1960

Analysis of the "November" Eclogue of Edmund Spenser's Shepheardes Calender

M. Theresa Nicholson

Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/1654

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1960 M. Theresa Nicholson
ANALYSIS OF THE "NOVEMBER" ECOLOGUE OF EDMUND SPENSER'S SHEPHERDES CALENDER

By

Sister M. Theresa of the Holy Child Nicholson, S. N. J. M.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

June 1960

She was graduated from Visitation High School, Chicago, Illinois, in 1933, and entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in Montreal, Canada, in January, 1934. She received the Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, in January, 1954. She then entered the Graduate School of Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, to pursue her studies for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

As a Sister of the Holy Names, the writer has taught in the parochial schools of her Congregation in Detroit and Chicago.

She has published articles in America and in Review for Religious.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>PASTORAL ELEGY: THEOCRITUS TO MAROT</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Origin in Theocritus--Development in Bion and Moschus--Pattern set by Vergil--Renaissance figures, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Sannazaro, Mantuanus, Alamanni--Terminology--E. K.'s use of AEglogai--Early English use of term.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Marot and the Pleiade--Spenser's reasons for choosing Marot--Marot's merit--Spenser's English predecessors--His borrowing--Comparison of Spenser's and Marot's elegies--Date of composition--E. K.'s gloss patterned after Muret's epistle.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>POETIC DICTION IN THE &quot;NOVEMBER&quot; ELOGUE</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Meter defined--Linked quatrains--Ten-line stanzas of elegy--Originality--Daring shifts of accent--Metric deviations--Caesuras--Excellence of Spenser's versification.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>USE OF ALLITERATION--ASSONANCE--RHYME--REDUNDANCIES--MUSICAL QUALITY OF WORDS--NADRIGALS--SPENSER'S WORD ARTISTRY.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Use of kinesthetic, thermal, gustatory, tactile, auditory, and visual images--Contrasts--Elizabethan books of rhetoric--Tropes--Schemes--Intricacy of Spenser's figures.</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii
VII. ALLEGORY IN THE "NOVEMBER" ECLOGUE

Theories summarized—Lido as Elizabeth—Historical background—Comparison of "November" with "Aprill"—Internal evidence.

VIII. SUCCESS OF THE "NOVEMBER" ECLOGUE

Spenser, exquisite artist and curious universal scholar—Earlier English pastorals—Greek conventions—Contributions made by Spenser—Contemporary judgments—Encomium of imitation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
### List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. WORDS OF FRENCH ORIGIN IN THE &quot;NOVEMBER&quot; ECLOGUE</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. WORDS OF ARCHAIC ORIGIN IN THE &quot;NOVEMBER&quot; ECLOGUE</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

PASTORAL ELEGY: THEOCRITUS TO MAROT

Among Edmund Spenser's illustrious literary forbears in the art of the pastoral elegy, Theocritus holds undisputed first place. He penned the oldest recorded pastorals; he served as a model for succeeding generations of poets. It is supposed that Theocritus, who lived in the sophisticated Alexandria of the third century B.C. and wrote charmingly about Sicilian shepherds, was born in Syracuse. His outburst of pastoral song might well have been a temporary means of escape from the stifling luxury of the court to the simplicity and innocence of a remembered childhood. ¹ "As an artistic form the pastoral elegy begins with Theocritus' first idyll, the devices of which have been repeated through the ages."² Here, many of the conventions had their start albeit in a sketchy manner: gift-bringing and song-contest, rustic language, and country life.

Here, too, he celebrates the death of the shepherd-hero Daphnis, "which in folklore had represented the annual death of Nature itself."³ Whereas the myth had depicted the fierce heat of summer affecting the tender life of the

year, the poet portrayed the blighting effect of the human passion of love on the life of the shepherd. Nature is made to share human sorrow. Wolves, jackals, and lions mourn the fate of Daphnis. His flocks bewail the loss of their shepherd. Thus, Ruskin's "pathetic fallacy" springs into being at the very source of the pastoral tradition. Later, Moschus carries the theme forward by calling on the woodland glades and all green things to give voice to their sorrow. Spenser follows this lead in his eclogues.

In Theocritus, we find the outlines, as it were, of the finished product which, centuries later, Spenser would bring forth. In the seventh idyll, the suggestion is clearly made that the poet represented himself in his poem.

Theocritus speaks of himself as Simichidas: "Thus I Simichidas sang, and sweetly smiling, as before, he gave me the staff, a pledge of brotherhood in the Muses." This idea becomes the central theme in the pastoral elegy, the role of the shepherd-poet increasing in importance as the elegy is removed from the province of realism. Speaking in propria persona, the poet voices ideas personal and intimate to himself.

Theocritus, moreover, "perfected the pastoral idyll in three forms, all more or less dramatic, and these have persisted down to the present time: the monologue, in which the despairing lover is pictured singing his song of complaint; the dialogue, in which two or more shepherds sing without having any fixed subjects; and the dialogue with a singing-match."

---

4 Ibid.


6 Harrison, p. 4.

7 Martha Hale Shackford, "A Definition of the Pastoral Idyll," PMLA, XXIX (December, 1904), 587.
The most convincing proof of the artistic genius of Theocritus may be seen in the long line of his imitators, translators, and critics. Comparatively obscure poets in succeeding centuries derived their pastoral themes, their hexameter meter, and their Doric dialect from his poems. They reproduced rather than explored their model.

The best known of these early imitators are Bion and Moschus. The Greek pastoral elegy, "Lament for Bion," attributed to the second-century Alexandrian poet Moschus, forms the next important link in the chain connecting Theocritus and Spenser. Bion was born at Smyrna. In the "Lament for Bion" we are told that he was "poisoned by certain enemies, and that while he left to others his wealth, to Moschus he left his minstrelsy." The "Lament for Bion" contains the only certain knowledge about its reputed author, Moschus. He speaks of his verse as "ausonian song," calls himself Bion's pupil and successor, and, Lang assures us, was certainly acquainted with the poems of Theocritus.

Moschus adds a new note to the pastoral by attributing poetic attainment to the dead shepherd and by having him bequeath his gift of song to the poet-singer who boasts of his former friendship. Prior to Moschus, a mythical Daphnis or a symbolic Adonis was eulogized. In the "Lament for Bion," the poet himself enters the elegy, honoring for the first time a real person, while introducing a certain delicate sentimentality alien to his predecessors.

---

8Kermode, pp. 22-24.
10Ibid., p. 185.
"By thus applying the imagery of the pastoral to a real person," writes James Hanford, "the author of the Lament had transformed what was previously a genre of erotic verse into the more serviceable type of the personal elegy in pastoral form."

Although Theocritus had raised the pastoral life of Sicily into the realms of art, he was careful not to dissociate his poetry from reality; he endeavored "to make his situations, episodes, and style of language natural and conformable to the rustic character of his theme." In his early imitators, the pastoral loses its idyllic simplicity as it puts on the artificiality and conventionality which would mark it for centuries. Connell states the case succinctly: "Vergil . . . sublimated the diction of the pastoral into a dignity and delicacy which impart to it an irresistible charm, but not the charm to be expected from shepherd boys." Vergil began the dissociation of the pastoral from actual life, seeming to regard the pastoral form as a convenient cloak for personal and political allusions. His shepherds cease to resemble the homely keepers of flocks, and his landscapes become more and more vague and undefined. "It is pastoral poetry which, for the first time, complicates the simple town-country contrast with serious reflections upon that contrast, which cultivates simplicity in decorated

---

11 James Holly Hanford, "The Pastoral Elegy and Milton's Lycidas," PMLA, XXV (September 1910), 413.


13 Ibid.

language; and which uses the country scene and rustic episodes for allegorical purposes.\(^{15}\) Vergil's transforming genius and painstaking art gave new impetus and definite direction to the pastoral tradition. Later writers would continue to adapt the old conventions to new themes until in Spenser's Shepheardes Calender a rich variety of themes would be realized.

No writer of pastorals gained enduring fame during the period immediately following Vergil. From the fourth to the tenth centuries isolated examples occur which, while preserving the classical memory, enrich it with Christian meanings and associations. "The eclogue is used to celebrate the praises of the 'saint cross'; to prove the truth of the Bible stories victorious over the falsehood of pagan myths; to voice allegorical religious laments, and to give honor to the saints.\(^{16}\) The stream of pastoral poetry during the Middle Ages is reduced to the "merest trickle," the few clerkly imitations of the Vergilian eclogue being "evidence only of the half-life which the memory of classical civilization led until the Renaissance.\(^{17}\)

Beginning a new and brilliant epoch, Petrarch revived the pastoral by his attention to form as well as by his return to a classic purity of language. He used the pastoral as a vehicle for veiled satire. Latin was the universal language among the lettered classes of Europe while the knowledge of Greek was a much rarer accomplishment; it is therefore scarcely surprising that the Vergilian tradition gained the ascendancy.

\(^{15}\)Kermode, p. 25.


\(^{17}\)Greg, pp. 18-22.
Through the instrumentality of Petrarch, who knew no Greek, and Boccaccio, who had turned for inspiration to Vergil, the Roman poet reigned supreme in Renaissance Italy. In the works of Petrarch and those of Boccaccio, the Latin eclogue is one of the few points of literary contact.\(^{18}\) Boccaccio's eclogues were printed in 1504, when Giunta included them in an anthology issued in Florence. Collections such as these popularized the works of both Petrarch and Boccaccio. "The practice of making the eclogue a vehicle for didacticism and personal allegory, thus inaugurated by Petrarch and Boccaccio, characterizes in a varying degree the work of their successors in the pastoral literature of the Renaissance."\(^{19}\)

The trend toward the vernacular kept pace with the Neo-Latin movement, and some poets wrote in both languages. Sannazaro, the Neapolitan, was the first to achieve distinction in both fields; first, in his Arcadia in Italian; later, in his Piscatory Elogues in Latin. He restored the Arcadia of Vergil as a setting, a significant accomplishment for the later pastoral. In his Arcadia, Greek and Roman, ancient and modern were met as "Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, and other Greeks joined company with the Romans, with Petrarch, and with Boccaccio."\(^{20}\) Sannazaro established the vernacular pastoral for succeeding poets; by Spenser's day it would be the accepted medium of expression. Sheer imitation would also be one of the distinguishing traits of the future pastoral elegy, as E. K. acknowledges unashamedly in his Dedicatory

\(^{18}\) Ibid., pp. 18-24.

\(^{19}\) Hanford, p. 430.

\(^{20}\) Harrison, pp. 9-10.
Epistle to the Shepheardes Calender.

Battista Spagnuoli, "more commonly known from the place of his birth by the name of Mantuanus," wrote ten eclogues accepted by sixteenth-century critics as models of pastoral composition, "inferior to those of Vergil alone." They were for the most part direct satires. "The eclogues of Mantuanus were studied in English schools, and Spenser, doubtless, made his first acquaintance with the Latin realist early in his career at the Merchant Taylors' School in London."22

Though his youthful imitative pastorals are not in themselves significant, Luigi Alamanni pointed the way for the French Pégase by instructing them in what examples to follow. He himself, at first, closely followed in footsteps of the Greek triad, Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus. Later, he used other models, adapting his eclogues to contemporary subjects and conditions. His importance rests in the fact that his pastorals were eagerly read and imitated by later poets not only on the Continent but also in England.23 The really vital link in the long chain is Clément Marot. His influence will be traced in some detail in Chapter II.

Concerning the terminology which has grown up around the poetry known as pastoral, much unnecessary confusion and many resulting complications have developed through the years. An attempt at clarifying the issue would seem

23 Harrison, p. 12.
to be in order, since one or other term appears in various quotations found in this thesis.

The earliest known term applied to the genre was that of idyll given to the poems of Theocritus either by himself or by some annotator. Since many of his poems dealt with shepherds and rural life, they came to be designated as pastorals. Thus the terms idyll and pastoral were used interchangeably. Vergil added to the difficulty by calling his imitations of Theocritus Bucolics although he alluded to them in his fourth Georgic as carmina pastorum. Lilly quotes Page as authority for her statement that the grammarians probably gave them the name eclogues. Four names, idyll, pastoral, bucolic, and eclogue, came to be indiscriminately associated with the same type of poetry.

The synonymous use of these terms would seem to date from the early Renaissance in England when the works of Theocritus, Vergil, and Mantuan were beginning to be read in translation. Congleton notes that Lodovicus Vives in his Preface to Vergil's pastoral poems (1544) "indiscriminately called them 'Bucolicks' and 'Aeglogues.'" In the Arte of English Poesie, commonly ascribed to George Puttenham, we find a reference to "pastorall Poesie which we commonly call by the name of Eglogue and Bucolick." It is

---


25 Lilly, p. 19. In contradistinction to Miss Lilly's finding, J. E. Congleton (see note 24 above) avers that Vergil gave the term eclogue to his imitations of Theocritus whereas the grammarians called them bucolics.

26 Congleton, p. 6.

true that Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* made its appearance late in Spenser's literary career. Yet he reflects the thought and usage of his day, which was also Spenser's, and may therefore be cited with some assurance.

Whether Vergil or someone else applied the term *aelegoi* to his pastoral poems, the early use of the term in pastoral poetry is generally attributed to Vergil's precedent. Strangely enough, the etymological meaning of the word *eclogue* has no connection with shepherds. In this respect, E. K.'s explanation though curious is eminently understandable given the continued confusion in terminology at this time.

They were first of the Greeks the inventours of them called *AEglogai* . . . that is Goteheards tales. For although in Virgile and others the speakers be more shepherds, than Goteheards, yet Theocritus in whom is more ground of authoritie, than in Virgile, this specially from that deriving, as from the first head and welspring the whole Imension of his *AEglogues*, maketh Goteheards the persons and authors of his tales. This being, who seeth not the grossenesse of such as by colour of learning would make vs beleewe that they are more rightly termed Eclogai, as they would say, extraordinary discourses of vneeessarie matter, which definition albe in subsance and meaning it agree with the nature of the thing, yet nowhit answereth with the . . . interpretation of the word. For they be not termed Eclogues, but *AEglogues*. . . which sentence this author very well observiug, vpon good judgement, though indeede few Goteheards have to doe herein, nethelesse doubteth not to cal them by theved and best known name.28

This unique interpretation by E. K. has been generally discredited by modern English scholars despite his alarming display of erudition. A tacit acceptance of the very meaning and spelling which E. K. rejected seems to be the rule. Most eclogues have been pastorals, though the word *eclogue*

would seem to be broader in scope than the word *pastoral*. Scaliger, as early as 1531, explained the meaning of the disputed word: "Let us note the origin of the word 'eclogue.' When certain superior poets became disgusted with some of their hurried productions—how often does the wise writer have the same experience!—they impulsively destroyed them and kept only an anthology of their better work. From this practice of 'picking out' or 'selecting' came the word *eclogue*, which bears this meaning in the Greek."\(^{29}\) In Cooper's *Thesaurus Linguae*, 1578, the word *eclogue* is defined as "election: choyse."\(^{30}\)

Pastoral, however, received no specialized meaning. Though the etymology of the word points up the narrower meaning as it was understood in Spenser's day and as it is used today, pastoral suggests to the student of literature "definite imagery, pictures of those happy guardians of the herd whose task gives them leisure for song, whose occupation is of a sort that leads to meditation on the beauty of the visible world, and stimulates the poetic spirit."\(^{31}\) The earliest use of pastoral in a literary sense is recorded in *A New English Dictionary* as Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*, 1591. Sidney treats the word as a new literary genre which has been placed on an equal footing with other genres, "Heroick, Lirick, Tragick, Comick, Satirical, Elegiack, Pastoral."\(^{32}\)

\(^{29}\) Congleton, pp. 7-8.

\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) Shackford, p. 585.

The term \textit{pastoral elegy} was used apparently for the first time in 1595 when Spenser so described his poem \textit{Astrophel}: "A Pastoral Elegie vpon the death of the most Noble and valorous Knight, Sir Philip Sidney."\textsuperscript{33} "Spenser was the first poet of note to apply the name \textit{pastoral elegy} to a chant of personal grief inspired by the loss of a beloved and revered person, in his \textit{Daphnaida} . . . and in \textit{Astrophel}."\textsuperscript{34} Frankly following Spenser's lead, we designedly use the same term as a self-explanatory description of Spenser's "November" Eclogue.

Tracing the development of the pastoral elegy through the long line of illustrious poets from Theocritus to Marot provides the historical setting for Spenser's eclogues. One can better appreciate and more justly evaluate Spenser's efforts in the light of the achievements of his predecessors. The abiding influence of such literary giants as Theocritus and Vergil hallows the pages of \textit{The Shepheardes Calender} though other influences are not wanting.

The Renaissance both in Italy and in France produced writers who rivaled the fame of Theocritus and Virgil. Italy was the land of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Mantuan, and Alamanni. France gained renown through the brilliant achievements of Ronsard, du Bellay, and the other stars of the poetic constellation called the \textit{Pleiada}, who "were spreading the fame of French verse over all the European countries."\textsuperscript{35} By means of translations, French literary thought

\textsuperscript{33}Variorum Spenser, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{34}Francis White Weitzmann, "Notes on the Elizabethan 'Elegies,'" \textit{PMLA}, L (June, 1935), 440.
penetrated to the England of Spenser's day bringing with it the influence of Clement Marot with which the following chapter will deal. Speaking of this enviable heritage, E. K. expatiates: "So flew Theocritus, as you may perceive he was all ready full fledged. So flew Virgile, as not yet well feeling his winges. So flew Mantuane, as being not full somd. So Petrarque. So Boccace; So Marot, Sanazarus, and also divers other excellent both Italian and French Poetes, whose foting this Author every where followeth, yet so as few, but they be wel sented can trace him out." 36

36 Variorum Spenser, p. 10.
Chapter II

Pastoral Elegy: Marot and Spenser

In the chain of pastoral writers uniting Theocritus and Spenser, the most important link is Clémént Marot. E. K. admits as much in the Argument for Spenser's "November" Eclogue: "This AEglogue is made in imitation of Marot his song, which he made upon the death of Loys the frenche Queene."1 Twenty years before Spenser's birth, Clémént Marot had been the central figure on the stage of French poetry linking medieval tradition with the Renaissance. Though he was the son of a rhétoriqueur, Marot heralded a new poetic mode.2 Associating himself with the work of the humanists, he not only translated but also imitated the classical poets. In 1531, upon the death of Queen Louise, instead of writing a Christian elegy as he had done in the case of Florimand Robertet, he chose the pastoral elegy, a form well liked by the humanists.3

Marot's work belongs both to the Middle Ages and to the Renaissance. Though the Renaissance would be fully launched only by the work of the Pléiade,

---

1Variorum Spenser, p. 104.
Marot stood, as it were, on its threshold. While his "interest in Virgil, Ovid, the Greek Musaeus, in Petrarch and Erasmus" is indicative of his humanism, his originality pointed to the later French poets. "Yet on the side of language, destined as it was to undergo marked changes, Marot's work stood condemned in the eyes of the Pléiade." Joachim du Bellay's treatise "is a violent attack on the older school of poetry, of which Clément Marot was the standard-bearer. Down with Gothic! Away with rondeaux, ballades, virelais, and all the other trash."

Spenser was well acquainted with the writings of du Bellay. He had, as a schoolboy, made translations from his sonnets for Van der Noot's Theatre; "and the critical ideas of the Pléiade and of Cinthio had manifest bearing upon the problems of diction and versification, of stylistic decorum, and of the improvement of the vernacular that he was trying to solve in his own language." Despite the fact that he deeply respected the doctrines of the Pléiade in other matters, Spenser chose to imitate Marot in his "November" Eclogue.

Spenser's humanistic studies at Cambridge, his militant Protestantism, and his choice of the pastoral elegy as a vehicle of expression resulted in his imitation of Marot. In a letter to Spenser, Gabriel Harvey gives us an insight into the Cambridge of his day: "Xenophon and Plato reckoned among discoursers, and conceited superficial fellows; . . . Petrarch and Boccace in

---

5Ibid.
every man's mouth . . . the French and Italian highly regarded; the Latin and Greek but lightly . . . ."  

There is a note of melancholy hidden in his words, as if he were longing for "the good old days" when Latin and Greek were regarded highly. E. K. bears him out when writing in 1579 about Spenser's Shepheardes Calender: "Having the sound of those auncient Poetes still ringing in his eares, he mought needes, in singing, hit out some of theyr tunes."  

Renwick avers that the mark of a reasoned critical basis is perceptible in Spenser's early work, a direct result of the teaching on humanist lines received both at the Merchant-Taylors' School and at the University of Cambridge.  

The familiar pattern of Marot's grief arose mainly from a source which ensured a sympathetic hearing in England. Though he denied that he was a "Lutheriste," he openly censured Papal pronouncements, and Francis I, his patron, was unable to protect him from persecution in Paris at the hands of outraged Catholics.  

No record remains of Marot's formal apostasy. The fact that he was persecuted and exiled by Calvinist reformer and Catholic king alike would seem to indicate an inconstancy contradictory to such a step. Yet his plight was one which would awaken the sympathy of a sincere Spenser. Jones is perhaps using the term "Protestant" in a wider sense when he refers to Marot as

---


"this Protestant poet of France." 12

Marot's chief literary merit, for our purposes, lay in his ability to treat the allegorical pastoral without sacrificing the charm of naive simplicity and genuine feeling. 13 In 1532, he introduced into French poetry the pastoral elegy, "La complainte de Madame Loyse de Savoye mère du Roy, en forme d'églogue." 14 The Queen Mother's death must be fittingly commemorated. This tribute Marot made so well that Gerhardt unhesitatingly applied the following commendation:

Marot a très bien compris le caractère essentiellement décoratif de l'églogue mortuaire. Il n'a pas surcharge la sienne d'allégories ni de nombreuses allusions, mais il a cherché une certaine puissance consolatrice dans la musique des vers et l'entrelacement des motifs pastoraux, harmonieusement tristes d'abord, sereins ensuite. Loin de s'adresser à l'intelligence, à la raison, il veut les assoupir par sa musique caressante, ses images prévues qu'une auguste tradition a consacrées. . . . Ni déséquilibrée par un chagrin violent, ni alourdie par les idées, elle chante un "deuil ordonné": mesuré, digne, tout en gestes rituels et en musique harmonieuse. Marot ne prétend à rien de plus, mais ce qu'il s'était proposé il l'a réalisé pleinement. 15


13 Greg, p. 62.

14 Mia Irene Gerhardt, Essai d'analyse littéraire de la pastorale (Rotterdam, 1950), p. 207.

15 Ibid., p. 212. Translation: "Marot understood very well the essentially decorative character of the pastoral elegy. He did not overload his with allegories nor with numerous allusions but he sought a certain consoling power in the music of verse and the interlacing of the pastoral motifs, harmoniously sad at first, serene afterwards. Far from addressing himself to the intelligence, to reason, he wishes to lull them to sleep by his caressing music, his foreseen images which an august tradition has consecrated. . . . Neither unbalanced by a violent sorrow nor weighted down by ideas, it sings an ordered sorrow, measured, worthy, entirely in ritual movements and in harmonious music. Marot pretends nothing more, but what he had proposed to accomplish he has fully realized."
Sebillet, listed by Congleton with Petrarch, Boccaccio, Vives, Barclay, Spenser "and other humanists," expressed the first significant criticism of the pastoral in France. Thirteen years before Scaliger's Poetica and four years before Spenser's birth, he stated the theory of the School of Marot:

L'éloge est Grèque d'invention, Latin d'usurpation, et Françoise d'imitation. Car Théocrite le Poète grec est le patron sur lequel Vergile ha pourtrait sés Eclogues: et Vergile est le moule d'ou Marot et les autres Poètes Franpois ont pris la forme dés siennes: et tous les trois sont l'exemplaire que tu y dois suivre. Avise donc que ce Poète qu'ils ont appelé Elogue, est plus souvent un Dialogue . . . tu feras meilleure, plus sera courte: et plus élégante de carmes de dis syllabes que de moindres. Et encor que la ryme plate y soit plus commune et propre, Marot n'eantmoins t'a montré en l'Elogue de feue Madame la Régante, que la ryme croisée n'y ha point mauvaise grace. 16

In spite of Puttenham's advice to look to other models: "Our maker, therefore at these dayes shall not follow Pierre plewman nor Gower nor Lydgate nor yet Chauser, for their language is now out of vse with vs," 17 Spenser nevertheless did "follow" Chauser, as will be seen in Chapter III. Wilson scornfully sets the background by his remark: "The fine courtier will talke nothing but Chauser." 18

16 Thomas Sebillet, Art poétique françois (Paris, [n. d.]), pp. 159-161. Translation: "The eclogue is Greek in invention, Latin by usurpation, and French by imitation. For Théocritus the Greek poet is the patron from whom Virgil drew his eclogues: and Virgil is the model from which Marot and the other French poets took the form of theirs: and all three are the modal which you must follow. Observe, therefore, that this poem which they call Eclogue is more often a dialogue . . . you would do better to make it shorter: and more elegant are lines of ten syllabes than lines of less. And even though the plain rime be more ordinary and proper, Marot, nevertheless, showed you in the eclogue of the deceased Madame Régent that linked ryme is not lacking in grace." [Old French]

17 Puttenham, pp. 144-145.

18 Smith, I, 86.
Among these courtiers, several fine poets had preceded Spenser: Skelton, Wyatt, Surrey, and Sackville. E. K. mentions Skelton in his Glosse to Spenser's "January" Eclogue in explanation of the name "Colin Cloute": "COLIN Cloute) is a name not greatly used, and yet have I seen a Poesie of M. Skeltons vnder that title. But indeede the word Colin is Frenche, and used of the French Poete Marot (if he be worthy of the name of a Poete) in a certein Aëglogue. Under which name this Poete Spenser secretly shadoweth himself."\(^{19}\)

Wyatt, and more certainly, Surrey might have written masterpieces in English under Henry VIII but they died young. Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, "had given fair promise of genius with his Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates but had soon turned from poetry to politics. The only poet of the same importance that had appeared of late was George Gascoigne."\(^{20}\) These and lesser poets had imitated both Italian and French writers in a vain attempt to awaken a loyal response in English hearts, hoping, perhaps, to counteract the influx of foreign literature.

Villey speaks of sixteenth-century England being "à l'école de la France."\(^{21}\) "Single books translated from 11475 to 1640 total roughly 2000, not counting subsequent printings or items listed as 'another edition' in the STC. . . . Approximately one book in eight published in English was a translated work."\(^{22}\) Most of these translations were from the French.\(^{23}\)

---

\(^{19}\) Variorum Spenser, pp. 17-18.

\(^{20}\) Leguois, p. 52.


\(^{22}\) Harold Davis, "Renaissance Conference," HIC, IV (January 1941), 147.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
It was Spenser's glory to raise English to the height already attained by French and Italian writers. Because he possessed the requisite wide learning, he could perform the task left incomplete by the death of Gascoigne. E. K. informs us while speaking of the Philomela legend: "whose complaintes be very well set forth of Ma. George Gaskin a wittie gentleman, and the very chefe of our late rymers, who and if some partes of learning wanted not (albe it is well known he altogther wanted not learning) no doubt would have attained to the excellencye of those famour Poets. For gifts of wit and naturall promptenesse appeares in hym abundantly."24

To this we need but add the comment E. K. makes about Spenser's borrowings"... and also divers other excellent both Italian and French Poetes, whose noting this Author every where followeth, yet so as few, but they be well sented can trace him out."25

One might say that Spenser's eclogue was vitalized by something other than all these literary sources - his genuine love of the country. Miss Freeman claims that this preference gives a consistent coloring to the shepherds and their lays. The nosegays, the cakes and cracknells, the cocked hay "do not belong to Sicily or Mantua, but have a life that springs from nearer home. In the same way his serious interest in extending the range of poetical language introduces the natural idiom and gnomic phrases of the countryman."26

At first blush, Spenser seems to have little in common with Marot. Yet when we examine the eclogues in question side by side, we find some interest-

24 Variorum Spenser, p. 111.
25 Ibid., p. 10.
26 Freeman, p. 12.
ing parallels. The names of the two shepherds, Thenot and Colin, are identical. In each, the shepherds vie with each other in complimentary speeches. Thenot invites Colin to sing; Colin demurs, Thenot offers a prize, Colin accepts. One might cite the pastoral tradition, which each poet is certainly following, to justify these and other similarities. A closer scrutiny will, however, serve to strengthen the case for Spenser’s direct borrowing from Marot. He depends indirectly on the French poet for his situations and thought suggestions. An example of this might be the mention of nymphs bringing garlands or the description of the shepherdess condescending to entertain humbler folk.

Spenser develops the idea differently from Marot. Besides the divisions into which the elegy proper falls, Spenser divides his entire poem into three distinct parts: introduction, elegy, and conclusion. A unique ten-line stanza distinguishes Spenser’s elegy, while the introduction and conclusion is an imitation of the linked quatrains which Marot uses throughout his eclogue. The prizes to be awarded are not the same. Spenser’s Thenot proffers a cosset and “much greater gyfts,” though the “much greater gyfts” are not spelled out for us. Marot’s Thenot offers:

Des coings aurés, six jaunes et six verts, 27
Des maulx sentans qu’on veit depuis Moises.

27 Harrison, p. 135, ll. 35-36. Translation: “You shall have quinces, six yellow and six green, of the finest fragrance since the days of Moses.” English prose translations of Marot’s verse used in this chapter are the work of Harry Joshua Leon in Harrison, already cited, pp. 134-145.
But besides these, he promises something finer and better:

De moy auras un double calumian
Faict de la main de Raffy Lyonnois. 28

He then proceeds to elaborate on its value, the difficulty he experienced exchanging it for a kid, how dear he holds it, how he has played on it but once. This elaboration is in direct contrast to Spenser's casual statement.

Another striking contrast is the number of stanzas. Spenser's 208 lines have an original setting of thirteen linked quatrains, fifteen ten-line stanzas, concluding with one quatrain and one couplet. Marot's 276 lines fall neatly into sixty-nine linked quatrains. Differences of interpretation, execution, and style are apparent. In Marot, Morley asserts, the stern realities in the condition of France, the "longing for peace in an afflicted nation, genuine sympathy with mourners, blend with the fresh strain of religion. These disappear, or become simply poetical ornament, in Spenser's lament for Dido." 29

Marot's Thenot leisurely comments upon the brook, the shade, the grass, and the gentle winds:

En ce beau val sont plaisirs excellens,
Un cler ruisseau bruyant près de l'ombre,
L'herbe à souhait, les vents non violens. 30

Spenser's Thenot goes directly to the matter at hand:

Colin my deare, when shall it please thee sing,

28 Ibid., p. 136, ll. 41-42. Translation: "You shall have from me a double pipe, made by the hands of Raffy of Lyons."


30 Harrison, p. 134, ll. 1-3. Translation: "In this fair valley there are excellent delights, a clear brook murmuring near the shade, grass to one's heart's content, winds not too strong."
As thou were wont songs of some louisaunce? (ll. 1-2)\textsuperscript{31}

Marot's "Tsabeau" becomes Spenser's "Rosalind."

Lines 1-6 of Spenser's eclogue have no counterpart in Marot. The next two lines:

\begin{quote}
Whether thee list thy loued lasse aduaunce,
Or honor Pan with hymnes of higher vaine. (ll. 7-8)
\end{quote}

are faintly reminiscent of Vergil's Fifth Elogue when Menalcos speaks to Mopsus: "Begin, O Mopsus, first, if thou hast aught of flames for Phyllis or praises of Alcoon or flouts at Codrus."\textsuperscript{32}

Remwick, speaking of lines 9-20 says: "Of the three poets, Spenser displays the greatest dramatic imagination, since in Virgil's and Marot's poems the theme is merely announced. Spenser leads up to it more carefully."\textsuperscript{33}

Lines 20-23 in Spenser correspond to lines 17-18 and 27 in Marot. Marot's Colin praises Thanot's songs more feelingly than does Spenser's Colin:

\begin{quote}
But if thou algate lust light virelayes,
And looser songs of louse to vnderfong
Who but thy selve deservs sike Poetes prays?
Reliese thy Caten pypes, that sleepe long.

Berger Thanot, je suis esmerveille
De tes chansons, et plus fort je m'y baigne
\[\ldots\] chante un peu de Catin.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{31}{Variorum Spenser. All references to lines of the "November" Eclogue will be made in the body of the thesis and will be taken from pp. 104-110.}


\textsuperscript{33}{William] Lindsay Remwick, The Shepherd's Calendar (London, 1930), p. 222.}

\textsuperscript{34}{Harrison, p. 135, ll. 17-17, 27. Translation: "Shepherd Thanot, I marvel at your song and I revel in them ever more \ldots sing a little of Catin."}
In Thenot's response we find the first lines almost identical. Where Marot speaks of the woodpecker, Spenser chooses a very small bird, the titmouse, proverbially contrasted with the nightingale in England.

The Nightingale is souereigne of song,
Before him sits the Titmose silent bee. (ll. 24-25)

Le rossignol de chanter est le maistre, 
Taire convient devant luy les pivers. 35

At times, Spenser finds the unadorned suggestion in Marot and clothes it in graceful imaginative language. Marot's simple lines 31-32, wherein Thenot assures Colin that whenever they happen to be together he [Thenot] will silence his varied reeds, find, in Spenser, a delicate expansion which lends dignity and charm to the whole:

And I vnfitte to thrust in skilfull thronge, 
Should Colin make jude of my fooleree, 
Nay, better learnes of hem, that learned bee, 
And han be watered at the Muses well: 
The kindlye dewe drops from the higher tree, 
And wets the little plants that lowly dwell. (ll. 27-32)

Lines 33-42 in Spenser correspond to lines 33-36 in Marot. This invitation is common to all pastoral verse. It is given rather abruptly in Marot while Spenser lingers on the theme which Colin will sing. He mentions the reason, Dido's death, identifying her as "the greate shephearde his daughter sheene" (l. 38), is lavish in his admiring praise and proffers the gift of a cosset. A prize is also offered in Marot but the subject is simply announced: "En deplorant la bergere Loyse." 36

35 Ibid., ll. 29-30. Translation: "The nightingale is the mistress of song; before her it behooves the woodpecker to be silent."

36 Ibid., l. 34. Translation: "Lamenting the shepheardess Louise."
As we have said above, the subject of the better prize is enlarged on by Marot while Spenser is satisfied with stating it without a hint of what it might be. In both poems, Thenot ends by reiterating his plea but Spenser dresses his with more ornament:

Then vp I say, thou olly shepeheard swayne,  
Let not my small demand be so contempt. (ll. 47-48)

Faisant cela a quy je te convies.  

In both poems Colin gives an affirmative answer. Marot says simply: "Tu me requiers de ce dont j'ay envie." and proceeds with the elegy. Spenser disparages his ability at length before he evinces his willingness to comply with Thenot's request:

Thenot to that I choose, thou doest me tempt,  
But ah to well I wote my humble vaine,  
And howe my rymes bene rugged and unkempt:  
Yet as I come, my coning I will strayne. (ll. 49-52)

Remwick's allusion to Marot's use of Melpomene, which occurs towards the end of his poem, is a little strained since Spenser was certainly acquainted, as E. K. in the "November" Glosse assures us, with Vergil's use of the "sadde and waylofull Muse" and would not need Marot's direction in this instance. Besides, Spenser invokes Melpomene in the traditional way, invoking the "grieslie ghostes" in the same breath:

Vp then Melpomene thou mournesfult Muse of myne,  
Such cause of mourning never hast afore:  
Vp grieslie ghostes and vp my ruffall ryme.

37Ibid., p. 136, l. 48. Translation: "By doing what I ask you."  
38Ibid., p. 136, l. 49. Translation: "You ask of me the thing I desire to do."  
39Remwick, Shepherd's Calendar, p. 223.
Matter of myrth now shalt thou have no more.  
For dead shee is, that myrth thee made of yore.  (ll. 53-57)

In contrast to this auspicious beginning, Marot’s seems reserved:

Sus donc, mes vers, chantes douloureuse,  
Puis que la mort a Loysé ravie,  
Qui tant tecoit nos courtils vigoureux. 40

The mention Spenser makes of "Kentish downes" (l. 63) is a typical  
English localization, as Remwick notes. 41 Marot mentions several regions of  
France as befits the mourning of a queen: Cognac, Anjou, Maine, Amboise,  
Angoulême, and Romorantin, personifying each in graphic fashion. "Cognac cuffs  
himself on his wan bosom . . . Anjou hangs his head. . . ." 42

Spenser’s refrain closing each stanza adds to his elegy a lyric charm  
which is wanting to Marot’s "Sing, my verses, sing . . ." The effective  
anaphora in ll. 64-66 is original in treatment. Marot has a similar anaphora  
but the development is much simpler than Spenser’s:

Waile ye this wofull waste of natures warke:  
Waile we the wight, whose presence was our pryde:  
Waile we the wight, whose absence is our carke.  (ll. 64-66)

Pleurons, bergers, Nature nous dispense:  
Pleurons la mere au grand berger d’icy;  
Pleurons la mere à Margot d’excellence;  
Pleurons la mere à nous autres aussi. 43

40Harrison, p. 136, ll. 50-52. Translation: “Come now, my verses, sing  
mournful songs, since death has carried off Louise, who kept our fields so  
fresh.”

41Remwick, Shepherd’s Calendar, p. 223.

42Harrison, p. 140, ll. 159-160.

43Ibid., p. 136, ll. 57-60. Translation: “Let us weep, shepherds, Nature  
gives us the right; let us weep for the mother of the great shepherd of this  
place; let us weep for the mother of excellent Margot; let us weep for the  
mother of ourselves as well.”
Lines 67-69, however, can be traced more definitely to lines 102-104 of Marot:

The somne of all the world is dimme and darkes:
The earth now lacks her wonted light,
And all we dwell in deadly night. (ll. 67-69)

Le ciel soleil chaleur plus ne rendit;
Du manteau vert les pres se devestirent;
Le ciel obscur larmes en respondit.\(^1\)

Spenser chooses what he wills, leaving many lines untouched because they do not serve his purpose. He ignores Marot's detailed description of the Queen Regent's concern with the young ladies at court, her training, her counsels, her examples. He simplifies Marot's account of nature's bereavement.

The mention of the Great Shepherd breaking his pipe is echoed in Spenser:

Le grand pasteur sa musette fendit,
Ne voulant plus que de pleurs se mesler.\(^2\)

Break we our pypes, that shrild as lowde as Larkes. (l. 71)

Lines 75-76 in Spenser seem to repeat ll. 130-131 in Marot:

The fayrest fleure our gyrlond all emong,
Is faded quite and into dust ygoe. (ll. 75-76)

Marot's tone is heavier as he sings "Quel duseil, quel enmy est ce / De voir secher la fleur de tous nos champs?"\(^3\)

In the fourth stanza, Spenser (perhaps through Marot's interpretation), echoes Job's lament on the finality of death: "A tree hath hope: if it be

---

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 138, ll. 102-104. Translation: "The bright sun gave no more warmth; the meadows stripped off their green mantle; the dark sky shed tears thereat."

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 138, ll. 105-106. Translation: "The great shepherd broke his pipe, desiring to concern himself only with weeping."

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 139, ll. 130-131. Translation: "What sorrow, what distress is it to see the blossom of all our fields wither?"
cut, it growth green again, and the boughs thereof sprout. If its roots be old in the earth, and its stock be dead in the dust, at the scent of water, it shall spring, and bring forth leaves, as when it was first planted. But man when he shall be dead, and stripped, and consumed, I pray you where is he?" (Job xiv.7-10).47

Whence is it, that the flour of the field doth fade,
And lyeth buried long in Winters bale;
Yet soone as spring his mantle hath displayd,
It flourith fresh, as it should never fayle?
But thing on earth that is of most avail,
As vertues braunch and beauties budde,
Relieu not for any good. (ll. 83-89)

Marot has

D'ou vient cela qu'on veoit l'herbe sechante
Retournar vive alors que l'este vient,
Et la personne au tumbeau trebuschante,
Tant grande soit, jamais plus ne revient?48

Marot's picturesque encomium of Madame Loyse is found subdued by English temperament in Spenser, the elaborate anaphora being reflected in one line only: 

"So well she couth the shepherds entertayne." (1. 95).

Tant bien scavoit le clos de France aymer,
Tant bien y sceut au lys rendre les roses,
Tant bien y sceut bonnes herbes semer,
Tant bien scavoit en seurete confermer
Tout le bestail de toute la contrée;
Tant bien scavoit son pare clorre et fermer,
Qu'on n'a point veu les loups y faire entrée.49


48 Harrison, p. 114, l. 177-180. Translation: "Why is it that one sees the withering grass return to life when the summer comes, while the person who falls into the tomb, great though he be, never more returns?"

49 Ibid., p. 140, ll. 142-148. Translation: "So well she knew to love the fields of France; so well she knew to restore the roses to the lily; so well she knew to sow good herbs; so well she knew to maintain in safety all..."
In the following stanza, Spenser again follows Marot's lead:

Or maintenant ne font plus rien les belles,
Sinon ruyssseaux de larmes et de pleurs.
Converzy ont leurs danses en douleurs,
Le bleu en brun, le vert gay en tanne
Et leurs beaux tainctz en mauvaises couleurs. 50

Instead of "brown" and "tan," Spenser uses "black" and "grey" perhaps for alliterative purposes. He introduces, besides, a lively representation of death, reminiscent of "La danse macabre," wherein Death, as a skeleton, is portrayed as leading skeletons to the grave: "All Musick sleepe, where death doth lead the daunce" (l. 105). Herford notes that the "Dance of Death" was a familiar topic in sixteenth-century England, "being painted in the cloisters of old St. Paul's, with accompanying 'metres' by Lydgate (the Daunce of Macabre) translated from a similar series of French verses inscribed about the walls of the cloister of St. Innocents at Paris." 51 As early as 1568, John Awdeley had a license for printing an old ballad called "The Daunce and Song of Death," and Sidney's Arcadia contains a reference to it: "And then each thing beginning to turne rounde in the daunce of Death." 52

The description of flowers which deck the grave is a simplification of Marot's four stanzas, lines 225-240, wherein he enumerates no less than

the cattle of all the region, so well she knew to fence in and enclose her fold, that no one ever saw the wolves enter there." 50

50Ibid., p. 137-138, ll. 91-95. Translation: "But now the lovely ones do nothing more, they only shed streams of tears and weep. They have changed their dances into lamentations, the blue to brown, the bright green to tan, and their lovely hues to vile colors."


52Quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 409.
fifteen different flowers to be brought to the grave of Louise. Spenser takes line 113 directly from Marot's line 61: "O grand pasteur, que tu as de soucy!" merely adding the word Lobbin: "O thou great shepherd Lobbin, how great is thy griefe" (l. 113).

Spenser's description of Nature's sympathy is an elaboration on Marot's theme: "Feuilles et fruits des arbres abbatirent," becomes "The faded lockes fall from the loftie oke" (l. 125); "Plusieurs ruysseaulx tous à sec demourerent" is rendered: "The flouts do gaspe, for dried is theyr sourse" (l. 126). Compare Spenser's elaborate alliteration with Marot's simple lines:

The feeble flocks in field refuse their former food,
And hang theyr heads, as they would learne to wepe. (ll. 133-134)

Dont son troupeau, qui plaindre l'entendit,
Laissa le paistre, et se print a blesir.58

The idea of the beasts of field and forest showing sympathy for the sorrow being sung was not a new one. Spenser follows Marot closely here:

The beastes in forest wayle as they were woods
Except the Wolues, that chase the wandring sheep.
(ll. 135-136)

Biches et cerfs estommes s'arresterent;
Bestes de proye et bestes de pasture,

53 Harrison, p. 136, l. 61. Translation: "O great shepherd, how much sorrow is yours."

54 Ibid., p. 138, l. 101. Translation: "Leaves and fruit blew from the trees."

55 Ibid., l. 114. Translation: "Many brooks went completely dry."

56 Ibid., p. 138, ll. 107-108. Translation: "Whereat his flock that heard him lament left off grazing and took to bleating."
Tous animaux Loyse regretterent,
Excepté loups de mauvaise nature.57

Marot enlarges on this theme including in his list of mourners the sea, the young dolphins, the blackened lily and the fleeces of the lambs, and particularly the names of birds and beasts. He goes farther than Spenser in expressing what Ruskin called "the pathetic fallacy."

Spenser avoids these exaggerations; in mentioning the turtle on a bared branch, he is obviously translating literally. Philomèle is an appropriate reference to include, although Spenser makes a change in the spelling:

```
Sur l'arbre sec s'en complaissant Philomene;
L'aronde en fait cris piteux et trenchans;
La tourterelle en gemit, et en mains
Semblable duel, et j'accorde à leurs chants.58

The Turtle on the bared branch,
Lamented the wound, that death did launch.

And Philomèle her song with tears doth steepes.
(II. 138-141)
```

Spenser describes the nymphs bringing cypress branches, the Muses carrying bitter elder branches: Marot calls on the Nymphs of Savoy to scatter flowers from her birthplace on Louise's marble tomb, naming fifteen different flowers with appropriate adjectives for each. This passage comes later in Marot expressing a triumphant mood. Spenser's use of nymphs is in a somber sense.

57 Ibid., p. 139, II. 117-120. Translation: "Hinds and stags stopped in bewilderment, beasts of prey and beasts of pasture, every animal grieved for Louise, excepting the ill-natured wolves."

58 Ibid., II. 125-128. Translation: "In the withered tree Philomena complains, the swallow utters piteous and piercing cries, the turtledove moans and shows like sorrow, and I am in accord with their songs."
In the last stanza before the traditional reversal of sentiment, Spenser enlarges on one of his favorite themes, taking advantage of the occasion to teach a lesson:

O trustlesse state of earthly things, and slipper hope
Of mortal men, that swinke and sweate for nought,
And shooting wide, doe misse the marked scope:
Now haue I learned (a lesson delyre bought)
That nys on earth assurance to be sought. (ll. 153-157)

He might have found a hint in Marot's line: "Rien n'est ça bas qui ceste mort ignore." 59 It suggests a passage in the parable of the rich man in the Gospel, the uncertainty of a long life, the foolishness of one who labors for the wrong goal and thus lives in vain. (Luke xii. 16-21)

With lines 163-179, Spenser gradually leads us into the transition from grief to joy. Herford claims that it is less beautiful in Spenser than in earlier pastorals because it is less sudden. Giving the reason first and the emotional appeal afterwards may be a logical procedure but it is also a less poetic one. 60 Marot's transition is sudden. It comes within a quatrain, the first line of which is steeped in an expression of grief:

Chantes, mes vers, fresche douleur conceue.
Non, taissez vous, c'est assis deplore;
Elle est aux champs Elisiens recue,
Hors des travaux de ce monde esplore. 61

In contrast to this abrupt change, Spenser first explains his reversal:

59 Harrison, p. 140, l. 157. Translation: "There is nought here below that does not know of this death."

60 Variorum Spenser, p. 412.

61 Harrison, p. 142, ll. 189-190. Translation: "Sing, my verses, fresh sorrow conceived. No, rather be silent; there has been enough lamenting. She has been received in the Elysian fields, beyond the labors of this distressful world."
But maugre death, and dreaded sisters deadly spight,
And gates of hell, and fyrle furies force;
She hath the bonds broke of eternall night,
Her soule unbased of the burdensome corpse. (ll. 163-166)

and then proceeds to counsel joy: "Why then weepes Lebbin so without remorse?"
(ll. 167).

Spenser places Dido as a reigning goddess among the saints, calls her a "blessed soule," and questions any further sorrow. Marot speaks of Loyse as beholding radiance, possessing eternal joy, "without fear, suffering or discomfort," in company of a thousand noble souls, pleasant animals, joy-giving immortal birds, among which is her parrot. He speaks of her as the "shepherdess of peace, one who knew how to arrange perfect harmony between shepherds."62 Spenser merely calls Dido the "saint of shepheards light" (l. 176) and "poor shepheards pryde." (l. 198) Both mention Elysian fields: "I see thee . . . Walkes in Elision fieldes so free," (ll. 178-179). "Elle est aux champs Elsiens recaus."63

Spenser philosophizes again in this passage. E. K. refers us to Plato. Riedner cites Phaedo 13 where he who is afraid to die is a lover not of wisdom, but of his body and of money and honor.64

Vnwise and wretched men to weste whatts good or ill,
We deeme of Death as doome of ill desert:
But knoow we fooles, what it vs brings vntil,
Dye would we dayly, once it to expert. (ll. 183-186)

---

63 Ibid., p. 142, l. 191. Translation: "She has been received in the Elysian fields."
64 Variorum Spenser, p. 413.
A similar vein of thought may be found in St. Luke: "For he who would save his life will lose it" (Luke ix.24). St. Paul says simply: "I die daily" (I Cor. xv.31). Marot is content with a more prosaic treatment:

Et nous ça bas, pleins d'humaines raisons,
Sommes marrys (ce semble) de son aise.65

Spenser's description of the fair fields, pleasant songs, fresh fields, green grass, and absence of danger finds its parallel in Marot's lines 193-202, 205-212. In the "comparison of nature and mankind with respect to life and death Spenser's eclogue echoes very definitely its source."66 It is the English poet who simplifies Marot's extended picture. Where Marot speaks of fruit "d'inestimable prix" and liquid "qui toute soif appaise,"67 Spenser labels the heavenly nourishment: "There drinks she Nectar with Ambrosia mixt!" (l. 195). True, Marot uses the term "ambrosienne" in describing the delights of heaven: "Car toute odeur ambrosienne y fleurent,"68 and on the whole, offers a much more detailed description of the joys of the other world than does Spenser.

In the concluding verses Spenser ignores Marot's invocation of the Nymphs to scatter flowers and the god Pan to sing the praises of the dead queen for him. Marot's Colin demands his prize for having complied with Thenot's re-

65Harrison, p. 142, ll. 203-204. Translation: "And we below, full of human reasons, are grieved (it seems) at her joy."

66Jones, p. 64.

67Harrison, p. 142. Translation: "of inestimable price," and "which appeases every thirst."

68Ibid., l. 198. Translation: "For every ambrosial fragrance flourishes there."
quest: "Delivre moy le chalumeau promys."  

Spenser shows a nice discernment in bringing his eclogue to an end. Echoing Marot, he has Thenot address Colin as "franck shepheard": The word in Marot had double significance as frank and French, a play on words which is missed completely in the English rendition. Marot's nightfall is exchanged for Spenser's "mistle," the reward is given, and the poem ends. Spenser's use of "Colins Emblemes," La mort my mord, is really an open admission of his indebtedness to Marot who used it in the preface of each of his works.

Friedland remarks: "For us the most interesting case of borrowing is the motto to the November eclogue: La mort my mord. This is the impresa of Clément Marot; his private seal, and as personal to him almost as his name. Thus, by the use of Marot's emblem, Spenser makes the most unequivocal of acknowledgments as to the source of the November eclogue."  

Throughout the "November" Eclogue, Spenser uses or discards at will what he finds in Marot's eclogue. He employs Marot's ideas as a springboard from which to launch his own imaginative interpretation and development. Where Marot uses an abundance of internal rhyme, Spenser counters with alliterative effects. A bare thought in Marot is expanded beyond expectation in Spenser. Lessons are brought home: "(Whose turne shall be the next?)"; conclusions are drawn: "O trustlesse state of earthly things . . ."; fears are banished, "doome of ill desert." Extraneous details are omitted. Given the point of

---

69 Harrison, p. 144, l. 255. Translation: "Hand over to me the promised pipe."

70 Variorum Spenser, pp. 633-634.
departure in Marot, Spenser achieves a practically original poem. Miss Borland states that 106 lines of the "November" Eclogue are borrowed completely from Marot. Her conclusions are open to doubt. After a close check, eighty lines are found to be direct borrowings, although other lines contain the germ of ideas upon which Spenser elaborates. Spenser seems to imitate many of Marot's redundancies.

Spenser apparently wrote much of the Shepheardes Calender in 1578 while he was secretary to Bishop Young of Rochester. This fact was noted by the late Sir Israel Gollancz in 1907 when he presented to the British Academy "a collection of books of travel bound together and annotated throughout which belonged to Gabriel Harvey, Spenser's great friend. One of the items in the collection is 'The Traveller of Ierome Turler,' imprinted at London 1575; and the title page bears in Gabriel Harvey's handwriting the following statement:-- 'Ex dono Edmundi Spenceri, Episcopi Roffensis Secretarii, 1578.' Dr. Young, Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, Spenser's own college, had been created Bishop of Rochester in 1578.

Legouis reminds us that the poetry of Spenser grew out of an academic soil, encouraged by scholars such as Harvey and E. K., possibly Edward Kirke, a fellow student at Cambridge. These two men "were not only learned but decidedly pedantic . . . gluttonous readers of books of all sorts, ancient and modern, with a preference for grammarians and critics, in the true spirit of

---


the Renaissance. The commentary which E. K. added to Spenser's eclogues quaintly testifies to this. Any discussion of Spenser's eclogues would perhaps be incomplete without a few words about this commentary. Atkins says it was a notable attempt at editing which represented an adaptation of the marginal notes or scholia of ancient grammarians on classical texts, and an innovation which its author recognized would seem 'strange and rare' to English Readers. Judson suggests that all three, Spenser, Harvey, and E. K., might have cooperated "in preparing the editorial material, working together as three young college friends might, to mystify the public and to accomplish certain ends, such as stimulating an interest in the works of both Harvey and Spenser." Such a procedure was not unknown to either Italian or to French literature.

Pierre de Ronsard published his first major work Les Amours I, with an accompanying prose explanation or commentary by Marc-Antoine Muret.

With minor exceptions the commentaries of Muret and E. K. follow the same pattern. Miss Adams has listed the analogies between the two works. Both are introduced by means of an address or letter to a third person. E. K. addresses his "Epistle" to "The Most Excellent and Learned both Orator and Poete, Mayster Gabriell Harvey"; Muret writes his "Preface" to "Monsieur Adam Fumee, Conseiller du Roy en son Parlement à Paris," and learned poet, mathematician, and philosopher. Obviously the men addressed, Harvey and Fumee, had manifested

---

73 Legouis, p. 53.
76 Dodge, p. 5.
an interest in letters and would be likely therefore to appreciate the poetic accomplishments of Spenser and Ronsard respectively. 77

Each commentator claims to be a good friend of the poet whose work he explains, following the pattern set by the friends of Petrarch, Benivieni, and Mantuan. Both are much concerned about the envy of other poets and both justify the use of coined or archaic words. Their appeal is to a learned audience. "The obscurity of the poet's meaning, the necessity for a gloss to explain words, phrases, and meanings, and the highly prized circumstances of the commentator's knowing the poet personally—all a portion of E. K.'s heritage—are anticipated by Muret's [example]." 78

From the time of the early Fathers of the Church, commentaries had been made to explain debatable texts. Because Petrarch had conceived allegory as the essential poetic principle, he considered a key necessary to all poetry. E. K. and Muret shared this tradition. 79

Contempt for the critic is very much a part of the sixteenth-century picture. In this respect, E. K. and Muret are no exception. On the other hand, each commentator expresses a desire for literary patronage for the poet he is championing. Spenser in making use of E. K. follows a scholarly tradition, thereby marking his work as worthy of respectful attention.

In the "Glosse" to the "November" Eclogue, E. K. speaks of "an elegant


78 Ibid., p. 27.

79 Ibid., p. 28.
Epanorthosis." Epanorthosis comments: "The poet's images are carefully labelled, with Greek names, like the flowers in a botanical garden. E. K. further flaunts his knowledge of classical lore by reference to the "Muses well Castalias," the "sadde and waylefull Muse," "grievous gospes," "Philomale," the three fates, "Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos," "Furies . . . three," "Elysian fields," and "Nectar and Ambrosia." He comments on various lines of the poem: "a gallant exclamation," "a lively icon or representation," "a notable and sententious comparison." He expands the meaning of passages, such as the "Embleme," interprets others briefly, and suggests a certain playfulness by deliberately cloaking the identity of "Dido" and "Lobbin."

What strikes one forcibly both in his "Epistle" and "Glosses" is E. K.'s assurance, his complete dedication to this "new poet," the faith he places in Spenser's literary excellence, and the daring with which he seeks literary patronage.

---

80 Variorum Spenser, p. 111.
81 Lagouis, p. 53.
CHAPTER III

POETIC DICTION IN THE "NOVEMBER" ECLOGUE

"The perfection of style is to be clear without being mean." 1 Centuries before Spenser's time, Aristotle had issued this dictum. He insisted that "nothing contributes more to produce a clearness of diction that is remote from commonness than the lengthening, contracting, and alteration of words. For by deviating in exceptional cases from the normal idiom, the language will gain distinction; while, at the same time, the partial conformity with usage will give perspicuity." 2 That Spenser wittingly or unwittingly followed this advice, there is ample proof in the "November" Eclogue.

The term "Poetic Diction" is used advisedly since it "ranges in meaning from artificial or mannered language to simple language which yet was considered sufficiently dignified to be an appropriate medium for imaginative writing." 3 Spenser spanned the breadth of this meaning in his poetry.

As a boy, Spenser had had a great schoolmaster, Richard Mulcaster. This man had trained him well, not only in the study and reading of the Middle

---

2 Ibid., p. 30.
English authors, especially Chaucer and Langland, but also in the classical and contemporary languages, Latin, Greek, French, and Italian.

Mulcaster had a strong influence on the young Spenser. Perhaps due to his recommendation, Spenser translated Marot's "Les Visions de Petrarch" and the sonnets of du Bellay into English verse for Van der Noot. Like Ronsard and du Bellay, Mulcaster believed in the vernacular and felt that it should be made equal to the classics.¹

After many years of teaching experience, indeed after Spenser had gained status by means of his Shepheardes Caederland, Mulcaster in 1582 published his Elementarie. Like the proverbial leopard, schoolmasters do not radically change their teaching techniques though they will improve, adjust, and even add to their pedagogical wealth through the years. One may safely assume, then, that Spenser was trained at the Merchant-Taylors' School along the lines set forth in Mulcaster's book.

"The first part of the Elementarie 'entreateth cheafellie of the right writ-
ing of our English tung.' Mulcaster emphasizes the importance of the school boy being well trained in the reading, writing, and grammar of the mother tongue, which should not be 'despised as rude and incapable.' He says, 'no tung is more fine than another naturallie, but by the industry of the speaker, which ... endevoreth himself to garnish it with eloquence, and to enrich it with learning.'"²

It was under Mulcaster's tutelage that Spenser acquired the fundamentals

²Ibid., p. 48.
of his education and learned to believe in the necessity of improving his "English tongue." This became evident in the extension of his vocabulary by the reviving of archaic words, borrowing from foreign tongues, and coining words. His intensity may be gauged by the tone of his letters to Harvey. In 1581, writing to his friend, he exploded, "Why, a God's name may we not have the kingdom of our language?"

Mulcaster's views on the nature of language and the necessity for labor, freedom, and boldness in the improvement of the English tongue paralleled the views of the Pléiade and especially of du Bellay's *La défense et illustration de la langue française.* Du Bellay and Ronsard, as we have seen in Chapter II, had their influence upon Spenser. When he advises future poets to be fearless in coining new words, du Bellay speaks for his colleagues in the Pléiade as well as for himself, and Spenser obeys: "Ne crains doncques, poete futur, d'innover quelque terme..." Further, he encourages them to enrich their work by imitating the ancient poets and by borrowing, in moderation, both from the learned and the working man's vocabulary.

Ronsard in his *Abbrége de l'art poetique francais* suggests borrowing from dialects: "Tu saguras dextrement choisir et approprier à ton ouvrage les vocables plus significatifs des dialectes de nostre France... pour veu que

---


8 William Lindsay Renwick, "Mulcaster and DuBellay," *MLR,* XVII (January 1922), 287.

ils soient bons, et que proprement ils expriment ce que tu veux dire.\textsuperscript{10} He urges the use of imagination in inventing new forms, a practice Spenser readily adopted: "L'invention n'est autre chose que le bon naturel d'une imagination . . . car, tout ainsi que le but de l'orateur est de persuader, ainsi celui du Poete est d'imiter, inventer, et代表rter les choses qui sont, ou qui peuvent estre, vraisemblables.\textsuperscript{11}

We shall see how faithfully Spenser followed this advice. He conscientiously used provincialisms and archaisms, drawing from Chaucer, from dialectical usage, and from poets who were his early contemporaries or immediate predecessors.\textsuperscript{12} In doing this he opposed such Cambridge scholars as Cheke, Ascham, and Wilson, the most famous English educationists of his day. Spenser's "creation of language was the negation of all that was authoritative in extant English criticism.\textsuperscript{13}

Wilson in his Arte of Rhetorique warns against the use of strange "ynkehorne" words and advises his fellow countrymen to "so speake as is com-

\textsuperscript{10}Pierre de Ronsard, Abbégé de l'art poétique françois, in Oeuvres Complètes (France, 1950), II, 998. Translation: "You will know how to choose dexterously and appropriate for your work the most significant words of the dialects of our France . . . provided that they be good and that they express correctly what you wish to say."

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 999. Translation: "Invention is nothing else than the natural gift of an imagination . . . for, just as the aim of an orator is to persuade, so that of the poet is to imitate, invent, and represent things which are, or which can be, probable."


monly received: neither sekyng to be ouer fine, nor yet liuyng ouer carelessse, vsyng our speache as most men do, & orderyng our wittes, as the fewest have done. . . ." Puttenham, at a later date, discourages young poets from using archaic words, adopting foreign words, or introducing dialect into the English language. He admits that he is guilty of all three offenses but insists that others may not excuse themselves on that account. Poets are warned against "Universities where Schollers use much peevish affectation of words out of the primitive languages," as well as discouraged from affecting the "terms of Northernmen, such as they use in sayly talks." Gascoigne, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, speaks of poetical license as a "shrewe fellow" which "covereth many faults in a verse; it maketh wordes longer, shorter, of mo sillables, of fewer, newer, older, truer, falser; and to conclude, it turkeneth all things at pleasure. . . ." Such stiff, pedantic, artificial language was, Lowell assures us, the poetical inheritance of style and diction.

Renwick says Spenser treated the English language as if it belonged to him and not he to it. English was practically a new language as far as poetry was considered; it remained for the poet Spenser to enrich, embellish, and enlarge his native tongue. The "decorum" which controlled phrasing, the use, and the choice of images and figures, controlled also the first element in

---

14 Smith, I, 86
15 Puttenham, pp. 144-145.
16 Smith, pp. 53-54.
style, the choice of words. In this respect, E. K. speaks only of Spenser's revival of old words:

And firste of the wordes to speake, I graunt they be something hard, and of most men vnused, yet both English, and also vsed of most excellent Authors and most famous Poetes. . . . But whether he vseth them by such casualtye and custome, or of set purpose and choyse, as thinking them fittest for such rusticall rudenesse of shepheards, eyther for that theyr rough sounds would make his rymes more ragged and rustical, or els because such olde and obsolete wordes are most vsed of country folke, sure I think, and think I think not amisse, that they bring great grace and, as one would say, auctoritie to the verse . . . for in my opinion it is one special prayse, of many whych are dew to this Poete, that he hath laboured to restore, as to theyr rightfull heritage such good and naturall English words, as have ben long time out of vse and almost cleane disherited.

Decorum dictated that the pastoral belonged to the base style "to be holden within their thether by a low, myld and simple maner of utterance, creeping rather then clyming, & marching rather then mounting upwardes." This partially explains Spenser's use of provincialisms and archaic words, "his dews obseruing of Decorum euerye where, in personages, in seasons, in matter, in speach," by "following the example of the best and most auncient Poetes, which devised this kind of wryting, being both so base for the matter, and homely for the manner."

E. K. seems to be apologizing in the Epistle for the "old and unwonted words" used by his author friend. Herford claims that the language used by

---

18 Renwick, Edmund Spenser, p. 75.
19 Variorum Spenser, pp. 7-8.
20 Kermoda, p. 30, quoting Webbe.
21 Variorum Spenser, p. 7.
22 Ibid., p. 10.
Spenser in the Shepheardes Calender is "as composite and heterogeneous as its literary descent; it is neither the English of Chaucer nor that of Lancashire peasants, but in E. K.'s phrase, a gallimaufry of dialect from the provinces, colloquialisms from everyday life, ancient terms from black-letter folios, and neologisms from Spenser's own brain—all interwoven upon a ground of the choicest contemporary phraseology." 23 Despite the anxiety of E. K. to point out Spenser's conformity to the rules of decorum, Lowell says "whoever looks into the glossary appended to the 'Calendar' by E. K. will be satisfied that Spenser's object was to find unhackneyed and poetical words rather than such as should seem more on a level with the speakers." 24

Gascoigne had warned poets to "avoyde prolilitie," one of the glaring defects of Elizabethan writers. "But do you (if you wil follow my advise) eschue prolixities and knit vp your sentences as compendiously as you may." 25 E. K. seems to echo this when he commands Spenser for avoiding loose sentence structure: "Now, for the knitting of sentences, whych they call the ioynts and members thereof, and for al the compasse of the speach, it is round without roughnesse." 26 The "ioynts and members," Clark says, "are the sola and commas of the oratorical prose rhythm." 27

Spenser was extravagant and unrestrained in his experiments on language,

---

23 Harford, p. xlix.
24 Lowell, p. 156, footnote.
25 Smith, I, 56.
26 Variorum Spenser, p. 9.
27 Donald Leman Clark, Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance (New York, 1922), p. 82.
cutting down or altering a word on his own authority or adopting a mere corrupt pronunciation to suit his meter or rhyme scheme. He was recklessly impatient in coining a word, making one word do the duty of another, interchanging actives and passives, and transferring epithets from their proper subjects. These bold borrowings, adaptations, and innovations in language and metrical form set the pattern for other Elizabethans.

Richard Mulcaster in his Elementarie had insisted that the English tongue would prove very pliable "if our learned countrymen will put to their labor." "Spenser," says Padelford, "was one pupil who took the precepts of his master seriously and who did put to his labor, but he early recognised that while the full resources of the native language should be explored and employed, it should likewise be enriched with judicious importations from abroad.

In a fairly exhaustive study of the French sources for Spenser's vocabulary, Mrs. Thornton points out some interesting details. In the "November" Eclogue one word dates from the eleventh century, one from the twelfth century, seven from the thirteenth century, and nine from the fourteenth century. Thirty-eight are words of French origin used by Chaucer. One is from the fifteenth century, three from the sixteenth century, and ten are listed as French

28 Church, p. 134.
29 Watkins, p. 267.
30 Frederick M. Padelford, "Aspects of Spenser's Vocabulary," Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hardin Craig (Stanford University, California, 1941) p. 87.
31 Ibid.
32 Thornton, pp. 90-367. Words of French origin found in "November" have been culled from this source and tabulated in Table I.
but given no century listing. (See Table I, p. 48)

Of these words, the sixteenth century ones are neologisms or coined words. Though the word "tinct" (1. 107) is designated as a French derivative by Mrs. Thornton, the NED suggests it is from a classical or vulgar Latin. "Embrace" (1. 109) is a "French Renaissance word introduced by Spenser"; "dreariment" (1. 36) and "iouissance" (1. 2) are also invented words with a French flavor. Draper says "dreariment" was probably coined by analogy with "meriment" (1. 34) to rhyme with it, while "iouissance," he says, is a convenient invention, probably to escape the difficult feminine rhyme of "joyeuse." The word "merimake" (1. 9) is, according to Skeat, a coined word in place of merrymaking. He says also that Spenser coined, and badly coined, the word "expert" (1. 186) to mean "experience."

Since the English language was in a fluid state during the sixteenth century and spelling was almost a matter of personal opinion, it is not always easy to distinguish among archaic words which came directly from Old English, those which were later developments, and French words which were introduced into the English language in earlier centuries but were, by that time, accepted as English.

"It may be said . . . that Spenser had such a thorough and intimate knowledge of and love for the French language and literature that French words, phrases, and even grammatical constructions flowed freely and naturally from

---

33 John W. Draper, "The Gloses to Spenser's 'Shepheardes Calender,'" JEGP, XVIII (April 1919), 565.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Earliest English Use</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Earliest English Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assurance</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>14th Century</td>
<td>jouisaunce</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>availe</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>ioyes</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bayes</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>ioyfull</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beasts</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>layes</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beauties</td>
<td>88, 94</td>
<td></td>
<td>list</td>
<td>7, 19</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blow</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>mantled</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burdenous</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>maugre</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cease</td>
<td>171</td>
<td></td>
<td>misgovernaunce</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaplets</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>mortal</td>
<td>123, 196</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chere</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muse, Muses</td>
<td>3, 19, 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colourd</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td>nosegaves</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constraint</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>nymphs</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corpse</td>
<td>166</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oline</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cracknells</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td>perfore</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cream</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td>pleasaut</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daunger</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
<td>pleasance</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disdayne</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
<td>poore</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doolful</td>
<td>204</td>
<td></td>
<td>prayse</td>
<td>18, 78, 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ildre</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
<td>raignes</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>embraue</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>relieue</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entertayne</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td>rejoyce</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eniyoes</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rosemaree</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eternall</td>
<td>165</td>
<td></td>
<td>round</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expert</td>
<td>186</td>
<td></td>
<td>ryme, rymes</td>
<td>43, 51, 55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feeble</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
<td>saynt</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floureit</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>simple</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>francke</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
<td>sourse</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fresh</td>
<td>36, 139</td>
<td></td>
<td>souenaunce</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furies</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>souereigne</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girldons</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>store</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grieve</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>strayne</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guerdon</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>sollein</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haust</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>tinct</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>herse</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>virelayes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iolly</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>waste</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aThis table is based on words of French origin in Thornton, pp. 90-367.*
his pen. And in reviving Chaucerisms he unconsciously chose many words that
were of French origin believing them to be native English."35

E. K. glosses those words which might be supposed to be less familiar to
the educated readers of his time. Hence, the dialect words, neologisms, and
borrowings are deliberately spelled out. The pedantic display of classical
learning might have been added as a reassuring factor that the "new Poet"
belonged to the scholarly world. E. K. makes a few mistakes in the "November"
gloss. He gives the meaning for "astert" (l. 187) as "befall unawares,"36
but Skeat says that this "is a good instance of the peril a poet incurs when
using archaic terms which he does not well understand. The true meaning of
"asterte" is to escape from, to start or get away, as in Chaucer, 'Knightes
Tale,' (l. 737) 'Ches which thou wilt, for thou schalt not asterte.' Thus
Spenser's line, literally translated, means, 'The shepherd can there escape
from no danger,' which is just the opposite of what is intended. The fact is
that Spenser, in using archaic words, frequently made mistakes. . . ."37
Another incorrect gloss which Skeat notes is "welked," (l. 13) as "shortned."
The true meaning, he insists, is "withered" from "welken," to wither, decay.38

"Spenser treats the sources of his diction, as he treats the sources of
his ideas and images, unhampered by too precise a regard for the original. He
shifts at will, sense, syntax, and pronunciation, sometimes for his rhyme or

---
35Thornton, p. 322.
36Variorum Spenser, p. 112.
37Skeat, p. 478.
38Ibid., p. 476.
meter, sometimes, apparently from caprice or forgetfulness." This latter criticism does not betoken the careful craftsman which some scholars have insisted Spenser exemplified. Why he used the words he did, why he apparently made mistakes in choice, why he changed spelling, syntax, or meaning are at least open questions. Had we a copy of The English Poet, we would also in all probability have the key to the strange assortment of words which Spenser so liberally used. Certainly, the Commentary, Argument, and Epistle to Harvey must have had Spenser’s approval. In all probability E. K. was echoing Spenser’s convictions as to what constituted serious poetry.

If we exclude all the words glossed by E. K., the dialect words, neologisms, borrowings from French, and classical allusions, a great many words remain which might well have seemed strange even to Englishmen of Spenser’s day. These words were drawn from earlier writers. In Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower, Spenser found ample treasure from which to choose verbal curiosities. His archaisms were “sufficiently well-known to be, with a little help, intelligible, and sufficiently out of common use to give the character of antiquity to a poetry which employed them.”

In his detailed study of Spenser’s archaisms, Wagner notes five verbs, three adverbs, and one noun found in the “November” Eclogue, which derive from Old English; other words he traces to Middle English; some words he labels dialect words or words having archaic form. (See Table II, p. 58) One

39Draper, p. 573.
40Church, p. 44.
example of an Old English derivative found in early English writers is the verb "con," very commonly found in the sense of "to know," and "to be able," and answering to the Old English "cuman." In modern English it signifies "to learn, to study over."\(^{42}\) In "November," Spenser employs "con" in the archaic sense of "I know": "Yet as I conne, my conning I will strayne" (1. 52).

The "y", employed as a prefix, answers to the German and Anglo-Saxon \([i.e., \text{Old English}] ge\) and the Gothic ga which is etymologically the same with Latin com and cum. In Anglo-Saxon \([i.e., \text{Old English}] ge\) was prefixed to imperfects as well as to past participles; in Old \([i.e., \text{Middle}]\) English ge was reduced to y or i, and was usually prefixed to past participles, but sometimes also to past tenses, to infinitives and to adjectives.\(^{43}\)

"In Chaucer i before verbs generally expresses the perfect participles of the verb... That Spenser availed himself of this ancient verbal prefix in the same way as Old \([i.e., \text{Middle}]\) English writers did, may be gathered from the following instances": "Istabled" (1. 15), "ygoe" (11. 76-81), and "yclad" (1. 118). In the case of "ynough" (1. 207), "not only the prefix y, but the whole form has been borrowed from the older language."\(^{44}\)

The case is entirely the reverse with the prefix be which is often omitted in Middle English before verbs that require it in modern English. Thus the

\(^{42}\)Ibid., p. 20. Very little has been done in recent years in English in the field of Spenser's diction. This thesis has had to rely on older sources which have not, as yet, been superseded. Miss Pope confines her study to the Faerie Queene. McElderry substantiates Wagner's statements on individual archaisms.

\(^{43}\)Ibid., p. 28.

\(^{44}\)Ibid., pp. 28-29.
form "gynnes" (l. 208) may be regarded as archaic.45

The negative form was frequently employed in Middle English to connect affirmative with negative sentences; Spenser uses this form in three instances in the "November" Eclogue. One example follows: "The mournful Muse in myrrh now list me masks" (l. 19).

"It was very common in Old [i.e., Middle] English that nouns ending in a sibilant, or followed by a word beginning with a sibilant, did not take the sign of the genitive..."46 This peculiarity of the older language is also to be met with thirteen times in Spenser's eclogue. "For beauties prayse" (l. 94) is one example. The use of his for 's, the sign of the possessive case, particularly after a proper name, arose in very early times from the possessive inflection 's being separated by scribes from its noun.47 "Dido the greate shephearde his daughter sheene" (l. 38).

A contracted form of more, "mo," is frequently used by Middle English writers. Spenser uses it thus: "Sing now ye shepheards daughters, sing no moe" (l. 77). The Middle English form "hem" is used for the modern "them" four times as in: "Now she is gon that safely did hem keepe" (l. 137).48

Several archaic forms of verbs have been used constantly by Spenser. When the meter requires a distinct syllable, he employs the ancient form of "eth" instead of the common Elizabethan termination of "s": hence, "loatheth"

---

45 Ibid., p. 29.
46 Ibid., p. 36.
48 Ibid., pp. 38-40.
(l. 13), "floureth" (l. 86), "lyeth" (l. 59, 84). In Spenser the third person singular of the verb to list constantly occurs in this archaic form: "The mornefull Muse in myrth now list ne maske" (l. 19). He shows a decided predilection for the Midland Middle English inflection in the present plural en: "sleepen" (l. 24), "reluuen" (l. 89), "doen" (l. 145), and "bringen" (l. 147).

"In Old [i.e., Middle] English the combination of the modal and auxiliary verbs with the negative ne gave rise to some contractions which are of so frequent occurrence [sic] in Spenser that they constitute a very striking feature of his archaic idiom. Thus, a contraction takes place between the negative and the third person singular of the present indicative of the auxiliary to be, by which we have nyne, or nis = ne is = is not, as for instance in the passage: "Thenot, now nis the time of merimake" (l. 9).49 Other auxiliary verbs, "han" and "southe," are found but once in the "November" Eclogue:

And han be watered at the Muses well. (l. 30)
So well she southe the shepherds entertayne. (l. 95)

Wagner cites the English Dialect Society to explain that numerous words which occur in the English provincial dialects belong to an earlier period. Thus they are stamped with a somewhat more archaic and indigenous character than that possessed by the standard English. In some northern districts, remnants of the Old English may be found unaltered and, so to say, in their purest state.50 Wrenn clarifies the term "pure": "The Elizabethan practice of speaking of Chaucer and other older writers as examples of 'pure' English (an adjective which they also applied to dialects, especially the more conservative

---

49 Ibid., p. 52.
50 Ibid., p. 10.
northern and western forms) is to be connected with the natural association of 'purity' with antiquity (real or supposed) and archaism.  

Spenser's stay in the North after leaving Cambridge must have helped to heighten his predilection for the idiom which he found there almost as "pure" as it was in the poems of Chaucer. Words such as "bene," "conne," "mizzle," "woode," and "sike" are still in use in the Lancashire dialect. The word "clout" apparently has more than one meaning. In Wagner, it is "a term applied to any worthless fragment of cloth." Skeat traces it to the verb meaning "to patch" and to the Anglo-Saxon clut, a patch, especially as it is said of strengthening a shoe with an iron plate, called in Norfolk a cleat or clout.

Whereas Skeat relates the dialect word "vnkempt" to the Anglo-Saxon caemban, to comb, Draper finds it is a locus desperatus. He says that E. K. "suggests a Latin origin, which is quite plausible in view of the Latin incomports. The Northern dialect unkempt, however, is a more probable source." Draper lists the words which are limited to the northern part of England:
carke, heame, heat, herse, mynt, shane, tene, varke. Add to these the East


52 Wagner, p. 12. Frederic Ives Carpenter amplifies this definition by adding "dish-clout" in a marginal note on his personal copy of Wagner's dissertation now in University of Chicago Library.

53 Skeat, p. 491.

54 Ibid., p. 537.

55 Draper, p. 569. In general, Draper's study substantiates Skeat and Wagner.

56 Ibid., p. 560.
Anglian "cosset," the commonly used "bene," the peculiar "clout," the Biblical "mizzle," the word "sike," and "until," the northern form for "unto." Many of these words existed in Middle English; most of them are of Old English derivation and are, therefore, included in Table II, p. 58. "Dialect words are everywhere freely mingled with cultured words, even with Latin neologisms, which no rustic lips ever fashioned." In studying the proper names used by Spenser in this eclogue, an unusual amalgam may be noted: Dido is from a classical source, Vergil's *Aeneid*; Colin and Thenot are most probably from the French source, Marot; Lobbin and Rosalind have a definitely rustic tinge.

It seems reasonable to presume that a word was not archaic in Spenser's time if the *OED* gives ten to fifteen quotations well-scattered through the period 1500-1650. This is especially true if they are found in well-known authors and in contexts where deliberate archaism would be unlikely.

Among others, McElderry lists seven archaic words which do not appear outside the Calendar: *als, nis, yore, bynesmoort, flourret, source, bearre.* He points out six dialect words some of which E. K. had glossed: *huke, heam, thilke, warks, hem* and *mizzle.* Just as the words "thee, thy, thou, and thyne" were a commonplace in Elizabethan times so McElderry notes the superlatives such as "mornfulst" (1. 54) and "meetest" (1. 11), unusual to us, were common in Spenser's time. He is credited with the introduction of such phrases as

---

57 Herford, p. lvi.
58 Variorum Spenser, p. 627.
59 Bruce Robert McElderry, Jr., "Archaism and Innovation in Spenser's Poetic Diction," *PMLA.* XLII (March 1932), 150-157. McElderry attempts to classify Spenser's archaisms and innovations into words considered "old" or "new" by Spenser's contemporaries. He hastens to add that such a classification is obviously impossible in anything resembling absolute certainty.
"Caten pypes" (1. 24) and "shepeheard swayne" (1. 48). The rustic effect of his verses is heightened also by the shortening of the proper name "Lobbin" to "Lobb" (1. 168).

In conclusion, there has always been a difference between a spoken and a literary language. Perhaps this fact accounts for the varying opinions expressed by scholars concerning Spenser's diction. He used archaic words varied in measure and quality according to the demands of his immediate literary purpose but he surrounded them with a rich variety of dialect, foreign, and coined words. This collection, which would deserve E. K.'s scornful term "gallimaufry" in other authors, became a new literary diction in Spenser's flowing verse, reflecting the eclectic character of his sources and a conscious effort to approximate rusticity. In speaking of Spenser's use of archaisms, Wagner says, he "knew better than any one else how to use archaic forms and words in order to dignify rather than debase the language of his age."60 His archaisms shed a scholarly dignity on the "November" Eclogue in particular. Herein the subject matter, the solemnity, and the importance of the elegy are duly emphasized by the poetic diction Spenser employs.

His teacher, Richard Mulcaster, had reason to be proud of Spenser as one who took seriously his lessons acclaiming "the conquering mind, such as he must have, which either sekes himself, or is desirous to se his cuntree tung enlarged, and the same made the instrument of all his knowledge."61 That Spenser had "the conquering mind" is abundantly clear in his choice of vocabulary,

60 Wagner, p. 8.
61 Renwick, Edmund Spenser, p. 93, citing Richard Mulcaster, Elementarie.
which may be characterized as "essentially English and essentially simple. His most copious innovations, made in the use of archaic words, are English."\footnote{Variorum Spenser, p. 626, citing Emma F. Pope.}

Perhaps poets are the ones who are best capable of appreciating the complexity, elasticity, and flexibility of language. Spenser changed in some way even the foreign words which he borrowed, as 
\footnote{Ibid., p. 104.}
\textit{iouisaunce, embraue, dreeriment.}
The emotional impact of his word repetition, the suggestiveness of his use of familiar dialect words in unfamiliar surroundings, and the mood changes inherent in his use of neologisms and borrowed words combine to give to the "November" Eclogue an excellence which E. K. felt obliged to acknowledge in the \textit{Argument}: "This Eclogue is \ldots farre passing \ldots in myne opinion all the other Eclogues of this booke."\footnote{Ibid., p. 104.}

\begin{flushleft}
Spenser molded a new language by compounding the riches of an earlier English with the expressiveness of a current dialect. Following Aristotle's advice, he gave us a diction clear and "remote from commonness," since he spared neither the lengthening, the contracting, nor the altering of words.\footnote{Aristotle, p. 29.}
Where others hesitated, he dared to deviate from the normal idiom. "In the "kingdom of our language,"\footnote{Letter to Harvey, quoted in Watkins, p. 265.} his daring has endured.
\end{flushleft}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Derivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>algate</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>als</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>also</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>astert</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>alarm</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bale</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>ball, package of merchandise</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bene</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>form of &quot;to be&quot;</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>besprint</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>sprinkle</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>betight</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>betide</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bringen</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>bring</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bynempt</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>promised</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carke</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>sorrow</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conne</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>know, be able</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conning</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>ability</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clout</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>patch</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>couth</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>could</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slight</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>prepare, put on</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doen</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doth</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>does</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drent</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>drenched</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eke</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>also</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floureth</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>blooms</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grieles</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>horrid</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gynees</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>begins</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>han</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hem</td>
<td>pronoun</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>them</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hent</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>gone</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hye</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>hasten</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laye</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>stall</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loatheth</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>loathes</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lyeth</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>lies</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>maid</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meint</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>mingled</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mo</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne</td>
<td>connective</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>neither, not</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nis, nys</td>
<td>contraction</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>is not</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reliuen</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>relive</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheene</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>shining or fair</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sike</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>such</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE II (continued)

**WORDS OF ARCHAIC ORIGIN IN THE "NOVEMBER" DIALOGUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Derivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sits</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>It befits</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleepen</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slipper</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>slippery</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swincke</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>toil</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tene</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>vexation</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thilke</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>that same</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>titmose</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>titmouse</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vnderfong</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>undertake</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vnkempt</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>uncombed, rough, rugged</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wanton</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>indiscreet</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weete</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wote</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>knew</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>were</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>were</td>
<td>Middle English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whilome</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>once upon a time</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wight</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>body</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yclad</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>clad</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ygoe</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>gone</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ynnne</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>lodging</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ynough</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>enough</td>
<td>Old English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yore</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>time past</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ystabled</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>confined</td>
<td>Archaic form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Sources for the material in this table: Wagner, Skeat, Herford, Draper, and McElderry, cited in the body of the thesis.*
Chapter IV

Versification in the "November" Dialogue

Aristotle says that it is imitation rather than the use of verse which makes the poet, but he clearly regards rhythm, and possibly meter, as a natural part of poetry. "Imitation and harmony and rhythm being natural to us, metres are manifestly sections of rhythm."1 "The word 'rhythm' is derived from the Greek word meaning 'flow,' but it is a measured flow."2 Deutsch amplifies this concept: Meter "imposes on verse a regular recurrence of durations, stresses, or syllables that is intended to parcel a line into equal divisions of time."3

English poets from Chaucer's day to ours, by using, adapting, or combining the metrical systems of the Anglo-Saxons, the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the French, have molded a tradition which in Spenser's day was still a bit tenuous.

The first work on English versification, one which Spenser doubtless warmly welcomed, though obviously he was not always in accord with its various prescriptions, was a brief pamphlet by Gascoigne published in 1575. It was called Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse. Gascoigne had apparently used as a model Ronsard's Abrégé de l'art poétique français, published ten

1Aristotle, p. 6.
3Ibid., p. 78.
years earlier in France. 4

The metrical systems known to men of Spenser's day, Renwick claims, "would be three: the quantitative system of the classics, the syllabic system of the French, and the system of Chaucer, which, like all men of his time, he would read as a somewhat irregular metre by omitting accented final 'e's' and anglicising most of the French accentuations." 5 The classical form of long and short syllables would be as familiar to him as the series of rhymed French lines, each containing a fixed number of syllables, or the Chaucerian series of lines, each containing a more or less fixed number of strong accents.

Certainly great poetry exists without benefit of meter. One has but to open the Bible and read the "Canticle of Canticles," the writings of Isaias, or David's lyric psalms to be convinced. But as Sidney in his Defense of Poesie admits, poets have chosen meter as the fittest clothing for that delightful teaching which is the hallmark of a poet, for meter elevates the words spoken. 6

In the "November" Eclogue, Spenser introduces the elegy by means of a dialogue between Colin and Thenot. Since the elegiac tradition pointed to the use of meter, Spenser, heeding the classical example of Theocritus and Vergil as well as the most recent influence of Marot, very naturally followed suit.

Nature herself, Aristotle states, discovered the appropriate measure for the dialogue, the iambic being, of all measures, the colloquial. 7 The iambic

---

5 Renwick, Edmund Spenser, p. 103.
6 Smith, I, 159.
7 Aristotle, p. 7.
was, moreover, the least artificial of poetic rhymes for an English-speaking audience. Spenser therefore employs it in his framework of linked quatrains, hiding, so to speak, the jewel of his elegy beneath the comparatively drab exterior of dialogue.

Thirteen linked quatrains introduce the elegy proper. Like Wyatt, Spenser freely borrowed this medium from Marot. Unlike any of his English predecessors, Chaucer alone excepted, Spenser gave to the iambic pentameter a melodious sweetness, an imaginative beauty, and a movement at once swift and supple. At the same time, "the skill with which this metre is made to conform to the rustic naïveté of the speakers, has a considerable charm."  

The "November" Eclogue has, in the Aristotelian tradition, a beginning, a middle, and an end. The middle of the poem is the dirge itself, fifteen lyrical stanzas which excel anything Marot could offer. E. K., not without prejudice, is rather emphatic on this point. Speaking of Spenser's borrowing from Marot, he adds, "But farre passing his reache, and in myne opinion all other the Eglogues of this booke."  

The intricate stanzas are handled with skill; Jones is tempted to compare them with the Lamentations of Palestrina, who was at that time giving new meaning to church music in Italy. Each admirable strophe begins with an alexandrine, descends stepwise through four pentameters and two tetrameters to the plaintive note of the dimeters. This is summed up by Professor Herford as "the expression of a recurring access or wave of emo-

---


9 Variorum Spenser, p. 104.

10 Jones, p. 70.
tion, marked at the onset (in a highly original manner) by the energetic and resonant Alexandrine, then gradually subsiding through verses of diminishing compass, until just before the close it rises in one expiring palpitation.11

The end comes quickly. One quatrain and a concluding couplet add the final note in which Steel experiences "a distinct flavour of the special Spenserian sweetness or succulence."12

As Thenot's plea to Colin gathers momentum, the pace of the dialogue seems to echo insistence; two, then four, and finally six stanzas of dialogue build up to the one stanza of acceptance in which Colin agrees to sing. Thenot's speech begins the dialogue part of the eclogue; he also concludes the poem in a laudatory vein with a very effective couplet. This is appropriate as a unifying element. By simple contrast, it also serves to highlight the beauty of the elegy.

The elegy forms a distinct departure from Marot, who, as we have seen, used the linked quatrain throughout his elegy. As the stanza grows to a length of ten lines, Spenser manipulates the structure to furnish a peculiar but pleasing variety. His gradual lessening of the line length comes to an abrupt pause with the first dimeter which effects a bold contrast to the longer lines preceding and following it. The second dimeter echoes the first, giving at times a melancholy tone, at times a joyous insistence, to the whole stanza. Repetition, a form of emphasis in any artistic medium, serves to underline or "hammer in" the heavy note of sorrow proper to the elegy. It is faintly remi-

11 Herford, p. 181.

niscient of the keenings of an earlier day.

The highly original line pattern of the elegy is $6babc_5cd_4d_2b_5d_2$. Steel remarks that "the two-beat eighth and tenth lines are of the nature of an interjected refrain, so that the decasyllabic ninth line really marks the prosodic and emotional conclusion of the stanza, and, by reverting to the rime of the second, fourth, and fifth lines, gives the effect of a movement finally subsiding after a soaring flight which has been poised for a moment at the middle of the stanza."\(^{13}\)

Spenser experimented with daring shifts of accent, something he hinted at in his second letter to Gabriel Harvey:

> For the onely or chiefest hardnesse, whyc seemeth, is in the accent: whyche sometime gapeth, and as it were yawneth illovour-edly, coming short of that it should, and sometime exceeding the measure of the number: as in carpenter, the middle sillable being used shorte in speache, when it shall be read long in verse, seemeth like a lame gosling, that draweth one legge after hir: and heaven, beeing used shorte as one sillable, when it is in verse, stretched out with a diastole, is like a lame dogge that holdes up one legge. But it is to be wonne with custome, and rough words must be subdued with use.\(^{14}\)

He frequently used the obsolete form ending "en" for verbs in order to complete a foot, "bringen" (l. 117);\(^{15}\) similarly, the "ed" of weak preterites and past participles is often sounded when it would ordinarily be silent: "And is / en-stáll / ed nowe / in heá / ueås hight" (l. 177). Many two or three-syllable words are telescoped into words of one or two syllables: some examples in the

\(^{13}\)Bib., p. 155.

\(^{14}\)Dodge, p. 771.

\(^{15}\)All references to individual lines are taken from the "November" Eclogue in the Variorum Spenser already cited.
"November" Elegies are "turnd" (1. 103), "wandering" (1. 136), and "learnd" (1. 156).

Within the quatrains, deviations from the decasyllabic line occur in three questionable places. If we read "watered" as a three-syllable word in "And hân / be wart / ersed at / the Hu / sees well" (1. 30), the line is lengthened to eleven syllables. If Spenser intended the "ered" to be slurred into one syllable, the line would conform to the usual decasyllabic form. In line 10, "Nor can to herye, nor with loue to playe," the "ye" should be pronounced as a separate syllable in the word "herye" but not in the word "playe." Given Spenser's arbitrary precedents, one may easily assume that he meant one to be accented and the other unaccented! Lastly, the word "doest" in line 49; evidently Spenser intended one syllable: "Thenot / to that / I choose, / thou doest / me tempt." It would seem to be in character for Spenser to stretch or diminish syllables as it suited his meter. Miss Willcock makes a pertinent observation: "By the exercise of such rights of pre-election on the very stuff of our syllables poets became for the Elizabethans 'language-makers' in far more than the ordinary sense. In the light of these views Spenser's sometimes irritating juggling to secure eye-rhyme as well as ear-rhyme ... becomes a mild assertion of the poet's prerogatives with language."16

Throughout the elegy, regularity of meter in the first five lines of each stanza is the rule. The dimeters also hold constant. Only in the couplets and the intervening pentameter does any marked variation occur. In the very first stanza, the second line of the couplet has seven instead of the required eight syllables.  

syllables; this adds a distinct emphasis to the word "dead" at the beginning of
the line:

\[
\text{Dido} / \text{my dear} / \text{ alas } / \text{ is dead,}
\]

\[
\text{Dead } / \text{ and ly } / \text{ eth wrapt } / \text{ in lead. (ll. 58-59)}
\]

The couplet in the third stanza lengthens to lines of nine and ten syllables
respectively. Might not this be a ruse on the poet's part to call attention to
the fertility of his poetic powers?

The songs / that \textit{Col} / in made / in her prayse,

But in / to weep / ing turns / your wan / ton lyes. (ll. 73-79)

In the same stanza, the intervening pentameter is lengthened to eleven syllables, "Now is time / to dye. / Nay time / was long / yeocs" (l. 81), thus re-
newing the spirit of mourning partially dispelled by Colin's mention of his
songs of praise.

An unexpected shortening of the couplet to trimeters occurs in the eighth
stanza. This adds a poignant touch to the whole:

Th' man / tied med / owes mourne,

Th'yr son / dry col / ours tourne. (ll. 128-129)

If Spenser intended "heauens" in the last pentameter of the same stanza to be
read as two syllables, the number of syllables stretches to eleven: "Th' heau / ens doe melt / in teares / without / remorse" (l. 131).

Finally, in the twelfth stanza, as the mood changes from deep sorrow to
exultant joy, its gaiety is reflected in the lengthened couplet:

\[
\text{O Lobb, / thy losse / no long / or lament,}
\]

\[
\text{Dido } / \text{n is dead, / but in / to hea / uen hent. (ll. 168-169)}
\]

The syllabic content may be said to be comparatively stable throughout the
eclogue. The several variations noted may readily be justified by either the thought or the emotional aspect involved.

Examining the thirteen quatrains for iambic regularity, we find that Spencer is not a slave to conformity. In seventeen instances, he substitutes the trochee for the iamb. At times it is difficult to decide where the accent should fall. Puttenham explains the "pre-election" theory of the origin of quantity as one of precedent hardened by custom: "And yet if ye will ask me the reason, I can not tell it, but that it shapes so to myne ear, and as I thinke to every other mans." 17

The very first line sets the pattern for deviation: "Colin / my deare, / when shall / it please / thee sing," a pattern repeated in the following lines:

As thou / were wont / songs of / some iou / isaunce?

Thy Muse / to long / slombreth / in sor / rowing

Lulled / a sleepe / through loue / misgou / ernance. (ll. 1-4)

If the accent falls, as Puttenham expresses it, on the "sharp" (i.e., strong) syllable, line 7 also begins with a trochee: "Whether / thee list ... "; and in line 12: "... vnder / the cock / ed haye."

Line 28 poses a problem. Should the stress fall on both words "make" and "iudge"? Should "make" remain unaccented? Three possible solutions present themselves. The line may be scanned as a tetrameter with the following rather unusual arrangement: "Should Colin / make iudge / of my fool / er ee"; this results in an amphibrach, a spondee, an anapest, and an iamb. It may also be scanned as a tetrameter composed of two iambs and two anapests: "Should Colin /

17 Puttenham, p. 132. In every citation from this author the letter 's' will be regularized.
make judge / of my fool / or ee." The last possibility, though it might sound awkward to our ears, is the most plausible one: "Should Col / in make / judge of / my fool / or ee." It offers the least deviation, preserves the pentameter, and stresses the important word. Other examples of trochees used to emphasize important words are found throughout the poem. A case in point is line 31: "The kind / lye dewe / drops from / the high / er tree" and line 38: "Dido / the greate / shephearde / his daugh / ter sheene." In the first instance, the trochee stresses the word "drops," while in the second example, "Dido" and the word "shephearde" are doubly linked by the same means.

One line of the concluding quatrain opens with a spondee followed by a trochee, if the meter has been properly interpreted. Each of two other lines contain one trochee:

Ay francke / shepheard, / how bene / thy ver / ses meint
Whether / rejoyce / or wepe / for great / constrainte?
Thyne be / the cos / sette, well / hast thou / it gotte.

What of the metrical pattern in the elegy? The fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh stanzas have a regular meter. The iambic measure is carried without variation through the ten lines of each stanza from the hexameter to the dimeter. Charles G. Osgood, the distinguished editor of The Minor Poems, speaking of stanzas 11 and 12, says: "Spenser achieves the transition very skillfully by a change in rhythm. Lines 153-62 are irregular, the usual end-stopping giving away to enjambement. Lines 163-72 are the most regular in the poem. The regular rhythm is pointed by an evenly balanced alliteration in
the two halves of each line." If, by "regular," he means no enjambement the point is well taken. There is room for discussion, however, on the "two halves" of each line. Only in the couplets is there an "evenly balanced alliteration" of 'l's', 'd's', and 'h's'. Even here, the caesura is varied in position so that no line falls into halves. If, by rhythm, Mr. Osgood means meter, the disagreement would be more marked. Stanza 11 is not irregular in meter; only one run-on line occurs in it. But stanza 12, although each line is endstopped, contains trochees, an anapest, and lines of more than the required number of syllables; its irregularity is obvious.

Four stanzas have one deviation each. The trochee begins a line in stanzas 5, 13, 14, and 15:

- She while / she was, / (that was, / a wo / ful word / to sayne) (l. 93)
- Walke in / El / sian fieldes / so free (l. 179)
- Dye would / we day / ly, once / it to / expert (l. 186)
- Dido / is gone / afore / (whose turne / shall be / the next?) (l. 193)

It seems necessary that "she" in the first line should receive the stress. Dido offers no difficulty. The verbs "dye," "walke," "fall," "drop," "flowe," and "cease" by their very abruptness as well as by their contextual significance demand emphasis.

Twice, Spenser begins a line with an incomplete iambic foot: in stanza 1, "Dead / and ly / eth wrapt / in lead" (l. 59); in stanza 3, "Now / is time / to dye . . . " (l. 81). Both catalectic lines produce a dramatic effect. Besides the incomplete iamb mentioned above, four lines of stanza 1 begin with either trochee or spondee:

18Variorum Spenser, p. 412.
Vp then / Melpom / éne / thou mourn / fulst Muse / of myne,
Vp gries / lie ghosts / and vp / my ru / full ryme,
Matter / of myrth / now shalt / thou haue / no more.
Dido / my deare / alas / is dead. (ll. 53, 55-56, 58)

Four successive lines in the second stanza also begin with a trochee, the final pentameter following suit. The effect of this repetition is a sense of great desolation, such desolation as to prompt people in sorrow to utter strange exaggerations:

Shepheardes, / that by / your flocks / on Kent / ish downes / abyde,
Waile ye / this wo / full waste / of na / tures warke:
Waile we / the wight, / whose pres / ence was / our pryde:
Waile we / the wight / whose ab / sence is / our carke.
Break we / our pypes, / that shrild / as lowde / as Larke.
(ll. 63-66, 71)

Stanza 3 begins with a trochee if the "why" is stressed: "Why doe / we long / er liue ..." (l. 73). In the second line, "death" seems to warrant an emphasis compounded by the spondee in the foot immediately following: "... death hath / shut vp / in woe" (l. 74). The first of the couplets reveals a surprising use of the anapest, surprising, that is, in the midst of such somber surroundings. The only plausible explanation, if explanation is needed, would seem to be Spenser's desire to call the reader's attention to his poetic ability, he not being one to bypass such a splendid opportunity: "The songs / that Col / in made / in her prayse" (l. 78).

The seventh, eighth, and twelfth stanzas are more complicated than the others. Trochees, anapests, and iambics are frequent. Lobbin is the subject of two of these stanzas; might this have any significance? Speaking of these devi-
ations, Renwick says: "Perhaps the verse is over-elaborate for a poem of such
length; the variations may be deliberate, and prompted by a sense of this de-
fect, or may be due to the difficulty of the stanza, for Spenser was still
learning his craft." In order to give full force to the greatness of Lob-
bin's grief in stanza 7, "great is" must be read as a trochee: "G thou /
great shep / heard Lob / bin, how / great is / thy grieves." In line 3, Ren-
wick would have the word "chaplets" read as a three-syllable word, but the
Variorum reading cancels his suggestion. The third line becomes a tetrameter
with an anaplectic last foot: "The col / ourd chap / lets, wrought / with a
chiefe." The final pentameter has two spondees and one trochee to bring out
its importance: "Thereof / nought re / maynes but / the mem / oree" (ll. 113,
115, 121).

Two trochees and an anapest in stanza 8 claim attention: "The fa / ded
lockes / fall from / the lof / tie cke" (l. 125) with the accent on "fall";
"And flouds / of teares / flowe in / theyr stead / perfors" (l. 127), the word
"flowe" receiving the stress; "The heau / ens doe melt / in teares / without /
remorse" (l. 131), giving another surprising anapest.

Rounding out the pattern of variations, we find stanza twelve containing
an anapest and two spondees:

O Lobb, / thy losse / no long / er lament,

Dido / nis dead, / but in / to heau / en hent.

Cease now / my Muse . . ." (ll. 168-169, 171)

Legouis sums up nicely: ". . . iambic decasyllabic plerique sunt sed trisyl-

19Renwick, p. 221.

20Ibid., p. 222.
labicus pes max admittitur."²¹

No strophe is without a variety of caesuras. Deutsch says that the caesura "is a pause in the reading of a line of verse that does not affect the metrical account of the timing. It may be dictated by grammar, logic, or cadence and is analogous to the pause for breath at the close of a musical phrase."²² The rules laid down by Gascoigne state that in a verse of eight syllables "the pause will stand best in the middest; in a verse of tenne it will best be placed at the ende of the first foure sillables; in a verse of twelue, in the midst."²³ The last dictum would result in a jog-trotting effect which Spenser was careful to avoid in seven out of fifteen stanzas. In stanzas 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 15, the pause in the hexameter comes after the third foot. One example will suffice: "Dido is gone afore // (whose turns shall be the next?)" (1. 193). The remaining first lines contain a pleasing variety. One has the caesura after the first foot; five place it after the second foot; one puts it after the fourth foot.

In examining the four pentameters of each stanza of the elegy, we find five stanzas with identical caesura patterns, stanzas 1, 5, 8, 9, 11, and 14. Four of these stanzas follow the evenly divided first line noted above. Four additional stanzas offer but one variation in these same lines, that of a pause after the third foot in one of the lines. Two stanzas divide the honors between the second and third foot pause. Stanzas 10, 13, and 15 show the great-

²¹ Smale [Hyacinthe] Legouis, Quomodo Edmundus Spenserus ad Chaucerum Se Fingens in Elogios "The Shepheardes Calender" Versum Heroicum Renovarit ac Re- fecerit (Paris, 1896), p. 27.
²² Deutsch, p. 31.
²³ Smith, I, 54.
est variety; pauses occur after the first, second, third, and fourth foot, as well as not at all. If a conclusion can be drawn from this study, it might possibly point up the increasing flexibility which Spenser exhibits as the elegy progresses.

Checking the tetrameter couplets of the elegy proper for the caesura, we find it "in the middest" in seven out of the fifteen stanzas. The variations include placing it after the first and fourth foot or not at all. This is especially true of the eighth stanza where the tetrameters are reduced to trimeters. Again the variations are more numerous as the elegy nears completion. The final pentameter has only two variations; nine stanzas show the pause after the second foot; six place it after the third foot.

As far as the quatrains are concerned, there is some variation in every one, adding up to what Shelley calls "the harmonious arrangement of the pauses." In the first line of Colin's last quatrain occurs the only double caesura: "Thenot // to that I choose // thou dost me tempt." (l. 49) No two stanzas have exactly the same arrangement of pauses. The least complicated is the last six-line stanza wherein there is but one deviation from the two and three pattern. Comparing the quatrains and the elegy proper for caesura variation, we find that the quatrains display more dexterity than does the elegy.

Might that be an indication that the elegy antedates the introduction to it? At least in part?

In the entire introduction, no enjambement occurs. Three stanzas in the elegy have one enjambement as well as one line which ends with a parenthesis. After the mood changes from sorrow to joy, there is not a line which is not end-stopped. One run-on line occurs in the final quatrain, as if to hasten the end once the important part had been accomplished.
To sum up, Spenser's intricate stanzas equal, if they do not surpass, his model, Marot, in variation, invention, and inspiration. Lines of unequal length, deviations from the iambic mold, and the ease with which he manipulates the caesuras testify to his poetic ability. Throughout the elegy, masterly fitting of verse and meter to the prevailing mood of mournful melancholy points up a maturity which is perhaps taken for granted today but which was a rare accomplishment in Spenser's day. If "verse moves between speech and song," Spenser's poetry can be said to approximate a flowing melody as he carefully uses all the resources of expression at his command. Chapter V will show how he develops his sound effects to advantageously serve the music of his verse.

24 Deutsch, p. 90.
CHAPTER V

SOUND PATTERNS IN THE "NOVEMBER" ECLOGUE

The blending of sound and sense is more than an added charm of poetry; it is the very foundation of poetry as art.1 Poetry is meant to be read aloud. Articulatory and auditory images, called "tied imagery" by I. A. Richards, "together give the full body, as it were, to the words, and it is with the full bodies of words that poets work, not with their printed signs." 2 What delights the ear, then, is of equal importance with what attracts the eye. Spenser uses various subtle and flexible devices pertaining to sound in order to make a fit setting for the beauty and harmony of his ideas. But poetry is "more than organized sound; it must appeal to all the senses...." 3 The alliteration, rhyme scheme, redundancy, assonance, and onomatopoeia found in the "November" Eclogue, devices which appeal to more than one of the five senses, will be discussed in this chapter.

Alliteration, "sometimes called head rhyme or initial rhyme, is the echo of the first sound of several words in a line." 4 It occurred quite regularly

---

1Renwick, Edmund Spenser, p. 117.
3Renwick, Edmund Spenser, p. 119.
4Deutsch, p. 118.
in early English poetry and was one of the features of the accentual pattern of Old English verse. E. K. in his Epistle to Harvey expresses the classical scholar's contempt for alliteration. "In regard wherof, I scorne and spue out the rakehellye route of our ragged rymers (for so themselues vse to hunt the letter) which without learning boste, without judgement iangle, without reason rage and fome, as if some instinct of Poeticall spirite had newly rauished them aboue the meanenesse of commen capacitie."5 Ironically, or perhaps intentionally to add weight to his scorn, E. K. himself "hunts the letter" while de­nouncing the poets of his day who are guilty of the offense.

Despite E. K.'s forceful criticism, Spenser proceeds to use alliteration freely in the "November" Eclogue. Twenty-two full-line initial alliterations, found mainly in the first lines of stanzas, are cause for admiration at his persistance. A few examples will suffice:

Waile ye this wofull waste of nature's warke. (l. 64)
The feeble flocks in field refuse their former foode. (l. 133)
We deeme of Death as goome of ill desert. (l. 184)

Puttenham disparages the excessive use of alliteration, urges young poets to avoid it, but nevertheless gives grudging praise to its judicious application. "Many of our English makers vse it too much, yet we confesse it doth not ill but pretily becomes the meetre, if ye passe not two or three words in one verse. . . ."6 In the "November" Eclogue, Spenser, for the most part, uses the device wisely, fitting the sound to the sense and giving a melancholy tone to the whole poem. His fecundity in this respect is shown in sixty-two examples of half-line alliteration. The following are typical:

5Variorum Spenser, p. 9.
6Puttenham, pp. 254-255.
Such pleasaunce now displast by dolors dint: (l. 1q)
Morne nowe my Muse. . . . (l. 111)

In "If thou wilt bewayle my wofull tene" (l. 41), a double alliterative pattern is discernible.

Instances of two-word alliterations abound. Seventy-nine examples are distributed throughout the poem: fourteen in the introductory quatrains, sixty-two in the elegy, and three in the closing quatraine and couplet. Many of these, in the style of Old English poetry, are balanced hemistichs, each with its own catch letter: "The fieldes ay fresh, the grasse ay greene" (l. 189). Sometimes the balance achieved is more subtle as: "But nowe sike happy cheere is turnd to heauie chaunce" (l. 7103).

It is not always with the same degree of success that Spenser indulges in the "national passion"7 as lines 37 and 164 prove:

    For deade is Dido, dead alas and drent. (l. 37)
    And gates of Hei and fyrie furies forse. (l. 164)

These lines are censured by one critic: "In an elegy especially it is impossible to commend the taste which seeks this rather tawdry purfling to decorate the garments of woe."8 On the other side of the coin, men like Davis defend Spenser's liberal use of alliteration: "With Spenser alliteration is not simply a trick or outward embellishment; he had fully exploited its more subtle usage as a continuous echo to meaning."9 Such gems as "The mantled medowes mourne," and "All Musick sleepes, where death doth leade the daunce" (l. 105), justify Spenser's use of alliteration. Each sets a mood, one of quiet sorrow,

7 Courthope, p. 79.
8 Steele, p. 155.
9 Quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 641.
the other of deliberate movement in imitation of a stilted dance.

The repetition of an alliterative refrain is, of itself, a mark of competence. It tolls the bell, "O heavy herse," as the sad procession moves on, and rings out gaily, "O happye herse," when the Elysian fields have been reached. This fusion of sound and sense may be illustrated in diagramming the first two quatrains wherein Thenot is coaxing Colin to sing. The sibilant "s" predominates; the "s's" are underlined to bring out their frequency pattern, and the soft "c's" are included in the analysis.

Colin, my deare, when shall it please thee sing,
As thou were wont songs of some louisaunce?
Thy muse to long slombreth in sorrowing,
Iulled a sleepe through loues miseouraunce.
Now somewhat sing, whose endles souenaunce,
Among the shepheardes swaines may aye remaine,
Whether thee list thy loued lasse auaunce,
Or honor Pan with hymnes of higher vaine. (ll. 1-8)

"The fitful movement of catch sounds from initials to medials ... strike the ear almost unconsciously. Alliteration of this more evasive kind as an undertone, heard intermittently but never lost, lies at the very basis of Spenser's verbal music."10

The light playful tone of Thenot's request is contrasted by a pattern of subdued "m's" and "n's" in Colin's reply. Further analysis reveals an underlying pattern of "s," "w," "l," and "th" sounds. Most frequent initial alliteration throughout the eclogue is the "s" closely followed by "w." The "h," "d," "l," and "m" patterns are fairly frequent but often in a minor capacity.

Closely allied to alliteration is assonance, "where the stressed vowels in

10 E. C. Davis, 
Edmund Spenser: A Critical Study
the words agree but the consonants do not."11 In the example above, the subtle influence of assonance may be noted. In line 1, the same lip movement is necessary to say "deare," "please," and "thee," vowels indicative of levity and mirth; the long sound of "u" dominates in lines 2 and 3, "loue," "muse"; the short sound in line 4, "lulled," "loue," "gouernaunce." In line 6 the repetition of the "a" sound is unusual: "swaines may aye remaine." Elsewhere in the elegy Spenser uses assonance but not with the prodigality he evidences towards alliteration. Some examples are:

For shee deemed nothing too deare for thee. (1. 117)
Waile ye this wofull waste of natures warke: (1. 64)
And Phoebus weary of his yerely taske. (1. 14)

This unobtrusive "sound echo" within the verse not only induces euphony but also accentuates the rhythm, enriching the flow of cadenced melody.

In regard to rhyme, the principle laid down by Thomas Hood still applies: "A rhyme must commence on an accented syllable. From the accented vowel of that syllable to the end, the words intended to rhyme must be identical in sound, but the letter or letters preceeding the accented vowel must be unlike in sound."12

Spenser makes use of two rhyme schemes discussed above in Chapter IV. The introductory quatrains imitate the "rime croise" of Marot while the elegy is given a complicated and beautiful ten-line stanza: ababcccdbd. This rhyme scheme is continued throughout the fifteen stanzas of the elegy with but one exception. In stanza 5, the ninth line reverts to the "a" rather than to the "b"

11Deutsch, p. 122.
rhyme thus forming the pattern ababccdad. "By the rhyming of the second,
fourth, fifth, and ninth lines and the recurrence of the 5b verse in the ninth
line after three lines of shorter length, there are secured (1) continuity in
the melody; (2) an absence of the feeling of top heaviness which might result
from the initial alexandrines; (3) an increase of the elegiac effect."13 With
rhyme as with diction, Davis remarks, "Spenser is no purist but a law to him-
self."14

Spenser is careful in the "November" Eclogue to avoid the use of feminine
rhymes. Floyd Stovall remarks this and adds: "The eclogues that have no femi-
nine rimes are loftiest in tone and subject matter."15 Studying the end-rhymes
we find a few deviations from the norm of perfect rhyming. In spite of current
opinion against the arbitrary changing of spelling to suit the rhyme, Spenser
in one case does just that: "memoree" (l. 121) and Rosemaree" (l. 116) are
altered to suit a visual as well as an auditory rhyme with "thee" (l. 114).
"Now there can not be in a maker a fowler fault," says Puttenham, "then to
falsifie his accent to serue his cadence, or by vntrue orthographe to wrench
his words to helpe his rime..."16

Imperfect rhyme of assonance is seen in "dint" (l. 104), "extinct"
(l. 106), "tinct" (l. 107), and "besprint" (l. 111). In the first ten-line
stanza, "nyne" (l. 53) and "ryme" (l. 55) follow the same pattern. Depending
on the pronunciation of his day and the individual manipulation of vowel sounds

13Steel, p. 155.
14Davis, p. 188.
15Quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 641.
16Puttenham, p. 81.
permitted, "beare" (l. 144), "weare" (l. 146), "seare" (l. 147) and "cheare" (l. 151) would possibly rhyme. If the modern English pronunciation of "wear" is intended to be that of modern English "cheer," the first two do not rhyme. Perhaps all four words were sounded alike in Spenser's time. In the first elegiac stanza "next" (l. 193) is imperfectly rhymed with "mirt" (l. 195), while despite the "z" sound, "is" (ll. 197-201) offers an "eye rhyme" with the words "blisse" (l. 194) and "misse" (l. 197).

Other instances of imperfect rhyming in the eclogue are: "make" and "merimake" (ll. 9-11), and "budde" and "good" (ll. 88-89). Finally in the last quatrain, "meint" (l. 203) does not rhyme perfectly with "constraine." "His treatment of words," says Mr. Craik, "on such occasions [occasions of difficulty to his verse] is like nothing that ever was seen, unless it might be Hercules breaking the back of the Nemean lion. He gives them any sense and any shape that the case may demand. Sometimes he merely alters a letter or two; sometimes he twists off the head or the tail of the unfortunate vocable altogether."

Marot's liberal use of redundant words and phrases is echoed in at least six instances by Spenser: "sing, songs" (ll. 1-2), "mournfulst, mourning" (ll. 53-54), "conne, conning" (l. 52), "death, deadly" (l. 163), "ioyes, enioyes" (l. 126), and "blessed Gods in blisse" (l. 194). Perhaps these redundancies help to point to the device in music, though Watkins claims that Spenser's repetition is not merely with variation but also with alteration of meaning. 18

17 Quoted in Church, p. 134.
18 Watkins, p. 281.
There is a music hidden in the very words Spenser uses, a harmonious blend of tone and color which lends its distinctive charm to the whole poem. The effect of "lulled a sleepe" (1. 4) is certainly not that of "bewayle my wofull tene" (1. 41). When Spenser uses the expression "the flouds do gaspe" (1. 126), the formation of the word "gaspe" simulates the action described; changing the word "heavie" for "happye" in the refrain, he changes the tone from weighty sorrow to light-hearted joy. How different is the tone of "deathes dreeriment" (1. 36) to "I see thee blessed soule, I see" (1. 178). The fluidity of the latter verse matches the joyful image of Dido in heaven. Rounded vowels and rolling liquid "l's" advance the movement. Spenser uses an amazing variety of tone-color in his flow of words thus enhancing the music of his poetry. The murmuring "m" sound is conducive to sorrowing:

Morne nowe my Muse, now morne with teares besprint. (1. 111)
The mantled medowes mourne. (1. 128)
The heauens melt in teares without remorse. (1. 131)

The low back vowels like "aw" give a dark, cheerless impression. Towards the end of the elegy the predominance of frontal vowels, "i," "e," and "o" bring out the joyousness of the transition. This suggestiveness of the intended mood might be called sound symbolism which is akin to onomatopoeia.

Onomatopoeia is the coining or use of words to imitate the sound of the things named. Spenser does this in the use of "mizzle" (1. 208) for a slight rain; "cracknells" (1. 96) for crisp crackers; "slombreth" (1. 3) for sleeping; "gaspe" (1. 126) for the act of breathing with difficulty.

Eighteen references to music and singing can be seen in such phrases as: "please thee sing" (1. 1), "songs of some iouisaunce" (1. 2), "hymmes of higher vaine" (1. 8), "Relieue thy Oaten pypes" (1. 21), and "light virelayes" (1. 21).
E. K. calls virelais "a light kind of song."\(^{19}\) The reference to "Philomela her song with teares doth steepe" (l. 141) follows a traditional respect for and love of the English nightingale. Ida Langdon says: "When he is conscious at all of music as apart from poetry, or from pastorals and 'songs of love and jollity,' he reveals that it is to him an agreeable sort of thing, eminently fitted to mark joyous occasions and suggestive of dancing and mirth."\(^{20}\) He banishes the carefree songs which the shepherds' daughters were accustomed to sing and speaks of the sleep of music: "All Musick sleepe, when death doth leade the daunce" (l. 105). He is conscious of his peculiar power to insinuate music into his most serious verses since he refers to the eclogue as "my song." "Ceasse now my song" (l. 201).

The musical quality of the ten-line stanzas is excellently verified by the inclusion of stanzas 1 and 13 in a book of English madrigals originally set to music by George Kirbye and first published in London in 1597. They form Numbers xxii and xxiii of The English Madrigal School.\(^{21}\)

Spenser is a conscientious and painstaking artist in the use of words. He melds the sounds and the sense so beautifully that the verses strike both eye and ear with equal force and the melody achieved is taken for granted. He makes excessive use of alliteration, moderate use of assonance and onomatopoeia, and "makes the sound echo the sense" as Pope later advised poets to do. Though he does not maintain an even excellence, he does lift the elegy to a lofty

\(^{19}\)Variorum Spenser, p. 110.  
plane and impresses the importance of Dido on everyone who cares to listen.

Finally, musical qualities abound. One can easily admit of a close relationship between poetry and music, both powerful media of emotional expression. The song Spenser puts on Colin's lips will continue to interest, delight, and influence future poets as it aroused Sir Philip Sidney's praise in his own day: "The Sheapheards Kalender hath much Poetri in his Eglogues; indeede worthy the reading, if I be not deceived."²²

²²Smith, I, 196.
CHAPTER VI

IMAGERY AND FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE "NOVEMBER" ECLOGUE

Many images unite to bring this eclogue to life. Spenser uses visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, thermal, and gustatory images in a skillful way to produce varying moods of lighthearted gaiety, melancholy, or joy. The first of these images is the visual one of the meeting of the two shepherds, Thenot and Colin. Their dialogue forms an auditory frame for the images which follow. The wintry season is contrasted with the spring and summer. Several delightful images are thrust upon us in quick succession; one hears the singing nightingale, notices the silent titmouse, and is made aware of the dew dropping from a tree and refreshing the lowly plants clustered around its base. Again, the "solein season" is mentioned, bringing the thermal suggestion of chilling winds and stormy skies. The description of Dido is a visual image, though scarcely a satisfying one, while Rosalind, the cosset, and the "iolly shepeheard swayne" are merely mentioned.

From the initial invocations of the Muse Melpomene and the "grieslie ghostes," tactile images vie with visual and auditory images for prominence. Spenser's use of the image of a corpse wrapped in lead is graphically emphasized by the image of "streaming teares." A visual image of shepherds on "Kentish downes" is quickly followed by a forceful repetition of the auditory image of wailing. The darkness of nature is shattered by the sudden breaking
of pipes and the lark's loud shrilling.

Spenser names four birds in the "November" Eclogue. With but one exception, they sing, shrill, or mourn. The humble titmouse alone keeps an eloquent silence symbolizing Thenot's respectful admiration of Colin's song. Flowers, garlands, and songs appear later as the "shepheards daughters" are cautioned to change Colin's lays into weeping. In the ensuing stanza, the flower image is beautifully expanded into a symbol of life and death; the winter scene is fittingly depicted as a burial; the springtime is seen as a renewal of nature.

The poet reminisces in stanza 5, extolling Dido's peerless beauty. Her hospitality, concretized in terms of rustic simplicity, is vividly recalled by means of cakes, cracknells, curds, and clouted cream. Auditory images intermingle as Dido calls the shepherds home, entertains them regally, and shows special consideration for Colin Clout. With the changing colors, the gaudy garland and faded flowers which decorate her grave, and the tears of the incomsolable shepherds, visual images again dominate.

A new direction is taken and a personal note added when Lobbin's name is mentioned. A kaleidoscopic view of nosegays, colored chaplets, knotted rushrings, and gilt rosemary suddenly becomes a lifeless thing of the past "yclad in clay." A tactile and thermal image of bitter winds blowing completes the stanza.

Sight rivals sound as the whole of nature sympathizes with Colin. Oak leaves fall, rivers shrivel, floods of tears flow, the "mantled medowes" change to mourning colors, and even the heavens "melt" in tears. The animals add their peculiar touch to the plaintive scene. Sheep refuse to eat, their heads hanging dejectedly. Wild beasts wail as if they had gone mad, with the excep-
tion of the wolf who freely preys on the now defenseless sheep. The turtledove and the nightingale alike lament their great loss. An incidental seasonal touch is given in the casual mention of the "bared branch."

Spenser now ascends to the spirit world of mythological creatures. The water nymphs bring "baleful" boughs of cypress, representing death and immortality. Muses bear dry and bitter elder branches. In a fanciful flashback, we see the nymphs singing and dancing with Dido while the olive branches of peace are being woven into a garland for her. The muses in that happier day are wearing green bay leaves indicative of hope and carefree pleasure.

The visual image of toiling and sweating men is a strong contrast for the somber funeral procession with the dead body on the "beare." Without much warning, vivid images of the three fates, the gates of hell, and the "fyrie furies forse" are succeeded by a lively kinesthetic depicting of the breaking of death's bonds. The pathetic picture of Lobbin's weeping is soon obliterated by the vision of Dido reigning as a goddess in "heauens hight" and walking in the Elysian fields. A mixed representation of fair and fresh fields, pleasant songs and green grass, combined with the assurance of perfect security, serves to entice the shepherds "thether to reuert."

The entire picture has changed from one of heavy mourning to one of almost unbounded rejoicing. The blessings of immortality are depicted in the tactile image of a light rain falling. On the homeward journey, we see the shepherds and their sheep trudging contentedly along, the "cossette" lodged securely in Colin's arms.

It is difficult to understand how Grosart can say that this eclogue is
The shepherds are clearly portrayed as watching their sheep, an occupation which immediately connotes the outdoors. The cosset is pointed out, "yond cosset," and later awarded to Colin. The fact of the rain beginning to fall and the consequent need to hasten homeward, "hye we homeward fast" (l. 208), as well as the original woodcut, bear out this supposition.

The woodcut represents a funeral procession moving slowly toward the church in the distance. Shepherds and the flocks, flutes and a laurel wreath monopolize the foreground while the inset correctly depicts the zodiac sign of the Centaur for November.

Light and darkness have been traditionally contrasted as symbols of joy and sorrow, life and death, love and hatred. Spenser uses darkness as a symbol of death and mourning:

Thilke sollein season sadder plight doth aske. (l. 16)
The earth now lacks her wonted light,
And all we dwell in deadly night. (ll. 68-69)

He reserves light for immortality and heaven:

She hath the bonds broke of eternall night. (l. 165)
That whilome was the saynt of shepheards light. (l. 176)
And is enstalled nowe in heauens hight. (l. 177)

Visual images predominate in the "November" Eclogue, recurring twice as frequently as tactile and auditory images, three times as frequently as kinaesthetic, and four times as frequently as gustatory and thermal images. Color imagery is effective not only in direct presentation but also when implied in the naming of various flowers. Green is the prevailing hue. The blue of loyalty turns to the black of death, the green of hope becomes the drab mist-land of gray. In happier days the Muses wore green "bayes." Once Dido is placed in

---
1Quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 631.
"heauens hight," the grass is "aye green."

A word about figures of speech in Spenser's day is in order. As Spenser uses the term, much more is implied than modern usage conceives. In the sixteenth century, figures of speech formed a part of the study of rhetoric, a subject Spenser diligently studied both as a boy in the Merchant-Taylors' School and as a young man at Cambridge. The stately figures of the classics mingled with Italian and courtly figures until the art of rhetoric occupied an important part in the educational system.

Books of rhetoric in English date from the Renaissance. A mere listing of the more important works will give some idea of their use. Leonard Cox's Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke (c. 1530) presents only the "art of exploring material to discover arguments in the arrangement of material for delivery."

He completely disregards questions of style and diction. Richard Sherry's A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes (1550) is limited to a discussion of style. Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique (1553, revised in 1555) treats all angles of rhetoric. Richard Rainolde's Foundation of Rhetorike (1563) is a collection of school exercises, useful to us in showing how boys of Spenser's day were taught to develop or amplify themes.

The Garden of Eloquence of Henry Peacham (1577, revised 1593) is another treatise of schemes and tropes. It contains one hundred ninety-six figures. The full title indicates the popular sixteenth-century view of the purpose of rhetoric: "The Garden of Eloquence, Conteyning the Figures of Grammar and Rhetorick, from whence may bee gathered all manner of Flowers, Colours, Orna-

---

ments, Ornaments, Forms and Fashions of Speech, very profitable for all
those that be studious of Eloquence, and that reade most Eloquent Poets and
Orators, and also helpeth much for the better understanding of the holy Scrip-
tures."\(^3\)

Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589) is divided into three books.
The third and longest book, called "Of Ornament" and containing over a hundred
figures with definitions and illustrations, "is the most complete critical ut-
terance on the adornments of language that the age produced."\(^4\) Puttenham tried
to change the custom of designating figures by their Latin or Greek names. He
substituted English equivalents such as: *Synecdoche or the Figure of quick
conceits* (p. 195), but failed to persuade his contemporaries to adopt his in-
novations. The stress he lays on the use of tropes is an echo of the impor-
tance this artificial style gained as the sixteenth century progressed.

No proof exists that Spenser was influenced by these books, but the sup-
position is that, being scholarly, well-read, and of an inquiring bent, he
would have had some knowledge, if not use of them. The greater the poet the
more "wit" he displayed in manipulating rhetorical devices. If we judge by the
abundance and intricacy of figures in Spenser's poems, he was truly a product
of his age and a great poet as well.

Figures of speech may be divided for the sake of clarity into tropes and
schemes. "A trope employs words in another than their literal meaning; a
scheme arranges or repeats words and longer units according to a definite pat-


\(^4\) Emma Corin King, "Rhetorical Elements in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser,"
Unpublished Master's Thesis (University of Chicago, 1912), p. 3.
tern, or amplifies the subject in a particular manner. It is clearly apparent that an extended treatment of tropes and schemes is not feasible within the limits of this thesis. Therefore, only the most evident figures of speech will be discussed: metaphor, hyperbole, metonymy, synecdoche, epithet, personification, simile, and symbol. Onomatopoeia has already been discussed in Chapter V in relation to sound effects.

Metaphora is called by Puttenham "the Figure of transport" and "an inversion of sense by transport." He explains further that it is "a kind of wrestling of a single word from his own right signification, to another not so natural, but yet of some affinity or conueniencie with it. . . . And three causes moves us to use this figure, one for necessitie or want of a better word. . . . Againe, we use it for pleasure and amount of our speach. . . . Then also do we it sometimes to enforce a sence and make the word more significative." Spenser's metaphors do not express the strong feeling usually associated with this figure. Most of the examples found in the "November" Eclogue are conventional utterances: references to the sun as "Phoebus" (1.14), to spring's "mantle" (1.85), to the "Muses well" (1.30), "Natures warke" (1.64), and "Winters bale" (1.84); the "faded lockes" (1.125) of the oak tree and the "vitall threde" (1.149) of life are representative of sixteenth-century usage. More graphic are the allusions to Dido's coffined body as being "wrapt in lead" (1.59), to her excellence as "vertues braunch and beauties

---

5Rix, p. 19.
6Puttenham, p. 178.
7Ibid., p. 154.
8Ibid., pp. 178-180.
and the glorification of Dido herself as "the saynt of shepherds light" (l. 176). The flowers of past favors are "yelad in clay" (l. 118) and the days are "shut vp in woe" (l. 74). These metaphors seem to be used by Spenser in the third sense indicated above by Puttenham, "to make the word more significative." 9

A trope which may be considered as an Elizabethan trade-mark is hyperbole, Spenser, who uses it prodigally in praise of Eliza in "April," is no less generous in expressing his sorrow over Dido's death in "November." Peacham, one of his contemporaries, defines it thus: "Hyperbole, when a saying doth surmounte and reach aboue the truth . . . this figure is not vsed to decease, by exceeding the compasse of truth, but vseth extreame wordes, to show that the thing we affyrm is very great, or very small, so that we use an incredible." 10 Spenser exemplifies Peacham's definition in the exaggerated manner of one in deep mourning. Especially in the stanzas dealing with the loss of Dido is his use of hyperbole effective:

The somne of all the world is dimme and darke:
    The earth now lacks her wonted light,
    And all we dwell in deadly night. (Il. 67-69)

As the dirge develops, the hyperbole increases in frequency as well as in power. All nature is described as being in passionate sympathy with the bereft shepherd. "Flouds" gasp, tears flow in floods, meadows assume a mantle of mourning, changing their "sowndry colours": the climax comes when "The heauen: doe melt in teares without remorse" (l. 131). The ensuing stanza continues the hyperbolic strain but the emphasis shifts to the animal world where the "feeble

10 Quoted in Rix, p. 26.
flocks" are disconsolate, and wild beasts "wayle as they were wood" (l. 135). Here Spenser succeeds in creating a mood by the very force of his incredible descriptions. Later when Dido is portrayed in the "Elisian fields," his hyperboles seem insignificant by contrast. Thus: "She raignes a goddesse now among the saintes," (l. 175), and "Dye would we dayly, once it to expert" (l. 186) suffer greatly in comparison with the vividness of the preceding stanzas.

Also found in the "November" Eclogue is metonymia which Puttenham dubs "the misnamer." His wordy explanation merely succeeds in confusing the issue: "Now doth this vnderstanding or secret conceyt reach many times to the only nomination of persons or things in their names, as of men, or mountains, seas, countries and such like, in which respect the wrung naming, or otherwise naming of them then is due, carieth not onely an alteration of sence but a necessitie of intendement figuratiuely. . . ."\(^{11}\) Deutsch simplifies the definition of metonymy: "The substitution of a word that relates to the thing or person to be named for the name itself. . . . The term metonymy is sometimes used to include the similar rhetorical device of synecdoche: the naming of a part to mean the whole."\(^{12}\) Spenser makes striking use of this figure in such instances as: "mortall stroke" (l. 123), "vitall thredes" (l. 149), "eternall night" (l. 165), "doome of ill desert" (l. 184), "heauie chaunce" (l. 103), "trustlesse state" (l. 153), and "kindlye dewe" (l. 31).

Among the schemes found in the "November" Eclogue, epitheton is one in which Spenser excels. Puttenham terms it the Qualifier: "When ye will speake giving every person or thing besides his proper name a qualitie by way of addi-

\(^{11}\) Puttenham, pp. 180-181.
\(^{12}\) Deutsch, p. 78.
tion whether it be of good or of bad it is a figurative speech of audible alteration.\footnote{Puttenham, p. 176.} In the "November" Eclogue alone, over one hundred instances may be noted. Such apt qualification as "doolful pleasaunce" (l. 204), "streaming teares" (l. 61), "wofull waste" (l. 64), "slipper hope" (l. 153), "burdenous corpse" (l. 166), "grieslie ghostes" (l. 55), "kindlys dewe" (l. 31), "dreerie death" (l. 123), and "balefull boughes" (l. 145) indicate clearly the deftness of which Spenser is already the master. True it is that some expressions used by Spenser seem to be conventional rather than original: "mournefulst Muse" (l. 53), "sadde Winter" (l. 13), and "humble vaine" (l. 50) are typical. Whether the numerous figures of epithet merely reflect a borrowed light or truly represent Spenser's own creation, they at least attest to be fertile poetic tendencies of the sixteenth century. In the recurring dimeters, "O carefull verse" and "O ioyfull verse," the epithet "carefull" means full of care, "ioyfull" means full of joy.

Personification or \textit{prosopopeia} is called "The Counterfait in personation" by Puttenham as he explains: "but if ye wil faine any person with such features, qualities and conditiohes, or if ye wil attribute any humane quality, as reason or speech to dobe creatures or other insensible things, and do study (as one may say) to giue the a humane person, it is ... \textit{Prosopopeia}, because it is by way of fictio."\footnote{Puttenham, p. 239.} The delightfully inventive mood with which Spenser makes use of this figure is especially noticeable in regard to nature. The seasons express sadness:
But nowe sadde Winter walke hath the day. (1. 13)
Thilke sollein season sadder plight doth aske:
And loatheth sike delightes, as thou doest prayse. (11. 17-18)

Nature comes to life in appropriate melancholy:

The mantled medowes mourne. (1. 128)
The heauens doe melt in teares without remorse. (1. 131)

Many examples of personification in "November" are of a classical origin. The mention of Pan, Muses, Nymphs, Fates, Philomele, and Phoebus brings to mind similar examples in Vergil. Spenser gives us a pleasing picture of the sun as Phoebus stabling his horse after the year's travels, a misconception of the sun's role which has its origin in classical literature:

And Phoebus weary of his yerely taske,
Ystabled hath his steedes in lowlye laye,
And takes vp his ynne in Fishes haske. (11. 14-16)

Throughout the poem, the mournful tone is almost impersonal. This impersonal air is emphasized by the personifications Spenser employs to help create the desired mood. One feels that the large approach appealed to Spenser. Perhaps his contemplation of the distant view tended to blind him to the immediate and the commonplace in nature. Yet this very fact lends a masterful touch to the whole, clothing it with its own unique grandeur. 15

Puttenham distinguishes three sorts of similitudo or resemblance: "Resemblance by Pourtrait or Imagery, which the Greeks call Icon. Resemblance morall or misticall, which they call Parabola, and Resemblance by example, which they call Paradigma . . . ." 16 Examples of this figure are not numerous in the

15 Other examples of Personification in "November" are: 11. 3, 4, 17, 19, 33-34, 68, 85, 91, 111, 115, 123-124, 126, 141, 143-145, 146-147, 148-149, 151, 171, 163-164.

16 Puttenham, p. 240.
"November" Eclogue. Spenser has not as yet perfected the art which will later adorn the Faerie Queene. The sound of the shepherd's pipe is compared to the shrilling of the lark: "Breake we our pypes, that shrild as lowde as Larke" (l. 71). The example cited falls into Puttenham's first category. It seems pale and inadequate when compared to the extended treatment Spenser gives his similes in the Faerie Queene.

The final figure to be discussed, symbol, is defined by Deutsch: "A word or an image that signifies something other than what it represents and that even when denoting a physical, limited thing carries enlarging connotations, so that it has the reality, vivid yet ambiguous, the emotional power, and the suggestiveness of a compelling dream or an archetypal myth."17 Spenser's symbols in "November" are rather pedestrian. He, in company with his adept fellow Elizabethans, borrows freely from the classics. The usual references are made to the poet's Muse, symbolizing thereby Spenser's exalted power.

Thy Muse to long slombreth in sorrowing. (l. 3)
Morne nowe my Muse, now morne with teares besprint. (l. 111)

The term, "Oaten pypes," as a symbol of the music of poetry, is credited to Spenser's genius: "Relieue thy Oaten pypes that sleepen long" (l. 23). Closely allied to both his muse and the oaten pipes is the symbol Spenser uses for the source of inspiration, "Muses well": "And han be watered at the Muses well" (l. 30).

That Spenser deliberately made prodigious use of rhetorical devices is an established fact, one which follows naturally from his sixteenth-century education. His skillful manipulation of so many and such varied figures commands

17Deutsch, p. 155.
our admiration. More worthy of praise, however, is his artistic melding of sound and sense in order to produce a harmonious whole. Nearly a century after Spenser's death, Dryden paid him high tribute by singling him out as the first English poet to understand the value of rhetorical repetition, "'turns' as his technical phrase is." In defense of Spenser's use and/or abuse of rhetoric, Rix contends: "Granting that the figures may be abused, that is, used recklessly for the sole purpose of decoration, we may nevertheless claim for them a place of merit in the creation of great poetry. To Spenser they provided indispensable aid in matters of arrangement and structure, characterization and description, amplification and mood, accommodation of style to subject, and the musical qualities of which he is supreme master." This conclusion we have endeavored to spell out in the present chapter.

Actually, the preoccupation with rhetorical figures among poets of Spenser's day becomes more noticeable as the century advances. This ornamentation of verse was an essential and increasing element of poetic art in the English Renaissance period. "The extent and variety of such figures in a work of a writer were in direct proportion to his poetic powers." But poets of Spenser's stature were not content with using figures singly. Following Chaucer's lead, "they showed the variations and mutations of the poet's craft."

After a study of Spenser's rhetorical figures, the conclusion reached may be summarized as follows. Spenser colors his eclogue with various tropes and

18 Quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 618, from Ker, Essays of Dryden 2. 109.
19 Rix, p. 78.
20 Rubel, p. 275.
21 Ibid.
schemes not because they are valuable in themselves, nor because they are useful in affording him a certain facility in this field, but because they fit a particular place in his over-all plan. He uses them not merely for purposes of decoration, though such an intent might well have been given consideration, but to elucidate a mood or delineate a character. Moving nimbly from figure to figure, intertwining and mingling one with another in a veritable maze of rhetorical devices, Spenser proves his poetic excellence.

Botting speaks of the "November" Elocque as one "in which the flowers of rhetoric bloom so freely as to recall January and the ode in praise of Eliza in April."22 We hope to establish more than one resemblance between the "November" and "April" Elogues in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

ALLEGORY IN THE "NOVEMBER" ECLOGUE

"The task of the poet is to deceive . . . to compose and adorn with artful colors the truth of things whether human or natural or whatever, to draw over it a veil of pleasing fiction, through which the truth may shine darkly . . . the discovery thereof being the more pleasant the more arduous the search. . . ."\(^1\) Thus far Petrarch. Most critics are agreed on the possibility of allegory in the "November" Eclogue, but few are in agreement concerning the possible meaning hidden behind the allegory. Scholars have tended to accept Lobbin as Leicester, Spenser's erstwhile employer, but they have been wary about establishing the identity of Dido in any but a purely speculative way. This dubious attitude has led to some highly improbable conclusions which we will briefly review.

Malone and Higginson hold that Dido is an alleged illegitimate daughter of Leicester by Lady Sheffield. This girl would have been from six to nine years old at the time of her supposed death. Buck and C. G. Moore Smith say that Dido represents Ambrosia Sidney, Philip's sister and Leicester's niece, who died at the age of fourteen in February of 1575. Judson, Spenser's distinguished biographer, suggests Susan Watts, who apparently died shortly before

\(^1\)Quoted in J. B. Fletcher, "Spenser, the Cosmopolitan Poet," The English Graduate Record, Columbia University (Sept.-Oct. 1905), 72.
1572. Judging by the provisions of her father's will, Susan would have been much younger than eighteen at the time of her death. The fact that her widowed mother married Bishop Young sometime before 1582 furnishes a rather tenuous connection with Spenser's elegy and Dido. Since his Cambridge days, Spenser had made no secret of his admiration for Bishop Young. In 1573, he had been the Bishop's secretary. He had enshrined him as "Roffy" in an earlier eulogy. Why should he not eulogize the Bishop's deceased stepdaughter? A few additional facts may clarify the matter.

Ambrosia Sidney, Susan Watts, and Lady Sheffield's supposed daughter were all young girls, whereas Dido is pictured by Spenser as a mature person who has already been the subject of his verses. Spenser also gives the impression that Lobbin is the lover rather than the uncle, father, or friend as suggested. Why does Spenser catalogue so weightily the consequences of the death of one so little known? Ambrosia had died four years before Sidney associated with Spenser. No proof exists for the existence of Lady Sheffield's daughter. Moreover, it would be extremely indecent as well as utterly tactless for Spenser to celebrate such a person since Leicester has, at this time, already repudiated Lady Sheffield as his mistress in order to marry the Countess of Essex. As for Miss Watts, not only are the time and place of her death unknown factors, but the exact date of her mother's marriage to Bishop Young is yet to be ascertained. Furthermore, no trace has yet been found of verses written by Spenser in honor of any one of the girls in question.2

A comparatively recent theory, first introduced by Mary Parmenter and later

---

2A concise summary of these identifications may be found in the Variorum Spenser, The Minor Poems, I (Baltimore, 1943), 402-404.
advanced by Paul E. McLane in a perceptive article in the Huntington Library Quarterly, attempts to solve the mystery in an intriguing yet plausible way. To understand its plausibility better, we would do well to examine its claims in the light of sixteenth-century events. The scene is placed in the midst of the turbulent times in which Spenser lived and wrote.

Judson tells us that, after graduation in 1573, Spenser spent some time at Cambridge working for the degree of Master of Arts. His thirst for preferment probably led to his friendship with the older Harvey and eventually to his position as secretary to Bishop Young, a former Master of Pembroke, Spenser's college. From such a position, it was a short step to Leicester's household where his courtly and scholarly aspirations might be fully satisfied. The Shepheardes Calender, which he probably began in the North country while in Bishop Young's employ, could now be continued. Renwick sagely comments: "Even discounting his own hints and without the aid of the commentary, the group of cultured friends to whom the poems were in the first instance addressed would understand his critical position and recognize his literary affiliation and they would recognize more than literary interests and affinities: this was a modern work, about living people and contemporary affairs, and stating opinions upon some of them."

It must have been an exciting life which Spenser led in Leicester House. As the Earl's confidential emissary, he would be introduced to the inevitable

3 Paul E. McLane, "The Death of a Queen: Spenser's Dido as Elizabeth," HIQ, XVIII (November 1954), 1-11.
4 Judson, p. 37.
5 Renwick, Edmund Spenser, p. 39.
political intrigues, Leicester's prestige, and the enticing possibility of court favor. His intellectual life would be sharpened by contact with Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew, and Edward Dyer, who, at that time, were apparently interested in reforming English poetry.\(^6\) Spenser's letters to Harvey indicate an ever widening stream of literary interests and experiments.

Writing to Harvey on October 5, 1579, from Leicester House, Spenser mentions his activities: "Your desire to heare of my late beeing with hir majestie muste dye in it selfe. As for the twoo worthy gentlemen, Master Sidney and Master Dyer, they have me, I thanke them, in some use of familiarity." And further on, he promises: "I will imparte yours [poems] to Maister Sidney and Maister Dyer, at my nexte going to courte."\(^7\)

For some years, the subject of a marriage for Queen Elizabeth had been the recurring pièce de résistance in court circles. Leicester had been the hopeful suitor, the Queen's favorite, until the strategic French offer of an alliance with the Duc d'Alençon took precedence. On January 5, 1579, Jehan de Simier, Alençon's master of the wardrobe, arrived in London. His sole purpose was to bring to a successful conclusion the negotiations which for several years had wavered in indecision. His adept love-making, in the accepted custom of the day, so charmed Elizabeth that she dubbed him her "monkey" and made him her constant companion.

Feeling ran high in England but no one was more disturbed by the turn of events than Leicester. No one had more to lose. Alençon's Catholic faith was the main cause of the opposition. Leicester, as well as most of the courtiers

---

\(^6\)Dodge, pp. xiv-xv.

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 769
who surrounded Elizabeth with the flattery on which she thrived, owed their estates and their vast fortunes to the Crown. "Since the execution of Norfolk, the government for the first time had passed into the hands of men not of noble birth," and no one knew better than Leicester how easily he could be deprived of fame, fortune, and power. Since the ruling class owed its financial security, after the Crown, to the wholesale suppression of monasteries and the confiscations of Catholic inheritances, its members had reason to fear the return of England to the old faith. Current French negotiations made such an event more than an idle supposition.

Other influences were at work to discourage the French alliance. Tales of past wars with France, retold from one generation to another, continued to embitter the average Englishman against his ancient enemy. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572, was of recent enough vintage to make any English Protestant indignant. Huguenot refugees had been welcomed to England, and their accounts of the massacre would have deepened English resentment in general and Spenser's in particular.

Sometime after Simier's arrival, Leicester, fearful of Elizabeth's displeasure, secretly married the Countess of Essex. Soon after, an attempt on Simier's life, imputed to Leicester and his sympathizers, was promptly avenged by the Frenchman's revealing to Elizabeth the recent marriage of Leicester. The atmosphere at court was, consequently, not congenial to Leicester, and he was obliged to remove himself from the Queen's displeasure for a time. This did little to sweeten his thoughts toward Simier or France.

When the Duc d'Alençon arrived on August 16, Elizabeth had been so well

---

prepared by Simier that she seemed to fall deeply in love with this man who was twenty years her junior. Leicester, back at court, was beside himself with fear and jealousy. The one topic of painful and absorbing interest for those of his household, one might suppose, was the approaching marriage. Certainly, Spenser would have shared the taut nerves and the state of unnatural excitement which such conditions would have created. Judson says that "it would have been strange indeed if the dramatic arrival of the Frenchman had left no traces in his [Spenser's] writings . . . Spenser was always a warmhearted partisan, full of loyalty to his friends and heedless of consequences. Strange would it be if the impending French marriage had not set his pen in motion. If he later (1591) dared to publish Prospopeia: or Mother Hubberds Tale with its trenchant attack on Burghley, why would he not have hidden his sentiments under the veil of allegory in the earlier 'Shepheardes Calender'"?9

After eleven days, Alençon departed for France and the final decision as to the marriage was held in abeyance for several months. The council debated the matter from October 2 to October 8, 1579, reflecting in their disapproval the sentiments of the more vocal among the English people. Spenser, at this time, wrote to Harvey of a prospective trip abroad, possibly in connection with Leicester's plan of intrigue against the Queen's marriage. He also alludes to his eclogues.10

The Queen's enthusiasm for the French marriage seemed slowly to diminish and, although negotiations continued to be made, to Leicester's relief, the inflammatory situation quieted. It was a stroke of political genius on Queen

9Judson, pp. 68-69.
10Smith, I, 83.
Elizabeth's part to accomplish the strengthening of relations between her country and France at a time when Spain ruled the seas. This feat she effected without compromising either herself or her people.

The way was now clear for Spenser to publish his Shepheardes Calender. But the expression of one's views on political or ecclesiastical matters was neither a welcome nor a safe venture in Elizabethan England. John Stubbe had suffered the dire penalty of having his hand chopped off for writing The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf, a pamphlet attacking the Queen's projected marriage. Spenser could avoid a like penalty if he hid his personages under the guise of mythology, which, Lotspeich says, he found interpreted as allegorical. "The emphasis was on its inner meaning, especially as that meaning had to do with morality." In both the "April" and "November" Eclogues, Spenser employs his knowledge of mythology to good advantage. Pan is the father of Elisa; Dido is the daughter of the "greate shepheard"; the nightingale is the "soueraine of song"; Philomele adds tears of sorrow to her song; nymphs and Muses, Graces and Fates flit about; and Dido "raignes" as a goddess in the "Elisian" fields.

Spenser chose Hugh Singleton, the man who, the previous August, had printed John Stubbe's notorious pamphlet, to print the Shepheardes Calender. "This choice," says Byrom, "was no haphazard undertaking on the part of Spenser, for quite apart from the unusual orthography adopted by the poet which demanded exceptional care in the printing house, the dangerous nature of the subject mat-

---

ter of some of the poems dictated caution in the selection of a printer. 12 When Stubbe had been punished, his printer had also been imprisoned. Apparently Singleton was pardoned since he was back at work a little more than a month after his trial. The proof lies in the entry in the Stationers' Register for December 5, 1579, granting him a license to print the Shepheardes Calender.

In Singleton, Spenser made a wise choice as Byrom's study amply verifies. "Furthermore, the freedom of the text of the eclogues, as finally presented to the reader, from obvious misprints, the scrupulous attention bestowed upon each detail of type, the care with which the impressions were taken, and the fact that the Calender was probably the finest piece of book-making left by Singleton, may be adduced as additional reasons for thinking that, perhaps under pressure from Spenser himself, a much longer time was devoted to the production of the Shepheardes Calender than Singleton was accustomed to spend on his publications." 13

There is plenty of further evidence that Elizabeth was extremely sensitive to attacks on Simier and Alençon. Her avenging anger was swift and cruel. Confirmation of this attitude is found not only in her letters and the reports of her conversations but indirectly in Simier's letters to her. 14

Bearing in mind Puttenham's description of an eclogue as "not of purpose to counterfeit to represent the rusticall manner of loves and communications: but under the vaile of homely persons, and in rude speeches to insinuate and

---

12 J. Byrom, "Edmund Spenser's First Printer, Hugh Singleton," The Library, XIV (September 1933), 134.
13 Ibid., p. 154.
14 Greenlaw, SP, p. 17.
glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not been safe to have beene disclosed in any other sort," it seems very logical that prudent Spenser would deliberately choose this simple ruse to convey his message. We do know that the Calendar was signed merely "Immerito," a necessary mask for "the avowed responsibility for it might have been inconvenient for a young man pushing his fortune among the cross currents of Elizabeth's court." Gabriel Harvey inadvertently confirms this suspicion in a letter contained in his "Letter Book": "And heare will I take occasion to shewe you a peece of a letter that I lately receyuid from the Courte written by a frende of mine, that, since a certayn chaunce befallen vnto him, a secrett nat to be reuealed, called himself Immerito." The pastoral, critically regarded as allegorical by nature and tradition, served Spenser both as a veil and as an ornament, enabling him at once to hide his personality and to reveal it under the fictitious name of Colin Clout.

Although Singleton received the license to print the Shepheardes Calendar only on December 5, 1579, we know from E. K.'s "Epistle to Harvey" that much of it, including the glosses, had been completed as early as April 10, 1579. What then delayed its publication? Could it have been the political unrest of the time? The "November" Eclogue could well have assumed its present form during the hectic days following the five-day session of the Privy Council when

15 Puttenham, p. 38.
16 Church, p. 38.
17 Smith, I, 126.
18 Legouis, Edmund Spenser, p. 11.
19 Variorum Spenser, p. 11.
opposition to the Queen's marriage had been registered by all except Burghley and Sussex. In his letter to Harvey dated October 16, 1579, Spenser decides that the time is propitious "when occasion is so fairely offered of Estimation and Preferment. For, whiles the yron is hote, it is good striking, and minds of Nobles varie."20 As the Queen's ardor toward France cooled, Spenser could easily have reflected the changing scene in "November": "dead is Dido, dead alas and drent" (1. 37) is changed to "She hath the bonds broke of eternall night" (1. 165).

Miss Parmenter gives evidence to prove that Spenser used the words "death" and "dead" in a figurative sense.21 Consider these examples. In "October," Piers says, speaking of Cuddie's songs: "Now they in thee, and thou in sleepe art dead" (1. 6). In the Teares of the Muses: "Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late..." (1. 208); in Colin Clouts Come Home Again, Hobbinol tells Colin: "Whilst thou wast hence, all dead in dole did lie" (1. 22), but with Colin's return, life also returns:

But now both woods and fields, and floods revive,
Sith thou art come, their cause of meriment,
That vs late dead, hast made againe alive. (11. 29-31)

In the "November" Eclogue, the figurative death of Dido could be an extenuation of the same theme.

Who is Dido? Could she represent Elizabeth, England's Queen? Miss Parmenter points out the aptness of linking "November" with Queen Elizabeth. The name Dido is a clue. The "Aprill" Eclogue is an acknowledged tribute to Queen Eliza-

20Variorum Spenser, p. 613.

21Mary Parmenter, "Spenser's 'Twelve Aeglogues Proportionable to the Twelue Monethes," ELH, III (September 1936), 214.
beth as Elisa, a name given in Vergil's Aeneid to Dido, the Queen of Carthage. Thus, a distinct relationship can be drawn between the Elisa of "April" and the Dido of "November." Further, since November is the month traditionally dedicated to the saints and the souls of the faithful departed, and is besides Elizabeth's own month, Miss Parmenter's suggestion gains weight. "Dido dies in November not only because the season of All Saints has the dual nature of the pastoral elegy itself—grief and joy—but because it is the Queen's own month."22 For some years, November 17, the day of her accession, had been celebrated annually as if Elizabeth were actually a saint in the calendar. "The main theme of the preaching and pageantry in her honor was her Protestant leadership, her triumph over the Pope."23 The month belonged to Elizabeth. This excessive adulation is noted by Paul Reyher: "Les anciens se contentaient dans leur apothéoses de mettre certains Césars au nombre des dieux; les poètes de la cour d'Elisabeth vont plus loin: ils font de leur reine la souveraine des dieux..."24 Spenser, in "November" definitely supports this statement: "She reigns a goddess now among the saintes" (l. 175).

In a detailed description of the old Kalender of Shepheardes translated from the French Kalendrier des Bergers, Mary Parmenter says "the significance of the months is expressed in two places: first in the Prologue of the 'Master Shepherd' upon the progress of man's life, where each of four ages is likened

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., p. 215.
24 Paul Reyher, Les masques anglais (Paris, 1909), p. 136. Translation: "The ancients were satisfied in their apotheoses to place certain Caesars among the gods; the poets of Elisabeth's court go farther: they make of their Queen the sovereign of the gods..."
to a season, and then each of twelve ages represented by one of the months; and second in the calendar proper, where verses in Latin and English, as well as wood-cuts of the appropriate occupations and of the signs of the zodiac, serve to mingle the astronomical, the bucolic, and the moral aspects—the moral coinciding with the teaching for the special season of the Christian Year. It would be appropriate to link the month associated with death and immortality with the figurative death of the "immortal" Queen. Despite the fact that the Protestant calendar made no mention of All Souls Day or All Souls month, people continued to regard November as that time when mankind, like the year, has "lost his kindly heat, and hath no more hope of long life, but desireth to the life everlasting."

The "November" Eologue could therefore be an elaborate portrayal of the figurative death of Elizabeth's true self, a poetic expression of grief over the fatal mistake of one who had crushed the rebellion in the North and triumphed over the Pope, a sorrowing protest against one who had preserved England and the Protestant religion from enemies both at home and abroad. The coldness between Elizabeth and those statesmen, including Leicester, who were consistently opposing the French marriage, could be considered a figurative death for them of all their hopes of future power and influence. Again, the French alliance spelled death to Elizabeth's patronage, her interest in their affairs, and her independence. The picture of the "weeping" of Lobbin without remorse can be justified since Elizabeth's marriage would deal the death-blow to the afflu-

26 Ibid., p. 213.
ence of statesmen like Leicester, Walsingham, and the Sidneys.  

McLane quotes a letter written October 16, 1579, by Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador at London, to the King of Spain. In it he refers to the situation at the English court during the turbulent weeks of October. Burghley and Sussex, he said, strongly opposed the contemplated marriage of the Queen, fearing "for the security of her person, the tranquility of her realm, and the preservation of the crown" if she were to marry Alençon. Mendoza continues: "If she were to die, as might be feared if the French were to obtain control of her person, they would take possession of the country, with the aid they would get from Scotland, without the English being able to prevent it. . . . They said that, even if she did not desire to foresee the evil results which they placed before her, and insisted upon marrying Alençon, it was nevertheless their duty to cast themselves at her feet and die there as they believed she would die if she did this thing."  

Mendoza faithfully reports all the angles essayed by the adamant council, who made clear to Elizabeth "that when she proposed to marry, Parliament would urge her to declare an heir to the crown, as the people did not wish, in case of her death, to find themselves in the present position with their enemies within their own gates. She has been greatly alarmed by all this, as she has been given to understand that as soon as a successor is appointed they will upset her." Later, mention is made of the possibility of civil war with the

---

29 Ibid., p. 5.
resulting downfall of the Established Church and the return of England to the Catholic Faith. Mendoza writes: "If this [the French marriage] is put into execution it may undoubtedly be looked upon as a divine provision to reduce this country to the Catholic religion, and to punish it by means of an intestine war, to judge by present conditions, for having separated therefrom."\(^3\)

One cannot help but notice the frequent use of the words "die" and "death." If such things were written in diplomatic letters, they must also have been talked about in court circles. We may presume then that Spenser was cognizant of prevailing opinion.

Examining E. K.'s remarks, which are supposed to offer some clarification, we find in the Argument for "November" that Spenser "bewayleth the death of some mayden of greate bloud, whom he calleth Dido. The personage is secrete, and to me altogether vnknowne, albe of him selfe I often required the same."\(^3\)

In his gloss for "The great shepheard," E. K. again beclouds the issue, saying he "is some man of high degree, and not as some vainely suppose God Pan."\(^3\)

Why should anyone "vainely" suppose Dido to be the daughter of Pan? Why should E. K. bring up the point unless there were some connection with a dangerous situation to be refuted? The fact that he refers to Pan at all makes it easy for one to hark back to the "Aprill" Eclogue where Pan is identified very definitely as Elisa's father: "So that by Pan is here meant the most famous and victorious King, her highnesse Father, late of worthy memorye K. Henry the

\(^3\)Tbid.
\(^3\)Variorum Spenser, p. 104.
\(^3\)Tbid., p. 110.
eyght. And by that name, oftymes (as hereafter appeareth) be noted kings and mighty Potentates. It seems strange, then, in the "November Glosse" to read: "The person both of the Shephearde and of Dido is unknowne and closely buried in the Authors conceipt." It is not strange but crystal clear if we remember that the very presence of such disclaimers is an indication that more is here than meets the eye.

Judging by E. K.'s artful dodging in earlier eclogues, it is reasonable to assume that he knew Dido's identity but denied such knowledge in deference to Spenser's wishes. In "June" the shepherd Menalcas is described thus by E. K.: "the name of a shephearde in Virgile; but here is meant a person unknowne and secrete, agaynst whom he often bitterly inuayeth." Again in "April" Colin's identity is veiled although he had been singled out in "January" as Spenser himself: "Seemeth hereby that Colin perteyneth to some Southern noble man, and perhaps in Surrye or Kent, the rather because he so often nameth the Kentish downes, and before, As lythe as lasse of Kent." In "January" E. K. had identified Colin: "Vnder which name this Poete secretly shadoweth himself, as sometime did Virgil vnder the name of Tityrus, thinking it much fitter, then such Latine names, for the great unlikelyhooede of the language." In "February" Phyllis is glossed as "the name of some mayde unknowen, whom Cuddie, whose

33 Ibid., p. 43.
34 Ibid., p. 110.
35 Greenlaw, p. 15.
36 Variorum Spenser, p. 65.
37 Ibid., p. 42.
38 Ibid., p. 18.
person is secrete, loued. 39 And in "March" we read in the Argument that "in the person of Thomalin is meant some secrete freend..." 40 Why is such secrecy expedient?

Greenlaw questions the comparative obscurity in which the Shepheardes Calendar was received. He sees the precarious political conditions reflected "in the anonymous publication of this work on which Spenser built such hopes, the authorship being uncertain for nearly a decade; in the mysterious remarks of E. K. as to the author's purpose and in his evident desire to stress pedantic matters in order to divert the attention from things which might seem too direct in application; in the cold praise bestowed upon it by Sidney, who as the friend of Spenser and the recipient of the honor of a dedication might have been expected to say more about it." 41 It is true that Spenser was a young, unknown poet who had come into the court circle only through the good graces of Leicester and Sidney. No idle dreamer, he, but an ambitious and patriotic champion of his employer's desires. Does it not seem logical that he would use the poetic means at his disposal to further his own ambitions?

Who were the "shepheardards" abiding on "Kentish Downes" if not the Sidney and Leicester clan? Leicester dared not openly oppose Burghley. Outwardly he favored the marriage while secretly doing everything in his power to stir opposition. He ordered his nephew to write the famous letter to Elizabeth in which Sidney decrines the barrenness of his life if Elizabeth marries the French Duke. This letter, presented to the Queen early in 1580, brought upon Sidney her

39 Ibid., p. 27.
40 Ibid., p. 29.
severe displeasure, Leicester joining in the rebuke! A letter to Sidney from Languee dated October 22, 1580, refers to the voluntary exile into which Sidney found it prudent to go when the Queen's anger was at its height: "Your letter was on many accounts most delightful to me, but especially because I learn from it that you have come forth from that hiding place of yours into open day." 42 Leicester's "unscrupulous disavowals of guilty knowledge when things got too hot . . . sent Sidney into retirement and sent Spenser to Ireland." 43 Keeping these facts in mind, we can more easily understand Sidney's apparently cool reception of Spenser's work.

A further look at the eclogue in question offers substantiating evidence. Dido is called "vertues braunch and beauties budde"; the death of the "braunch" must endanger the existence of the "budde" which is dependent upon it for life and sustenance. Indeed, the bud of the Leicester clan, as well as the beginnings of the Established Church, "eke needes must quaile" if Elizabeth "dies" through her marriage to the Duc d'Alençon. Dido's kindness to the shepherds points up the Queen's bounty towards her favorites. Spenser had been to court and had been graciously received: "Als Colin cloute she would not once dis-dayne" (I. 101). The Earl of Leicester has long been associated with the name "Lobbin," but why should he mourn "without remorse"? Assuming that Dido is Elizabeth clarifies the situation. The Queen had been particularly fond of her "Robbin," as she had playfully nicknamed him, and had made him the recipient of her pleasure by means of various, delicate, and touching courtesies symbolized by the "gilte Rosemaree," "coloured chaplets," and dainty flowers. Now, "nought

42 Quoted in Greenlaw, SP, p. 19.
43 Ibid., p. 20.
remayne but the memoree" (l. 121), since the sweetness of past favors has turned to bitterness, the flowers have faded, and "they bene all yclad in clay" (l. 118) as dead as his hopes. Certainly, Leicester had reason to grieve since his party was "of the opposition," and his position was precarious despite his skilful maneuvering.

But wait! A change has occurred. In spite of the forces of darkness, the Queen is safe after all: "She hath the bonds broke of eternall night" (l. 165). Leicester can stop his grieving for "Dido nis dead, but into heauent hent" (l. 169). The celebration of her month can go on as usual. "She raignes a goddesse now emong the saintes" (l. 175) of November; she is again "enstalled nowe in heauens hight" (l. 177). She walks in "Elisian fieldes so free" (l. 179), so free from foreign entanglements, so secure in her own Elisian kingdom; she is once more the "saynt of shepheards light" (l. 176), surely the shining light of Leicester and his party.

A word of explanation concerning disputed passages should be given. The prize puzzler seems to be the "Fishes Haske." Most scholars agree with Mr. Renwick who claims that "this is Spenser's error . . . this eclogue was perhaps written before the idea of the Calender occurred to him, and placed here because of its appropriate melancholy." If Spenser was "usually careful about this sort of thing," why would he have made such a gross error, unless he did it of set purpose? E. K. goes along with Spenser, tongue obviously in cheek, as he glosses line 16: "In fishes haske) the sonne, reigneth that is, in the signe Pisces all November. a haske is a wicker pad, wherein they vse to cary

Renwick, The Shepherd's Calendar, p. 226.
E. K. as well as Spenser and other Renaissance scholars would know that the sign of the zodiac changes on November 22. It is, therefore, possible that Spenser designedly prompted the gloss, "all November." Renwick further suggests that since Pisces is the sign of February, the eclogue was originally written for that month. This is not accurate since the days would be getting longer in February whereas we are definitely told in "November" that "sadde Winter welked hath the day" (l. 13).

Mary Parmenter comments. "My conjecture is that here is a riddle, or dark conceit, to be solved by guessing that all November is to be kept as a fast, or unseasonable Lent: Phoebus inn is at the sign of the Fish." At least on some old calendars and on many modern ones, fast or abstinence days are indicated by the picture of a fish and commonly called "fish days." In the days of the catacombs, Christians recognized one another by the sign of a fish since the Greek word for fish formed an acrostic, the letters representing the words Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. Thus, a Catholic could easily be symbolized by the sign of a fish. Why not Alençon? To the average Elizabethan, the sun represented the monarch symbol:

And Phoebus weary of his yerely taske,
Ystabld hath his steedes in lowlye laye,
And taken vp his yyne in Fishes haske. (ll. 14-16)

Note that both Phoebus and Fishes are italicized in the Variorum reading.
Could this mean that Elizabeth, the sun of England, is caught in the "haske" of the Catholic fish and French Dauphin? McLane points out the similarity between

---

45 Variorum Spenser, p. 110.
46 Ibid., p. 243.
this interpretation and the "May" Eclogue's fable of the Kid caught in the Fox's bag.\footnote{Mclane, p. 7.} It must have seemed to English Protestants such as Spenser, Leicester, and Sidney that their sovereign had hopelessly entangled herself in the "Fishes haske"; the Catholics would not only have Elizabeth and England in their power, cause enough for grief, but they would also be in a position to avenge the wrong done them, a greater cause for grief to the "Shepheards":

\begin{quote}
Shepheards, that by your flocks on Kentish downes abyde,
Waile ye this wofull waste of natures warke:
Waile we the wight, whose presence was our pryde:
Waile we the wight, whose absence is our carke.
The sonne of all the world is dimme and darke:
The earth now lacks her wonted light,
And all we dwell in deaily night,
O heauie herse. (ll. 63-70)
\end{quote}

Why are the "Kentish Downes" singled out? McLane reminds us that "except for the period from August 5 to mid-September, 1579, when Elizabeth made a short progress through Essex and Suffolk, the Court was in attendance at the royal palace of Greenwich, Kent, from July to the end of the year. All of the bitter meetings of the Privy Council with the Queen in October and November were at Greenwich."\footnote{Ibid., p. 8.}

By the use of allegory, Spenser could make himself understood by the friends he could trust and at the same time protect himself. His choice of the French elegy by Marot "which he made vpon the death of Loys the frenche Queene"\footnote{Variorum Spenser, p. 104.} was a masterly stroke. Besides offering a logical vehicle of expression, it cleverly veiled while it sufficiently revealed Spenser's intentions.
Dido or Elissa is thereby made the equal of the French Queen in dignity and honor. Should anyone hostile to the Dudley faction suspect Dido's true identity, he could easily be placated by the similarity between the two poems.

Using Dido as the heroine's name was another clever move. Spenser wrote his poetry for a select group of educated men. They would certainly remember their Vergil and associate Spenser's Dido with the tragic Queen of Carthage who fell in love with the stranger Aeneas. "A single good example of the currency of the Elissa-Dido equivalence is found in the title of the summary preceding Surrey's highly popular translation of Book IV of the Aeneid: 'the occasion of the love between Elissa the Queene of Carthage after called Dido, and the Trojan lord Aeneas, briefly gathered out of Virgill." Spenser says that later poets often used a double plot "to glorify the loved woman, a trick that seems partly derived from the deification of Elizabeth; to take the deity from her and give it to some one without public importance is like the use of heroic language about the pastoral swain." One can find many references to Dido's dignity and deification in "November."

Parallels exist between the "April" and "November" Eclogues. They stand out among the twelve by reason of their excellence, their lack of rustic bluntness, their musical quality, and their noble tone. Davis says that Spenser varies the measure and quality of his dialect "according to the demands of his immediate literary purpose. For obvious reasons there is less in his courtly April and November than in other eclogues." Speaking of the marriage songs

51 McIane, p. 6.
52 Empson, p. 69.
53 Quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 629.
in the Prothalamion, Watkins concludes that both songs are "The consummation of technical experimentation reaching back to the Elisa Song and the Dido Elegy of the Calender. . . ." Though the one is a panegyric and the other is an elegy, the Elisa of "Aprill" could be the Dido of "November." The dainty nymphs of "Aprill" reappear in "November." The songs "that Colin made in her prayse" (l. 78) might refer to the "Aprill" ditty in praise of Queen Elizabeth. In "Aprill" we find Hobbinol singing Colin's song:

Contented I: then will I singe his laye
Of fayre Elisa, Queene of shepheardes all:
Which once he made, as by a spring he laye,
And tuned it vnto the Waters fall. ("Aprill," ll. 33-36)

"While she was" may be a cryptic reference to the former Elisa, gracious and generous, before her preoccupation with Alencon and his Simier. "She, while she was, (that was, a woful word to sayne)" (l. 93).

Describing the sympathy of the animals, Spenser includes all

Except the Wolues, that chase the wandring sheepe:
Now she is gon that safely did hem keepe. (ll. 136-137)

McLane sheds a little light on the meaning of the word "wolues." He says that John Ferne, in Blazon of Gentrie, London, 1586, Section II, p. 41, describes these animals as sources of discord and sedition (by which is usually meant Catholics). Re-read in the light of this fact, the passage becomes clearer. All creation mourns except those creatures who enjoy some advantage from Dido's death. They are not to be trusted because they (read Catholics) are sowers of discord and disunion, in short, traitors! The inference is clear.

---

54 Watkins, p. 213.

55 McLane, p. 6.
In both the "Aprill" and "November" Eclogues, shepherds' daughters are called upon:

Ye shepheards daughters, that dwell on the greene,
hye you there space: ("Aprill," ll. 127-128)

Sing now ye shepheards daughters, sing no more. (l. 77)

In happier times the water nymphs were "wont with her to sing and daunce"

And for her giltord Oliue braunches beare,
Now balefull boughes of Cypres doen advance. (ll. 143-145)

This passage distinctly recalls "Aprill's" "beuie of Ladies bright" whose leader bore a Coronall of olive branches for Elisa:

They bene all Ladyes of the lake behight,
that vnto her goe.
Chloris, that is the chiefest Nymph of all,
Of Oliue braunches beares a Coronall:
Oliues bene for peace,
When wars doe surcease;
Such for a Princesse bene principall. (ll. 120-126)

Also mentioned in "November" as a thing of the past are the "greene bayes" which the Muses were wont to wear. We meet the Muses in "Aprill" bearing their "Bay braunches" to Elisa:

And after her the other Muses trace,
with their Violines.
Bene they not Bay braunches which they doe bear,
All for Elisa in her hand to weare? ("Aprill," ll. 103-105)

Concerning these branches, E. K. has an interesting item: "Bay branches) be the signe of honor and victory, and therfore of myghty Conquerors worn in their triumps, and eke of famous Poets. . . ."56

In "Aprill," Elisa is called a goddess and placed in heaven as a fourth Grace.

56 Variorum Spenser, p. 44.
She is my goddesse plaine. ("April," I. 97)
I see Calliope speede her to the place,
where my Goddesse shines. ("April," II. 100-101)

She shalbe a grace,
To fyll the fourth place,
And reigne with the rest in heauen. ("April," II. 115-117)

As if to dispel any doubt one might have of Spenser's intention to deify Elizabeth, he calls her the daughter of Pan and Syrinx, insists that her beauty makes Phoebus blush, and puts the crowning touch in Hobbinoll's emblem:

"O dea certe" which E. K. explains:

This Poesye is taken out of Virgile, and there of him vued in the person of Aeneas to his mother Venus, appearing to him in likenesse of one of Dianes damosells: being there most divinely set forth.
To which similitude of diunitie Hobbinoll comparing the excelency of Elisa, and being through the worthynes of Colins song, as it were, overcome with the hugenesse of his imagination, bursteth out in great admiration, (O quam to memorem virgo?) being otherwise vnhand, then by soddein silence, to expresse the worthinesse of his conceipt. Whom Thenot answereth with another part of the like verse, as confirming by his graunt and approuance, that Elisa is nowhit inferior to the Maiestie of her, of whome that Poete so boldy pronounced, O dea certe.57

In "November," the transition to joyful verse is marked by the deification of Dido:

Dido nis dead, but into heauen hent. (I. 169)
She raignes a goddesse now among the saintes,
That whilome was the saynt of shepheards light:
And is enstalled nowe in heauens hight.
    I see thee blessed soule, I see,
    Walke in Elision fieldes so free. (II. 175-179)

As if emphasis were needed, Spenser elaborates:

There liues shee with the blessed Gods in blisse,
There drinks she Nectar with Ambrosia mixt,
And ioyes enioyes, that mortall men doe misse.
The honor now of highest gods she is. (II. 194-197)

57 Ibid., p. 45.
Both eclogues feature Theonot as one of the shepherds. In both, a song of Colin's is sung. Both are divided into three parts, the song in Elisa of Dido's honor forming the most important section. The thirteen stanzas of "Aprill" compare favorably with the fifteen of "November." The "Helicon" of "Aprill" becomes the "Muses well" of "November"; Colin speaks of breaking his pipe in "November" while Hobbinol tells us in "Aprill" that Colin has broken his pipe. These several items appear in other eclogues as well but in no other pair are there so many parallels as can be found in "Aprill" and "November." Greenlaw says that in the Calendar there was "a carefully constructed and cumulative argument warning Leicester and the Queen that the activities of the papal propaganda in England and Ireland, together with factional troubles in the government, would lead to Catholic supremacy and perhaps the overthrow of Elizabeth." Could this dreaded overthrow be the subject of "November" skillfully hidden under the allegory of Dido's death? Might not "Elisian fields" be a clever pun indicating England?

Once Spenser succeeds in having the Calendar printed, he finds to his dismay that Sidney apparently gives it a cool reception. Now that he is back in the Queen's good graces, Leicester, too, is apparently annoyed at Spenser's daring. At any rate, he refuses his patronage, and we soon hear of Spenser's change of occupation. Cuddie's complaint in "October" might well be put into Spenser's mouth: "Yet little good hath got, and much lesse gayne" (l. 10). Harvey, in reply to Spenser's second letter sent from Westminster, April, 1580, counsels him against writing "unlesse ye might make account of some certayne

ordinarie wages, or at the leastwise have your meate and drinke for your dayes workes.”

The rivalries of great men form a rough proving ground for the delicate sensibilities of an inexperienced poet. Spenser was ardent as well as loyal, but these qualities cost him the preferment he was so intent on winning. We next hear of Spenser as the secretary to Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, the Queen's new deputy to Ireland and Leicester's political opponent. Henceforth, Spenser's life is one of virtual exile. Even in fairly peaceful times the Irish appointment was no sinecure. The fact that Elizabeth disliked Lord Grey made the post "withal it looked so magnificent . . . a doubtful honor," which Spenser shared with Lord Grey. Why did Spenser leave the employ of Leicester, a man whose interests he had made his own? Why did he quit the Protestant milieu of London for the unbearably Catholic surroundings of Ireland? Had we the answers to these questions, much light would certainly be shed on the subject of "November's" allegory.

One supposition is that, because of Leicester's tenuous position at court, Spenser's writings in his defense had offended rather than pleased him. Perhaps, Elizabeth had learned somewhat of the poem's intentions and had decided that Spenser should be removed from her presence.

Could Sidney have had anything to do with Spenser's exile? In writing to Harvey October, 1579, Spenser speaks of him as "gentle Master Sidney." In the letter dated April, 1580, he does not write from Leicester House and mentions

59Dodge, p. 772.
60Ibid., p. xvi.
Sidney only once as "Master Sidney." Hunter writes that his appointment as secretary to Lord Grey seems to have been made by the Earl of Leicester. He adds: "One story is that he was recommended to be secretary to Lord Grey by Sir Henry Sidney [Philip's father]." Sidney died in October, 1586. Four years later, Spenser had not as yet written any verses to commemorate the event, despite the fact that his first published work had been dedicated to Sidney. Is this fact perhaps significant in the light of his past difficulties? Spenser gives an explanation of sorts in his dedication to the "Ruins of Time": "Sithens my late cumming into England, some friends of mine . . . knowing with howe straight bandes of dutie I was tied to him [i.e. Sidney] . . . have sought to revive them by upbraiding me, for that I have not shewed anie thankefull remembrance towards him or any of them [i.e. the Dudleys], but suffer their names to sleep in silence and forgetfulnesse." Note that Spenser speaks not of love or friendship but of "dutie"; whatever his feelings were, they would have to be revived; he offers no excuse for his apparent ingratitude. Almost as if he meant to put an end to the importunities of his friends, he adds: "Whome chieflie to satisfie, or els toavoide that fowle blot of unthankfulnesse, I have conceived this small poeme." Dodge adds that Spenser at this time, 1590, could not have already composed Astrophel, the pastoral elegy in memory of Sir Philip Sidney.

---

62 Dodge, pp. 771-772.
64 Dodge, p. 699.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
Renwick reminds us that Spencer "was never again to scrutinize public affairs and public personages so directly as in some parts of *The Shepheardes Calender*..." 67

The last word has not yet been written concerning the identity of Dido. Since the pastoral has always been critically regarded as allegorical by nature as well as by tradition, it is an apt vehicle for such veiled references as Spencer makes. E. K. in the Dedicatory Epistle tells us that Spencer's choice was "to unfold great matter of argument covertly." 68 The evidence gathered in this chapter, though not conclusive, furnishes abundant and convincing proof that the person he calls Dido in the "November" Elegy might well be Queen Elizabeth.

68 Variorum Spencer, p. 10.
"It is not sufficient," writes Gabriel Harvey in his *Marginalia*, "for poets to be superficial humanists, but they must be exquisite artists, and curious universal schollers."¹ Harvey might well have had Spenser in mind when he penned the foregoing, for Spenser, as the preceding chapters bring out, is the artistic scholar *par excellence*. The universality of his scholarship is shown by the number and variety of those poets "whose foting" he followed: Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, Vergil, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Sannazaro, Mantuanus, Alamanni, and Marot. His exquisite poetry remains the admiration of each succeeding age.

Earlier English poets had produced pastorals. Skelton made use of a very conscious rhetoric in his elegy, "Vpon the Dethe of the Erle of Northumberlande," while Alexander Barclay, the third major poet of the earliest English Renaissance period, used plain language in order to reach and teach the common people. In *The Eclogues*, his language is neither rural nor designedly aureate, but "playne" so as not to exceed the "small capacity" of shepherds. Skelton and Hawes, addicted to fine and elaborate diction, strove to expand, invigorate, and enhance the vernacular, but their method of exaggerated and aureate

¹Smith, I, 161.
words encouraged later poets to turn again to Chaucer.  

Since new editions of Skelton, Hawes, and Barclay appeared from 1555 onwards, Spenser was presumably well acquainted with their works. Wyatt, Surrey, and Grimald carried forward three main tendencies in poetic diction: Revival of native archaisms in preference to importing affected borrowings; disarranged syntax . . . and ornamentation by interweaving rhetorical figures.  

From Gascoigne to Nashe, excessive alliteration, though repeatedly frowned upon by the critics, pervaded the poems in the various miscellanies. Barnabe Googe published his **Eglogs, Epytaphes, and Sonettes**, in 1563. These eclogues are characterized by a lack both of distinguished diction and of contrived figures of speech, a result of a deliberate effort to keep the pastoral plain. Googe describes conditions in winter, spring, and summer—a motive which Spenser enlarges upon in the **Calender**. Turberville in his letter to the reader prefixed to his translations of **The Eclogues of Baptista Mantuanus** (1567) expresses the prevailing opinion regarding pastorals:  

I have not chaunged the Authors meaning or sense in any thing: . . . observing that which we terme **Decorum** in eache respect, as far as the Poete and our mother tong wold glue me leaue. For as ye conference betwixt Shepherds is familiar stuffe & homely: so haue I shapt my stile and tempred it with suche common and ordinarie phrase of speach as Countreymen do vse in their affaires: . . . for in deede, he that shall traslate a shephiers tale, and vse the talke and stile of an Heroicall personage, expressing the siellie mans meaning with loftie thundering words: in my simple judgement ioynes (as Horace sayth) a Horses necke and a mans hed togethers.

---

2Rubel, p. 50.
3Ibid., p. 88.
4Ibid., p. 110.
5Ibid., p. 112-113.
Prior to Spenser's *Calendar*, the pastoral's main purpose was not to show the shepherds in their native simplicity, but to subject sophisticated life to the shrewd analyses which such natural folk were able to make with unbiased perspicacity. By the time Spenser begins work on his *Calendar*, the earlier attempts of English poets are apparently forgotten, and as a pioneer he sets out, as E. K. tells us in the Dedicatory Epistle, "to furnish our tongue with this kinde, wherein it faulteth." How does Spenser's work differ from earlier elegies? Did he add anything to the traditional elegiac form? Did he succeed in doing what he set out to do?

Spenser's work combines the best elements of pastoral poetry in the original unity of a calendar. He exhibits a striking departure from the familiar pastoral tradition in the excellence of his poetry, his daring innovations in meter and rhyme, his prolific use of intricate rhetorical devices, the musical quality of his verses, the prodigious use of archaisms, neologisms, and dialect words, his artful "shadowing" of contemporary events, and the success with which he unites sound and sense in a rich variety. "This rich variety was quite opposed to pastoral tradition. Theocritus, indeed, sometimes introduces elegiacs as the medium of lyric dialogue (*Idyll 8*), but Virgil compels the hexameter to serve all his purposes, and his authority decided future practice."

Spenser adds a freshness of interest in rustic life, actually making use of English country scenes and Northern dialect to authenticate the setting, whereas earlier eclogues generally had an artificial, stereotyped background.

---

6 Ibid., p. 113.
7 Variorum Spenser, p. 10.
8 Herford, quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 637.
"Thus, without departing from the convention of pastoral poetry, Spenser modified it for his own purposes with such admirable delicacy and artistic instinct, that he appears as in a certain sense an inventor, even on well-trodden ground." 9

In the original Greek, elegies had three phases: the statement of the loss, the intellectual questioning, "why?", and the transition from mourning to joy in the thought of the loved one's eternal beatitude. Spenser includes the three phases in "November," but he does not observe the same natural order as his Greek model. Following Marot, he returns at intervals to the first mood of grief, obscuring thereby the progress of the emotion and making it seem more diffuse than it is. The second phase, the intellectual questioning, comes nearer to the beginning than to the end of the song, thus breaking the emotional thread being woven. 10 In the earlier English miscellanies, only the first and third parts of the Greek elegy were expressed. No transition was made and at times even the element of consolation was omitted. Thus, Spenser's "November" is a definite improvement on the earlier forms. Add to this advance in form the exalted idealism to which the subject of his elegy is raised.

Thoughts of Dido are clothed in images drawn from the lovelier aspects of nature. The frailty of life is expressed in a beautiful convention:

Whence is it, that the flouret of the field doth fade,  
And lyeth buried long in Winters bale:  
Yet soone as spring his mantle hath displayd,  
It floureth fresh, as it should neuer fayle?  
But thing on earth that is of most availe,  
As vertues braunch and beauties budde,  
Reliuen not for any good. (11. 83-89)

9 Courthope, quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 582.
10 Erskine, quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 397.
In the miscellany epitaphs this thought is dogmatized in variations of the "all flesh is grass" theme. Spenser's questioning indicates "a truer dramatic conception of the mood of grief."\(^{11}\)

Spenser combines the traditions of regular pastoral, says Greg, with the wayward graces of native inspiration.\(^{12}\) One of the main contributions Spenser makes is the conscious and deliberate artistry he brings to the Calendar. An excellent example of this artistry is the distinctive ten-line stanza with which he graces the "November" Eclogue. Here he is the skilled craftsman, fashioning an exquisite gem which will delight discriminating poets for many ages.

Norlin enumerates and discusses the various Greek conventions of the pastoral elegy and their use by Spenser. He lists them thus:

1. Its subject masquerades as a herdsman moving amid rustic scenes.
2. Dialogue frame-work of the elegy.
3. The refrain.
4. All nature mourns.
5. The "Where were ye, Nymphs?" formula.
6. The "Wherefore dost thou languish?" formula.
7. The strewing of flowers on the grave.
8. The riddle of this painful earth.
9. The "Peace, peace! he is not dead!" formula.\(^{13}\)

Of these conventions, Spenser included in the "November" all but numbers 5 and 6.

Osgood, the editor of The Minor Poems, adds a few conventions to Norlin's list. The first is the statement: "He is dead and must be mourned" usually presented with a tolling iteration of the deceased one's name. This convention

---

11 Ibid., p. 398.
12 Greg, p. 84.
13 Quoted in Variorum Spenser, p. 399.
may be found in the "November" Eologue. The second addition is the account of "when and how" the person died. Spenser judiciously or mysteriously omits this convention. The convention of echo lamenting does not appear while the procession of mourners is doubly emphasized; it appears in the verse and in the woodcut which accompanies "November." Spenser includes the eulogy, a very scanty biographical account, the pastoral setting, and abundant archaisms. Other conventions which Spenser does not use are the reference to Aphrodite, Urania, or Clio as the poet's mother and the account of the dying speech and death of the loved one.14 Greg says that Spenser also omits the "golden age" theme.15

All elements of poetic diction which had been part of an unbroken tradition from Chaucer's time on are combined in Spenser's pastorals: the use of established archaisms and borrowings, the revival of other archaisms, the introduction of new loan words, and the ingenious manipulation of verbal figures.16 It was Spenser "who ultimately determined the diction of the pastoral to the very close of the period [Renaissance]."17

In "November" Spenser varies the usual evening theme by introducing the "drizzle" common to English countrysides in the late fall of the year. The rich variety of verse forms in the Calendar is quite opposed to pastoral tradition. Within the usual iambic pentameter line, moreover, he blithely ignores the rules imposed by critics of his day demanding ten syllables distributed in five words with a caesura regularly after the fourth syllable. The variety he

---

14 Ibid., p. 98.
15 Greg, p. 98.
16 Rubel, p. 160.
17 Ibid.
introduces includes a variation of spondees and trochees, while he definitely
does not confine the caesura to a given position. As it pleases him, he
shortens or lengthens the traditional pentameter line by the subtraction or
addition of a syllable.

One conclusion which is apparent to the most casual observer is that Spenser
intentionally wrote not for a general public but for a comparatively closed
circle of contemporaries. Chief among the chosen few would be his friends at
Cambridge, especially Gabriel Harvey. At court, he would certainly count the
friends of Leicester and Sidney among his interested readers. He wrote for an
educated elite as E. K.'s scholarly gloss alone would imply. But the Dedicatory
Epistle, General Argument, and Spenser's letters to Harvey emphasize the
learning presumed to be the accoutrement of his audience.

Five editions of the Calendar in Spenser's lifetime warrant a high degree
of interest in an "unknown" poet. Judging by the comments which appeared spo-
radically during the years following its publication, the Shepheardes Calender
was as much appreciated as it was carefully read by both poets and critics.
Sidney, in his Defense of Poetrie, written in the early 1580's but not pub-
lished until 1595, gives the first recognition. He seems to speak guardedly
about his erstwhile admirer: "The Sheapheards Kalender hath much Poetrie in
his Eclogues: indeede worthy the reading, if I be not deceived."18 This terse
praise carries added weight when we consider that Sidney mentions Spenser in
almost the same breath in which he speaks of Chaucer, Sackville, and Surrey.
He did not approve of Spenser's diction: "That same framing of his stile to an
old rustick language I dare not alowe, sith neyther Theocritus in Greek,

18Smith, p. 196.
Virgill in Latine, nor Sanazar in Italian did affect it. No mention is made that the "exiled" Spenser is the author.

An interesting note is the Latin verse translation made of the Shepheardes Calender a few years after its publication by John Dove of Christ Church, Cambridge. The manuscript is entitled Poimenologia and is now in the Caius College library at Cambridge. John Dove seems to have had no knowledge of Spenser's authorship. Few outside of his circle of intimate friends did at first connect Spenser's name with the "Immerito" of the Calender. Whetstone attributed it to Sidney. In 1586, Webbe made the Calender in some sort the text of his Discourse of English Poetrie. In this most comprehensive review of existing poetry yet attempted, Webbe heaps praise on the author of the Calender:

"This place have I purposely reserved for one, who, if not only, yet in my judgement principally, deserueth the tytle of the rightest English Poet that euer I read, that is, the Author of the Sheepsheardes Kalender, intituled to the woorthy Gentleman Master Phillip Sydney: whether it was Master Sp. or what rare Scholler in Pembrooke Hall souer, because himself and his freendes, for what respect I knowe not, would not reveale it, I force not greatly to sette downe: sorry I am that I can not find none other with whom I might couple him in this Catalogue in his rare gyft of Poetry." He is not sure or pretends not to be sure, perhaps out of caution, to know who wrote the Calender, but he goes so far as to name "Master Sp.," without spelling out Spenser's name.

---

19Ibid.
20Greg, p. 98.
21Herford, p. xiii.
22Variorum Spenser, p. 571.
Two years later, Abraham Fraunce, in his treatise on rhetoric and in his
Lawyers Logike, quotes from the Shepheardes Calender. In 1589, the reputed
author of the weighty Arte of Englishe Poesie, George Puttenham, speaks of "that
other Gentleman who wrote the late Shepheardes Callender," coupling his name
with that of Sidney and Challoner as the best exponents of the "Eglogue and
pastorall Poesie." 23

Henry Peacham referred to the readers of his Garden of Eloquence (1593)
"the new Shepheardes Calender, a most singular imitation of ancient speech," for
examples of onomatopoeia. 24

That Spenser succeeds in justifying his use of archaisms to some extent is
evident not only in the use successive poets make of the same words, but also
in the general acclaim with which the Calender is received by his contemporar-
ies. Thomas Nashe writes in 1592 to Harvey: "I would teach thy olde tewant-
ship the true use of words, as also how much more inclinable verse is than
prose, to dance after the horrizonant pipe of inueterate antiquitie." 25 Dray-
ton eulogizes Spenser thus: "Master Edmund Spenser had done enOllt; for the
immortality of his name, had he only given us his Shepherds' Calendar, a mas-
terpiece, if any . . . Spenser is the prime pastoralist of England." 26 Again,
he terms Spenser "Fame's eldest favorite."

The fact is that the Shepheardes Calender "lay in the main stream of lit-

23Puttenham, p. 63.
24Davis, p. 184.
25Quoted in Rubel, p. 106.
p. 503.
erature, and reflected the mind of the age,"27 so that subsequent poets naturally followed Spenser's lead in the writing of pastoral poetry. In his *Skialotheia*, Guilpin praises Spenser's "profound-prickt layes"; to Whetstone the *Calender* was "a work of depe learning, judgment & witte"; Nashe insisted in a letter to the "Gentlemen Students of both Universities" in his preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) that, should Spenser's work be challenged, he would uphold "divine Master Spenser, the miracle of wit, to bandie line for line for my life in the honor of England against Spaine, France, Italie and all the world."28

Within the traditional framework, Spencer traces a delicate pattern. He builds upon a unique stanzaic structure, breathes new life into old rhetorical devices, and produces a "thing of beauty" which will be a joy forever.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES


II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A. BOOKS


137


Craig, George L. Spenser and His Poetry. 3 vols. London, 1845.

Craigie, Sir William. The Northern Element in English Literature. Chicago, 1931.

Davies, Peter, ed. The Kalendar and Compost of Shepherds, From the Original Edition Published by Guy Marchant in Paris in the Year 1493, and Translated into English c. 1518: Newly Edited for the Year 1931. London, 1930.


Du Bellay, Joachim. La défense et illustration de la langue française. Paris, [1530].


Gerhardt, Mia Irene. *Essai d'analyse littéraire de la pastorale.* Rotterdam, [1950].


-----. *They Tell of Birds.* Austin, 1956.


-----. *Specimens of English Literature*. Oxford, 1890.


Wilkins, Ernest H. *Outlines and Bibliographies of the Survey of the Renaissance*. University of Chicago, 1921.


B. ARTICLES


Byrom, H. J. "Edmund Spenser's First Printer, Hugh Singleton," The Library, XIV (September 1933), 121-156.


Fletcher, Jefferson Butler. "Spenser, the Cosmopolitan Poet," The English Graduate Record, Columbia University, I (September-October 1905), 65-81.


McLane, Paul E. "The Death of a Queen: Spenser's Dido as Elizabeth," Huntington Library Quarterly, XVIII (November 1954), 1-11.


C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS


APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister M. Theresa of the Holy Child Nicholson, S.N.J.M. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

May 28, 1960
Date

Edward Luntz
Signature of Adviser