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Of Arms and the Heroic Reader: The Concept of Psychomachy in Spenser, Milton and Bunyan

By

Arlette Marie Zinck

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of English

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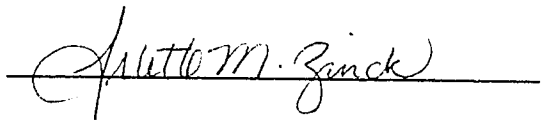

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Of Arms and the Heroic Reader: The Concept of Psychomachy in Spenser, Milton and Bunyan submitted by Arlette Marie Zinck in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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October 1, 1993.

For Robert, whose hand I hold as we, with wandering steps and slow, make our solitary way.

Abstract

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the theological concept of psychomachy, or holy war, was both current and influential during the period in which Edmund Spenser, John Milton and John Bunyan produced their work. Furthermore, the discussion that follows will endeavour to prove that psychomachy exerts a substantial shaping influence on both the narrative events of their literature and, more importantly, on readers' response to these works. The first chapter establishes the history and evolution of the psychomachy concept. The second chapter proceeds from this foundational argument to show how the concept shaped the literary theory out of which these authors wrote. Chapters three and four offer readings of the four major works under discussion throughout the thesis: *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War*. These readings demonstrate how the premises of psychomachy shape readers' experience of these texts. The final chapter offers an estimate of the power and purpose of this distinctly theological approach to literary art.

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Introduction:

The argument of this thesis is simple: I propose to demonstrate that the theological concept of psychomachy, or holy war, was both current and influential during the period in which Edmund Spenser, John Milton and John Bunyan produced their literature. Furthermore, I intend to show how this concept shaped both the literary theory out of which these authors wrote, and the actual form and narrative content of their literature. Psychomachy's influence on these literary works results in an intensely reader-focused work. In their attempts to inculcate conflict in their readers and "move" them toward resolution of these conflicts, Spenser, Milton and Bunyan draw these readers into an experience of the virtues and vices represented in their fictions. In this way the heroic protagonists of the classical epics are displaced by the heroic readers of Spenser's, Milton's and Bunyan's Christian epics.

The origins of psychomachy are, as is frequently the case with powerful and ubiquitous ideas, somewhat indeterminate. The concept can, however, be traced to the earliest hours of Christian thought. As the first chapter of this discussion establishes, psychomachy is well entrenched long before the Reformation period, although the inspiration that arises out of the personal and ecclesiastical reforms that sweep both England and the continent seem to infuse it with new vigour. In chapter two, the evidence of psychomachy's influence on Renaissance literary theory is traced throughout the treatises of dominant English theorists such as Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham. These findings are then

assessed against the fragments of theoretical discussion that can be culled from Spenser's, Milton's and Bunyan's letters of apology and specific introductions to their works. In each case, evidence for the influence of psychomachy found in all of these works is assessed against the central statements of the doctrine that are popularized during this period by prose writers such as William Gurnall, William Gouge and John Downame.

In the third and fourth chapters, the focus of discussion turns from psychomachy itself to an exploration of the concept as it appears in both the narrative plot of the literary works and, especially, in readers' experiences of the stories themselves. Throughout this section of my argument I depend most often upon the theoretical discussions of reader response and literary anthropology that are offered by Wolfgang Iser in his influential discussion, *The Act of Reading*, and in his more recent books entitled *Prospecting* and *The Fictive and the Imaginary*. Iser's theories provide a valuable framework by way of which the now outdated premises of psychomachy may be translated into a meaningful discussion of literature's projected and actual effects.

In these two central chapters of my argument, the focus shifts from a rather clinical proof for the existence and probable influence of psychomachy to a dissertation on the literary effects produced by this influence. Here again, the prose tracts and other didactic writings of key Puritan divines and other thinkers are brought to bear upon the literary discussion. Readers of this thesis may observe that although many holy war or psychomachy tracts are mentioned (see the bibliography of psychomachy tracts included),

several authors are cited more frequently than others. This emphasis on writers such as Gurnall and Downame serves the interests of both accuracy and practicality. Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour* and Downame's *The Christian Warfare* are the most popular and widely read of the tracts, and this popularity has helped to ensure my easy access to readable and reliable texts. In addition to the mircofilmed copies of Gurnall's text that are available in the University of Alberta's Early English Text collection, I was surprised to discover that this particularly lengthy tract has recently been republished in an updated and slightly abridged edition (it remains a full three volumes long) by Banner of Truth Press. Apparently the popularity of these works and of psychomachy theology has been diminished but not eliminated by time. Beyond these practical considerations, my preference for particular tracts also reflects a concern for accuracy, particularly where Bunyan's works are involved. Of the three writers considered here, Bunyan is the most likely to have had recourse to the prose tracts, and to have had reason to avail himself of these opportunities. A tract writer himself, Bunyan was no doubt curious to see what others were writing and anxious to benefit from their observations and inspirations. As William Tindall points out in his study of the sources of Bunyan's imagery, there is reasonable evidence to suggest that Bunyan read and was influenced by Gurnall's Tract.[1]

The final chapter of this discussion addresses the inevitable question that must arise from a study of this sort: if, in fact,

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[1] See Tindall's book, *John Bunyan Mechanick Preacher.* For the specific reference to Gurnall, see note 30 in Chapter Viii, page 272.

psychomachy does exert a substantial influence over the form and content of this literature, what is the final effect of this influence? This question is addressed in the context of recent New Historicist readings of *The Faerie Queene*, of Marxist readings of Bunyan's works, and, of formalist evaluations of the epic which chart the evolution of the genre from the classical works of Homer and Virgil to the early Christian allegory of Prudentius. Finally, I apply these critical approaches and literary techniques against the mature Christian epics of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan. To the extent that these works exhibit a fusion of imaginative inspiration and fictional finesse, they reveal themselves to be radical writings -- that is, profoundly effectual writings that initiate fundamental, or "radical", changes within their readers. Spenser, Milton and Bunyan harness the usefulness of literary adversities and exploit the didactic opportunities created by fiction in order to teach their readers the art of holy war and to train these "heroic" readers to change their worlds by first submitting to the spiritual revolution that begins within their own soul.

Chapter One

Topic into Illustration: the Psychomachy Tradition

> To The Christian Reader.
> There be two sorts of people always in the visible church, one that Satan keeps under with false peace, whose life is nothing but a diversion to present contentments, and a running away from God and their own hearts, which they know can speak no good unto them; these speak peace to themselves, but God speaks none. Such have nothing to do with this Scripture, Ps. xlii. 11; the way for these men to enjoy comfort, is to be soundly troubled. True peace arises from knowing the worst first, and then our freedom from it. It is miserable peace that riseth from ignorance of evil. The angel 'troubled the waters,' John v.4, and then it cured those that stepped in. It is Christ's manner to trouble our souls first, and then to come with healing in his wings.
>
> Richard Sibbes, *The Soul's Conflict With Itself*, 1635.

Throughout the remainder of *The Soul's Conflict With Itself,* Richard Sibbes, a well known seventeenth-century preacher, expounds upon the seemingly oxymoronic pairing of "true peace" and "sound trouble" that is made in the quotation above. The theological concept of holy war, or psychomachy[1] is the means by which "sound

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[1] The Latin term *psychomachia* is derived from two Greek words for which the English equivalents are *psyche*, meaning life or soul, and *machia* , meaning fight or conflict. The O.E.D. records that the English variation "psychomachy" evolved into the language by way of a Latin poem, *Psychomachia*, that was written in the fourth century by the Spanish writer Prudentius. Since its introduction to the English language, the term has been used extensively (particularly during 16th and 17th century) to mean "a conflict of the soul." *Psychomachia* has come to refer to a specific theory that explains why human beings experience inner conflict. I will be dealing extensively with

trouble" can bring about "true peace", and throughout his treatise, Sibbes illuminates the fine points of this doctrine by way of his exhaustive explication of the eleventh verse of Psalm xlii.

By the time Richard Sibbes was writing *The Soul's Conflict*, there was already a significant degree of renewed interest in the concept of psychomachy among the reformed protestant churches. As G.R. Owst observes, the topic of psychomachy evolved throughout early English culture in both writings and illustrations until it was so thoroughly entrenched that the topic and the illustration blended into one, powerful and pervasive concept (*Literature* 87). Although the influence of psychomachy can be found in literature and theological prose written long before the seventeenth-century, the concept experiences something of a revival among Sibbes and his contemporaries.

In its most basic and literal form, psychomachy posits the individual soul as a battleground wherein demonic forces wage war against the godly spirit, and it attributes spiritual growth to the individual's successful confrontation and conquest of these demonic attacks. This definition of the term "psychomachy" encompasses not only the actual battle between virtue and vice (to which the definition is often and incorrectly limited), but it also refers to a far broader theological justification of inner conflict that forges a causal link between the outcome of these battles between virtue and

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both Prudentius's *Psychomachia* and the theological concept that has taken its name from this work. In order to distinguish between the two, I will use "psychomachy" (the anglicized and seemingly obsolete variation of the term which is cited in the O.E.D.) to refer to the theological concept, and *Psychomachia* to refer exclusively to Prudentius's poem.

vice and the individual's process of sanctification. Although literary manifestations of psychomachy often resemble depictions of other dualistic representations of inner conflict, like the body-soul / flesh-spirit debates that were also popular during the seventeenth century, these resemblances are superficial.[2] The body-soul debates posit a conflict between two opposite forces contained within the individual. The triumph of the soul or spirit over the sinful flesh or body requires a defeat of one aspect of the self over the other. By contrast, psychomachy posits a unified self that is acted upon by external forces of good and evil.[3]

Psychomachy was particularly meaningful to those trained by Calvinist theology to search for evidence of election within their own heart, and to examine their conscience for proof of divine intervention. The early protestant reformers can be credited with the renewal of interest in a more literal understanding of psychomachy; however, the concept itself claims origins that precede Christianity itself. The Christian concept of psychomachy

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[2] For a comprehensive discussion of this idea, see Rosalie Osmond's *Mutual Accusation: Seventeenth-Century Body and Soul Dialogues in Their Literary and Theological Context*..

[3]The distinction I draw here, while valid and necessary to the discussion to follow, is far more complex than I represent it here. For example, both the body-soul disputes, which ultimately arise out of Platonic dualism, and psychomachy as I have defined it here, may be traced to common sources in Augustine and other writers. In the *Confessions*, Augustine draws a sufficient distinction between the body and the soul to beget later theories that perpetuate and expand upon the dualism implied in this distinction. At the same time, however, Augustine insists on the unified nature of the body and soul. He characterizes the conflict as a fluctuation of one soul between two wills rather than a battle between two disparate parts of the self, and he refuses to blame "the flesh" for sins that he willfully commits. (See *Confessions* IV.26; VIII. 24-25). As a result of these ideas he can also be linked to the development of psychomachy theology.

is most accurately attributed to an intermingling of influences that evolve out of both eastern and western philosophies of which Greek philosophy and Judaic theology are the most significant.

Greek philosophers who deliberate on the nature of virtue recognize the polarities of good and evil, although the Greeks themselves conceive of the relationship between good and evil as one regulated by reason rather than by will. In *Timaeus*, Plato outlines his theory of the three faculties of the soul, each of which governs a specific part of the body, while in *Phaedrus*, he provides a vivid portrayal of the conflict that arises among the three faculties of the soul with his analogy of the two horses and the charioteer. As the white horse (intellect) and the dark horse (will) exert themselves, the charioteer (reason) is left to mediate and direct these forces. For Aristotle, the choice of virtue or vice is a matter of desire. The truly virtuous person will not struggle to choose good, but rather will be drawn to it.[4] In both Plato and Aristotle, the polarities of the moral life are emphasized, but the moral life is not understood as a series of battles. This concept of warfare is most credibly traced to Gnostic modifications of the Greek philosophies and to the influences of eastern faiths like Zoroastrianism. In his study of the origins of the seven deadly sins, Morton Bloomfield argues that the matter-spirit oppositions that are evident in the Greek philosophies are "strengthened and made outright by the Gnostics" (*Seven* 9). The Gnostics conceived of an evil world and an evil creator. According to Bloomfield, they take

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[4] Aristotle's views are offered in both *Nicomachian Ethics* and in *Eudemian Ethics.*

over the Greek and Persian dualistic conceptions and add "a complicated hierarchy of divinities and demons of diverse moral qualities" (Bloomfield, Seven 9). Zoroastrianism, a Persian faith that posits that the world is a battleground in which two equal Gods, Ahura Mazda (or Ormuzd), leader of the "good" forces, and Ahriman (or Angrimanu), leader of the forces of evil, struggle for control of both the external world and the individual soul, is the most obvious precursor to the Christian concept of the moral life as a series of battles. It is generally believed that this Persian ethical dualism worked its way through the Babylonian culture and into rabbinical thought after the Persian military conquest of Babylonia. Judaism may have been particularly receptive to such influences because the idea that the moral life is a series of battles accords with the Hebrew understanding of evil as the result of humanity's willful rebellion against the divine (Bloomfield, *Seven* 63). At the same time, however, Judaism is not dualistic. The Hebrews saw the world as God's creation and essentially good or at least potentially good, and therefore any Zoroastrian and Gnostic influences on the Jewish faith are greatly mollified by the central tenets of Judaism. The Christian version of psychomachy, therefore, naturally arises out of all of these influences, but most directly out of both the Jewish faith and, through Greek philosophy, the neo-platonic influence apparent in Pauline thought.[5]

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[5]While the Gnostics and other dualistic heresies may be argued to have influenced Zoroastrianism which, in turn, may factor into the influences felt by Judaism, which then exerts influence on Christianity, I do not mean to suggest that the Gnostics had any direct influence on mainstream

One of the most significant literary manifestations and early treatments of the psychomachy theme occurs in the Bible where a specific link is drawn between spiritual or soulful conflict, and conflict involving physical or military activities. This metaphorical pairing of ideas may be explained by the evolutionary and syncretic theory outlined by Bloomfield, and by what Rosalie Osmond describes as the essential difference in emphasis that is evident between the Greek and Hebraic conceptions of the body-soul relationship.[6] Where the Greeks prefer to see the body as an incarnate soul, the Hebrews view humanity as animated or soul-filled bodies. Thus, for the Hebrews, the biblical analogy drawn between the physical body and the spiritual life might satisfy an innate or cultural preference for understanding intangible spiritual matters in terms of their concrete, physical correlatives. The biblical version of the psychomachy, then, does not simply appear *ex nihilo* or even *ex deo:*

Catholic thought. Any direct influence that the Gnostics might have exerted on the Catholic tradition would occur as a result of the Catholic Church's reaction against their beliefs.

[6] See Rosalie Osmond's discussion of the background that informs the body-soul dialogues of the 17th century. The differences in emphasis that exist between the Greek and Hebrew understanding of human composition are clear when the Aristotelian theory of soul generation is compared to the Hebraic myth of human inception recorded in *Genesis*. Where Aristotle postulates the pre-existence (or at least the potential for existence) of the human soul in the male semen, the Genesis story reverses this order when Adam's body is formed out of clay before the spirit of life is breathed into him. This distinction becomes significantly less clear, however, when the Hebraic concept of original sin is considered. If an individual's sin, which is a corruption of the soul, precedes the existence of the individual himself and is passed down through subsequent generations by way of Adam and Eve, then it may be argued that the soul predates the body. In any case, it is sufficient to say that, in general, the Hebrews are more likely to present a more holistic view of the relationship between the body and soul than the Greeks who view the soul as the original and most important aspect of humanity.

rather, it is one version of a series of ideas that is undoubtably influenced by diverse sources in much the same way as it itself becomes an influence for the many treatments of the theme that follow.

The link between physical and spiritual warfare is grounded in the Old Testament where God is acknowledged as a God of war:

> . . . the armor of the Lord of Hosts ("god of battle"), [is] alluded to in Isa. 11:4-5; 59:16-18 and Wisd. of Sol. 5:17-23. For ancient Israel, the central image of salvation was the exodus from Egypt, when God acted miraculously to deliver his people from slavery and at the same time gave them military victory over their oppressors (Exod. 14). Premonarchial Israel's military leader was therefore the Lord himself, and its wars were "holy"; indeed, the so-called "Day of the Lord" originated in the conception of God's literal military vindication of his people. One of the oldest images of God in the OT is "a man of war"(*Exod.* 15:3). (Jeffrey 506)

These references, however, are only precursors to the most complete development of the spiritual warfare theme which is presented in the Pauline text of *Ephesians.* Through the use of metaphor, Paul constructs a bridge between what he assumes his readers know and understand and the intangible theories he wants to teach them. A translation of spiritual matters takes place wherein societal concerns for legitimacy, citizenship and possession of property become concerns for membership in the divine family, eternal citizenship in the "heavenly realms" (1:20) and possession of spiritual inheritance: those who are separate from Christ are "excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise" (2:12); the Holy Spirit is described as "a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" (1:14); and the divine characteristics

of mercy and grace are described as "riches" of incomparable value to the faithful. Military action would be understood to be necessary for preserving territorial rights and protecting property; correspondingly, Paul argues that spiritual warfare is required to preserve both personal and communal claims to spiritual legitimacy, citizenship and spiritual riches.

That which is characterized by the Greeks as a wholly individual and internal tension between faculties governing reason and emotion is translated in the Pauline biblical text into a military battle between competing forces of good and evil that both act upon the human soul, thereby causing internal strife, and also act upon the Christian community to cause actual physical strife and the occasion for military response. Paul's translation of issues of commerce and military defence into issues pertaining to the spiritual life mimics the larger biblical structure in which the Old Testament promises of a Messiah, which the Jewish people understood as a promise of the ultimate military leader, are answered with the revelation of Christ as ultimate commander of spiritual warfare. As John Cox points out in his discussion of the *Miles Christi,* the "redefinition of holy war" is apparent in "the mission and ministry of Jesus":

> In keeping with the ancient Hebrew concept of peace as shalom (wholeness, equilibrium, health), Jesus embodies the struggle against Satan, the adversary of God and the prime disrupter of shalom. Both Jesus' teaching about the kingdom (or Kingship) of God and his actions as healer, judge, sufferer, and resurrected savior are to be understood in light of this struggle, whose outcome is indeed victory -- but victory for shalom, not for one human party at the expense of another. Paul's use of military metaphors, then, is consistent with the

> conflict Jesus enacted, in which Paul sees every Christian as engaged: this is what it means to be a "soldier of Christ" (Lat. *miles Christi*) -- even as every Christian participates in the victory won by Christ over Satan and death (I Cor. 15:55-57; 2 Tim.2:3). That Eph. 6 makes the enemies "the devil" and allied forces of evil (11-12) instead of foreign nations is probably also a reflection of postexilic Jewish thought in which demonic forces are seen as the deeper explanation of evil in the world. (Jeffrey 506)

Thus, according to Paul, to experience internal conflict is to join with Jesus and engage in warfare with the principalities and powers that afflict the individual spirit. This internal warfare is best understood in terms of the external manifestation of this same struggle wherein the people of Israel are afflicted by evil powers and called into physical battle against them. The metaphor serves not only to describe the aspects of spiritual conflict, but also to describe the defences required to combat such attacks:

> Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
> Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
> Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
> And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
> Above all, taking the shield of faith , wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:11-17)

Here the military images are clearly paired with the spiritual qualities they represent. Although the battle described takes place

within the individual, Paul's representation of psychomachy is also unique because it incorporates a larger spiritual context for the battle. While the conflict still takes place within, and must be fought with spiritual rather than physical resources, both the sources of evil and of good are positioned outside the individual. Thus, the battle is brought on as the evil acts upon the soul and its owner is required to summon divine force to counter the attack.

The use of military images and of the larger context for the spiritual battle that is incorporated into the Pauline depiction of spiritual warfare is also used by Prudentius in his poem *Psychomachia*. While the biblical influence on Prudentius is undeniable, there are also considerable differences between the psychomachy theme as it is developed by St. Paul and by Prudentius. In *Ephesians* Paul describes the armour of the individual soul, whereas Prudentius develops the spiritual warfare metaphor by personifying individual virtues and vices and weaving these characters into a sustained narrative. As Machlin Smith points out, Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* and Cyprian of Carthage's *De Mortalitate* are generally cited along with the Bible as the primary influences on Prudentius's work.[7] In *De Spectaculis,* Tertullian deals directly with the warfare theme and encourages his reader to imagine

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[7] While Smith argues that Tertullian's influence is most significant in the *Psychomachia*, Morton Bloomfield finds "the ultimate source of this particular allegory" in Philo. See Bloomfield pp. 64-65. Detailed arguments for Prudentius's sources can be found in the following article and books: A. L Hench, "Sources of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*"; C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love,* p. 68; Lavarenne, *Étude sur la langue du poète Prudence*, p. 564. For a more complete analysis of the possible influences of Terullian and Cyprian on the work of Prudentius see Smith pp. 128 through 132.

"impurity overthrown by chastity, perfidy slain by faith" and similar fictive constructions. But while the framework for personification is in place here, Tertullian's passage is distant from the rich narrative construction and fuller characterizations achieved by Prudentius. Neither does Tertullian's work establish that the battle of virtue and vice takes place within the human mind or soul. This latter element is, however, evident in Cyprian of Carthage's *De Mortalitate,* which specifically refers to the *mens hominis* as the site of the devil's assault upon man. Up until approximately 405 A.D., when the *Psychomachia* was written, metaphors of warfare and spirituality are used sporadically and inconsistently in patristic writings like those of Tertullian and Cyprian, but at the close of the fourth century they are frequently psychologized to represent inner states.[8] Thus, Prudentius writes out of an established and accepted tradition in choosing the militaristic metaphors, and, to some extent, by psychologizing the warfare metaphor, but he contributes significant new elements to the tradition by incorporating all of these aspects into the form of a sustained, personified allegory. Although the religious writings are generally cited as the primary influences on the *Psychomachia*, the secular influences are also significant. Whether one argues that Prudentius writes in imitation of the classical epic authors like Homer and Virgil, or (as does Smith) that he is deliberately writing to mock these works, the result of Prudentius's work is the same: the *Psychomachia*

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[8]See Machlin Smith's study of Prudentius's *Psychomachia.* Smith argues that this change in the frequency and the thoroughness with which the metaphors are used is directly attributable to the works of Augustine and to Prudentius himself.

transforms the classical epic tradition of Virgil and Homer into a mode suitable to accommodate the theme of Christian conversion.

The form of the *Psychomachia* mimics that of the classical epic. In the proem, for example, the address to the pagan deities is replaced by an address to Christ; in the main body of the text, the gruesome battles between personified abstractions are substituted for Homeric and Virgilian episodes of battle and conquest. The differences between the classical and allegorical epic, however, are unmistakable. The allegory lacks the classical epics' rich characterization and sophistications of plot: the allegorical characters are flat and predictable, and the outcome of each battle is never a surprise. These differences are not necessarily the result of artistic failings on the part of Prudentius, but rather they are the product of Prudentius's deliberate attempt to shape his narrative in order to achieve the didactic purposes which he outlines in the Proem of the work:

> The way of victory is before our eyes if we may mark at close quarters the very features of the virtues, and the monsters that close with them in deadly struggle.

In the work that follows, Prudentius sets out to "mark at close quarters" the virtues and vices that inhabit each heart. In doing so, he maintains the epic's concern for subjects of great scope and significance, but he interiorizes this theme: that is, he moves the site of analysis from the outside world to the interior of the individual.

The *Psychomachia* offers a narrative account of a series of battles between virtues and vices. These narrations, although they

are linked by slender threads of plot, are episodic. Although there is little to establish causal relationships between the events of one encounter and those of the next, the overall structure of the work is tightly governed by a series of progressions. The sequence moves from physical encounters to psychological battles, from encounters with overt evil to more subtle battles with fiendish abstractions. As the story moves from the first encounter between Faith and Worship-of-the-Old-Gods to the building of the temple, it charts the progress of the human soul from initial acceptance of Christian faith and the rejection of all other faiths, to the construction of a temple which, as John Hermann points out, is "an artificial biblical image emblematic of the self constructed through psychomachia"(*Allegories* 15). The battles in the *Psychomachia* are framed by two encounters that involve the character Faith. In the initial battle, Faith takes on Worship-of-the-Old-Gods; in the last, she joins Peace and Concord to defeat Discord and Heresy. Between these two battles six others intervene: Chastity wars against Lust, Patience against Anger, Humility bests Pride and Hope severs Pride's head, Soberness stands firm against Indulgence, and Good Works defeats Avarice.

At first glance, the sparseness of the Prudentian allegory compares rather poorly with the rich characterizations and complex plot structures of the classical epics. If the entertainment value of the reading experience were the only consideration that governed the readership of this text, it would not be surprising to discover that the *Psychomachia* received little attention either at the time it was written or in the years that followed. In fact, the opposite is true.

Manuscript evidence suggests that Prudentius's poem had an unusually large readership.[9] The poem's popularity and its subsequent influences on medieval English art and literature suggest that the didactic value of Prudentius's work was of greater consideration to its readership than its aesthetic appeal, or at least that the didactic element played a role in influencing its perceived aesthetic value. Prudentius's most significant literary contributions include his invention of the sustained personified allegory, and his construction of a text that uses the psychomachy theory as the dominant structural principle and theoretical construct. He also contributes to the development of psychomachy theology by codifying the details of this theology. *Ephesians* proclaims the existence of overt battles between the individual soul and demonic forces, and it hints at the relationship between success in the battles and the progression toward sanctification, but the *Psychomachia* spells out and graphically depicts these aspects of holy war theology.

Owing in large measure to the success of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, the theme dominated Anglo-Saxon and early medieval art and culture. A bibliography of *Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices* written between approximately 1100 and 1500, lists some 9,000 entries (Bloomfield), and Katenellenbogen's study of *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Mediaeval Art* proves the tremendous influence the psychomachy theme had on western art as

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[9]see Johan Bergman, *De Codicibus Prudentian is.* For a more complete list of subsequent emendations to Bergman's research see Herman, p. 17, footnote 10.

it traces the development of the theme from its roots in the Prudentian allegory through hundreds of significant representations in European painting and sculpture. Although all of these works incorporate the theme of warfare between virtue and vices, psychomachy is not used as the central structuring principle as it is in Prudentius's work. In the *Psychomachia*, the battles between the various virtues and vices are the focus of the literary action and the centre of the reader's attention, and the larger context for these battles is clearly delineated and periodically reinforced by the narrative. The prologue, the prayer and the final section of the epic in which the temple is built, all stress that the battles between the virtues and vices have been occurring in Man's soul, and further, that success in these battles is the means by which spiritual growth occurs. By contrast, many of the Anglo-Saxon literary treatments of the theme offer "only brief, unsustained allegories" (Hermann, *Allegories* 37). In *Beowulf*, for example, the Gregorian concept of the "arrows of the devil" may inform the passage in which Beowulf is warned by Hrothgar not to allow his victories in physical battles to lead to defeat in spiritual battles, and in Cynewulf's *Juliana*, derivations of the psychomachy theory are apparent in the poet's reference to the "arrows of the devil" and his incorporation of the tradition of the soul as besieged fortress.[10] Similar arguments for the incidental use of the psychomachy theme or its derivatives can be made for a great number of Anglo-Saxon and early English

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[10] These observations are made by Hermann in his essay "The recurrent Motifs of Spiritual Warfare in Old English Poetry."

writings like those of Alcuin and Aelfric as well as *The Battle of Maldon*, *Solomon and Saturn*, and *The Dream of the Rood*.[11]

In these works, the raw, literal representation of spiritual warfare as presented by Prudentius become increasingly psychological and abstract, a trend which is in keeping with developments in patristic thought. The Pater Noster sequence (where seven vices were positioned in direct opposition to the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer)[12], Gregory's theory of the "arrows of the devil" (the four part, escalating series of temptations toward sin) and the *castellum animae* tradition, are prime examples of the ways in which the psychomachy theme evolves from the sustained, personified allegory of spiritual sanctification into a myriad of related theological and literary forms. According to Hermann, the social context in which the later representations of the theme are produced may account for the frequent but incidental references to psychomachy and the general movement away from the sustained Prudentian allegory toward "microallegories of war":

> Dominated by the formal order of Cassian's archetext, which invokes scientific objectivity rather than narrative invention,

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[11] In addition to Hermann's book *Allegories of War*, the reader might also wish to consult the following essays by Hermann: "The Theme of Spiritual Warfare in the Old English *Elene*."; "The Pater Noster Battle Sequence in *Solomon and Saturn* and the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius."; "The Theme of Spiritual Warfare in the Old English *Judith*."; "Some varieties of Psychomachia in Old English."; "Language and Spirituality in Cynewulf's *Juliana*". See also Martin Irvine's article "Cynewulf's Use of Psychomachia Allegory: The Latin Sources of Some 'Interpolated' passages." in Morton Bloomfield's *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, pp. 39-62.

[12] According to Bloomfield, the pater noster "had been divided into seven petitions at least as early as Cassian and Augustine." See *The Seven Deadly Sins*, p. 163.

> Aldhelm's conflict of virtues and vices reflects its social context: the distance between the *Psychomachia* and its Old English analogues is the distance between a late classical Christianity forming itself in opposition to the paganism of the cultured classes and a hegemonic monastic culture with a highly formalized technology of the psyche. (Hermann, *Allegories* 37)

Thus, the theory of sanctification through spiritual warfare became not only the dominant belief structure, but a culturally pervasive theme. The psychomachy theory, which was by this point established and well defined by both *Ephesians* and the *Psychomachia*, could be taken as assumed knowledge; fragmentary references and motifs could be presumed to have meaning on their own, and, as a result, commentaries on the fine theological implications of the theory become more abstract and complex.

This movement toward a more fragmentary representation of psychomachy is also apparent in the visual arts that were directly influenced by Prudentius's poem: in the pictorial cycles of the virtues and vices, and in the illustrations that accompanied the manuscripts of the *Psychomachia*. The exception to this generalization is the group of images that illustrate a specific sub-theme of the "Ladder of Virtue." As Katzenellenbogen points out, the majority of visual representations of the psychomachy theme concentrate on the individual battles themselves. Although there are fluctuations between more realistic and abstract treatments of the psychomachy,[13] the overall movement is toward a more stylized

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[13]In the final series of illustrations (circa 1298) for the *Psychomachia*, for example, this trend toward "realism" is evident in the artist's decision to illustrate the virtues as nuns and the vices as townswomen. According to Katzenellenbogen this decision represents the artist's desire to place

and symbolic rendering of the personified virtues and vices that reflect the complex theological theories they were designed to represent in the later periods:

> The psychomachia cycle had first given a visual picture of the invisible conflict between the spiritual forces of good and evil. After a highly ramified development in the 9th and 10th centuries, it declined in the latter part of the 11th, to give place to triumphal psychomachy, the more rigid and direct treatment of the same motif, so preparing the way for a fuller development in 12th century French sculpture. And the illustrations of the ladder of virtue finally showed the various steps in the subjection of evil and the ascent to the good.
>
> The virtues, however, were not only portrayed dynamically in the excitement of battle or of triumph but also in peaceful representations of a static nature. From the 9th century onwards whole groups of moral personifications were enclosed in "medallion" designs, the clear and systematic arrangement of which suited the complicated thought structure which the picture sought to convey. (Katzenellenbogen 73-4)

But while the pervasive movement of the psychomachy theme leads away from the robust, sustained personified allegory of Prudentius toward a more incidental and abstract treatment of the psychomachy theme, as J.F. Forrest points out, the imaginative potency of the spiritual warfare theme appears to have diminished little throughout the middle ages:

> One of the oldest figures of Christian thought, the warfare appears in literature at least as early as the fifth-century *Psychomachia* of Prudentius and is a fascinating motif in the sermons and drama of the Middle Ages. When it is

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"the action in a setting of greater reality, that of the world around him" since there appears to have been a general "tendency to apply the wealth of everyday experience to the discernment of good and evil" (Katzenellenbogen 7).

> combined with the ancient image of the journey, a fertile soil is produced for the growth of the conflict between the Sins and the human soul. The battle is fought as early as the *Ancrene Riwle* (ca. 1200), a hortatory handbook for anchoresses living outside the nunnery walls, in which the Jerusalem-bound pilgrim is shown beset with seven fierce beasts; it flares up again in Lydgate's *Assembly of Gods* (ca. 1400) and in his translation of the unconscionably lengthy fourteenth-century poem, Guillaume de Deguilleville's *Le Pèlerinage de l'ame*. Spiritual warfare is also the backbone of the English morality play, as in *The Castell of Perseverance* (ca. 1425). ("Introduction" viii)

For the most part, the incidences cited here conform to the pattern of incidental and fragmentary inclusions of the psychomachy theme found in Anglo-Saxon and Early English writing. *The Castle of Perseverance* is an exception to this rule. In this early play, the author's use of the psychomachy extends beyond motif to become the central theme and structuring principle for the work.

In this morality play, which was first performed in the early 1500's, the psychomachy moves beyond the printed page to the stage[14] where the personified virtues and vices are acted out before an audience. There appears to be a formidable gulf between the periodic and incidental references to the erudite variations on the psychomachy theme that occur in earlier English writings, and this lively and overt representation of a battle between the virtues and the vices. Between the periods described by Hermann and Katzenellenbogen -- when the psychomachy theme became

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[14]I use the term "stage" loosely here. Based on a diagram that accompanies the manuscript of this play, it is believed that *The Castell of Perseverance*, and perhaps other morality plays of its kind, were performed on the ground with the audience seated in a circle around the focus of the action. See R. Southern, *The Medieval Theatre in the Round.*

progressively theoretical, fragmented and abstract -- and the appearance of this morality play, the tradition of a sustained and personified allegory of the virtues and vices must have remained alive in the popular imagination even if it did not appear in the literature. In his study of medieval English literature and the sermon, G. R. Owst argues that the medieval sermon acted as a conduit by which the classical and patristic sources of the early psychomachy tradition made their way into later medieval and reformation theology and literature.

Ultimately, the Bible and Prudentius can be claimed as the sources of the personified abstractions and the depiction of battling virtues and vices that surfaces in *The Castell of Perseverance*, but Owst suggests a more immediate source:

> ...subsequent development of the allegoric abstractions in our native literature, in which the abstract figure is made to appear as a living, realistic personality, can safely be attributed to the influence of the pulpit. (*Literature* 87)

This attribution is supported by Owst's research which uncovers many examples of personified allegorical figures and battling virtues and vices in sermons delivered throughout the medieval period. Furthermore, these sermons often interpreted these allegories for the congregations in terms of quotidian existence. Therefore, even though the literature and theology of spiritual warfare was becoming more abstract, psychological and generally far removed from the more literal "prudentian" model, the more lively and concrete representation of the psychomachy theme was in

some measure preserved in the popular theology expounded from the pulpit:

> Writers of pulpit manuals and treatises, from the thirteenth century onwards, were accustomed to illustrate each separate "branch" of Vice or Virtue, treated in turn, with precisely such vivid little sketches of contemporary men and women and their ways. Thus grew up a natural tendency to identify topic with illustration, and blend them into one. At length, with the increasing popularity of sermon satire and realism, the Abstraction itself became a living person, known and recognized by all men. The Vices themselves now strutted upon the scene as well-known types and characters of the tavern or the marketplace. The Virtues appeared in the guise of noble women of the times. (*Literature* 87)

It might also be reasonable to assume that the pictorial representations of the *Psychomachia* may have played some role in keeping the "prudentian-style" allegory alive in the minds of the both the congregations and the clergy because many late medieval and early renaissance preachers would have seen visual representations of the psychomachy theme decorating their walls and windows each time they looked out into their churches. In any case, the sustained, personified depiction of battling virtues and vices found in this play can be linked to the Prudentian tradition without requiring a direct relationship between the two texts.

The Castle of Perseverance actually provides a unique opportunity to measure the changes in psychomachy theology that had occurred since Prudentius wrote the *Psychomachia*. In many of the earlier, fragmentary or fleeting references to psychomachy that may be discerned in Anglo-Saxon and early English works, the authors draw upon small portions of the psychomachy theme or upon

learned derivations and explications of specific aspects of the theology. The *Castle of Perseverance*, however, revisits the same issues addressed by Prudentius: it incorporates a battle between personified virtues and vices, and establishes a context for these battles in the larger scheme of salvation.

Despite the close to one thousand years between them, *The Castle of Perseverance* and the *Psychomachia* exemplify a similar version of holy war theology: the life of the spirit is a life of conflict, humanity is the site of spiritual conflict, external forces of both demonic and godly origin attempt to influence the individual, and the individual is left to choose between these opposing forces. In *The Castle of Perseverance* this idea is worked out in a considerably more complex narrative structure. The battles of the virtues and vices, which are the focal point of the Prudentian allegory, are incorporated into a more detailed dramatic account of the salvation story. Usually man himself is left out of the representation of battle because he is the site of the battle (as is the case in the *Psychomachia*), but in this drama the allegory incorporates several levels of significance. Mankind is the central figure in the *Castle of Perseverance,* and he represents both the site of the battles that take place within the individual Christian and the conflict between good and evil that define humanity's Christian experience. Thus mankind appears on stage beside his own allegorized constituent parts in his role as individual man and as a metonymic figure representative of humanity at large.

The drama begins with "the banns", a brief summary of the theological basis for the play that follows, and an outline of the

forth-coming action. The players who present the banns provide a brief summary of the psychomachy theory:

> Euery man in hym self for sothe he it may fnde . . . God hym geuyth t[w]o aungelis ful yep and ful yare,
> The goode aungel and the badde, to hym for to lende.
> The goode techyth hym goodnesse; the badde, synne and sare;
> Whanne the ton hath the victory, the tother goth be-hende,
> Be skyll.
> The goode aungel coueytyth euermore mans saluacion,
> And the badde bysytyth hem euere to hys dampnacion.
> And God hathe govyn man fre arbritracion
> Whether he wyl hymse[lf] saue or his soule per[yll]. [15]

The actual drama begins as the character mankind is addressed by both a good and bad angel. As the banns forewarned, mankind is taught goodness by the good angel and is "bysytyth", or attacked, by the bad angel. Initially, mankind is offered the choice of serving God or the world. He chooses to serve the world and is soon after beset by vices. Eventually Shrift and Penance temporarily redeem mankind and following this redemption he seeks protection from sin in the castle of perseverance. This brief respite of grace is soon ended as the vices attack the castle and the actual battle between the virtues and the vices takes place on stage. Although the vices are unsuccessful in either their verbal or physical assaults against the virtues, they eventually succeed in seducing mankind and removing him from the castle. The seduction is accomplished by Covetousness's neat rationalization: he convinces Mankind to accept the pecuniary vice by tempting him to mask his covetousness in a false concern for others -- mankind can use the worldly wealth to

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[15] This and all future quotations from this interlude will be taken the following edition: *The Castle of Perseverance.* Ed. F.J. Furnivall and A.W. Pollard.

soothe the sufferings of the poor, rectify the injustices perpetrated by the Church as well as ensure a small sum for himself. Mankind falls to Covetousness and moves to a small bed under the castle. Soon after Death enters with his darts. Mankind realizes his error and repents of his covetousness. With this, Mankind dies and his soul crawls out from beneath the bed and addresses first his body and then the Good angel. The drama ends with a judgement scene. The Four Daughters of God, Mercy, Truth, Righteousness and Peace argue Mankind's case to God. God finds in favour of Mercy and Mankind's soul is saved. The drama ends with a direct appeal to the audience from the character of God:

> Thus endyth oure gamys!
> To saue you fro synnynge,
> Evyr at the begynnynge
> Thynke on youre last endynge!
> *Te, Deum, laudamus!* (3646-3650)

The didactic purpose proclaimed in the *Psychomachia* is also affirmed in this medieval interlude. The dramatic "game" played by both the actors and the audience is justified by the moral lesson provided: both players and audience members will be "saved from sinning" by the example set forth on stage.

In *The Castle of Perseverance*, the two styles of representation that have characterized the depiction of psychomachy in literature coalesce. The interlude makes use of the religious myths and traditions that grow out of the theological explications and which are often used as motif-style references to the psychomachy in Anglo-Saxon and medieval writing; it also uses the psychomachy as the thematic structure for the work and

incorporates the robust, relatively uncomplicated battles between virtue and vice that were popularized by Prudentius. As Bernard Spivack points out, however, the actual battle scene between the virtues and vices as it is presented in *The Castle of Perseverance* and in *Mary Magdalene* (another medieval allegory which incorporates a similar battle scene) become "homiletic pageantry rather than dramatic action, elocution and spectacle rather than plot." The emphasis on the physical violence of combat between opposing forces (to which Spivack and other critics have incorrectly limited their definition of "psychomachia") "has already shriveled to an episode of homiletic pageantry on the margin of a plot of intrigue."[16]

The drama's incorporation of theological myths and allegories like the soul as castle, death's darts, the body-soul debate and the Four Daughters of God reflect the mature state of Christian theology and an awareness and acceptance of its teachings among potential viewers of the play. These myths and allegories significantly enrich the narrative appeal of the psychomachy theme but they also complicate the theology, and, it may also be argued, obscure the biblical emphasis and weaken the play's ability to communicate the simple facts of salvation theology to an audience unfamiliar with the subtleties of psychomachy. By contrast, the reader of the *Psychomachia* need only refer to the literary text in order to contextualize the imaginative narrative in biblical teaching and to interpret the imaginative narrative within the allegorical framework proposed by the author: Prudentius's proem and

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[16] Spivack, Bernard. "Falstaff and the *Psychomachia*".

introductory prayer provide the biblical context for psychomachy in the *Genesis* text, and provide the reader with a model for interpreting the imaginative narrative of the virtues and vices in his step-by-step explication of the allegorical or "spiritual" meaning inherent in the *Genesis* story of Abraham and Lot. A complete appreciation of the allegorical significance encoded in the *Castle of Perseverance,* however, is dependent upon the viewers' familiarity with the traditions represented by these myths and allegories and their comprehension of the theological principles that such myths and allegories represent. For example, Christ's role in redemption is obvious in the *Psychomachia* where Prudentius outlines Christ's role in his explication of the Abraham story, but it is far less apparent in *The Castle of Perseverance* where Christ's influence is buried in the apocryphal lore of the Four Daughters of God.[17] If the audience's comprehension of these myths and allegories is assumed (as it must be in order for the drama to achieve its goal "of saving" the audience "from sinning"), then the play is itself proof of the hegemonic state of psychomachy theology and its derivations. The interlude's combination of sub-allegories and myths in its otherwise straightforward account of psychomachy is particularly interesting because it supports the conclusions of Hermann and other critics who have seen the psychomachy theory implied throughout earlier and concurrent literature in the abstruse and incidental references to associated myths and allegories.

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[17] A comprehensive history of the allegory of the Four Daughters of God and the theology it represents is provided by Hope Traver in "The Four Daughters of God: A Mirror of Changing Doctrine."

The dramatic form of *The Castle of Perseverance* also makes it a particularly important example in the development of psychomachy in literature. This interlude incorporates one of the most obvious examples of "stage psychomachia".[18] This term describes the manner in which mankind is represented to the audience in *The Castle of Perseverance*. "Stage psychomachia" is:

> a dramatic moment in which a figure about to make a significant decision is on stage with two or more figures who in some way act out the alternatives involved in that decision. (Dessen 129)

"Stage psychomachia" gives "external stage life to man's internal forces" (Dessen 128), and allows these forces to interact with the character of which they are a part. Although this seems at first to be a paradoxical combination of allegorical and literal representations, Spivack argues that this combination of literal and figurative representations is the logical dramatic extension of the allegorical tradition practised in earlier dramas:

> The popular stage easily tolerated the paradox for at least two reasons. By the fourteenth century moral allegory had become so conventional that its personifications assumed independent life as artistic motifs and existed without reference to their ultimate or metaphorical logic: mankind could appear in the company of his vices and virtues because they had become autonomous figures in the medieval imagination. In the second place, the omission of man from his own drama, while tolerable in the diffuse and discursive method of other forms of art, violated every instinct of the theatre, especially the homiletic theatre which, by its traditional commitment to popular entertainment and moral instruction, cultivated the obvious rather than the subtle. The morality stage was compelled by its own necessities to present mankind along

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[18]See Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Drama and the Viewer's Eye.*

> with his vices and virtues; and he remains, in his various forms, a standard figure in the dramatized Psychomachia, making a third element in a tripartite grouping of personae. Since he is not a personification, his appearance in the allegory is actually the first of a series of literal intrusions that ultimately bring the metaphorical drama to an end. ("Falstaff" 453)

Subsequent manifestations of the psychomachy in drama seem to exploit the ambiguity introduced by this juxtaposition of allegory and realism. Although the explicit religious content of the earlier metaphorical and allegorical dramas eventually gives way to the more secular themes of the early Renaissance stage, and this overt interaction between literal and figurative characters becomes less fashionable in the later dramas, vestiges of the binary debate structure that characterize the moral battle of psychomachy are discernible in many later plays. Alan Dessen suggests that many Elizabethan dramatic texts incorporate a potential for stage psychomachy, but as he himself points out, speculation about staging based on written text is not always sound. Given the pervasiveness of the psychomachy theory and the prevalence of explicit representations of the idea on the early stage, however, it is reasonable to conclude that in many cases the earlier allegorical representations of moral conflict are not dispensed with altogether, but rather modified to gratify subtler tastes in representation.

One such example may be found in Act 2, scene 4 of *Cymbeline*. Here, Jachimo attempts to convince Posthumus that Imogen has been unfaithful. Posthumus remains unconvinced for some time, but finally he begins to accept Jachimo's bogus accusations. At this point Filario enters the debate and presents arguments to counter

debate found in *The Castle of Perseverance*: Jachimo is the hellish fiend who attempts to corrupt the figure of "mankind", for whom Posthumus is the substitute, and Filario is the virtuous voice of reason who attempts to dissuade Posthumus from believing Jachimo's lies. Dessen offers the following analysis:

> On one side stands Jachimo who offers convincing evidence of Imogen's infidelity, which appeals to the hero's baser nature; but also on stage is Philario, the voice of reasoned caution, a figure not in any of the numerous sources and analogues, whose presence makes the chooser appear far less blameless. Although literal stage personae, both Jachimo and Philario *could* correspond to forces within Posthumus at this moment, an effect that *could* be heightened through staging and theatrical give and take. . . For an early seventeenth-century audience not far removed from the obvious stage psychomachia, Posthumus's choice of Jachimo/slander over Philario/reason *could* have larger psychological resonance, especially if the literal staging follows theatrical patterns associated with the allegorical staging of the previous generation. (Dessen 141-2)

Dessen is correct to balance his comments with a tentative "could"; staging considerations are invariably speculative. Even if the staging considerations are ignored, however, the debate structure of the written text is sufficient to link this particular scene with earlier representations of psychomachy on stage.

This example of "stage psychomachia", and the others that Dessen cites, represents one of three ways in which psychomachy is

discernible in the Elizabethan drama.[19] A second and more obvious manifestation of psychomachy is occasionally apparent in the monologues of individual characters. Finally, it has been argued that psychomachy has shaped the depictions of several characters who, once the influence of the psychomachy is discerned, are revealed to be complex representations of the allegorical figures typical of earlier drama. Several Shakespearean plays provide excellent examples of more incidental uses of psychomachy, however, Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is the most comprehensive and complex exploration of the theme.

Like the many brief, incidental references to psychomachy that are apparent in the early English or medieval literatures, the reader must bring an appreciation of the tradition to Shakespeare's work in order to appreciate his limited references to psychomachy. Having done so, however, the reader will notice that the connections between the Shakespearean references and the psychomachy idea are obvious. The debate between good and evil forces, which is typical of psychomachy's representation of internal conflict, is apparent in *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III* and in *The Merchant of Venice*. In these cases the psychomachy is depicted as a debate within the mind of a single character (as opposed to the externalized representation that Dessen labels "stage psychomachy") and this debate is conveyed to

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[19] Dessen discusses a number of other Elizabethan plays in which similar scenes occur. Some examples, like the above quoted passage from *Cymbeline*, are more convincing than others. Although most of the plays that Dessen discusses are Shakespearean, he does provide examples from other authors including Jonson, Tourneur and Beaumont and Fletcher.

Although this brief example of dramatic soul-searching bears little resemblance to the allegory of either the *Psychomachia* or the *Castle of Perseverance*, Richard's debate with himself is shaped by the psychomachy's impulse to ascribe a voice to both sides of a moral debate and to situate this debate within the moral agent. In this play, the virtues and vices that beset the protagonist in the *Castle of Perseverance* and Posthumus in *Cymbeline* are represented within Richard himself. The morality's personifications disappear; the broader theological context has collapsed. All that remains is the debate itself and the protagonist who must come to terms with the disparate and warring aspects of his own mind.

A similar, comical example of the psychomachy occurs within the mind of Lancelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*. In Act 2, scene 2, Lancelot considers whether or not he should leave his master:

> Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me "(Gobbo), Launcelot (Gobbo), good Launcelot," or "good (Gobbo)," or "good Launcelot (Gobbo), use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says, "No; take heed, honest Launcelot, take heed, honest (Gobbo), " or, as aforesaid, "honest Launcelot (Gobbo), do not run, scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. "Fia!" says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend; "for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience hanging about the neck of my heart, says very widely to me, "My honest friend Launcelot", being an honest man's son -- or rather an honest woman's son, for indeed my father did something smack, something grow to; he had a kind of taste -- well, my conscience says, "Launcelot, bouge not"; "Bouge!" says the fiend; "Bouge not", says my conscience. . . (II.ii.1-20)

In this example the theme has deteriorated from the theological heights to a comic depiction of a mixed-up mind. All of the classic elements of psychomachy are apparent, however. Lancelot's inner conflict is represented as a dispute between his conscience (the seat of virtue in humanity) and the fiend (the demonic influencer). Having listened to both sides of his own mind, Lancelot is left to choose for himself.

Once again, the reference to the psychomachy is incidental to the larger plot. Shakespeare's use of the psychomachy to characterize inner conflict appears to be more a reflection of the pervasiveness of the theory than it does a purposeful allusion to the theology implied in this theory These scenes of inner debate do not form part of an explicit representation of the salvation story as they do in either the *Psychomachia* or *Castle of Perseverance;* however, these plays do grapple with questions of morality. Brutus's inner turmoil, for example, is an obvious dramatic manifestation of the play's central concern with Caesar's death and the moral implications of that death. Morality is also at issue in *Richard III.* Richard operates as an agent of incarnate evil throughout the play. His final moment of self-analysis affirms to the audience that King Richard's actions fall into a sphere of judgement that extends beyond the limits of his world. It also suggests to the audience that Richard is damned for his actions; unlike Mankind, Richard is unable to repent at the final moment. In *The Merchant of Venice,* Lancelot's moment of internal debate provides comic relief from the more serious theme of mercy that is examined throughout the play. This nonsensical, and light-hearted

look at the issue of "right action" and "justice" accords with the serious treatment of these same issues that is presented in Antonio's trial, Act 4, Scene 1. In both plays, then, psychomachy informs the dramatic representation of inner conflict and, although these representations are not specifically linked to a didactic portrayal of salvation theology, they do form part of a more complex exploration of moral issues.

The character of Falstaff provides yet another example of the way in which Shakespeare uses Psychomachy to develop specific themes in his dramas. In his article "Falstaff and the *Psychomachia*", Bernard Spivack provides convincing evidence for his contention that Falstaff is the embodiment of the allegorical vices that frequent the earlier moralities.[21] Spivack traces the evolution of dramatic depictions of the battle between virtue and vice and points out how the actual battle scenes fell into disuse in the more "realistic" dramas of the early Elizabethan period. The allegorical figures are absorbed into more rounded and complex characters and the physical battles between vice and virtue are replaced with more subtle representations of the protagonist's descent into vice or ascent to virtue. Falstaff, Spivack argues, exemplifies many of the traits that were associated with several more obvious dramatic representations of vice. Spivack concludes:

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[21] Spivack acknowledges the work of Dover Wilson who he says "develops the influence of the moralities upon the structure and moral theme of the Henry IV plays" but does not develop the specific relationship between Falstaff and the moralities' vices. See Dover Wilson's *The Fortunes of Falstaff*.

> The dismemberment of Falstaff into allegorical fragments might be continued in other moralities, reversing the synthesis that put him together. The homiletic allegory of youthful delinquency and personified vice in a dozen morality plays, perennial on the stage, supplied Shakespeare with the moral and dramatic structure of the Falstaffian epos, and also with the images of the personae who fit into it. . . . The delinquent prince, his precocious first soliloquy, and his rejection in the end of the "reverend vice, that grey iniquity", who has been such "good felyshyp" to him for so long, create problems of interpretation because the play has become isolated from its source in homiletic allegory. . . . He [Falstaff] was originally a personification, or a set of cognate personifications, to whom, because he was too theatrically attractive to die with the dramatic convention to which he originally belonged, Shakespeare gave a local habitation and a name. But although he walks like a man his "innards" are allegorical. (Spivack, "Falstaff" 458)

Shakespeare's use of "stage psychomachia", his reliance on psychomachy for the depiction of inner conflict in *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and finally, his composite of allegorical figures in the character of Falstaff attest to the prevalence of psychomachy theology in Elizabethan England and provide a witness for the subtle changes that occurred in the popular representations of the theological concept. Inner conflict is represented as the product of a binary debate between good and evil forces that exert pressure on the individual to force a choice. But where the good and evil forces -- the vices and the virtues -- were once portrayed as external spiritual agents that act upon the individual, in these Shakespearean examples the origins of these agents have become more ambiguous. King Richard's psychomachy results from a dream; whether this dream is a *bona fide* encounter with spiritual agents external to himself or merely the delusions of

a troubled mind is never clarified.[22] Brutus also compares his experience of conflict to a delusional or dream-like state. Lancelot's deliberations are given a clearer source, but the comic context diminishes the credibility of either the "fiend" or "conscience". Falstaff is sufficiently removed from the allegorical context from which Spivack argues he arose that he need not be exclusively tied to this tradition despite his links to the psychomachy vices. The changes permit a more psychological and secular reading of these depictions of inner conflict than was possible in the allegorical dramas. The theological structure of psychomachy is still apparent, but the interpretation of this structure is not so tightly controlled.

The incidental and fragmentary references to the psychomachy found in these Shakespearean examples attest to the pervasiveness of the tradition during this period; however, the most important dramatic treatment of the theme occurs in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The concept of temptation is explored fully throughout this drama, and this temptation is conceived and represented as psychomachy. As it was in *The Castle of Perseverance*, psychomachy is the thematic focus and central

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[22] It is true that Elizabethan prose commentaries on the human conscience often link afflictions of conscience to divinely inspired dreams. In the 1618 English edition of Peter de la Primaudaye's *French Academy*, for example, a troubled conscience is explained as follows: God "terrified them also by dreams and maketh them to tremble at their owne fancies." Writings of this sort no doubt ensured that a good portion of Shakespeare's audience understood a theological undertone in Richard's dream. At the same time, however, this particular scene could also have been interpreted by secular beliefs in magic, the occult or by more scientific and psychological theories in a manner that the explicit didacticism of the earlier dramas would not support.

structuring principle of *Doctor Faustus.* Marlowe's depiction of psychomachy shares many common features with the moralities and other earlier representations of the theme, but it also differs from these predecessors in three significant respects: it presents the first sustained non-allegorical treatment of psychomachy, it offers a slightly different theological emphasis by stressing the role that personal choice plays in the salvation or damnation of the individual, and it is the first tragic representation of the theme: it is a drama of the damned rather than of the redeemed.

Many critics have pointed to the vestiges of the morality tradition that are still apparent in Marlowe's play.[23] Good and bad angels debate with Faustus as they do with Mankind, and the seven deadly sins re-emerge from their allegorical contexts in plays like *Mary Magdalene* to appear again on the Elizabethan stage. Unlike earlier complete treatments of the psychomachy theme, however, *Doctor Faustus* does not sustain the allegorical mode. The doctrine of psychomachy is completely externalized in both the *Psychomachia* and *The Castle of Perseverance*: the aspects of inner conflict are personified and the interaction between these characters conveys the theological principles of which they are a part. In *Doctor Faustus*, the representation of psychomachy is both external and internal. Faustus's conversations with Mephistopheles and his exposure to the good and bad angels, the seven deadly sins and the Old Man, serve to outline the terms of the psychomachy debate to

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[23] These studies include: David Bevington's *From "Mankind" to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popuiar Drama of Tudor England.* Douglas Cole's *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe.* See also Charles Masinton, *Christopher Marlowe's Tragic Vision: A Study in Damnation.*

the audience and to set the debate in the familiar context of moral didacticism. But unlike Mankind, Faustus is not a flat, predictable figure. A substantial portion of the play's psychomachy is, therefore, represented as Faustus's inner conflict: Faustus's particular experience of psychomachy is conveyed to the audience in his rhetoric and clarified through his actions. Although the setting and the issues are familiar, Marlowe's protagonist exists outside the conventional framework in which he has been placed -- he is an essentially realistic character who has been placed in an allegorical setting. His actions are, therefore, a source of tension and curiosity. As a result, the doctrine of psychomachy takes on a new dimension in this drama. The doctrine is explored from the single vantage point of a specific situation rather than from the more universal and detached perspective provided in the earlier representations. The routine interaction between the protagonist and the seven deadly sins is subservient to Faustus's specific struggle with the particular temptations of intellectual pride and scholastic ambition. The realism of Faustus's struggle is also underscored and complicated by his biographical links to actual men.[24] As John S. Mebane points out,

> There is, in spite of all of the apparently orthodox features of *Dr. Faustus,* an ambivalence which results in part from Marlowe's decision to use a semi-historical and in many respects admirable individual as his protagonist: Faustus is a

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[24] Marlowe's Dr. Faustus has been associated with two historical figures: Johannes Faust and Theophilus of Syracuse both of whom were reputed to have made pacts with the devil. See J.P. Brockbank's discussion in *Marlowe: Dr Faustus,* pp. 12-13. See also David Bevington's *From "Mankind" to Marlowe,* pp. 245-62.

> man, not merely a moral abstraction, and he is, moreover, a man whose aspirations and whose daring may well have appealed to the Christopher Marlowe with whom the biographers have acquainted us. The introduction of Faustus' Promethean aspirations into the morality pattern produces a mixed genre and consequently enables the play to evoke complex emotional and intellectual responses. (117)

Because Marlowe's treatment of the psychomachy is accomplished through a specific character rather than a stock allegorical figure, he incorporates a more detailed analysis of particular aspects of the theology. Issues of personal responsibility are fore-grounded in this drama: Faustus's conscious choice for damnation is emphasized throughout the play. The first and perhaps the most symbolically significant evidence of this choice is presented in Faustus's first speech of Act 1, scene 1. After rejecting all of the lesser studies, Faustus considers Divinity, the pinnacle of the hierarchy of learning:

> When all is done, divinity is best.
> Jerome's Bible, Faustus, view it well:
> *Stipendium peccati mors est.* Ha! *Stipendium,* etc.
> The reward of sin is death. That's hard.
> *Si peccasse negamus, fallimur*
> *Et nulla est in nobis veritas.*
> If we say that we have no sin,
> We deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us.
> Why then belike we must sin,
> And so consequently die.
> Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
> What doctrine call you this? *Che sera, sera:*
> What will be shall be! Divinity, adieu! [25]

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[25] *Faustus*, I.i.37-47. This quotation is taken from the Methuen English Classics edition of the play.

When he rejects divinity, Faustus chooses damnation.[26] The rest of the play examines the repercussions of this decision, the second thoughts, reassessments and the inevitable confirmation of this first choice. In this respect Marlowe's drama has been linked with the *De Casibus* tradition (exemplified primarily in the non-dramatic works of Boccaccio) which emphasizes a more explicit link between the fate of the individual and his own actions.[27] Faustus's final exit with the devils is a direct and clearly stated consequence of the decision he makes at the commencement of the drama.

This emphasis on the protagonist's choice is not likely to represent a theological difference between this drama and *The Castle of Perseverance,* for example, but rather it is a reflection of Marlowe's need to clarify the premises of his plot. In *The Castle of Perseverance,* the plot is relatively predictable; the allegorical framework minimizes the need for clarification of the doctrine since the correspondences between the signifiers on stage and the signified theological doctrines are established outside of the drama in the ecclesiastical interpretive community to which the audience

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[26] I acknowledge that the degree to which Faustus's choice is free rather than predetermined is also a point of controversy. For example, it is possible to argue that God prevented Faustus's repentance because Faustus's sin of pride prohibits him from acknowledging the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for his sins. Brockbank suggests another assortment of possibilities that limit Faustus' responsibility for his damnation: "could it be that God hardens his heart, as he hardened the heart of Pharaoh? or it might be the devil, the Satan who 'entered into' Judas Iscariot?"(18). The distinction I wish to draw lies between the direct action and consequence that operates in Marlowe's plot and the more symbolic and less clearly motivated consequences that evolve out of the moralities' treatment of the same themes.

[27] Douglas Cole deals with Marlowe's use of the *De Casibus* tradition in *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe.*

is presumed to belong. The individual's role in choosing either salvation or damnation is certainly part of the Catholic tradition to which *The Castle of Perseverance* would belong. But while Mankind may be technically granted a choice in the theological scheme as it is represented in the drama, this choice is not *felt* in the same way that it is in *Doctor Faustus.* The *post mortem* petitions of the Four Daughters of God on behalf of Mankind have the effect of blurring the lines between Mankind's actions and their consequences.

The third substantial difference between Marlowe's treatment of psychomachy and those that precede him is that *Doctor Faustus* is a tragedy -- the psychomachy results in the damnation rather the salvation of the protagonist. This is a significant distinction; as a result of this decision, Marlowe is forced to be meticulous in his representation of Faustus; he has to show just cause for Faustus's fate and he must justify the outcome of the drama both in terms of the theology and in terms of the audience's expectations. The viewers of Marlowe's play would also be familiar with the earlier moralities, and they would have no doubt expected a comic resolution for Faustus. These considerations distinguish Marlowe's representation of the psychomachy from those of his predecessors by forcing the drama to present an intimate portrait of Faustus's mind. It forces the play to move beyond the simple fact of Faustus's sin and to engage in the specifics of each transgression and the context in which they are committed. As Mebane observes, this distinction also sets Marlowe's Faustus apart from his source in the Faust Book: "Marlowe's emphasis is not on the vandalized body as in the Faust book, but on the inward state of the soul" (47). Marlowe

must eschew the pat symbolic action that has to this point dominated the literary presentations of psychomachy, and he must turn away from the visual spectacle of physical decay that, while it presents appealing opportunities for drama (which is foremost a visual medium), might upstage and thereby obscure the vital and subtle details conveyed in the Faustian rhetoric.

Doctor Faustus offers an unusually complete and detailed analysis of a theme that otherwise appears to experience a decline in the drama and literature of the Elizabethan period. The decline is not so much a diminishment in the frequency of the references, but rather a subtle diminution of the absolute authority attributed to the theory. As the fragmentary Shakespearean references to the concept in *Cymbeline* indicate, the idea is still current in the years following Marlowe's major treatment in this play. However, both Shakespeare's and Marlowe's treatments indicate a progressive trend toward a more secular, psychological and generally ambiguous attitude toward the theology implied in psychomachy. While this statement is true of the literary representations of psychomachy, an equal and opposite force is discernible in many of the theological tracts that begin to emerge about this same time. During the 1500's, the idea of psychomachy develops in two distinct directions: it simultaneously moves away from its strictly theological and spiritual context toward a more secular and questioning representation in certain Elizabethan dramas, and, later in Reformation literature, it moves back to a more radical, literal and theological representation in religious treatises.

As the discussion to this point indicates, the concept of psychomachy is continuously apparent in the art and literature of the periods preceding the Reformation. Thus, to say that the concept of psychomachy experiences a rebirth during the Reformation may appear contradictory since no "death" occurs. However, the frequency and the manner in which the topic is treated in the Reformation period differs so radically from the treatments that immediately preceded it that the term "rebirth" is justified. In fact, English reformation theology resurrects the Prudentian style of psychomachy which is characterized by a comprehensive treatment of the spiritual warfare theme and a concentration on the literal equation of spiritual warfare and physical warfare. These Reformation tracts evolve out of a complex network of influences that include the 'New Learning' practised by a Catholic group of "Oxford Reformers" who were inspired by Italian neo-platonic philosophies, the emergent protestant theologies of Luther and Calvin, and, as I will argue, from the actual civil war that plagued England during the seventeenth century.

Erasmus's *Enchiridion Militis Christi* is one of the earlier and most influential of the tracts on spiritual warfare. The document was written in St. Omer during the summer of 1501 to address the need which he outlined in a letter to his friend John Colet:

> The *Enchiridion* I wrote to display neither genius nor eloquence, but simply for this -- to counteract the vulgar error of those who think that religion consists in ceremonies, and in more than Jewish observances, while they neglect what really pertains to piety. I have tried to teach, as it were, the art of

> piety in the same way as others have laid down the rules of [military][28] discipline. (Seebohm 169)

The *Enchiridion* is written out of the following assumptions:

> that life is a warfare, and that the Christian must sacrifice his evil lusts and passions, and spend his strength, not in the pursuit of his own pleasure, but in active service of his Prince. (Seebohm 173)

Erasmus is linked with the neo-platonic influences that circulated in Italy during the early 1500's, and with the school of 'New Learning' which Colet, Erasmus and Thomas More incorporated into the reformed faith that they practiced at Oxford and for which these three men are sometimes referred to as the "Oxford Reformers".

During his travels through Italy, John Colet was impressed by the works of the Platonic Academy, and particularly by the works of two men: Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. Although Colet might not have met either man, he is almost certain to have read their works,[29] writings which achieved notoriety in their application of Platonic philosophical reasoning to Christian apologetics. The cool, reasonable approach to Christian doctrine demonstrated by intellectuals like Ficino and Pico evolved among Colet, Erasmus and More into a preference for the Pauline texts (which most closely reflect Platonic influences) and a determination to eschew excessive allegorizations in favour of a "literal" reading and "reasonable" analysis of Scripture. Both of these biases no doubt function as inspiration for Erasmus's re-invigoration of the

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[28] This clarification is added by Seebohm. Translation of this letter is also the work of Frederic Seebohm.

[29] This according to Seebohm. See page 22.

psychomachy theme, and also for Thomas More's translation of two of Pico's texts: "Twelve rules, partly exciting and partly directing a man in spiritual battle" and "The twelve weapons of spiritual 'battle'".[30]

In both the *Enchiridion* and in Pico's two works on spiritual warfare, psychomachy regains its ability to influence practical piety. In the hands of earlier Catholic theologians, the concept of spiritual warfare and the ever-increasing allegorical interpretations applied to it are rendered so abstruse and theoretical that the concept loses its power to shape the daily practice of the faith. Although Erasmus and Pico arrive at a revised psychomachy through currents of reform operating within the Catholic tradition, their works are not fully appreciated until they are read by the protestant reformers. As Seebohm points out, the readership of the *Enchiridion* is rather small until protestant reformers take note of it:

> Whilst for years after it was written it [the *Enchiridion*] was known only in select circles, and was far from being a popular book; yet no sooner had the Protestant movement commenced than, with a fresh preface, it passed through almost innumerable editions with astonishing rapidity. Nor was it read only by the learned. It was translated into English by Tyndale, and again in an abridged form reissued in English by Coverdale. And whilst in this country it was thus treated almost as a Protestant book, so in Spain also it had a remarkably wide circulation. (174)

Psychomachy's insistence upon an actual, tangible devil and its explication of inner conflict as a spiritual war within the human

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30 See Seebohm p.152

soul allow Martin Luther and John Calvin and their followers to be amenable to the idea despite its wholly allegorical origins.

Both Luther and Calvin demonstrate a great interest and belief in the psychomachy's theory that sanctification is achieved as the human soul experiences and triumphs over the series of attacks launched upon it by the forces of evil. This theory is entirely consistent with Luther's belief in a literal, personal devil at whom he threw an inkpot on one notable occasion (or so the Luther mythology would have us believe).

Psychomachy is also central to Calvin's understanding of his faith. As John T. McNeill, editor of *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, points out, "the warfare of the kingdom of Satan is a theme frequently present to Calvin's mind".[31] Calvin's belief in psychomachy is evident throughout his work but it is particularly apparent in his discussions on the knowledge of God the Creator:

> All that scripture teaches concerning devils aims at arousing us to take precaution against their stratagems and contrivances, and also to make us equip ourselves with those weapons which are strong and powerful enough to vanquish these most powerful foes . . . We have been forewarned that an enemy relentlessly threatens us, an enemy who is the very embodiment of rash boldness, of military prowess, of crafty wiles, of untiring zeal and haste, of every conceivable weapon and of skill in the science of warfare. We must, then, bend our every effort to this goal: that we should not let ourselves be overwhelmed by carelessness or faintheartedness, but on the contrary, with courage rekindled stand our ground in combat. (I xiv.13)

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[31] See John T. McNeill, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, volume 1, p.173, note 23. See also K. Fröhlich, *Gottesreich, Welt und Kirche bei Calvin*, p.19.

As this passage indicates, psychomachy is an integral part of Calvin's daily experience of his faith. Where evil is often portrayed as a theological construct in many of the patristic writings, it is now a concrete entity: it has a name, it has a motive and its assaults are felt by its human targets.

Thus, a revitalized, literal understanding of psychomachy blossomed in both the Lutheran and reformed churches. It is interesting that the protestant reformers, who generally held allegory in such contempt, should accept the overt allegorization of spiritual conflict that is present in the psychomachy metaphor. This slight inconsistency is perhaps best explained by the fact that the allegory itself is Scriptural. Psychomachy does not originate in the Augustinian four-fold approach to scriptural interpretation which is responsible for so many of the theological abstractions against which the reformers protested. Paul proposed the metaphor in *Ephesians* and protestant theologians treated this portion of Scripture with the same literal analysis they applied to all others. Their approach to the *Ephesians* passage is consistent with the reform theology which works to establish a direct relationship between the individual and God. By understanding Paul's metaphor in literal terms, the reformers succeed in turning the "unseen" spiritual battle into a clear-sighted understanding of their daily, personal encounters with temptation and doubt.

The renewed interest in the psychomachy among the reformed churches, particularly the Calvinist congregations, is also a logical result of their theology. Calvinism's emphasis on election breeds a significant degree of anxiety within proponents of the faith who are

forced to determine for themselves whether they number among the elect or the damned. The only answer to this vital question lies within the soul of each individual believer and it is the believer's duty to search out the answer by monitoring the motions that stir within. This belief inevitably leads to a great deal of introspection and, in many cases, to the vast number of spiritual autobiographies in which the faithful record their thoughts and actions so as more accurately to examine their lives for signs of Divine grace. Of course the reformers had also done away with the Catholic sacrament of reconciliation, and so the monitoring and reporting of temptations and actions may have also resulted from some need to compensate for this loss. In his study of *The Puritan Experience,* Owen Watkins records the following observation:

> When a repentant sinner sued for grace he would know that if he were one of the elect a power would be bestowed on him which would keep him faithful to the end. If, on the other hand, he were not foreordained to salvation, his conversion was a false one, and although he might for a while be able to subdue the effects of sin, it would not be destroyed at the root and he would never achieve complete victory. In that case he was doomed to be one of the reprobates who would glorify God by demonstrating that human nature, even at its highest, could not renew itself or obtain salvation on its own initiative. Thus the convert kept watch on his moral and spiritual life for the fruits of the Spirit, which were the outward signs of saving grace in the heart. (9)

As Watkins points out, it is through self-examination that the warfare of the spirit, or psychomachy, becomes apparent to the Christian. Temptations are understood as Satanic prodding to evil, or divinely sanctioned tests of the believer's will, but in either case they are envisioned within the context of psychomachy. Forces of

both evil and good battle for control of the individual's soul; the outcome of these battles not only provides evidence of election or damnation, but the battle itself is imagined to be the mechanism by which the elect proceed through sanctification toward glorification. It is not surprising that the internal conflict experienced by believers is imagined as a personalized version of the Prudentian epic. Although Schiller and later Victorian philosophers develop elaborate intellectual constructs to give an alternative, secular account of inner conflict, the reformers were influenced directly by the Scripture and indirectly (but no less powerfully) by the vast weight of the theological and cultural tradition of psychomachy that was by this time deeply ingrained in the Christian consciousness.

The reformed theologians and commentators provided strong impetus for a renewed interest in psychomachy. With Calvinism came a population of anxious believers whose desperate search for signs of election led to a preoccupation with the self and, specifically, with the feelings of inner conflict which were explained as an experience of psychomachy. This interest in psychomachy or spiritual warfare among the members of the reformed churches, however, may also be seen as part of a broader intellectual trend. The advent of Cartesian philosophy, for example, is generally considered a significant factor in the emergence of the concept of "selfhood" that might be argued to have begun with the advent of the Catholic sacrament of repentance. As Descartes

pronounced "cogito ergo sum," he introduced a philosophical system premised on the existence of the individual "self".[32]

As a direct result of this collective obsession with inner motions and the daily spiritual development of the "self", a plethora of guides and treatises emerged. Within these conduct books and other manuals for daily living were directions for dealing with the inevitable temptations:

> Books like Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* and Roberts Bolton's *The Saints Selfe-enriching Examination* taught him [the justified person] how day to day to with-stand the devil, who by temptation from within and without tried ceaselessly to deprive God of His glory and man of his soul. (Watkins 13)

Bunyan was inspired by one of these manuals, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven,* and he also wrote several books of the conduct genre himself, as did other well-known theologians and preachers such as Richard Baxter (*A Christian Directory*) and Jeremy Taylor (*Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*). Although a substantial part of these books deal with the psychomachy and its implications, there is another sub-group of tracts and treatises that deal specifically with the spiritual warfare theme. When John Downame published the first edition of his successful book *The Christian Warfare* in 1604, he participated in a trend that resulted in a great number and variety of publications on this theme. *The Christian Warfare,* like the

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[32] In mentioning Descartes I am by no means suggesting that either the philosopher or his theories had any influence on the Puritan divines or on their development of the psychomachy idea. Descartes' philiosophy does, however, exemplify a more general interest in the self which is also apparent in psychomachy. Where Descartes' ideas develop out of a psychological interest which links him with Aristotle's *De Anima*, the Puritan divines restrict their interest in "selfhood" to the individual's contemplation of his or her spiritual state.

Enchiridion Militis Christi before it and the many influential writings that followed on this theme, is structured after the *Ephesians* passage and provides a commentary on, and explication of, the "Whole Armour of God"[33] Downame exhorts his readers to embrace the holy warfare of the spirit:

> When wee are roused up by temptation, we enter into a more strait examination of our selves, and search what secret sinnes lie lurking in the hidden corners of our hearts, that so we may repent of them and make our peace with God, without whose assistance wee can have no hope to stand any temptation. (8)

Downame's exhortation underscores the need to experience and triumph over temptation in order for sanctification to be achieved, and evidently the advice he presented for doing so was deemed of great value by many. *The Christian Warfare* was reprinted in four editions: 1604, 1608, 1612 and 1634. In 1611 *The Christian Warfare: The Second Part* was published and it too went into a second edition before very long (1619). In between the publication of the two editions of *The Second Part*, a third entitled *The Christian Warfare: Consolations for the afflicted*, and a fourth, entitled *The Christian Warfare: The conflict between the flesh and the spirit*, both made their way into print. Three other books on psychomachy experienced similarly positive receptions: William Gouge's *The Whole Armour of God* (1616), William Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour* (1655) and Richard Sibbes' *The Soule's Conflict* (1635).

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[33] For Downame's explication of the "whole Armour of God" see pp.44-72.

Both Gouge's and Gurnall's writings are structurally similar to *The Christian Warfare* and to each other. All three texts are chiefly concerned with the *Ephesians* passage, and all three spend a significant portion of their discussion addressing two key issues: how Christians can expect to be afflicted with temptation, and how Christians can arm themselves against these temptations. These tracts are lengthy: they aim toward a comprehensive treatment rather than a representative sampling of issues pertaining to their primary subject and yet despite their intimidating length, both tracts went into multiple printings. *The Whole Armour of God* was printed three times within ten years and the first part of Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour* was printed three times within four years and was quickly followed by a second and third part.

In *The Soule's Conflict,* Sibbes approaches the topic of Psychomachy on a slightly different tack. His discussion proceeds from an explication of Psalm 42: 11:

> Why are thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

His purpose is not only to affirm the need for the spiritual unrest through which sanctification is achieved, but to exhort readers who are plagued by Satanically-inspired conflict to move beyond this conflict toward the peaceful enjoyment of Divine grace:

> Since he [Satan] cannot hinder their estate, he will trouble their peace, and damp their spirits, and cut asunder the sinews of all their endeavors. These should take themselves to task as David doth here, and labour to maintain their portion and the glory of a Christian profession. (122)

Sibbes's discussion then proceeds to advise his readers how they can discern between Godly and Satanic promptings and how they can then deal with either sort. Like Downame's *The Christian Warfare*, and the treatises by Gouge and Gurnall, *The Soul's Conflict* was evidently deemed to be of value to Sibbes's contemporaries: the document was reprinted or issued in a new edition eight times between 1635 and 1658.[34]

Although these treatises address essentially the same topics, they and the many lesser known tracts that were also being published at the same time were evidently well received by the reading public. The authors and the readers of this material deem the repetition to be warranted, although the repetition is apparently questioned by some since Gouge feels compelled to address the charge that his subject matter has been "written before", and to offer a justification of his work:

> I answer that though it should bee true in regard of the summe and substance of matters, yet in regard of a more full opening, a more perspicuous delivering, a more evident prooving, a more powerful urging and pressing of points, a more fit applying them to present occasions, more and more may bee, and daily is added by sundry authors, whereby the Church of God is much edified. ("Epistle to the Reader" 3-4).

Obviously the level of detail which these authors attempt to achieve creates the opportunity for subsequent writers to fill in material absent in previous treatments of the theme, but, as Gouge points out,

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[34] For more details about this publication information see the Bibliography of Holy War or Psychomachy texts included in this thesis. It is also interesting to note that after a hiatus of at least a hundred years both this document and William Gurnall's *The Christian in Complete Armour* were republished in England.

the way in which the subject matter is written can be as important as the information itself. The English reading public of the early seventeenth century exhibit an insatiable appetite for all matter and manner of writing concerning spiritual warfare.

In addition to the influences of both the Oxford and the Protestant reformers, this marked interest in psychomachy may also be attributed to the political reality of Reformation England: civil war. The resurgence in holy war theology and psychomachy treatises certainly did not *cause* England's civil war; it is equally problematic to argue that the war brought about the renewed interest in the theology and spawned the popularity of the writing. Millenarianism, for example, would also play a large roll in motivating and shaping militaristic thinking among the ardent religious reformers. There is, however, an unmistakable correlation between the two occurrences. The holy war metaphor that so apply describes the battle against spiritual corruption that began the reform movement proves a convenient rallying-cry when civil war becomes the most expedient way to ensure that England will become "the new Jerusalem". In these circumstances the cross pollination of ideas is predictable: physical warfare becomes more palatable when it is presented as a noble "spiritual battle" to preserve the "true faith"; information that purports to supply the means for victory in spiritual battle is of keen interest to those who may die in a physical battle.

This entwinement of metaphoric spiritual warfare and its physical correlate is not original to seventeenth-century England. The precedent is set in the Old Testament where Israel's spiritual

well-being is linked to its success in territorial battles, but it is also firmly established by the Crusades. Although historians insist that the decision for war against the "infidel" to reclaim the Holy Land had as much to do with domestic problems of overpopulation and unemployment for legions of disgruntled knights as it did any religious concerns, Pope Urban II was careful to set these wars within a spiritual context by blessing the knights' armour and praying over the departing troops. At some time between 1073 and 1083, Pope Gregory VII took the process one step further by perverting the blatant spiritual and symbolic intent of the *Ephesians* passage to support his military campaigns. Pope Gregory succeeded in turning the crusades from "just wars" into "holy wars" and promised remission of sins and sanctification to all who participated in the violence.[35]

In the case of the English civil war, however, the authors of the psychomachy treatises can hardly be blamed for open conflict, or even for using their writing to directly bolster a military mentality. The treatises were being written well before the threat of civil war appeared and even treatises written during the thick of the war do not promote physical violence. Neither Downame and Gouge nor Sibbes and Gurnall make any comments about actual political unrest. At the same time, however, a reasonable case can be made that these treatises formed part of a mind-set that allowed the church leaders to play a role in preparing the English for battle. Although

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[35] This information of the Crusades is primarily drawn from a collection of essays entitled *The Holy War* edited by Thomas Patrick Murphy.

the psychomachy treatises of Gouge, Gurnall, Downame and Sibbes do not mention civil war, a number of other treatises during this same period indicate that "holy war" thinking was not restricted to the spiritual variety. In 1629 Richard Bernard published a treatise entitled *The Bible Battles: Dedicated as a History of the Holy Warres*, and in 1639 Thomas Fuller published *The Historie of the Holy Warre*. Historian J. Hale argues that the influence of the pulpit must have played a significant role in turning the people of pre-civil war England, who had a desperate dread of war, into a large and vigorous fighting force.[36] Hale's position is consistent with both J.F. Forrest's argument that the reformers regard spiritual battle, particularly prayer, as a type of "holy violence", and with sentiments expressed to Cromwell by Thomas Harrison, a doughty Major General during battle in 1650:

> My lord bee carefull for nothing, but praie with thanksgiving (to witt in faith), Phill. 4. 6, 7. I doubt not your successe, but I thinke Faith and Praier must bee the cheife engines, as heretofore the ancient Worthies through Faith subdues Kingdomes, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiaunt in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the Aliens.[37]

Harrison's letter betrays a significant and deliberate confusion of spiritual and physical warfare which is also apparent in the many soldier's pocket bibles and other similar writings that are popular at this time.

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[36] See "Incitement to Violence: The English Divines on the Theme of War" in *Florilegium Historiale*, pp. 368-399.

[37] This passage is quoted by Forrest. See "Milton and the Divine Art of Weaponry" p. 135.

Ultimately it is impossible to discern whether spiritual warfare begat physical warfare or vice versa -- it is most likely that each contributed to the other. It is, however, reasonable to conclude that once the civil war began, the concept of psychomachy became even more central to the reformers' experience and understanding of their faith. During the years leading up to the Civil War and during the Cromwellian protectorate, the reformers' natural bent toward psychomachy was stirred to a feverish pitch. Spiritual warfare defined and engulfed both the macrocosm and microcosm of their existence; it was experienced both within and without. It is not surprising, however, that this intense concern with religious battles of both the tangible and intangible variety died a quick death with the Restoration and Glorious Revolution of 1688.

The concept of psychomachy pervades the history of Christianity in England, and it is a discernible influence in a good portion of both secular and Christian literature written before the Reformation. For the English reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries psychomachy is far more than a theological concept; it is the metaphor that dominates their daily life. Psychomachy is infused in every aspect of both their religious thinking, and their political reality. The evidence suggests that the skills required for success in psychomachy were, for most Christians of the reformed faiths, the single most important skills they could possess.

Since the time of Prudentius the skills required for success in psychomachy are deemed to be transmittable to a reader through a written text. Reformation England held the same assumption.

Writers like Downame, Gurnall, Gouge and Sibbes pen their lengthy tomes in the faith that their written words will initiate a spiritual change within the reader that will allow the Holy Word to be more easily heard and understood. This didactic purpose is amply apparent in the prose of the theologians but, as the following chapter will indicate, it is also a central but implied assumption in the work of many other pious writers who sought to "teach" their readers "war"[38] through more delightful and imaginative literary means.

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[38] Judges 3:2, KJV

Chapter Two

To Move the Soul: Fashioning a Literary Theory.

Many readers and writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries believe that readers can be made aware of their own experience of psychomachy and be taught the art of spiritual warfare by reading didactic prose tracts. This fact is evidenced by both the number of psychomachy tracts written during the period and by publication statistics that indicate the reception these tracts enjoyed from contemporary readers. The concomitant belief that imaginative literature might also bring about an awareness of psychomachy and teach the reader equally valuable lessons about spiritual warfare is more difficult to document, but far more important to our understanding of the literature and criticism written during this period.

Seriously pious writers of imaginative literature and literary theory during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries write in direct opposition to a significant body of criticism that eschews imaginative literature as fundamentally corrupt and therefore a patently inappropriate vehicle for the conveyance of moral truths. These writers often pen defences and justifications to accompany their works, and it is not surprising that the ideas expressed in these writings echo Protestant assumptions about spiritual truth and its apprehension that can be found in any number and variety of religious prose tracts. Since, as the previous chapter has argued, psychomachy is the most prevalent and universally acknowledged explanation of how spiritual growth takes place, it is reasonable to

expect that the tenets of psychomachy influence these defences and justifications for imaginative literature. However, I wish to propose something far greater than "influence". In the following discussion I will argue that the theological concept of psychomachy not only affects the perceived value of imaginative literature, but rather that literature's value is specifically linked to and measured against its ability to provoke psychomachy within the reader. In effect, a theory of literature is "fashioned" from the belief that by "moving the soul" (to use Sir Philip Sidney's terms) an author may provoke spiritual change.

This direct relationship between psychomachy and literary theory is apparent in assumptions both about the reading process, and about the skills that may be gained by reading, that are discernible in the writing of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan. To a large degree these assumptions also concur with the explicit theories of literature outlined by Sidney, George Puttenham and other Renaissance critics. All of these writers assume the reader's active participation with the text. In the case of Spenser and Bunyan, this participation is in part brought about through the use of allegory which, assuming the reader is interested in discovering the moral and spiritual truths encoded within, compels the reader to seek correspondences between the natural world that is represented in the text and the spiritual world it signifies. This active participation in the creation of meaning involves the reader in a struggle to discern "right" from "wrong", "evil" from "good" in order to recognize and understand the "truth" conveyed in the story. In the elect reader this struggle is rewarded by a visitation of divine grace

which bestows apprehension of this truth. The entire process mirrors the conflict that, according to psychomachy theology, begets spiritual knowledge.

Allegory is not, however, the only means by which reader participation is brought about. In his *Defence*, Sidney argues that the very process of reading imaginative literature, whether it is allegorical or not, "moves" readers to action by providing them with "notable images of vertues, vices or what els" and seducing them with "the sweete delights of Poetrie" until they "finde a pleasure in the exercise of the mind" (5). Milton's writing, which is more mythic than allegorical, proves Sidney's point. *Paradise Lost* invites or (as Stanley Fish argues) demands readers' active participation in puzzling through the fiction. Milton subscribes to a theory of accommodation that accepts that divine truths can only be crudely represented in fallen language. These truths can be understood by readers who apprehend with the spirit but not by those who seek to understand merely with their carnal nature. As Milton argues in *Areopagitica*, one must struggle in "free and open encounter[s]" in order for falsehood to be vanquished, although truth itself is never "put to the wors" (561) in these struggles[1] . So too must Christians be "put to the wors" to attain spiritual growth, and reading "what ever sort the Books be" (491) is deemed an appropriate method of initiating and engaging in these trials. Thus, imaginative literature is understood by each of these writers to be a sacred battlefield wherein "fit" readers may be taught through the intervention of

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[1] Although in the context of this discussion it might be tempting the understand "wors" to mean "wars", the word is, according to the O.E.D., an archaic spelling of "worst".

divine grace to know themselves, their enemy and the means to their salvation.

The belief that stories can teach such essential lessons to the Christian spirit is not an original claim of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Prudentius makes a similar assertion in his *Psychomachia*. From the outset the readers' participation is assumed and the expectation that the reading prccess will teach the art of spiritual warfare is established. Prudentius sets out with an explicit purpose: he intends to teach his readers about conflicts within the soul. In designing a literary format that will accommodate his goal he creates the first sustained allegory. The *Psychomachia* does not seek to impart factual information to a passive observer; rather, it entices its readers to engage in the story, to become aware of the psychomachy within themselves. To this end the text teaches its readers how to decode the spiritual truth within the allegory and how to use this information to discern spiritual truths about themselves.

Prudentius involves his readers in the poem from the beginning. In the proem, the narrative speaker includes the readers is his prayer to Christ by replacing the singular "I' with the communal "we". The speaker states that "we" worship one God under two names and Christ is beseeched by the speaker to "say what help there is then to guard her [the heart's] liberty, what array with superior force withstands the fiendish raging in *our* heart" (279). This prayer replaces the invocation to the muses that precedes the classical, secular epics. Just as the muses inspire and oversee Homer's stories of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and Virgil's account of

the *Aeneid*, so Christ himself is the inspiration and guide of Prudentius's text. In effect, Prudentius establishes himself in this proem as a conduit through which the divine muse will respond to the question posed for both poet and reader. The text thus becomes a communal enterprise shared by Christ, Prudentius and the readers of the *Psychomachia*.

When the prayer is answered, the story that results will tell exactly "what help" is available to guard the liberty of both the poet's and the readers' hearts against "fiendish ravings". The text achieves this objective in part by presenting an imaginative framework in which the characteristics of fictional "virtue" and "vice" are revealed to the readers. By simply reading the *Psychomachia*, readers will come to understand virtue and vice as literary phenomena, but this knowledge alone will not satisfy the petition made in the proem. In order for poet and readers to comprehend the working of their hearts, the fiction presented in the allegory must be understood in spiritual terms: the knowledge that is crudely represented in the story must be magically transmuted by the reader into divine wisdom. Prudentius takes it upon himself to facilitate this process.

In the Preface, Prudentius establishes context for his writing and the manner in which this writing must be received by his readers. The text begins with a piece of exegetical allegory. The stories of Abraham's conquest of Lot's enemies, of Melchisedec's celebration of the conquest and of Sarah's subsequent pregnancy are interpreted by Prudentius as an allegorized account of spiritual warfare. Abraham's victory over Lot's enemies is equated with the

"gathering of forces at home"-- the individual's efforts to summon strength within himself to combat the vices from "without". Melchisedec's offerings of food to Abraham are interpreted as Christ's presentation of food to the individual soul following victory over sin. The visitation of Lot by three angels is understood as the visitation of the Trinity in the individual heart. Finally, Sarah's pregnancy is equated with the holy issue that will come out of the union of divine spirit and the individual soul once victory over vice has been achieved. This sample of exegetical interpretation accomplishes three key objectives. It establishes the thematic context of the work that follows, it grounds the fiction in both the Biblical "pretext"[2] and in a tradition of allegorical interpretation, and finally, it teaches readers how the fiction should be read: as an allegory designed to impart lessons about spiritual warfare.

Prudentius's didactic purpose is obvious in his choice of the *Genesis* passages rather than the *Ephesians* 6: 11-19 passage as the context for his fiction. In the *Ephesians* passage, the equation between the signifier and the signified is incorporated into the text by its author; readers need only accept the relationships that are set before them. There are no clear indications of how the author arrived at the metaphoric pairing of sword and spirit, for example, or of helmet and salvation. By contrast, the *Genesis* passages force Prudentius to make the relationship between the biblical text and the interpretation of that text clearer to his audience. In so doing,

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[2]Maureen Quilligan argues that all allegories are founded upon a "pretext", usually the Bible, to which the allegory refers. Biblically based allegory is then a narrative commentary and re-enactment of the Bible. See *The Language of Allegory*, p. 99.

the groundwork is laid for the reader to continue the process by which the events of the story are converted into events of the "spirit."

According to Saint Augustine, there are two ways in which spiritual knowledge can be discerned: directly by divine inspiration, or through human teachings which, if they do in fact teach truth, ultimately originate in divine inspiration. In the defence of Christian instruction offered in the preface to his *De Doctrina Christiana,* Augustine justifies his own attempt to teach a method for the apprehension of scriptural truths with an analogy about the acquisition of language:

> Certainly, since my case deals with Christians who rejoice that they understand Sacred Scripture without human instruction (and if this is so, they rejoice in a true and by no means insignificant blessing), they must concede that any one of us has learned his own language simply from hearing it habitually from childhood, and that we have acquired a knowledge of any other language -- Greek, Hebrew, or any one of the others similarly -- either by hearing them or by some person's instruction. Now then, are we to admonish all our brethren not to train their children in these subjects, since in a single instant the apostles filled with grace by the coming of the Holy Ghost, spoke in the tongues of all peoples; or are we to admonish anyone who has not enjoyed such privileges to think that he is not a Christian or to doubt that he has received the Holy Ghost? On the contrary, let whatever should be acquired through human means be acquired humbly, and let anyone who is instructing another pass on to him whatever he has received without haughtiness or grudging. Let us not tempt Him whom we have believed, lest, deceived by such cunning of the Devil and by our own stubbornness, we may even decline to go to church to listen to the Gospel itself or to learn about it, or to refuse to read a book, or to pay attention to a reader or a preacher, but expect, as the Apostle says, to be caught "up to the third heaven . . .whether in the body or out of the body," and there hear "secret words that man may not

> repeat," or there see the Lord Jesus Christ and learn the Gospel from Him rather than from men.
>
> We should guard against such presumptuous and perilous snares. (21-22)

Evidence within the *Psychomachia* suggests that Prudentius concurs with Augustine's epistemological theories. The prayer included in the Proem indicates Prudentius's belief in divine inspiration and his subsequent narrative results from the assumption that this inspiration can be taught to those who earnestly seek the knowledge.

But while both Prudentius and Augustine agree that seekers of truth must involve themselves in the process of learning that truth, it is not immediately clear how Prudentius imagines this information to be transferred by way of his fictional allegory. There is nothing startling or new about Prudentius's allegorization of scripture: the patristic writers had been offering allegorical and typological reading of scripture long before Prudentius, and for that matter, the Bible itself lays the groundwork for such readings in the New Testament's typological readings of the Old Testament and in the Pauline allegory of Abraham and Sarah that appears in *Galatians*. There is also nothing new in Prudentius's implied suggestion that imaginative literature can be read allegorically. Heraclitus and Plutrach read Homer's epic as an allegory of the "unseen" forces such as the plague and moral change centuries before.[3] What is new is Prudentius's invention of a sustained allegory specifically designed to teach Christian principles (unlike the classical epics that were

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[3] see Michael Murrin's *The Allegorical Epic,* pp. 24-25. Murrin argues that such allegorical interpretations of the classical epics were often attempted as a means of "explaining away the scandal of Homer's Gods" (3).

clothed in allegory after the fact by critics rather than by the authors themselves) and his effort to direct the interpretation of this sustained allegory.

Within Augustine's writings there are hints that may suggest why Prudentius chose to express his understanding about spiritual warfare in a sustained allegory. As C. S. Lewis points out, although Augustine did not write an allegory himself, he was evidently drawn to the form. "He pushes his imagery . . . a little farther in the allegorical direction" (*Allegory* 66). The most convincing praise of figural writing, however, arises out of Augustine's comment about obscure and vague passages of Scripture:

> . . . no one is uncertain now that everything is learned more willingly through the use of figures, and that we discover it with much more delight when we have experienced some trouble in searching for it. Those who do not find what they are seeking are afflicted with hunger, but those who do not seek, because they have it in their possession, often waste away in their pride. Yet, in both cases, we must guard against discouragement. The Holy Ghost, therefore, has generously and advantageously planned Holy Scripture in such a way that in the easier passages He relieves our hunger; in the ones that are harder to understand He drives away our pride. (*De Doctrina* 2.6.8)

The sustained allegory combines the edifying effects of figures and the enjoyment of a fictional, secular epic. By presenting his readers with a fictional allegory of religious truth, Prudentius mimics the scriptural puzzles enjoyed by Augustine.

Some justification for Prudentius's sustained allegory is also offered by twentieth-century theorists of the form. C.S. Lewis, for example, argues that allegory is the natural result of any attempt to

turn abstractions into concrete entities.[4] By this account, Prudentius is forced into allegory by the nature of his subject matter: in order to make that which is otherwise intangible concrete, he must develop a strictly monitored series of correspondences that will allow his reader to understand much more than is actually written on the page. Maureen Quilligan suggests that Prudentius' allegory is sanctioned by the Christian heritage of word play: "Christ as logos sanctions the pun" (*Language* 161). But as Scripture itself will attest, Christian word play is serious business. Cursed is the natural man who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 *Cor.* 14). As Gordon Teskey points out, the same "hermeneutic anxiety" that is associated with the interpretation of Scripture is also associated with allegory:

> Allegorical writers often will arouse this anxiety by expressing contempt for anyone who finds the enigma hard to decode (F.Q. II proem 4). But the division of the audience into those who understand and those who do not is really a division inside the experience of each reader, who feels as some moment as if the play of signifiers will never find its end in the presence of truth and at other moments as if it may be possible finally to draw back the veil and grasp what is hidden behind it. (17)

In many respects the process of decoding allegory by "trying on" various possible interpretations and puzzling through to establish appropriate solutions to significant problems resembles classical

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[4]See Lewis's *The Allegory of Love.* Lewis distinguishes allegory, which he believes moves from the abstract to the concrete, from symbolism which moves in the opposite direction: from the concrete to the abstract.

disputational techniques. Although "reformed" rhetoricians like Augustine condemn the artfulness of secular disputational techniques that are more designed to fluster an opponent than to discover truth, even Augustine cannot avoid the binary, adversarial form of the debate in his written arguments. His tract *The Christian Combat,* which he wrote to teach the art of spiritual warfare, provides an excellent example of this adversarial and combative style of argumentation. After establishing the principles of spiritual warfare, Augustine exhorts his readers to subject their souls to God if they hope to defeat the devil, and states that faith alone makes the soul subject to God. These statements are followed quickly by his reminder that the Church's faith is brief and yet despite this brevity, these eternal truths "cannot be grasped by the carnal-minded". Shortly after this statement Augustine outlines the articles of this "brief" faith; throughout the next eighteen chapters he asserts the verity of the faith by refuting opposing heretical doctrines. Eighteen chapters -- a brief faith indeed. Pity the readers who fail to see the truth in Augustine's arguments. They will no doubt labour long to correct their misunderstanding and clear themselves of the threat of carnal-mindedness.

It is perhaps the useful adversity offered by literary puzzles and disputational style that most attracts Prudentius to the allegorical and fictive form. Through these literary devices his readers are challenged to engage in the very action which the narrative seeks to explain. As these readers interpret the spiritual meaning of the allegorical action, they employ the same skills of discernment, reasoning and judgement that are required in actual

spiritual warfare. The battle of the virtue and vice represented on the printed page mimics the intellectual and spiritual battle in which the readers must engage to make sense of the poem: form mirrors content. As Ellen Spolsky comments in her preface to a collection of essays that explore the uses of adversity in reading, "the reading becomes a dialectical experience: the reader is forced to acknowledge his error, correct it, and thus move toward truth" (24). No doubt Prudentius's own understanding of psychomachy convinces him that this particular reading process could only be edifying.

Prudentius's implicit and explicit assumptions about imaginative literature's ability to teach spiritual and moral truths appear to be shared by Spenser, Milton and Bunyan. All believe that the call to poetic and literary pursuits is a call to further the Christian education of their readers by providing them with a delightful and provocative experience of their faith.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the acute awareness of and interest in psychomachy make it probable that the active, dialectically combative aspects of allegorical play that were appropriate to Prudentius's poem were also attractive to Spenser and Bunyan. But while these two later writers of allegory may have shared both motivation and aesthetic theories with Prudentius, the environment in which they create their allegories is dramatically different. Christianity is no longer the ideological infant in a culture of secular adults that it was in Prudentius's time. By the time Spenser writes *The Faerie Queene* Christianity is dominant and, therefore, a highly codified system of belief. As a result, the

expression of moral and religious truths is closely governed. There is much debate among sixteenth and seventeenth century theorists about imaginative literature's ability to contribute to a moral and spiritual education; however, the assumption that all education must be Christian education, one designed to impart moral lessons and to develop virtue, is deeply rooted in English culture and especially important to this period of religious reform.

The moral imperatives for education can be traced throughout early western culture back to classical roots. As Ernst Robert Curtius points out in his study of the origins and development of medieval humanism, Plato and Cicero debated the relative moral and didactic merits of any given study, and these same debates were taken up with enthusiasm by the late Latin and early medieval patristic writers.[5] Later, Dante justified literary study as a means of promoting spiritual betterment to his audiences on the continent, while in medieval England the curriculum of King Alfred and the underlying assumptions of later allegorical, didactic and religious writings like the *Ancrene Riwele* and William Langland's *Piers Plowman* promoted or at least reflected similar beliefs.

During the early reformation period in England, education's "duty" to inculcate moral and religious truths is carried out as the political and personal stakes associated with the practice of faith increased. The evangelical appeal of Luther and Calvin spark personal reformations in many church members both on the continent

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[5] See Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* especially chapter three "Literature and Education," and excursus XXII, "Theological Art-Theory in the Spanish Literature of the Seventeenth-Century."

and in England. These reformations lead to an intensely self-conscious and self-evaluating experience of faith for many who were previously distanced by the corruption of the Roman church. Governments whose powers were bolstered by the church are suddenly threatened by the Roman establishment's loss of credibility and consequent inability to exact obedience from the populace. Thus, in both the Romanist strongholds and in the newly-established Protestant communities, the personal becomes intensely political: the profound intermingling of church and state powers invests the outward practice of faith with serious political consequences. The government of religious practices and opinions is, therefore, closely attended by ruling parties throughout Europe.

Although earlier studies argued that Renaissance England experienced a educational revolution which resulted in "radical changes in educational provision" (O'Day xi) to accommodate the concurrent alterations in government and its bureaucracy, recent scholarship has denied that such a "revolution" ever took place, and has attempted to establish that education acted as both a "force for change or for stability in early modern society" (O'Day xii).[6] But while Renaissance England may not have revolutionized its education system to accommodate any particular religious influence, a review of the more popular tracts and treatises reveals a preoccupation among educators with moral and perhaps even religious aims of education. Although the authorized advanced catechism did not appear until Bishop Alexander Nowell's version was printed in 1570,

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[6] The idea of a "revolution" in education is proposed by Lawrence Stone in his article "The Educational Revolution."

catechisms and studies by Erasmus and Calvin were in heavy use before this date. The moral and religious aims of these texts is confirmed by T.W. Baldwin who, in his study of Renaissance education systems in the "petty schools," asserts that "The aims of the petty school were wholly and consciously religious and moral" (20). This claim is substantiated by his study of pedagogical tracts like "The Education of Children" written by William Kempe and published in 1588, and of works by William Bullokar, the spelling reformer writing in the 1580's, who begins his course of studies with a spelling pamphlet and proceeds directly to the Psalter and primer "because these be the first books that are handled of learners" (Baldwin 18). The explicit moral and religious objectives of education can also be seen in one of the most popular education tracts which was written by Elizabeth's own tutor, Roger Ascham. In his preface to *The Scholmaster* (1570), Ascham asserts that: "In writing this book, I have had earnest respect to three special pointes, trothe of Religion, honestie in living, right order in learning" (Ascham xxii). His influential relationship with the Queen and the popularity of the tract itself make it highly probable that Ascham's belief in the moral and religious aim of education reflects the dominant opinion both at court and among the English people.

But while education is designed to promote religious and moral beliefs, imaginative literature, be it either poetry or prose, is not guaranteed a role in this educative process. Throughout the Elizabethan period and the seventeenth century, questions regarding the relative merits of imaginative literature as an educative medium act as a impetus to literary theory. For many, imaginative

literature represents nothing more than lies which, by the very untruthfulness of their own nature, are wholly unable to educate. For others, the problem rests not so much with the literature but with the imagination itself. The faculty of the imagination is held suspect by many, especially by Puritan preachers for whom, as J.F. Forrest argues,

> . . . vanity of vanities is the undisciplined cogitation that breaks from the mind's orderly ranks to pursue a will-o'-the-wisp; that rebel thought's true range, the divine believes, is indeed the world of shadow, the fragmentary sphere of time, a universe of seeming in which reason is left behind and the quarry of the fanciful run to earth. ("Allegory" 93).

But while this view is held by many, it is not universal. An opposite argument arises in the late sixteenth century to suggest that, in the hands of a conscientious artist and an introspective reader, the very waywardness of imaginative literature, and specifically allegory, can be harnessed to produce pious results. As Forrest points out, the argument is ultimately attributable to Scripture:

> According to St. Paul, the inner perception that enables one to understand vision is entirely a matter of grace. Writing to the Corinthians of the ineffable nature of the divine vision (I *Corinthians* 2.10), Paul remarks that God's true wisdom is transmitted only by the spirit, which "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." When such things are communicated to others, the words used are not those of human wisdom, but those conveyed by the spirit; the natural human is therefore quite incapable of understanding this peculiar language which can be only "spiritually discerned." St. Paul's comment is illuminated by Christ's remark in *Matthew* 13.9-11, which in turn makes reference to the prophecy in *Isaiah* 6.9-10; and all these citations are crucially significant for those who seek to appreciate Puritan literature. For Isaiah and Christ and Paul enunciate a truth that contains within itself the seeds of prodigious artistic potential, in so far as it

> can imaginatively distinquish the sheeps from the goats, the elect from the reprobates. ("Allegory" 96-7)

Thus, once again, the adversities which the imagination and allegory introduce to the reading process are put to an edifying use. Pious writers may apply confidently their quills to the quire since the same divine grace, the same heavenly muse, that inspires their fiction will also guarantee the apprehension of that fiction to their readers -- at least those readers who prove their "fitness" by confronting the virtues and vices presented on the page, summoning the full power of both their intellect and spirit to discern specious from truthful argument, judging good and evil and otherwise doing battle with the literary challenges set before them. As Arthur Golding argues in the preface to his 1587 translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* it is the duty of poets to portray both virtue and vice in an interesting and deliberate fashion in order that the reader be edified by the task of first entertaining and then judging between truth and falsehood.

Spenser and Bunyan both subscribe to the aesthetic theory that is spun out of the Pauline Scripture. In both cases the authors' aesthetic assumptions and their justifications of allegory are outlined in prefatory addresses to their readers. Spenser's explicit purpose is outlined in the "Letter to Raleigh" that prefaces *The Faerie Queene*:

> The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: Which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the

> which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profite of the ensample.[7]

Spenser's intention "to fashion a gentlemen or noble person" refers not only to the fictional characters which he will "make, build or shape"[8] for his reader, but to the readers themselves whom Spenser is most anxious to entice to read his work with his "plausible and pleasing" fiction. By encoding his vision of virtuous and gentle discipline within an allegory, Spenser, like Prudentius, ensures interaction between the reader and the text. Teskey argues that by understanding allegory as a game "designed by the writer and played by the reader", we clarify Spenser's comments about "fashioning a gentleman":

> The reader is to be morally changed not just by seeing examples of admirable conduct but by becoming engaged, through the play of interpretation, in the theory of virtue. Spenser's allegorical writing, like Dante's, fashions an intellectual habit. (Teskey 16)

This "intellectual habit" consists of a tendency to challenge and evaluate characters and events, to seek out the stratagems and wiles of the fictional enemy, to recognize virtue and vice in the protagonists and to discern pattern and meaning in the narrative structure. This "intellectual habit" would no doubt be the envy of psychomachy tract writers like William Gouge whose stated objective for writing his tract includes the development of such talents:

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[7]This, and all subsequent references to *The Faerie Queene*, will be drawn from the Longman's edition.

[8]These synonyms are presented in the O.E.D.'s definition of "fashion" as per 16th century usage.

> For the time of our life being a time of warre, a time wherein our spiritual enemies (who are many, mighty, malicious, sedulous and subtle) put forth their strength, and bestirre themselves to the uttermost that possibly they can, Seeking whom to devoure, what can be more behouefull, then to discover their cunning stratagems and wiles, to declare wherein their strength lieth, to furnish Christ's Souldiers with compleat armour & sufficient defense, and to shew how our enemies way be disappointed of their hopes, and we stand fast against al their assaults? This is the scope of this treatise. ("To The Reader" 2)

One need not look far for assurance that the idea of psychomachy is foremost in Spenser's mind as he writes *The Faerie Queene:*

> In the end that Lady told him that vnlesse that armour which she brought, would serue him (that is the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul V. Ephes.) that he could not succeed in that enterprise, which being forthwith put vpon him with dewe furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the Lady. ("Letter to Raleigh")

In this description of the Red Cross Knight, Spenser cites the most important biblical summary of the psychomachy theme. The fact that the *Ephesians* passage is mentioned in reference to one of the poem's major characters is important since these characters may be regarded, in many respects, as the reader's fictional counterparts. Just as the adventures of the fictional Faerie Queene promise to prove various knights fit gentlemen for her court, so the adventures told in *The Faerie Queene* are intended to fashion virtuous and gentle discipline within the readers and prove them fit receptors for religious and moral truths.

Spenser, like Gouge, believes in the existence of an objective religious "truth", and Spenser's justification of his "dark conceit" is

based on the assumption that the "meaning" of his allegory "lies within the limits of the text's surface intentionality" (Quilligan, *Milton* 25), but this assumption need not imply a single inflexible meaning for the allegory. Readers learn by "restructuring" the text as they proceed through the narrative (Honig 29). According to the Pauline theory of divine vision and the Calvinist theory of election, it is this process of restructuring that will sort the elect reader from the reprobate. The elect reader will grapple with the text and will, with the assistance of divine grace, apprehend meaning and be sanctified by the process. The reprobate will either fail to grapple or fail to apprehend. In either case the allegory tells as much about the reader as it tells about itself:

> Precisely because the poet's attitude is let him see and hear who can, his vision searches and investigates us: from this point of view his art becomes in the fullest sense a mirror held up to nature, a looking-glass that can reflect the image of our selves and reveal thoughts both good and ill lodging in the mind, thus manifesting the soul's state. (Forrest, "Allegory", 9)

As Forrest argues, the same assumptions that justify Spenser's allegory also justify Bunyan's. Bunyan is acutely aware of the arguments against imaginative literature, and allegory in particular, that threaten the reception of his text, and like Spenser, Bunyan prefaces his allegories with a justification of the form. In "The Author's Apology for His Book," the preface to *The Pilgrim's Progress,* Bunyan cites the principal objections launched against imaginative literature as an educative tool. It is claimed that such "feigned and dark" literature is an inappropriate vehicle for truth and that the metaphors characteristically employed in such writings serve only to blind the reader. Bunyan responds to these accusations

with a battery of justifications for his art. He begins by establishing the "veiled" nature of all spiritual truth and he asserts that some measure of accommodation must be made if the truth is to be represented to the fallen mind. Secondly, Bunyan reclaims the argument set forth by Horace that literature teaches by way of delight, and finally he justifies the imaginative and poetic tradition by an appeal to its origins in Biblical text.

As he establishes the biblical precedent for allegory, Bunyan also establishes its unique ability to convey truth in a delightful manner and its mysterious ability to reach beyond the page and actually involve the reader in the pursuit of virtue. "This book will make a traveller of thee," warns Bunyan in his authorial "apology" for *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This process by which the reader is involved in the journey of the text is of course a difficult process to explain because it is a magical phenomenon that involves a literary and spiritual sleight of hand:

> You see the ways the Fisherman doth take
> To catch the Fish, what Engins doth he make?
> Behold! how he ingageth all his Wits
> Also his Snares, Lines, Angles, Hooks and Nets
> Yet Fish there be, that neither Hook, nor Line
> Nor Snare, nor Net, nor Engin can make thine;
> They must be gropid for, and be tickled too,
> Or they will not be catcht, what e're you do.[9]

This fishing image and the gaming image that follows both allude to the author's deliberate deceptions and justifies them by the end they

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[9] This, and all future references to the works of John Bunyan, will be drawn from the Oxford editions of his work. See page 3.

accomplish.[10] If the author is successful, and if the "fish" is destined to be caught, the process of reading will yield a bounty of knowledge and develop a host of valuable skills:

> Come, Truth, although in Swaddling-clouts, I find
> Informs the Judgement, rectifies the Mind,
> Pleases the Understanding, makes the Will
> Submit; the Memory too it doth fill
> With what doth our Imagination please;
> Likewise, it tends our troubles to appease. (5)

It is interesting to note how the list of skills developed through reading that are mentioned here by Bunyan resemble those listed both by Augustine and by many twentieth-century theorists of allegory. These skills also, of course, share a great deal in common with the objectives which Gouge mentions in the introduction to *The Whole Armour of God.* As was the case with Spenser, ample evidence is adduced to prove that psychomachy is foremost in Bunyan's mind as he writes his allegories. The most important testimony to this is his allegorical epic *The Holy War.*

As Bunyan explains in the "Address to the Reader" that introduces *The Holy War,* the skills of judgement, understanding and memory which he mentions in his apology for *The Pilgrim's Progress* are developed through the readers' application of them to the text, a process which is invited by the story itself and requisite if readers are to grasp the personal import of the story set before them:

> Tis strange to me, that they that love to tell

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[10]The fishing image is, of course, thoroughly biblical. Christ proclaims in Luke 5:10 that he will make his followers fishers of men. Other seventeenth-century writers like Izaak Walton also make good use of the fishing image. See Walton's *The Compleat Angler.*

> Things done of old, yea, and that do excel
> Their equals in historiology,
> Speak not of Mansoul's wars, but let them lie
> Dead, like old fables, or such worthless things,
> That to the reader no advantage brings;
> When men, let them make what they will their own,
> Till they know this, are to themselves unknown. (*The Holy War* 1)

As this introduction points out, the process of reading is a process of self-discovery. The battle for Mansoul that is depicted in the text is a mirror image of the battles that are going on inside the readers' souls as they make their way through the story. The imaginative and allegorical framework of the story moves readers both into the narrative and into themselves. In great contrast to the freewheeling imaginative wanderings that are predicted and dreaded by the Puritan preachers of Bunyan's day, however, these trips are carefully guided. Not only does the allegory itself provide a web of meaning that spins out directly from the events and often the individual words of the story, but in Bunyan's case the reader is provided with additional support in the keys that lie in the margent "windows." These windows establish the allegory within the biblical pretext by providing specific biblical references alongside the allegory. The allegory is designed to be interpreted in light of these quotations, and they therefore serve to limit the realm of interpretive possibilities and clarify the writer's intended meaning.

In his defences, Bunyan states explicitly the assumptions about the way allegory works that are implied or alluded to by Prudentius and Spenser. The readers' participation is critical to these justifications of figurative writing, and the principles of psychomachy, of spiritual sanctification through intellectual trials

and challenges, are apparent throughout. These appeals to the theory of psychomachy to justify imaginative literature are also consistent with contemporary views about the value and functioning of Scripture. While the Protestant poetic ethos valued certain types of literature more than others, it generally conceded approval for all forms of imaginative literature on the basis that Scripture itself incorporated these genres.[11] It is also important to note that "the word of God" is one of the most important weapons in the Christian armour mentioned in *Ephesians*: it is described as a sword that will pierce the soul of both Christians and of their enemies. In *Grace Abounding,* Bunyan describes for his readers his personal experience of conflict while his soul was afflicted by both Satan and by Scripture. It was through the long painful process of learning to distinguish between the two sorts of motions which afflicted his soul that Bunyan achieved salvation. What Prudentius, Spenser, and Bunyan seem to be arguing is that imaginative literature has the capacity to move the human soul in much the same way as does Scripture. Naturally the effect of any human writings would not have been assumed to match or replace Scripture, but these authors and theorists argue that literature has enough to offer to ensure its justification on moral grounds.

The defences of Prudentius, Spenser and Bunyan, however, argue specifically on behalf of allegory. The defences written by Sir

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[11]This view is argued by Barbara Keiffer Lewalski in *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*. Lewalski argues that while allegory was accepted as a mode of revealing truth, the "plain style" was preferred. Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs were also the preferred, biblically sanctioned forms.

Philip Sidney and George Puttenham employ similar arguments to make the general case for imaginative literature of all types. In the defences of literature set forth by Sidney, Puttenham and others lie the kernels of a comprehensive literary theory which bases its justification on literature's ability to contribute to the process of readerly sanctification. Close examination of these arguments reveals that the philosophical and theological assumptions of psychomachy play a large role in their justifications.

In the *Defence* Sir Philip Sidney confronts the four most popular complaints launched against imaginative literature[12]: that it is a waste of time, that poesie is the mother of lies, that poesie is decadent and, finally, that Plato banished the poets. Although it is often alleged that Sidney is responding directly to the Puritan complaints against literature, this may be an overly simplified explanation for the genesis of Sidney's *Defence*. As several critics have noticed, many Puritan objections to imaginative literature focus on the drama, a topic which receives comparatively little emphasis in Sidney's discussion. If Sidney's intent was to confront these complaints one might expect a detailed response to specific attacks like, for example, the anti-poetical pamphlet written by Stephen Gosson and dedicated to Sidney shortly before Sidney began the *Defence*.[13] This is not the case. Although the *Defence* does

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[12] David Daiches points out in his study, *Critical Approaches to Literature* , that although Sidney uses the term "poesie" he is actually referring to imaginative literature in general. The term "poesie" has simply narrowed in meaning over the centuries. See Daiches p. 5.

[13] William Rossky takes up this point regarding the extent to which Sidney can really be believed to have been responding to Puritan complaints and argues that it is far more likely that Sidney was actually writing in response to the concerns of Renaissance philosophers and other intellectuals

address the most fundamental grounds for Puritan discontent -- the alleged immorality of imaginative literature -- Sidney's argument is more accurately described as a continuation of Aristotle's counter-argument to Plato than it is as a response to any of the contemporary Puritan diatribes. In the *Poetics* Aristotle rebuts Plato's allegations of poetry's innate inferiority because it is merely an imitation of an imitation, and he praises the human faculty responsible for poetic inspiration. Finally, he argues that poetry purges any excess of emotion that it might arouse.[14] Aristotle contends that imaginative literature is not inferior to other studies, but Sidney argues that imaginative literature is superior to two of the most respected studies: history and philosophy; Aristotle argues that imaginative literature is not immoral, but Sidney argues that it is the most effective means of inspiring morality and virtue. Sidney thus furthers Aristotle's argument but, as O.B. Hardison Jr. points out, in the process he also blends many humanist ideas into his defence.

According to Hardison, these Aristotelian and humanist arguments represent only one of two distinct and largely irreconcilable voices that may be discerned in the *Defence*. In his article "The Two Voices of Sidney's Apology for Poetry", Hardison delineates very convincingly the differences in assumptions and

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who would have been influenced by contemporary theories of psychology, and who, as a result, were likely to have harboured a distrust of the faculty of the imagination. See Rossky's article entitled "Imagination in the English Renaissance: Psychology and Poetic." Geoffrey Shepherd refutes the claim that Sidney is responding to Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse* in the introduction to his edition of the *Defence*. See pp. 2 - 3.

[14] See Daiches *Critical Approaches* p. 22.

theoretical positioning that are discernible between the defences for poetry presented in the first three-quarters of the document and the critique of current English poetry that is presented before the conclusion. Throughout his defence Sidney subscribes to the view that poetry is an inspired craft. Through an etymological discussion that links the word "poet" to the roman term "vates", he establishes a relationship between the poet and the priest and sets up his argument, of which Hardison provides the following summary:

> Poetry is the mother of civilization. It is allied to prophecy. Its language is characterized by 'high flying liberty of conceit'. It is dependent not on nature but on inspiration. It is superrational and reveals 'unspeakable beauty' seen only by the mind cleared by faith. (Hardison 88)

In the critique portion of the *Defence*, however, Sidney emphasizes regimen and rules over inspiration, and replaces his open-minded acceptance for all manner of poesie with exacting criticisms. Hardison believes that this abrupt change results from shifts in Sidney's own opinions and influences which he recorded after he had written the first part of the *Defence* and which he was prevented from mediating into the earlier parts of his discussion.[15] Both sections of the *Defence*, however, reflect Sidney's keen awareness of psychomachy.

In the first "voice" of the *Defence*, Sidney moves beyond the traditional rationalizations for literature that are expounded by critics such as Thomas Lodge. Lodge and like-minded critics depend upon the allegorical translation of imaginative works in order to circumvent claims of immorality. Sidney establishes the credibility

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[15] See Hardison pp. 98 -99.

of his subject directly by arguing for the superiority of imaginative literature over history and philosophy on the grounds that only imaginative literature has the potential to effect moral improvement. The *Defence of Poesie* begins by aligning imaginative literature with the established moral principles of learning:

> This purifying of wit, this enriching of memorie, enabling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning, under what name so ever it come forth, or to what immediate end soever it be directed, the finall end is, to lead and draw us to as high a perfection, as our degenerate soules made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of. (11)

A few years earlier, George Puttenham had made a similar claim for poesie:

> It is beside a maner of utterance more eloquent and rethoricall then the ordinaries prose, which we use in our daily talke: because it is decked and set out with all maner of fresh colours and figures, which maketh that it sooner inuegleth the iudge ent of man, and carieth his opinion this way and that, whither soeuer the heart by impression of the eare shalbe most affectionatly bent and directed. (8)

Once again these claims echo those made by Augustine in his commendation of figurative writing. They also anticipate similar claims made by Gouge and Bunyan decades later. More interesting still, however, is the similarity between Sidney's and Puttenham's statements and one made by Erasmus in his comprehensive and well known tract on spiritual warfare:*Enchiridion Militis Christiani.*[16]

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[16]Although the *Enchiridion* is not highly esteemed by its modern critics (for example, Anne M. O'Donnell, editor of the Early English Text Society's edition, argues that the text is "repetitive and its tripartite structure is flawed") it was very popular among Erasmus's contemporaries. During the author's lifetime no fewer than fifty editions of the Latin text were printed, and another ten editions of the English version appeared in Tudor England. During the reign of Henry VIII, the *Enchiridion*

Erasmus's treatment of the psychomachy theme is particularly interesting because it begins with the assertion that learning is one of the key weapons that man may exert against the principalities and demons that afflict his soul, and because it specifically mentions literature as a means of procuring this required learning:

> But of the armure and wepons of a christen man, we shall make specyal mencion whan we come to the places conueyent. In ye meane ceason, to speke breuely who so euer wyl assayle with batayle the seuen nacyons that be called cananei, Cethei, Amorrei, Pherezei, Gergezei, Euei and Iebuzei, yi is to say who so euer wyl take vpon hym to fyght agaynst the hole hoost of vices of the which seuen be counted as chefe capitaynes must prouyde hym of two specyall wepons prayer and knowledge otherwyse called lernynge. (42)

Later in this same chapter entitled "The wepons of a chrysten man", Erasmus refers to classical literary characters to enhance his argument that God's love is required to conquer all vices. Erasmus cautions that if readers are to pick and choose among the books of the "gentyles" they ought to select with care, but not overlook the wisdom offered in these Classical, non-Christian sources:

> And also, yf thou by the example of the bee fleynge rounde aboute by the garydens of olde authours, shalte sucke out onely the holesome and swete iuce (the poyson refused and left behind) thy mynde shall be better apparaylled a great deale and armed vnto the commune lyfe or conuersacyon in which we lyue one with an other in honest maner. For the philosophers and lerned men of the gentyles, in thyr warre vse certeyn wepons and armure not to be despysed. (52)

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appeared in six editions; during the reign of Edward another edition was published; during Mary's reign two more editions appeared; finally, after Elizabeth's accession to the throne yet another edition was printed.(Erasmus xiv -xv).

Erasmus seems to concur with the comment by Arthur Golding, translator of the *Metamorphoses*, that is recorded earlier in this discussion. Readers must be presented with pictures of virtue and vice in order that they may be edified by the process of choosing between them. But unlike Sidney who seems to find value in all sorts of literature so long as representations are "most comely and bewtiful images and apparances of things,"[17] Erasmus is more cautious.

In his discussion of Plato's theory of the two souls, Erasmus appeals to the arguments presented by Plato in *Timaeus* that man has one spiritual and immortal soul as well as a second soul that is mortal and "in daunger to dyuerse perturbacions or mocions of unquietness" (63). Erasmus argues that there are many perturbations or motions that disturb the soul and among the eight mentioned appear "flatering hope, with beestly ymaginacion and knowledge not govuerned of reason and worldly loue, that layeth handes violently on al thynges" (63). In these references and in the many that follow, both "motions" and the imagination are linked directly with undesirable behavior. Further on in the discussion, he allows that the motions and perhaps even the fantasies and imaginations that prevent proper reason may serve a noble end if they serve to "prycke" or "spurre" the individual to virtue (66:9-12):

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[17]In this insistence on "comely and bewtiful images," Sidney must be understood to mean truthful and inspiring images rather than merely appealing images. As David Daiches argues in his discussion of Sidney's *Defence*, Sidney is not only interested in portraying virtuous characters, but rather he is concerned to ensure that goodness is truthfully represented and that badness is equally well depicted (*Critical Approaches* 60).

> First of al therefore, thou must beholde and consyder diligently, al the mocions, mouynges, or steryng of thy mynde and haue them surely known. Farthermore, thou must vnderstande, no mocyons to be so violent, but they may be eyther refrayned of reason, or els turned to vertue. (66-7).

Erasmus's reservations about poesie do not rise directly from his opinion of literature, but indirectly through his understanding of the imagination. The relative value of the imaginative faculty is a topic of Renaissance psychology much debated among Sidney and Puttenham's contemporaries. Where conservative theologians and philosophers tend to denigrate the redemptive qualities of the imagination, an opposing school of poets and artists is disposed to commend this same faculty. Since poesie is born from the poet's imagination, the faculty's perceived strengths and weaknesses play an important part in the justification of the art. According to Erasmus, the negative powers of the imagination can be mitigated through readers' application of reason; according to George Puttenham, the potential damaging effects of this faculty need not be feared in poesie since poets do not draw on the "monstruous and illfauored" aspects of the imagination:

> Euen so is the phantasticall part of man (if it be not disordered) a representer of the best, most comely and bewtifull images or apparances of thinges to the soule and according to their very truth. If otherwise, then doth it breede Chimeres & monsters in mans imaginations, & not onely in his imaginations, but also in all his ordinarie actions and life which ensues. Wherefore such persons as be illuminated with the brightest irradiations or knowledge and of the veritie and due portion of things, they are called by the learned men not phantastici by euphantasiote, and of their sorte of phantasie are all good poets. (19)

Sidney, however, feels the imagination needs no defence or qualification whatsoever. As Robert Kimbrough points out, Sidney's definition of imagination is akin to Wordsworth's "reason in her most exalted mood" and it is "logically based upon the sixteenth-century theological and physiological concept of "erected wit," -- the divine attribute of man's rational soul and the source of poetic art (45).

While Sidney disagrees with Erasmus's and Puttenham's understanding of the imagination, he does agree with the direct connection they both establish between the "moving" that poesie stirs within readers and the readers' subsequent actions. Sidney claims that the learning provided by poesie is brought about by a sort of siege of the human soul wherein poesie, unlike philosophy which merely bestows a "wordish description", "strike[s], pearce[s]" and finally "possesse[s] the sight of the soul" and "moves" its reader to virtuous action (14):

> Yet do i thinke, that no man is so much . . . as to compare the Philosopher in mooving with the Poet. And that mooving is of a higher degree then teaching, it may by this appeare, that it is well nigh both the cause and effect of teaching. For who will be taught, if hee be not mooved with desire to be taught? And what so much good doth that teaching bring foorth, (I speake still of morall doctrine) as that it mooveth one to do that which it doth teach. (Sidney 19)

Sidney argues that this movement or motion results in a more complete and perfect experience of the teaching for the reader. Unlike the historian who is restricted by the facts, the poet can figure a more perfect realm wherein "vertue [is] exaulted & vice punished" (Sidney 18); unlike the philosopher who is capable only of

showing the way and enumerating the particularities of any virtue, the poet is able to entice the reader to experience virtue by making the path toward it delightful.

This use of the term "movement" or "motion" that is employed by Sidney, Erasmus and Puttenham can be traced back to the classical oratorical writings of Cicero. In his essay *De Optimo Genere Oratorum,* Cicero describes the characteristics of the supreme orator: *"Optimus est enim orator qui dicendo animos audientium et docet et delectat et permovet"* (I.3). Thus, the best orator not only teaches and delights the members of his audience, but he also "moves" their minds or souls. This concept of "movement" was later incorporated in several prominent aesthetic discussions by Italian theorists during the early to mid 1500's. J.J. Pontano and Girolamo Fracastoro both employ the term to describe the desired emotional effect that poetry is intended to exert upon its readers. It is interesting to note that in both cases these writers choose to distance their use of the concept from any of the moral or spiritual implications of effective writing that might be implied in Cicero's choice of the word *animos* (which can mean either mind, spirit or soul) to describe the object of movement. In his introduction to Fracastoro's *Naugerius*, Murray W. Bundy observes the change in emphasis that may be observed in Pontano's and Fracastoro's use of the Ciceronian critical vocabulary:

> Here it is apparent that, although Pontano insists that the poet both in invention and elocution seeks to arouse admiration, this state is different from the capacity for being moved: the idea is taking on a new meaning. . . Here, "admiratio," evolving from the rhetorical "movere",

> approaches a genuine aesthetic aim: it is the delight of the poet in the choice and elaboration of his subject, and its expression in consummate style. The poet does not seek to stir the emotions but to arouse the good opinion of the reader. (18-19)

In this same introduction Bundy stresses that Fracastoro, unlike Sidney, is "seemingly unconscious of any strong moral impulse" in his theoretical considerations (10). This moral impulse is very much apparent in the way Sidney's use of the term "movement" differs from that of Pontano and Fracastoro. The implication of Sidney's use is decidedly moral:

> By these therefore examples and reasons, I thinke it may be manifest, that the Poet with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually then any other Art doth. And so a conclusion not unfitly ensue, that as vertue is the most excellent resting place for al worldy learning to make his end of, so Poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most Princely to move towards it, in the most excellent worke, is the most excellent workeman. (21-22)

Often, as in the passage quoted above, Sidney's use of the term "move" and its related forms concurs with the eleventh entry under the word "move" that is listed in the O.E.D.:

> Of God, good or evils spirits, one's own heart, etc.: to prompt, impel to some action; in passive, to have an inward prompting, to feel inclined.

On occasion his use also seems to resemble an obscure definition of the term "motion" which is apparent in the *Book of Common Prayer* and other religious texts written throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The collect for the first Sunday in Lent includes the petition" that. . . wee maye euer obeye thy Godlye mocions". The O.E.D. makes provision for this usage and records that

the term "motion" can also mean "A working of God in the soul". This definition is related specifically to the working of grace in many renaissance literary works, most notably in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*.[18] Thus, poesie's ability to "move" provides the art with the high moral justification that Sidney is seeking and with a direct link to the intellectual action or spiritual utility required to vindicate the art from accusations that it is decadent and wasteful of time.

Just how poesie is able to move towards the moral improvement of the reader is never fully explained by Sidney. Because Sidney insists that the movement results in virtuous action and not merely in the reader's desire for virtue, the standard rhetorical understanding of the term as an effective appeal to the emotions is inadequate here.[19] However Sidney envisions the process of moral improvement to take place, this vision is based on a series of assumptions that were obvious to his first readers, but which are no longer apparent. In his study of the *Defence*, Andrew Weiner explains the process through which the "movement" is able to effect change in the reader in terms of Calvinist theories of the inner workings of the soul. Using references from the *Institutes*,

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[18]See line 1382 of the poem. Samson feels "rousing motions" and tells the chorus to be of good cheer shortly before he agrees to go with the officer.

[19]The rhetorical use of the term limits the outcome of the "movement" to an intellectual conversation and not to physical action. Augustine, in his highly influential work, *On Christian Doctrine*, molds the aims of the classical orator to suit the Christian objective of moving humanity to holiness (for further discussion see Charles Baldwin *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic*) and thus comes closer to the idea expressed by Sidney. However, the issue of how "movement" is to result in virtuous action is still unresolved in this work.

Weiner pieces together a theory that argues for the sanctifying powers of the imagination by establishing the post-lapsarian defects of both the senses and of reason and by pointing to the imagination's capacity to bring about actions by affecting the will:

> Because the poet can appeal directly to the imagination, he avoids the corruption of the senses; because he controls what the imagination receives, he avoids the possibility of its disorder; finally, because the imagination can work directly upon the will, he can overcome the obstacle to virtuous action presented by our 'infected will'. (40)

This argument goes further than most in explaining the various components of Sidney's discussion. Not only does Weiner relate Sidney's use of the term "movement" to the religious context that it implies, but he also succeeds in relating Sidney's specific references to the soul to the rest of the theoretical discussion. Where the argument fails is in its implication that the imagination is capable of achieving virtuous action by by-passing the senses, an argument that is certainly not substantiated by Sidney's references to the senses throughout the *Defence*. In fact, Sidney's argument seems to depend upon poesie's ability to appeal to the senses in order that it may thereby delight the imagination and achieve its goal of moving the soul. Sidney makes frequent references to poesie's ability to create beautiful pictures, he applauds the delight that is produced when rhyme "striketh a certaine Musicke to the eare"(44), and in the following passage he suggests that poesie's strength derives from its ability to appeal to the sense of taste:

> For hee doth not only shew the way, but giveth so sweete a prospect into the way, as will entice anie man to enter into

> it: nay he doth as if your journey should lye through a faire vinyard, at the verie first, give you a cluster of grapes that full of that taste, you may long to passe further. (19)

Thus, it is highly unlikely that Sidney would agree that the imagination can be justified because it circumvents the senses, but there is little reason to believe that Sidney would dispute Calvin's conclusion that the imagination brings about action by moving the soul.[20]

The second and perhaps most problematic aspect of Weiner's argument is its obscurity. His theory is actually pieced together from a series of statements made by Calvin in various sections of the *Institutes* and by other Renaissance writers like La Primaudaye and George Puttenham. The case Weiner presents for the imagination is never actually argued by Calvin himself, and it is doubtful whether Calvin would agree with the conclusions that are drawn from his material.[21] In any case, the argument does not seem to have been widely known or at least acknowledged by other writers and theorists of the period so that Sidney's scant outline of his theory could not, in this case, be explained by its dependence upon a series of well known assumptions.

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[20] As Calvin points out in his discussion of the workings of the soul, his ideas are principally based upon the theory of the soul presented by Plato. The imagination is also described by Aristotle in *De Anima* as a "motion generated by actual perception" which "knows and understands" a part of the soul. See book III, chapter three, sections 13-14 and chapter four, section 1.

[21] Calvin's discussion of man's degenerate wit and will occurs in *Institutes* 2.2.12. The discussion of the process by which sensory data becomes action is outlined by Calvin in *Institutes* 1.15.6-7. Finally, the power of the imagination is established by La Primauday in *French Academie*, page 415 and by Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie*, p.19.

In his edition of the *Defence*, Geoffrey Shepherd also seeks to explain how Sidney's "motions" result in action. Shepherd relates the stirring of passions or emotions that are caused by poesie to the exertion of "a control upon the will" which results in the initiation of "courses of action". Shepherd therefore concurs to some extent with Weiner, but Shepherd's explanation is also consistent with another, and more probable explanation that is drawn from the theory of psychomachy.

Psychomachy explains both Sidney's reference to poesie's ability to affect the soul by striking, piercing and possessing it, and his reference to its ability to "move" the reader into virtuous action. Psychomachy also explains Sidney's moral defence of poetry by relating it to theological doctrine expounded by Calvin and other noted reformers. Unlike Weiner's theory, however, the principles of psychomachy were well known by Sidney's contemporaries and could have been treated as assumed information.

It is important to recall that psychomachy, or the theory that explains conflict within the soul, was believed to be the means by which the Christian is sanctified, or achieves holiness. Psychomachy posits a human soul that is acted upon by supernatural forces of both Godly and Satanic origin. This soul is beset with passions and desires which move the individual to action. Thus, it is the responsibility of the Christian to discern between evil and Godly "motions" and to arm himself with the weapons of spiritual warfare that enable him to fight against the motions that threaten to enslave his soul. The elect individual will succeed in conquering the ungodly

motions because of the intervention of divine grace. Through this process the elect are sanctified.

Evidence that Sidney is aware of the psychomachy concept is apparent throughout the *Defence*. The binary opposition of virtue and vice that is so central to the concept of psychomachy is identified by Sidney as the key, identifying characteristic of poesie: "it is that faining notable images of vertues, vices, or what els, with that delightfull teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a Poet by" (11). Many other traces of psychomachy are also apparent. In accordance with the doctrine of the psychomachy, for example, Sidney argues that learning is a vital weapon for the Christian warrior, that spiritual and moral learning takes place when the soul is stirred, pierced and otherwise moved, and that the movements that occur within the soul directly affect subsequent actions. Just as Augustine, Erasmus and later writers of psychomachy tracts establish a direct connection between the battle between virtue and vice and subsequent action, so Sidney establishes a connection between literature and the virtuous action it begets:

> The philosopher saith he, teacheth a disputative vertue, but I do an active. His vertue is excellent in the dangerlesse Academy of Plato: but mine sheweth forth her honourable face in the battailes of Marathon, Pharsalia, Poietiers, and Agincourt. (12-13)

It is no accident that Sidney specifically associates virtuous action with warfare. Life in England, especially at this time, is shaped by war; the dominance of the psychomachy concept ensures that life itself is thought of as a battle.

According to psychomachy theology, physical action and Christian works are brought about through a prior subjection of intellect and soul:

> Let us subject our soul to God, therefore, if we want to bring our body into subjection and win the victory over the Devil. It is faith that first makes souls subject to God. Next come the precepts for right living. When these are observed, our hope is made firm, charity is nurtured, and what before was only believed begins to be clearly understood. (Augustine *The Christian Combat* 13.14)

Augustine's Catholic insistence of the subjection of the soul through faith (the Romanist church's faith) is no doubt modified by Sidney and his Protestant countrymen to mean faith as it is made manifest to each heart through Scripture. In any case, the order of events is clear: one battles to subject the soul through the godly use of the intellect, and, following the intervention of divine grace, right actions will follow. According to Sidney, poesie's most valuable attribute is its ability to provoke "pleasure in the exercise of the minde"(5). This characteristic sets it apart from all other studies which provide knowledge, but do not spur the intellectual and spiritual motions that shape virtuous action.

Essentially, then, Sidney relies upon the widely-known theory of sanctification to argue that the writing and reading of imaginative literature can be justified because it simulates, within the controlled environment of the text, an intellectual holy war wherein the soul is besieged by various images and the individual is forced to learn to purify the wit, enrich the memory, enable the judgement and enlarge the conceit by actually exercising these faculties in order to determine the truth which the "maker" has

encapsulated within the text. If the reader will "learne aright, why and how that maker" made the "Cyrus" represented on the page, then not only one, but many "Cyruses" will appear, courtesy of the author's work (8). In this way, Sidney argues, the perfected world represented in imaginative literature is of far greater value than anything produced by the philosophers or the historians because the poet actually forces readers to exercise their faculties and skills in the pursuit of virtue as they set about decoding the many "misteries" that are deliberately "written darkly" by the poet (45).

The first "voice" of the apology makes a strong case for poesie based on a spirit-filled, inspired view of both poetry itself and the reception of that poetry. If the psychomachy theme has not been noticed in the Apology before, it is likely because Sidney's emphasis falls on the assumption of grace that should pervade both the writing and reading of inspired art rather than on the battling that must take place before understanding is achieved. If Hardison is correct and there is a substantial span of time between Sidney's writing of the defence portion of the discussion and the critique of English poetry that follows, it could be that the change of opinion about poetry that is apparent between the two sections may result not only from an alteration in Sidney's aesthetics, but also from a shift in his theology. As Hardison points out, the differences in aesthetic theory are significant:

> Along with the change in tone, there is a marked change in critical perspective. At the beginning of the section Sidney asks poets to "look themselues in an vnflattering Glasse of reason"; and while still admitting that poetry is a "diuine gift," he insists: "the highest flying wit [must] haue a Dedalus to guide him. That Dedalus . . . hath three wings . . .that is, Arte,

> Imitation, and Exercise. But these, neyther artificiall rules nor imitatiue patternes, we much cumber our selues withall" (195). Earlier in the apology the poet was said to range freely "within the Zodiack of his owne wit," guided by the supra-rational force of inspiration. Now the point of view is reversed. Instead of images of freedom and flight, emphasis is on control and guidance; instead of imagination, "unflattering reason" is to assist the poet, and it is symbolized by the figure of Daedalus, who restrains "Hightest flying wit" and who (with charitable allowance for the odd metaphor) is equipped with three wings representing "artificiall rules," "Imitatiue patternes," and "exercise." Nothing has been said previously about "rules" of art even in passages where Aristotle has been named and quoted; but now they appear as central principles. By the same token, when the term imitation has been used, it has meant creation, especially the creation of fictions. Now, however, it is used in the rhetorical sense of "copying the masterpieces." Imitation in the sense of copying is not merely different from Sidney's earlier view, it is irreconcilable with the idea that the poet should range freely "onely within the Zodiack of his owne wit." It is the very sort of imitation advocated in the "Nizolian Paper-bookes" which Sidney has earlier satirized. (94)

Hardison concludes that these differences reflect "the tensions in the last quarter of the sixteenth century between an older and a newer understanding of poetry" (97), tensions which are not fully apparent until the seventeenth century. The differences between the two sections of Sidney's defence and the Italian neo-classical tensions in aesthetic to which Hardison attributes them may both have a common, largely theological source.

In the first part of the *Defence*, Sidney operates under the assumption of grace and of a common faith between poet and reader. When the correct apprehension of literary "meaning" relies on the intercession of grace, any alteration in belief which changes the assumed availability of the grace (eg: Calvinism) is bound to affect

literary theory. Similarly, if the assumptions upon which a spiritual truth is based change or are no longer accepted unquestioningly (as is the case with the onset of the scientific movement), the clarity and persuasiveness with which those truths are conveyed becomes more important. Naturally, as both the theology of grace and assumptions about language's ability to convey spiritual truth are eroded, these developments must be reflected in aesthetic theories that justify themselves by their ability to provide spiritual edification to their readers. As Maureen Quilligan observes, between the time of Spenser [and, therefore, of Sidney] and Milton, many changes had occurred to alter the reception of literary texts. "The skeptical and scientific movement undermines allegorical tradition in the seventeenth century" (*Language* 172); when "men begin to feel that the language most like algebra is the most privileged, then the culture ceases to provide a context in which allegory can be written or even read intelligently." (176). It may be that Quilligan's specific observations about allegory may hold true for the larger case of aesthetics that root themselves in divine inspiration. If this is true, then Sidney's shift from inspiration alone to inspiration guided by reason and sound poetic principles is not incomprehensible. These changes, however, do not mean that the concept of psychomachy is any less important to Sidney's later views of poetry. If the first voice of the defence summarizes the aesthetic principles upon which Spenser writes the *Faerie Queene,* the second might very well prefigure the principles upon which Milton writes *Paradise Lost.*

Spenser's ability to promote the spiritual development of his readers was an attribute that was both attested to and commended by Milton. As Quilligan observes, Milton learned his rhetorical strategy from Spenser:

> How to make the reader interpret his or her own interpretations, to judge the moral quality of his or her own response to reading, to feel the work as a large rhetorical appeal to the will, and to make a choice. (42)

In the literary context that begat both the first portion of Sidney's *Defence* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, this process of interpretation could be allowed a broad range; in Milton's, however, the "plurality of possibilities" (Quilligan 42) offered by Spenser are best reduced to a more cautious "binary choice of either or about truth" (Quilligan 42). In both cases psychomachy is the theological foundation upon which these aesthetics are based.

In the *Areopagitica* Milton proclaims that Spenser is a "better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas" (516) and throughout the remainder of the tract Milton argues against the censorship of reading materials on the basis that it would deny Englishmen the opportunity to develop virtue by the "to see and know and yet abstain" theory of practical experience that is exemplified in *The Faerie Queene*. In this tract Milton establishes his belief in the power of the reading process and in the reader's duty to pursue virtue by actively wrestling truth from falsehood. According to Milton, humans live in a world that contains both truth and falsehood, virtue and vice. It is each Christian's duty "to repair the ruins" of their "first parents" by learning to discern between good and evil, truth and falsehood rather than by seeking to hide from the world and its temptations:

> As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdome can there be to choose, what continence to forbeare without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasure, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring[22] Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary. (514-515)

In this passage the doctrine of sanctification by spiritual warfare is both implied and stated explicitly. Holiness or virtue are the prizes to be won by those who are willing to engage in a battle of the mind and soul against the temptations to evil. True warfaring Christians are compelled to experience psychomachy and to emerge victorious from it. Since Christians must confront temptations, Milton argues, what better way to expose oneself safely than through reading?

> Since therefore the knowledge and survay of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human vertue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with lesse danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity then by reading all manner of tractats, and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuousiy read. (516-517)

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22 Although this word appears as "wayfaring" in many early editions of the *Areopagitica*, it is the judgement of the editor for the Yale Prose edition, Ernst Sirluck, that "warfaring" is the correct word: "There is no other instance in Milton of either 'wayfaring' or 'warfaring', but 'Christian warfare' occurs several times, while the image of the Christian pilgrimage, frequently found elsewhere, never occurs in Milton." For the remainder of his argument see note 102 on page 515 of the text.

Like Sidney, Milton believes that the process of reading can incite a conflict within the mind and soul of the reader, and like Sidney, Milton believes that this process has the potential to result in the development of virtue. For Sidney this process is specifically linked to the moving powers of imaginative literature, whereas for Milton the process is more loosely tied to the reading process itself.

In his study *Surprised by Sin*, Stanley Fish provides a careful analysis of how the process of reading *Paradise Lost* results in spiritual edification. While addressing the concern stated earlier by A.J.A. Waldock that the poem contradicts itself, Fish develops a comprehensive theory of reader response. Waldock is troubled by the grandeur of Milton's evil characters and by the sympathetic picture the poem paints of Adam shortly before the fall. He is also interested in the ways in which the narrator's voice serves to contradict and undermine the feelings evoked in the reader.[23] Waldock attributes the poem's contradictions to uncertainty within Milton himself, and he argues that these contradictions result in an interesting but flawed work. Fish sees the contradictions mentioned by Waldock, but he understands them as essential and deliberate parts of Milton's poetic and didactic purposes. Fish outlines his thesis in the preface to *Surprised by Sin*:

> I believe Milton's intention to differ little from that of so many devotional writers, "to discover to us our miserable and wretched estate through corruption of nature" and to "shew how a man may come to a holy reformation and so happily recover himself."(Richard Bernard, *The Isle of Man.*) In the course of the poem, I shall argue, the reader

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[23]See *Paradise Lost and its Critics.*

> (1) is confronted with evidence of his corruption and becomes aware of his inability to respond adequately to spiritual conceptions, and
> (2) is asked to refine his perceptions so that his understanding will be once more proportionable to truth the object of it.
> The following chapters, then, will explore two patterns -- the reader's humiliation and his education -- and they will make the point that the success of the second depends on the quality of his response to the first.

Fish argues that readers of *Paradise Lost* are edified through a process of trial and error that is entirely consistent with Milton's statements about the value of reading and with the doctrine of psychomachy. Although Fish never specifically mentions the doctrine, his descriptions of the reading process are infused with the images of psychomachy. He comments at one point that the reader's "mental armour" is never quite strong enough to avoid completely the Satanic temptations woven into the fabric of the poem (14). Later he describes the effect that the poem has on its readers in terms worthy of tract writers such as Gurnall or Gouge:

> The long-range result of this technique is the creation of a "split reader", one who is continually responding to two distinct set of stimuli -- the experience of individual poetic moments and the ever present pressure of the Christian doctrine -- and who attaches these responses to warring forces within him, and is thus simultaneously the location and the observer of their struggle. (Fish 42)

As this comment attests, the premises of psychomachy are so deeply and thoroughly encoded within Milton's poem that an analysis of the experience of reading *Paradise Lost* is sufficient to allow this critic to reconstruct the theory.

Fish's reading of the poem is also consistent with Milton's didactic and priestly view of poetry. In Milton's tract *Of Education,*

the fundamental principle of the educational endeavor is clearly stated:

> The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection. (631)

As he makes clear in the *Areopagitica*, reading is intended to play a large role in this repair work, and it is the poet's duty to ensure this possession of the soul's true virtue by both exercising his readers' intellect and spirit and by employing language to accommodate the truths of the faith. For Milton, the role of poet is also the role of the high priest who endeavors to bring his readers to a richer understanding of their faith. The poet, according to Milton, is the conduit through which the "Holy Light" is hailed and recorded for the benefit of the "fit Audience" (*P.L.* VII 31). In his tract *An Apology for Smectymnuus,* Milton allows himself a brief excursus into autobiography before beginning the substance of his argument. In this passage he sets forth the credentials of the poet:

> And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things -- not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy. (694)

This theme is also expressed in Elegy VI ,"*Diis etenim sacer est vates, divumque sacerdos, / Spirat et occultum pectus et ora Iovem*", and its influence is apparent in the *Nativity Ode* where the role of

the poet's Heavenly Muse is compared to that of the prophet Isaiah whose lips are cleansed by an altar coal in preparation for divine prophesy (*Isaiah* IV:6).[24]

Milton, like Spenser before him, sees the poet's role as profoundly intermixed with that of the priest. In order to succeed in his ultimate educative project of justifying "the ways of God to men," Milton himself must strive to become a "true poem" or worthy communicator. These statements demonstrate the lofty spiritual objectives of the poetic craft and are therefore based upon an implied belief in the surpassing suitability of the poetic art to meet the expectations placed upon it. The suitability of poetry is largely attributable to the theory of accommodation to which Milton subscribes. As C.A. Patrides explains, the theory is a Renaissance commonplace which is most clearly enunciated by St. Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*.[25] Essentially, the theory states that the fallen human mind is incapable of apprehending divine truth directly and, that as a result, these truths must decline to the lower human understanding and be crudely accommodated in language and explained through examples taken from human experience. These examples must then be understood in a spiritual sense in order for the truth conveyed behind them to be apprehended. Thus, the process of attaining truth is necessarily one fraught with adversity and trials. Only the "fit" poet is a suitable conduit for the conveyance of divine truth, and only "fit" readers will succeed, with the

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[24]In his notes to Elegy Vi, Merritt Hughes points out that Ovid also asserts "the poet's divine inspiration because he sings of divine things." See p. 52.

[25]See *Bright Essence* .

intervention of divine grace, in battling through the adversity in the text and within themselves to attain this truth.

Thus, the doctrine of psychomachy informs Milton's literary theory just as it does the theory of Spenser and Sidney before him, and of Bunyan after him. Although a genealogy of influence can be credited with the similarities that arise among Sidney, Spenser and Milton, this literary lineage stops short of Bunyan. The fact that Bunyan's beliefs about the values of reading and the process by which reading imaginative literature brings about the spiritual edification of its readership are similar to those of his literary predecessors is best explained by the pervasiveness of these ideas. It is this pervasiveness that often makes the detection of a theory like psychomachy very difficult. As C.S. Lewis argues in his study *The Discarded Image*, culturally pervasive ideas such as psychomachy and the discarded image have influenced so much and are assumed by so many that the process of uncovering them is hampered by the fact that they are seldom identified and even more rarely explained. The task, therefore, is not merely to identify the occurrence, but to follow the trail of evidence that suggests its presence and to prove by the assumptions that are made that the ubiquitous theory in question is most likely at work. Such will be the task of the following chapters. Having established the influence of the theological theory of the psychomachy upon the literary theory of Sidney, Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, it now remains to be shown that this influence can be detected at work within the structures and events of the literature itself.

If psychomachy does inform these works, what characteristics should they exhibit? Although each author must be allowed the opportunity to answer this question in his own way, it is reasonable to assume that certain broad characteristics should be shared among these diverse works. The single most notable claim made by these writers is that the reading process forces the reader to develop the skills of self-knowledge and spiritual discernment that are required by the spiritual warrior. These skills are developed by enticing the reader into the work and then by presenting this reader with a series of puzzles and challenges designed to incite conflict within his or her soul. The following chapters will explore the various means by which these authors seek to engage their readers in a process of sanctification by trial that involves self-discovery in the protagonists, deception by villainous wiles, and, finally, the discovery of pattern and meaning in the sacred art of the story.

Chapter Three

"Doctrine by Ensample": The Reader Encountered

> Tell on, faire Sir, said she, that doleful tale,
> From which sad ruth does seeme you to restrain,
> That we may pity such unhappy bale,
> And learne from pleasures poyson to abstaine:
> Ill by ensample good doth often gayne. (*The Faerie Queene* II.ii.45)

The tradition of telling stories about evil or even from the point of view of evil characters is justified throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the good that may accrue to readers who are able to profit from the negative example. Among the works of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, Bunyan's *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* [1680] is the only sustained examination of the life and exploits of an unsavory character. Elements of the picaresque, through shady and indictable character and action, however, are discernible in the work of all three authors. Evil is also the subject of considerable reflection and discussion throughout the tracts on psychomachy. The authors of the tracts agree that the Christian soldier must be cognizant of the wiles and stratagems of the devil if he or she is to triumph in battle. Both the psychomachy-tract writers and the three authors under consideration here agree that evil must be written about and described in order to be "unmasked" and defeated by their readers. In fact, this point of agreement between the psychomachy tracts and the fictions of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan is but one of several areas which demonstrate

concurrence with not only the broad theological constructs and premises of psychomachy, but also with the particulars of the theology as it is popularly represented in the tracts. These writers of tract "facts" and narrative "fictions" share a belief that the process of discovering evil on the printed page will enable their readers to make the far more important discovery of evil within themselves.

As the previous chapter established, psychomachy is a critical part of the ideological framework out of which the works of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan are produced. Internal evidence from their works or from related prose materials indicates the manner in which the assumptions of psychomachy inform details of plot and characterization. Analysis of these works from the vantage point of an "implied reader" yields another manifestation of psychomachy in this reader's experience of the text. The following discussion of *The Faerie Queene, Paradise Lost, The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War,* will endeavour to recover the influences of psychomachy in these texts and to assess the implications of this influence -- that is, the extent to which this particular religious discourse shapes both an understanding of the fictional events narrated by the authors, and the experience (rational, emotional and perhaps spiritual) of this intended or implied reader. Both the presence of influence and the absence of or gaps in this influence are instructive to any reading of the fictions. In my use of the term "implied reader", I am, of course, drawing on the definition provided by Wolfgang Iser to which I would add that this implied reader is specifically a conceptual entity that has been socially constructed

by Christian ideology and the discourse of psychomachy to identify internal conflict as spiritual conflict.[1]

Throughout, these literary texts will be read in light of the psychomachy prose tracts that were available in such abundance during the latter part of the seventeenth century. In the case of Milton and Bunyan, these tracts provide a contemporary touchstone for the verification and clarification of the fine points of doctrine as it was being discussed during the period. This procedure, when applied to Spenser's work, is admittedly anachronistic. However, I believe this anachronism is more than compensated for by the commonalties that exist between these tracts and the doctrine and belief structure that existed during Spenser's lifetime. As Raymond Williams suggests, ideologies exist as cultural influences in dominant, emergent or residual forms.[2] Psychomachy exists as a dominant cultural influence throughout the lifetimes of all three writers. As I have argued earlier, the plethora of written tracts that emerges during the latter half of the seventeenth century is the product of political and social changes more than it is a reflection of a dramatic shift in the importance or pervasiveness of this

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[1] I must point out here that I do not propose to discover what actually happens when each reader confronts these texts, but rather to describe the indications of an implied or desired response encoded within the texts themselves. I accept Catherine Belsey's critique of reader response criticism that fails "to recognize that a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings" (*Critical Practice,* 33) and I plan to discover the ways in which the influences of a dominant discourse like psychomachy shapes the readers' response.

[2] See *Marxism and Literature*, pp.121-7.

particular theological discourse. Thus, these later tracts may provide legitimate insights into Spenser's work.

Most of the psychomachy tract writers dedicate a considerable portion of their work to the enumeration and description of satanic wiles and stratagems, and it is not surprising that many of the same wiles and stratagems are discussed in tracts by various authors. What is more interesting, however, is that the strategies and wiles most common to the tracts are also represented in the fictions of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan. Three particular satanic stratagems or wiles reappear frequently throughout the works under discussion: sinful sleep, disguise and *delectatio morosa*, or the progressive descent into sin. In each case, the satanic wile operates both within the text and within the reader with the result that the events narrated within the text are actually experienced by the reader. I use the terms "strategies" or "wiles of the devil" to describe the mechanisms within the text that confound and otherwise deceive either or both the reader and the fictive characters. It is through this interesting mimesis of literary action within the reader that, I believe, the authors succeed in creating the opportunity not only to relate the facts of sanctification through psychomachy, but actually to incite the spiritual battle within the reader and thereby teach through experience. The following discussion will examine several "paradigmatic reading moments"[3] from *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* which demonstrate how the thematic concerns of psychomachy are explored in the text and how the stylistic components of the texts themselves conspire to involve

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[3] I borrow this term from Wolfgang Iser. See *The Act of Reading*, p.114.

readers in an actual experience of the doctrine by way of the reading process itself. This interesting duplication of thematic content in the reading experience of these works will then be contrasted with Bunyan's epic allegory, *The Holy War*, where the doctrine of psychomachy is the subject of the allegory, but where it is not incorporated into its form. In all four works psychomachy informs the background or, as Iser labels it, the "repertoire" of social norms and literary allusions upon which these works are constructed (*Act* 69). In each case, however, an experience of the "implied reading" incorporated into the texts depends on the actual reader's willingness to comply with, or become involved in the production of meaning instigated by the texts.

In his rather lengthy disquisition on the nature of warfare, William Gurnall gives the following note of advice to his readers:

> An ignorant person is in the same predicament as a sleepwalker who treads barefoot upon an asp and never feels its sting. He falls headlong into sin and never realizes he has been mortally wounded. (172 abr.)

Later, Gurnall goes on at length about the dangers posed to Christian soldiers by sleep:

> Standing is a waking, watching posture. In the military, "stand to your arms!" means "Stay alert and watch!" In some cases it is death to a soldier to be found asleep -- when he is assigned to guard duty, for instance. He is to watch so that the rest can sleep. Shirking his duty endangers the lives of the entire army, so he deserves his sentence of death.
>
> Watchfulness is more important for the Christian soldier than any other. In temporal battles soldiers fight against men who sleep the same as themselves, but the saint's enemy, Satan, is always awake and walking his rounds. (abr. 301)

Similarly, John Downame warns his readers:

> If he [Satan] cannot any longer keepe us asleepe in sinne, by rocking us in the cradle of carnal security, and singing unto us the sweete tunes of God's mercie and Christs merits, the [sic] will he labour to plunge us in despaire, by setting before our eyes the hainousness of our sinnes, and sounding in our ears the thunder threatenings of the law. (89)

Gurnall's and Downame's use of sleep as a metaphor for spiritual stupor or disarmed inattention is entirely consistent with the symbolic import attributed to sleep both in the Bible[4] and throughout both the *Faerie Queene* and the *Pilgrim's Progress.* In Milton's prelapsarian world the sinful aspects of sleep do not enter into the theological considerations the way they do in Spenser's or Bunyan's fallen universe; key episodes like Eve's dream, however, indicate Milton's subscription to the general principles demonstrated by his literary peers[5]. Sleep, however, is distinguished from dream and is often suspect. For all three authors dreams retain the prophetic and visionary qualities generally attributed to them in Greek philosophy, in the Bible and in early English literature. With the select exception of divinely sanctioned or ordained rest, sleep is a metaphor for spiritual lapse that signals the characters' descent into sin. In both Spenser's and Bunyan's

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[4]The biblical association between sleep and spiritual lapse is evident throughout Scripture. See Christ's visit to his sleeping disciples (Mark 14:37-8), and the parable of the farmer whose enemy came while his men slept and sowed tares among the wheat (Matthew 13:24-26). See also God's promise to Israel Psalm 121:3-4 "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee will not slumber./ Behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

[5] Eve's dream, and its relationship to the psychomachy tradition will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, as will the nature of Bunyan's "dream" vision.

embattled worlds, the characters struggle to identify the place and time for appropriate rest and often succumb to sinful sleep.

The temptation to inattention or sleep that threatens the characters is also influential in the reader's experience of these texts. Anyone who has attempted to read cover to cover through the *Faerie Queene* will attest to the tranquilizing effect of its seemingly endless stories. Yet, there is significant evidence within the complex and integrally inter-related narrative constructions of the Spenserian epic, and within the disputational structures of Bunyan's dialogue, to suggest that the temptation to disarmed inattention that plagues the fictional characters is also part of the reader's experience. If sanctification is precipitated by dispelling ignorance (as Gurnall suggests), and if this literature is designed to impart wisdom to combat ignorance, then the implications of the readers' failure to follow the story or to comprehend the argument are parallel to the physical peril experienced by the sleepy characters. For readers who are attuned to the metaphoric link between sleep and spiritual peril, the acknowledgement of their own lapse of attention serves as an alarm to summon their concentration back to the text, and as an alarum to battle against the unseen enemy that threatens their spiritual well-being outside the confines of the fictional world.

One of the first significant references to sleep in the *Faerie Queene* occurs when Redcross and Una are lodged at Archimago's Hermitage:

> The drouping Night thus creepeth on them fast,
> And the sad humour loading their eye liddes,

> As messenger of Morpheus on them cast
> Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleepe them biddes.
> Unto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes:
> Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,
> He to his study goes, and there amiddes
> His magick bookes and artes of sundry kindes,
> He seeks out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy mindes. (I.i.36)

The dangerous and undesirable connotations of sleep are amplified in this passage. Sleep is deadly; it drowns its victims in a state of mental and spiritual stupor. Redcross's "sleepy mind" is unable to distinguish the real Una from the spright "fram'd of liquid ayre" (45.3) that appears in bed beside him, and as a result he abandons the real Una. But while his visual error may be understandable since the spright's own "maker" was "nigh beguiled with so goodly sight" (45.6-7), his mistake is symbolic of a far more dangerous spiritual error. In the summary that precedes canto ii, the poet clarifies the specific significance of Archimago's success and Redcross's error: "The guileful great enchanter parts the Redcrosse Knight from Truth: Into whose stead faire falsehood steps". Archimago's plan is enabled by and enacted during his victim's sleep, a sleep that both separates and confuses truth and falsehood.

The connection between sleep or even rest and the spiritual state of unpreparedness and inattention is also made at many other points in the poem. In canto vii, Redcross's reunion with Duessa occurs when Redcrosse is disarmed and resting beside a fountain (2). This reunion soon leads to Redcross's enslavement to Orgoglio and to the need for his rescue by Una and Prince Arthur. At several points in Book Two the connection between sleep and spiritual drowsiness is conveyed through the actions and descriptions of Cymochles. He

is disarmed and asleep in the company of Acrasia when Atin seeks him out to revenge his brother's death, and he is easily lured back to sleep and away from his mission by Phaedria. Acrasia's Bower is also strongly associated with sleep and death. Acrasia's ability to induce sleep corresponds to her desire to suppress her victims' power of rationality and to weaken their normal vigilance. When Guyon arrives he discovers Verdant, Acrasia's newest lover, disarmed, his sleeping head resting in her lap. In Book Four, Scudamore lays his armour aside and falls asleep in the House of Care, at which point he is endlessly tormented by jealousy and doubt (canto v); soon after, he learns from Britomart that his love, Amoret, was captured by the Hairy Carle when they both had stopped to rest and Britomart fell asleep (canto vi). Finally, in Book V, Britomart reproves her droopy eyes and stays awake all night in Dolon's Castle. As a result, she avoids the peril that would have afflicted her had she not stayed awake and heard "The bird, that warned Peter of his fall, first ring's silver bell t'each sleepy wight" (V:vi:27:2-3) In all cases sleep results in some sort of beguilement or narcotic disorientation for the characters who succumb. In the case of Cymochles and perhaps even of Scudamore, sleep seems to result from a more significant sinful weakness in their own nature. Britomart's sleep is more accurately attributed to careless inattention. Redcross's lapses are often the result of willful ignorance and spiritual disorientation.

Not all characters do succumb to the impulse to sleep or rest at inappropriate times. Accordingly, the poem's theology of sleep is also exemplified through these instances of resistance and

fortitude. When Guyon descends into the Cave of Mammon, he sees Sleepe in his Stygian domain beside Care:

> Before the dore sat self-consuming Care,
> Day and night keeping wary watch and ward,
> For feare least Force or Fraud should unaware
> Breake in, and spoile the treasure there in gard:
> Ne would he suffer Sleepe once thither-ward
> Approach, albe his drowsie den were next;
> For next to death is Sleepe to be compared:
> Therefore his house is unto his annext;
> Here Sleep, there Richesse, and Hel-gate them both betwext. (II.vii.25)

In this particular stanza the equation between sleep and death that has been implied throughout Book One is made explicit. Unlike the Redcrosse Knight, Guyon does not allow Sleepe to "untye" his "eye strings", and as a result the "ugly feend" that longs to "rend" Guyon "in peeces with his rauenous pawes" (27.8) is left unsatisfied. Similarly, in the Bower of Bliss Guyon resists Acrasia's charms and stays wakeful and fully armed while he carries out its destruction. Britomart also succeeds in her bid to ward off sleep and maintain armed attention throughout her night in Busirane's castle:

> Yet nould she d'off her weary armes, for feare
> Of secret daunger, ne let sleepe oppresse
> Her heauy eyes with natures burdein deare,
> But drew her selfe aside in sickernesse,
> And her welpointed weapons did about her dresse. (III.xii.55)

Guyon's and Britomart's armed wakefulness is credited with their success in averting the perils that threaten them.

Just as circumstances within the narrative conspire to threaten Spenser's characters with sleep, so Spenser's written text conspires to threaten his readers with a sort of sleep. At intervals

even the most attentive and alert readers fall prey to the deliberate complexities and ambiguities laying in wait throughout the poem. Stories within stories unfold as Spenser summons classical references to expand or clarify a particular point, and the reader must follow these seeming digressions without losing the thread of narrative that precedes them. From Book Three onward the complexity of the reading experience is exponentially increased as the cast of characters expands and the episodes begun in one book are carried over into the next. These general characteristics of the poem are only complicated by more minute poetic and stylistic details. The poem's language, for example, was archaic and therefore somewhat unfamiliar to Spenser's first readers let alone to those who have confronted the poem in the centuries that have followed. These textual obstacles by no means render the text inaccessible, but they do make it challenging. One moment's inattention often results in the loss of a vital detail that throws the surface narrative into confusion to say nothing of the allegorical implications that spin out of that moment of fictional action. As a result, the perils of "sleepy" inattention that threaten the characters of Spenser's narrative also threaten his readers, and Spenser's fictional action is played out in his readers' minds as well as in his character's imaginary universe.

The hypnotic effect of the text is best demonstrated through specific example, as in the following: in Book One, canto ix, Redcross enters the Cave of Despair and once again the mingling of lexical definitions sees "sleep" equated with disarmament and death. Despair tempts Redcross to suicide with a witty series of

arguments that culminate in one of the poems most memorable stanzas:

> He there does now enjoy eternall rest
> And happy ease, which thou does want and craue,
> And further from it daily wanderest:
> What if some little paine the passage haue,
> That makes fraile flesh to feare the bitter waue?
> Is not short paine well borne, that brings long ease,
> And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet graue?
> Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
> Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please. (I.ix.40)

In his rebuttal, Redcross summons the military imagery favoured by the psychomachy tracts:

> The knight much wondered ar his suddeine wit,
> And said, The terme of life is limited
> Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it;
> The souldier may not moue from watchfull sted,
> Nor leave his stand, untill his Captaine bed.
> Who life did limit by almightie doome,
> (Quoth he) knowes best the termes established;
> And he, that points the Centonell his roome,
> Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome. (41)

The announcement of a change of speaker is made very clear in the 41st stanza and the dialogue that ensues is thus clearly attributable to the Redcross knight. In the stanza that follows, however, no such announcement is made. The poem moves from Redcross's reply directly into a counter-argument by Despair and leaves readers to distinguish the change in voice:

> Is not his deed, what euer thing is donne,
> In heauen and earth? did not he all create
> To die again? all ends that was begonne.
> Their times in his eternall booke of fate
> Are written sure, and haue their certaine date.
> Who then can striue with strong necessitie,

> That holds the world in his still changing state,
> Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie?
> When houre of death is come, let none aske whence, nor why. (42)

As A.C. Hamilton points out in his note to this stanza, "either Despair argues for despair -- as fate, necessitie, and destinie render life (and death) meaningless -- or the Knight argues against suicide" (*Faerie Queene* 127). The ambiguity created by this failure to identify a speaker creates the opportunity for readers to undergo an experience of intellectual confusion similar to the intellectual confusion that is overtaking Redcross. Despair tempts Redcross with rest and resignation that, if he were to succumb, would end by laying "his soule to sleepe in quiet graue" implying both death and damnation. Meanwhile, the didactic worth of this particular segment of the poem for its readers is largely dependent upon their ability to follow the argument for and against despair, and to stay awake and alert to the implications of each statement. As a result of the ambiguity built into the poem at this point, however, the progression of argument works against a clear distinction of its components. The text is designed to ensure that even the most attentive readers are momentarily plagued with the sense of confusion that so often accompanies a brief lapse of concentration. In the process of doubling back to clarify their confusion, readers are returned to the last clear announcement of a change in speaker and are thereby given the opportunity to re-read Redcross's explicit assertion: "The souldier may not moue from watchfull sted,/ Nor leaue his stand, untill his Captaine bed" (41.4-5). The perils of sleep and of the consequent disarmed inattention are thus not only

demonstrated to the readers through the narrative action of the poem, but are actually experienced by the readers as they read. The poem's simulation and stimulation of psychomachy, however, does not stop here. Once readers acknowledge their own confusion and experience the feeling that so often accompanies a sleepy lapse of attention, the challenge to discern between the two voices remains.

In the effort to distinguish the identities of the speakers within the text, readers are encouraged to absorb the binary debate represented on the page into their own minds and, as they do so, the requirements for a full experience of psychomachy are established. Readers' minds become the sites of deliberation as they challenge themselves to distinguish between the "godly" argument against despair and the "evil" argument for it. This battle to distinguish between opposing spiritual forces operating within a single mind is typically represented through allegory in earlier literary explorations of the psychomachy theme such as Prudentius's *Psychomachia* and *The Castle of Perseverance*. The battle is even more common among the literary representations of inner conflict that are contemporary with or that follow *The Faerie Queene*. Shakespeare dramatizes this effort to arbitrate between the voices within one's own mind through both Lancelot Gobbo and Richard III and, later, Bunyan documents his personal battle to distinguish between conflicting arguments in *Grace Abounding*:

> And I remember one day, as I was in diverse frames of spirit, and considering that these frames were still according to the nature of the several scriptures that came in upon my mind; if this grace, then I was quiet, but if that of Esau, then tormented. Lord, thought I, if both these scriptures would meet in my heart at once, I wonder which of them would get

> the better of me. So methought I had a longing mind that they might come both together upon me; yea, I desired of God they might.
>
> Well, about two or three days after, so they did indeed; they bolted both upon me at a time, and did work and struggle strangely in me for a while; at last, that about Esau's birthright began to wax weak, and withdraw, and vanish; and this about the sufficiency of grace prevailed, with peace and joy. And as I was in a muse about this thing, that scripture came home upon me, Mercy rejoiceth against judgement (Jas. 2:13). (55)

This battle which Bunyan records in his own spiritual autobiography is a clear example of the manner in which psychomachy was believed to shape the experience of faith. Although Bunyan's acute angst over this spiritual state is the product of his Calvinism, his understanding that sanctification occurs through inner conflict and debate -- psychomachy -- is rooted in doctrine that extends beyond the immediate influences of Calvinism to more catholic, Christian principles. By his deliberate incorporation of ambiguity into the Cave of Despair episode, Spenser creates th opportunity for two conflicting spiritual arguments about despair to "come both together upon" his readers. As a result, he creates the opportunity for spiritual warfare not only to be recognized as a component or influence on the literary narrative, but also to be experienced by his readers. The poem thereby succeeds in both providing an intellectual understanding of the Satanic wiles of sleep and despair while drawing its readers into an actual experience of the process upon which their sanctification depends.

A similar effort to incorporate the reader into the experience of the narrative is also apparent in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress.* Throughout the course of Bunyan's allegory Christian and his

companions struggle to discern the correct time and place for rest, and like Redcross and various other characters in *The Faerie Queene* they occasionally fail. The associations and metaphoric links that define "sleep" within the parameters of Bunyan's text establish a definition similar to those apparent in both the psychomachy tracts and *The Faerie Queene:* sleep is compared to spiritual inattention and deadly sloth. The use of sleep as a metaphor for spiritual lapse is particularly interesting in Bunyan's allegory since the story of Christian and his companions is told in the form of a dream vision. The dreamer, who is by necessity asleep, is the blessed recipient of the pilgrim's story. His exception from the general equation of sleep and sin is directly attributable to the distinction made by both Bunyan and Spenser between the divinely inspired dream and the satanic temptation to sleep. In "The Author's Apology for his Book," Bunyan identifies the paradoxical nature of sleep and dream when he challenges his readers: "Would'st thou be in a dream, and yet not sleep?" Bunyan's invitation to "dream" is an invitation for his readers to participate in an active, interpretative process in which the readers will learn to "read" themselves as well as the text. This state of vigilant, attentiveness is the opposite of the moral and intellectual dissolution associated with sleep.

The first reference to sleep occurs in the opening section of the narrative where Christian (or Graceless, as he later says he was called while living in the City of Destruction) undergoes the torment of guilt and sin that eventually prompts him to begin his pilgrimage. Christian's wife hopes that sleep will "settle" Christian's "brains" (51), but Christian's concern for his salvation prohibits him from

sleeping. In this case sleep is defined by its absence. Christian's awakened conscience keeps his spiritual sense alert and ready to hear the call, the vocation, that beckons him toward salvation. Although his heightened awareness is perceived as a madness by his friends and family, Christian continues to resist sleep and to seek an answer to his overwhelming question: "What shall I do to be saved?" (52). A precise definition of the consequences that await the unwary sleeper is delivered at several points later in the story.

Shortly after Christian reaches the Cross and is both unburdened and reclothed, he encounters three fellow travellers who are fast asleep with fetters on their heels. Simple, Sloth and Presumption resist Christian's attempt to warn them of their danger:

> Christian then seeing them lie in this case went to them, if peradventure he might awake them. And cried,'You are like them that sleep on the top of a mast, for the Dead Sea is under you, a gulf that hath no bottom; awake therefore, and come away; be willing also, and I will help you off with your irons.' He also told them, 'If he that goeth about like a roaring lion comes by, you will certainly become a prey to his teeth.' With that they looked upon him, and began to reply in this sort: Simple said, "I see no danger'; Sloth said, 'Yet a little more sleep'; and Presumption said, 'Every fat must stand upon his own bottom, what is the answer else that I should give thee?' And so they lay down to sleep again, and Christian went on his way. (83)

In this passage sleep is directly equated with spiritual peril. The three sleeping travellers are fettered and therefore easy prey for the roaring lion and yet their sleepy state prohibits them from perceiving their danger. As Gurnall warns in *The Christian in*

Complete Armour, they are like the "sleepwalker who treads barefoot upon an asp and never feels its sting" (172 abr).

Later in the narrative, when Christian and Hopeful reach the Enchanted Ground, the temptation to sleep arises again and this time Hopeful is afflicted with drowsiness. Christian keeps him awake with a reminder of the warning they received earlier from the Shepherd that they should resist sleeping on the Enchanted Ground. Hopeful is grateful for the reminder and the two decide to "fall into good discourse" (188) in order to dispel the drowsiness. At this point the narrative breaks to allow the Dreamer to interject with a brief, poetic note:

> When saints do sleepy grow, let them come hither,
> And hear how these two pilgrims talk together:
> Yea, let them learn of them, in any wise
> Thus to keep ope their drowsy slumbering eyes.
> Saints' fellowship, if it be managed well,
> Keeps them awake, and that in spite of Hell. (188)

The Dreamer's note serves to expand the relevance of the lesson learned by Hopeful beyond the bounds of text by explicitly pointing readers to the spiritual truth evidenced in the narrative. As is so often the case throughout *The Pilgrim's Progress,* the reader is deliberately invited, through either the Dreamer's interjections or the marginal notations, to reflect on the theological principles expounded by the text. As was the case in the *Faerie Queene,* however, Bunyan does not restrict his readers' involvement to the intellectual contemplation of doctrine; rather he ensures that his readers will be drawn into an actual experience of the doctrine discussed. As the psychomachy tracts explain, sanctification is

brought about through the actual experience of temptation, and *The Pilgrim's Progress* provides the opportunity for such an experience.

Bunyan's story makes it clear that Christian's wise advice to Hopeful about the perils of sleep is not the result of Christian's innate spiritual superiority. Rather, it is the direct result of prior experience -- an experience that the readers are encouraged to share. Soon after his experience at the Cross Christian reaches the Hill Difficulty. The Dreamer informs the readers that Christian chose the narrow way up the hill despite his choice of two seemingly easier paths, one named Danger, the other Destruction. Christian's choice is determined to be the correct one since, as the Dreamer records, each of the alternate paths leads subsequent travellers to undesirable consequences. During his climb up the hill, Christian discovers a place of "rest":

> Now about the midway to the top of the Hill was a pleasant Arbour, made by the Lord of the Hill, for the refreshing of weary travellers. Thither therefore Christian got, where also he sat down to rest him. Then he pulled his roll out of his bosom, and read therein to his comfort; he also now began afresh to take a review of the coat or garment that was given him as he stood by the Cross. (86-7)

To this point all has gone well with Christian and the text gives no indication to its readers that Christian's actions have been inappropriate or that he faces immediate danger. In addition to the reassuring description of the "pleasant" arbour and comment that it was made by the "Lord of the Hill for the refreshing of weary travellers", the marginal notation that accompanies this segment of text further describes the resting spot as an "Award of Grace." When

Christian falls asleep it seems an entirely appropriate response to both his physical fatigue and the expressed purpose of the arbour:

> Thus pleasing himself a while, he at last fell into a slumber, and thence into a fast sleep, which detained him in that place until it was almost night, and in his sleep his roll fell out of his hand.

The rebuke that appears in the marginal notation at the point of Christian's seemingly innocent slumber comes as a surprise: "He that sleeps is a loser" (87). At this point Christian is awakened by a voice quoting the wisdom of Proverbs: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise."

Like Christian, readers of *The Pilgrims's Progress* are lulled into a false sense of security about Christian's actions by the pleasant description of the arbour and its Godly purpose. The text undercuts itself and the expectations of its readers; as a result, the flow of the narrative is interrupted and additional attention is focused on the site of the interruption. Inattentive readers are encouraged either to reread the preceding passage in order to see where their expectations were led astray, or to slow down to take careful account of any explanation for the unexpected turn that may be offered by the text. In so doing, the textual indications which led readers to assume that the arbour was an appropriate place for sleep are brought up against the knowledge of the outcome of Christian's actions. Readers are left to establish theological connections between the two by absorbing the conflicting sets of evidence and deliberating between them. As was the case in *The Faerie Queene*, this process stimulates an experience of psychomachy in these readers and trains them for the more complex task of discerning evil

in their own lives. Whether or not a particular reader succumbs to this textual trap, the disruption in expectations serves as an alarm to wake sleepy readers: readers are called to account for any lack of attention that they may have paid to the text in the same way that Christian must repent for his unlawful sleep. The intellectual matter under discussion in the text is duplicated and brought into the readers' experience through the very process of reading.

This example of disruption or subversion of the readers' expectations agrees to a limited extent with the evaluation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* that is offered by Stanley Fish (*Self-Consuming Artifacts*). Fish argues that the patterns of backsliding and providential rescues that are apparent in this example and many others throughout the narrative "work to subvert the self-confidence of the pilgrim and the reader alike" (229). Fish eventually concludes that this erosion of self-confidence is the desired effect of the dialectic textual design which, through the "demonstration of the inadequacy of its own forms" (264), inevitably points to a similar inadequacy of the readers' understanding. This inadequacy within readers in turn encourages them to abandon faith in their own powers in order to acknowledge the powers of a transcendent force:

> The dialectic is not so much the orderly disposition of things in the phenomenal world, as the transformation of the soul-mind into an instrument capable of seeing things in the phenomenal world for what they really are (turning things upside down): imperfect, inferior reflections of a higher reality whose claim on our thoughts and desires is validated as earthly claims are discredited. (7)

Fish is correct in his estimation that inattentive readers may experience a temporary diminishment of their self-confidence after

falling prey to a textual trap of this sort. However, this particular example actually serves to discredit Fish's larger argument that the work is designed to erode the readers' confidence in their own abilities. Bunyan's Calvinist theology is founded upon an assumption of the complete sufficiency of the fully-armed, grace-filled Christian to withstand temptation. Accordingly, Bunyan's narrative serves to reinforce this premise. Wakeful, "fully armed" readers are given the opportunity to avert an experience of uncomfortable surprise if they are attuned to warnings provided in the story. The abrupt turn that transforms the Lord's resting-place and award of grace into the site of sinful sleep is not without justifications, if it is considered in the context of the earlier encounter with the three sleeping travellers, Simple, Sloth and Presumption. At this point, the metaphoric connection between sleep and sin is clearly established, and if it is recalled at the moment that Christian falls asleep, it serves to warn readers of the possible danger implied in his actions.

Several paragraphs after the episode in the arbour a full explanation of this turn of events is offered. Upon the discovery that his roll is missing, Christian asks God's forgiveness for having fallen asleep:

> Thus therefore he now went on, bewailing his sinful sleep saying 'O wretched man that I am, that I should sleep in the day-time! That I should sleep in the midst of difficulty! That I should so indulge the flesh as to use that rest for ease to my flesh which the Lord of the Hill hath erected only for the relief of the spirits of pilgrims! . . .'. (88)

If, like Christian, readers are brought up short by the arbour experience, they are offered the opportunity to recognize their error

and to learn, through an experience of intellectual debate that simulates psychomachy, to avoid similar mistakes in the future. If, however, readers are alert to the metaphoric link established between sleep and sin earlier in the text, they are confirmed in their knowledge, and their ability to deal with similar challenges is increased. In either case the text serves as a test which evaluates the readers' ability to discern satanic wiles and devilish stratagems.

In both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Faerie Queene* the metaphoric equation of sleep and sin is explored and exploited in order to bring the reader to a full intellectual and emotional experience of the concept which the psychomachy tracts deem so critical to the development of a competent Christian soldier. Sanctification through psychomachy is predicated on the necessity of experiencing temptation. The fictions of Spenser and Bunyan conspire to stimulate such an experience by mimicking the temptation to sleep that is faced by the narrative character in the actual construction of the fiction in order that the information provided in the story will be reinforced by the experience of reading the story. In both *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* the textual design serves to move the binary debate of psychomachy into the readers' minds as they attempt to discern good from evil. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, readers are given the opportunity to test their memory and their understanding and to be edified by the experience whether they pass or fail.

The theme of disguise is another fiendish deception or wile that receives substantial attention in the psychomachy tracts and

throughout the work of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan. Evil, the tracts warn, is seldom represented as itself. The very success of temptation depends on the ability of evil to represent itself as good. Physical disguises and visual deceptions make up a large portion of the disguises that are encountered by the characters in *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War*; however, these works also incorporate more subtle uses of disguise where evil motives and actions are cloaked in seemingly good intentions and reasonable arguments. *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* contain two of the most interesting examples of a more subtle treatment of the disguise theme. In *Paradise Lost*, sin is disguised as love and Adam's fall is made possible by his "loyalty" to Eve. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian's escape from the City of Destruction is complicated by his abandonment of his family "duty" and conjugal bond. In both works sin is camouflaged: it makes the worst appear the best and tempts its unwary victims when and where they are most vulnerable.

As was the case with the metaphor of sleep, while the thematic treatment of disguise is worked out in the narrative, the concept of disguise is mirrored in the form of the fiction. If readers seek to align their understanding of the events of either *Paradise Lost* or *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the narrator's reading of these works, they must confront the satanic disguises incorporated in the text and engage in an active comparison of, and deliberations between, right "seeming" and evil motivations. In both cases the narrators of these works exhibit definite opinions about how the various events related in the text are to be read; in both cases these

readings concur with a largely orthodox understanding of Christian doctrine. Although the narrator's reading is certainly not the only way to approach either text, these comments do provide a stable bench mark against which the influences of the theological concept of psychomachy may be assessed. In *Paradise Lost*, the deliberation between "right" and "evil" motivations is focused on parallel events within the work itself; in *The Pilgrim's Progress* the deliberation occurs between biblical passages that act as pretext to the allegorical events of the narrative. In both cases this effort to align reading with the narrator's explicit or implied reading results in the assimilation of the debate within readers' own minds, and an experience of the psychomachy recorded in the fiction.

The concept of disguised evil is overtly represented throughout *Paradise Lost* by Satan's ever-changing physical appearances. During the course of the poem readers witness a physical diminution of the once glorious angel that corresponds with the poem's revelation of his spiritual decay. In Book One, the fallen angel is chained on the burning lake where he is compared to the largest of created beings:

> Thus Satan talking to his nearest Mate
> With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
> That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides
> Prone on the Flood, extended long and large
> Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
> As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,
> *Titanian* or *Earth-born*, that warr'd on *Jove*,
> *Briareos* or *Typhon*, whom the Den
> By ancient Tarsus held, or that Sea-beast
> *Leviathan*, which God of all his works
> Created hugest that swim th'Ocean stream. (192-202)

The epic similes that compare Satan and his legion of fallen angels to the largest of created beings and the most powerful of classical figures are surpassed only by Milton's treatment of God and the Son, both of whom defy comparison altogether; even the most grandiloquent of epic similes are foresworn in the poem's descriptions of the heavenly domain and its occupants. As the story unfolds, Satan is compared to various beasts: he is like a "prowling wolf" when he enters the garden in Book IV and like a cormorant as he sits perched in the tree of life "devising Death" (IV:197).

Satan's protean abilities are emphasized not only through the various comparisons made throughout the poem, but also through the actual transformations that he undergoes in order to perpetrate his deceptions. These transformations range from overt shape-shifting to more subtle, but equally deceptive misrepresentation of himself. In order to effect his seduction of mankind, Satan first transforms his physical appearance into that of "a stripling cherub" (III:636) and as such he travels toward the garden. Upon entering the garden Satan changes appearance again:

> Then from his lofty stand on that high Tree
> Down he alights among the sportful Herd
> Of those fourfooted kinds, himself now one,
> Now other, as thir shape serv'd best his end
> Nearer to view his prey, and unespi'd
> To mark what of thir state he more might learn
> By word or action markt: about them round
> A Lion now he stalks with fiery glare,
> Then as a Tiger, who by chance hath spi'd
> In some Purlieu two gentle Fawns at play,
> Straight couches close, then rising changes oft
> His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground
> Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
> Gript in each paw. (IV:395-408)

Finally, he is "squat like a Toad, close at the ear of Eve" (IV:800) when he is discovered by Ithuriel. Satan's predatory and destructive intent is graphically illustrated here in the bestial disguises that he assumes. The disguises also take on a symbolic import representative of Satan's corruption as they are compared in sequence; the cherub degenerates into a beast, and the beast degenerates into successively inferior forms from the lion (the top of the chain of being) to the tiger, the toad and finally to the snake. The physical disguises that Satan assumes during his first approach to Eve are the most overt manifestations of his deceptive abilities; however, the emotional disguise which he assumes while addressing his fallen troops during the first two books of the poem also represents a significant aspect of his artifice. The guile with which he manages his fallen army foreshadows his masterwork of deception: the temptation of Eve.

The ambiguities and complexities in Satan's character that result from his adept disguises and related abilities for deception reach beyond their immediate implications for the narrative figures and implicate readers of the poem. Readers are encouraged to make sense of both the dramatic grandeur of Satan and the authoritative and often contradictory reading provided by both the narrator and the structural parallelism of the poem which invites a comparison between the actions of Satan and those of the Son. As they make sense of these contradictory elements, Milton's implied readers -- those who he may have assumed to have both an understanding of the Genesis story and of the concept of psychomachy -- are encouraged to engage in an exercise in dialectical reasoning that works with the

textual information but involves a degree of manipulation and extrapolation from these facts. This process of manipulation and extrapolation forces these readers to participate in the production of the poem's meaning. If these readers experience a contradiction between the emotional appeal of Satan and the sermonizing words of the narrator, then they are given the opportunity to benefit from the inner conflict incited by the poem. If these readers are attentive to the structural and thematic parallels set up between Satan's and the Son's offers of self-sacrifice, they are offered the opportunity to refine the powers of discernment that will enable their own efforts to see through satanic disguises operative in their own lives. In both cases the edification offered by the poem is predicated on the assumption that the innate intellectual conflict associated with psychomachy will result in the desired, sanctifying experience for its "fit" readers.

Satan's disguise of both his emotions and his motivations seriously complicates his characterization and complicates the poem with a palpable ambiguity. In public Satan plays the role of the defeated hero: he provides order and direction to the disassembled troops, he submerges his own pain and despair in order to bolster the failing morale of his followers, and he plans and executes a strategy of revenge. The optimism and leadership abilities that have led many critics to call Milton's Satan a hero are apparent in the speech with which Satan opens the consult in hell:

> Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav'n,
> For since no deep within her gulf can hold
> Immortal vigor, though opprest and fall'n,
> I give not Heav'n for lost. From this descent

Celestial Virtues rising, will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall
And trust themselves to fear no second fate:
Mee though just right and the fixt Laws of Heav'n
Did first create your leader, next, free choice,
With what besides, in Counsel or in Fight,
Hath been achiev'd of merit, yet this loss
Thus far at least recover'd, hath much more
Established in a safe unenvied Throne
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heav'n, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence, none, whose portion is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm Faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heav'n, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assur'd us; and by what best way,
Whether of open War or covert guile,
We now debate; who can advise, may speak. (II:11-42)

In this speech Satan demonstrates characteristics that might be admired of a shrewd if somewhat unscrupulous politician: he uses commanding rhetoric to place the best possible light on a bad situation, he secures his own position of leadership against any insurrection among his own number ("who here/ Will envy whom the highest place exposes/ Foremost . . .") -- and in doing so he plants the suggestion of his own heroism among his troops -- and, finally, he organizes a forum for discussion out of the confusion that results from their fall.

The extent to which Satan disguises his own doubts and regrets is not apparent to readers until Book IV. It is only when Satan is revealed by himself, or at least far from the gaze of his fallen crew, that the alternative "self" is revealed. In his address to the sun, Satan admits that "Pride and worse Ambition" (40) were the causes of his fall and acknowledges God as the "matchless King" (41) of heaven who exacted nothing more than "the easiest recompense" (47) of thanks. Eventually these statements of remorse are hardened by despair of repentance into the diabolical resolve: "Evil be thou my Good" (110). When Satan remembers that God is watching him, he quickly changes his outward appearance and disguises the remorse he has just demonstrated beneath a feigned appearance of contentment:

> . . . Whereof hee soon aware,
> Each perturbation smooth'd with outward calm,
> Artificer of fraud; and was the first
> That practis'd falsehood under saintly show,
> Deep malice to conceal, couch't with revenge. (IV:119-123)

Although Satan's calculated deceptiveness at other points in the poem might provoke readers to question the validity of his statements here, his abrupt recognition that he is being watched and his spontaneous effort to disguise his inner turmoil, serve to heighten the degree of validity credited to these private revelations.

As John Carey comments in his assessment of Satan, it is his dramatic quality -- the profound ambivalence of his nature and the depth of his characterization both of which are exhibited during the addresses to his troops and throughout his private lamentations -- that makes him an attractive and persuasive character for many

readers (133). The dramatic display offered by Milton's Satan in the early books of *Paradise Lost* has long caused debate about whether Satan is the real hero of the epic. Although the ends of his actions are defined by the narrative and by the epic narrator as infernal, his "heroic" conduct has been sufficient evidence for many critics as early as Dryden to justify his actions by necessity and assert his fate as evidence for the fallibility and corruption of the Christian God. For other critics, however, the dramatic power and seduction of Satan are weighted against the outcome of his actions and are interpreted in the context of the narrator's observations and remarks. For these critics Satan exhibits the diabolic and pitiable nature in *Paradise Lost* that is attributed to him in both Scripture and Christian lore. Carey provides a brief summary of critical opinion of Milton's Satan:

> Sharrock (463-5) has shown that the notion of Satan as the true hero of Milton's epic goes back to Dryden and was a commonplace of eighteenth-century literary opinion both in France and England. Barker (421-36) finds that eighteenth-century admirers of the sublime praise Satan's "high superior nature", and so came into conflict with Addison and Johnson, who declared Satan's speeches "big with absurdity". Among Romantic critics, Blake, Byron, Shelley, and Hazlitt championed Satan, whereas Coleridge identified him with Napoleonic pride and sensual indulgence (see Newmeyer). These critics certainly intensified and politicized the controversy, but they did not start it -- nor, of course, did they finish it. In the twentieth century, anti-Satanists such as Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis, S. Musgrove, and Stanley Fish have been opposed by A.J.A. Waldock, E.E. Stoll, G. Rostrevor Hamilton, William Empson, and others. (132).

As Carey's catalogue suggests, the variety in critical opinion that surrounds Milton's Satan in the twentieth century was also apparent

at the time, or shortly after, the poem was published. This fact suggests that the tension that exists in Milton's character is not solely the product of post-Christian thinking but rather an effect of the poetic design itself, an effect that Milton himself could have anticipated and, further, one he may have deliberately incorporated into the poem in order that it might produce a specific reaction within his readers. Naturally, not every reader will react to the poem in the same way. Cultural assumptions will undoubtedly shape the reactions of different communities of readers over time, and the various ideological pressures that came to bear on the individual reader even within the author's lifetime no doubt ensured that any reactions could be predicted but not guaranteed. As Dennis Danielson observes in his discussion of the poem's theodicy, "one cannot realistically join the conversation created by *Paradise Lost* and expect one's beliefs or unbelief to go unaddressed" (113). John Carey makes the specific point about Satan:

> Though originally the product of Milton's psychology, Satan, as he is read and interpreted, is also the product of the reader's psychology. *Paradise Lost,* like other texts, reads the reader, and Satan, as I have shown, divides readers into opposed camps. (143)

It is not, therefore, that the poem forces a reaction or "effect" on its readers, but rather that it sets up the conditions under which readers who choose to obtain an orthodox reading of Satan are challenged to do so. The text supplies adequate evidence to confirm a diabolic reading of Satan's most especially impressive moments. Yet, despite the strength and optimism apparent in his first speech to Beëlzebub, the narrator informs readers that Satan is "Vaunting

aloud, but rackt with deep despair" (I:126); the sympathetic portrait of the aggrieved fallen angel who despairs at "the bitter memory / Of what he was" (IV:25) is contextualized by the reminder that he intends "to wreck on innocent frail man his loss/ Of that first battle" (IV:11-12). But these brief editorial justifications constitute only one small component of the textual evidence. The elaborate analyses of logical fallacy and moral deliberations on intent that have been performed by many astute anti-Satan critics demonstrate the extent to which the poem counters its own portrayals of Satanic grandeur.[6] If readers are to choose an orthodox reading of Satan, however, they must assemble this textual evidence from the substance of Satan's rhetoric and from the narrator's comments to explain to themselves any pull of sympathy they may feel toward him in his moments of candour, or any inkling of awe that may overtake them "unawares" as they read Satan's early, eloquent, speeches. In modern readers this intellectual exercise of discerning argumentative fallacies and debating fine theological points is encouraged as a productive means of sharpening the mind. In readers intent on using the poem as a means of worship and increased understanding, and, specifically, in readers who attribute their sanctification to a process of inner conflict or psychomachy, this same exercise in discernment and debate may be understood as an edifying experience of their faith. The process of interpreting the parallel events of sacrifice -- the pseudo-sacrifice of Satan and the self-sacrifice of the Son -- provides a clear

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6 For an exemplary study of "anti-Satan" criticism, see C.S. Lewis's *A Preface to Paradise Lost.*

example of the manner in which the structural design of the poem encourages the readers' assimilation of the binary debate between "good" and "evil" that is synonymous with psychomachy.

The thematic parallel that exists between Satan's offer to undertake the perilous journey to paradise and the Son's offer to redeem mankind is one invented by Milton rather than indicated by his biblical source. Its effect on the poem is thus of particular interest since it is likely to be an intentional rather than accidental result of retelling the Genesis story. The similarities that exist between these two segments of the poem are more than mere coincidence. And similarities abound: Satan is seated "High on a Throne of Royal State" in hell, and God the father "sits /High Thron'd above all highth" in heaven. In both cases a call is made for one individual to offer himself to accomplish a great deed. In hell the plea sounds for one sufficient to carry out the dangerous plot against mankind:

> Here he had need
> All circumspection, and wee now no less
> Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send,
> The weight of all and our last hope relies. (II.413-15)

When the call is made, all of the infernal troops in attendance at the great consult "sat mute" (420). In heaven, the request is made for one to satisfy divine justice and make grace and mercy possible:

> Die hee or Justice must; unless for him
> Some other able, and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
> Say Heav'nly Powers, where shall we find such love,
> Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
> Man's mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save,
> Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear? (III.210-216)

When this call is received "all the Heav'nly Choir stood mute" (217). The similarities between these passages serve to underscore the great differences that also exist between them. Although Beëlzebub actually proposes the plan to assault mankind before the gathered troops, the narrator reveals that the plot was originally "devis'd/ By Satan, and in part proposed" (II.379-380): Beëlzebub's presentation is merely a theatrical device designed by Satan to set the stage for his grand acceptance of the dangerous office. By contrast, when the rhetorical question "Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear" is posed to the heavenly assembly, God the Father's advance knowledge of the answer results from the perfect accord between the will of God the father and that of his son rather than from a deliberate orchestration of events. The motivations for Satan's and the Son's actions are also distinct. The above-quoted material emphasizes how concerns for self-interest and revenge motivate Satan's actions; by contrast, the Son's offer of himself arises from his concern for mankind and for the preservation of heavenly justice and the exercise of divine grace and mercy.

If readers recognize and attempt to process the implications of this structural parallel within the poem, the effect of hearing both segments one after the other (for so they are placed in the text, Satan's offer in Book II and the Son's in Book III) is rather like the comic representations of psychomachy where the devil whispers into one ear and God in the other. The structure of the narrative ensures that Satan's speeches are not interpreted in isolation. The parallel between the two offers ensures that both textual moments combine to affect the readers' experience and understanding of the

"meaning" proposed by the narrative. As Iser argues, memory serves to create meaning for implied readers by juxtaposing the most recent event against the larger narrative background:

> Each individual image therefore emerges against the background of a past image, which is thereby given its position in the overall continuity, and is also opened up to meanings not apparent when it was first built up. Thus the time axis basically conditions and arranges the overall meaning, by making each image recede into the past, thus subjecting it to inevitable modifications, which, in turn, bring forth the new image. Consequently, all images cohere in the readers' mind by a constant accumulation of references, which we have termed the snowball effect. (*Act* 148)

This accumulation of conflicting images and impressions forces readers of *Paradise Lost* to reason, to choose, and to discern the disguised motivations and objectives that lie beneath the devil's clever rhetoric. In doing so they experience a pleasurable challenge to learn valuable lessons about the text and about themselves -- lessons which the psychomachy tracts seek to teach through a relation of fact in prose. In *The Christian Warfare,* for example, John Downame warns his readers that the devil is capable of disguising his intentions in apparently harmless or even noble-sounding actions:

> But if he cannot thus preuaile, he wil transforme himself into an angell of light, and tempt them to the doing of a lesse good, that they may neglect a greater; or that which is in it selfe lawfull and commanded in his due time & place, he will tempt them to performe it unreasonably, whe as other duties in respect of present occasion are more necessary; and so vseth one vertue or duty to shoulder another, & thrust it disorderly out of it own place and standing. For example, in the hearing of the word he wil cast into their minds meditations, in their owne nature good and acceptable to God in their due time and place, to the end he may distract their minds and make them

> heare wihout profit: in the time of prayer he will not stick to recall to their memories some profitable instructions which they haue heard at the sermon, to the end he may disturbe them in that holy exercise, and keep them from lifting up their hearts wholly unto God. Moreouer, in al his temptations he will alleage scripture; but then either hee deprayeth the place by adding or dectracting, as whe he alleageth scripture to our Sauiour Christ, Matth.4.6. *It is written, he will give his angels charge ouer thee*, &c. and leaueth out *to keepe thee in all thy waies*, which is expressed in the place he quoteth, Psal.90.11. because that made quite against him; or if hee recite them right, he will wrest the words vnto another sense, than the holie Ghost hath written them, that so he may deceiue vs and leade vs into error. (86)

Downame's warning is especially relevant to readers of *Paradise Lost* as they attempt to make sense of Adam's fall. Although an orthodox understanding of the fall demands that readers condemn Adam's choice to fall with Eve, and although there is sufficient evidence in the text to support this orthodox reading of the poem, the poetry of Adam's lament works against this reading by creating sympathy in readers and confusing the theological issues of obedience with the mistaken impression that Adam falls because of love. The skills which readers are given the opportunity to develop in learning to read Satan "aright", however, are also useful here. If readers choose to align their understanding of the Fall with the narrator's commentaries they must engage with the argument of the poem itself and wrestle with the emotional response elicted by the poetry to achieve this understanding. Once again, parallels in the structure of the poem seek to provide additional insight to readers who are engaged in such a struggle. Just as the similarities and differences that exist between Satan's and the Son's sacrifices produce relevant insights to Satan's character and motivations, so

too does a comparison of Adam's self-sacrifice with that of the Son produce increased understanding of Adam's sinful choice.

In his influential reading of the fall, A.J.A. Waldock conforms his understanding of the poem to fit with his emotional response to Adam's decision. According to Waldock:

> . . . in reading *Paradise Lost* we must not always expect to find that Milton's intention is perfectly matched by his performance -- that what he meant to do in any given case has always its exact counterpart in what he did. (25)

In Waldock's view, Milton intended to write an orthodox story explaining the fall, but what we find is that the poetry itself slips away from him at intervals. The result is a profoundly ambiguous poem that seeks to teach one thing, but makes its readers feel another. This approach leads Waldock to the following understanding of Adam's choice:

> The matter then may be summed up quite bluntly by saying that Adam falls through love -- not through sensuality, not through uxoriousness, not (above all) through gregariousness--but through love as human beings know it at its best, through true love, through the kind of love that Raphael has told Adam "is the scale/ By which to heav'nly Love thou maist ascend." (52)

Certainly the poetry itself lends credence to Waldock's assertion that Adam's love for Eve is "almost universally felt" (52) by the poem's readers. It would be difficult to mistake the depth and sincerity of Adam's affections as they are expressed by him before the fall. Milton withholds nothing from his poetry at this point. Desperation, longing and remembrances are combined to mediate Adam's anger and dismay to produce an exemplary love poem in the post-lapsarian style to which all of Milton's readers are accustomed:

> How can I live without thee, how forgo
> Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly join'd,
> To live again in these wild Woods forlorn?
> Should God create another Eve, and I
> Another Rib afford, yet loss of thee
> Would never from my heart; no, no, I feel
> The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,
> Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe. (IX.908-916)

If, however, the readers choose to see the limitations of Adam's decision, the evidence is available for them to do so. Stanley Fish arrives at the following conclusion:

> This is the terminal point of the reader's education, the trial to which he will be adequate only if he has succeeded in recovering the vision Adam now proceeds to shatter. The specific act he is asked to perform is literary, simply the determination of meaning; but by deciding, as he has had to decide before, exactly what the poem means, he decides between the philosophical and moral alternatives mirrored in the interpretative possibilities (Adam is right, Adam is wrong), and in this instance these possibilities embrace the full range of contraries whose differentiation has been his concern in the body of the poem -- true and false heroism, true love and love of the self, freedom and license, in sum, union with divinity and therefore with everything of value, or thraldom to the false values created by a distorting perspective. (*Surprised* 271-272)

The reading of *Paradise Lost* that has been assembled here largely agrees with Fish's assessment of both the Fall and of the poem. The weakness in Fish's argument is that he anticipates that all readers will or should approach the poem with the specific assumptions and objectives of the implied readers. Fish's comments do, however, provide an apt estimation of what the form and content of the poem are designed to achieve. For the text's implied readers -- those who are assumed to understand sanctification to take place through

psychomachy -- the battle to weigh and finally choose between the mutually exclusive alternatives that are identified by Fish would likely be understood as the means through which the poem's didactic purposes are achieved.

Finally, an orthodox reading of the poem, that is a reading that conforms to the narrator's directives and comments, is an act of will -- a choice. Waldock's response to the poem, and those of the legions of critics that have followed his thinking about the poem, are defensible reactions to the poem given the set of cultural and religious assumptions they bring to the work. If we are to appreciate what the form and content of the poem were most likely designed to do for their historical or implied readers, however, Waldock's analysis is inappropriate. Any reading which privileges the emotional impact of Adam's professions of love over the larger issues in debate throughout the poem would, in the terms of the implied reader who has chosen to understand the narrator's view, be the victim of satanic deception of the variety described by Downame. The apparent goodness of Adam's love for Eve disguises the corruption implied in Adam's forsaking the greater claims of divine love and obedience. The binary opposition of circumstance and motivations that is revealed in the comparison and contrast of Adam's love of Eve and the Son's love for humanity is instructive.

Immediately after Adam makes the decision to fall with Eve, he reflects on the consequences of his decision and the reasons that most pressed it:

> However, I with thee have fixt my Lot
> Certain to undergo like doom; if death

> Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;
> So forcible within my heart I feel
> The Bond of Nature draw me to my own
> My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
> Our State cannot be sever'd, we are one,
> One Flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself. (IX.952-959)

Adam's profession of love is moving. As Eve points out in her response to this speech, Adam gives "good proof" of their union of "One heart, one Soul in both" (997) when he resolves to withstand death rather than be separated from her. Although the weight of consequences and the divine injunction for obedience would likely dissuade "fit" readers from a complete indulgence in sympathy for Adam, the poetry at this critical juncture does serve to lend a credible motivation for Adam's fall. A more complete understanding of the sinfulness of Adam's decision is possible when his motivation for dying with Eve is contrasted with the Son's offer to die for mankind:

> Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life
> I offer, on mee let thine anger fall;
> Account mee man; I for his sake will leave
> They bosom, and this glory next to thee
> Freely put off, and for him lastly die
> Well pleas'd, on me let Death wreck all his rage. (236-241)

Where the Son is willing to put himself through the experience of death for the sake of mankind and to secure "Joy entire" for the Father and the heavenlies, Adam decides to die in order to prevent losing himself through the loss of Eve. Where the Son is entirely outward-looking, Adam is exclusively inward-looking. Adam considers nothing but that which pertains to his own personal

happiness. Love of God and, really, even love of Eve -- a selfless concern for her well-being -- does not enter into his decision.

In effect then, the literary problem faced by readers who choose to understand the "truth" of the Genesis story as it is retold by Milton is very similar to the problem faced by Adam in the moments before he utters his resolve to fall with Eve. Adam must choose between what he knows to be true, what his faith demands of him, and what seems to be most emotionally satisfying at the moment. Similarly, readers must choose between what they know to be true and that which the poem presents most sympathetically. The readers' decisions are also complicated by what is generally acknowledged to be an emotionally unappealing, although theologically sound, portrayal of God the Father.

Thus, the process of interpreting *Paradise Lost* according to theological conventions of the seventeenth century and the narrator's cues involves an act of will to become integrally involved with the complexities of the poem's arguments and to engage in a battle to discern right actions from right "seeming" actions. Readers struggle to compare and contrast the portrayal of action motivated by love provided by the Son in Book III with Adam's example of the same in Book IX. They are forced to employ their memories to hold both examples in their minds and they are required to debate the implications of both positions before finally judging and choosing between them. Milton structures his poem so that it may provoke its readers with the opportunity to discern the satanic disguise that makes Adam's decision appear an act of love. In doing so he provides his readers with the information with which they may

"arm" themselves in their own battles against Satan. He also creates the opportunity for these readers to undergo an experience of psychomachy within themselves as they choose between the two versions of love presented in the poem. The power of the poem, then, lies in its ability to lift the site of conflict from the printed page and into its readers' minds.

A disguised version of love is also presented and explored in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The picture of Christian running from his home with his fingers in his ears as his wife and "sweet Babes" (51) run crying after him is certainly one of the most controversial scenes of Bunyan's allegory. The scene reflects the biblical injunction recorded by Matthew in Chapter 10:37-39:

> He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
>
> And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me.
>
> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (KJV)

Although the scriptural passage is theologically satisfying to the curious, it is cold comfort to those disturbed by the portrayal of desertion and abandonment conveyed in the text. What is more, the event occurs on the second page of the story: there is no opportunity for the drama to be softened by perspective or doctrine. This event more than any other aspect of *The Pilgrim's Progress* suggests that Bunyan's allegory is an effort to preach to the converted. Whatever small incentive may be created by the curious harshness of this passage for the unbeliever to read beyond this event is undone by the substantial disincentive the event creates for them to read

sympathetically. This is not to say that Bunyan's allegory has not or could not bring about a change of faith in the unbeliever, but rather that, if such a change occurs, it is more correctly attributed to what Bunyan himself would understand as the invention of grace rather than to the attractiveness of the faith as it is portrayed in the allegory.

As was the case with *Paradise Lost*, a sympathetic, or theologically orthodox reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an act of will. All of the necessary textual elements are in place to ensure that this choice is well rewarded. However, these rewards are not given away without an effort: the theologically "correct" reading is disguised by unsympathetic actions while the incorrect reading is encouraged by the compassion evoked by the narrative for Christian's family. In order to read the text in the manner prescribed by its narrator, readers must be willing to privilege the orthodox interpretation and actively seek to support it by referencing relevant scriptural passages or doctrine that are either implied in the narrative itself or directly supplied by Bunyan in the marginal keys. The above-quoted example serves to demonstrate how this interpretive process might function. Upon reading that Christian flees from his wife and family with his fingers in his ears one of two potential responses are likely: readers will hear the biblical passage from Matthew 10:37-39 sound in their own minds and understand the implications of Christian's actions, or they will pause to reflect on the seeming heartlessness of his actions. Recall that the man in rags, who has not yet been identified as Christian, fears destruction of his entire city and yet the story says that he

flees alone. No mention is made of any attempt to save his wife and children. He simply focuses on himself:

> So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children perceiving it began to cry after him to return: but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, "Life, life, eternal life." So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain. (53)

Details like the fingers in the ears combined with the utter lack of attempt by Christian to save his wife and children from destruction might leave many scripturally-informed readers to question the moral implications of Christian's actions. The story seems purposely designed to provoke a questioning response. In fact, its didactic effect is dependent upon it.

When this questioning response is created, it in turn creates a literary, interpretative challenge: the meaning or significance of any event must be supplied by its readers. If readers are able to access the relevant scriptural passages that act as commentary on the event, these readers are encouraged to compare the emotional response provoked by the text with the harsh rational "explanation" supplied by the implied inter-textual referent. Once again the familiar binary debate so typical of psychomachy is provoked within these readers' minds. While reading Bunyan's text they are forced to engage their intellects to interpret the allegory and to choose between the emotional, compassionate response provoked by the text and the moral teaching implied within it. As this early example of the self-involved man in rags proves, the "right" choice is often not the most attractive or easy choice.

If, however, some readers are unable to access the relevant scriptural or doctrinal response to the event portrayed, the interpretative process is altered slightly. In this case a "correct" or narrator sanctioned reading of the passage requires an act of faith. Biblically illiterate or doctrinally ignorant readers are challenged to make a willing suspension of "unbelief" that will allow them to have faith in the text's ability to teach them, despite the unattractiveness of actions which are justified by the marginal notations. The marginal notes which immediately precede and follow Christian's departure clearly condone his actions:

> Christ and the way to him cannot be found without the Word. They that fly from the wrath to come, are a gazing-stock to the world. (53)

But no marginal note directly accompanies Christian's actions. Readers are left alone to ponder a solution to the dilemma. Essentially, then, Bunyan's implied readers are placed in the position of his narrative figure: just as Christian must make the unnatural choice of listening to the words of a stranger named Evangelist over the cries of his own family, so too must readers listen to the words of the marginal directives rather than to the response of their own "better selves"-- selves that respond compassionately to the narrative. Thus, through this internal deliberation, the interpretative process creates a psychomachy within its implied readers.

Those readers who submit to the harsh teachings offered at this point in the narrative find their decision is commended later in

which Bunyan chooses to address this complaint is also significant. Although Christian's departure occurs within the first page or so of the story, the explanation is incorporated into a much later segment of the allegory. Bunyan chooses to deliver his justification long after his readers have been forced to come to a decision about it themselves. He does not incorporate Christian's pleadings with his family directly into the narrative itself, but rather discloses the story indirectly through a two-sided debate at the House Beautiful in which Christian recalls from memory the events that preceded his departure. As Bunyan himself says in "The Author's Apologie for his Book", the allegory is instructive to the extent that its readers submit to its teaching:

> This book will make a traveller of thee,
> If by its counsel thou wilt ruled be;
> It will direct thee to the Holy Land,
> If thou wilt its directions understand:
> Yea, it will make the slothful active be,
> The blind also delightful things to see.

As the depiction of Christian's flight from his home demonstrates, this book is not designed to be a vindicatory portrayal of the Christian faith. The doctrine it represents is tough and uncompromising. A sympathetic reading, therefore, results from the conscientious labour of its readers. Once again a sense of psychomachy influences Bunyan's stylistic decisions: the inquisition of Christian by Charity is dialectical. It provides answers to the questions that are most likely to have arisen within the minds of the "fit" readers as they struggled to make sense of the story. More importantly, the text forces this struggle upon its readers. By deliberately obscuring the events that preceded Christian's

departure from the readers' view throughout the early portion of the story, the narrative provokes a psychomachic conflict within its readers as they attempt to align their response with that of the biblical referent and the narrative itself. The episode at House Beautiful allows these "fit" readers to grade their own responses to the "test" conducted early in the story by providing them with the opportunity to compare their responses to those offered by Christian himself.

The evidence of psychomachy that is apparent in the structure of Bunyan's narrative is also apparent in the thematic content of the allegory. As was the case with Adam's fall, Christian's flight from his family disguises the incorrect or sinful choice as love. Just as readers are tempted to understand Adam's fall as the result of his love for Eve, so too are they tempted to see Christian's flight as a sinful abandonment of his wife and children. The topic of Satan's tricks and disguises is popular throughout the psychomachy tracts, but William Gurnall makes specific reference to the issues addressed in Christian's departure from his family. Gurnall cautions sinners to be wary of the many tricks Satan will employ to keep them in submission:

> Sinner, be especially wary of carnal friends and relatives when you decide to follow Christ. Resolve that if your own children grab you by the ankles and try to hold you back from Him, you will drive them away. And if your father and mother throw themselves in front of you, you will step over their backs if you must, to get to Christ. (abr. 171)

This is not easy doctrine. Like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the tracts encourage their readers to understand that a lesser good, even

something as seemingly important as love for one's children and parents, can often disguise the greater good, which is love of God.

The third satanic wile or strategy that receives a good deal of attention in both psychomachy tracts and in the literature of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan is a temptation which is often referred to by the Latin name assigned to it by Thomas Aquinas, *delectatio morosa*. Lingering delight, or the progressive descent into sin is not, like temptation to sinful sleep or disguise, an active intervention by the devil against the Christian, but rather a mode of operation through which the devil manages to manipulate the Christian into a willing compliance with sin. Bunyan's *The Holy War* provides a sustained demonstration of the *delectatio morosa*. *The Holy War* is an explicit meditation on the concept of psychomachy, and it is therefore not surprising that the most popular of devil's wiles are enthusiastically represented in this allegorical epic. What is most interesting, however, is that *The Holy War*, unlike *The Pilgrim's Progress*, does not incorporate the literary devices that stimulate the actual experience of psychomachy within its readers.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan records the spiritual journey of a Christian "Everyman" and, throughout the narrative, he seeks to involve his readers in the spiritual process described in the text. The story focuses on its single protagonist. Although the narrator does occasionally slip into an omniscient voice, the observations of the dreamer are predominantly present-tense observations of a narrating protagonist. And while Christian and his companions interact with both demonic and angelic forces in the process of their journey, the narrative retains the perspective of its central human

character. Readers are encouraged to follow these human figures and to learn the basics of their Christian education with them. Thus, *The Pilgrim's Progess* is a sort of primer in spiritual didacticism. By contrast, *The Holy War* maintains an omniscient epic perspective that records the activities and motivations of the demonic forces as well as the allegorical abstractions that are represented as the human residents of Mansoul. The narrative does not follow the actions of any one character, but rather maintains a distant and largely objective vantage point which allows readers to observe both the human and spiritual component of Christian warfare. *The Holy War* is an advanced catechism for the mature Christian. It does not seek to duplicate the experience of psychomachy within the readers' minds because the human experience is only one dimension of the complex representation of spiritual battle that the epic seeks to explain. While *The Pilgrim's Progress* seeks to incite feelings of conflict within the readers' minds, *The Holy War* endeavors to identify and explain all of the various causes of such conflict, and to contextualize the experiences of one man's soul in the larger spiritual dimension.

The manner in which Bunyan develops the idea of psychomachy within *The Holy war*, and specifically the manner in which he explores the concept of the *delectatio morosa* is most evident when it is compared to Milton's treatment of these same ideas in *Paradise Lost*. Both Eve's seduction and Adam's fall are represented as a progressive descent into sin. In *Paradise Lost*, however, Milton's didactic purposes are somewhat more specific than are Bunyan's intentions for *The Holy War*. Milton seeks to bring his "fit" readers

to a fuller understanding of the Fall in order that he might succeed in his stated objective: of "to the height of this great argument" justifying "the ways of God to man". Accordingly, his fiction seeks to involve his readers in the actual experience of a spiritual fall. In *The Holy War* Bunyan provides his readers with an intellectual understanding of the multitude of temptations to sin that are so subtle that they often go undetected in the naive or ignorant Christian. Where Milton endeavors to explain a particular fall (which is, of course, the paradigm for all human falls), Bunyan attempts to explain both "the Fall" and the intricacies of the many subsequent falls that afflict Christian pilgrims. Bunyan's allegorical form expands the potential of his meaning. As E.M.W. Tillyard observes, the allegory of *The Holy War* more closely resembles the allegory of *The Faerie Queene* than it does *The Pilgrim's Progress*:

> . . . he was at liberty to resemble Spenser by using different methods; sometimes beginning in the personal sometimes in the allegorical way, and then either continuing such beginnings or thinning a person into an abstraction or condensing an abstraction into a person. We must in fact judge the allegory of the *Holy War* for what it is. (399)

In this expansion and contraction of allegorical figures lie the additional complexities and richness of *The Holy War's* depiction of psychomachy.

In both *The Holy War* and in *Paradise Lost* readers witness two separate but related falls. In *Paradise Lost* Eve's seduction begets Adam's fall; in *The Holy War* the original fall of the sinless Manscul creates the opportunity, indeed the necessity, for the subsequent falls experienced by the Christian corporation. In all four cases, the

falls depicted by Milton and Bunyan conform to the outline of sin presented by the patristic and tract writers. John Downame warns his readers about a progressive descent into sin:

> A second policie which Satan useth to circumvent us, is this; if he cannot at the first intice us to fall into outragious wickednes, he will seeke to draw us thereunto by degrees, beginning at the least, and so bringing us from that to a greater, till at last wee come to the highest step of wickednes: whereby it commeth to passe, that as those who walke to the top of an high hill, whose ascent ariseth by little and little, come to the top without wearines, before they wel perceived that they did ascend; so they who goe forward in the waies of wickednes by degrees, do without any controlment or checke of conscience climbe vp to the highest top thereof, whence Satan casteth them down headlong into the pit of destruction. (37)

As Downame explains, a progressive descent into sin rather than an abrupt and drastic alteration in the Christian's behavior is often a more expedient way of introducing a committed individual to sin. The *delectatio morosa* is another appropriate, and somewhat related, means of seducing the less pliable Christian since it also entails a process of seduction by degrees. In this case the seduction begins when the thought of sin is introduced without invitation to the innocent mind. Accordingly, the *delectatio morosa* the logical theological and narrative choice for the original fall which must be both sufficiently motivated to be believable and yet not so drastic that it calls into question the sufficiency of either Adam and Eve or of Mansoul to have withstood the temptation. As J.F. Forrest observes, a venerable theological tradition links the *delectatio morosa* to the original fall from Paradise. In his note of commentary on the fall in *The Holy War*, Forrest comments that Bunyan's

depiction of a progressive descent into sin, "they looked, they considered, they were taken" accords with St Augustine's "three steps -- suggestion, pleasure, consent", and with Milton's comment in the *Christian Doctrine* that sin is comprised of three stages: "seeing, desiring, enjoying".[7] The concept of a progressive descent is also apparent in Gregory's writings. In his commentary on Job, Gregory outlines a four part scheme: *suggestio* (incitement to sin), *delectatio* (the stirrings of pleasure in the flesh), *consensus* (the formal assent to sin), and *defenionis audacia* (the justification of sin brought on by pride).[8] As Augustine points out, the progressive descent is a measure of degrees of sin rather than a linear measurement of time. It is a process by which reason lingers over a sinful decision and is seduced by degrees as a result of the hesitation.

Eve's seduction by the serpent follows the general outline of *delectatio morosa* described by all of these writers. She does not fall immediately or without consideration. After extended debate with the serpent, Eve proves interested and attentive to his ideas. But it is not until she has further reasoned with herself that she consents to sin:

> He ended, and his words replete with guile
> Into her heart too easy entrance won:
> Fixt on the fruit she gaz'd, which to behold

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[7]See Forrest, *The Holy War* Copp Clark, 1967. p. 18 note 35f. As Forrest points out, the quotation from St. Augustine may be found in "Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount" in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* ed. Philip Schaff.

[8]See John P. Hermann's discussion of the Gregorian scheme. Gregory's description can be accessed directly from *Moralia,* in *Job.* Migne, J.P. *Patrologia Latina.* 75:661.

> Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
> Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
> With reason, to her seeming, and with Truth;
> Meanwhile the hour of Noon drew on, and wak'd
> An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell
> So savory of that Fruit, which with desire,
> Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
> Solicited her longing eye; yet first
> Pausing a while, thus to herself she mus'd. (733-744)

Now that the serpent has created the opportunity for sin with his compliments of Eve and his opportunistic assault upon her "eager appetite", Eve is left to muse over the seeming logic of the serpent's claims. At the moment in which she chooses to pause, her descent into sin begins. Rather than react in obedience to God's orders and dismiss the serpent's claims outright, she allows her reason to deliberate over the sinful proposals. This deliberation concludes some thirty lines later when the narrator announces: "She pluck'd, she eat" (781). Adam's fall also incorporates this same pattern of deliberation and consent. His decision to fall is preceded by a series of doubts about the likelihood that God will follow through on his promise of death. His reasonings, like Eve's, lead him to commit the final act of sin.

Throughout the course of Eve's temptation the readers of *Paradise Lost* are also tempted to slide into sin with her. The purpose of Milton's narrative is to both motivate and explain the actions of his protagonists while also upholding his justification of God's actions toward humanity. Throughout the process of the fall, readers are tempted to doubt the justness of God's actions and to applaud the actions of the protagonists. Although Adam's fall is the focus of this temptation, Eve's fall acts as the initial stage of

progressive offers of temptation in which the seed of doubt is first sown in the readers' minds. Just as Eve allows her reason to deliberate over the thought of the serpent's ideas within the text, so the clever dialectic of the debate itself, along with the questions of Eve's sufficiency to withstand this intellectual challenge, tempts readers to allow their reason to deliberate over the "justness" of her fall. Thus, the depiction of psychomachy is both demonstrated in the text and mirrored in the readers' experience.

The justness of Eve's temptation is entirely dependent upon her ability to withstand the temptation presented to her. Milton deliberately complicates the question of Eve's ability to withstand temptation by presenting the serpent's argument in the form of a reasoned debate. Eve has already been confirmed by the narrative to be the lesser intelligence, and her habit of deferring to her husband's instructions rather than listening directly to the conversations held between Adam and the angels makes it difficult to discern how strong her powers of reason actually are. In his depiction of Eve's fall, Milton allows Satan to prey upon the weakest attribute of Eve's character. In so doing, he creates the opportunity for doubt to arise in his readers' minds: has Eve sinned, or has she merely been duped by a superior intellect? These questions about the justness of Eve's temptation are compounded by the attractiveness of her characterization. Although she is by no means as complex or fully developed as Adam, Milton's Eve is not merely a theological abstraction. Readers are encouraged by the narrative to understand Adam's attraction to her, and perhaps feel an attraction to her themselves. If, however, these readers are seduced by the narrative

to question the justness of Eve's temptation, then the stage is set for a more serious reaction to Adam's "heroic" decision to defy God and fall with Eve.

Of course, in this case, as in all others discussed to this point, the questions raised by the narrative can also be answered by it should readers decide to do so. In this instance, the episode of Eve's dream proves to readers Eve's own sufficiency to withstand sin. When Satan pours evil thoughts into Eve's sleeping mind, she is troubled by his suggestions. Although Adam is also troubled by her experience, he absolves Eve of all guilt:

> Evil into the mind of God or Man
> May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
> No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope
> That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
> Waking thou never wilt consent to do. (V.117-121)

This episode fulfills a three-fold purpose: it provides Eve with a valuable warning as well as an experience in the dismissal of Satanic temptations; secondly it lends a significant degree of irony to Adam's fall when he fails to follow the instruction about *delectatio morosa* that he here gives to Eve; finally, the episode provides readers of *Paradise Lost* with positive proof of Eve's sinlessness and, more importantly, her sufficientcy to withstand the temptation in the garden had she chosen to do so.

As both Gurnall and Downame assert, evil must be embraced in order to constitute sin:

> But if he [Satan] cannot aggravate their sins, which in truth they have committed, and make of them such a huge mountaine as may serue to ouerwhelme them, hee addeth vntothem his owne sinnes, by casting into their minds outragious

> impietie, as it will make their hairs to stand on end when they so but think of them perswading them that they are their owne thoughts, and therefore horrible sinnes, whereas in truth they are but his suggestions, and therefre is wee doe repell and reiect them, they are not our sinnes but the sinnes of the tempter. (Downame 34)

And again:

> Christian, this is imperative for you to realize: When wicked or unclean thoughts first force their way into your mind, you have not yet sinned. This is the work of the devil! But if you so much as offer them a chair and begin polite conversation with them, you have become his accomplice. (Gurnall abr. 197)

When Eve is confronted with evil suggestions in her dream she rebukes them; when she is confronted with evil suggestions in the garden, however, she assents and thereby begins her descent into sin. Eve's dream proves that Eve had the capacity to resist temptation. All that was required was an act of will: a deliberate, and immediate rejection of the sinful suggestion would have thwarted the process of *delectatio morosa*. The same is true of the readers' experience of the fall. Although the actual scene of Eve's temptation creates unsettling doubts about her ability to withstand the temptation, readers are challenged to reject these doubts and to seek evidence from the poem to prove that her fall was not inevitable. Should readers fail to understand Eve's fall in this way, they will fail to conform their understanding of the poem with the implied and explicit direction of the narrator. Like Eve, they also will fall victim to *delectatio morosa* as they allow their reason to linger over a more sympathetic but erroneous reading of Milton's Adam.

In *The Holy War* the potential for a transference of experience from the text to its readers by way of the stylistics of the document itself are considerably reduced. The rich characterizations that tempt readers into a sympathetic experience of the fall in *Paradise Lost* are not apparent here. In their place a community of allegorical figures that, for the most part, do not demand individual scrutiny or reward a complex meditation of their characteristics. What these allegorical figures provide, however, is a profound examination of the subtleties of human sin. The experience of psychomachy that is provided to readers in *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress* is replaced in *The Holy War* by an intellectual revelation of doctrine in narrative form. *Delectatio morosa* plays a large role in Bunyan's extensive discussion of psychomachy: both of the "falls" described in *The Holy War* are the result of Mansoul's progressive acceptance of sin.

The first, great fall occurs within the space of two paragraphs in Bunyan's narrative. The Diabolonian forces consult and decide that deceit is the best means by which to attack mansoul. Having arrived at this decision, the forces position themselves outside of Mansoul. They begin by killing Captain Resistance outright and follow-up with a speech by Mr. Ill-Pause who, by tempting Mansoul to listen to his "good advice", succeeds in killing Lord Innocency. Upon the death of Lord Innocency, the townsfolk quickly succumb to the Diabolonian temptation:

> And first they did as Ill-pause had taught them: they looked, they considered, they were taken with the forbidden fruit: *they took thereof, and did eat.* (18-19)

As this brief synopsis indicates, the narrative is devoid of the complex character development that begets the theological doubts which create tension and provoke inner debate within readers of *Paradise Lost.* Despite Tillyard's earlier-quoted statement about the similarities between Bunyan's and Spenser's allegories, Mansoul, as it is depicted in its fall, bears little resemblance to any of *The Faerie Queene's* characters. The readers' involvement with this scene is strictly intellectual. The plot is predictable, the characterizations are unidimensional. The interest and didactic worth of the passage lies entirely in the contemplation of the theological doctrine implied in the brief narrative.

In the character of Mr. Ill-pause, for example, Bunyan portrays the *delectatio morosa.* His speech to the townsfolk is the deliberating reason in action: it causes the townsfolk to pause rather than reject the evil of his statements outright. During the course of their "ill-pause" the townsfolk inadvertently cause the death of Lord Innocency and their fall follows naturally from this loss of innocence. As this example illustrates, the process of interpreting *The Holy War* involves its readers in a process of creation whereby the narrative outlined in the text becomes the building blocks from which understanding is created. As Iser explains in *The Fictive and the Imaginary*, the literary text acts as an intermediate point between the fictive and the imaginary realms. The reading process gives scope and detail to the fictive construction of the text by summoning the powers of the readers' imaginations to make associations with information and experience outside of the text to clarify the fiction itself:

> We can now see two distinct processes, which are set in motion by the act of fictionalizing. Reproduced reality is made to point to a 'reality' beyond itself, while the imaginary is lured into form. In each case there is a crossing of boundaries: the determinacy of reality is exceeded at the same time that the diffuseness of the imaginary is controlled and called into form. Consequently, extratextual reality merges into the imaginary, and the imaginary merges into reality.
>
> The text, then, functions to bring into view the interplay among the fictive, the real, and the imaginary. (3)

Recognition of the *delectatio morosa* in this episode is dependent upon the readers' ability to summon extra-textual knowledge about the doctrine to illuminate the suggestions provoked by the name of "Ill-pause" and the consequences that follow from his speech. If this particular information is not available to some readers, their understanding of the fall may still be enriched by Bunyan's depiction of *delectatio morosa*. Personal experience or other more general theological theories about temptation may be brought to mind by the passage. Sufficient reflection on the nature of Ill-pause's activity and on Mansoul's reaction to him is likely to bring readers who choose to look for an orthodox explanation of the fall to a greater understanding of it.

The same can be said for the second fall recorded in *The Holy War*. After the town of Mansoul is set free from Diabolus by Emmanuel and his forces, there follows a period of peace and reconciliation between Mansoul and its Lord. This hiatus is soon followed by the advent of sin. Mr. Carnal Security enters among the townsfolk and wins their attention by flattery and commendations of the town's strength. His words, because they are not rebuked or ignored, soon lead to sin and Mansoul's separation from Emmanuel.

Once again Mansoul's descent into sin is progressive. The simple act of listening and accepting the words of Mr. Carnal Security leads to greater sins of inattention and neglect of Emmanuel until finally Emmanuel withdraws from the town altogether. This second fall and the events that follow from it provide a valuable elaboration on the *delectatio morosa* theme as they develop a complex and detailed picture of psychomachy. Mr. Carnal Security's success in perverting Mansoul demonstrates the vulnerability of the post-lapsarian mind to even the most apparently innocent thoughts. The marginal notation which follows soon after Mr. Carnal Security begins his attack on Mansoul makes the doctrinal point clear: "Tis not grace received, but grace improved, that preserves the soul from temporal dangers " (172). Continual vigilance and improvement is the only means by which a relationship with Emmanuel can be maintained.

In *The Holy War* readers gain specific information about the nature of sin -- it can result from the most seemingly innocent confidence in one's own destiny; it can result from any variety of combinations of inner states and dispositions if they are wrongly managed -- but the story avoids any specific characteristics in its allegorical figures that might make them particular rather than generic representations of human nature. Throughout the narrative a consistent distance is maintained between the narrator and the members of all camps involved in the battle for Mansoul. The narrative is almost journalistic in its stance. Although the narrator clearly sides with Emmanuel and although the marginal notations endeavor to guide readers to an orthodox reading of the allegory, the story itself simply records the events of the war. Readers are not

given the opportunity to know any one character in detail; rather they are encouraged to broaden their view and to understand the complex inter-relationships that exist among all characters.

The abbreviated style of Bunyan's allegory in *The Holy War* creates a very open-ended reading experience. The allegorical names and events are designed to touch off a series of associations within the minds of "fit" readers. Although the explanations of psychomachy that are offered in the text are guided by the fictive construction itself, their proper interpretation and appreciation are dependent upon the readers' constant involvement with the narrative: they must fill in details, make associations and generally struggle to understand the suggestions made in the text.

The primary difference that exists between *The Holy War* and the other texts discussed so far is this: the other fictions seek to teach their readers by provoking an emotional and intellectual experience of psychomachy within them; *The Holy War* seeks to teach its readers the fine points of psychomachy theology by distancing them from the actual experience through the use of abstractions, and by guiding readers through the process of achieving a rational understanding of the doctrine. Adam's and Eve's own experience of *delectatio morosa* is reflected in the stylistic elements of the text that seek to provoke a similar experience in unwary readers; by contrast, the episode with Mr. Ill-Pause is related without embellishment or stylistic obstacles. Readers' involvement with the passage is strictly intellectual. The differences that exist between the treatment of psychomachy in Milton's work and in *The Pilgrim's Progress* versus its treatment in *The Holy War* are largely a result of

differences in emphasis. The concept of psychomachy is implied in the fiction of both *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and it is incorporated into the reading experience of these works as a means of creating understanding of the fall and for the daily struggles of Christian existence. In *The Holy War*, the concept of psychomachy is not merely implied; it is the explicit thematic concern of the work. The fall of humanity from grace and the concerns of daily Christian life are merely occasions through which the doctrine of psychomachy is explained.

Thus *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* show the influence of psychomachy in both their thematic content and their stylistic construction. Throughout their works Milton and Bunyan give evidence of their concern for the didactic effect of their writing for their "fit" readers.[9] "Fit" or implied readers will seek to attain from these writings an enriched understanding of their faith; they will bring with them an understanding of psychomachy and they will regard the stylistic challenges incorporated in each of these texts as an invitation to test themselves and to refine their faith.

As we have observed, each fiction requires an act of will on the part of readers in order to be read sympathetically; the texts themselves incorporate adversities into the stories which ensure that readers will struggle to achieve an increased understanding of the Christian faith. In *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* these adversities teach by inciting an experience of psychomachy within their readers. In *The Holy War* this adversity takes the shape

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[9] The term "fit" reader is, of course, borrowed from Milton, but it has been used throughout this discussion to describe an implied reader.

of a sparse narrative that requires readers' participation in order to achieve its full didactic potential. The concept of sanctification through adversity is of course central to psychomachy. The Christian can only experience sanctification through the intervention of grace and the encounter of temptation and struggle. Temptation and struggle are therefore often welcomed and sought after as evidence of election. All of these texts are designed to ensure that they provide exactly this opportunity for sanctification within "fit" readers.

Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* also demonstrates the influence of psychomachy in both its thematic content and its structural and stylistic design. Like Milton's and Bunyan's texts, Spenser's allegory also incorporates significant moments of adversity in which readers are challenged to undergo an experience of inner struggle and debate that simulates the effects of psychomachy on the Christian soul. Unlike Milton's and Bunyan's texts, however, the reading experience of Spenser's allegory is not as tightly controlled by either marginal notations or a narrator's voice. The readers are guided to an orthodox representation of the Christian faith by large metaphoric and structural signposts, but otherwise they are left to confront the ambiguities and complexities of the poem in whatever manner they are able. Spenser's narrator does not deign to anticipate and direct all of the subtle lessons and truths that his allegory may provide to individual readers. Even in the "Letter to Raleigh" Spenser refrains from "expressing of any particular purposes or by-accidents therein occasioned" (737) by the poem's dark conceit.

If, as Milton argues in the *Areopagitica*, "the knowledge and survay of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human vertue" (516), it is not surprising to discover that all three authors make the revelation of the Devil's wiles and stratagems a priority for their didactic fictions. Incorporated in three of the four works is both the information required to discern the actions of the devil as he attempts to afflict the narrative characters, and the opportunity for readers to undergo and triumph over a similar experience of temptation in the process of reading. In *The Holy War*, the experience of psychomachy is set aside in order to provide readers with the opportunity to achieve a more complete understanding of psychomachy or holy war. The scant detail of Bunyan's fiction ensures a high level of interaction on the part of his readers. As they endeavor to make sense of the events of the story, readers participate in the construction of a more universal understanding of psychomachy that extends their knowledge of the doctrine beyond the human component of the experience. In this way all of these fictions surpass the didactic value of the tracts which seek to teach only through doctrine: "so much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule" (Spenser, "Letter to Raleigh", 737). As the following discussion will point out, the didactic worth of these narrative fictions does not end with its ability to provoke the experience of psychomachy within their readers. The fictions also seek to train their readers in the use of the Christian armour.

Chapter Four

Arming the Reader: Literature as Redemptive Act

To this point our discussion has focused on the ways in which the works of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan provoke an experience of internal conflict within their readers. The influence of psychomachy on these works, however, is not restricted to these literary moments of uncertainty when readers are encouraged to confront and choose between conflicting emotions or ideas. As the psychomachy tracts point out, a successful Christian soldier must be suited in the whole armour of God; accordingly, a substantial portion of these tracts is dedicated to describing and explaining the six pieces of spiritual armour that are mentioned by Paul in the *Ephesians* passage:

> Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
> Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
> And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
> Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God:
> Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (6:11-18)

In *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War*, Spenser, Milton and Bunyan provide their readers with the opportunity to "arm" themselves with the spiritual qualities required of a Christian soldier. Within the fictions, each writer

encodes definitions or examples of many of the qualities of the spiritual armour listed in *Ephesians*; meanwhile, the textual designs endeavor to provide readers with the opportunity to exercise these qualities while they interpret the fictions. In this way, the literature itself becomes a facilitator of its readers' redemption.

Readers who approach Milton's poetry with a desire to enrich their existing understanding of Christian doctrine are pressed both to cling to their "shield of faith", in trusting that Milton's poetic rewriting of Scripture will reflect orthodox theology, and to hope (which is represented as the "helmet of salvation" in the psychomachy tracts) that the new insights generated by the fiction will be both truthful and edifying. The result is a reading experience that trains readers both to develop a steadfast mind to protect their faith against doubt and to challenge the limitations of their understanding of Scripture in the hope that what lies beyond is also sanctified knowledge. Readers who approach Bunyan's texts with a similar attitude will also find the opportunity to exercise their spiritual armour. Throughout *The Pilgrim's Progress*, readers are invited to follow the process of dialectical reasoning that "girds" Christian's loins with truth. In doing so, they too will learn to distinguish truth from falsehood and thus ward off ignorance. In *The Holy War*, the full complement of armour is represented in the fiction itself. Through the process of interpreting this text -- as readers make the necessary associations between representations in the text and their own experience -- they are brought to a heightened awareness of spiritual activity in their own lives and are, therefore, laying the foundation for personal peace -- the

spiritual shoe, as Gurnall points out. In *The Faerie Queene*, the "breastplate of righteousness" gets particularly good wearing as readers struggle to achieve a holistic vision of the virtues represented in fragmented form throughout the fiction. This process of assemblage, of finding the mean between extremes, is similar to the action of assuming the breastplate of righteousness or holiness as it is described in many of the psychomachy tracts. To assume the breastplate of righteousness is to be filled with desire for holy perfection and with a confidence that allows its wearer to set about the heroic task of achieving this perfection. Readers who approach *The Faerie Queene* must be similarly inspired and determined to achieve a vision of holiness or wholeness from the complex and fragmentary portraits of virtue scattered throughout the text.

Throughout these readings it is crucial to bear in mind that the "implied" or "fit" reader that is projected to read these works in the manner described here is a theoretical construction. Their characteristics may be assembled from the texts themselves which encode certain assumptions and tailor aspects of their material to cater to the needs and requirements of their final consumers. These "readers" possess an existing background knowledge of Christian doctrine, and, most importantly, they come to these works with a desire to discover an orthodox portrayal of their faith within them and to enrich their own understanding by this discovery. Reading is, for these "readers", a serious process of learning and a pleasurable opportunity for worship. While this theoretical construct may describe many of the actual readers who have confronted these texts over the years, they are by no means representative of all or even

most actual readers. It is not the intention of this argument to present these "implied" or "fit" readers as superior either by virtue of the "correctness" of their readings or by some imagined majority of actual readers they may represent. Rather, by examining these works from the point of view of their "implied readers", this discussion will seek to establish the degree of influence which the doctrine of psychomachy exerts on this literature, and correspondingly, to clarify the theoretical assumptions about literature's ability to teach spiritual truth that are pronounced by Spenser, Milton and Bunyan.

Throughout *Paradise Lost* and most of his other poetry, Milton demonstrates a preoccupation with a somewhat paradoxical aspect of the Pauline injuction to spiritual warfare. The objective of fully armed Christian soldiers is not to vanquish their opponent (since the devil is incapable of being vanquished) but rather to stand against him. Thus, the warfare metaphor which implies vigorous action is, paradoxically, associated with a spiritual state of resistance which is often most fully accomplished by the Christian's stasis or inaction. Throughout his poetry Milton uses the verb "to stand" as a metaphor for holiness. He explores the concept of steadfast-mindedness[1] which allows the fully armed Christian to withstand the Satanic onslaught. This state of inactivity thus becomes a noble form of spiritual action.

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[1]For the term "steadfast-mindedness" and for my understanding of its implications for the narrative and theology of Milton's poetry, I am indebted to Professor J.F. Forrest who presented the concept in a graduate seminar on *Paradise Lost*.

While these issues are worked out in Milton's fictions, the design of the texts themselves provides readers with the opportunity to practice "arming" themselves in order that they too may "stand" against temptations. Like *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* depend upon a certain steadfastness of mind in their readers if an orthodox Christian understanding of faith is to be gained through reading these poems. While the intertextual links between Spenser's and Bunyan's fictions and the Bible are significant, Milton is the only author of the three who actually retells scriptural stories in his poetry. Thus, while reading these poems, readers must both arm themselves with a "shield of faith" in order to trust that the story created by Milton will remain true to the essential Christian doctrine, and with hope (which is most often interpreted in the psychomachy tracts as "the helmet of salvation") that the insights generated by his fiction will be both truthful and edifying.

The thematic connection between the verb "to stand" and an active demonstration of holiness in Milton's poetry is most apparent when isolated uses of the term are compared with one another. In his sonnet XIX, "When I consider", the validity of "standing" and "waiting" as legitimate forms of active service to God is revealed to prevent the persona from doubting Divine justice. The voice of a personified Patience intercedes to respond to the murmur that God might "exact day-labour, light denied":

> . . . "God doth not need
> Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
> Bear his mild yolk, they serve him best; his State
> Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed

And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait." (9-14)

The final line of the sonnet makes the point: the physically idle postures of standing and waiting constitute an active service that is superior to the "speeding" and "posting" demanded of others.[2] Active service to God is thus a state of mind -- a willingness to remain prepared and to resist the temptation to act inappropriately. The connection between "standing" and the military metaphor of psychomachy is also simply established: standing guard against the enemy is a posture typical of soldiers.[3] For soldiers, standing and waiting for further orders constitutes active service, and a decision to act without orders merits serious punitive action. The same is true for Milton's persona who must disregard all other than divine orders and remain in "active" service by standing and waiting.

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[2] In his notes to accompany lines 3-14 of the sonnet, Merritt Hughes makes the following comment about the superiority of the contemplative, physically inactive service over active service: "Perhaps, as H.F. Robins thinks -- *RES*, n.s. VII (1956), 360-366 -- Milton also had in mind St. Thomas's attribution of supreme contemplative insight to the higher angelic orders or Beatrice's revelation (*Par.*, XXVIII, 110) that those orders have an understanding of God which exceeds all the joy of his active service."

[3] This military definition of the verb "to stand" is listed as the third and fourth entry in the O.E.D. The third entry records the now obsolete use of the term to denote a military ambush or cover and among the examples cited is a quotation derived from Shakespeare's *Henry Vi.* III.i.3:"For through this Laund anon the Deere will come,/ And in this couert will we make our Stand". The fourth definition more closely resembles Milton's usage: "A holding one's ground against an opponent or enemy; a hault (of moving troops) to give battle or repel an attack; esp. in the phrase *to make a (or one's) stand.*" Among the examples quoted here is a citation from Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* II.vi.15 "On th'other side, th'assieged Castles ward /Their steadfast stonds did mightly maintain."

The issues first explored in this private consideration of Milton's own blindness and the implications this affliction held for his poetic and religious ambitions, is later reflected in his biblical poetry. In *Paradise Regained* the dramatic climax of the poem centres on the final temptation at the temple. Satan places Jesus on the highest pinnacle of the church spire and challenges him to stand:

> There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
> Will ask thee skill; I to thy father's house
> Have brought thee, and highest plac't, highest is best,
> Now show thy Progeny; if not to stand,
> Cast thyself down; safely if Son of God. (IV.551-555)

Throughout the poem the interaction between Satan and Jesus takes the form of a mystery where Satan seeks to establish Jesus's identity as the Son of God and to identify his capabilities. In this scene, the contest is brought to a decisive conclusion:

> Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood.
> But Satan smitten with amazement fell. (IV.561-562)

Throughout the poem Satan tempts Jesus to incorrect action and in all cases Jesus responds by inaction. By placing Jesus on the spire, Satan calculates that Jesus will be forced to act: gravity ensures that inaction is almost physically impossible by human means alone. Thus, whether he falls or stands, Jesus is forced to reveal the fact and nature of his title "Son of God". Once again, Jesus acts by refusing to act. He defeats his opponent by standing against him. Jesus's physical balance is symbolic of the moral balance which is, paradoxically, both utterly human and yet also divine. The theology of the temptation sequence demands that Jesus be tried on human power alone and in each case he betters his opponent through the use

of human will-power and skill. In this final temptation Jesus's "stand" is fully representative of righteous human power upheld by Divine intercession. In making the decision to resist temptation, and by refusing to take any action even when no alternative seems to exist, Jesus creates the opportunity for divine power to act. This divine intercession is, according to Gurnall and others, fully available to all Christian soldiers:

> God expects you to meet every trial, every temptation, leaning on His arm.
>
> As a father walking over a rough path offers his hand to his child, so God reaches forth His power for His saints' faith to cling to.
>
> . . . Believe you will be victorious on the day you are tested. Your father watches closely while you are in the valley fighting; your cries of distress bring him running. Jehoshaphat called for help when pressed by his enemies, and the Lord rescued him (2Chron.20). (Gurnall Abr. 42, 52)

Christians are required to fight against temptation, but victory is not dependent upon their strength alone. God intervenes to support his people and to assure their success against Satan.

Jesus's decision to stand against Satan in *Paradise Regained*, contrasts with Adam's decision to fall in *Paradise Lost*. As God the Father points out in Book Three, Adam was "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall " (99). Adam's descent into sin was, therefore, a choice rather than the inevitable consequence of a weak spiritual nature. As Adam's fall demonstrates, "standing" against sin is both a mental and a physical response to temptation. The fall was not only effected by Adam's action -- by eating the apple -- but also by the consent to sin which preceded this action. By doubting God's promise that violation of the interdiction would result in death,

Adam fails to demonstrate the steadfast mind that allows Jesus to triumph and regain paradise.

The association which Milton builds in these poems between "standing" and the state of holy resistance to sin is once again apparent in *Samson Agonistes*. In fact, an appreciation of the metaphoric significance of "standing" and of psychomachy is requisite to an understanding of Samson's final action. Throughout the course of the poem, Samson, like Jesus in *Paradise Regained*, is tempted to inappropriate action. Dalilah and Manoa each offer Samson the opportunity to escape if he will only condescend and plead with the necessary officials, but Samson resists these offers. In his encounter with Harapha, Samson himself attempts to provoke a fight, but this action is thwarted by Harapha's refusal to meet Samson's challenge. Throughout the course of the poem Samson remains firm in his belief that God will pardon him and that a means to both end his slavery and bring about the defeat of his enemy may present itself if he is patient:

> All these indignities, for such they are
> From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
> Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
> Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
> Whose ear is ever open; and his eye
> Gracious to re-admit the suppliant. (1168-1173)

> But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
> My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
> The worst that he can give, to me the best.
> Yet so it may fall out, because their end
> Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
> Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed. (1262-1267)

What Samson requires is a signal or sign that will apprise him of the opportunity he seeks. Unlike Jesus, Samson is a fallen man who has repeatedly acted without first seeking divine sanction for his activities. His marriage to Dalilah was such an instance, and the consequences led him to the pitiable state in which the reader encounters him at the beginning of Milton's drama. The encounter with Harapha may also be interpreted as yet additional evidence that Samson must struggle to control his desire to act. Finally, however, resolution of the drama's dilemma occurs when Samson receives and responds to the inner "motion" that signals the time for appropriate action.

When the officers first arrive to summon Samson to the Dagon feast, he is scornful and obstinately refuses to comply with their demands. Even the threats delivered by the messengers are insufficient to alter his resolve:

> Can they think me so broken, so debas'd
> With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
> Will condescend to such absurd commands?
> Although thir drudge, to be thir foll or jester,
> And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
> To show them feats, and play before thir god,
> The worst of all indignities, yet on me
> Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come. (1334-1342)

As this passage indicates, Samson is not even tempted to act in this instance. He imagines the Dagon festival to be an experience of scorn and shame and he reacts both emotionally and intellectually against the idea of attending. When he experiences "rousing motions" (1382) and suddenly changes his mind, therefore, his decision to act cannot be interpreted as a willful indulgence of his

own desire. In the speech that immediately precedes his experience of the "rousing motions", Samson deliberates on the consequences of his refusal to comply with the officer's orders and he refutes the Chorus's argument that actions "where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not" (1368):

> Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds;
> But who constrains me to the Temple of Dagon,
> Not dragging? the Philistian Lords command.
> Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
> I do it freely; venturing to displease
> God for the fear of Man, and Man prefer,
> Set God behind: which in his jealousy
> Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
> Yet that he may dispense with me or thee
> Present in Temples at Idolatrous Rites
> For some important cause, thou needst not doubt. (1368-1379)

This passage concludes a long section of debate between Samson and the Chorus that traces the alteration in Samson's mind from his refusal to comply with the officer's order to the final line of the above-quoted passage in which he acknowledges the possibility that God might choose to use him in manner that will make his participation glorious. This two-sided debate over the moral implications of Samson's options for action resemble the incidents of "stage psychomachy" observed by Alan Dessen in several of Shakespeare's dramas. Rather than have the character debate with himself, as is the case with Richard III at the conclusion of his play and with Lancelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare chooses to use two separate characters to represent what can easily be understood as the opposing sides of the same argument in

Cymbeline.[4] Here, in what he refers to as his "dramatic poem", Milton also chooses to externalize the two voices of Samson's internal conflict. The formulaic pattern of psychomachy is evident throughout this section as Samson's struggle to distinguish the "right" course of action concludes with the "rousing motions" that signal the work of God's grace within his heart and with Samson's own victory over evil impulses.[5] Samson's final decision to attend the festival ensures that he finally 'stands" against his enemies and in doing so he triumphs:

> . . . With head a while inclin'd,
> And eyes fast fixt he stood, as one who pray'd,
> Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd. (1636-1638)

Moments before destroying the temple and many, including himself, who are within it, Samson demonstrates the prayerful, steadfast state of both his heart and mind. The death and destruction that results from his final action is therefore understood by Manoa and the chorus as Divine retribution against the Philistines rather than a suicidal act of vengeance by Samson himself.

As was the case with *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regained* also present their readers with several tempting opportunities to doubt or at least dispute the portrayal of Divine justice offered by the events of these poems. Samson's death has been called sinful suicide by some who emphasize Samson's pronouncements that he desired to die; others have objected to the bloody destruction that Samson brings upon his enemies. Jesus's

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[4] For further discussion of Dessen's concept of "stage psychomachy" and its application in Cymbeline please refer back to the earlier discussion of these points in Chapter One.

[5] Recall that the connection between "motions" and "grace" is explained in Chapter Two.

renunciation of learning and his scathing indictment of the "miscellaneous rabble" have affronted many readers of *Paradise Regained* who reject Milton's severe portrait of the Son of God as unbalanced and unrepresentative of the man portrayed throughout scripture. In either case, elements of these poems challenge readers to struggle to achieve an orthodox interpretation of the biblical story that is represented by Milton in poetic form. As the previous chapter argued, these moments of tension and conflict between orthodoxy and the emotional effects of the poetry itself can be understood to provoke an experience of psychomachy within the readers.

These moments of conflict, however, are not the only means offered by the structure and content of these poems for understanding and learning the doctrine associated with psychomachy. The experience of reading Milton's poetry not only provides the opportunity for conflict, but it also encourages its readers to develop certain pieces of the spiritual and intellectual "armour" required to succeed in these battles. In rewriting biblical stories Milton elevates the status and importance of his poetry. His imaginative exploits can no longer be dismissed by his pious bible-reading contemporaries as unimportant or vain. His subject-matter also seriously circumscribes the possibilities for interpretation by forcing his readers to connect their understanding of the poem with their understanding of Scripture. Of course, in the very process of writing Milton invokes both his own and his readers' imaginations to this process of interpretation. The result is a simultaneous expansion and contraction of the interpretive possibilities for both

the poems and for their source texts. By expanding the interpretive possibilities, these poems call upon their readers to arm themselves with the helmet of salvation, or as it is most often understood, the hope of salvation which will allow them to open their minds to the possibilities and new insights suggested by the poem in the "hope" that these insights will lead readers to an improved understanding of Christian doctrine. By contracting or limiting these same interpretive possibilities, the narratives encourage their readers to proceed armed with the shield of faith that will allow them to trust that the story represented in the poem faithfully retells the doctrine of the Scriptural story. By having faith in the poet and his poems, Milton's readers are able to exercise the same steadfast-mindedness in interpreting the more perilous passages of his poems that Samson and Jesus exhibit within the poems themselves.

As Gurnall points out, the connection between the helmet of salvation and the virtue of hope is established in Scripture:

> The Apostle lends us a key to open our understanding of this piece of armour, the helmet of salvation: 'And for an helmet, the hope of salvation' (I Thess. 5:8). (159 vol 2 abr.)

Gurnall describes the hope of salvation in the following terms:

> Hope is a supernatural grace of God whereby the believer through Christ expects and waits for all those good things of the promise which he has not yet received, or not fully. (159 vol 2abr)

If one approaches Milton's poetry with the expectation of attaining spiritual insight or increased understanding of the Christian faith, the process of reading his imaginative constructions does resemble the process of "hoping" described by Gurnall. Since truth has its

origin in God and is offered to humanity through grace, the act of interpreting Milton's poems would necessarily be one in which readers expect and wait for the understanding that they have not yet received. This hope allows readers to approach the poem with an open mind. Because they are working with the specific hope that their reading will be profitable to their faith and understanding of doctrine, they are less troubled by the possibility of falling prey to the poetic seductions that appear at intervals, and they are therefore in the courageous and heroic frame of mind that allows them freely to investigate the interpretive possibilities in search of truths that may stretch their existing beliefs. Hope is, therefore, like a helmet that "makes the heart bold" (Gurnall, 163 vol 2 abr) by protecting readers from the text's false and deceptive impressions of sin, while readers challenge themselves to attain a deeper understanding of familiar stories:

> As the helmet defends the head, a principal part of the body, so this "hope of salvation" defends the soul, the principal part of man. The helmet protects the believer from dangerous or deadly impressions of sin or Satan. It defends the Christian because it is hard for temptations to snare a person who is satisfied with princely favor and who stands on the stairs of hope, expecting to be called at any time to the highest place a king can bestow. (Gurnall, 163, vol 2 abr.)

Throughout Milton's poetry his readers are pressed to move beyond the scant narrative outlines provided in Scripture to explore the broad landscape of his poetic canvas. In all of these poems, the realms of potential for new meaning are in large measure created out of the gaps that exist between the Scriptural and the Miltonic versions of the stories. These gaps signal the author's deliberate

departures into fiction; however, because these gaps occur within a reconstructed version of Scriptural text, the interpretation of these gaps is to some degree circumscribed by Scripture. Readers are encouraged both to recall that the story they are reading is to concur with its scriptural source or pretext, and to be aware that they are reading a fiction, which by virtue of its close relationship with the imagination must involve them in the process of creating meaning. Hope is required if readers are to free themselves to investigate the plurality of interpretive possibilities offered by these poetic rewritings of Scripture. However, faith is also necessary if these readers are to shield their fundamental beliefs from the doubts and misunderstandings that may be produced by textual obstacles that actively challenge interpretive ability.

If hope is the virtue that allows readers to wander freely in the maze of interpretive possibilities offered by the text, then faith is like a thread that pulls these readers through the maze to safety when they are confused or disoriented. When readers approach a nettling problem about Divine justice that cannot be explained without doing violence to their belief in this justice, they simply shield themselves from the offending possibilites and proceed in the faith that the issue will be reconciled or explained further on. The last chapter included a discussion of two narrative moments that provide an excellent example of how readerly faith is designed to operate within both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and in *Paradise Lost.* In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Graceless's departure from his home with his ears plugged and his wife and children crying behind him has the potential to create uncertainty and doubt about the morality of these

"Christian" actions. No real explanation is offered to alleviate readers' discomfort at this point; however, if readers proceed in faith that the godly call to which Graceless is responding is just, this faith is later rewarded by a full justification at the House Beautiful. In *Paradise Lost,* readers are encouraged to take a similar stand in faith while they experience the "open palm" of Satanic rhetoric in Book Two. If readers proceed in the faith that their sympathies for Satan will be contextualized by a more complete understanding of Divine justice, this faith is rewarded as the remainder of the poem unfolds.

The implications of this hopeful and faithful approach to literary interpretation are best demonstrated with specific example. In *Paradise Lost,* Milton sets out to expand the Genesis narrative and to fill in both the trivial and substantial details that are suggested by the original story. Milton begins by placing the Fall of humanity in the context of the angelic fall. He offers details about the creation story and, in doing so, he answers questions left unanswered by the biblical text. For example, he expands the Genesis story that explains how birds and beasts were named to include fish ("understand the same/ Of Fish within thir wat'ry residence" [VIII, 344-345]), and he offers a description of angelic sex ("Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st/ (and pure thou wert created) we enjoy/ In eminence" [622-624]). Most importantly, however, he motivates Adam's fall and thereby allows readers the opportunity to understand this central but largely unexplained biblical story of disobedience.

When they encounter each of these creative extensions, readers are given the opportunity to see a familiar story in new ways. According to Iser, this opportunity is the goal of all fiction whose "strategies" -- those aspects that "organize both the material of the text and the conditions under which that material is to be communicated" (*Acts* 86) -- serve one "ultimate function": to "defamiliarize the familiar" (*Acts* 87). With Milton's addition of details like the naming of fishes and the sex life of angels the reading experience is enriched with information that will serve to guide the imagination in its construction of an intellectual backgound for the central drama. In his inclusion of critical portions of text, such as the juxtaposition of the angelic and human fall and the addition of motivation to Adam and Eve's actions, he encourages his readers to re-configure a substantial portion of their existing knowledge and to open these existing stores of knowledge to new possibilities. The same portions of text that present a potential stumbling-block to readers who desire an orthodox understanding of Satan's fall also offer the opportunity for readers to appreciate the original grandeur of these angels, and perhaps to begin to understand the power of the Satanic seduction that succeeded with Eve. The same portions of text that lead critics like Waldock and Empson to applaud Adam's decision to fall, and which tempt many other readers to question God's justice, also significantly enrich the text's capacity to convey the effect of Adam's choice. Milton's depiction of the fall suggests a plethora of possibilties for understanding this central moment of Christian doctrine, and the relevance of these suggestions extends past the

poem itself to shape understanding of its source text. If readers understand that Milton's Adam fell out of disobedience, uxoriousness, or whatever else they may determine, they are free to associate these possibilities with the Genesis passage and to judge for themselves whether or not the conclusions are appropriate.

Thus, the process of reading this poem is one in which readers hope both to expand the horizons of the biblical text in order to achieve new insight, and to read with complete faith in the founding tenets of their doctrine in order that their imaginative explorations are circumscribed by these vital limitations. Not only do Milton's texts teach the process of sanctification by forcing their readers into an actual experience of the conflict, but they also provide the opportunity for readers to use their spiritual armour. The shield of faith and the helmet or hope of salvation are assumed, in order that readers may effect the maximum benefit from their experience of the fiction and yet also solidify their commitment to the central tenets of faith, especially when these tenets are challenged.

Although one might also argue that Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* provides its readers with the opportunity to use their shields of faith and helmets of salvation in the process of reading and understanding the work, the most impressive case for the influence of *Ephesians* imagery is that which demonstrates the manner in which readers are encouraged to "gird their loins" with the truth of doctrine and Scripture. Within the narrative itself, Bunyan demonstrates the effect of divine inspiration on the sanctified Christian by consciously differentiating the manner and extent of Christian's ability to participate in dialectical debate before and

after his experience at the sepulchre. Meanwhile, throughout the course of the text readers are required by Bunyan to follow the increasing number of dialectical debates in order to sustain their interest and understanding of the narrative. Bunyan's decision to emphasize dialectic in this didactic fiction may be explained by both his desire to distance his approach to doctrine from the preaching of heretics who were believed to persuade through trickery rather than through reason, and by his conscientious attempt to recreate the conditions of psychomachy through which he believed the process of sanctification to occur.

When readers are first presented with Christian they meet a man who is earnest in his desire for relief from spiritual torment but largely incapable of distinguishing right from wrong or of explaining the feelings that have newly formed within him. He is driven by the threat of destruction from his home, and he is directed to the wicket gate by the words of Evangelist. When challenged by Obstinate and Pliable to explain his single-minded determination to begin a journey, he can only quote promises and relate the advice of Evangelist:

> Christian: Come with me neighbour Pliable, there are such things to be had which I spoke of, and many more glories besides. If you believe not me, read here in this book; and for the truth of what is expressed therein, behold, all is confirmed by the blood of him that made it.
> Pliable: Well neighbour Obstinate (said Pliable) I begin to come to a point; I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him. But my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?
> Christian: I am directed by a man whose name is Evangelist, to speed me to a little Gate that is before us, where we shall receive instruction about the way. (55)

At this point in his spiritual journey, Christian has access to a borrowed wisdom through Scripture and through counsellors, but he has not yet assimilated this knowledge within himself. When he confronts hardship as he does at the Slough of Despond and at the steep hill (Mount Sinai), he is easily confounded. While Christian's resolve does not falter, he is entirely dependent upon the advice of others to remove himself from his hardship and to learn the reasons for his error:

> Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavored to struggle to that side of the slough that was still further from his house, and next to the Wicket Gate; the which he did, but could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back; but I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him, whose name was Help, and asked him what he did there.
> Christian: Sir, said Christian, I was bid to this way, by a man called Evangelist, who directed me also to yonder gate, that I might escape the wrath to come; and as I was going thither, I fell in here.
> Help: But why did you not look for the steps?
> Christian: Fear followed me so hard, that I fled the next way, and fell in.
> Help: Then, said he, Give me thy hand; so he gave him his hand, and he drew him out, and set him upon sound ground, and bid him go on his way. (57-58)

As this passage demonstrates, Christian is unable to judge his feelings and to make reasonable decisions when he encounters difficulty. Even when he is pulled out of the slough and set on his way, it does not occur to Christian to ask Help to explain why the slough exists and why it is not made less dangerous. This question is posed by the dreamer himself:

> Then I stepped to him that plucked him out, and said, 'Sir, wherefore, since over this place is the way from the City of

> Destruction, to yonder gate, is it, that this plat is not mended, that poor travellers might go thither with more security?' And he said unto me, 'This miry Slough is such a place as cannot be mended; it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run, and therefore is it called the Slough of Despond: for still as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place; and this is the reason of the badness of this ground. (58)

During this rare moment in which the story-teller actually interacts with subjects of his tale, useful information is provided to readers which is no longer relevant to Christian himself.

Until he is transformed at the sepulchre, Christian's success depends entirely upon his obedience to his counsellors. As the episode with Worldly-Wiseman indicates, he even lacks the ability to distinguish between good and false counsel. When Christian finds himself in peril beneath the hill, he begins "to blush for shame" (63) as Mr. Evangelist comes into sight. Although the text and marginal note comment that Mr. Evangelist "reasons afresh with Christian", the actual exchange resembles more of a didactic colloquy where the child-like Christian is made to see the error of his way by Evangelist's wise counsel:

> Evangelist: What doest thou here? said he; at which word Christian knew not what to answer: wherefore, at present he stood speechless before him. Then said Evangelist further, Art thou the man that I found crying, without the walls of the City of Destruction?
> Christian: Yes, dear sir, I am the man.
> Evangelist: Did not I direct thee the way to the little Wicket gate?
> Christian: Yes, dear sir, said Christian.
> Evangelist: How is it then that thou art so quickly turned aside, for thou art now out of the way?

> Christian: I met with a gentleman, so soon as I had got over the Slough of Despond, who persuaded me that I might in the village before me find a man that could take off my burden.
> Evangelist: What was he?
> Christian: He looked like a gentleman, and talked much to me, and got me at last to yeild; so I came hither: but when I beheld this Hill, and how it hangs over the way, I suddenly made a stand, lest it should fall on my head.

Note that while Evangelist asks Christian to describe the substance of the man he encountered -- "What was he?"-- Christian is able to respond only with a description of his outward appearance -- "He *looked* like a gentleman". Accordingly, Evangelist does not expect that Christian should have been able to distinguish the falseness of Worldly-Wiseman; his rebuke of Christian results from Christian's failure to "live by faith" and follow the counsel outlined for him without wavering. Evangelist then proceeds to explain the nature of Worldly-Wiseman to Christian who eagerly absorbs the information. Between Evangelist and the sepulchre Christian encounters two more people: Good Will at the Wicket gate and Interpreter at his home. Both of these encounters take the by now familiar form in which Christian is either tested with questions or taught by doctrine. He answers the questions plainly and with no other information than that which arises out of his immediate experiences. The doctrine presented to him at the House of the Interpreter is gratefully accepted. In all cases to this point, the flow of information has moved toward Christian. He is unable to distinguish good from evil and he is able to avoid peril only by faithful obedience to his instructions. When doctrine is presented to him he can neither comment nor elaborate upon it. He is unable to decode the puzzles and riddles that are shown to him in the Interpreter's House and he

therefore relies on the Interpreter to answer his much repeated question "What means this?" After both his encounters with Good Will and the Interpreter, Christian begins to "gird up his loins" (71, 81) in preparation for his journey. Armed with the truth that he has learned in each of these meetings, Christian is prepared to meet the next challenge that awaits him. This girdle is the first piece of armour that Christian acquires in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Later, when Christian arrives at House Beautiful and is given a tour of the armoury and of the weapons and defences in which he will be suited before he leaves the House, the narrative maintains its own consistency by recognizing that the girdle was already acquired by Christian before he arrived. Although Bunyan does not make the point explicit in the dialogue, he is careful to ensure that every other piece of armour listed in the *Ephesians* passage is described to Christian except the girdle:

> The next day they took him, and had him into the armoury, where they showed him all manner of furniture, which their Lord had provided for pilgrims, as sword, shield, helmet, breastplate, All-prayer, and shoes that would not wear out. (99)

At the moment that Christian arrives at the cross and his burden rolls off his back and into the sepulchre, he is not only clothed in new garments but also with new wisdom. To this point Christian has only relied on faith and on the directions provided to him by others. His source of wisdom was external rather than something possessed within him. Immediately following his justification at the Cross, however, he gains unprecedented self-possession. The one-sided information-gathering sessions that

Christian participated in before this point give way to a series of dialectical debates where Christian demonstrates his ability to distinguish evil and wrong-doing, and to respond to falsehood with a commanding presentation of doctrinal and biblical truth. Christian's discussion with Formalist and Hypocrisy demonstrates the changes that have occurred within him:

> Christian: Gentlemen, whence came you, and whither do you go?
> Formalist and Hypocrisy: We were born in the land of Vainglory, and are going for praise to Mount Sion.
> Christian: Why came you not in at the Gate which standeth at the beginning of the way? Know you not that it is written that, *He that cometh not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*
> Formalist and Hypocrisy: They said, that to go to the Gate for entrance, was by all their countrymen counted too far about; and that therefore their usual way was to make a short cut of it, and climb over the wall as they had done.
> Christian: But will it not be counted a trespass against the Lord of the City whither we are bound, thus to violate his revealed will?

In this situation the roles that had been established between Christian and the Evangelist, Good Will and the Interpreter are reversed as Christian assumes the function of the questioner and Formalist and Hypocrisy replace Christian in the role of the ignorant responder. At the moment of justification, when the process of sanctification begins, Christian is given personal access to the truth and wisdom that will allow him to distinguish good from evil and participate in dialectical debate. In effect, he is armed with the faculties that will allow him to experience psychomachy and which result in his ever-increasing ability to "gird" his mind with truth.

Once again, the metaphoric link that designates the girdle of truth as an armament for the mind is supplied by Scripture and elaborated by Gurnall:

> And what is meant by loins? Peter interprets Paul: 'Gird up the loins of your mind' (I Pet. 1:13) -- they are our spirit and mind which wear this girdle of truth. (21 vol.2 abr)

The definitive differentiation that is established between Christian's capacities for dialectical debate before justification and afterwards, associates the ability to reason and deliberate about spiritual truth with the state of sanctification itself. This spiritual girdle of truth -- the first piece of armour that Christian acquires -- serves to separate him from both those who would trick him into betraying his faith and those who would diminish his faith by threats and dangers. It is also interesting to note that in this work of fiction, where the author has so explicitly defended fiction's suitability to teach spiritual matter to his readership in his preface, the narrative itself makes such extensive use of the dialectic to portray the discovery of truth between its characters. It would seem that while pleasing stories and narrative tricks are sufficient to create readers' interest in pursuit of spiritual truth, the relation of the truth itself must be left to the respectable forms of reasoning in which the rhetoricians' persuasions and emotional appeals will not interfere. The tradition which links reasoned debate with truth extends back to classical thinkers. Occasionally reference to this tradition is made by the psychomachy writers of Bunyan's time:

> Tertullian described the preaching of heretics like this: 'They teach by persuading, and do not by teaching persuade.' That is,

> they court the emotions of their hearers without convincing their judgement. (Gurnall, 23 vol 2 abr)

This view is also echoed by intellectual luminaries of the seventeenth century such as Dryden who argues that " A man is to be cheated into Passion, but to be reason'd into Truth".[6] This belief in the reasonableness of truth is also complicated by Bunyan's implied belief that only the sanctified will be able to distinguish truth when it is presented to them. Although the unsanctified may be tricked by rhetoric to believe truth, only the elect and justified individual will be able to recognize and appreciate it when it is presented in a reasoned debate.

Consequently, throughout the course of reading *The Pilgrim's Progress,* readers are given the opportunity to seek evidence of their election by recognizing the truth revealed in the debates that occur between Christian and his fellow-travellers. Readers are also challenged to test their own knowledge and insight as they attempt to keep up with the discussions that go on between these characters. Although an understanding of the basic sequencing of the plot can be achieved by remembering the names of the places and characters that Christian meets along his way, a full appreciation of the significance of these meetings and of the doctrinal points that are illustrated through them is wholly dependent upon readers' abilities to comprehend the debates that occur at each meeting. In order to read the narrative profitably, then, readers must themselves engage

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[6] This quotation, taken from the "preface" to *Religio Laici*, in *The Works of John Dryden, Vol. II: Poems 1681-1684*, p. 109. It is also quoted by William Edinger in *Samuel Johnson and Poetic Style* p. 34.

in the process of "girding" themselves with spiritual truth. The doctrine expounded on the page must not only be read; it must also be understood in order for truth to penetrate the readers' understanding and for the narrative itself to make sense. This point is best demonstrated with the character of Ignorance who is so often the subject of debate among critics of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and the object of pity for readers who fail to comprehend the doctrinal "truth" that is represented through this character.

Twice during the course of the journey Christian and Hopeful meet Ignorance and have a conversation with him, and in each case Ignorance is proclaimed by them to be both in error and determined to remain in that error. Christian and Hopeful engage Ignorance in several doctrinal debates. On each occasion Ignorance is proven to be well equipped with answers that bespeak both a familiarity with these issues, and considerable effort in the development of reponses to them. After their first conversation, Christian concludes that Ignorance will be unaltered by their debate and so Christian and Hopeful decide to move ahead of Ignorance and allow him to consider privately the issues that have been raised:

> When Christian saw that the man was wise in his own conceit, he said to Hopeful, whisperingly, '*There is more hopes of a fool than of him.*' And said moreover, '*When he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.*' (175)

In their second conversation, the initial debate about spiritual matters is reopened and Christian and Ignorance continue for some time to dispute each other's views on key doctrinal issues. For

every challenge that Christian makes, Ignorance has a response that contains at least the appearance of truth:

> Then, directing his speech to Ignorance, he said, 'Come, how do you? How stands it between God and your soul now?
> Ignorance: I hope well, for I am always full of good motions, that come into my mind to comfort me as I walk.
> Christian: What good motions? Pray tell us.
> Ignorance: Why, I think of God and Heaven.
> Christian: So do many that are never like to come there: *The soul of the sluggard desires and hath nothing.*
> Ignorance: But I think of them, and leave all for them.
> Christian: That I doubt, for leaving of all is an hard matter, yea, a harder matter than many are aware of. But why or by what art thou persuaded that thou hast left all for God and Heaven?
> Ignorance: My heart tells me so.
> Christian: The wise man says, *He that trusts his own heart is a fool.*
> Ignorance: That is spoken of an evil heart, but mine is a good one.
> Christian: But how dost thou prove that?

As Ignorance's use of the term "motions" to describe his spiritual experience attests, he is well versed in the terminology of salvation. Throughout this early part of their debate readers may be forgiven for feeling that Christian's persistent challenges to Ignorance are a little harsh; as the debate continues, however, the error of Ignorance's ways becomes fully apparent. Ignorance is unaware that the process of sanctificaton includes the conviction of sin that often begets psychomachy. Because he does not understand the process of sanctification, Ignorance assumes that all fearful "motions" are of the devil and therefore he seeks "to stifle them" (203) without ever battling within himself to determine whether these convictions may be godly calls to repentance.

If, then, Ignorance is truly ignorant of his own errors, as Christian maintains that he is, how can Ignorance be condemned for this lack? This question has always plagued critics of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The answer lies in the narrative's cumulative definition of truth and the distinction it draws between humble and willful ignorance. Before he reaches the sepulchre Christian is also ignorant of doctrinal and biblical truths. He is gullible and without discernment; he falls prey to wrongful suggestions and, as a result, he is continually pressed to confront his own errors. As J.F. Forrest points out, however, Ignorance is not innocent in his errors. Ignorance is willfully blind to the truth and he obstinately refuses to tolerate correction:

> Ignorance is ultimately the personification of mulish unbelief, whose ignorance, being wilful, is irrevocable, hence unforgiveable. ("Ignorance" 19)

According to Gurnall, ignorance "shuts out Christ but leaves the door wide open for Satan" (172 vol. 1 abr). In his steadfast refusal to submit to the chastening "motions" of grace within him, Bunyan's character "Ignorance" remains unaware of his sinful state and of the need for repentance. Ignorance is not only ignorant but determined to remain so:

> Ignorance locks out the means of rescue. Friends and ministers stand outside and cannot save a burning man if he will not let them in. Neither threats nor promises are of any use if you are counseling a willfully ignorant man. He fears not the one and desires not the other. Write "Danger!" as large as you can, and paint it red; it will no more serve as a warning to a blind man than to a dumb ox. (Gurnall, 173 vol. 1 abr)

Gurnall's description fits Bunyan's character exactly. Ignorance slights "good counsel ten times over" (201) and in the closing paragraph of the narrative Ignorance meets his destiny as he is escorted to the way to Hell from the gates of Heaven. In terms of Bunyan's own readers, Ignorance is like the one who will not read, or who fails to struggle with the useful adversities placed within the text for his or her own edification.

While reading *The Pilgrim's Progress*, readers are challenged to keep up with the fine points of doctrine that separate Ignorance's self-reliant theology from Christian's doctrinally correct position that emphasizes salvation by grace through the sacrifice of Christ. Unlike the earlier episode in which Christian abandons his family and readers are left on their own to judge the appropriateness of this action, in these encounters with Ignorance and the many other dialectical debates that occur throughout the narrative, readers are given every opportunity to see the doctrine explained and reiterated as the debates proceed. As the previous chapter pointed out, at many instances throughout the text Bunyan's readers are forced through the ambiguity or silences within the text to make sense of the debated issues on their own, and they are often compelled to undergo a simulated experience of psychomachy as they do so. During the dialectical debates that occur throughout other parts of the narrative, however, readers are not required to confront ambiguity or silences. Rather, they are required to follow through and understand the fine points of doctrine as they are expressed in the story in order to appreciate fully how each debate shapes the events that follow it. The reading experience may perhaps be compared to

the experience of reading Plato's *Dialogues*: readers must follow the course of the argument in order for the overall discussion to make sense. The dialogues themselves will apprise readers of their areas of weakness as they discover the point at which they are no longer able to understand the debate. As Forrest observes, this effect of the reading experience is particularly apparent in the interpretations of Ignorance:

> Can Ignorance therefore be held to account? Those critics who think that the crime does not fit the punishment and that Bunyan has botched the ending ignore the author's manifest intentions. According to the postulates of the allegory, Ignorance is just as responsible for his condition as Christian is for his. No puppet or pariah he, for Bunyan has possessed him with an imaginative empathy comparable to that with which Milton has entered into Satan or Adam; he has understood him completely, and yet he has condemned him. To feel shock at the treatment of Ignorance, then, is only to experience the searching force of the allegorist's thaumaturgical art. It is to realize that while we are caught and held in the fabric of his wonderful dream we do not expound the characters so much as they interpret us, circumscribed by our common human frailties and pitiable mortal standards. And yet it is ultimately to recognize in Bunyan's great drama of predestination the tremendously awesome dignity of that responsible freedom which lies within ourselves and inevitably involves us all in Christian's cry of anguish: "What shall I do to be saved?" ("Ignorance" 21-22)

As was established in the previous chapter, the implied readers of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are, in Bunyan's terms, elect readers. The text is designed, at least in part, to accommodate the needs of a committed Christian readership which earnestly seeks edification through Bunyan's imaginative fiction. The long dialectical arguments are included to perform a specific office: they

expound the "truth" in the clearest, most painstaking manner in order to justify the events of the narrative and, more importantly, to provide Bunyan's readership with the opportunity both to see falsehood openly disputed and to "gird" themselves with the "truth" that is revealed in the process. For these readers, biblical and doctrinal "truth" carry the weight of law. The usefulness of Bunyan's fictions, therefore, can be compared to the use that was made of fictions by Roman law:

> Roman law was therefore, in many areas, adapted to the various requirements not through general norms (laws) but through the appropriate handling of individual cases (casuistry). This procedure suggests a method that carefully sought to model the new on the tried and trusted old; a favored means of establishing patterns was fiction: this extended legal definitions to related situations for which these definitions had not originally been created.[7]

Just as fictional situations were used to extend the usefulness of general laws to individual cases in the Roman judiciary, so too Bunyan's fictions serve as exempla for the means by which the applicability of doctrinal and biblical law may be extended to the variety of individual circumstances that faces his readers. Through his allegorizations, Bunyan gives both virtue and vice particular character and circumstance. He enlarges the theoretical details and breathes life into them so that the relationship between the theory and its manifestation in human action is made clear. In choosing to build this relationship between theory and human action by use of

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[7] Manfred Fuhrmann, "Die Fiktion im römischen Recht," in *Funktionen des Fikitiven*, page 413f. This selection appears as it is translated and quoted in Iser's *The Fictive and the Imaginary*. See p. 96.

allegory, however, Bunyan clearly signals to his readers the fictionality of his story. It is this consciousness of its own fictionality that allows *The Pilgrim's Progress* to involve its readership in the process of creating individual meanings for each reader:

> Fiction becomes fictitious through its as-if character, but this must always be indicated or known, for fictions are means of solving problems -- for the Romans to extend their laws, and for modern times to extend the human mind. (Iser, *Imaginary* 97)

By naming his characters in blatantly allegorical titles and ensuring that their actions accord with these titles, Bunyan dissolves the illusion of reality and, with it, the comfortable distance that generally accompanies the observation of the "other". The stories then become examinations of general principles that are not only applicable to the particular characters in the story, but to the readers as well. The challenge implied in reading these texts is thus expanded from a process of solving the problems of the protagonist's salvation, to the process of solving the problems of the individual reader's salvation. Bunyan's fictions serve to expand and clarify the particulars of doctrinal and biblical law as they challenge their readers to extend their minds and souls to see the model of that law in the individual circumstances of their own lives.

In effect, then, Bunyan associates his dialectic with the process of sanctification and he relies upon this dialectical style of debate to uncover "truth" within the narrative between the fictional characters and to offer this truth to readers as they encounter debates within the text. This use of the dialectic serves to

establish a link between Bunyan's fiction and more respectable, scientific means of revealing truth by way of hypothesis and discussion. In his discussion of the origins of fiction and of literary theory, Wesley Trimpi establishes an ancient connection between the philosophies and the sciences. He argues that the same imaginative thinking that allowed Euclid to postulate the existence of realms between the "intelligible and sensory worlds" (39), also served to legitimate literary fiction:

> For our purposes it is by means of a common analogy with these 'intermediate' constructs of geometry that we can see the relation of fictional *argumenta* to dialectical demonstration. That is, it will be seen that the analogies between the formal hypothesis of geometry and, on the one hand, the dramatic hypothesis and, on the other, the cognitive hypothesis elucidate the relation of literature to philosophy. (39)

Throughout both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War* Bunyan relies upon the fictional *argumenta* of his narrative to give proof of a spiritual rather than a mathematical truth through the use of the dialectic. In his reliance upon the dialectic, Bunyan signals a connection between the serious pursuit of spiritual truth that is made possible by his narrative and the long tradition of philosophical and scientific proofs which, although they were under dispute by Francis Bacon and other proponents of the empiricist movement, still held considerable sway among Bunyan's first readers. In *The Holy War* Bunyan's use of the dialectic is slightly less extensive than it is in *The Pilgrim's Progress*; however, the design of the narrative still functions to expand upon and clarify doctrinal and biblical truth.

The Holy War is the most complex and, arguably, the least engaging of Bunyan's fictions. In its effort to maintain epic scope and delineate the fine points of the human experience of psychomachy *The Holy War* often foregoes the more complex character developments apparent in *The Pilgrim's Progress* or (perhaps) *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman.* In their place, however, is a comprehensive account of human spiritual history. *The Holy War* offers an account of both paradise lost and paradise regained in one book. As one compares Bunyan's fictional account of spiritual warfare with the many prose tracts written on the same subject, it soon becomes apparent that most, if not all, of the topics addressed in these multi-volume tracts are also treated in Bunyan's narrative. Through his allegorical characters, Bunyan brings the psychomachy tracts to life. The tract's warnings about the wiles of the devil are clearly represented in the actions of Diabolus and his fallen angels; Christ's role as saviour and guardian of the human soul is exemplified and rendered more memorable through the actions of Emmanuel; finally, the experiences and effects of psychomachy on the human soul are anatomized and individually characterized by allegorical figures whose names label the attribute or function they are intended to represent. While Bunyan's narrative design serves to underscore the reality upon which his fiction is constructed, the very act of fictionalizing this reality ensures that the reader not only observes this reality but is actually drawn into the construction of a new, more personal version of it. As Iser's theory of fiction maintains, the final product of any reader's experience with a fictive text is a personal, individual understanding that

results as their imagination is both inspired and bound by the reality of this written text. To read *The Holy War* is, therefore, to read about one's personal experience of psychomachy. The text is designed to ensure that its readers not only concern themselves with an understanding of the events depicted on the page, but rather that they see themselves in the actions of Mansoul and learn to recognize the actions of Diabolus and Emmanuel within their own soul. Having done this, readers are armed with both an increased knowledge of the gospel, of themselves, and of the sincerity of their committment to their faith. All of this, according to the psychomachy tracts, provides them with the Christian's spiritual shoe: the preparation of the gospel of peace:

> Directions For Wearing The Spiritual Shoe:
> . . . Examine the sincerity of your obedience: . . . Soldiers can wear a complete suit of armour and live in a castle whose foundation is rock and whose walls are brass, yet if their hearts are not right with the prince, the slightest storm will throw open the gate and drive them from their place of duty. Sincerity is the only bolt that holds the gate secure.
>
> We have all seen how honest hearts with very little support from without have held the town, while no walls have been thick enough to defend against treachery and the betraying of trust. (Gurnall vol 2 379 abr)

This brief selection from Gurnall's tract demonstrates the extent to which metaphor and simile are used to inject didactic prose with a vibrancy and clarity that will help it to be both understood and remembered by its readers. These same literary principles are at work in *The Holy War* to a far greater extent; in this work the overt didacticism of the tract-style prose is incorporated into the fictional tale of Mansoul. Only the marginal notations retain the

prose tract's overt focus on the reader; however, this focus is implied throughout the allegory.

Throughout *The Holy War*, Bunyan employs three types of marginal notations. In most instances the notations provide clarification for either the plot or the allegory and serve to ensure that readers are not lost in the narrative details. The second variety of notation functions as a direct injunction to a readerly intelligence : "take heed mansoul" or "mark this" is often posted in the margin when the Diabolians' activities or strategies are discussed within the text. Finally, the notes also serve to juxtapose the fictional events with the scriptural authority from which the scene is constructed. In each case, these notations serve to draw readers into a conscious participation in the construction of meaning and relevance from the narrative. In the many instances in which the notes offer a clarification of plot or of the allegory, these notations remind readers to seek meaning beyond the surface narrative and to retain an overall perspective of the events as they unfold. Where the notes post warnings, they function as a direct connection between the author and his readership. In his address "To the Reader", which precedes the narrative, Bunyan makes his didactic intent explicit. The warnings in the marginal windows remind readers of this intent while they also emphasize that the events of the narrative have a relevance that extends beyond the fiction -- that the readers are themselves "mansouls".

The scriptural notations also educate readers in any of several possible ways. In many instances they serve to amplify the biblical echo that sounds in readers' minds as they encounter a familiar

event or turn of phrase. In others, they serve to prod readers unfamiliar with the scriptural passage quoted to return to the Bible and compare the fiction with the biblical fact. The following example, which is taken from a later selection in which Lucifer counsels his fellow Diabolonians to set a subtle trap for Mansoul, demonstrates the interpretative possibilities created by the marginal note:

	What also if you join with them Mr. Sweet World and Mr. Present-good, they are men
Look to it.	that are civil and cunning, but our true friends and helpers.
Rev. 3.17	Let these with as many more engage in this business for us, and let them grow full and rich, and this is the way to get ground of them. (216)

As is so often the case, the warning accompanies a portion of text in which the activities of the Diabolonians are described. The warning reminds readers to learn from the "inside" information which the narrative is providing about the intentions and stratagems of the devil. The scriptural notation that follows directly after the warning refers to the following selection of biblical text:

> Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

For readers who are well acquainted with Scripture, the memory of this passage may be provoked by the sight of the notation. For these readers the correspondence between this scripture and the Diabolonian plan to allow Mansoul to "grow full and rich" may be

reinforce the point. For readers who are unfamiliar with the scripture, the gloss might entice them to look up the passage and thereby increase their knowledge of it. In either case, when the scripture quoted in the gloss is compared with the relevant section of text, readers are exposed to the same idea from two points of view: the text depicts the situation as it is seen by the Diabolonians, and the biblical passage restates similar sentiments from a divine perspective.

In many respects, *The Holy War* is a vehicle for the communication of scripture. Just as the fictional judiciary cases of the Roman court expanded and interpreted the law to particular circumstances, Bunyan's fiction interprets and expands spiritual law. In the process of creating fiction, Bunyan assembles a variety of scattered references that relate to the subject of spiritual warfare and positions them in an allegorical framework that both increases their visibility and their memorability. In the process of interpreting this fiction, readers are encouraged to apply the knowledge discovered in the text to themselves. The very structure of the allegory is designed to incorporate readers. As the marginal notations periodically point out, its readers are the explicit subject of the narrative: Mansoul is both a fictitious town and precisely what its name implies -- a man's soul, namely the reader's. As readers travel through the events of the narrative, the marginal notes reinforce the fact that the particular man's soul under discussion is the reader's. The fictional mode, at least as it is understood by Iser, implies its readers' involvement in the assemblage of meaning from both the readers' imaginations and from

the interpretative framework developed by the author. In *The Holy War*, this process of assemblage necessarily demands a particular focus both on Scripture and on the readers' spiritual state. In effect, the process of reading begets the type of spiritual self-scrutiny for which Bunyan's contemporaries are renowned.

Works like *The Holy War* would have been expected to yield the same result as the meditation described by the Puritan divine, Richard Rogers:

> How doth it [meditation] make us acquainted with the manifold rebellions of our nature: with our blindnes, securitie, earthines, and infinit other loathsome filthinesses.[8]

As John Knott points out, Puritan writers demonstrate a concern with "rousing the affections" (66). Their attention to such "motions of the heart", as Knott describes them, reflects a pious concern for self-knowledge and a firm belief that such personal weaknesses are eradicated by a process of psychomachy which requires the believer to have a clear understanding both of the means to their salvation (grace as it is expressed in the gospel), and of the condition of their own soul. In effect, *The Holy War* is designed to act as a guided meditation for its readers. The narrative provides an epic sweep of the spiritual history of mankind. It maintains a distanced vantage-point from which it records not only events as they are seen through the eyes of the principal protagonist (as in *The Pilgrim's Progress*), but also the actions and motivations of both the heavenly and diabolical camps. Thoroughout, the narrative provides cues and

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[8]*Seven Treatises* (London, 1603), p. 233. As quoted by John Knott in *The Sword of the Spirit*.

reminders to its readers to assess the actions of the text against the motions in their own heart. For Bunyan's anticipated audience, or those first readers for whom we may imagine that he wrote *The Holy War*, the experience of reading the narrative might be compared to the process of self-examination required to write a spiritual autobiography. Although the Calvinistic angst that usually inspired the rigorous self-analysis typical of Renaissance spiritual autobiographies has long since waned, the components of Bunyan's textual design -- his use of marginal notations and of the narrator's objective, universal vantage-point -- suggest that many modern readers may also find themselves watching their "inner motions" more closely upon reading Bunyan's fiction. In effect, then, the process of reading *The Holy War* is a process of both biblical and personal discovery. By prompting its readers to understand both the need of and the means to their own salvation, the narrative seeks to arm its readers with the spiritual shoe -- the personal peace that comes from personal awareness and gospel knowledge.

The concept of discovery that is so central to the experience of reading *The Holy War* is also realized in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Throughout Spenser's narrative his characters are forever on a quest. They travel in seach of adventure, they seek to set wrongs right, and endeavor to prove and improve themselves through their various encounters. For readers of *The Faerie Queene*, the effort to find meaning in these encounters is also something of an adventure. Somewhere, between the extremes of temperament and action that are represented by the vast supporting cast of allegorical figures, lies a perfect "mean". This vision of perfection

is, however, seldom figured in the text; rather, readers are prompted to create this vision of perfection for themselves. Guided by the directions of the narrator and by the structural parallels that suggest comparison and contrast between characters and events, readers are challenged to assemble a vision of wholeness from the fictional fragments offered by the text. Through this process of assemblage they achieve not only a whole -- that is a single, unified -- meaning from the disparate events, but also an extended vision of holiness -- a vision of a single, unified Christian virtue. By doing so, readers are trained to arm themselves with the holiness and the righteousness that are associated with this fictional vision. The breastplate of righteousness or holiness is assumed, as these readers learn to protect their souls and consciences and to assume the courage to strive beyond themselves in their personal pursuit of virtue.

In his discussion of the breastplate of righteousness, Gurnall makes the following observations about the relationship between righteousness and holiness, and the effect that this piece of spiritual armour has upon the "soldiers" who wear it:

> . . . that work which Scripture calls holiness and righteousness is a sculpture which the Spirit engraves exclusively upon God's children. . . .
>
> No sooner does the spirit plant this principle of new life in man's heart than he rises up to wait on God and to serve Him with all his might. . . .
>
> The principle of holiness in a saint, then, makes him try to lift a duty which he can barely move; he can do little more than desire with all his heart to see it done. Paul sketches his own character from the sincerity of his will and efforts, not from the perfection of his works. (148 vol two abr)

In his depiction of Red Cross Knight at the House of Holiness, Spenser also makes the connection between righteousness and holiness explicit. After Red Cross Knight has been cured of his soul-sickness by the various figures who minister to him at the House of Holiness, it is proclaimed that "his mortall life he learned had to frame/ In holy righteousness, without rebuke or blame" (I.x.45). True to Gurnall's statement that the principle of holiness, once within the saint, will "make him try to lift a duty which he can barely move", Red Cross Knight proceeds from this experience of health, wholeness and holiness into battle with the dragon. Red Cross Knight is nearly vanquished several times by the beast but is never overcome. Instead of defeat, Red Cross Knight experiences a painful trial during which he, like the prophet whose lips are purified by hot coals in Isaiah 6, is scorched by the very armour that is designed to protect him. This final rite of holy purification, however, enables Red Cross Knight to succeed in his quest to free Una's parents and it makes possible his betrothal to Una.

The connection between the inviolate state of spiritual holiness and the concept of unity and completeness that is implied in the term "wholeness" presents itself in a variety of ways throughout *The Faerie Queene*, but it is most apparent in the various betrothals and marriages that occur throughout the poem. When Redcross Knight is betrothed to Una at the conclusion of Book One, the anticipated union of the one "truth" to the Christian knight is described with many references to Revelation -- the biblical account of the perfection union that will be achieved at the second

coming when Christ is finally wedded to his bride, the Church.[9] The betrothal of Una to Red Cross Knight is solemnized with "sacred rites and vowes" (I.xii.36) that look forward to the union and wholeness that will be achieved when "holy knots" will "knit" (37) the two lovers together for eternity. This concept of holiness as a wholeness achieved by married union is also apparent in the relationship between Britomart and Artegall who are developed throughout their encounters as perfect complements to, rather than mirror images of, one another. Spenser's most direct statement of the theme, however, is expressed in stanzas 43-47 of the 1590 edition of the poem in which Scudamour and Amoret achieve a perfect unity in their embrace and resemble the classical Hermaphrodite. Ovid's image of a male and female unified in one body provides Spenser with a visual image that depicts the spiritual wholeness implied in his vision of marriage.

The connection that is established by Spenser between holiness and wholeness is also supported by the etymological origins of the word "holy". The O.E.D. observes that while the pre-Christian definition of the term is uncertain, it is likely related to concepts of wholeness and health associated with the Old English term *hál*:

> [the word "holy"] is with some probability assumed to have been 'inviolate, inviolable, that must be preserved *whole* or intact. (345)

In Spenser's portrait of a fallen Christian world, however, wholeness and holiness represent a state of spiritual perfection

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[9]See notes in Hamilton's version of the text : Book One, Canto xii. stanzas 4,13,21,22,23,36,39.

that may only be suggested but not fully represented. As the apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 13, as humans we see "through a glass darkly" -- the whole, heavenly perfection that is promised throughout Scripture has been shattered by sin and may not be fully reassembled in this life. What remains, then, is for Christians to reassemble what pieces are presented to them -- to strain to catch the brief glimpses of otherworldly concord and union that present themselves in the course of daily existence. It is not surprising, then, that with the exception of Florimel and Marinel and of the symbolic weddings of the rivers, all of the betrothals that are presented throughout the course of the poem remain as promises of divine union rather than consummated marriages. Spenser avoids all of the complications involved in depicting a perfect state by freeing this depiction from the limitations of literary art and creating the opportunity for his readers to imagine the perfect union implied in the text.

A similar textual strategy is apparent throughout the remainder of Spenser's poem. While the poem's fictional characters strive to move beyond their own limitations to accomplish new feats, so readers of *The Faerie Queene* strive to reach beyond their own limitations and the limitations of literary art to move toward a holistic understanding of the shadowy virtues represented in the text. In each book of the poem, Spenser does not depict a perfect virtue in action, but rather a virtue in the process of development. Just as the entire plot of the poem moves toward the vision of perfection represented by Gloriana's court, so each book of the poem evolves toward a complex portrait of the virtue announced in its

title. The readers' task is to compare and contrast the depictions of the various virtues offered within the text and to assemble from these portraits (and through the use of their own imaginations) the perfected image that is alluded to throughout the passages. This textual strategy is apparent throughout the poem but it is particularly evident in Book Three.

In Book Three, the structure that Spenser has developed throughout the first two books is altered slightly. The single hero of the first two books gives way to a community of characters that collectively represent the virtue of chastity. Although Britomart is the focal character, and therefore the centre out of which the definition of chastity must be assembled, Britomart and Amoret also represent principal female aspects of the virtue while Artegal and Scudamore portray the principal male components of the same. As the plot unfolds throughout this book and into the ext, the characters experience a series of events that leads them into combat against the extremes to which unchaste individuals are tempted. In the first six cantos, the events centre on the libidinous excess that is exemplified by Malecasta and the evil that results from this particular form of unchaste behaviour. At one point in the last six cantos, the characters confront an equally pathetic distortion of chastity in the jealous impotence of Malbecco. Although the book is not structured in a simplistic binate form, there is an obvious series of contrasts that forces the various characters, particularly Britomart, to try themselves against several forms of unchaste behaviour.

The episode with Malecasta, for example, focuses on the metaphor of disarmament. Each of the male knights, including Red Cross, is seduced by Malecasta and her feminine wiles. Without their armour, these knights are incapable of resisting such false versions of love. As the narrator makes clear, Malecasta represents a fleshly distortion of the chaste ideal:

> Nought so of love this looser Dame did skill
> But as a coale to kindle fleshly flame,
> Guiving the bridle to her wanton will,
> And treading vnder foote her honest name:
> Such love is hate, and such desire is shame. (i.50.1-5)

In the story of Florimel, the connection between unchaste love and lascivious female wiles is balanced with a depiction of destructive masculine lust and of an innocent female victim. Both of these stories emphasize the fact that the libidinous excess of the aggressor leads to a vulnerability for the objects of their pursuits. For the males, this vulnerability is represented by the removal of their armour which, by this point in the story, is clearly established as a symbol that represents both their physical and spiritual strength. For female victims like Florimell and Amoret, the masculine aggression also results in a physical and spiritual vulnerability. Their desperate attempts to save themselves from physical harm and spiritual violation cause Amoret and Florimel to be separated from their true loves. This separation delays their marriage and hence thwarts their attempts to achieve "wholeness" and holiness through this union. In these episodes, the poem explores the destructive power of lust and the way in which these unbridled passions objectify, and therefore dehumanize, the person

to whom they are directed. The result is an intolerable distortion of power between the participants of the sexual union in which the physical aspects destroy the spiritual components of the union.

Although the lustful excess of Malecasta represents one extreme form of unchaste behavior, the ideal of chastitiy as is it experienced by Britomart, Amoret and Florimel, Scudamore and Marinell is far more complex than a simple abstension from all forms of love. The jealousy and impotence of Malbecco provide Britomart with yet another close look at unchaste love. Malbecco and his wife Hellenore represent a sexless, and therefore unnatural, form of married love. Once again this distortion of chastity results in the objectification of the "beloved". Hellenore is the possession of Malbecco. She is guarded in the same way as he guards his treasure, but with a loveless brand of tyranny that makes them both miserable:

> Yet warily he watcheth euery way,
> By which he feareth euill happen may:
> So th'euill thinkes by watching to preuent;
> Ne doth he suffer her, nor night, nor day,
> Out of his sight he selfe once to absent.
> So doth he punish her and eke himselfe torment. (x.3.4-7)

Propositioned by the unscrupulous Paridell, Hellenore is easily seduced, and her unchaste behaviour quickly reduces her to the level of a beast. Hellenore's character alone makes the point which is developed at far greater length throughout the book: true chastity is not accessible through extremes but rather in the perfect midpoint that rests between them. The characters who are best equipped to live out this perfect, golden mean, however, are continually thwarted in their attempts to act on their highest impulses.

Although Britomart and her companions observe many inappropriate forms of love and participate in creating the environment in which chaste love is possible, the poem's plot ensures that all, with the exception of Florimell and Marinell, are prevented from demonstrating this perfected chastity.

For readers of *The Faerie Queene*, the poem's projected but unfulfilled demonstrations of chaste love create a vacuum which they themselves are left to fill. Somewhere between the demonstrations of excessive lust and jealous impotence lies the perfect virtue to which the poet will only allude. The characteristics of Spenser's chaste virtue are deeply interwoven within his labyrinthine allegory. Although the "truth" and "meaning" of Spenser's allegory often appears inaccessible within the complexities of the narrative, as Angus Fletcher observes, there is a pattern and focus to the poem's events:

> . . . *The Faerie Queene* will generate a growing atmosphere of centeredness, as each picture of the picturesque scene is framed in the mind's eye, becoming a momentary symbol of the centre. (34)

Fletcher argues that there exists an essential tension between these moments of centredness -- the temples-- and the labyrinthine expanses of poetic wanderings. The "prophetic moments" of the poem are achieved, he argues "through the dialectic of temple and labyrinth" (45) when the poet-seer dispenses the "darkened wisdom" he receives through his prophetic sight (5). But although Fletcher is correct in positioning the poem's centres of meaning within this dialectic of pattern and chaos, the moments of prophetic sight are not so much the poet's as they are the readers'. The poet's art makes

the moments of epiphany and insight possible, and certainly he guides the readers' process of interpretation. Finally, however, the moments of insight originate with the readers. Just as the marriages -- the demonstrations of perfect union and wholeness -- are withheld from the characters' experience within the text, so too is the literary representation of a perfected virtue withheld by the poet from his readers. The process of creating meaning from the fragments of experience represented in the text is, therefore, a process that requires the readers' active participation.

In his analysis of *The Faerie Queene*, Paul Alpers compares Spenser's style of poetry with the comments which Sir Philip Sidney makes about the art in his *Defence of Poesie 1595*. Alpers concludes that Spenser creates "psychological pictures" and not actual "paintings with words" as several of the Romantic critics once asserted:

> The Apologie for Poetrie provides considerable support for our view of *The Faerie Queene* as a continual address to the reader rather than as a fictional world. (21)

In this address, Alpers contends that the nature of Spenser's allegory eschews casuistry and in its place offers a multi-faceted portrait of virtue:

> What is unusual is that Spenser is content to treat the elements of a complex moral case as distinct and self-contained moral perspectives, and feels no need to combine them into a single structure of judgement. (285)

While is it true that Spenser's allegory functions very differently from the authoritative and explicitly didactic form later used by Bunyan, to say that Spenser feels no need to pronounce judgement is

to miss the point of Sidney's argument and to disregard the actual experience of readers that is recorded in centuries of Spenserian criticism. Although the poem itself does not offer a "single structure of judgement", readers of the poem do. As criticism of the poem attests, readers naturally fall into judgement, reasoning and evaluation; Spenser is well aware of this fact and accordingly constructs the poem in a manner that will provoke such judgements while it also subverts simplistic analyses. In his insistence that the "meaning" is always contained in the surface of the poem and that the canto and not the book is the organizing unit of the poem, Alpers misunderstands the dialectical components that Fletcher brings to our attention. As the examples cited from Book Three attest, the vision of virtue that is outlined throughout this section of the poem is apparent only when readers compare and contrast the varying demonstrations of this virtue, or the abuse of it, that is presented thoroughout the book. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War*, each isolated episode can be understood as a consideration of a particular law which serves to expand the relevance of the law beyond generalities and to demonstrate its application to particular cases. As Alpers correctly concludes, *The Faerie Queene* does not operate in this manner; in fact, the opposite is true. Each particular episode offers a fragmentary and biased assessment of a given value. It is only through the assembly of these fragmented and biased views that readers can arrive at the understanding of a given law from which Bunyan's analyses begin. What Alpers fails to recognize is that this process of assembly -- of remembering various episodes and comparing and contrasting them both within

the book and within the entire poem -- is a necessary, natural and distinctly "readerly" process that is encouraged by the textual elements of the poem. The allegorical form itself begs interpretation, and the structural parallels between events and characters are often too obvious to overlook and too richly suggestive to ignore. Although these structural parallels often complicate rather than simplify the process of analysis, these complications attest to the interpretive strategy alluded to by Sidney and described fully by Iser.

Through the confrontation with various conflicting portraits of virtue and vice that appear throughout the poem, readers become active participants in the experience of the narrative. The fiction itself incites the process of analysis through which the readers' imagination inspires the reality figured in the text with a meaning that is the product of both the suggestions encoded within this text and of the readers' own experiences. The final result is similar to that which has been observed in both Milton's and Bunyan's fictions: the events and experiences of the fictional characters are translated by the process of reading into parallel or corresponding experiences for the readers. Just as Britomart is challenged both to demonstrate and develop her chaste virtue through the various adventures she encounters throughout the poem, so readers are challenged both to demonstrate and to develop their understanding of chastity by interpreting and understanding the various and often complex and contradictory examples of it offered throughout the text. This process of assembly does not neatly conclude at the end of a stanza, a canto or even of a book; rather, readers are enticed to "fashion" an

ever-expanding portrait of virtue and of true "gentle" conduct as they move through the poem.

As this process of assemblage occurs, readers create for themselves a wholistic understanding of the subjects touched by the poem. This understanding is necessarily the product of inspiration -- both the poet's and readers'. In theological terms, this inspiration can be explained as the grace that works through the human mind to produce divine understanding. In terms of psychomachy theory, this visitation of grace may be either the result of the readers' successful resolution of a binary debate, or it may be the quiet result of meditation on the issues raised in the poem. As the discussion of *The Faerie Queene* in both this chapter and the previous demonstrate, both the binate debate and quiet meditation are consciously provoked by the design of the poem itself. At many points in the poem, such as Red Cross's adventure at the Cave of Despair, the poetic design deliberately works to subvert its readers' expectations and provoke within them an experience of inner conflict or psychomachy. At other points, as in Book Three, the poem works more subtly to prod its readers to construct from the fragments of truth offered a whole and holy vision of virtue. In doing so, readers exercise the skills of armament that are discussed at length in the psychomachy tracts. In assembling their vision of holiness, these readers are most specifically arming themselves with righteousness. The skills which they employ in the acquisition of this symbolic "breastplate" may very well provide them with the courage and ambition that Gurnall associates with this particular piece of the Christian armour. If one is practiced in the art of

distinguishing truth from falsehood and of deriving a whole, spiritual understanding from the fragmentary glimpses of reality offered in a poem, it may be argued that one is better able to perform these same tasks in the often less exciting but no less complex circumstances of daily life.

This chapter has demonstrated that the textual designs of the works of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan encourage their readers to develop specific sets of skills that bear great resemblance to the skills described as spiritual armour in the various psychomachy tracts. This discussion has attempted to point out the similarities between the reading strategies encouraged by individual textual designs and the characteristics of specific pieces of the armour described in Ephesians; while the examples cited here are those that most readily suggest themselves, many alternative arguments could also be constructed. The connection that is here established between the shield of faith and helmet of salvation and Milton's poetry, for example, might also be argued to exist in Spenser's poem. The symbolic relationship that exists between *The Pilgrim's Progress's* dialectical revelation of truth and the spiritual girdle might also be argued to exist in a slightly altered form in *Paradise Lost*. The essential point is that, in all of these works, the author's didactic intentions are evident in the form and content of their literature. As Iser's theories of fiction and reader response suggest, these impressions upon the form and content of the literature do not determine or even predict the final understanding that will be achieved by each reader; however, they do imply certain characteristics about the specific type of reader that these authors

had in mind, and about how these authors anticipated that their readers might go about interpreting the literature. What this chapter proposes is that each of these three writers expected their readers to be aware of what is entailed in psychomachy. Further, it also argues that the reading experience of these works is designed to develop a specific set of intellectual and spiritual skills that are symbolically represented in the Christian armour listed in *Ephesians* and most fully described in the psychomachy tracts that seek to explicate this particular portion of Scripture.

This case for the influence of psychomachy on the literature of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan inevitably leads one to a consider the implications of this influence. The theological implications of psychomachy are radical -- the result is an profound alternation in the essence of an individual's spirit. To promote the experience of psychomachy is therefore to promote radical change both in the individual and, eventually, in society. The influences of psychomachy that are apparent in these works of literature are, therefore, not merely benign vestiges of a now largely obsolete mind-set; rather, they are concrete evidence of the constructive but also subversive power of literature and of this literature's ability to shape lives and change the course of history. Psychomachy is about power -- the personal power that is derived from conviction and that is sustained by knowledge and experience. In their conscious efforts to provoke the experience of psychomachy within their readers and to supply them with the knowledge required to succeed in these experiences, Spenser, Milton and Bunyan signal their intention to promote radical change. By transforming the literary

epic to record the battles within a single mind rather than the wars that transform worldly empires, these authors seek to arm their readers with divine insight and spiritual power. Rather than effecting political change through rhetorical persuasion and physical force, these authors set about changing their political scene by changing the individual constituents of the body politic. For Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, change is effected by altering society reader by reader, one soul at a time. The following chapter will chart the implications of psychomachy for our understanding of literature's ability to shape history. As the following discussion will demonstrate, literature's most significant effect on history, and particularly on political power, may be effected through the discourse of religion -- and specifically through the discourse of psychomachy.

Chapter Five

Revolutions From Within

> There have always been rebels and visionaries who persisted in believing that each person has a centre of power and wisdom within, whether it's called the soul or the authentic self, Atman or the spirit. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, just rediscover it.
>
> But old or new, this wisdom too often remains in our heads. Only experience can make it a visceral part of our daily lives by bridging the distance from head to heart. That's why a story teller is magic, but a teller of facts is not. There is a reason why parables are the oldest form of teaching: they work.
>
> . . . Perhaps we share stories in much the same spirit that explorers share maps, hoping to speed each other's journey, but knowing that the journey we make will be our own. (Gloria Steinem, *Revolution From Within* 34)

In her most recent book, Gloria Steinem charts the process of a different type of revolution. Although Steinem is renowned for her pivotal role in the advancement of women's issues through active social and political campaigns, in this particular work she turns her focus of attention inward. She advocates the development of self-esteem, and predicts radical consequences for both the individual and society, if this process of inner change takes place. In many respects, Steinem's shift in focus from external, political sources of change to this very individual and private type of revolution has a great deal in common with the literary career of John Milton. On the surface, their politics could hardly be more different -- many will marvel that their names can even be mentioned in the same paragraph without consequence. At the core of each writer's philosophy, however, is a significant common ground. These two revolutionary writers ultimately reach a shared awareness that

radical change -- that is change that alters the root or source of society -- begins not at the top of a system of government, nor in the upper levels of the most totalitarian of cultures, but in the individual. In Steinem's words, it is the change that occurs in "soul or the authentic self, Atman or the spirit" that exerts the most powerful force in societal change. Further, Steinem and Milton agree that stories -- fictions -- offer an effective means of initiating this sort of fundamental change.

Milton, like Steinem, reached this awareness after a considerable number of years spent trying to effect change from the top down. His prose tracts are written evidence of his committed attempts to bring about the "New Jerusalem" by transforming the religious and political government of England. After the crushing defeat of the revolutionary parliament and the restoration of monarchical government, Milton's idealism takes another form. The "left-handed" prose writer is transformed into a poet-priest; his grand audience of parliamentary and ecclesiastical luminaries is exchanged for the far more humble audience of "fit" readers, "though few". Both Milton's literary predecessor, Edmund Spenser, and his successor, John Bunyan, however, seem to have recognized the individual as the ultimate source of power at an earlier point in their careers. For Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, the "centre of power and wisdom within", as Steinem describes it, is understood in religious terms. God working within the soul is the source of the individual's power and wisdom, and God's work in the soul is effected through psychomachy.

Recently, proponents of the New Historicism have expended great energies to demonstrate the manner in which Spenser's work reveals his private ambitions and his complicity with the social powers of Elizabethan England. What these critics, ignore, however, is the truly radical nature of his poetry. The structure of *The Faerie Queene* reveals the narrative strategies that are hinted at in the "Letter to Raleigh" that introduces the poem. Spenser intends his poem to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline", and throughout the course of the work he demonstrates how this "fashioning" of the individual ultimately transforms society by changing all relationships from the most to the least intimate. Although the poem functions at one level as an encomium to Queen Elizabeth, at another it destabilizes this surface appearance by continually pointing toward a perfected image and thereby creating an implicit contrast between the imperfection that is, and the perfection that might be.

Just as the New Historicism has shaped recent criticism of Spenser's work, so the influence of the Marxist historian Christopher Hill has moulded views of Bunyan and of his literature. Ironically, in his claims that Bunyan's writings prove the writer's complicity with the political forces that bring civil unrest to seventeenth-century England, Hill errs in the same way as the New Historicists do in their assessment of Spenser. Hill fails to acknowledge the surprising degree to which Bunyan's writings pursue their objective of personal and societal reform while ignoring overt references to existing political structures. Certainly Bunyan is an advocate for change, but like Spenser and Milton before him, he realizes that

lasting change is not effected in the trenches of civil war, but on the battlefield within the individual soul. Both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War* provide evidence of Bunyan's philosophy for change: the revolution begins within. By changing one mind, a writer may change one reader, and through that reader, one family, one community, and, ultimately, one nation. Through this revolution, society and the political structures that sustain it are changed one soul, one reader at a time.

For Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, then, the theological concept of psychomachy itself offers the model upon which truly radical change must occur. Just as the alteration of the individual soul ultimately and inevitably brings about change in the whole person, so the alteration of a single person may beget alteration within society. In their adherence to the principles of psychomachy, and their efforts to impart these principles to their readers, Spenser, Milton and Bunyan signal their truly subversive ambitions; in the alterations in genre, in the broad structures and sweepings patterns that can be traced throughout these works, they construct a radical form of epic fiction in which readers are the true heroes.

The rhetorical and political strategies of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan are first evidenced in the alterations they make to the epic genre. All three authors follow the trend toward the christianization of the secular epic that is begun by Prudentius in the *Psychomachia*. As Machlin Smith argues, Prudentius's stance toward the Roman literary tradition is fundamentally ironic (5). Throughout the course of writing his sustained, personified allegory, Prudentius exposes the Roman epic as a "vehicle for sin and error"

until the epic genre itself becomes converted to the "scriptural genre of mystic vision" (Smith 109). In this process of "christianization", the epic form moves from the discussion of the worldly exploits of "a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race,"[1] toward a self-consciously binate, symbolic action in which the narrative action also refers overtly to the inner workings of the individual soul. In the *Psychomachia*, this symbolic action dominates the text. The repetitive, episodic nature of the poem ensures that the spiritual level of meaning retains its readers' primary interests; meanwhile, the transparent and relatively uncomplicated relationship between the signifier and the signified ensures that this "spiritual meaning" is readily discerned. In this way, the epic battles that occupy both Aeneas and Odysseus are transformed by Prudentius into a far more serious and profitable study of the internal, spiritual battles that redeem both the individual and Christian society.

The interiorization of the epic subject matter that begins with Prudentius is continued by Spenser, Milton and Bunyan. The simplistic pairings of signifier and signified that are apparent in the *Psychomachia*, however, are greatly complicated in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. The narrative evolves in Spenser's poem far beyond the servile function it performs in the *Psychomachia*; *The Faerie Queene* combines both a complex story-line and a political allegory with the spiritual allegory. The one-to-one

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[1] This definition of the literary epic is excerpted from *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams. See p. 50.

correspondences of the Prudentian allegory are replaced by a multiplicity of overt and suggested signifieds for each signifier. Where, for example, the character named "Chastity" wars against another character clearly labelled "Lust" in the *Psychomachia*, the same issues are expanded and treated with far greater complexity in Spenser's depiction of Britomart and her various adversaries. As A.C. Hamilton and Paul Alpers have observed, the surface narrative and the images contained within are the essential features of *The Faerie Queene*, and accordingly, the interpretative process is concentrated here at the primary, literal level of readers' experience with the poem[2]. In this way, Spenser's epic can be viewed as a complex hybrid of the strong plot lines of the classical epics and the spiritual, moral subtext of the Prudentian allegory.

In *Paradise Lost*, this evolution of the epic form is continued as Milton reverts to the non-allegorical form of the classical epic while maintaining an overtly Christian theme. As Wesley Callihan argues, Milton accomplishes a Christian redemption of the Virgilian epic by building on the teleological scheme that is apparent in Virgil's work, but by centring the vision of its fulfillment on Christ:

> Milton redeems this teleogical drive in his epic, given to him by Vergil, in a manner not open to Vergil's ultimately futile outlook. What Vergil's epic . . . could never have consistently supported -- true obedience, self-denial, and long-term ethical behaviour encouraged by a consideration of future generations -- Milton's could, because the One Man who is the center of the

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[2] Hamilton's argument is contained in *The Structure of Allegory* in *The Faerie Queene*; later, Paul Alpers makes a similar case for the primacy of the surface narrative in *The Poetry of The Faerie Queene*.

> vision is the same who in the Gospel removes the obstacles to obedience. (22)

Throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton modifies the structural components of the epic in order that they may accommodate his retelling of scripture. It is this choice of story rather than any particular deviations from the classical genre that sets Milton's poem apart as an example of Christian epic:

> Not sedulous by Nature to indite
> Wars, hitherto the only Argument
> Heroic deem'd, chief maistry to dissect
> With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights
> In Battles feign'd; the better fortitude
> Of patience and Heroic Martyrdom
> Unsung; or to describe Races and Games,
> Or tilting Furniture, emblazon'd Shields,
> Impreses quaint, Caparisons and Steeds;
> Bases and tinsel Trappings, gorgeous Knights
> At Joust and Tournament; then marshall'd Feast
> Serv'd up in Hall and Sewers, and Seneschals;
> The skill of Artifice or Office mean,
> Not that which justly gives Heroic name
> To Person or to Poem. Mee of these
> Nor skill'd nor studious, higher Argument
> Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
> that name, unless an age too late, or cold
> Climate, or years damp my intended wing
> Deprest; and much they may, if all be mine,
> Not Hers who brings it nightly to my ear. (P.L. IX.27-47)

The inspired scriptural story provides Milton with the opportunity to discuss the spiritual virtues of "the better fortitude". By constructing his poem out of biblical text, Milton eliminates the need for overt allegory. The cumbersome and obvious allegory which Prudentius requires in order to make the spiritual intent of his fiction apparent to his readers is no longer necessary in *Paradise Lost* where the scriptural intertext itself acts as signal to readers.

The interpretive process that translates the general lessons of Scripture into the personal lessons applicable to individual lives is also functioning in *Paradise Lost.* By eschewing allegory and relying on more literal interpretative strategies, Milton aligns his poetry with a dominant trend within the Protestant reform movement where literal approaches to Scripture obviate traditional allegorical readings. Proof that allegory was not uniformly abandoned by reformation Protestants, however, is available in Bunyan's epic, *The Holy War.*

In many respects *The Holy War* represents a literary regression to the Prudentian epic. The allegory is once again reduced from the multi-dimensional form it assumes in *The Faerie Queene* to a less complex and more obvious relationship between the signifiers and signifieds. The grand classical literary heritage that informs both *The Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost* is not apparent here, but in its place is a homely, domestic touch of realism. Much is attempted in Bunyan's epic. Where the *Psychomachia* represents the story of end times -- the battle for the soul and the final victory of Christ -- *The Holy War* retells both the story of the initial fall and the story of the subsequent battles that ensue from it. Where Prudentius restricts himself to the traditional, canonical list of virtues and vices, Bunyan looks within himself, and into the hearts of others around him, and creates his own lively cast of Diabolonians and Mansoulians.

Hence, the epics of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan differ from the *Psychomachia* in the increased complexity of their narratives, and they differ from the classical epics in their incorporation of

Christian themes in both the surface and subtexts. The most radical departure from Classical epic form, however, is initiated by Prudentius and continued by all three English writers. The classical epics chronicle wars between earthly nations and the exploits of heroic warriors; in each of the Christian epics, these battles are interiorized -- the conflicts between civilizations give way to spiritual battles waged in the individual hearts and souls of Christians by Godly and demonic forces. The classical epics celebrate the heroism of their protagonists (witness Virgil's introduction to *The Aeneid*: "Of arms and the man I sing") and of civilizations that are, or that have long past. Readers observe the magnificence of the events described before them from an omniscient, distanced perspective from which the characters and events appear separate and larger than life. Although there has been some discussion of symbolic or allegorical undertones in these works,[3] the consensus agrees with Richmond Lattimore's assessment of the *Odyssey*:

> There is plenty of morality in the *Odyssey*, but it is where it ought to be, inextricably implicit in the story itself. This is a brilliant series of adventures linked and fused by character. The tests (including the tests on Ithaka) are passed by the exercise of virtues, viz. (in ascending order) physical courage and strength; ingenuity where these might fail; restraint, patience tact, and self-control; and the *will* for home.
>
> These are the virtues not of Man, but of a particular valiant, resourceful, much enduring hero, established as such in the *Iliad*, and developed in a development of the *Nostoi*, the sequel to the *Iliad*. ("Introduction" 16)

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[3] An allegorical reading of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* is offered by G. deF. Lord in *Homeric Renaissance.*

As the previous chapters have argued, the virtues demonstrated in the Christian epics of Prudentius, Spenser, Milton and Bunyan are exactly the virtues of Man or, better yet, of humanity. The overt allegorizations of Prudentius, Spenser and Bunyan and the rich intertextual relationship that Milton establishes between *Paradise Lost* and the Bible ensure that readers of these latter-day epics do not merely observe the actions described before them, but actually participate in them. The classical epics describe to their readers the lessons of mythologized history: they are stable, and the heroic virtues represent an established ideal. By contrast, the Christian epics are dynamic. The heroic ideal is represented as potential, and both the reader and the protagonist share in the definition of this heroism. Of course, the differences between classical and Christian heroic ideals are most obvious in the heroes themselves. The mighty, self-sufficient warriors of classical epics bear little resemblance to the self-doubting, vulnerable Christian heroes who make the paradoxical claim that in their weakness is their strength. In the classical epics, the heroes themselves represent an attainable human ideal. In the Christian epics, however, this ideal is only apparent in Christ himself. All other Christian heroes may only strive toward this divine perfection. The classical epics express their cultural ethos and teach the established personal, political and ideological values of this culture; the Christian epics, however, seek to provoke change. This change begins in the individual spirit but, if it is successful, it must inevitably destabilize political forces and ideological powers that oppose this change.

Nowhere is this potential for destabilization and change more obvious than in *The Faerie Queene.* Despite recent claims by some New Historicists, who discover in Spenser's poetry a complicity with existing political power structures or at least an awareness of its own inability to change these powers, the very structure of *The Faerie Queene* contradicts these claims and boldly announces its subversive ability to incite revolutionary change. In his chapter entitled "To Fashion a Gentleman", Stephen Greenblatt accomplishes his analysis of the Spenserian epic, and particularly of Guyon's encounter at The Bower of Bliss, by positioning the destruction of the Bower within the broader cultural and political context of Elizabethan England's domineering colonial attitudes.[4] According to Greenblatt, *The Faerie Queene* embodies the same destructive idealism that is evident in other political policies of the day. Destruction is viewed within this cultural context as a means to self-definition and self-assertion. Guyon's destruction of the Bower can be read, therefore, as a reflection of a larger cultural practice that found it easier to destroy even the most attractive aspects of a colonized region than to run the risk of being seduced and, perhaps, ultimately assimilated into these "differences". Although Greenblatt aligns Guyon's destructive impulses with state values, and therefore implies a complicity with these values in Spenser's allegory, in so doing, Greenblatt ignores the subversive potential implied in Guyon's actions. It is important to recall that Guyon's actions at the Bower arise out of the development of selfhood and of the expression of personal values that is evidenced at the Cave of

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[4] See *Renaissance Self-Fashioning.*

Mammon. Within the confines of the narrative, the dominant political power is not represented by Guyon, but rather by Mammon and Acrasia who both exercise the privileges of land ownership and of absolute rule over their willing subjects. Guyon's abstinence at the Cave of Mammon is, therefore, an act of personal conscience and defiance of social pressures.

The same may be said of his destruction of the Bower. Guyon refuses to conform to the external pressures of a powerful ruler who seeks to eliminate the "differences" apparent in each of her colonial subjects by reducing them all to animals. Rather than submit to her power and conform to societal expectations, Guyon takes a personal stand against Acrasia's tyranny and in acting upon the personal values which he demonstrated earlier at the Cave of Mammon, he single-handedly begins a revolt that liberates both himself and all who will follow behind him. Guyon's success in destroying the Bower also marks a significant development in the epic form. As Robert Hoopes observes, Guyon, the Christian knight, surpasses his classical literary predecessors by eliminating a destructive force that the others were only able to escape:

> Even so, one may observe that Guyon, a Christian, does destroy Acrasia's garden, which is more than his pre-Christian predecessors, Odysseus and Aeneas, were able to do: they managed only their own getaways. (92)

Thus, far from demonstrating a poetic complicity with existing power structures, Guyon's destruction of the Bower signals the subversive power of personal change as individual values dominate and force new definitions for societal relations.

Where Greenblatt implies that Spenser reflects repressive political ideologies, Louis Montrose makes a more moderate argument for the impotence of Spenser's poetic power to overcome the inevitable conflicts that arise between the spiritual and political functions of poetry. Montrose concludes that the thematic effect of *The Shepheardes Calender* produces a disparity between the poet's "high calling" and the reality of the poet's limited effect upon his society:

> [the thematic effect of the poem] produces a disjunction between poetry's excellence as ornament and its inadequacy as persuasion, between the poet as maker and mover" (58)

Even if Montrose's observations may be true of *The Shepheardes Calender,* they are not true of *The Faerie Queene.* The very structure of Spenser's epic suggests the momentous revolutionary power that he expects his poem to have on both the individual and on society. Whatever frustrations an ambitious poet may encounter with the upper echelons of courtly, political power, these frustrations do not alter the poet's ability to provoke change by touching the individual reader's heart and soul.

Although a great deal of energy has been expended in the analysis of the allegorical structure, or the structure of individual books and even of images within these books, seldom is the most obvious structural pattern of the poem discussed at any length. The first two books discuss the personal virtues of holiness and temperance. From this point, the work expands to examine an ever broadening network of relationships and the bonds that secure these relationships. Upon close examination of the first two books, it may

be argued that the entire poem is founded upon holiness -- the central link between God and humanity -- and that each subsequent book builds upon this essential relationship.

The trail that leads to this conclusion about the poem was initially obscured by A.S.P. Woodhouse's influential discussion of nature and grace in the first two books of *The Faerie Queene*. Woodhouse argues that the Redcross Knight exemplifies the order of grace, and Guyon the order of nature:

> I suggest that some such relation between the order of nature and the order of grace is likewise present in Spenser's mind, and some such distinction between the motives and sanctions of virtue in the natural level and on the specifically religious, and that these are consistently applied in the part of *The Faerie Queene* which we possess; or, to be quite concrete, that Book I moves (as has been generally recognized) on a religious level, or (as I should prefer to describe it) with reference to the order of grace, and the remaining books (as has *not* been recognized) on the natural level only: that the Redcross Knight is indeed *microchristus*, but Guyon, and each of the other heroes of individual books, *microcosmus* alone. (28)

Although many insightful observations arise out of Woodhouse's schematic approach to the first two books of the poem, his insistence upon the irreconcilable differences between the Redcross Knight and Guyon obscure the more important connections between them. As A.C. Hamilton has observed, the structure of these first two books is parallel, and there are numerous clues throughout both books to suggest that, rather than representing mutually exclusive virtues, these books actually demonstrate the interdependence that exists between nature and grace ("Like Race" 332). In his response to Woodhouse's scheme, Robert Hoopes arrives at a similar conclusion:

> One thing to remember is that Book I was, in a sense, the book of conversion; in it the Redcross Knight was incorporated into the faith. The remaining books, I submit, were intended to record the progress of the soul after conversion with a different knight as the hero of each book, as Spenser tells us in the letter to Raleigh, 'for the more variety of the history.' At any rate, the significant thing about the meeting at the start of Book II, if I am right, is that before Guyon begins his quest he must recognize his dependence upon God. (87)

Hoopes justifies his conclusions by pointing to the many incongruities that arise out of Woodhouse's categorical assertions about the "natural" limitations of Guyon. Hoopes takes note of the blessing pronounced upon Guyon by the Palmer at the beginning of their adventure ("God guide thee, Guyon, well to end thy warke") and he does not dismiss the several instances in which Guyon is specifically related to grace.

In fact, Hoopes' observations accord with a larger pattern that is observable throughout the rest of the poem and may suggest a subtle Calvinist influence in the structuring of the work. As Hoopes observes, Book One does centre on the theme of conversion. The images and symbolism of spiritual warfare are employed to build on the suggestion that the Redcross Knight has received the "call" or vocation to holiness, but that he had not yet responded to that call until he presented himself at the Faerie Queene's court and was adorned in the Christian armour by Una:

> Presently that clownish person upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the Lady much gainsaying, yet he earnestly impo.tuned his desire. In the end the Lady told him that unlesse that armour which she brought, would serue him (that is the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul v. Ephes.) that he should not

> succeed in that enterprise, which being forthwith put vpon him with dewe furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the Lady. And eftesoones taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that straunge Courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first booke, vz. ("Letter to Raleigh")

Although the Knight's armour has been well used -- "old dints of deepe wounds did remaine" in his "mightie armes" (I.i.i.3-2) -- the knight had not yet been in battle -- "armes till that time did he neuer wield" (I.i.i.5). The events that follow this auspicious beginning build toward the betrothal of Una, the one Truth, and the Redcross Knight in Canto xii. The adventures in between develop both the spiritual and comedic implications of the Knight's various exploits. As both Woodhouse and Hoopes observe, the Redcross Knight "stumbles along his way, is safe only in the presence of Truth, and has to be rescued again and again from his own spectacular failures" (Hoopes 85). The spiritual significance of his journey culminates at the House of Holiness where he is prepared for the final battle and ultimate reward for his labours. The comedy results from both the successful resolution of his quest and from the simple comic effect produced as the Knight, who has so recently discovered the One Truth in Una, spends a substantial portion of the poem chasing Duessa, the embodiment of duplicity -- or of two false "truths".[5]

In many respects, Spenser's Redcross Knight resembles Bunyan's Christian before his transformation at the sepulchre. Both

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[5] I am indebted to Dr. R. Bowers for my appreciation of Spenser's wit. It was Dr. Bowers who first pointed out the subtle comedy implied in Redcross Knight's actions when the Knight forsakes Una for Duessa.

characters are responding to a call, and both are naive and dependent. Without Una, the Redcross Knight is vulnerable. He is easily deceived by false appearances (Duessa and the false Una are, of course, the most obvious examples) and on several occasions his errors can be corrected only with the help of others (usually Arthur). The same is also true of Christian. Before he reaches the sepulchre he too is easily deceived by false appearances and often requires the help of Evangelist to set him back on the right path once he has wandered into error. To follow this comparison to its logical conclusion, one may trace the similarities between Christian's edification at the House of the Interpreter to the Redcross Knight's rehabilitation and schooling at The House of Holiness. Finally, the brief moment at the Sepulchre when Christian's burden rolls away and his rags are exchanged for new raiments may be compared to the celebrations that mark the Redcross Knight's victory over the dragon and his betrothal to Una.

What is most intriguing about this comparison between the Redcross Knight's exploits and Christian's journey before the sepulchre is that the broader comparison between the two works in which they figure may be continued with Guyon's adventures and Christian's progress after the cross. Both Robert Hoopes and Maurice Evans provide convincing arguments to suggest that Guyon does not represent the order of nature, as Woodhouse suggests, but rather a combination of nature and grace. Evans suggests that the parallel structure that exists between Books One and Two may be clarified by the fact that both sets of adventures combine to provide a complete view of the warfaring Christian:

> Why did Spenser make his two heroes go through such precisely parallel sequences of adventures? An answer perhaps lies in the fact that the two books are dealing with complementary aspects of the same theological scheme. Salvation demands both faith in the grace and mercy of God as manifested through the Redeemer, and reason by which to choose and follow that faith through an act of free will. Both halves of this circle of love are necessary; heaven only stoops to us provided that we struggle upwards to the extent of our limited powers. . . Both books embody the whole process, but the emphasis in Book One is on faith, and in Book Two, on reason. Book One is the book of rescues; Book Two that of the human struggle. (186)

As the discussion of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in chapter four pointed out, the same combination of grace and reason that Evans and Hoopes see in Guyon is also apparent in Christian after his experience at the cross. Just as the use of reason is one of the principal factors that distinguish Redcross Knight from Guyon, so Christian's ability to reason after his experience at the Cross is the most obvious evidence of his progression from the state of vocation to that of sanctification. Thus, as Evans points out, together Redcross Knight and Guyon tell the story of Christian warfare: Book One describes what happens when God calls and bestows his grace on a soul, while Book Two describes what happens when that soul acts in accordance with that gift of grace.

The story of Christian's journey toward Glorification ends when he reaches the heavenly city. The story of Redcross Knight and of Guyon, however, does not restrict itself to this exploration of the personal virtues required for salvation of an individual soul. From the conclusion of Book Two, *The Faerie Queene* blossoms into a complex exploration of the human relationships required for the

governance and salvation of a Christian community. The interdependent thematic link that Evans observes between Book One and Book Two continues throughout the remainder of Spenser's epic fragment. Having established the basis for individual salvation as holiness and temperance, Spenser then moves in an orderly and systematic manner to describe the spiritual requirements for the primary, fundamental relationship that links one human soul to another: chastity, or the intimate, sexual union between male and female. In Book Four this ever-broadening circle of human relations is expanded again to consider friendship, the next closest link that ties two people together. In Book Five, the circle expands once more to consider the basis upon which all societal relationships that are not founded upon the sexual union or friendship must be based: law and justice. Just as holiness is the foundation upon which all other natural virtues must be built, so justice is the cornerstone that allows more sophisticated systems of social relationships to function. Courtesy, the subject of Book Six, is the logical next step since it represents the virtues that make these sophisticated systems of civility possible.

Viewed in this manner, the structure of *The Faerie Queene* demonstrates a profoundly radical plan for the transformation of society. Any disjunction that Montrose may observe in *The Shepheardes Calender* between poetry's ornamental and persuasive functions is completely lacking here. Spenser designs his poem to move his readers by transferring the holy war waged in words from the page into his readers' minds. Evidently, he provokes this change with the full confidence that the same transformations in societal

relationships that are demonstrated in the fiction will also be demonstrated in his readers' imaginations and, ultimately, in their lives. If one soul may be changed by reading, then so also may one relationship, one friendship, one society be changed. The poem's structure, then, betrays the ultimate subversive plot: provoke change from within. It also betrays its author's buoyant confidence in his own ability to multiply his own limited personal power by transferring this power through one of the oldest and most effective evangelical techniques: touch one soul, pass it on.

Whatever Spenser's personal and career ambitions might have been, *The Faerie Queene* provides tangible proof that whatever hopes the poet may have had for societal change were not pinned on his governmental offices, but on his poetry. Whenever one is tempted to ascribe great significance to the fact that Spenser's epic is an overt political gesture in praise of the Elizabethan Faerie Queene and the perceived perfection of her administration, it is tantalizing to bear in mind the verbal link that exists between Spenser's image of perfection, the Faerie Queene Gloriana, and Calvin's name for the ultimate spiritual state: glorification. Without ascribing too much significance to the rather ambiguous influence Calvinism seems to have had upon Spenser, it appears reasonable to argue that this verbal link may be more than coincidental. And if this is so, the implications are significant. According to Calvin, the state of glorification is attained by sustained, edifying experience of holy war within the saint, and may be realized only through God's grace when the saint reaches heaven. If the praise accorded to Gloriana is also intended for Elizabeth, it is not for the imperfect, human ruler

that is, but for the perfected, glorified ruler who might be. The poem, therefore, is not a celebration of *status quo*, but rather a rallying cry for the holy war that will "glorify" both Elizabeth and England.

The same political strategy that is apparent in *The Faerie Queene* is also apparent in Milton's poetry. Although Milton begins his career by trying to effect change from within the political structures of his day, he ends by focusing his efforts on the individual and by trying to effect change from within a single soul. In this way Milton succeeds, as Montrose observes, in transforming the "failure of political activism into the triumph of poetic power and personal conscience" (63). Evidence of Milton's belief in the revolutionary power of a single voice is scattered throughout *Samson Agonistes*, *Paradise Regained* and, of course, *Paradise Lost*.

In both *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regained*, Milton demonstrates the power of individual resistance. When Samson aligns his heart and his actions with the Godly motions that stir within him, the consequences reach far beyond his own life to change the actual political circumstances of those left behind him:

> Come, come, not time for lamentation now,
> Nor much more cause: Samson hath quit himself
> Like Samson, and heroicly hath finish'd
> A life Heroic, on his Enemies
> Fully reveng'd hath left, and freedom, let but them
> Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
> To himself and Father's house eternal fame. (1709-1717)

The same is also true of Jesus's resistance to the temptations of Satan in *Paradise Regained*. The poem fully realizes the typological importance accorded to the Biblical version of the temptation, in

which Jesus becomes the second Adam who reverses the damage brought about by the first. In this poem and in *Samson Agonistes* the principles of political activism advocated in *The Faerie Queene* are demonstrated. The impetus for change arises out of a single heart which, by acting on its principles, provokes a series of consequences that finally alter the larger social sphere.

Those with a penchant for biography will observe the great degree to which the theory of social change outlined above might coincide with the personal hopes and beliefs of Milton himself. Within his lifetime he saw the hopes and dreams of establishing a New Jerusalem in England smashed by the pressures of political reality. Milton himself participated in the process that was to bring about significant social and religious reforms; when the defeat came, then, it was not only public, but also private. Out of the ashes of his political prose career, however, arose his poetic phoenix. What Milton could not accomplish as an influential member of the ruling political power structure, he set out to accomplish through an intimate relationship with his reader. Although he could not restrain the governmental "Satan" by force or by political power, he could inspire an Abdiel -- the solitary voice of resistance from which true victory might eventually sound.

In *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve initially demonstrate by negative example the power of personal decision. In the concluding chapters of the poem, however, the visions of the future demonstrate how the two who leave the gates of paradise to make their solitary way will form a multitude from which redemption will eventually be achieved. Although Milton's narrative

demonstrates the process by which societal redemption may occur, it is the poetry itself which invests its readers with the revolutionary power. Milton is clear about both the risks and opportunities that he faces in daring to write *Paradise Lost*, and in his initial invocation to his Heavenly Muse he prays for the strength and vision to effect the desired result:

> . . . What is dark in me
> Illumine, what is low raise and support;
> That to the highth of this great Argument
> I may assert Eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to Men. (I.22-26)

The justification of God's ways is wholly dependent upon the "highth" of Milton's argument. His success in changing minds and persuading hearts is inextricably linked to the holy, poetic inspiration that shapes his work. If the holy war described on the page is to evolve into an actual experience of psychomachy within his readers, the impetus for this transmutation of words into actions must result from the grace that will both infuse his poetry with power and create the capacity for its reception in his readers.

If Milton's calculation is correct and grace is the principle that determines the success of a literary work, then grace did truly abound as Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress.* Of the three authors considered throughout this discussion, John Bunyan presents the strongest case for the revolutionary power of inspired literature. Although Bunyan was the least educated, least politically connected and certainly the poorest of the three, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was at the time it was published, arguably the best read and most influential of all their works. In his analysis of Bunyan and of

Bunyan's church, Marxist historian Christopher Hill argues that the Bedford preacher's prose and poetry can be mined for evidence of his political and theological dissent.[6] Further, Hill maintains that Bunyan's aspirations for political change should be acknowledged along with his spiritual objectives as intentional and legitimate aspirations for his art. Although Hill is correct to acknowledge the political power of Bunyan's prose, he is misdirected in his efforts to assign overt political ambitions to Bunyan's literature. Bunyan, like Spenser and Milton before him, provides sufficient evidence within his work to suggest that he too is aware that truly radical change can only be effected through the inspiration of individuals rather than the orchestrated uprisings of disgruntled masses. Although, as Hill asserts, Bunyan's literary representation of military victory in *The Holy War* must have had "inevitable political consequences", it is prudent to recall that Bunyan is writing in the wake of military defeat. If the holy war between the Royalists and Roundheads brought defeat to Bunyan and his fellow revolutionary churchmen, *The Holy War* might yet spark the process by which lasting religious freedom might be gained.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan concentrates on the journey of the individual soul toward glorification. If a comparison is to be drawn between Bunyan's works and the vision of societal renewal that is sketched in the last four books of *The Faerie Queene* or the promises of renewal offered in the prophetic visions of *Paradise Lost*, the comparison is most readily obtained in *The Pilgrim's*

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[6] See *A Turbulent, Seditious and Factious People: John Bunyan and His Church 1628-88.*

Progress, Part Two. In this sequel to Christian's journey, Christian's wife, Christiana, along with her children and her friends retrace the steps recorded in the first book. In the sequel, however, the journey is not solitary but communal. The progress toward the glorification of the entire community is not accomplished through political activism or governmental activities, but rather through patience and prayful obedience to the inner motions that define the puritan Christian experience. In effect, the very existence of *Part Two* is testament to Bunyan's utterly subversive but completely apolitical plot for revolutionary change. When Christian departed from his home at the opening of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, he alone had heard the call and responded in faith. His wife and children resisted his pleas and were left behind. As a direct result of Christian's example, however, his wife and children are eventually brought into the pilgrimage themselves:

> . . . for Christiana did also begin to consider with herself, whether her unbecoming behaviour towards her husband was not one cause that she saw him no more,and that in such sort he was taken away from her. And upon this came into her mind by swarms all her unkind, unnatural, and ungodly carriages to her dear friend, which also clogged her conscience and did load her with guilt. She was moreover much broken with recalling to remembrance the restless groans, brinish tears and self-bemoanings of her husband, and how she did harden her heart against all his entreaties, and loving persuasions (of her and her sons) to go with him, yea, there was not anything that Christian either said to her or did before her all the while that his burden did hang on his back, but it returned upon her like a flash of lightening, and rent the caul of her heart in sunder, specially that bitter outcry of his, 'What shall I do to be saved', did ring in her ears most dolefully. (235)

The psychomachy that brings about Christian's salvation is also directly responsible for the conversion of an entire community. The process of revolution that is realized in the second part of Bunyan's narrative is analogous to the process of empowerment that is experienced by Bunyan himself as he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress.* Although he was denied the freedom to spread his religious views from the pulpit by judicial force and physical imprisonment, Bunyan's imagination was liberated by inspiration and as a result he wrote a piece of literature that would touch more hearts and change more minds than Bunyan himself could ever have dreamed of reaching. Once again, the process by which the sanctifying powers of psychomachy are lifted from the page and implanted in readers' minds is governed by the mystical power of art that moves the imagination and breathes lived reality into lifeless typeset symbols.

Although *The Holy War* is designed to be Bunyan's grand literary achievement, his epic finally demonstrates by negative example the very principles that allow *The Pilgrim's Progress* to succeed. In *The Holy War* Bunyan attempts to create the effects of inspiration by the sheer force of his will and by the masterful architectonics of his literary design. The work itself, however, proves that saying will not always make it so. While the work satisfies its readers' hunger for an intellectual understanding of holy war, it fails to provide the actual experience of it. The carefully wrought structure is rich in information and in moments of realism, but comparatively poor in the fictive qualities required to ignite its readers' imaginations. Thus, although it is the only work among the four discussed in this paper that openly announces itself

as an exploration of psychomachy or spiritual warfare, it is the least effective in drawing its readers into the actual experiences described on the page. In his attempt to catalogue and contain the structure of holy war, Bunyan transgresses the principle of success that he demonstrates so clearly in *The Pilgrim's Progress*: revolution begins within the individual not within the institution.

The works of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan demonstrate, then, the profound influence of a radical theological concept. The principles of psychomachy were well established at the time in which all three of these authors were thinking and writing about spiritual and ecclesiastical reformation. Each understood the potential of psychomachy as a agent for change, and all three authors developed this potential in both their narrative fictions and in the structural design of their literature. As a result, the concept of spiritual war or psychomachy not only shapes the plots of the stories but also our readerly responses to these stories. Each author writes out of an awareness that the battle to establish in reality the political ideals figured in their fictions is ultimately a psychomachy. By building on this awareness, these authors challenge their readers to embrace the principles that must shape any system of government that will implement spiritually informed political ideals. The final product of this influence is a powerful, radical form of fiction that transcends the limitations of factual prose and incites a process of transference that allows the heroic protagonist of classical epic to be replaced in the Christian epic by a heroic reader. As the random pagan universe of Homer gives way to the ordered, teleological world view of Virgil, and finally to the

providential Christian universe of Prudentius and of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, the celebrations of existing imperfection are surpassed by the triumphant projections of future perfection -- a perfection that may be achieved when readers of these fictions become the authors of a new political reality. The importance of political schemes and military victories is diminished by the presence of supreme power: the work of grace within the soul. It is through this inspiration of grace that the literary holy wars of Spenser, Milton and Bunyan claim ultimate and final victory -- one battle, one reader at a time.

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