

## Metaphoric Accumulation: Notes on the Structure of *The Faerie Queene*

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### I. Preliminaries

The return to the Faerie Queene provides the theme for any knight's adventure in *The Faerie Queene*. But the seeming end is always projected into another beginning of journey; any end in *The Faerie Queene* is anticlimax. And the full union between a lover and a beloved is laid in the future. We naturally wonder why Spenser, who attached the lovable "Epithalamion" to *Amoretti*, retreated from the final consummation of marriage. A clue to this problem lies in a structural principle of *The Faerie Queene*: the romance of Spenser accommodates itself to the cyclical movement, though it tries to transcend the cycle by marriage, whose implication extends beyond the physical to the spiritual one. It would be noticed that the consequence of the cyclical movement is temporality of the Faerie Land. But I must add an important thing that it is the fullest realization on the earth, and the joyful and happy acceptance of mortality.

### II. Metaphoric Accumulation

In *The Faerie Queene* we notice two movements, one rectilinear, the other circular: the movement to transcend Nature and the movement to remain in it. The former propounds to complete the quests which are bound to an end, and to accomplish the pledged marriage. The latter yields to ever-circling wheel of Nature failing to do so.

"To transcend Nature" is a metaphoric way

of speaking, for the vision which is really beyond time appears only twice in the poem: the New Jerusalem, which the Red Cross Knight glances in the distance, and the Sabaoth's sight, which the poet is eager to see in the closing canto. The poem is concerned not so much with these visions, which directly express eternity, as with the metaphoric end-points.

A hierarchy of metaphors can be made, each of which expresses a step towards eternity: firstly the New Jerusalem, which is the direct metaphor of eternity, secondly the Faerie Court, which never appears and yet always exists as an off-stage entity, and lastly the Faerie Land, where the knights wander envisaging the final goal. Thus it can be said that the poem is a collection of metaphors, though apparently disconnected, skilfully connected and arranged so as to create one image: every metaphor is united in representing the image of time-transcending.

The direct concern of the wandering knights is the Faerie Court, the integration of all the other houses of virtue, or "house of recognition," as Frye terms it.<sup>1</sup> The Faerie Court, the most desired among these houses, is the end of knights' journeys and the place of marriage. And encompassing them, there lies a labyrinth, as Fletcher argues. Noting "two cardinal images" of the temple and the labyrinth, he explicates the structure of the poem. In his argument, the temple is "an exclusion of chaos" or "the resting place of man," and the labyrinth is "the place of inevitable wandering."<sup>2</sup> So the struggle of the knights in the labyrinth can be understood as that of coming back to the temple from there.

Though this destination exists in time, it is a metaphoric eternity. This is only another way of speaking that time can be an image of eternity. Since the recognition abiding inevitably in time does not diminish man's conviction that he can dissociate himself from the realm of time, time and eternity can be harmonious in his mind. But to avoid ambiguity, it must be added that the absolute separation of them is taken for granted in such a conviction. Eternity is beyond every possibility of gradual mediation, so that time and eternity cannot be balanced by any means. The earthly and the heavenly do not merge. But time only simulates eternity. And the earthly fulfillment is integrated into the eternity through functioning as its metaphor.

Thus the mood of craving eternity is an undercurrent of *The Faerie Queene*. The quests are coloured by the wish of coming home that images the Apocalyptic world. The desire to recover the paradise embraces the knights, who are wandering in the wilderness. The end-point is the earthly paradise, which lies in a different time-scheme from the ordinary world, if not wholly freed from time. Now we are to discuss the Faerie Court, which is the end-point of Arthur's love pilgrimage and the other knights' adventures, and then the Garden of Adonis, which prefigures it as the place of the full possession of love.

### III. The Faerie Court

The time-scheme of the Faerie Court is paradoxical, existing at once in past, present, and future. As past, it is retrospective of the golden age when the world was not corrupted. And it is also contemporary with the actions being performed now. And it is the place of the reward for adventures when professed morals have been perfectly achieved.

As for its place, a clear statement that it exists on the earth can be found in the poem:

Yet *Cleopolis* for earthly frame,

The fairest place, that eye beholden can .....  
(I, x, 59)<sup>3</sup>

These are the words of the Contemplation, who distinguishes clearly between the New Jerusalem and Cleopolis: the one is heavenly and the other is earthly. And since the images of the Queen Elizabeth and Gloriana can be sometimes commingled, one can easily imagine that Cleopolis is equal with London. Though Cleopolis exists on the level quite different from that of the New Jerusalem, it is not the direct expression of London, for as Paridell's speech shows, Brute's

..... worke great *Troynouant*, his worke is eke.

Faire *Lincolne*, both renowned far away,  
That who from East to West will endlong seeke,

Cannot two fairer Cities find this day,  
Except *Cleopolis* .....

(III, ix, 51)

The consideration that London has a claim as the image of Cleopolis does not necessarily imply that the two cities are identical.

The foregoing considerations lead us to conclude that Cleopolis and its court, the Faerie Court lack any specific time and place. Its time-scheme can be characterized as the co-existence of past, present, and future. "Distance is also strangely telescoped, imprecise."<sup>4</sup> When we hear that some knights or ladies have just come from the Faerie Court, its place can be felt as quite near to us, as a central castle standing in a relatively small land. In contrast, as the end-point of all adventures and the home of all wandering knights, its presence is peculiarly distanced from our eyes: it seems far beyond the very wide land of the Faerie. It is on the earth and not on the earth; it is in present and not in present.

This ambiguity of time and place is a concomitant of the earthly paradise. The Faerie Court is then the earthly paradise as the image of

the end of man's spiritual wandering. Though Gloriana's reward is earthly (I, i, 3), what man can get is not a mere earthly thing, but imbued with the spiritual implication. The Faerie Court is pronouncement of men's strong conviction that they can dissociate from the endless cyclical movement and that perfection in virtue can bring them outside the domain of Time. And besides the place of perfected virtue, it is also the place of marriage; the marriage of Arthur and Gloriana as the unifying image of all other marriages. The marriage in *The Faerie Queene* metaphorically signifies the revelation of the Apocalyptic world, and accordingly should be the great end of the narrative.

The Faerie Court is the fullest realization in a temporal world, and as such it is beyond time while being, in reality, time-bound. This shows that it is in the *aeuum*: "the integration of past, present, and future which defies the successive time," and the participation "in both the temporal and the eternal."<sup>5</sup> If we consider the Faerie Court as the realm in which time is not continually flowing but is integrated into one point, it is possible to regard the earth as one level higher than usual.

#### IV. The Garden of Adonis

The paramount question is how the Garden of Adonis is the prefiguration of love's fulfillment. This question is best answered by the presence of Venus and Adonis, and Cupid and Psyche. The figures of Venus and Adonis provides an underpinning for Book III as a whole. Interpretations vary as to the conflicting versions of their myth figured in the tapestry of the House of Malecasta and here. C.S. Lewis elucidates the difference by the view that the former is a picture of "lust suspended" while the latter is "a picture of fruition."<sup>6</sup> This is a right point. We will go further into the meaning of the myth presented in Book III. The tapestry of the House of Malecasta precisely prefigures the story of Malecasta, which is immediately told after the

description of the tapestry. The main points are artfulness and one-sidedness of love both Venus and Malecasta.

The figures of Venus and Adonis in the tapestry reveal a clear contrast with these in the Garden of Adonis:

Then with what sleights and sweet allure-  
ments she  
Entyst the Boy, as well that art she knew,  
And wooed him her Paramoure to be;  
Now making girlonds of each flowre that  
grew,  
To crowne his golden locks with honour  
dew;  
Now leading him into a secret shade  
From his Beauperes, and from bright  
heauens vew  
Where him to sleepe she gently would  
perswade,  
Or bathe him in a fountaine by some couert  
glade.

(III, i, 35)

Paul Alpers, in refuting Lewis' view, argues that this description in itself does not demand moral judgement and that this is simply the picture of "pastoral seclusion."<sup>7</sup> But the reader may well notice that the diction employed here is absent in the Garden of Adonis and evocative of the scene of Duessa's seduction of the Red Cross Knight.<sup>8</sup> When he rests himself by "a fountaine side," Duessa approaches and reproaches him for leaving her, and

Vnkindnesse past, they gan of solace treat,  
And bathe in pleasaunce of the ioyous  
shade,  
Which shielded them against the boyling  
heat,  
And with greene boughes decking a gloomy  
glade,  
About the fountaine like a girlond made ....

(I, vii, 4)

The words "bathe," "shade," "fountaine," and "girlond" are most revealing. Of course one may say that employing similar terms is merely accidental. But the absence of those in the description in the Garden of Adonis and the presence of these here bespeak an important thing: this scene is not simple and innocent pastoral. It is an ominous scene, and this diction provides a mood for seduction and wooing. In short, a point which distinguishes this scene from the Garden of Adonis is that here love is one-sided and there it is reciprocal: Venus and Adonis in the Garden of Adonis enjoy reciprocity in amorous relationship, which can be seen from the following description of Adonis:

There now he liueth in eternall blis,  
 loying his goddesse, and of her enjoyed.....  
 (III. vi, 48)

In opposition to this, Venus here

..... ioyed his loue in secret vnespyde.  
 (III, i, 37)

And Adonis here wants to "hunt the salvage beast in forrest wyde" (III, i, 37). What is prominent is the aggressive wooing of Venus and reluctance of Adonis. And how Venus seduces Adonis is another characteristic of love in the tapestry: it is "as well that art she knew" (III, i, 35). Here is not mutual love but artful and one-sided love.

The interesting thing is that this kind of love can be paralleled with Malecasta's love, which in its turn has the same root with Busyrane's love. We can say that the love adumbrated in the House of Malecasta and the House of Busyrane is Eros, which is in the sharp opposition with Agape. This is what we find when we notice the prominence of Cupid in both houses. In the House of Malecasta, "*Cupid* still amongst them kindled lustfull fires" (III, i, 39), and Cupid in the House of Busyrane is none but Busyrane himself. Whereas, Cupid in the Garden of Adonis,

..... laying his sad darts  
 Aside, with faire *Adonis* playes his wanton  
 parts.

(III, vi, 49)

When these considerations have been made, the clear differentiation between Venus and Adonis in the tapestry of the House of Malecasta, and those in the Garden of Adonis can be made. The latter is not constricted by the rule of courtly love, which is symbolized by the fact that Cupid gives up his deadly arms. The love of the former is destructive, one-sided, and lays its emphasis on the process, while the love of the latter is creative (for it is involved in the generative cycle), mutual, and lays its emphasis on fulfillment. The one is what Rougemont calls passion,<sup>9</sup> whose essence is Eros and whose other name is courtly love. The other is Christian love, which leads to marriage.

The garden of Adonis is the place for those who have come through struggles and deserve to enter it, in contrast with the Bower of Bliss, into which anyone can enter, however little moral strength he has and however he lacks heroic effort. Venus has endured her beloved's death, and Adonis "has ended by recognizing the necessity of love to define and crown his quest."<sup>10</sup>

So it is also the place for Cupid and Psyche, who have undergone the persecution and separation, and not for Amoret, who has been trained only in the lore of love and womanhood, not yet trained in chastity. Consequently she is not qualified to enjoy "eternall blis."

The patient love is rewarded. The fulfillment of pleasure can be brought about only through the long process of struggle. Everyone who loves looks forward and backward to the Garden of Adonis, because this is the place of love's fulfillment. And every woman's end lies here, because this is the place of the reconciliation of Venus and Diana, *coincidentia oppositorum*: lover and virgin, the aspects of Amoret and Belphoebe. Both must be compensated by the other, which

is what Britomart is trying to do.

But one would easily notice that this happy place is unobtainable. "It is everywhere and nowhere *in particular*,"<sup>11</sup> so that any hope of seeing and attaining it is lost for any mortals. In fact, on further reflection, the mortals are not included here as the sharers of "eternall blis," unless they are united with the immortal beings, or like Amoret half-immortal. It is desired end of lovers, who are not yet entitled to enter it because they have not run through all the trials. It is the earthly paradise, which mediates between time and timelessness, that is in the *aevum*.

### V. Circuitous Journey

The return to the Faerie Queene is the theme of every knight's adventure. Its fulfillment seems simultaneously imminent and remote,<sup>12</sup> just as the Faerie Court seems near and distant. At the beginning and in the middle of each book, the perfection of a virtue and the completion of an appointed adventure looks so far beyond many dangerous trials. In the end after the overthrow of the arch enemy, we naturally expect the knight to be rewarded and to go back to the Faerie Court, which is the place of the grandiose reward. But our expectation is always baffled; a knight's effort is always frustrated and the new effort is required again. We can perceive a sense of never-endingness: *The Faerie Queene* does not assure a decisive ending.

This atmosphere embraces the whole poem. Book II has ended with Guyon's perfection as the knight of Temperance. Most paradoxically, this accomplished knight easily yields to wrath, as if he has learned and acquired nothing from the long and painstaking quest in Book II:

.....then the Faery quickly raught  
His poinant speare, and sharply gan to spurne  
His fomy steed, whose fierie feete did burne  
The verdant grasse, as he thereon did  
tread .....

(III, i, 5)

The posture in which he established his virtue, temperance, was pedestrian. When we recall this fact, "fomy steed," which symbolizes nothing but passion, looks so contrary an accomplishment to Temperance. And he is overthrown by Britomart. That Book III is the realm of Britomart gives a reason for it. But the sense of disappointment or strangeness is unavoidable. Guyon's power fails here.

We are even more surprised to see him ride after Florimell with Arthur:

Full of great enuie and fell gealosity,  
They staid not to auise, who first should bee,  
But all spurd after fast, as they mote fly,  
To reskew her from shamefull villany.

(III, i, 18)

The terms are ambiguous: on the surface "enuie" means "Malignant or hostile feeling" (OED 1), and "gealosity" means "indignation" (OED 1). When we take into account the virtuousness of Arthur and Guyon, this meaning looks prominent. But it cannot be denied that the current meaning of both words are present.<sup>13</sup> Then, though apparently Arthur and Guyon, full of great hostility and furious indignation, go to rescue Florimell from shameful villainy, they may also bear a grudge against giving the Foster such a fair maiden as Florimell. In fact, it is pronounced that

The Prince and *Guyon* equally byliue  
Her selfe pursewd, in hope to win thereby  
Most goodly meede, the fairest Dame alieue .....

(III, i, 18)

And the poet himself seems to approve Britomart's constancy:

The whiles faire *Britomart*, whose constant  
mind,  
Would not so lightly follow beauties chace,  
Ne reckt of Ladies Loue, did stay behind...

(III, i, 19)

Thus Sir Guyon, who had resisted the temptation of naked maidens in the Bower of Bliss, could not resist the beauty of Florimell; was his course a round-about way from the beginning to another beginning?

When we turn our eyes to Books V and VI, we find the sense of mutability of any achievement deepening. The ending is interrupted in Book V and unfinished in Book VI. Apart from the historical cause, we would be naturally surprised when we hear that Artegall must go back to the Faerie Queene leaving his quest unfinished.

But ere he could reforme it thoroughly,  
He through occasion called away,  
To Faerie Court .....

(V, xii, 27)

We suppose, though with some anxiety because the Book is drawing to the end, that he would return immediately within Book V. But our expectation is bound to be frustrated. Moreover on the way to the Faerie Court, he is attacked by the Blatant Beast and defenceless against it. Is this really Britomart's beloved and the knight of Justice? He is too easily diminished to a vulnerable person.

Calidore's victory is impermanent and precarious, though he has safely rescued Pastorella and finally bound up the Blatant Beast. The pastoral mood, which was dominant through larger part of the Book, has been broken up by the ravage of brigands and captivity of Pastorella, and it cannot be wholly restored once it has been damaged. And most surprisingly of all, the Blatant Beast breaks the chain and again makes havoc here and there:

..... whether wicked fate so framed,  
Or fault of men, he broke his yron chain,  
And got into the world at liberty againe.

(VI, xii, 38)

The poem itself cannot be spared:

Ne may this homely verse, of many meanest,  
Hope to escape his venomous despite.....

(VI, xii, 41)

We see the Blatant Beast rushing towards the poem and ultimately towards ourselves.

The victory is only temporary; nothing is absolute. The dragon-fight of the Red Cross Knight seemed to lead him towards an ending of all his heroic efforts and eternal bliss with Una. Guyon's destroying the Bower of Bliss was his completion as the knight of Temperance, at least for the reader. Britomart's attainment of chastity through overthrowing Busyrane, her battle and reconciliation with Artegall, and her victory over Radigund should have qualified her for the marriage to Artegall. What is worse than these things is that Artegall could not complete his adventure, and that Calidore's binding up the Blatant Beast is too temporary. The figure of the Blatant Beast unbound has an impact strong enough for us to fear that the day will come when Archimago, Duessa, Acrasia, the Boar in the Garden of Adonis, and Mutabilitie, though now silenced or bound, will come again into the poem and will be triumphant over the virtuous knights. The evils are never vanquished completely. This is because the world of the poem is mutable. So since the evils "are of earth's essence they will again break free and threaten destruction, night, and chaos."<sup>14</sup>

That the Faerie Land is a mutable space would require an explanation. It owes its mutability to the fact that *The Faerie Queene* is not completed with marriage. From the standpoint of narrative movement, the assertion of the full close of a poem is enabled by the heroine's marriage: "by her marriage, or whatever it is, she completes the cycle and passes out of the story."<sup>15</sup> This is Northrop Frye well articulating the idea of an ending of romance. Marriage is a moment when a lover and a beloved are dismissed out of the ever-whirling wheel of reality. And they are allowed to go onto the higher level. We readers are convinced that they would

live happily ever after: happiness of lovers does not interest us so much as unhappiness.

Further in *The Faerie Queene*, the implication of marriage extends to the spiritual. The lover's pilgrimage (mainly Britomart's and Arthur's) foreshadows the Soul's pilgrimage towards the union with the divinity. Its end is release from the labour, departure from the bounds of Time; and restoration of the Garden of Eden. Marriage embraces a great deal of meanings beyond the physical meaning of the union of mortals; the marriage of Britomart and Artegall, and Arthur and Gloriana are metaphors for mankind's reconciliation with God. They are metaphors of the Apocalyptic world. Accordingly the Faerie Court as the place of marriage is also a metaphor of the Apocalyptic world. This implication gives rise to the statement that end is beyond time. The end of the quests is the end of man's pilgrimage. "Beyond, and really beyond the bounds of *The Faerie Queene*, St. George unites forever with Una in that final Sabbath when all things rest upon the pillars of Eternity."<sup>16</sup>

But this linear movement towards eternity is unfulfilled, and the result is the temporality of the Faerie Land. It is a temporal space between the First Coming and the Second Coming, ever waiting for the Apocalypse. It is ruled by Nature, where the knights are wandering towards remote goals. The seeming resting places are always to be left behind; the knights are homeless. They are ever wandering in the Faerie Land. Though various trials and adventures are the means to enter the home and the Faerie Court, they never lead the knights into anywhere. They still remain in the wilderness, which is the place of inevitable wandering.

This is inevitable, because reality always requires heroic efforts. An ending is a new beginning; a seeming end is immediately taken over by another beginning of an adventure. A vision of an ending dissolves soon after the realization of it. The effort is always frustrated. But we find no loss of vitality; rather the con-

tinually repeated cyclical movement is enmeshed in the sense of joy and hope, and despair is only a temporal mood. Order and fertility characterize the cyclical movement of *The Faerie Queene*, which is witnessed by the marriage of Florimell and Marinell, and the Thames and the Medway.

## VI. The Marriage of Florimell and Marinell

The love of Florimell and Marinell is the only one that is consummated in *The Faerie Queene*. This yields something interesting and important.

At the beginning of Book III, she rushes into the scene like a blazing star:

All suddenly out of the thickest brush,  
Upon a milk-white Palfrey all alone,  
A goodly Ladie did foreby them rush .....  
(III, i, 15)

And her palfrey runs at too high a speed,

Which fled so fast, that nothing mote him  
hold,  
And scarce them leasure gaue, her passing to  
behold.  
(III, i, 15)

What they see at the next moment is her backward posture:

Still as she fled, her eyes she backward threw,  
As fearing euill, that pursewd her fast;  
And her faire yellow locks behind her flew;  
Loosely disperst with puffed of every blast;  
All as a blazing starre both farre outcast  
His hearie beams, and flaming lockes  
dispred .....  
(III, i, 16)

The dominant impression we receive from this scene of Florimell's first appearance is her suddenness to come and go: in stanza 15 she has rushed in, in stanza 16 she is riding out, and in

stanza 17 a forester comes after her. Her pattern of behaviour is not static but in motion; she appears in the poem with someone pursuing her. And with her Spenserian narrative technique of casting a flash from different angles is exploited to a high degree. And accumulation of this sudden flashes on Florimell achieves both narrative suspense and the growing interest in Florimell.

The story of Florimell, one would notice, is peculiarly dissociated from the other story lines. The simultaneous advancement of several stories is not unusual with Spenser, in which the apparently disconnected episodes are deliberately associated with one another especially through the titular hero. But this is not true of Florimell's story; she has no direct contact with the major characters throughout Books III, IV, and V, where she appears. She plays no role in chastity, friendship, and justice. Her story, instead, provides a background for these Books, especially for Books III and IV. As William Blissett rightly points out, "from the beginning she is dissociated from moral types and associated with strange and terrible natural forces."<sup>17</sup> It is true that what threatens her is natural forces: the forester is the power of forest and Proteus is the power of the sea.

Florimell's fleetingness, which was considered a moment earlier, is one aspect of her symbolism. Besides this, what is peculiar to her is that she is loved and moreover desired to be got by everyone who sees her,

For none aliue but ioy'd in *Florimell* .....  
(IV, ii, 23)

And the emphasis is on her brightness:

Whose face did seeme as cleare as Christall  
stone,  
And eke through feare as white as whales  
bone:  
Her garments all were wrought of beaten  
gold,

And all her steed with tinsell trappings  
shone .....

(III, i, 15)

Her face is like a crystal, her garment is golden and "gay" (III, viii, 26), and even her horse is equipped with shining metals. Her image is "of life, light, and beauty."<sup>18</sup> Accordingly her epithet is "the fairest maiden"; virtue has not such a dominant place as in Britomart, though no one can deny her chastity. These observations and the etymology of her name reveal her symbolism as a vernal flower. And it can be said also that the general course of her journey is natural cycle. This statement would be substantiated when we consider the world during her absence and the power which causes her absence. She is confined in the sea during the winter and re-appears in the spring at the end of Book IV. While the true Florimell enters the realm of the sea, the counterfeit is made mainly from snow:

The substance, whereof she the bodie made,  
Was purest snow in massie mould  
congeald .....

(III, viii, 6)

This is the beginning of the winter season: snow prevails instead of a vernal flower.

Proteus too points up the wintry season during Florimell's absence; or more precisely he makes spring absent from the world. One would easily notice that no moral judgement is applied to him. Rather, it would be natural to misconceive him as the final rescuer of Florimell, for we can hear nothing of his intention to rape her. When he heard the cry of Florimell

Through all the seas so ruefully resound,  
His charet swift in haste he thither steard.....  
(III, viii, 30)

And,

He therein saw that yrksome sight, which  
smote

Deepe indignation and compassion frayle  
Into his hart attonce .....

(III, viii, 31)

What he witnessed caused his indignation  
towards the fishermen and sympathy with  
Florimell, instead of envy or lust. And after  
delivering her,

..... he endeoured with speeches milde  
Her to recomfort, and accourage bold,  
Bidding her feare no more her forman vilde,  
Nor doubt himself .....

(III, viii, 34)

We are more likely to get an impression that his  
motive is a very simple one to rescue her. But this  
turns out to be a hasty conclusion; his attitude  
towards Florimell changes immediately after he  
brought her to his house:

Thither he brought the sory *Florimell*,  
And entertained her the best he might  
And *Panope* her entertained eke well,  
As an immortal mote a mortall wight,  
To winne her liking vnto his delight:  
With flattering words he sweetly wooed her,  
And offered faire gifts t'allure her sight .....

(III, viii, 38)

Here for the first time we are told that Proteus is  
wooing her, who until a moment earlier, we  
thought, simply tried to comfort her. This comes  
rather as a shock. But nevertheless this fact does  
not identify Proteus as the defiler of a virgin. A  
clear distinction should be made between him  
and the other pursuers of Florimell: in the first  
place, lust or love towards her does not character-  
ize him, and secondly and accompanying the  
first characteristic, he is free from any moral  
judgement.

The image would disclose his mythical

character. In as early as the first presentation of  
him, the association with the wintry sea is  
explicit:

An aged sire with head all frory hore,  
And sprinckled frost vpon his deawy beard ...  
(III, viii, 30)

And when he delivered Florimell from the boat  
of the fisherman,

Her vp betwixt his rugged hands he reard,  
And with his frory lips full softly kist,  
Whiles the cold ysickles from his rough  
beard,  
Dropped adowne vpon her vuorie brest ....  
(III, viii, 35)

In short, he is winter, which confines spring. This  
episode is in its essence distinct from Busyrane's  
imprisonment of Amoret. This statement is  
verified by the fact that "Florimell is not rescued  
by a heroic lover but released by a god at the  
order of a superior god — that is, in the natural  
course of evnents."<sup>19</sup>

The union of Marinell and Florimell is  
rendered in the mythical and natural terms:  
Marinell,

Who soone as he beheld that angels face,  
Adorn'd with all diuine perfection,  
His cheared heart eftsoones away gan chace  
Sad death, reuiued with her sweet inspection,  
And feeble spirit inly felt refection;  
As withered weed through cruell winters  
tine,  
That feeles the warmth of sunny beames  
reflection.  
Lifts vp his head, that did before decline  
And gins to spread his leafe before the faire  
sunshine.

(IV, xii, 34)

Her apperance as the sun revives the withered  
plant; spring has come back to the world after

long winter. Thus we have come through the natural cycle from spring (the time while Florimell resided at the Faerie court) to the next spring with Florimell and Marinell.

But here a consideration must be given necessarily to the symbolism of Marinell. It is pointed out that the name Marinell signifies the sea. And sometimes the union of Florimell and Marinell is interpreted as the union of Land and Sea. The existence of such an implication cannot be denied. But here I shall pay particular attention to another meaning, putting aside the theme of the world's harmony, which is brought by the marriage of Land and Sea. It is, of course, true that Marinell is the sea. But he signifies a particular aspect of the sea. He was first brought into the poem in the scene of the battle with Britomart. Allegory requires to determine what kind of enemy he is to Britomart. What can characterize and be associated with him is the rich strand.

..... bestowed all with rich aray  
Of pearles and pretious stones of great assay,  
And all the grauell mixt with golden owre ....  
(III, iv, 18)

Before being overthrown by Britomart, he was watching over these treasures of the sea. This illustration would warrant our saying that Marinell "represents the fertility and force of the sea deprived of its terror."<sup>20</sup> Therefore it may well be said that the Marriage of Florimell and Marinell is the union of the vernal flower and the fertility through love.

A certain principle underlies this cyclical movement of seasons. It is the principle of love. At the beginning of this section I observed the peculiarity of Florimell's entry into the poem, always in motion, which does not allow us to look at her long enough. This may well represent her as the fleetingness of nature. But as the story develops, we become conscious of another feature: it is her unyielding will to whatever obstructions may come. Then it can be asserted, through her association with the natural

world, that nature is not controlled by mere fortuity but is firmly based on a principle. And her stubborn will and the principle of nature are formed through love, her constant love for Marinell. Her poignant speech is a convincing expression of the permanent principle of love:

Yet though he neuer list to me relent,  
But let me waste in woe my wretched  
yeares,  
Yet will I neuer of my loue repent,  
But ioy that for his sake I suffer prisonment.  
(IV, xii, 7)

Though nature seems always fleeting, order inheres and love gives the full meaning to it. Therefore it is more important to emphasize the law of nature than its mutability. Then, it is very meaningful that Florimell's imprisonment was for seven months, for, as expounded by Fowler, the number seven paradoxically embraces two opposite significations, mutability and constancy.<sup>21</sup>

Our understanding of order and love would be strengthened when we consider the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, which is the prefiguration and background of the marriage of Marinell and Florimell. The significance of the marriage of the Thames and the Medway is that it is the expression of the joy of the earth and that the very multiplicity is indicative of order hidden in it.<sup>22</sup> This is analogous to the Mutabilitie Cantos. Just like the irony tasted by Mutabilitie, the rivers, which is usually expressive of mutability, join the praise of fertility and order. The order gives meaning to the mutability.

The order is best expressed by the illuminating study of Fowler. Various numerical patterns are noticed by him, which I have no reason to question; the arrangement is so complex, and multifaceted and overlapped, and penetrated into the least expected corner. It would not be too much to say that everything in the canto has numerological aspects and that numerology can be applicable to everything. Anyway what we

can infer from this is that the canto has an implicit order so firmly absorbed into the poem beneath the apparent chaos which has sometimes been noticed by critics. Fowler himself says: "what we actually find in the wedding of Thames and Medway canto is a high degree of formal organization — 'narrow verse,' in which there would literally be no room for a single additional stanza or an extra river."<sup>23</sup>

And this order has emerged from nothing but love, which is also similar to the Mutabilitie Cantos. It should not be forgotten that this pageant forms the climax of Book IV with the marriage of Florimell and Marinell. The *discordia concors* is the main theme of that Book, which is symbolized by the Concord unifying Love and Hate in the Temple of Venus. Fertility and order are the high expression of praise of love and marriage as the unifying power of the universe.

### VII. Underneath the Circle

To say that the Faerie Land is a temporal space does not mean the sad resignation to fate and mutability; though the Faerie land inevitably abides in Time, its dominant mood is, it can be observed, joy and hope. The consideration that the Faerie Land is not fastened to tragic obsession implies that Time can be an image of eternity, and secondly that the circuitous journey is not obsessed by despair. The second is the supplementary to the first.

The movement towards the final end, which is the metaphoric revelation of the Apocalyptic world, was broken off. But one can never assume that the knights themselves are aware of the vanity of their efforts. Although patience is always required, and an end is always projected into another, and the reward is never given to them, the movement of the poem, for them, is ever rectilinear thrust, while in reality it is circular. The poem itself is a pronouncement of a firm faith in human capability of transcending change. It moves towards a denouement, always broken off but each time newly begun. This

understanding discloses a poem's feature: a circular movement inherent in a linear movement, and at the same time a linear movement inherent in a circular movement.

Time serves to marshal human energy and enthusiasm to conquer mutability. Change and mutability is not so much ominous as in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. One would notice that *Amoretti* is not so preoccupied with the sense of mutability and the urgent desire to transcend time as in *Sonnets*. As in *Amoretti*, where we sense from the outset of the sequence the reward to come, we perceive in *The Faerie Queene* that the way of time-transcendence is open to man. There exists confidence, which prevents man from despairing and wholly looking up to the heaven. A continuous consciousness that the reward is imminent and that we have a hope, clinches the poem. Life is intermixed with good and bad seasons. But man has courage and forbearance to live through the bad season, since he knows that the cycle of the seasons surely brings back spring. Awareness of the order allows him the sense of stability and never-quenched hope.

From the foregoing reflections on the marriage of Florimell and Marinell, it would be clarified that the natural cycle, which can be also evocative of mutability, is embedded in order and love. It could be also observed in the pageant of Mutabilitie. Order and love are the undercurrent of the circuitous journey of the knights of *The Faerie Queene*. Awareness of these modifies the view of the earth, which is absolutely subordinated to the heaven.

Mankind pilgrimages towards the recovery of the lost Eden. Comprehension of direction in man's earthly passage can attenuate the poignant sense of change and death. The journeys of *The Faerie Queene* are always under the shadow of this final end. *The Faerie Queene* is equipped not only with this end-directedness but also with the other consolatory idea, which redeems man's inevitable dwelling on the earth. This is fertility. Fertility is the justification of this world, in the

Western dual concept of the universe, where the other world is exclusively prior to this world: "since the only way in which the finite can imitate the infinite is by diversifying and going on, the test of the imitation is its fruitfulness."<sup>24</sup> That *The Faerie Queene* is given to variety can hardly be questioned. We take from the procession of the rivers in Book IV canto xi the image of fertility. This impression is assimilated into the poet's lamentation over "an endlesse worke":

O What an endlesse worke haue I in hand,  
To count the seas abundant progeny,  
Whose fruitfull seede farre passeth those in  
land,  
And also those which wonne in th'azure sky?  
For much more eath to tell the starres on hy,  
Albe they endlesse seeme in estimation,  
Then to recount the Seas posterity:  
So fertile be the flouds in generation,  
So huge their numbers, and so numberlesse  
their nation.

(IV, xii, 1)

The testimony is numerous; among them, there are "thousand, thousand naked babes" of the Garden of Adonis. Charissa's babies in the House of Holiness are also pronouncement of fertility:

A multitude of babes about her hong,  
Playing their sports, that joy'd her to  
behold .....

(I, x, 31)

And Britomart's progeny is called "fruitfull Ofspring" (III, iii, 23),

Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin,  
Till they to heauens hight forth stretched bee.

III, iii, 22)

And *The Faerie Queene* itself is one vast panorama of the celebration of creation; it is the picture of the world on the move and the jocund

and happy variety and productivity on the earth.

### Notes

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19. Blissett, *op. cit.*, p.100.
20. Roche, *op., cit.*, pp. 192-193.
21. Alastair Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p.58.
22. Roche, *op., cit.*, p.181.
23. Fowler, *op., cit.*, p.191.
24. Nelson, *op. cit.*, p.311.