss of her brother and his later love, Creusa. By surrendering to passion, Jason destroyed his manly vigor and the human relationships around him that supported and aided him.

At the entrance to the bower stands a seemingly noble man; he is the false Genius and is analogous to Archimago.<sup>12</sup> As Archimago represents hypocrisy, this vice also permeates the bower. The entire scene is drenched in hypocrisy because of the preceding motif of Jason and Medea. The Genius presented here is dressed as a philosopher might be dressed,

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<sup>11</sup>Books I and II of "The Faerie Queene": The Mutability Cantos and Selections from the Minor Poetry (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1965), p. 388, note 44.4.

<sup>12</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 389, note 47-48.



but the condition of his clothing reveals that he does not represent true logical thought. He is another drawing card for the bower, and his presence shows another way that the bower is drawing victims, by appealing to false ideas and illogical syllogisms. The genius is thus described:

A comely personage of stature tall  
And semblance pleasing, more than natural,  
That travelers to him seemed to entice.  
His looser garments to the ground did fall,  
And fell about his heels in wanton wise,  
Not fit for speedy pace or manly exercise.  
(II.xii.46.4-.9)

Like the art found in the bower, he is more than natural, for he lures visitors into the bower by placing before them a false vision of learning. Even his clothing mirrors the languor and softness of the bower, for it impedes man's natural movement and one of the things most prized for building man's body into physical perfection: exercise.

James Nohrnberg identifies this Genius as representing pleasure and says that the further identification of him as the governor of the area shows that reason does not rule the bower.<sup>13</sup> He further asserts that this Genius is a part of the Bacchic theme which characterizes the nature of intemperance because the wine bowl, with its associations with love-making, is present.<sup>14</sup> Spenser as a poet notes

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<sup>13</sup>Nohrnberg, p. 495.

<sup>14</sup>Nohrnberg, p. 496.

that the Genius operates through guile and secret deceit; he is thus a vehicle for pulling more people into the bower. Thus the association between entrapment and disguise is present in the figure of the false Genius. He is the enemy to the beneficial way of life. Although the Genius is supposed to guide men toward independence, men become slaves of passion to the point that they can no longer control their lives. His staff in hand is a part of this disguise, for he holds the staff for the sake of appearance; it is not a symbol of authority, as the Palmer's is. Only if they utilize reason, as Guyon does, will men recognize this false Genius as being evil.

The Genius is bedecked with flowers which are described as being "dainty" (II.xii.49.1); perhaps this description emphasizes the effeminate nature of this clothing. James Nohrnberg says that his clothing may be a traditional garment which is linked with the gift of Dido to Aeneas.<sup>15</sup> He draws out this analogy to illustrate that the drinking cup, which Spenser describes as being a "mighty mazer" (II.xii.49.3), is part of a theme of intemperance that stretches back to Mordant, who drank from Acrasia's cup and suffered death because he gave in to excess. Nohrnberg also comments that

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<sup>15</sup>Nohrnberg, p. 495.

"wine used moderately is a good Demon,"<sup>16</sup> and the obvious meaning here is that those men who drink from the cup give in to immoderate drinking and thus become intemperate.

Spenser's implicit warning to man here follows the line of Stoic philosophy, for Seneca warns man against indulging himself. Once he indulges himself, the indulgence becomes a vice, and only the wise man may contain the vice.<sup>17</sup>

Because those men who enter the bower drink from the cup of excess, intemperance fills them even as they step into the bower.

Guyon, in a manner different from the manners of the other visitors, breaks the staff and overthrows the cup upon entering the gate; thus he destroys the alluring elements and removes the temptation from his presence. However, other alluring elements immediately face him; he views a beautiful plain that is lavishly adorned with flowers. Spenser seems to feel that Art has used nature to decorate the area too lavishly. Thus nature is compared to a "pompous bride." Art again lends a sinister aspect to the description by overworking the beauty of the natural world; art has thus cheapened the natural beauty of the landscape. Mirroring

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<sup>16</sup>Nohrnberg, p. 497.

<sup>17</sup>Seneca, p. 335.

the symbolism found in the description of the cup, Nature becomes a tool of those people who lead men into intemperance through excess. The nature is described as being more beautiful than the nature found in numerous other gardens, and one of these gardens, notorious for its inhabitants' actions, is the Garden of Eden.

I suggest that Spenser placed the Bower of Acrasia in a direct line of comparison to the Garden of Eden because both places are noted for intemperance, particularly sexual incontinence. Acrasia draws her lovers through sexual wantonness; her actions are passionate, intemperate acts. These actions mirror those of Adam and Eve after the fall from grace. However, the bower, unlike the beautiful Garden of Eden, tempts man to wantonness by ornateness and artificial sterility which promise limitless pleasure. The price for this pleasure is high, for the man who succumbs to this wantonness sacrifices his independence.

Although Guyon observes this magnificent setting, he does not allow his senses to overcome him. Spenser states that "Bridling his will and mastering his might" (II.xii.53.5), Guyon travels through the area until he comes to a grape arbor whose branches reek of excess; the branches are intricately entwined to the point of excess. The arbor itself,

as Nohrnberg notes,<sup>18</sup> is part of the Bacchic imagery, yet Spenser describes the fruit in terms which are suitable for the descriptions of hard, precious stones, not edible fruit. Spenser says that they are "So made by art" (II.xii.55.2), to again reinforce the constructed artifice described in the earlier passages.

The woman who inhabits this arbor is the first female character described within the Bower of Bliss, and the garments, being "foul disordered" (II.xii.55.8), demonstrate another type of intemperance that Guyon will soon be tempted to indulge in: sexual wantonness. Yet Guyon responds to the offer of her cup by destroying it; she is vexed by his actions, but she is powerless to do anything about them because excess cannot move a continent man.

Perhaps the best description of Guyon's inner state is found in the description of his eyes; they are "sober" (II.xii.55.2). Whereas an incontinent man would be tempted by excess, the temperate man is not affected and shuns the offer. Even the beautifully described flowers and trees of the bower which represent what would be a sensuous paradise to another man, even any other man, are revealed by Guyon as being artificial evils:

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<sup>18</sup>Nohrnberg, p. 497.

There the most dainty paradise on ground  
 Itself doth offer to his sober eye,  
 In which all pleasures plenteously abound  
 And none does other's happiness envy--  
 The painted flowers, the trees upshooting high,  
 The dales for shade, the hills for breathing space,  
 The trembling groves, the crystal running by.  
 And that which all fair works doth most aggrace,  
 The art which all that wrought, appeared in no place.  
 (II.xii.58.1-.9)

Art and nature are so entwined that the distinction between the two has become blurred; a man could be duped into believing that he was in the Garden of Eden. Yet Sir Guyon, armed with the tool of reason, is able to assess this view rationally so that he is not taken in by his surroundings; he sees that the very dew of the flowers seeps with wantonness.

He soon views two obvious examples of wantonness in the two maidens who play in the fountain, for their playing seeks to reveal everything to anyone who is present. When they realize that Guyon is watching them, they entice him by revealing more:

The wanton maidens him espying, stood  
 Gazing awhile at his unwonted guise;  
 Then th' one herself low ducked in the flood,  
 Abashed that her a stranger did advise;  
 But th' other rather higher did arise,  
 And her two lilly paps aloft displayed,  
 And all that might his melting heart entice  
 To her delights she unto him bewrayed.  
 The rest hid underneath, him more desirous made.  
 (II.xii.66.1-.9)

The first maiden, upon seeing the actions of the exposed one, unbinds her hair and blushes. Guyon is tempted by the sight of the two maidens, and he unfortunately shows

that he is by softening his stormy actions and by allowing his face to reveal his thoughts. His expression reveals his inner turmoil, but this turmoil does not develop into overt action because the Palmer's infusion of reason immediately enables Guyon to restrain himself.

While some critics may interpret this response on the part of Guyon as being proof of his fall, I would suggest that his inward response simply shows that like all men, he is simply human and can be tempted. His virtue lies in not succumbing to the vice when it lures him, and since the Palmer rebukes him, I feel that Spenser is indicating that man cannot be made absolutely perfect; temperance is something that must be practiced throughout a lifetime. Guyon may stumble and his passions may try to take over his life, but the active use of reason will always restore the temperate balance within him.

Lewis H. Miller has said that:

Guyon is the natural man who is striving to perfect his internal organization, to achieve a particular psychic harmony called Temperance, has fallen into error or vice ('wicked man') only insofar as he has been irresponsible enough to act without his reason.<sup>19</sup>

His irresponsibility does not carry the same burden of guilt that purposely making the wrong choice does; his observation

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<sup>19</sup>"A Secular Reading of The Faerie Queene, Book II," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 161.

is only a minor error in behavior because he does not turn away from the sight. His lack of physical action is only a mistake that is on the same level of an innocent misdeamor. He does not pursue the maidens, and his lack of pursuit is proof enough that he has simply responded, but not fallen, to a sight quite unlike anything he has seen before.

After the Palmer rebukes him, Guyon then confronts the bower itself, and the first assault to his senses is a harmonious one, song. Within the bower, a variety of sounds from birds and animals sweetly calm those men who are within it; the passage exemplifies disguise and trickery. One might ask how such sweetness could be so evil, and the only answer would be that this seemingly innocent scene drains from man his mortal spirit, his free will, and his ability to use temperance in controlling his life.

Maurice Evans notes that Spenser's Bower of Bliss is the Art which should be the incentive to virtuous action but is instead a subtle temptation to sloth.<sup>20</sup>

Acrasia's latest victim, Verdant, is still within the bower; and she draws his spirit from him even as he sleeps. On this subject, R. Nevo writes that:

Acrasia's Bower inveigles Temperance into an improper relationship to the senses, one which

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<sup>20</sup>"Guyon and the Bower of Sloth," Studies in Philology 61(1963), 149.



subtly shifts the balance of the mind, vying one with another, outdoing each other in delectability and losing the name of action, as has the Genius of the place, with his loose garment falling to the ground above his heels. . . .<sup>21</sup>

Thus Acrasia's threat to man's ability to control his own destiny lies also in the lasting, as well as temporal, effect that it will have on him. The artificiality and sterility will permeate his life and will cause his intellectual and rational growth to stop, then shrink.

Acrasia herself sings a song which Kellogg and Steele identify as having a carpe diem theme,<sup>22</sup> for Acrasia's pull is not eternal but fleeting. This moment, if a man falls into temptation, erases the work that he has done to sharpen and practice his reason.

The description of Acrasia is sensual and provocative, and her appeal is mainly directed to those people who are given to excessive sexual pleasure. Verdant, her latest lover, is an example of the man whose former temperance has been wasted:

The young man sleeping by her seemed to be  
Some goodly swain of honorable place,  
That certes it great pity was to see  
Him his nobility so foul deface.  
(II.xii.79.1-.4)

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<sup>21</sup>"Spenser's 'Bower of Bliss' and a Key Metaphor from Renaissance Poetic," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 37.

<sup>22</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 394, note 74-75.

He has thrown away his honorable past in the pursuit of pleasure because his reason has been blinded by Acrasia, herself representative of vicious pleasure.<sup>23</sup>

When Guyon and the Palmer capture Acrasia and her lover, they symbolically restore Verdant to the real world, for this action "is symbolic of the conquest of illusion by harsh reality through the dispassionate light of reason."<sup>24</sup> Unlike the name of Mordant, the name of Verdant symbolizes hope. The last passages which describe Verdant show that in the true classical tradition reason will once again rule his life and actions when he learns to balance his passions with his intellectual faculties.

Guyon then destroys the bower completely, leaving no part of it standing for a later reconstruction, and he comes to the wild beasts surrounding the bower. The destruction of the bower is essential for Guyon as well as all other men. As temperance is an internal ordering of man's mind with his passions, Guyon's destruction shows that he has unequivocally obtained a temperate balance in his life; Acrasia will not attract him ever again. His destruction of the bower makes temperance or the temperate balance

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<sup>23</sup>Lewis, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup>Evans, p. 2.

possible for other men. He has liberated himself and other men from the cunning trap and has shown us that classical temperance can be exercised to bring about a rational, ordered life for man that mirrors, as completely as possible in an imperfect existence, the divine realm.

Since Acrasia acts as the power of physical passion, the capture may be viewed as a harsh measure, but I do not feel that this capture is vindictive because it is necessary to remove the threat of intemperance, particularly that of deceptive intemperance, from man. Those men who are released by Guyon are set on the path of reason so that they can again learn to balance, or temper, their lives, particularly after seeing the exposure of the bower by Guyon. Because it is impossible to annihilate Acrasia, she can only be arrested.<sup>25</sup>

Although the Palmer changes the men back into human beings, one, called Grille, remains an animal. Guyon comments on this choice:

'See the mind of beastly man  
That hath so soon forgot the excellence  
Of his creation, when he life began,  
That now he chooseth, with vile difference,  
To be a beast and lack intellegence.'  
(II.xii.87.1-.5)

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<sup>25</sup>Alistair Fowler, "The Image of Mortality: The Faerie Queene, II.i-ii," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 150.

With these words, Guyon and his Palmer depart, and the knight concludes his promise made upon learning of Ruddymane's plight, to destroy Acrasia's bower and to restore to man his ability to control his own life through the subduing of physical desires. Thus the challenge the bower has posed to Guyon, the representative of natural man, has been an invitation to languish in the sensual passion of wanton excess. However, Guyon's conquest of this place has shown the operation of rational temperance in his life, and this triumph demonstrates that he has learned how to exercise his virtue so that he will balance his passionate and his rational faculties; in the destruction of Acrasia's bower, he has given other men a chance to once again control their lives through the active exercise of temperance.

## CHAPTER V

### TEMPERANCE IN RETROSPECT

In retrospect, we can see that the primary purpose of Book II of The Faerie Queene is to demonstrate the active virtue of temperance through the character of Sir Guyon. As a representative of natural man, Guyon becomes everyman in his adventure, and his actions show the ability of classical reason, in compatibility with Christian thought, to elevate man toward the eternal realm.

However, Spenser's idea of temperance embodies a greater ability for man to control his place in the universe:

The Augustinian view so aptly displayed through the adventures of Red Crosse, is complimented by the bolder, more humanistic focus of Guyon's story in which the liberating spirit of a Pico della Mirandola offers man the rare privilege of controlling his own destiny, of effecting his own destruction, or, indeed, his own salvation.<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean that divine providence is inoperable in Guyon's quest; the presence of the guardian angel after Guyon's faint demonstrates God's guidance from afar and His approval of man's journey. Guyon is not totally corrupt in the Calvinistic sense; the light of heaven is

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis H. Miller, Jr., "A Secular Reading of The Faerie Queene, Book II," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972), p. 169.

open to him if he will only use his divine faculties. That is, in the spirit of Pico, man can control his own destiny, and although he is tainted by original sin, his reason has been only darkened, not extinguished. Man can still aspire to the levels of the angels if he learns how to control his passions. Thus he is not totally corrupt in the Calvinistic sense. If man actively exercises temperance, he will bring about his own salvation from the ravages of sin; it will not necessarily occur because God wills it. The heavenly salvation that God wills is the eternal grace that will insure the existence of his soul after death. This freedom for man means that on the earth, he is free to choose the path that he will follow throughout life, just as Guyon has done.

Reason is the guiding principle in Guyon's life, just as it has been in the writings of Cicero,<sup>2</sup> and it is the quality essential to the perfection of the universe because it allows man to come as close to the universal perfection as he possibly can in an imperfect existence. Guyon has traveled with the Palmer during his voyage, and although he has needed the aid of the Palmer at certain times to help him regain a proper perspective of a situation, as he did in

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<sup>2</sup>De Natura Deorum, trans. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1933), p. 141.

the meeting of Grille, he has not been so much in need of reason that he has deliberately chosen the path of vice; Guyon's reason has operated so that he has been restrained from wickedness even when the Palmer has not been present. Any errors Guyon has made have simply been errors in calculation for failing to assess a situation entirely; these errors merely represent the desire on his part to do what he feels is correct.

The first meeting with Archimago demonstrates his desire to perform virtuous acts, for Guyon is so eager to avenge the claimed injustice that he almost annihilates Red Cross. He does have a knowledge of temperance, but he does not have the practice in using it wisely; therefore, his journey is necessary to teach him the balance point between excess and deficiency, a point which can be reached only through the dispassionate and judgmental light of reason.

Throughout the entire journey, echoes of classical, medieval, and Renaissance philosophers continuously appear in Spenser's narrative:

The emphasis upon rational control of the complex human organism, the distinction between two kinds of passion depending upon pleasure and pain, the condemnation of extremes in human behavior, and the equality of manly self-government with nobility of character

are all part of the stock of classical moral philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

Although the religious aspects of divine influence are present, Spenser focuses on man's position in the universe as the controller of his life. Spenser examines this ability to control one's life throughout Guyon's journey and through the various vices exhibited in Book II. For example, Braggadochio and Trompart are foolish in the way their passions exploit them. They have no self-control whatsoever and spend a great amount of their time trying to avoid any confrontation that would temper them into responsible men. Pyrochles, suffering from the ravages of his choleric spirit, is so wracked by the storms of anger that overcome him that he is forever doomed to respond to his anger and not to reason.

Guyon is then able to use his reason in the situations which confront him, and the absence of the Palmer in certain confrontations bespeaks his own ability to maintain temperance without the Palmer's constant supervision. Because he possesses temperance, a cardinal virtue, all other virtues are possible.

One example of this temperance is found in the

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<sup>3</sup>William Nelson, The Poetry of Edmund Spenser: A Study (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 193.



responses Guyon gives to Mammon; Guyon's exercise of temperance is such that the virtues of humility and purity can remove him from Mammon's tempting offers. In the passages which describe the offer of Philotime's hand by Mammon, Guyon responds thus:

'Gramercy, Mammon,' said the gentle knight,  
 'For so great grace and offered high estate.  
 But I, that am frail flesh and earthly wight,  
 Unworthy match for such immortal mate  
 Myself well wot, and mine unequal fate;  
 And were I not, yet is my troth y-plight  
 And love avowed to other lady late,  
 That to remove the same I have no might.  
 To change love causeless is reproach to  
                   warlike knight.' (II.vii.50.1-.9)

In this passage alone, Guyon demonstrates humility, courtesy, and honesty. We have already discussed in the consideration of Medina's castle that courtesy is a metaphor for temperance, and we can see that because he exercises the golden mean, he has learned how to virtuously and tactfully handle a potentially explosive situation.

Yet this does not mean that Guyon is perfect; he still can slip and fall into error, and his questioning of Shamefastness demonstrates his imperfection because he does not recognize her. Kellogg and Steele identify shamefastness as the essential motivation of Guyon's quest,<sup>4</sup> and his

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<sup>4</sup>Books I and II of "The Faerie Queene": The Mutability Cantos and Selections from the Minor Poetry, ed. Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele (New York: Odyssey Press, p. 342, note 43.9.

reaction to the wanton maidens shows some relapse on his part. His reaction to the wanton maidens, previously discussed in Chapter IV, pp. 78-80, shows us again that the human response and the capacity to err cannot be totally driven out of man but that temperance can make his life more fruitful and more independent than it would otherwise be.

The difference between temperance and intemperance appears also in the descriptions of the characters. Maleger, Pyrochles, Cymochles, Furor, Impatience, Impotence, and Mammon are characterized by repulsive habits and physical appearances, whereas Alma, Belphoebe, and Medina are beautiful inhabitants of ordered rational environments. In these characters the outside mirrors the internal structure, and those who particularly practice intemperance are torn apart by their passions; the external appearance mirrors the internal havoc. Alma, Belphoebe, and Medina are internally ordered, and their rational appearance in ordered environments as well as their rational conduct shows natural order through the practice of reason. All of them use the mind instead of the physical desires to rule their lives. Steele and Kellogg comment on their choice of rule;

Of all man's physical parts it is the  
noblest analogous to reason in the rational  
soul, the king in state, and God in creation.

As the noblest of God's creations it  
is superior to all man-made structures.<sup>5</sup>

And lest this should seem inconsistent with the Bower of Bliss, we must remember that the final curse of those men who succumb to Acrasia is to be turned into beasts because her excessive beauty, which entraps men, drains their spirits and their ability to control their own lives to the point that they are no better than any other animals. Acrasia's beauty, an invitation to excessive behavior, covers up intemperance; it is no more than a disguise for evil.

The principle of free choice operates throughout Book II, from Mordant and Amavia to Grille, and this idea of free choice follows in the footsteps of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola:

Let us also, therefore, by emulating the Cherubic way of life on earth, by taming the impulse of our passions with moral science, by dispelling the darkness of reason with dialectic, and by, so to speak, washing away the filth of ignorance and vice, cleanse our soul, so that her passions may not rave at random or her reason through heedlessness ever be deranged.<sup>6</sup>

Those men who practice the principle of free choice learn how to control their lives and their destiny, but those

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<sup>5</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 432, note 44.8-47.5.

<sup>6</sup>Oration on the Dignity of Man, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller, Ernst Cassirer, and John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 229.

incontinent men who allow their lives to be controlled by the passions suffer and no longer see the light of heaven.

Maturity also brings temperance, for it is not a quality which man can practice with beneficial results when he is young; as Seneca and Aristotle have noted, virtues come only after practice and trial. Men are fortunate if they learn temperance by the time they are middle-aged, for many men go throughout life as slaves to their passions. Certain types of incontinence therefore bear resemblances to childish faults because their practitioners are not completely mature and are unable, therefore, to control their desires and the directions their lives are taking.<sup>7</sup>

Although Belphoebe's speech and many other passages speak of Stoic ideals, they are not harsh, vicious guidelines; all are benevolently administered to man because to practice such a type of harshness would be to give in to excess. Seneca shows a desire for all men to follow somewhat stringent guidelines and does warn man to abstain from vice rather than attempting to control and contain vice, but he does it as a preventative measure.

In summary, then, Guyon's quest of temperance and his destruction of intemperance carries the knight and the

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<sup>7</sup>Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, ed. Capps, Page, and Rowe, trans. Richard M. Gummere (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1925), p. 143.

Palmer through a variety of situations which illustrate the nature of both virtue and vice. Guyon, the fresh natural man, is placed in many situations which would cause the downfall of any other man, but he does not succumb to the temptations because he uses reason as the measuring stick for his responses.

Pyrochles and Cymochles are two adversaries whose actions bespeak of intemperance due to physical problems as well as mental ones. Pyrochles is marked by excessive anger, similar in intensity to a burning furnace, while Cymochles bathes in excessive wantonness. Both suffer as incontinent men because their spirits and bodies have been consumed by a lack of balance in their lives. Much potential good has been destroyed by this intemperance to the point that Cymochles is roused to action not through an appeal to virtue but instead through insults delivered by Aton.

The consumptive force is also seen in the actions of Elissa and Perissa, for they form the physical opposites of Pyrochles and Cymochles. As we have noted previously, the two sisters form a motif of intemperance by purposely demonstrating a lack of courtesy to Guyon, showing that they have not mastered one of the basic mediums of temperance, the social graces.

Medina, who symbolizes the middle path of active

temperance, lives within her castle and attempts to reconcile the warring elements of her house by actively using reason. Unlike her sisters, she practices courtesy to strangers, in particular to Guyon, and her life is such that she is not internally consumed by vice.

In a similar manner, Alma's house is internally ordered. It contrasts with Maleger's rabble outside her walls in that every element of the house is in harmony with all others. No part wars with another for control, for all members of her household recognize the supremacy of the mind over the corporeal. Alma's house is thus run as a piece of carefully-constructed machinery is and it is a place of peace and harmony, in direct contrast to the disordered, vicious world surrounding it. Unlike Mordant and Amavia, who despaired at the onslaught of intemperance, Alma is calm and allows Arthur, the substitute for Sir Guyon, who has gone on to fight Acrasia, to mount a battle against Maleger's motley crew.

Mordant and Amavia, identified as the characters who form the central motif of The Faerie Queene,<sup>8</sup> illustrate that man forever carries the burden of having to reconcile his two sides. Man cannot free himself from his place on the bridge between the physical world and the spiritual world, for

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<sup>8</sup>Kellogg and Steele, p. 55.

he is both spirit and flesh; in order to exist on this bridge, where he is forever committed to reside, man has to learn through practice how to balance the two sides without drowning in either one. As it is much easier to immerse oneself in the sensual, Spenser and many other philosophers consider sensuality to be man's greatest danger. The Bower of Bliss exemplifies the danger of sensuality, because Acrasia's offer of sensual pleasure ultimately robs men of their rationality and intelligence.

Because Guyon fully realizes the threat the bower poses to man's control of his own life, he can look at the bower soberly and not be taken in by the excess there. He sees the false Genius as simply a fraud, and he is able to refuse (by destruction) the cup of excess. Although he is tempted by the two wanton maidens, he quickly regains control of himself.

His control directly contrasts with his behavior in Canto i, when he very nearly killed Red Cross. Whereas he was fooled by appearance, his mind has been so sharpened by reason that he can perceive the core of a problem and deal with it.

The ultimate problem, of course, is Acrasia and her too-appealing bower. Many men have fallen here, as evidenced by the animals around it, but Guyon changes this pattern.

His Stoic manner as he destroys her bower demonstrates complete control of his senses by reason; even the harmonious sound of the music which greets his ears does not affect him. His purpose in travelling to the bower has been to expose fraud and deceit, and he does so by wreaking havoc on the bower.

Yet there is a negative side to this outcome, for the principle of free choice whose positive side Guyon has followed also allows for man to choose the side of the beasts, as Grille has done. Since man can slide down to the level of the animals if he so desires, the principle operates in both ways. Nothing can be done by Guyon or his Palmer when Grille makes his choice, and the Palmer wisely realizes that Grille must be left alone to live his life as he pleases because he also has the right to choose the direction that his life will take. The best indication that such men as Grille will change is given to us in the name of Acrasia's last lover, Verdant, meaning "green" and thus symbolizing hope. As Guyon hopes for a change in Grille's desires, the symbols of hope lead us to the conclusion that he some day may change.

The incident with Grille, however, indicates that man can effect his own salvation from the whims of the emotions if he so desires. The use of reason, the highest faculty in man's possession, brings about his salvation from the



storms of passion that flow over him. But this salvation on earth does not mean that his heavenly salvation is caused by his actions; the former type of salvation simply brings him as close to God as he can come in the mortal world. Thus the mental ordering of his life elevates him spiritually and physically and provides for his understanding of the divine world. In this sense, man shows that he does possess a spiritual side that is able to understand the movement of the heavens and the ordering of the universe.

Philosophically and theologically, Guyon's journey becomes a working model of the basic principles of classical, medieval, and Renaissance thought on man's existence in the world; in the narrative of this journey Spenser combined many diverse ideas to synthesize his own opinion on man's position between the earth and the stars. Following in the footsteps of Aristotle, Seneca, and Cicero, he has shown that reason brings maturity and critical judgment to man by ordering his life from within. He has also shown that temperance, like all other virtues, must be acquired through practice and that it does not come to man automatically. It controls man when he is hurrying into wickedness by restraining him until he can view the situation clearly. In the line of Thomas Aquinas, Spenser has exemplified the thought that temperance is a cardinal virtue and that temperance is the first virtue that man must master before any other virtue can come to him; for

this reason, then, temperance is crucial to man's development.

In the line of the thoughts of Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, Guyon has exemplified the principle that free choice operates in man's actions; that is, man is not tied down by a pre-ordained curse so that he can do nothing about his position in life. Since Guyon is not bound by this idea of human limitation, he illustrates that man has the capacity, if he has the will, to become the creator and the destroyer in the mortal realm; Guyon has chosen the creative aspect of free will by making his world of internal order and by destroying those obstacles that impede the natural development and ability of other men. Spenser, through Guyon, does not follow the Calvinistic tenet that man is totally depraved, but he does follow the belief that God alone can provide heavenly salvation for man.

Guyon's entire journey is an experience in which he alone controls his ultimate outcome; he is the sole creator in terms of his earthly existence. However, the salvation of God is necessary for his entrance into the higher divine realm; the pinnacle reached by the temperate man brings him to the bridge between the mortal world and the divine world. Spenser thus makes man the creator over those earthly realms and gives him an understanding of, but not dominion over,

the eternal realms. His understanding of his own existence thus increases by the exercise of reason and the temperance that he practices aids him in understanding the order and purpose of the cosmos.

In conclusion, then, we can see that Book II of The Faerie Queene provides us and Guyon, the natural man, with the opportunity to view those members of society who have chosen or have been forced into the intemperate life. Guyon exercises temperance when faced with the obstacles the intemperate characters place in front of him; he shows us that the potential for the virtuous use of reason is everywhere but that few persons know how to use it. Guyon is one who does know. He achieves at the end of Canto xii an internal and external ordering of his body and his mind and thus becomes the ruler over his own life.

Retrospectively, Guyon's journey becomes a personal and a public quest for temperance and freedom from excess. His position in the epic romance is that of a hero, for his allegorical journey provides a demonstration of virtue that is a reward in itself. His virtue is the ability to control his life while living on the earth and while facing adversity and temptation. He is a model of what man should be on the earth, and Arthur becomes a counterpart of the divine level. For the sake of all men, not only for his own sake, Guyon undergoes a time of trial so that the final result of his

journey is a new, optimistic future for mankind in a world that has reconciled the best of classical and Christian thought.

The destruction of the Bower of Bliss does not mean that Spenser has rejected beauty and pleasure, but that both qualities must be put in their proper perspectives. Sensual love is not degraded by Spenser, but the actions of Guyon demonstrate the idea that sensual love is not an end in itself and that this physical love is proper only when it is a middle stage between the absence of love and the final solidification of a new, lasting relationship between the individuals who are participating in it. Acrasia's lovers, numerous and forgotten, are victims of the love that does not last; Guyon's release of these men demonstrates that they have been freed from the chains of purely physical love to enter a new realm of understanding and light through the action of virtuous temperance.

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