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Layers Of Identity: Multiple Voices And Contradictory Patterns In Spenser's "shepheardes Calender"

Marianne Micros

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LAYERS OF IDENTITY:
MULTIPLE VOICES AND CONTRADICTORY PATTERNS
IN SPENSER'S SHEPHERDES CALENDE

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Spenser, in his Shepheardes Calender, created "a Calender for every yeare," but the calendar of each speaker, and possibly of every reader, varies based on a person's attitude towards his or her place in the natural and cosmic cycles. Although many critics have tried to impose regularity of structure and content on Spenser's poem, and have attempted to define Spenser's viewpoint, it seems likely that Spenser was not attempting to present one consistent, inflexible viewpoint.

I propose that The Shepheardes Calender is a work consisting of many voices, not only the voices of the fictional characters within the work, but also the voices of Spenser the author, his persona Immerito, an unnamed narrator, and E.K., the critical commentator. The reader participates in the work as well, moving back and forth among levels of fiction and interpretation. Spenser invisibly manipulates the reader's responses by his use of paradox and irony, his inclusion of voices which contradict each other and often themselves, and his indication by various means, such as frames, that this work is fictional. Thus Spenser subverts the possibility that any one viewpoint be taken as that of the poem or poet. The analogy between human beings and nature, which is the thematic and structural foundation of the poem, is questioned by the use of these various techniques.
This dissertation is structured according to the calendar format and that very analogy that is being questioned. Themes relating to fiction-making in spring, choosing landscapes in summer, escaping nature in the fall, and contradicting oneself and others in winter are explored in the various chapters.

In all sets of eclogues the analogy between human beings and nature is paradoxical. The identities of the speakers are inconsistent, the frames within frames subvert any clear boundaries between fictional and real worlds, and readers are unable to maintain secure positions for themselves in the text. Spenser is questioning the nature of poetry itself and its relationship to the paradoxes of fiction and reality, order and disorder, time and eternity -- a subject he continued to explore in his later work.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION ............................................ii
ABSTRACT ........................................................................iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .............................................................vii

CHAPTER I -- "Goe little booke: thy selfe present,
As child whose parent is vnkent":
THE MULTIPLE VOICES, THE INVISIBLE
AUTHOR, AND MULTIFARIOUS READINGS OF
THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDER .................................1

CHAPTER II-- "Such rage as winters, reigneth in my heart":
FRAMES, CONTRADICTIONS, AND THE WINTER
ECLOGUES ...............................................................51

CHAPTER III--"... then will I singe his laye"
THE SPRING ECLOGUES AND THE MAKING OF
FICTIONS .................................................................105

CHAPTER IV --"Whether on hylls, or dales, or other where":
CHOICES OF LANDSCAPE IN "IVNE," "IVLYE,"
AND AVGVST"..........................................................154

CHAPTER V -- "No such countrye, as there to remaine":
RIsing out of the fall -- attempts to
ESCAPE NATURE IN THE AUTUMN ECLOGUES ....202

CHAPTER VI-- "Goe lyttle Calender, thou hast a free
passeporte": AFTER READING THE SHEPHEARDES
CALENDER .............................................................233

WORKS CITED .................................................................244

VITA.................................................................................258
CHAPTER I

"Goe little booke: thy selfe present,
As child whose parent is vnkent":

THE MULTIPLE VOICES, THE INVISIBLE AUTHOR,
AND MULTIFARIOUS READINGS OF

THE SHEPHEARDES CALENTER

One problem for readers of The Shepheardes Calender\(^1\) has been the absence in the text of Spenser's own point of view concerning the different issues that arise in each eclogue. Some critics have decided that one or another character speaks for Spenser in a particular debate or, on the basis of information collected about Spenser's religious and political affiliations, have made educated

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\(^1\)The Shepheardes Calender was published in 1579, under the pseudonym Immerito, by the printer Hugh Singleton and republished, in the same format, by John Harrison in 1581, 1586, 1591, and 1597. All these editions of Spenser's first published work included a title page, with a dedication to Philip Sidney; an introductory poem, "To His Booke" by Immerito; an epistle from the critic of the poem, E.K., to Gabriel Harvey, introducing and explaining the work; the General Argument of the poem described by E.K.; twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year, beginning with January, each introduced by a woodcut and E.K.'s description of the argument and followed by an emblem and a gloss by E.K. After E.K.'s explanation of the December emblem, which is in fact missing, there is an envoy, or final poem, by Immerito. This format did not change until 1611 (Bruce R. Smith 79). It would appear then that the design of the work was carefully planned. Some critics believe that Spenser commissioned and supervised E.K. and, as well, chose the woodcuts (Luborsky and B. Smith).
guesses as to Spenser's position. The diversity of opinions among critics and the impossibility of coming to any agreement about Spenser's views would indicate that Spenser was not attempting to voice one consistent, inflexible viewpoint against which to measure all the others in *The Shepheardes Calender.*

Although Spenser's presence is not visible or obvious in the poem, there is evidence that he is somehow present. As Wayne Booth points out in *The Rhetoric of Fiction,* an author is always present in his work in some manner, often through the creation of a "second self" or "implied author" who exists behind the scenes, determining the effects of his work on the reader. Even when the author is silent, he may be invisibly pulling the strings by using such techniques as point of view and irony, and by manipulating structural arrangements and language to indicate ways of reading the text. Although Spenser enters his work visibly only under assumed identities, one of which is Immerito and another Colin Cloute,

2 Peter Brook, director and filmmaker, has identified a similar technique of multiple voices and authorial silence in Shakespeare's plays. Brook calls this "omnidimensional reality." "Elizabethan Theatre," *All the World's a Stage,* PBS, Nov. 9, 1987.

3 Patrick Cullen states that E.K. is only partially correct when he identifies Colin as Spenser. Cullen claims that "It is Immerito, not Colin, who 'equals' Spenser" and that "Colin's antipastoral actions cannot possibly be equated with Spenser's rejection of pastoral poetry since, obviously, it is Spenser who is writing the
himself is behind all these masks, hinting at alternative interpretations of the words of each speaker.

Spenser manipulates the reader in many ways, but especially by his use of three major techniques. First, he presents multiple points of view in the work. Each speaker in the eclogues gives his own unique attitude toward and perception of an issue, a landscape, or a human relationship. In addition, Spenser introduces points of view external to the poem proper, i.e. those of Immerito, E.K., and an unnamed narrator. Second, and in consequence, the author allows contradiction to exist throughout the poem. Not only do the individual speakers sometimes contradict each other, but often a speaker contradicts himself. A variety of techniques which express contradiction, such as paradox (when two opposing statements are simultaneously true), and irony (when the reader sees the limitations of each point of view and is aware of alternative points of view) lead the reader to question any opinion expressed by a speaker.

The third technique, which is closely related to the pastoral Calendar" (Cullen 78-9). Louis Montrose distinguishes among Immerito, Colin Cloute, and Spenser, and even between the old Colin and the young Colin; he finds, however, that the identities of these personae at times merge. He writes, "The process of Immerito's testing is coterminous with the process of Colin's creativity, suffering, and decline. Immerito, the persona of the fledgling poet who mediates between Colin Clout and Edmund Spenser, has tested his wings and finds them sound" ("'The perfecte paterne . . .'" 60).
second, is the indication by various means that this poem is a work of fiction, and, as well, that the points of view of individual speakers are often fictionalized, even within the limits of the work. Techniques one and two, that of multiple viewpoints and that of contradictions, contribute to the reader's awareness that the work and many of the views expressed may be fictional. A structural technique that combines all three of the above is that of framing. By including frames which surround the Calender (i.e. the narrations by Immerito, E.K., and an unnamed person), and frames within the eclogues (around inserted songs, fables, and debates), Spenser has emphasized that his work is a fiction which includes multiple voices, contradicting each other and often themselves.

The reader, then, presented with several fictional speakers, an unreliable critic, an unknown narrator, a fictional author, and a real author — all with different approaches to the poem, must constantly move inside and outside the work, from one narration to another and from one level of significance to another — from E.K.'s comments, to the narrator's lines, to a speech by one fictional speaker, then another, and out again to the words of E.K. (who speaks at times about the poet Immerito and about the real world outside the poem) — then back to another poem with different speakers, and so on. The poem creates fictions within fictions that always threaten to
break out of themselves and into the real world outside the poem. The different narrations, identities of speakers, levels of interpretation, and connections between real and fictional worlds form layers which interact, forcing the reader to move back and forth among them, or to choose a provisional reading.

Spenser uses all these techniques to explore a major theme of *The Shepheardes Calender*, the relationship between a person's journey through life and the cycle of nature, and to question that analogical relationship. Yet this analogy is the foundation of the poem's structure and of many of its thematic concerns, as Spenser's subtitle--"Conteyning twelve AEglogues proportionable to the twelve monethes" -- indicates. S.K. Heninger, who explores the evolution of the traditional concept that each person is a microcosm who repeats the pattern of the year in his or her humours and four ages, believes that "without any doubt this scheme -- this cosmic pattern interrelating the four elements, the year, and man -- was the fore-conceit in the mind of Spenser which he extended in *The Shepheardes Calender*" (313). The belief in this analogy was a Renaissance commonplace, and reflected both the notion of the human being as microcosm, and the Pythagorean division of all life into groups of four, or tetrads. Heninger writes,

The tetrad as a mechanism of cosmos is
operative at every level of creation
and underlies every set of
relationships between the items of
nature. Hierocles is explicit on this
point:
'The Tetrad cements al things that
have any existence together, as
the Elements, Numbers, Seasons of the
year, and periods of Age. Neither are
we to doubt that these flow not from
the Tetrad as the root and spring:
for the Tetrad, as we said before, is
in the Creatour and cause of all
things, the Intellectuall God, the
Sonne of the Celestiall and Sensible
God.'

(Heninger 166, 168, and Upon The
Golden Verses, trans. Hall 126.)

Also from Pythagoras came the idea of a
correspondence between the seasons of the year and the
stages of human life. In one of the predecessors of
Spenser's Shepheardes Calender, The Kalender of Shepherdes
(1506), human life is described thus:

This must ye rekene for every moneth
syxe yere. or ellys it may be
understonde by the foure quarters and
seasons of the yere. So devydyde
man into foure partyes as to youthe /
strengthe. wysdome / and age. he to
be. xviii. yere. younge. eyghttene
yere stronge. xviii. In wysdome and
the. foureth eyghttene yere to go the
full of the age of lxxii. (III,10)

The traditional view of the analogy between human
life and nature’s seasons implies two attitudes about
time: the view of time as linear -- a pessimistic view
which focuses on death in the winter, and the view of time
as cyclical, an optimistic view which focuses on rebirth
in the spring and the continuance of human life through
spiritual or other means. The simultaneous presence of
these two attitudes produces a paradox in the relationship
between human beings and nature.

Both Heninger and Patrick Cullen trace throughout the
*Calender* the correspondence of the eclogues to their
months and seasons, and the suitability of the themes of
each poem to the appropriate human age and natural season.
Both recognize the paradox of the human situation, that we
can follow nature’s pattern but not repeat the cycle. To
both critics Spenser’s poem is a perfect example of
discordia concors, the combination of mutability and
constancy, which for Heninger reveals “the paradox of man,
created in the image of an inexhaustible God, subjected to
the limitations of mortality" (316). Cullen writes that "the natural year in the Calendar, then, represents the mutable world that man must adapt to and yet ultimately triumph over, and it symbolizes in its own precarious balance of winter and spring the balance-in-opposition necessary for man and pastoral society with the natural world" (123). Both Heninger and Cullen, while they recognize the paradoxical nature of the relationship between humans and the structure of the cosmos, believe that the polarized views presented in the Calendar are synthesized.

Nancy Jo Hoffman has noticed the inconsistencies in the presentations of natural landscape and its relationship to the speaker(s) of the poem. She notes that in "Januarye," when Colin mentally shifts from thoughts of winter to memories of spring, then back again, Spenser "has entwined nature and human nature to such an extent that no truly visual quality or precise analogy remains" (46). Nevertheless, this only confirms her conviction "that Spenser sees simultaneity between patterns in nature and patterns in man's experience" (46), since nature, in The Shepheardes Calender, is a product of the human mind, which shifts from season to season whenever emotional disruptions force a change in mood: "A representative mind creates fictional, seasonal landscape outside of itself that reflects and accommodates inner psychological
states" (Hoffman 79). Nature can therefore mirror "paradox and irresolution" and can also "be a willing witness to a variety of human states; man can put his construction on nature" (Hoffman 83). For Hoffman, the form of the calendar and the relationship of human life to nature's patterns are imitated in The Shepheardes Calender, even if the poem shows the mind as capable of creating its own landscapes. The calendar itself is "the human organization of nature's patterns" (78), symbolizing the mental association of the self with nature and the tendency to interpret the year's process according to human life and changing moods. Hoffman thus finds a direct relationship between human life and nature in The Shepheardes Calender, despite Spenser's refusal to take a definite stand concerning the existence of such a relationship.

Only recently have critics begun to suggest that Spenser's work may have multiple meanings, and that the contradictory stances do not necessarily fuse into a unified whole. Carol V. Kaske, in an article published in 1975, boldly calls Spenser's work (especially The Faerie Queene) "pluralistic":

... Spenser is usually characterized as a syncretist, and if this is all syncretism means, he certainly is. But in what ways does he combine the two matters [Christian and classical]
--- in a reasoned Aquinian synthesis, in a loose, Picinesque synthesis, in simple juxtaposition merely evoking a feeling of paradox, or in deliberate opposition taking one side or the other? . . . I suggest that while he uses all of these combinations at one time or another, his most basic position . . . is something else --- opposition and yet affirmation of both sides. This qualified relativism of Spenser's should, I believe, be characterized as pluralism. (120)

Kaske's "pluralism" is closely tied to "paradox," a mode of thought which, according to Rosalie Colie, was "epidemic" during the sixteenth century. Colie claims that paradoxes "tend to constellate . . . in a period, like the Renaissance, of intense intellectual activity, with many different ideas and systems in competition with one another" (33). She demonstrates ways in which opposing sides of a paradox can fuse and become each other, and can interact in complex ways. Though there may be a fusion, Colie paradoxically informs us that "The paradoxist knows, none better, that paradox tends toward self-contradiction and thus toward self-destruction" (520). Heninger, with his emphasis on the cyclical structure of the cosmos and
The Shepheardes Calender, would be wise to remember that "The circle-figure is also the figure for zero; the snake with his tail in his mouth may eat around to his head" (Colie 40). As Colie says, a book "may destroy itself, though it is intended to come full circle" (40).

The argument for multiple readings has been taken further by Judith Anderson, who sees the opposing viewpoints of the July eclogue as relative, and Bruce R. Smith, who proposes that, because of the three genres combined in The Shepheardes Calender -- pastoral romance, calendar-almanac, and classical eclogue -- a reader is asked to approach the text in three different ways. Smith claims that the reader must choose a reading, or combine the kinds of readings dictated by the three genres and by the presence of different narrators. Similarly, William Oram finds (in Spenser's transformation of history into fiction) "the play of many -- at times contradictory--attitudes toward his subject" (34), and writes, "The fragmentation of historical characters in the fictional world is thus often associated with perspectivism, the tendency to present multiple views of the same situation" (39). Oram's claim that "The golden world of Spenser's fictions plays against particular facts in order to question them" supports the notion that Spenser is also questioning the reality of the relationship between human and natural patterns. Kenneth Gross, as well, writes (of
The Faerie Queene) that "Spenser always multiplies and opposes perspectives in his poem, always sets one mode of imagination against another—not for the sake of rhetorical display but to keep his ideals from turning into idols, his tropes into traps" (15).

The concepts of multiple interpretations of a poem and the crucial role of the reader are not unique to our postmodern age. As Renaissance writers such as William Webbe and Henry Reynolds proposed, writers of allegory veiled their meanings for various reasons and created different levels of interpretation. Michael Murrin writes that "metaphoric discourse" (synonymous with allegory in Renaissance terms, Murrin 54-5) "is open-ended; it demands interpretation, and often the critic will find more than one interpretation which can fit" (Murrin 57). Murrin continues,

... allegory can be described as a figure of speech incomplete in itself, which, for this very reason, makes certain demands on an audience. The hearer by analogy must fill in the proper meaning to complete the figure. It follows that allegorical figures presuppose a certain cooperation between a speaker and an auditor; the former makes a statement and the latter completes it by his interpretation (58).
Murrin applies this directly to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: "Spenser's fiction is open-ended like an allegory and demands the auditor's interpretation for an adequate understanding" (56). He further points out that writers, realizing that interpretation would be difficult for some readers, often provided a commentary (e.g. Spenser's use of E.K.'s gloss): despite this, the truth represented by allegorical poetry is difficult for the reader, who unravels "almost futilely because he will never find an ultimate interpretation. The poet's truth defies rational expression; no number of interpretations will suffice" (Murrin 73-74).\(^4\) The variety of interpretations possible in allegory, and the "shifting symbolism" used in the Renaissance (Murrin 104) lead, then, to the involvement of the reader in ways not so different from those described by today's "reader response" critics.

The act of reading and the reader's participation in creating a text have been studied by many contemporary theorists (see, especially, Fish and Iser).\(^5\) Linda

\(^4\) Despite Murrin's emphasis on multiple interpretations, and his statement that there is much in common between Renaissance and modern critical methods, he does not hold to those methods in his interpretation of the "December" eclogue. Although he does find different meanings -- a negative one within the poem and a positive one on the part of an "elite audience" which is outside the poem -- he cannot let the parts rest, or let different audiences find different interpretations.

\(^5\) Iser's definition of the "implied reader" perhaps best suits my concept of "reader": "He embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise
Hutcheon has recently defined the reading process in relation to certain kinds of postmodern, "narcissistic" novels:

Overtly narcissistic texts make this act a self-conscious one, integrating the reader in the texts, teaching him, one might say, how to play the literary music. . . . In covertly narcissistic texts the teaching is done by disruption and discontinuity, by disturbing the comfortable habits of the actual act of reading. . . . By reminding the reader of the book's identity as artifice, the text parodies his expectations, his desire for verisimilitude, and forces him to an awareness of his own role in creating the universe of fiction. (Hutcheon 139)

Hutcheon also writes,

The reader of narcissistic fiction is indeed left with more than his usual

its effect -- predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader" (34). My emphasis is especially, however, on the techniques and narrative strategies used by the "implied author" to demand a certain reading of the text, or to subvert some readings (even the same ones that are indicated by those strategies).
share of freedom to create order, to build unities and relationships between parts. . . . Self-interpreting texts imply the amalgamation of the functions of reader, writer, and critic in the single and demanding experience of reading. (Hutcheon 152)

As already explained, this type of reading is not peculiar to postmodern texts, nor is my reading of The Shepheardes Calender specifically, or merely, a postmodern reading. The multiplicity of possible interpretations, the presentation of multiple speakers and contrasting but interweaving narrations in a many-layered poem, and the expectation that the reader will participate actively in the poem are not unusual in Renaissance texts. It is true that The Shepheardes Calender is a poem, not a postmodern novel of the kind that Hutcheon is specifically discussing. However, poems are even more suited to "postmodern" readings, since readers are expected to be involved in the work, interpreting and participating in what is clearly an artifice, and one with many possible meanings.

Renaissance poetry was especially dependent on the responses of its readers. As Jane P. Tompkins points out, Renaissance poetry was designed to play an active part in the socio-political world: "The poet's dependence on his
patrons, the social relations that subsist between him and his audience, give Renaissance poetry the power to carry out a host of new functions that might be summed up in the phrase 'public relations'" (Tompkins 208). Louis Montrose writes, as well, that "... during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the separation of 'Literature' and 'Art' from explicitly didactic and political discourses or from such disciplines as history or moral and natural philosophy was as yet incipient" ("Renaissance Literary Studies" 12). Renaissance poetry, then, may have had a social, political, or economic goal as its purpose (such as a reward for the poet's efforts)\(^6\) and may have been written for a different kind of reader, one who responded as a member of a social group or community, rather than as an individual (Tompkins 210). One may conclude that readers of different time periods will participate in a text in different ways.

Not only is it now legitimate to consider that a literary work will have different meanings to different readers, but it is also valid to interpret works in relation to contemporary socio-political situations. The New Historical Movement reads literature in relation to

\(^6\) That goal, however, was not always clear and simple for the poet. Louis Montrose writes, with reference to The Shepheardeas Calender, of the poet's frustration in his attempts to make changes or obtain power or praise by means of his poetry, and of the poet's struggle between personal and socio-political aims ("'The perfecte paterne ...'" ).
its times, and, further, sees history as subjective, based on the bias of the interpreter. Recent critics have revised views of the Renaissance, understanding it as an age of transition "between two more monolithic periods where one can see acted out a clash of paradigms and ideologies, a playfulness with signifying systems, a self-reflexivity, and a self-consciousness about the tenuous solidity of human identity" (Howard 16), all traits, which, as Howard points out, also describe our Postmodern Age. The new theory is that the Renaissance was, like our age, a time of discontinuity and contradiction, not, as previously theorized, an age of continuity. Literature, for New Historicists, is important to the shaping of history: "... instead of a hierarchical relationship in which literature figures as the parasitic reflector of historical fact, one imagines a complex textualized universe in which literature participates in historical processes and in the political management of reality" (Howard 25). Reading Renaissance literature today is subjective, participative, and interdisciplinary; the text is open to many interpretations.

Nevertheless, The Shepheardes Calender is not the same as a post-modern text: although it allows for different readings, it possesses a regular structure--that of the calendar and of the cosmos -- and bases its structure and themes on well-known conventions. However,
the 

the *Calendar* allows its structures and conventions to represent many things at once, separately or together, depending on the reading, as do postmodern texts, and flies beyond the regularity of its design. As a poem it engages the reader, demanding exploration into the historical and mythological references, the meanings of unknown words, the inventiveness of the varieties of forms, and the identities and messages of the many speakers. The very presence of contradictory viewpoints and various levels of narration place demands upon the reader to involve him or herself in the text, comparing, choosing, and attempting to understand the various themes and relationships.

ii

It seems only logical that a poem with so many viewpoints and internal contradictions would invite a multiplicity of evaluations and interpretations: in fact, from the time of its first publication to the present day, *The Shepheardes Calender* has caused dissension among critics. The critics generally agree that the poem is eclectic (Hallett Smith 309):

What Spenser did in *The Shepheardes Calender* was to combine in one collection of twelve eclogues much idyllic pastoral in most of its modes,
some satirical-pastoral and
countemporary allegory, some verse
which was neither specifically
satirical nor pastoral, many general
reflections on conventional topics or
truisms, some comment on the poet’s
trade and vocation, some conventional
flattery of the Queen, and probably
some deliberate autobiographical
references. (Bayley 34-5)

Critics also agree on the historical importance of the
poem, which has been called a work of "first-rate
historical importance" (Greg 82) and a "landmark in the
history of English poetry" (Renwick ed.). They agree, as
well, that Spenser's work was highly original, though the
newness lies not in an invention of a totally new genre,
style, or language, but in Spenser's combination of
traditions and conventions, in his uniting of separate
eclogues by use of a calendar framework (Greg 84 and
Heninger 309), and in his improvements to poetic metre,
stanza form, and language. Spenser's unity in variety, so
characteristic of his later work, The Faerie Queene, and
his transformation of earlier and/or foreign traditions
into something English and Elizabethan, made Spenser
deserving of the epithet, "our new Poete" (E.K., "Epistle
to Harvey"). Renwick calls The Shepheardes Calender "the
first English example of high Renaissance art: a clearly-perceptible self-conscious personality working within a well-understood convention" (Renwick, ed. 163).

On the other hand, there is little general agreement about the identities of the living persons on whom the fictional characters were based, the identity of E.K., Spenser's religious leanings, the secret meaning of the poem in relation to its historical allegory, the derivation, meaning, and purpose of Spenser's archaic words, the unity of the poem, the structure or design of the poem, the relationship of the individual eclogues to their months, and the identification of a central theme of the work. Even the quality of the work has been questioned:

Spenser's version of pastoral has little of the idyllic charm of Theocritan pastoral; the language is sometimes deliberately crude, the metres often intentionally stumbling or banal, and the subject-matter often simple or tedious. Further, while it is ostensibly a collection of twelve pieces unified by the device of the twelve months and by the pastoral convention, it is in fact heterogeneous enough for the claim of unity to seem specious. Most damning of all, it undeniably seems manufactured, even
to those who admire it. One does not often feel that the creator is genuinely and excited, involved in his creation. A final difficulty is that The Shepheardes Calendar is accompanied by an elaborate apparatus of gloss and comment, and treated as if it were a great addition to the glo... of world literature. (Bayley 33)

Critics have been interested in Spenser's eclectic use of sources7 and in the pastoral conventions of his poem.8 Other approaches vary depending on the biases of

7Spenser combined a variety of elements in his work: foreign and English literary sources; biblical, classical, medieval, and contemporary traditions; lyrical and satirical moods. He borrowed his general approach from the traditions of the pastoral genre or mode; the form, structure, and much of the subject matter of his eclogues from the classical eclogue; the satirical style and tone from Mantuan; phrases and themes of some particular eclogues and a tendency to allegorize and make contemporary the pastoral world from Marot; the narrative line concerning unrequited love from Petrarch, Boccaccio, Dante, and Sannazaro; much of his language and verse forms and, more importantly, a spirit of Englishness from Chaucer; and the framework of the calendar and the theme of human life in relation to nature's seasons from calendar-almanacs and other such works. Some important source studies are those of Hughes, Herford, Jones, Alpers, Cullen, Hoffman, Miskimin, Greg, Luborsky, H. Smith, B. Smith, Heninger, and Friedland.

8The pastoral world always contained both the ideal and its opposite, both withdrawal and involvement, peace and turmoil. Andrew Ettin, in his book Literature and the Pastoral, describes the pastoral as "an ironic form, based on a perceivable distance between the alleged and the implied. It lets us know either that its point of view is significant largely because it contrasts with some other point of view, or that its real subject is something
the age and of the reader. A study of some of the readings from 1579 to 1987 reveals the enormous range of critical approaches possible and the amazing variety of perspectives from which different minds have seen Spenser's poem.

The very first critic of the poem, whose identity has been debated for so many years, is E.K., whose eccentric, opinionated heralding of the new poet has been considered both help and hindrance to the readers of the poem (see Iser, Steinberg, and Cornelius). E.K.'s introduction of the poem and his gloss contain information which does not always fit Spenser's obvious intentions, which is sometimes based on factual error, and which, even when helpful, is written in a voice that is pedantic, self-congratulatory, pompous, and distanced from the poem, rather than involved closely with it. Even when sympathetic to the work, E.K. expresses his views in a

in addition to (or perhaps even instead of) its ostensible subject. The pastoral impulse toward containment involves holding contraries together in apparent unity, forged by art out of discordant emotions and perceptions" (12). Spenser's inclusion of multiple viewpoints and ambiguity is not unsuitable to a pastoral work. Ettin writes, "We have seen also that the pastoral is not a simple phenomenon but rather a group of images and attitudes which may appear in any combination. Even a pastoral lyric that is simple in construction and in its creation of an unambiguous pastoral environment may express several aspects of the pastoral. We have also seen that a major function of the pastoral is to express a distinction between experiences. Here, too, great variety is possible" (Ettin 56).
tone that seems ironic or even parodic. He is the academic critic, presenting his own case as well as that of Spenser.

Whether E.K. was Spenser's friend Edward Kirke or Spenser himself creating a fictional alter-ego, his comments have accompanied the text through many editions and are now considered an integral part of the work (McCanles, B. Smith, Luborsky, Steinberg). These comments establish another point of view which should not be ignored by readers if they wish to experience the full flavour of the work and its original intentions. The twentieth-century reader can deduce from E.K.'s comments, as well, what was new about the Shepheardes Calender, for E.K. would choose to explain what would be unusual or difficult for contemporary readers.

E.K. might be called a humanist critic. He reads the poem with appreciation of its original treatment of classical and other sources, with respect for Spenser's application of the principle of decorum, and with admiration for the moral lessons he believes are taught by the poem. In his letter to Gabriel Harvey, E.K. praises Immerito for

his Wittinesse in devising, his pithinesse in

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9See Variorum, Jenkins, and Steinberg. Recently, Heninger has suggested that E.K. was Gabriel Harvey, as previously proposed by Muriel Bradbrook in 1960 (Heninger, "The Typographical Layout of Spenser's Shepheardes Calender" 1988).
uttering, his complaints of love so lovely, his
discourses of pleasure so pleasantly, his
pastorall rudenesse, his morall wisenesse, his
dewe obseruing of Decorum everye where, in
personages, in seasons, in matter, in speach,
and generally in al seemely simplycitie of
handeling his matter, and framing his words.

He praises as well the tight structure of the work and the
poetry, finds a pattern in the work of three kinds of
eclogues—moral, recreative, and plaintive (categories
still used by critics today), discusses etymologies of
words and their meanings, identifies verse forms and
metres, names rhetorical devices, gives sources for
Spenser's borrowings, and hints at a "secret meaning"
behind the eclogues, thus opening the field to speculation
about Spenser's references to politics and religion.

E.K. also defends Spenser against criticism that he
knew would come of the unusual words used in the poem:
E.K. claims that the use of these archaic words is
justifiable since the words are ancient and worthy ones,
since the old and rough words are suitable to the speech
of lowly shepherds, since these ugly words provide a
contrast with the graceful words, thus setting them off,
and since Spenser was restoring English words which had
become obsolete to the language in order to limit the
dependence on foreign words. E.K. defends Spenser's
decision to begin his calendar with the month of January at a time when the year began in March. The year should end in December and begin in January, E.K. writes, because Christ's birth at the end of December led to the renewal of mankind.

E.K.'s commentaries and gloss serve to remind the reader that the poem is an art object, to be interpreted by readers and critics in the real world outside the poem. E.K. interprets the poems as moral lessons, according to his own puritanical, anti-catholic, and anti-erotic view of life. Although his obtuseness, his errors, and his misinterpretations have been emphasized by many twentieth-century critics, his comments are valuable in that he is Spenser's first reader and a reader of a certain Renaissance type. He may have made the book acceptable to some other readers, and may have given the book respectability by showing that it was worthy of critical attention and that it was complex and profound enough to warrant an explication.

Other contemporary readers praised Spenser for his moral lessons, verse forms, and secret meanings (Webbe, for example), but criticized him, as E.K. had expected, for his rustic language. Philip Sidney, in his "Defence of Poesie," finds the poem "woorthie the reading," but writes: "That same framing of his style to an olde rusticke language, I dare not allow: since neither
Theocritus in Greek, Virgil in Latin, nor Sanazara in Italian, did affect it" (Sidney 37). The most famous criticism of Spenser's language is by Ben Jonson, who wrote that "Spencer, in affecting the Ancients, writ no language: yet I would have him read for his matter, but as Virgil read Ennius" (Jonson, Timber, Works, VIII, 618).

Alexander Pope in "A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry," 1704, may have written the first "modern" criticism of the poem, with his examination of the calendar framework, the suitability of eclogues to months, the verse, the allegory, and the language. Pope finds the work imperfect because the eclogues are too long, are sometimes too allegorical, and use a pastoral style to treat matters of religion. Pope does not approve of Spenser's use of obsolete and dialectal words, but praises him for his calendar framework, by which "he compares human Life to the several Seasons, and at once exposes to his readers a view of the great and little worlds, in their various changes and aspects." Pope was the first critic to mention that some of the eclogues did not fit their months, and the first to show the micro-macrocosm connection in Spenser's calendar framework (Pope 155-6).

Attitudes towards Spenser's works have changed with the interests of each age (see Cory).¹⁰ In the twentieth

¹⁰ Herbert L. Cory has divided the trends in Spenser criticism before the twentieth century into five ages: 1) The Age of Enthusiasm and Spenser Worship (Spenser's
century critical readings of the work up to 1943 have been documented in the Variorum edition of the Shepheardes Calender (Volume I, The Minor Poems).\textsuperscript{11} Especially important are the close studies of Spenser’s language and of his sources, the detailed explorations of the political and religious crises of Spenser’s age and their relationships to the poem, and the general overviews of Spenser’s major themes and prevailing structures. The attention to classical sources and forms, and the interest in the messages of the moral eclogues are consistent with the predilections of this Humanistic, pre-New Critical age.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11}Quotations from The Shepheardes Calender are all from the Variorum edition.

\textsuperscript{12}Areas of focus in the Variorum edition, which identify the interests and methods of literary exploration at that time, are the following: Spenser’s archaisms; his imitation of his predecessors; his pastoral sources; his originality in melody and numbers, design and style; the artificiality, or the naturalness of the work; the decorum of the pastoral disguise in relation to the ideas; the importance of the moral eclogues; the date of composition; the language and style; the design of the poem; the metres of the verse; Spenser’s early fame; the identity of E.K.; and the identity of Rosalind.
Critics from 1897 to 1943 freely mixed an historical approach, viewing Spenser as part of his age, with an attention to the poetry and design of the work, some interest in themes, and a particular interest in moral lessons. There seemed no need to force the poem into a unified whole or to find one definitive theme, or to disregard Spenser's life and environment when analyzing the poem.

During this period two editions of The Shepheardes Calender with useful introductions, those of Herford (1897) and Renwick (1930), advanced interest in the poem, and several general studies of the poem, those of Greg (1906), Renwick (1925), and Jones (1930), provided definitive overviews and some original ideas that are still valid.

Herford's introduction touches on many important topics, including biographical information, sources, the work's originality, the structure of the whole work and of individual eclogues, the identity of E.K., the story of Colin Clout, the themes of love, morality, and poetry, and the language and verse forms. Later critics would carry on explorations into all these topics, but many would try to find a unity in the work that Herford did not believe existed:

It is not a systematic or homogeneous work of art, but a collection of experiments executed
under various conditions and inspirations, and with varying success -- a motley tissue of impressions caught from a host of different sources, but all touched with something of Spenser's native grace and fervour (xxxviii).

Renwick, as well, does not see the Calender as unified and proposes that Spenser invented the calendar scheme because he had written some eclogues (167). Botting (1935) explains the many errors, inconsistencies, contradictions, and varieties of verse forms and subject matter by arguing that Spenser had no plan beforehand, but hastily threw some poems together for publication.

Others of that time sought a structural unity, as well as a thematic one, in the Calender. Walter W. Greg discovered an internal structure in the poem, within the external framework of the calendar. He, in 1906, thought the work unified by the framework, by the suitability of eclogues to months, by a mood which is "pitched in a minor key" (93), and by an "architectonic basis of the design": the three Colin-centred eclogues -- "Januarye," "Iune," and "December" -- are at the beginning, middle, and end of the Calender, and the two eclogues surrounding "Iune" except for one on each side, "Aprill" and "August," contain songs by Colin sung by another shepherd.

Jones, in A Spenser Handbook (1930), also proposes a thematic unity to the work, centred in the figure of
Hobbinol, who represents Gabriel Harvey and the principle of moderation, and in the "October" eclogue, the "keystone of the arch," which Jones believes holds the entire poem together. Jones may be the first critic to claim that the debates of the moral eclogues present evenly balanced positions, rather than arguments weighted on the side supposedly favoured by Spenser.

Parmenter (1930) also proposes a unified Calender with each eclogue closely related to its month, according to the tradition of the Kalender and Compost of Shepherds and of early primers and prayerbooks. In what has been called a "highly speculative" (Variorum, editor, 634) manner Parmenter relates church festivals, saints' days, and gospels of each month to the appropriate eclogue.13

Also of note during this period are the writers interested in The Shepheardes Calender as an allegory of the religious and political situation in England in 1579. Edwin A. Greenlaw, in a 1911 article, analyzes the moral eclogues in relation to the religious situation. Both he and James J. Higginson (1912) identify the shepherds as political and/or religious figures and, on that basis, find hidden meanings in the poem. Higginson's thesis, 13

13 Patrick Cullen, in 1970, calls her article a "pioneering but generally unconvincing attempt" (121-2, note 2); interestingly, it was necessary for Cullen, and others, to acknowledge her article, an innovative study which may jump to conclusions, but led critics into a new and fruitful area of research.
that Spenser was a radical Puritan criticizing Anglican abuses, was based on some faulty assumptions, according to McLane in 1961. McLane believed that the fact that Higginson did not know that Spenser was secretary to the Anglican Bishop Young in 1579 would have prohibited his involvement with the radical Puritan movement. However, Higginson provided much valuable information on Spenser's social, political, and religious milieu. These attempts to find a meaning based on Spenser's religious and political inclinations have continued up to the present time.

The eternal debate about the identity of E.K. is of major concern to critics in the historical school. The Variorum provides information about this battle: the opponents fall primarily into two groups, those who believe E.K. is Edward Kirke (Malone, Cooper, Keightley, Grosart, Dodge, Jones, etc.), and those who believe he is Spenser himself (Sommer, Kuersteiner), tempered by those who believe Spenser and E.K. worked together on the gloss (Palgrave, Fletcher, Renwick). The most widely accepted theory is the Edward Kirke one, even today.

E.K.'s commentary, and his many errors, have been popular fields of study for scholars such as Draper, Mustard, Renwick, Emma Pope, and Hughes. The disagreements concerning E.K.'s usefulness, validity, and effect on the reader have continued into our present age.

Another continuing quibble concerns Spenser's
language. McElderry's careful study comes to the conclusion that the extent of Spenser's use of obsolete and archaic words was greatly exaggerated and that in fact many of the words were in use during Spenser's time. (That of course does not explain why so many critics objected to the diction, or why E.K. felt he had to defend it.)

For the most part, the close attention to language and verse forms and, with one or two exceptions, to historical criticism, and the willingness to allow the Shepheardes Calender an openness of structure and a tendency to disunity and contradiction, ended with the publication of the Variorum. In the 1950s and 1960s critics of The Shepheardes Calender, in New Critical style, sought the unity of the work in patterns of themes and images. Interesting theories concerning the structure and themes of the Calender were developed by Hallett Smith, A.C. Hamilton, Robert Durr, S.K. Heninger, William Nelson, Maren-Sofie Røstvig, and Isabel MacCaffrey, all of whom believe the work to be a unified whole with a definite structure. Smith and Hamilton find an internal pattern based on E.K.'s categorization of the eclogues into moral, recreative, and plaintive. For Smith each set of eclogues forms an orderly pattern leading up to a climax in the next-to-last eclogue, which is followed by an eclogue on the subject of poetry. Hamilton too
discovers, and charts, a regular pattern in the structure of the eclogues. Nelson claims for the poem a circular structure, rather than a linear one, and Heninger carries this idea further, finding both a circular and a linear structure, the circular represented by the calendar and the straight line by Colin's path through life. For Heninger the structure demonstrates the paradoxical relationship of mutability to constancy and the relationship of microcosm to macrocosm, of human life to nature and the universe. Heninger, as we have seen, suggests that the poem achieves "a synthesis of all disparate factors into a single well-ordered unity" (317). Røstvig goes further into Pythagorean structures and numerology, finding groups of three and four throughout the Calendar, demonstrating that they all add up to the perfect number of harmony and timelessness. MacCaffrey, like Heninger, believes that the poem is unified by its calendar framework and that the poem contains both linear and circular structures. She adds to this theory a claim for the existence of other lines, or "ladders," which connect straight line to circle, lines of transcendence by which Colin could have escaped linear time but did not.

These critics also propose a unity of theme to the poem. While Smith contends that the theme of the whole poem is "the pastoral idea" and the meaning the "rejection of the aspiring mind," with Colin choosing the pastoral
world of *otium* over the life of duty, Hamilton claims that Colin escapes from the pastoral world to the outside world of duty and commitment, finding his identity through his relationship to nature, his awareness of the fallen state of human beings, and the possibility of Christian rebirth. Robert Durr also finds unity of theme in Colin's dilemma: for him the poem is "a kind of fugue whose complexities of counterpoint and flux of figures converge upon that point of firm repose which is its clear and single theme" (269); according to Durr, the three themes of love, religion, and poetry converge into a "three-part polyphonic harmony" (270), whose moral centre is based on the contrast between good and bad shepherds and the importance of choosing the spirit over the flesh and the world. Durr finds Colin Clout a failure in his attempts at poetry, love, and religious belief. For Heninger and MacCaffrey as well, Colin fails and dies because he is unable to fit his life to the patterns of nature and the universe.

All these critics argue for the unity of *The Shepheardes Calender*, but define that unity in varying ways, as they evaluate and analyze the structure and theme of the poem and scrutinize the relationship of its various parts to each other and to the whole. Their work is highly important to any analysis of *The Shepheardes Calender* because an awareness of the interworking of structures and themes is necessary in order to understand the poem. That
awareness does not make interpretation of the poem less difficult. Because the paradoxes noted by MacCaffrey and Heninger do exist in the poem, a universally accepted interpretation of the poem's thematic and structural components and the unity of those components into one poem will never be achieved.

Another important study of the 1960s furthered the historical criticism of Greenlaw and Higginson. Paul McLane, in *Spenser's Shepheardes Calender: A Study in Elizabethan Allegory*, refutes Higginson's earlier study by giving evidence that Spenser was a moderate Anglican, not a radical Puritan, and by engaging in his own thorough study of the political and religious situation in England at that time. McLane identifies the disguised characters and analyzes the content of *The Shepheardes Calender* in relation to his interpretation of the poem as a disguised warning against the proposed marriage of Queen Elizabeth to the Duc d'Alençon. Although its approach now seems outdated and unprovable, this book is so far the definitive study of Spenser's historical allegory.

Another chapter of McLane's book is highly innovative because of its tentative exploration of a new way of reading the *Shepherds Calender* -- as a dramatic poem, with many speakers expressing various points of view. McLane proposes that the poem can be read either literally or allegorically, and can be considered fiction, history,
or poetic drama. He responds, as well, to the many explanations of the unity of the poem: there is unity in the calendar device, in the tone or mood, in the repetition of characters, in the presence of one author — the Calender is "as unified as need be," McLane asserts equivocally.

This decade ends with Martha Craig taking the issue of the language in a new direction, by asserting that Spenser used obsolete words because of the hidden meanings that can be found in their etymologies, and with Michael Bristol (1970) devising an extremely complex structure of the Calender based on his theory of reciprocal pairings of eclogues. Another approach is Harry Berger's (1961 and 1969): he sees in the poem an exploration of the poet's growth and inner conflicts, an approach very popular in the 1970s.

The faith in a definitive structure and theme, and the belief that the poem can be interpreted with finality, are concepts already being questioned by 1970, when critics began to read the poem as a combination of various points of view and perspectives. Patrick Cullen, for example, proposes in 1970 that The Shepheardes Calender consists of "a juxtaposition of different perspectives, whereby pastoral experience is evaluated" (vii).

Cullen's landmark book brings together many previous approaches in a new way. Cullen seeks, and finds, unity in
the work, particularly in the suitability of the eclogues to their months and seasons, thus carrying forward the work of Parmenter and others. Like Heninger and MacCaffrey, Cullen believes a major issue to be Colin's relationship to nature and his difficulty in fitting the stages of his life to the appropriate seasons of the year. Like Durr, Heninger, and MacCaffrey, he thinks that Colin dies a failure. He also finds unity in Spenser's use of the pastoral mode, as did Smith and Hamilton. For Cullen, it is the patterning of pastoral perspectives and the presence and exploration of extreme and opposing positions, particularly in the moral eclogues, that mainly comprise the theme of the work.

Cullen identifies two pastoral perspectives: the Arcadian, in which the pastoral ambience is presented as an ideal, paradisical setting; and the Mantuanesque, in which the pastoral locale is used as a vehicle for a satirical commentary on existing conditions and as a setting for discussions of moral choices. Both Arcadian and Mantuanesque pastorals contain within them opposition or tension between disparate values. For Cullen the debates of the moral eclogues are ambivalent, "not simply debates between good and bad shepherds, but between two perspectives, each limited, each containing a potential for either good or evil" (32). Cullen maintains that the ideal solution of each debate between opposing positions
would be a balance, or harmony, since both views in themselves are limited and inadequate.

Cullen anticipates the 1980s by suggesting that Spenser possessed a "pragmatic and mature awareness of a plurality of values" (26) and by stating that "the Calender is constructed not as an exposition of a single, sure perspective, but as an exploration of perspectives. It is a use of pastoral to explore pastoral and, beyond that, the uncertain and tangential truths of all our visions of certitude" (112). Cullen is not quite ready, however, to let the poem rest in uncertainty: he still looks for a definite purpose in the author's decision to present various perspectives. He does not question the reader's, or his own, objectivity, nor find discontinuity in the poem. He does carry to its limit the search for unity of theme and structure, while approaching the new attitude that the poem contains multiple perspectives.

The 1970s also saw a renewal of interest in Spenser's use of sources, especially classical mythology and rhetorical methods, and in the identity and role of E.K. Studies of The Shepheardes Calender as a poem whose main theme is poetry itself and the poet's voice and career, an approach whose popularity was enhanced by the schools of biographical and psychoanalytical criticism, were conducted at this time by critics such as Thomas Cain, Richard Helgerson, Richard Mallette, and Louis Montrose.
These critics tended to mix New Critical types of analyses, by which they looked closely at the work's structure and characterization, with historical types of study, by which they considered Colin Clout's career in relation to Spenser's and applied theories of poetry, especially the platonic and neoplatonic ones popular in the Renaissance, to Spenser's poem. A comparison of Colin Clout with Spenser dominates much of this type of criticism, as does an analysis of the purpose of poetry and the poet's role in society.

Montrose, a New Historicist, has initiated new ways of reading Renaissance works, in relationship to the political and social patterns of a culture. In his 1979 article "'The perfecte paterne of a Poete': The Poetics of Courtship in The Shepheardes Calender," he continues the trend to explore the poet's role in Spenser's work, but sees that role in relation to Elizabethan culture. According to Montrose, Spenser is expressing "his awareness of a discrepancy between the myth of the Poet's high calling and the functions to which his skills are relegated in his own society" (34), a society in which poetry is politically and ethically impotent (54). In 1980 Montrose writes of another role of Elizabethan poetry: certain poems, often pastorals, were used to praise the Queen with the purpose not only of honouring the Queen, but also of persuading the general public that she was
human, as well as extraordinary ('Eliza, Queene'). This kind of poetry did have a certain kind of political and social power, in comparison to kinds of poetry which sought change in the society or preferment of the poet.

The return to an interest in Spenser's use of literary sources is evident in Paul Alpers' article on Spenser's use of Theocritus and Virgil; Alice Miskimin's book on Chaucer; and Hoffman's book on Spenser. As we have seen, Hoffman presents a detailed and important exploration into Spenser's transformation of Virgil, Mantuan, and Marot. She also looks closely at language and rhetoric, sees the pastoral landscape as mental landscape, and analyzes the poem in relation to religious and political problems of Spenser's time.

The old battle about E.K.'s usefulness and the validity of his commentary has been revived in the opposing opinions of Theodore L. Steinberg and Patsy Scherer Cornelius. Steinberg returns to the once-repudiated theory that E.K. is Spenser himself and proposes a new reason for Spenser's creation of E.K. -- to parody the theories of the poets of the Pléiade. Steinberg calls E.K. "the worst critic of the poem" (56), whose contradictions of himself and of Spenser's poetry were written purposely by Spenser to "present positions which oppose, and thereby highlight, the positions which Spenser supports in the Calender" (54).
Cornelius, in contrast, claims that E.K.'s commentaries and gloss are valid, correct, and useful and that Spenser, together with E.K., provided comments to guide the reader to a correct interpretation of the poem. In her view E.K. makes no mistakes that Spenser would not have made himself; rather, he helpfully indicates sources, gives clues to meaning, adds a Christian dimension, and wards off possible criticism. Without E.K.'s additions to the text, "the reader's impression and understanding of The Shepheardes Calender is significantly altered" (108).

As they approached and entered the 1980s, most Spenser critics remained conservative, despite the popularity of critical theories such as deconstructionism and reader response. Nevertheless, a few critics have undertaken deconstructionist and New Historical readings, and several have allowed the possibility of relativist, subjective, or pluralistic interpretations.

Jonathan Goldberg is one of the few Spenser critics who can be labelled a true deconstructionist. Writing of The Faerie Queene, in his 1981 book Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse, Goldberg says,

I cannot see that a principle that determines meaning is offered in Spenserian narration; its very endless quality denies hermeneutic closure. The text invites us, lures us, to these activities and then obliterates the possibility
of interpretation (76 note 1).

Of *The Shepheardes Calendar* Goldberg says:

As much as *The Faerie Queene*, this first poem is one of fissures, of losses, of disconnections: a jumble of poetic kinds and attitudes, prose and verse, woodcuts and emblematics. All that unites the poet’s pleasure to the demands of society is loss.

(173)

The *Calendar*, according to Goldberg, is "a poem about the shepherd’s void" (172). Goldberg continues his study of Renaissance texts in the context of Derridean theory in *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism and English Renaissance Texts*, again discussing the "October" eclogue in relation to intertextuality, various voices, and the loss of poetic voice.14

An unusual combination of a deconstructionist approach with reader-response and new historical methods is found in Wolfgang Iser’s "Spenser’s Arcadia: The Interpretation of Fiction and History." Iser claims that *The Shepheardes Calender* can have different meanings at

14 Similar in approach is Balachandra Rajan’s *Form of the Unfinished*, in which he calls *The Faerie Queene* a work that could not be finished without erasing its own significance (14). Rajan finds the poem pluralistic and ambivalent, full of dichotomies without solutions: Spenser, according to Rajan, "engineers the self-effacement of the poem itself" (9).
different times of history because of its transcendence of its original purpose -- to oppose the d'Alençon marriage. The multiple perspectives and many contradictions were devised, writes Iser, both to conceal and to reveal the true subject matter of the text. The contradictions point to the situation which could undermine the state and the old order, just as the poem threatens to obliterate itself if it does not succeed in bringing action in the real world. Different possibilities are offered as solutions to the present problem, out of which the best solution can be chosen. The hidden signals in the poem are not explained by Spenser: the reader must find the message himself by understanding that the disorder of the poem points to the real threat to the order of the state and that the multiple perspectives indicate that the reader has a choice. Iser is not, then, a true deconstructionist, since he tries to find a purpose in Spenser's contradictions and multiplicities of viewpoint.

Michael McCanles, in contrast, allows The Shepheardes Calender to remain deconstructive, "a book about itself." He believes that "the perspective each eclogue takes on the others [is] ultimately self-cancelling" (17). He considers the poem a document and a monument, a work of fiction frozen into the cycle of the seasons but never allowed "to rest conclusively in any one attitude and one perspective" (17). McCanles also writes that "It is part
of the fiction of *The Shepheardes Calender* that E.K.'s glosses and commentary are not part of the fiction" (5). This very contemporary article places the poem firmly within its inconclusive text, while the reader observes it from outside.

A. Leigh DeNeef's book on *Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor* (1982) looks closely at the metaphoric quality of Spenser's poetry and interprets the debates between the shepherd-speakers in *The Shepheardes Calendar* as confrontations between one who interprets the language, landscape, and life literally, and one who sees them metaphorically. DeNeef is neither a deconstructionist nor a reader-response critic, but one who, like Iser, finds purpose behind the misreadings made by the fictional characters in the text and behind Spenser's use of multiple perspectives: "The true or Right Poet, Spenser implies, is he who is able to transcend the limited sets of the individual textual genres by imagining metaphoric conceits or by constructing mixed forms which actualize differing perceptual options" (24). Like a New Critic, DeNeef looks for authorial intention and assumes the possibility of one correct reading of the text, but like the relativists of the 1980s, he allows the multiple perceptions of value and virtue set forth in the poem to stand.

Bruce R. Smith and Ruth Luborsky explore the variety
of influences on the form of *The Shepheardes Calender*, and both find unity in the variety. Smith's article is concerned, as was mentioned earlier, with the difficulty of reading a poem with three sets of expectations based on the three different genres combined in the work: pastoral romance, which demands a sympathetic reader; calendar-almanac, which requires a detached, dispassionate reader with a sense of the cyclical and linear views of human life; and classical eclogue, which demands an active reader, working his way amongst multiple perspectives. To add to this problem, *The Shepheardes Calender* includes several voices -- the fictional shepherds, the narrator, and E.K., each of whom presents a different mood and tone. The reader, concludes Smith, must combine all three strategies of reading by taking into account all three genres. Smith's interpretation is based on an awareness of the multiple perspectives in the poem, but he believes that unity can be achieved through the mind of the reader, thus placing himself with reader-response critics. Like the New Critics, however, Smith finds definite genres, divisions, and viewpoints which come together into a unified whole.

Luborsky too finds a variety of sources and styles in the text of the poem and also finds unity -- not, like Smith, through the reader's mind, but through the correspondences of the woodcuts to their months as
indicated by their style and detail, even though they are by different hands and do not all fit their months. Luborsky believes that, despite some inconsistencies and contradictions, the text was carefully planned and approved of by Spenser.

David Shore, in *Spenser and the Poetics of Pastoral*, combines an almost New Critical focus on structure and unity with a belief that there are multiple perspectives and values within the poem, though he seeks purpose behind Spenser’s presentation of those perspectives. Shore proposes that each moral eclogue contains within it all three of E.K.’s categories: plaintive, recreative, and moral. No one perspective is indicated as the superior one by Spenser; rather, they all relate to some view of the pastoral ideal: "In the moral eclogues the plaintive acceptance of loss circumscribes both the recreative assertion of the pastoral ideal and the moral awareness of the necessity for non-pastoral activity in a non-pastoral environment" (67).

Shore, whose predecessors are critics such as Smith and Hamilton who sought the unity of the work and a structural principle, and those such as Greg and Berger who debated about the meaning and place of pastoral in the poem, finds that the "pastoral image is... the principle of unity" (102) in the work. Shore concludes that the limitations of that pastoral image are finally accepted by
Colin at the time of his death, while Spenser lives on to write *The Faerie Queene*.

Other readers, such as those described earlier in this chapter, have recognized the multiplicity of viewpoints in Spenser's works and have contributed to my interpretation.

The pluralism, multiplicity, and disconnectedness emphasized in the thought of our age to some extent define the criticism. Although Spenser scholars are generally cautious in implementing new theories in their interpretations of Spenser's work, particularly *The Shepheardes Calender*, some awareness of multiple perspectives and subjective readings is beginning to take hold, although little has been done up to now. The approach of this dissertation is based on the difficulty of reading the work, even, or especially, when, one does not attempt to find unity, or to force the multiple viewpoints into one meaning. The reading is based on an awareness of the multiple layers of the poem (the "mirrors within mirrors" described by Goldberg, *Voice*) and of the contradictions between and within every viewpoint presented. All this is discussed in relation to the analogy between human life and nature's patterns.

This dissertation is divided into chapters that correspond to my selection of seasonal eclogues (as
opposed to the allotment of months to each season in early shepherd's calendars): the choices were made after my recognition of certain common themes and tendencies that seem to tie some eclogues together within a particular season of the year. The winter eclogues ("Ienuarye," "Februarie," "December") are discussed in relation to the contradictory attitudes to the season, which often arise from the biological ages of the speaker. Spring, in "March," "Aprill," and "Maye," is discussed as a time especially suited to fiction-making, when, however, the icons created by fiction have many faces and are constantly changing before the observers. Summer (in the June, July, and August eclogues) is discussed as a time when choices must be made, but when speakers disagree about those choices. The relative aspect of the points of view presented is especially conveyed in these eclogues. The autumn eclogues ("September," "October," and "November") are discussed in the context of the attempts of human beings to escape the pattern of nature, while at the same time striving to remain within that pattern.

In all sets of eclogues the analogy between the humans and the natural world is paradoxical, pluralistic, and relative. Our reading of The Shepheardes Calender is richer if we take into account the complexity of the design, the presence of multiple layers and multiple voices, the subjectivity of our relationships with the
different narrators, and the existence of contradictory statements and messages.

No matter how thoroughly critics manage to lose the text when concentrating on its historical and sociological contexts, or how vigorously they claim that the poem obliterates itself, *The Shepheardes Calender* lives on, recycling itself through the seasons of every year. As E.K. writes, "all thinges perish and come to theyr last end, but workes of learned wits and monuments of Poetry abide for ever" ("December," gloss on the emblem). Even this statement is self-contradictory, for the emblem that E.K. is explaining did not survive with the text; only the critic's comment remains. Nevertheless, *The Shepheardes Calender* has lasted into our time, to be read in many different ways, not as a definite statement about human life, but as a compendium of viewpoints and choices, sources and responses. A reading of these multiple perspectives will not deconstruct the text, nor will it lead to an interpretation of it: it will simply repeat the complexities of the human mind as mirrored, or not mirrored, in the natural and supernatural worlds.

Spenser, whose imagination could envision the paradoxical relationships of unity and variety, mutability and constancy, nature and eternity, would capture the paradox again in his great work *The Faerie Queene*. He writes of the Garden of Adonis:
There is continually spring, and harvest there
Continually, both meeting at one time.

(III.vi.42.1-2)

Venus describes her beloved Adonis:

All be he subject to mortalitie,
Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
And by succession made perpetuall.

(III.v.47.4-6)

Nature says that all things

... are not changed from their first estate;
But by their change their being doe dilate:
And turning to themselves at length againe,
Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:

(VII.vii.58.4-7)

The Shepheardes Calender exhibits many choices and many perceptions of truth and reality, and can lead to many interpretations. It is indeed a paradox that all these voices in the text are present every time the work is read: these voices are "continual" and "by succession made perpetual." However, these voices are subject each time to different readings and therefore "eterne in mutabilitie," that mutability of perceptions and choices making them eternal and eternally interesting.
"Such rage as winters, reigneth in my heart":

FRAMES, CONTRADICTIONS,
AND THE WINTER ECLOGUES

i

An interesting structural component of the Shepheardes Calender, as mentioned earlier, is the framing of the text by several external, and internal, parts which are set one within the other in a frame-within-frames configuration. The following framing units surround the work: Immerito's frame -- a dedicatory poem preceding and an envoy following the poem, both presumably composed by Immerito, Spenser's pseudonym and mask; E.K.'s frame -- commentaries preceding and concluding the entire work with an argument and gloss surrounding each eclogue as well; the narrator's frame -- comments by an unidentified speaker framing "Ianuarye" and beginning "December"; Colin Cloute's frame -- monologues by Colin Cloute beginning the poem proper in "Ianuarye" and ending it in "December."

The effect of these frames is to distance the reader from the poem while emphasizing the fact that the poem is a created fiction and that each eclogue consists of one or more fictional expressions by different speakers. The reader is encouraged to compare the various perspectives,
and to see the poem in relation to its implied author, its critic, its characters, the world outside the poem, and the literary tradition behind the poem. The framing then enhances Spenser’s focus on multiple perspectives, contradictions, and fictionalization, while providing hints that the author who created the poem is still present, despite his assertions to the contrary. A consideration of the relationship of each speaker to the Calender as a calendar, and of each reader to the concept of the calendar as a human creation devised to make order of the chaos of human life, is encouraged by this distancing effect created by the concentric frames.

The outermost frame of The Shepheardes Calender is the unit of the two poems by Immerito which begin and end the entire work. The dedicatory poem and the envoy are poems which point to the author’s manipulation of the reader’s response to the Calender as a whole and encourage the reader to recognize that the work is a fiction created by an author who presents himself under a masked identity. The reader should eventually realize that this narrator’s voice is one of many, and that the poem should be considered separately from the author’s world, yet at the same time in relation to that world.

In the dedicatory poem, "To His Booke," Immerito asks his book to go on without him and seek the protection of the dedicatee, Sir Philip Sidney. Part of Spenser’s
purpose here is, obviously, to praise Sidney and ask for his patronage. In addition to that purpose, Spenser, by sending the poem on without him ("Goe little booke: thy selfe present, / As child whose parent is vnkent"), is emphasizing his separation from the poem, and therefore distancing the reader from both himself and the poem. As the author stands outside the poem, so does the reader, who thus regards the poem as a created fiction, separate from the poet, and separate from the real world surrounding it.

Immerito also uses this poem to proclaim yet protect his own identity. This is the first example of self-contradiction by a speaker in the work, since Immerito emphasizes his humility and unworthiness, while at the same time expecting envy of others and a future reputation as a writer. Immerito tells his book, "A shepheards swaine saye did thee sing, / All as his straying flocke he fedde" (9-10). Immerito here is not claiming that Colin Cloute represents himself in the poem; he is merely telling his book to make the claim that its author is a shepherd. The lines are also metaphorical, since Immerito is taking the pose of humility and unworthiness -- of an unknown writer trying out his wings. Why the author is hiding his identity and why he expects envy from others and jeopardy for his book are not revealed.
The envoy which ends the Calender repeats some elements of the dedicatory poem. The poet separates himself from his poem, writing "Goe lyttle Calender, thou hast a free passeporte" (?), again distancing himself and the reader from the fiction, or the art, of the poem. In this poem Immerito takes a much more serious attitude towards the separation of poem from poet, however. The poet believes that his poem will be immortal, living on without him, that it is "a Calender for every yeare" which will last beyond time. The reader then expects not just the text of the poem, but its relevance, to last forever. This difference between the poet and the poem/calender emphasizes the major difference between human life and nature's cycle, that the human body dies irremediably, but that nature is reborn every spring.

Again in the envoy Immerito contradicts himself by declaring himself and his poem humble and unworthy, while at the same time claiming that his work will be immortal (a claim attesting to his skill as a poet). He says to his book, "Goe but a lowly gate amongste the meaner sorte. / Dare not to match thy pype with Tityrus hys style, / Nor with the Pilgrim that the Ploughman playde a whyle" (9-10). Even while mentioning the unworthiness of his poem, he speaks of Chaucer and other great predecessors. His declaration that his poem should not aspire to such heights does not annul the facts that he has considered a
relationship with those other writers and that he has professed that his art will be immortal. Yet Immerito contradicts even that: the poem will last "if" he has "marked well the starres revolution." He therefore may have some humble reservations about his skill: whether he has succeeded or not seems debatable. The author is questioning his own ability to imitate nature's pattern, and the ability of any human being to understand his or her relationship to the cosmic pattern.

Unlike the dedicatory poem, the envoy declares the purpose of The Shepheardes Calender: first, to imitate the pattern of every year; second, "To teach the ruder shepheard how to feede his sheepe, / And from the falsers fraud his folded flocke to keepe" (5-6). Paradoxically, then, this frame not only encourages the reader to consider the poem a fictional work of art, but also to consider its themes in relation to human life.

By framing The Shepheardes Calender proper, the poems by Immerito enhance the cyclical effect of the poem, reminding us at the end of the beginning, just as the December eclogue takes us back to "Ianuarye." We see the whole poem as a fiction, a fiction which comments on the external world of nature, and of humans. The poem is separate from the poet, but under his control at all times. The poet then, paradoxically, while proclaiming his separation from the poem, is an integral part of it
throughout the work.

The next external frame, which is however inside the poems by Immerito in relation to the poem proper, is that created by E.K., whose commentary continues the trend to distance the reader from the poem in order that the reader think of the poem's messages in relation to other realities. E.K.'s commentary supplies the point of view of a critic reading the poem in relation to literary tradition and contemporary values, and supplying explanations and definitions in order to help the reader decipher the poem.

Like Immerito, E.K., in his letter to Gabriel Harvey, continues the theme of the poet's lack of reputation. "Vncouthe vnkiste," E.K. begins, but writes that this new poet will soon be famous and beloved because of his writing. Like Immerito, E.K. establishes a relationship with the reader and asks the reader to stand apart from the poem and judge it as a created work, separate from yet related to human life outside the poem. The Shepheardes Calender is seen as an independent work of art, but not divorced from tradition and contemporary society. E.K. also agrees with Immerito that the Calender contains "twelue AEglogue proportionable to the twelue monethes," Immerito by his subtitle of the work, and E.K. by frequently declaring in his commentary that there is a relationship between the eclogues and their months and
between Colin's life and the year.

It becomes apparent, however, that E.K.'s commentary expresses only one point of view, a point of view which often contradicts others expressed in the Calendar itself. E.K.'s inaccuracies, contradictions, and incorrect interpretations may be disturbing to a reader, especially since they are presented under the guise of scholarship and learning. Yet E.K.'s commentaries contribute to the total effect of the poem as they point to the existence of many points of view and many different kinds of knowledge. E.K.'s tone and mood, his pedantic style and pompous self-regard jar the moods created by various speakers in different eclogues, thus adding to the multiplicity of perceptions. His interruptions are especially noticeable since they frame not only the entire Calendar but each individual eclogue as well.

Bridging the gap between E.K.'s frame and that of Colin Clout's is a frame created by the words of an unnamed narrator. This narrator is within the poem proper, since his words begin and end the January eclogue and begin the December eclogue; yet he is also outside the poem, since he does not appear as a character and stands outside the action, commenting on Colin Cloute's personality and the weather. Unlike Immerito and E.K., however, the narrator is concerned only with what is inside the poem, not with making connections between the events of the poem and the
outside world. Yet, like the other frames, this one distances the reader from the poem, in this instance by encouraging the reader to view Colin's words objectively and perhaps somewhat critically.

By providing an alternative voice to that of Colin Cloute within the poem, the narrator's voice participates in Spenser's technique of using multiple viewpoints and contradictions in his text.¹ The narrator's voice and tone are gentler than those of E.K. and more optimistic than those of Colin Cloute. His attitude toward the analogy between human and natural worlds and his descriptions of the scenery and of Colin contradict the versions presented by Colin. In "Januarye," for example, the frozen ground and trees described by E.K. and the barrenness and sadness detailed by Colin are very different from the narrator's point of view: this scene is occurring when "Winters wastful spight was almost spent" (2) and "All in a sunneshine day . . ." (3). At the end of the eclogue the narrator sees the melancholy Colin as only "halfe in despight" (76) and the sheep as only seeming to weep with him. Not only does the narrator have hope for Colin, but he is perhaps the first to

¹Bruce R. Smith identifies the narrator's voice as one of three in the January eclogue and characterizes this voice as possessing a "gentle irony" and bringing to the work "a sly comic touch" (86). The narrator, Smith believes, differs from Colin, who speaks without irony, and E.K., who has too much irony (86-7).
contradict an analogous relationship between human beings and nature. It may be true, however, that he does see the analogy, thinking that what he sees as a sunny day corresponds to the potential for happiness in Colin’s life. The narrator, then, makes us question Colin’s point of view and consider that Colin may be fictionalizing his situation, his potential, and his view of the landscape and weather.

Likewise, in “December” the narrator contradicts Colin’s words: while Colin sees himself as a failure both as a poet and as a lover, the narrator praises the piping and singing of the “gentle” Colin. While Colin describes a cold, winter setting, in which he draws near to death, the narrator describes a peaceful, pleasant, shady scene. The narrator does not return to end “December,” but perhaps his voice is not needed now, since Colin’s voice has become gentler as he says his adieus and since Immerito’s voice merges with it as he ends this eclogue and the whole poem with his epilogue. This is a calendar “for every yeare,” we are told in the envoy; therefore, the reader can circle back to the beginning, to the dedication poem, E.K.’s argument, and the narrator once more.

The innermost frame, surrounding the Calendar proper, is that created by Colin Cloute’s monologues in “Januarye” and “December.” These two eclogues are similar in verse
form, metre, and structure, with "December" containing exactly twice as many lines as "Januarye" (Heninger, Shore, and others have discussed these similarities in more detail). In both of these eclogues Colin Cloute emphasizes the correspondence of his life to the seasons, in "Januarye" to winter (though he simultaneously recalls his spring), and in "December" to all four seasons, as he looks back on his li. Since these eclogues begin and end the *Calendar*, their themes should be indicative of the themes of the entire work and should provide a commentary on the other eclogues. Indeed, if we compare each eclogue to the season of the year and to human life, we must note that in general the analogy fits (as proposed by Parmenter, Cullen, and J. M. Richardson).

The point has already been made, however, that Colin’s point of view has been qualified by the inclusion of other interpretations of the landscape, of human life, and of Colin’s words themselves. It is also evident that there are contradictions within Colin’s monologues. For example, as he compares the seasons of his past life to the seasons of the year in "December," his descriptions do not always fit the appropriate season. These contradictions existing even in his own words, added to the contradictions between his views and those of the other speakers and narrators, lead the reader to question the validity of Colin’s story. It must be suspected that
Colin is perhaps fictionalizing his own life and his present position.

Between these two framing poems are ten other eclogues, each consisting of conversations among two or more speakers, who express different points of view, different perceptions of the month, the season, and the relationship between human life and the pattern of nature. A comparison of all these viewpoints with that of Colin, all seen in the light of the commentaries by Immerito, E.K., and the narrator, shows the difficulty in determining the extent of the relationship between human life and nature's seasons, and also reveals a complex relationship between the reader and the invisible author.

The January and December eclogues begin and end the Calendar; the poem therefore begins and ends in winter. However, this calendrical structure was not the accepted one during Spenser's time, when it was traditional for the year to begin in March. E.K. writes in "The generall argument of the whole booke,"

for then the sonne reneweth his finished course, and the seasonable spring refresheth the earth, and the plesaunce thereof being buried in the sadness of the dead winter now wore away, reliveth.

E.K. proposes that perhaps because of Christ's birth at
the end of December, or perhaps because January was named for Janus, the god of beginnings, Spenser decided to begin his poem with that month. E.K. ambiguously ends his argument by stating,

But our Author respecting neither the subtletie of thone parte, nor the antiquitie of thother, thinketh it fittest according to the simplicitie of commen vnderstanding, to begin with Januarie, wening it perhaps no decorum, that Shepheard should be seen in matter of so deepe insight, or canvase a case of so doubtfull judgment. So therefore beginneth he, and so continueth he throughout.

Spenser, then, has structured his work so that it imitates the pattern of human life as well as the pattern of nature and also shows the paradox inherent in the relationship between those two patterns. The fact that Spenser's poem, like a calendar, may be seen as cyclical, as well as linear (Heninger, MacCaffrey, et al.), further emphasizes the paradox. The various speakers created by Spenser differ in their perception of their relationships with the natural scenery and its mirroring of their ages and states of mind. The analogy, then, between human life and nature's pattern is both debatable and paradoxical.
Not only is it controversial to begin the year with January, but the name of the month contains within itself a paradox. The god Janus was two-faced, symbolizing endings and beginnings at the same time. Patrick Cullen finds this suitable to Colin’s plight, since Colin, although still in the springtime of his youth, feels old, defeated, and ready to die:

Conveniently for Spenser’s seasonal portrayal of Colin’s tragic contradiction, the interpretation of January in terms of the traditional year of men’s life are themselves contradictions, Janus-like (Cullen 124).

The month reflects its own paradoxical nature, with its landscape of winter storms containing our knowledge of the coming of spring. By beginning his Calender with January, Spenser may be questioning the analogy between human and natural seasons: youthful spirits are out of place in January’s winter weather.

The three speakers of "Januarye" -- Colin, E. K., and the narrator -- reveal different viewpoints of the analogy and often self-contradictory ones. The fictional speaker, Colin Cloute, is in tune and out of tune with nature at the same time. He is "a figure of tragic paradox and contradiction" (Cullen 81). For Colin it is not a sunny day, as it is for the narrator, nor does he look forward to the coming of spring. He mournfully sings, "Thou
barren ground, whome winters wrath hath wasted, / Art made a myrrhour, to behold my plight" (19-20). He sees his mood reflected in the cold weather, bare trees, and wasted earth, and compares the icicles on the trees to his own tears. Yet even within these stanzas, Colin mentions spring and summer -- the spring and summer of the past, not those to come. Although he sees the present scenery as analogous to his mood, he is aware that he is, or should be, in the springtime of his life and that nature's pattern does not therefore reflect the pattern of his individual life.

The fact that Colin recalls flowers from another season in one sense restores that season and, in another sense, makes its loss more poignant. According to David R. Shore, "the materials of his [Colin's] lost world survive in the very words that express their loss" and, furthermore,

The evocation of the image of content means that the world of pastoral harmony survives as an imaginative possibility in spite of its apparent practical loss (Shore 70, 72). Hoffman explains this simultaneous existence of the year's spring and winter, and Colin's spring and winter, by stating that human nature and the nature of conventional seasonal description are entwined in an original
and even startling fashion in order to explicate the psychological and moral qualities of love pain (45).

For Hoffman, the landscape is mental, changing as the mood of the speaker changes. Ironically, Colin's actual spring is out of tune with nature, even while his mental state finds itself reflected in the winter scenery. As Cullen describes, Colin is young in January, but feels paradoxically old and near death; his tragedy is his inability to participate successfully in the coming spring (Cullen 82). Whether the landscape is a mental place, or one that has been altered by a person's belief that nature exists as a mirror of one's mood or age, Colin's condition is paradoxical. The landscape does and does not mirror his plight, and his age does and does not suit the season.

An example of this paradox is evident in Colin's mention of the daffodil. Colin remembers "Thy sommer prowde with Daffadillies dight" (22) (mistakenly, since the daffodil is a spring flower), and contrasts that flower from his past with the present winter setting and his present wintry state of mind. The daffodil, which is absent from the scenery, yet present by its very mention, is an appropriate symbol for Colin because of its association with both life and death, love and egotism.  

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2Gerard (17. 2) identifies the daffodil as a narcissus and a spring flower. See also OED, s.v. "daffodil," 2 and s.v. "narcissus." As a narcissus, the
Nevertheless, a daffodil first of all brings to mind the spring season: Colin is remembering that flower which represents to him a season that has been lost. While it is true that the materials of Colin's lost world survive in the words he uses to express their loss (Shore 70), it is also true that those materials which express that lost beauty may allude to even darker losses. What was lost can remind us of what is to come in the cyclical movement of nature's seasons.

Colin's pessimism is evident not only in his attitude to nature, but also in his relationship with the gods. He addresses the gods ironically: "Ye Gods of love, that pitie louers payne, / (If any gods the paine of louers pitie)" (14-15). He hopes, but is not certain, that Pan, who also suffered from the pains of love, will pity him. He is also disappointed in his prowess as a poet, since Rosalinde cannot be won by his songs. He therefore breaks his pipe, evidently despairing of any success in love or in poetry.

The point of view of the narrator, whose words begin and end the eclogue, contradicts and questions that of Colin Clout. It has already been noted that the narrator's description of a sunny day opposes Colin's view

flower is associated with the myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own image after rejecting Echo, and was subsequently transformed into a flower (Ovid, Met. III.402-526.)
and mood. Colin is described by the narrator as "pale and wanne" (7), and the narrator guesses "May seeme he lovd, or els some care he tooke" (9). Interestingly, the narrator is not sure of the reasons for Colin's despair, and must only conjecture. This would indicate a separation of narrator from author and from Colin. The narrator, bridging the distance between poem and reader, addresses the reader, and, in order to gain sympathy for Colin, asks us to realize that Colin is a mere shepherd's boy (1).

The narrator begins and ends the eclogue, but disappears in the middle while Colin holds the stage. His presence, however subtle, guides the reader to a recognition that Colin's view is only one way of perceiving life. The narrator's very presence tempers the reader's involvement, and balances the reader's sympathy with objectivity. After the narrator's gentle and optimistic introduction, Colin's moaning seems melodramatic, his view of nature naive and self-centred, his breaking of his pipe childish and temperamental. The difference in language and tone between the narrator's lines and Colin's words is startling and indicates that perhaps there are other ways of interpreting Colin's plight. For example, the narrator's comments "May seeme he lovd, or els some care he tooke" (8) and "the pensife boy halfe in despight / Arose" (76-77) contrast greatly with
Colin's "Such stormy stoures do breede my balefull smart, / As if my yeare were wast, and woxen old" (28-29). The narrator's closing of the eclogue provides an anticlimax to Colin's outburst, balancing Colin's attitude with one of objective optimism. The narrator's viewpoint then provides another interpretation of Colin's personality and his dilemma.

E.K. reads the poem in a way very different from the narrator, and presents a different landscape. He reads literally Colin's description of the scenery and writes in his argument that Colin: "compareth his carefull case to the sadde season of the yeare, to the frostie ground, to the frozen trees, and to his owne winterbeaten flocke" ("Argument" to "Ianuarye"). It should be noted that E.K. does not actually compare Colin to the season. His claim, rather, is that it is Colin himself who does so. E.K. seems more certain than does the narrator of the reason for Colin's state ("his vnfortunate love") and takes a more pessimistic approach to Colin's situation. He describes melodramatically Colin's breaking of his pipe ("in peeces" while Colin "casteth him selffe to the ground"). This is very different from the narrator's description of Colin as a skilled poet and a responsible shepherd who, at the end of the eclogue, arises to drive his sheep home.

Like the framing devices discussed earlier, E.K.'s
gloss distances the reader from the fiction of the poem. It makes the reader interpret the poem in relation to the world of Spenser's contemporaries. E.K. is especially anxious to find the hidden identities of the characters, and names Spenser as Colin Cloute while hinting at secret identities for Hobbinol and Rosalinde. E.K.'s insistence upon assigning a real identity to each fictional character in the Calender has the effect of limiting interpretation and meaning, and of increasing the reader's distrust of the fiction. A fiction should create a world within itself which, though it relate to the real world, can stand on its own. E.K. brings the reader out of the fiction and places upon the poem a single-minded, simplistic interpretation which threatens to destroy the integrity of the fiction. Yet Spenser's possible commissioning of E.K.'s interpretations and his probable permission for them to remain in the text may demonstrate his favourable attitude to this gloss (Bruce R. Smith 79).

E.K.'s obsession with those hidden personages, his contradictions of Spenser's probable attitudes (e.g. his criticism of Marot whose poem Spenser used as a model for

3If Colin were simply Spenser's persona, however, we could not account for the other voices throughout the Calender and for Spenser's insistence that we see Colin's egotistical vision in some perspective. Cullen has pointed out that "A literal equation of Colin and Spenser . . . is biographically unfounded" (79), since Spenser is not old at the end of "December" and since Spenser does not die at the end of the work.
"December"), his irrelevant contributions (his statement that the phrase "Neighbour towne" expresses "the Latine Vicina" and his discourse on pederasty in relation to Hobbinol's affection for Colin), and his references to himself (his mention of Smith's "booke of gouerment" of which he says "I have a perfect copie in wryting, lent me by his kinseman, and my verye singular good freend, M. Gabriel Harvey") seem superfluous and distracting. His pedantic, pompous language, and his moralistic tone are exemplified by the following statement:

But yet let no man thinke, that herein I stand with Lucian or hys deuelish disciple Vnico Aretino, in defence of execrable and horrible sinnes of forbidden and vnlawful fleshlinessse.

This provides a contrast with the gentle words of the narrator and the melodramatic, yet poetic, phrases of Colin Cloute.

E.K. then comes between Spenser and the reader and establishes an unusual relationship between them. He addresses the reader directly, presents himself as a personality, gives inadequate or inaccurate explanations (see Steinberg on E.K.'s mistakes), but often amuses the reader. His strong personality does not disappear into the work, but instead remains intrusively present, contradicting what seems to be the author's purpose. Yet the inclusion of E.K.'s commentary adds to what may also
be the intention of the author -- the presentation of varying points of view within each eclogue and the indication that the poem is a created piece of fiction. The reader must stand apart from the poem and from Colin's mind to evaluate Colin's experience and question his interpretation.

The final emblem of "Ianuarye" contradicts both E.K.'s argument and Colin's pessimism. Anchora Speme, supplied perhaps by the narrator, or Immerito, or Spenser the author, is an optimistic ending to the poem, and is translated and commented upon, even by the skeptical E.K., as "that notwithstanding his extreme passion and lucklesse loue, yet leaning on hope, he is some what recomforted." Palgrave has written:

Nor does the embleme or motto, with which, in Italian fashion, this and the other months conclude, find support in the poem, which nowhere suggests any ground for hope. It seems to be only a poetical ornament added in obedience to a reigning literary custom (Variorum 245).

It is true that Colin does not seem to have hope; yet his youth and his potential as a poet may support the optimism of the emblem and thus contradict Colin's melancholic self-evaluation.

The combination of these various perceptions in the
January eclogue points to interesting relationships between the reader and the poem; the poem and the world external to it; the created characters and their real counterparts; the critic and the poem; the poet and the poem; the narrator and the other voices; the various possibilities presented by Spenser. E.K. relates to reader and poem, and to the outside world. The narrator, who lives both inside and outside the poem, functions as a bridge between Colin and the reader, and looks at Colin with both sympathy and detachment. The narrator is separate from Colin, but not as detached as E.K. He relates directly to the reader but not to the outside world. Colin Cloute is of course inside the poem and inside his own world entirely, having withdrawn egotistically into his woods. He does not seem aware of reader, poet, or narrator.

Given that there are three narrations, the reader is left with a contradictory portrait of Colin. We sympathize with his misery, but smile at his naivete; pity him, while remaining critical of his self-centredness and withdrawal from life. We admire his tenacity, while noting his distorted impression of himself. We must wonder at the truth of his comparison of himself to the season, because Spenser, the author, has provided alternative opinions on that matter. Spenser, working behind the scenes, has ensured that the reader will remain aware of the many ways
of understanding the relationship of human beings with nature and that the reader will remember the constant presence of bias, individual personality, and inadequate understanding.

iii

"December" contains similarities to "Ianuarye" which have been pointed out by several critics. David Shore finds similarities in form (6-line rhyming stanzas), structure (the narrator's introduction of Colin, who delivers his soliloquy as a prayer to Pan), and themes (Colin's unrequited love of Rosalinde, his friendship with Hobbinol, his music, the winter scenery as compared to his present state, and his rejection of his shepherd's pipe). Another similarity can be found in the contradictory nature of the landscape, and contradictory interpretations of its relationship to human beings. These contradictions complicate further the paradoxical quality of Colin's dilemma: the joy and pain of love, the paradox of life-in-death and death-in-life, the intertwinnings and complex cause-and-effect relationships among love, life, and art.

These parallels between the two eclogues mark the cyclical structure of the Calender and of the calendar form, and the contradiction between that cyclical structure and the linear structure of human life. Spenser chose to end, as he had begun, with Colin's attempts to
fit his own life to nature’s patterns. Colin’s failure can be seen as tragic, since he must die -- or as comic, since he may achieve spiritual immortality, as described by his "November" elegy, or immortality through his art. This combination of cyclical and linear structures points to the paradox of human life in relation to natural and cosmic patterns.

The position of "December" as the last month in the Calender indicates a paradoxical significance to the month. If December is the last month of the year, representing therefore the last season of man's life, the eclogue is suitably sombre and valedictory in tone. Yet, as E.K. reminded us in his "generall argument," December was also the month of Christ's birth; the reader may also be aware that this is the month of the winter solstice, at which time the number of daylight hours will begin to increase and thus signal the approach of spring. In Two Cantos of Mutabilitie Spenser describes December as follows:

And after him, came next the chill December:
Yet he through merry feasting which he made,
And great bonfires, did not the cold remember;
His Saviours birth his mind so much did glad:
Upon a shaggy-bearded Goat he rode,
The same wherewith Dan Ioue in tender yeares,
They say, was nourisht by th’Idoean mayd;
And in his hand a broad deepe boawle he peares;
Of which, he freely drinks an health to all his peers.    (FQ VII.vii.41)

Other than Colin's reference to Pan as "the God of shepheards all" (7) (seen in the light of E.K.'s identification in his gloss to "Maye" of Pan with Christ, "the very God of all shepheards"), and Colin's mention of Christmas in line 26, there is no intimation of immortality and rebirth in this eclogue. Colin has, apparently, tied himself only to the aspects of December that signify death and barrenness, not to any that indicate a belief in spiritual immortality. Yet there are other hidden voices in the poem that point to the paradox of death and rebirth, of mutability and constancy.

One of the paradoxical themes in the poem is the relationship between healing and destroying, a theme highlighted by Colin's realization of the dual effects of love. The herbs mentioned by 'lin and commented upon by E.K. emphasize this life-death contradiction:

The power of herbs, both which can hurt and ease:

And which be wont tenrage the restless sheepe,

And which be wont to worke eternal sleepe.

But ah vnwise and witlesse Colin cloute,
That kydst the hidden kinds of many a wede:
Yet kydst not ene to cure thy sore hart roote,
Whose ranckling wound as yet does rifelee bleede.
Why liuest thou stil, and yet hast thy deathes wound?
Why dyest thou stil, and yet aliue art founde?

(88-95)

E.K. comments:

Of herbes) That wonderous thinges be wrought
by herbes, aswell appeareth by the common
working of them in our bodies, as also
by the wonderful enchauntments and
sorcerie, that haue bene wrought by
them; insomuch that it is sayde that
Circe a famous sorceresse turned men
into sondry kinds of beastes and
Monsters, and onely by herbes: as the
Poete sayth Dea saeua potentibus
herbis &c.

Like herbes, the landscape and its individual trees and
flowers are capable of both healing and harming Colin
while they sympathize, or contrast with, his state of mind
as he remembers the seasons of his life from youth to old
age, spring to winter.
When Colin describes his past life as analogous to the four seasons of the year, he contradicts that very analogy without realizing it. To describe his youth, Colin begins, "Whilome in youth, when flowrd my joyfull spring" (19), adding an element of spring to his mental landscape even in the midst of winter. He also places his young self in relation to plants and trees that symbolize old age and autumn. The landscape of Colin’s youth is the "wastefull woodes and forest wyde" (23), which are dangerous, but not feared by the young Colin (at least in the mind of the old Colin). Colin mentions his wanderings through a "mazie thickette" (25), of which E.K. writes, "For they be like to a maze whence it is hard to get out agayne." So far, we have not entered a youthful paradise. Colin remembers too that he climbed the oak and shook the walnut tree for nuts. Both oak and walnut trees are associated with age and power, not with youthful springtime (Pliny XXI.ii.3; Ovid, Fasti, IV. 319-400). Since walnuts do not ripen in the spring, but in the fall, Colin is, ironically, describing his younger self in an autumn setting and therefore describing his younger self in relation to, and from the perspective of, his age. By omitting the spring flowers and placing youth in a landscape of mature and aging trees, Colin alters our perspective of youth and ensures that we see the follies, lustfulness, and pride of that age. The older Colin shows us that the younger
Colin, like the briar of the fable in "February," was more interested in rebelling against authority and age than he was in enjoying his youth. This double perspective creates a bitter-sweet memory, a mixture of mockery of the foolishness and pride of youth, and a lament for the loss of past freedom and optimism.

Colin retains another kind of pride, a justifiable pride in the poetic skill he learned during his youth. Yet that pride too was "ill repayde" when love struck Colin, taking him painfully into the burning heat of summer. Colin's description of his spring season, then, twists and turns ironically, its double perspective of youth and age becoming a lament over the ironies of fate. Colin's picture of folly turns into a description of rightful pride, followed by a description of the loss of all skill and pride. Colin thus provides a complex commentary on the ironies of youth and love.

Colin's summer is also described ironically. Although he claims to have been destroyed by the heat of passion, he also tells of the education he received in many trades and arts, all related somehow to the wonders of nature. After claiming that the joys of springtime (which he never described) gave way to horrors in his summer of passion (toadstools and paddocks replacing the honeybee, and the "ghastlie Owle" replacing the "chaunting birds," 72, 71), Colin proceeds to describe the useful education he
received during that time. He learned to make huts for his sheep, cages for nightingales, and traps for fish; to read the "signes of heauen" (83); to read the future by observing the waves and the birds; to use herbs properly, and so on. Despite all this he thinks his summer was "worne away and wasted" (97) because he could not win the woman he loved. Colin seems to be comparing a spring that never was to a false view of his summer. We have learned from him that in his springtime he abused and overpowered nature, but in his summer he learned to understand nature, to use it wisely, and to live in harmony with his surroundings. He does not recognize his own contradictions. To Colin, life is a paradox in itself since he is caught in a living death, unable to heal himself even with the healing herbs he has learned to use.

Despite his education and his success as a singer, Colin believes that he has failed to yield a harvest and has entered the autumn phase of his life barren. Colin ironically mentions the "fragrant flowres" of his garden, but appropriately to tell us that the garden has not yielded the fruit or flowers he had expected. Colin has reaped only weeds, "Cockel for corne, and chaffe for barley bare" (124), and, now in his winter, can hope only for death. Despite his worthy education in the care and understanding of nature, he distorts his relationship to nature. His poetry and his mind seem worthless and barren
because he has failed in love. Colin believes his life does not fit nature’s pattern because in Autumn he has nothing to harvest: yet it could also be said that his mood does fit the time when trees lose their leaves and when fruit grows old.

He has now entered the season of winter, which he describes at the beginning and ending of his recitation; this season does indeed suit his present mood and, we suppose, his age. He is correct, as well, that death must follow a man’s winter, or old age. However, he fails to see the spiritual symbolism of December and the cyclical structure of the year and of human spiritual existence.

One discrepancy between the January eclogue and the December one lies in the fact that the pipe destroyed by Colin in "Ianuarye" is again whole in "December": at this time, though near his death and in the depth of desolation, Colin does not destroy the pipe but hangs it on the tree. One wonders if past and present have become confused, if the calendar has begun and ended with the proper eclogues, if the broken pipe, again whole in "December," will again be destroyed in "Ianuarye" as we cyclically return to that month.

The woodcuts to "Ianuarye" and "December" also show the paradox of Colin’s relationship to the seasons. The January woodcut is indeed gloomy and dark, even though the emblem has indicated that there is hope. December’s
woodcut is bright and sunny, with the sheep feeding contentedly and fresh water available. The sun in the background is low in the sky, but it is impossible to tell if it is setting or rising.

Colin's claim to have failed as a person and a poet is contradicted by Colin's own words: Colin has reaped a harvest, having left behind him the skillful poems of "Januarye," "December," "Aprill," "Iune," and "Nouember." He has also matured enough to appreciate Hobbinoll's friendship, to recognize his own folly as a young lover, to mock his own false pride, and to appreciate the skills he has acquired. Colin has not lost his bitterness at his inability to change his fate nor has he managed to rise above his obsessive self-centredness. He fails to recognize that his achievement as a poet may, after all, bring him immortality. The reader, then, must question Colin's view of his own life and of its relationship to the four seasons.

In contrast with Colin's opinion, we again have the viewpoint of a kindly narrator, who, sympathetic to Colin, calls him "gentle" and places him in a more pleasant setting than Colin has given himself -- "beside a spring" (1) and "... in the shadowe of a bushye brere" (2). The "brere" or 'riar, which we consider a thorny, prickly bush, is in fact a rose bush, signifying the beautiful flowering that can exist even in conjunction with
difficulties (OED "brier, briar, brere" l). The narrator praises Colin's singing, that he learned so well from Tityrus: it would seem that Colin is undervaluing his own success and depreciating his season and setting.

The narrator, however, disappears after line six, not returning to close the eclogue as he did "Ianuarye." Yet his viewpoint remains: the reader realizes that Colin's problems may not be as bad as they seem, and, aware now of the contradictions in the eclogue, reads with greater objectivity. Again, in comparison with the narrator's tone, Colin's tragic situation seems melodramatic, and his attitude towards his life rigid and fatalistic.

Our critic, E.K., is also strongly present in the December eclogue, beginning the eclogue for us, commenting and explaining in his gloss, and ending the poem. In his "December" Argument and Gloss, E.K. plays the role of interpreter, much more than he did in "Ianuarye," explaining the meaning of the whole poem and its parts and paying less attention to the real identities of the characters and to the relationship of the poem to the contemporary world. E.K. clearly says that it is Colin who "proportioneth his life to the foure seasons of the yeare" and not he, E.K., who does so, even adding "he Layth" to indicate that it is Colin who sees his manhood and summer as "consumed with greate heate and excessive drouth caused throughe a Comet or blasinge starre"
(Argument, "December"). E.K. believes that a metaphoric interpretation of comet is called for and sees it as symbolizing "love, which passion is comenly compared to such flames and immoderate heate." Although not questioning Colin's view of his life or the analogy between human and natural life patterns, E.K. seems to be reading Colin's description of nature as a symbolic portrayal of his inner state.

The cosmic and the natural phenomena are also explained in the gloss as symbols of the experiences Colin has undergone. E.K. focuses quite frequently on the position of the planets at certain times of the year. This focus strengthens the analogy of human life to a cosmic pattern, as E.K. indicates by his metaphorical readings of Colin's references to the planets and stars. Of Colin's words that love was then dwelling in the "Lyons house" (57), E.K. writes:

He imagineth simply that Cupid, which is love, had his abode in the whole signe Leo, which is in middest of somer; a pretie allegory, whereof the meaning is, that love in him wrought an extraordinarie heate of lust.

Both the comet, and Venus, are interpreted by E.K. as signifying beauty, the cause of Colin's love.

E.K. also provides symbolic readings of some of Colin's references to the landscape, showing that they are
metaphors of a state of mind or age. E.K., however, sometimes misinterprets metaphors. He calls the "fragrant flowres" of line 109 "sundry studies and laudable partes of learning, wherein how our Poete is seene, be they witnesse which are privie to his study." Colin's words seem to relate those withered flowers more directly to his withered love. E.K. seems closer to the mark when he relates Colin's phrase "hoary frost" (135) to the "hoary heares scattred lyke to a gray frost" on Colin's aged head. E.K. does not seem to notice that there are contradictions in Colin's manner of relating the seasons to the four ages of his life.

Another tendency of E.K.'s is to explain the obvious, while ignoring or perhaps not recognizing the subtle or the difficult. He divides Colin's monologue into sections, each one indicating a season and time of life, although those divisions are obvious to the reader. He gives meanings for simple words, defining "Peres," for example, as "felowes and companions", and repeats his identification of Tityrus as Chaucer, though impatiently adding "as hath bene oft sayd." E.K. unnecessarily explains to us the section of the poem beginning "Where I was wont to seeke the honey Bee" (67):

a fine discription of the chaunge of hys lyfe
and liking; for all things nowe seemed to hym to have altered their kindly course.
As usual, E.K. includes information which does not seem closely related to Spenser's purpose. He gives information which he says is from Livy about the origin of soothsaying from birds, and in relation to the qualities of herbs tells the story of Circe. His identification of line 41 as similar to a line from Virgil (though Spenser very likely received it through Marot, Renwick, Variorum 426), does not seem relevant to an understanding of the eclogue, nor does his quotation from Terence regarding the identification of music with poetry.

E.K., however, is able to end the poem for us by supplying the missing emblem, without which the poem would be incomplete. He writes, "The meaning whereof is

4This information is actually from Cicero, and copied by Spenser from Marot, according to Renwick, Variorum 426.

5 Patrick Cullen has documented several attempts by critics to supply the missing emblem. W.L. Renwick (MLR 14 1922) has proposed that the November emblem was intended for December. J. Hughes has restored the emblem as "Vivitur ingenio, caetera mortis erunt" (Variorum 426). Allan H. Gilbert (MLN 63, 1948) has suggested that the motto at the end of the Calender, Merce non mercede, was intended as the emblem of "December." The accuracy of none of these can be verified (Cullen 97, note 34). Judith M. Kennedy, in her article "The Final Emblem of The Shepheardes Calender," like Gilbert believes that "Merce non mercede" is the emblem of "December." She claims that this emblem is from the viewpoint of Immerito, whom she believes stands for Spenser, and that it speaks for several of the main themes of the Calender, specifically love, poetry, and religion. Kennedy explores the meanings and derivations of the closely related words, "merce" and "mercede": her theory of multiple meanings of this motto, which she says "wittily exploits the multiple senses of these two closely related words, finding in diversity a unity" (98), suits my pluralistic reading of the Calender.
that all thinges perish and come to theyr last end, but
workes of learned wits and monuments of Poetry abide for
ever." The poem ends with a paradox: Colin Cloute has
disappeared from the poem, but the poem itself will last
forever, making the poet immortal. Another irony exists:
if E.K.'s explanation fits the emblem intended for
"December," that emblem does not fit the eclogue itself.
If it does fit the eclogue, it must be that Spenser
intended the reader to see Colin's failure to understand
himself as a poet and as a man. Colin sees his own death
as final and his entire life as a failure. The first part
of E.K.'s explanation would therefore be accurate: "The
meaning wherof is that all thinges perish and come to
theyr last end." Yet there is no indication in Colin's
words that he is aware that his poetry will be immortal;
nor does E.K. refer to this possibility before his gloss
of the missing emblem. The ironical truth that a person
can live on through his art even after his body dies is
still too hopeful to match the mood of the complaining
Colin.

E.K., then, by supplying the missing emblem, has
filled a gap left by Spenser (or perhaps by his
publisher). Yet an unsettling contradiction remains. The
emblem was omitted and E.K.'s words cannot be completely
trusted. If the words of the poet have disappeared, does
that mean that he has died forever as well? Ironically,
the pompous, annoying critic, E.K., has supplied that emblem and helped make possible the immortality of the poet's message. We do not know what has happened to Spenser or to the narrator, or even to Colin Clout—, but E.K., the critic, by bringing the whole Shepheardes Calender to the public and by explaining its significance in relation to contemporary life, has perhaps helped the poem survive.

One may conclude that the three interpretations of the natural landscape presented in the December eclogue differ and are sometimes ambiguous in themselves. Colin, the most subjective and self-centred observer of nature, and a fictional character within the poem, sees nature only as a reflection of himself. In Colin's very words appears another view of nature as something separate and not always in tune with Colin's mood. It is an impression given perhaps either by Colin's unconscious and wiser self, or by the presence of the narrator, or by Spenser the author. Another added irony is achieved by the counterposing of the simultaneous viewpoints of the old Colin and the young Colin. The narrator, in his own words too, sees nature more objectively than does Colin, and, by providing a different impression of Colin and the landscape, alters the reader's impression of nature and of Colin. E.K.'s interpretation, based on a literal reading of Colin's belief that nature mirrors his mood, is that
nature exists solely to symbolize the age or state of mind of the protagonist.

Behind all these voices is that of Spenser. By juxtaposing these different points of view, he causes the reader to question Colin's view and to reconsider the relationship of winter weather and scenery with a wintry state of mind or the wintry state of old age. Colin's January and December eclogues are set, not in winter, but in all four seasons. These exist simultaneously in the poems, because of the altering mental states of Colin and because of the interpenetration of the viewpoints of Colin, the narrator, and E.K.

iv

The third eclogue set in winter, "Februarie," also presents multiple points of view, but, unlike "Ianuarye" and "December," "Februarie" has two speakers engaged in argumentation. Once more Spenser does not indicate his own point of view in any way, but instead offers the reader different perspectives for exploration.

"Februarie" has been often read as a polarized debate, with the worthiest argument that of Thenot, the old man, who, according to some critics, represents one side of a religious controversy, while Cuddie represents another (e.g. Anglicanism as opposed to Catholicism, or Puritanism as opposed to high Anglicanism -- Greenlaw, Higginson, McLane -- see ch. I). Other opinions have also
been offered about the outcome of the debate. There is, however, more than a simple opposition presented in this eclogue. Multiple perceptions and internal contradictions make the poem more than a simple debate between old age and youth. Even the woodcut displays the landscapes of both speakers, as well as the landscape of the fable. Thenot, the old man, is on the left, with his sheep below him, and behind them a sturdy house with a fence around part of it. Cuddie is on the right, his bullocks looking up at him. Behind Cuddie is a woodcutter cutting down a tree, just as the Husbandman of the fable cut down the oak tree.

A crucial element in the poem which adds to the complexity of the eclogue is the position of the February eclogue in Spenser’s Calendar and the paradoxical position of February in the year. February can be considered the last winter month or the first spring month, depending on the calendar used (Cullen 37, note 3). Spenser’s decision to begin his calendar with January makes February the

6 Some critics have found the two arguments of equal weight, with Spenser’s purpose to praise the virtue of moderation or balance (Jones, Cullen). Others believe the outcome of the debate inconclusive (Iser, McCannel, Cornelius, Shore): Shore claims that the "debate provides a framework for the conflict and equilibrium of ideas; it allows the poet to present opposing positions while often leaving his own a matter of doubtful inference or even indifference . . . " (15). Iser, too, believes that neither side is victorious, but that both positions remain ambiguous in order to urge the reader to consider different choices.
second month of the year, and of human life, representing therefore a period of youth. At the same time, February is a winter month, signifying, ironically, both the death of winter and the birth of spring. Because in this month winter and spring are "vying for supremacy," as Cullen points out (126), February is the appropriate month for a debate between an old and a young man.

Spenser is also presenting to the reader different attitudes to winter. Winter may be perceived as a season that is fixed and final, since all people may be said to end their lives in a symbolical winter of old age and death. It may also be regarded as a temporary discomfort while one awaits spring, or continues to live in a mental spring. The choice here may be between a cyclical and a linear view of time, or between two views of the cycle, one beginning and ending in winter, and the other beginning and ending in spring. This points once more to Spenser's favorite paradox of death and rebirth, mutability and constancy. Interestingly, a person may choose to see nature as a mirror of his life, or as a separate entity, and can create a calendar that reflects the choice.

Thenot and Cuddie, the two speakers of "Fehruarie," act out the conflict between youth and age, winter and spring, and between two different views of the winter season. Thenot's age suits the winter weather, while
Cuddie's youth, and his physical and mental state, are uncomfortable with that season. Both characters know that Thenot's old age is analogous to winter and that Cuddie's youth is springlike; nor do they disagree about the unpleasantness of winter and the beauty of spring. The point of contention is the attitude towards the season and towards life (Hoffman 95), and towards the movement of a human being through time. Cuddie cannot accept the cold: he expects it to change and complains while it lasts:

Ah for pittie, wil rancke Winters rage,

These bitter blasts neuer ginne tasswage?

(1-2)

For Cuddie the cycle will move to spring, which is where he belongs at this time. Hence Cuddie's view is optimistic and forward-looking. Thenot, however, has his own spring behind him. His pessimistic view is of a cycle which begins and ends in winter:

Must not the world wend in his commun course
From good to badd, and from badde to worse,
From worse vnto that is worst of all,

And then returne to his former fall? (11-14)

Thenot believes that Cuddie should not complain, and should remember that he will eventually reach his own winter. Cuddie, of course, wants to enjoy his spring while it lasts.

Cuddie and Thenot's perceptions of themselves and
each other are biased by their respective ages. Both recognize their relationships to the season, but while Thenot's approach is fatalistic and inflexible, Cuddie's is optimistic. Thenot can say nothing good about youth, now that he is past it:

For Youngth is a bubble blown vp with breath,
Whose witt is weakenesse, whose wage is death,

(87-88)

Thenot sees in Cuddie a p-ide and lustiness that disgusts him now that he is old. He unjustly accuses Cuddie of laxity in his duties, misinterpreting a love of women and nature as laziness and immorality. To him Cuddie represents the youth he has lost; all his previous seasons are now coloured by the fatalistic outlook of his old age. Thenot's view of the movement of the seasons seems ignorant of time as a cycle or of the possibility of rebirth or transcendence.

Cuddie too sees the analogy between the ages of a human being and the seasons, recognizing Thenot's resemblance to winter ("For Age and Winter accord full nie" (27)), and also the resemblance of Thenot's animals to their aged master (77-84). He sees himself as "foe to frost" (31) and as lusty as his "Bullocke" (71). Cuddie, however, is not fatalistic, and does not believe that a person needs to be tied to his age. For Cuddie the mind can transcend the season. Even in winter, his mind is
springlike. Cuddie also believes that Thenot could be mentally young if he had the love of someone like Phyllis ("Such an one would make thee younge againe," 68). Thenot, of course, in his pessimistic vein, replies, "Thou art a fon, of thy love to boste, / All that is lent to love, wyll be lost" (69-70). The fate of age and death cannot be escaped, according to Thenot, but Cuddie looks forward to the future and to love. He has not yet been old, and has no means of identifying with Thenot. Cuddie is perhaps blind to the linear aspect of time, while Thenot ignores the possibility of cyclical rebirth. Cullen contends that both views are necessary:

If youth wastes itself without the wise restraint of age and experience, life itself is wasted, and age becomes sterile if youth is spent withdrawing from experience and procreation" (38).

The reader, noting that these two points of view are strikingly incompatible, should also become aware that each view is biased and limited. Again the reader may note the fictionalization of the analogy between humans and nature by each speaker, who, because of a bias in favour of his own subjective attitude, may also misinterpret, or fictionalize, the attitude of the opposing speaker.

This tendency to fictionalize is also emphasized by
the use of frames within this eclogue. E.K.'s comments frame the eclogue, as they do every eclogue, pointing to the poem as a fiction in need of interpretation and adding his own "fictional" interpretation. In effect, E.K. is awakening the reader to the fact that the work is a fiction created by an author in order to convey meanings.

The poem itself acts as a frame around the fable, which is a fiction within a fiction. The fiction is further emphasized because the fable is a product of Thenot's bias against the "pride" of youth, and in favour of the "wisdom" of age. The moral of the fable reflects Thenot's bias and does not reflect the balanced argument of the actual quarrel between Thenot and Cuddie (Cullen 41). In the fable, Cuddie's youthfulness becomes pride, haughtiness, and destructiveness, an extreme and distorted view of the Cuddie the reader sees in the poem. Cuddie, though uncharacteristically enthusiastic about hearing the tale, is probably right to reject it as of "little worth" (240), since it does not really apply to the situation and the personalities, or, at best, gives only one side of the issue. To accept the tale would be to accept Thenot's point of view of the truth and to reject the joys of life that Cuddie has before him.

The fable allegorizes the characters of Thenot and Cuddie and in the process distorts them. This distortion is enhanced by their depiction as oak and briar, rather
than human beings. Cullen has called the fable "a parody of the order and balance contained in the framework" (39). In the fable, youth is destroyed because it has destroyed age. As Cullen writes,

Age's reverence for tradition has been perverted by the Oak into superstition, while youth's self-assertion of its fertility has been perverted by the Briar into ambition destroying itself and others (40).

The fable is also different from the frame, since, as Shore and Hoffman have indicated, the fable's setting is non-pastoral and hierarchical (Shore 22, Hoffman 96). The issue in the fable, too, is not so much the youth-age conflict as it is pride or a defiance against authority.

A comparison of the views expressed in "Februarie" with those expressed in "Ianuarye" and "December," a comparison indicated by Spenser's inclusion of the youth-age struggle in all three winter eclogues, makes one question once again the viewpoints of Colin, as well as those of Thenot and Cuddie. The youth-age, winter-spring struggle between Thenot and Cuddie is reminiscent of the struggle within Colin as he compares his old age to his youth, and as he compares himself to the season.

Both Cuddie and the Colin of "Ianuarye" are painfully aware that their ages are not suited to the winter season. Colin, however, is mentally suited to winter because of
his depressed state of mind. He accepts winter and abandons spring even though he is still young: "And yet alas, but now my spring begonne, / And yet alas, yt is already donne" (29-30). Cuddie, on the contrary, is mentally in tune with spring and aware that winter, for him, is temporary. He complains about winter ("But my flowring youth is foe to frost, / My shippe vnwont in stormes to be tost," 31-32), but refuses to let it dominate him. He is happily in love and refuses his "springing youngth to spil" (52), unlike Colin who, unhappily in love, gives up spring for winter.

The young Colin described by his older self in "December" is similar to Cuddie. This Colin was, like Cuddie, joyful, lusty, fearless, and optimistic: "What wreaked I of wintrye ages waste, / Tho deemed I, my spring would ever laste" (29-30). This Colin is similar to the Cuddie envisioned by Thenot. Both are views of youth distorted by the vision of an elder. The older Colin and Thenot accuse the younger men of pride, lust, looseness, and the belief that spring will never end. The older Colin and Thenot are bitter, aware of approaching death, and resigned to the finality of life. They resent and envy youth, and regard the seasons as beginning and ending in winter. Thenot warns Cuddie, "But eft, when ye count you freed from feare, / Comes the breme winter with chamfred browes" (42-43). Likewise Colin equates winter with death,
a fate which cannot be escaped, and says in "December,"
"Winter is come, that blowes the balefull breath, / And
after Winter commeth timely death" (149-150). Thenot and
the older Colin are similar in outlook, as are, to some
extent, Cuddie and the young Colin seen through the older
Colin's eyes in "December." However, the difference
between Colin of "Januarye" and Cuddie of "Februarye"
suggests that perceptions of the relationship between
one's age and the season are not always the same. Both
Colin and Cuddie relate their mental states to their
failure or success in love. Thus, the analogy between
human beings and nature works only if certain conditions
are satisfied.

The struggle between Cuddie and Thenot (spring and
winter, old age and youth), which is allegorized by the
fable, also may be seen as analogous to Colin's inner
struggle between youthful and aged states of mind. Just as
Cuddie and Thenot can never agree with each other nor
understand each other's attitudes, so neither can the
older Colin and the young Colin ever meet. In both
"Februarye" and "December" the old man and the young one
fictionalize their own lives and the attitudes of the
other, while in "Januarye" the melancholy Colin distorts
his life and his relationship to nature. "Februarye,
then, is a fiction which can be compared to other
fictions, while its fable is another fiction comparable to
the situations in all three eclogues. All of these fictions comment upon each other and present different perspectives of life and nature.

The reader must also take into account the opinions of E.K., who in his commentary on "Februarie" shows bias in favour of Thenot and against Cuddie. E.K. puts himself in Thenot's camp in the "Argument" by ignoring any cyclical view of the year and describing February and winter as the "last age" of the year. His interpretation of the poem focuses on Thenot, rather than on both speakers. He describes this eclogue as a "discourse of old age" and accuses Cuddie of scorning Thenot, though he ignores Thenot's scorn for Cuddie. Instead of interpreting the fable objectively and with awareness of the speaker, he voices conventional praise of Thenot's abilities at telling a tale, in a manner that reminds us of Sidney's concept of poetry as a "speaking picture": "so lively and so feelingly, as if the thing were set forth in some Picture before our eyes, more plainly could not appeare," writes E.K.('Argument" to "Februarie"). E.K., because of his own bias, does not notice Thenot's bias nor read with an awareness of multiple viewpoints.

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7 Note that the young Colin described in "December" has "scaled the craggie Oke" (31) and could be compared perhaps to the Briar of the fable who manages to overthrow the Oak. The sacred oak of "Februarie" has been interpreted in many different ways, see Variorum, Cullen, etc.
E.K., strangely for him, denies that there is any historical allegory in this poem, saying that it is "rather morall and generall, then bent to any secrete or particular purpose." However, his own gloss of "The priestes crewe" contradicts this statement by criticizing Catholic rituals which he claims caused the decay of the "auncient Oake." Despite E.K.'s disclaimer, historical allusions seem likely, and many critics have pursued interpretations of the allegorical significance of the fable in relation to religious quarrels of Spenser's time (Greenlaw, Higginson, McLane, et al.).

In his gloss E.K. continues to stress the old age-winter analogy. He admires Thenot's description of winter: "A verye excellent and lively description of Winter, so as may bee indifferently taken, eyther for old Age, or for Winter season" (gloss, 42 ff.). He also seems to enjoy Thenot's description of youth as a bubble, of which he says, "A verye moral and pitthie Allegorie of youth, and the lustes thereof, compared to a wearie wayfaring man" (gloss, 87 ff.) The briar's speech beginning with line 127 he calls "scorneful and very presumptuous" (as indeed it is). Clearly, E.K. favours the view of Thenot and old age, himself scorning youthful pride, naivete, and lustiness.

E.K. makes the usual errors in classical sources: the name Phyllis does not occur in Theocritus (Mustard)
and line 215 is not from Virgil (Mustard). He, interestingly, explains what might be termed reverse metaphors. Given that the characters in the fable are trees, their physical attributes are personified -- compared to human properties. E.K. explains that the naked arms of line 171 mean the bare boughs of the tree and that the hoary locks of line 181 are "withered leaues."

E.K., then, shows us his conservatism -- by his identification with the old, sombre man of the eclogue, by his disparagement of youthful pleasures, and by his criticism of Catholic rituals and superstition. E.K. too sees Cuddie as the Briar, proud, haughty, and egotistical, and Thenot as the Oak, without questioning the metaphors. He reads the fable as Spenser's message, not as a biased message from Thenot, or as a presentation of different viewpoints.

"Februarie," to strengthen its focus on two, alternative points of view, ends with two emblems. Thenot's emblem can be translated as "God, because he is old, creates his own in his own image" (Sowton, ed. of Spenser's Works). Cuddie's is "No old man fears God" (Sowton, ed. of Spenser's Works). If the application of the emblems to the characters is problematical, even more so is E.K.'s lengthy explanation of them. Thenot's emblem seems to indicate that he is the proud and arrogant one,
believing himself favoured by God. E.K. explains that the meaning of the emblem is that God makes those whom he loves like himself and gives them long life. He contradicts this by saying that sometimes evil men live long as well, but that (another twist) a long life may give them a chance to repent. E.K.'s comment on Thenot's emblem ends thus: "So the old man checketh the rashheaded boy, for despysing his gray and frostye heares." Once more E.K. seems to be sympathizing with Thenot.

Cuddie's emblem seems even less applicable to his situation. Instead of supporting Cuddie's optimism as he dismisses the fatalistic, pessimistic view of Thenot, the emblem criticizes old men for not fearing God. E.K. calls this a "byting and bitter prouerbe, spoken indeede at the first in contemp of old age generally." His long gloss includes the following: reasons that men of experience are no longer afraid of God; a reference to a fable of the Ape and the Lion (for an unknown reason altered to make the Fox an Ape, see Friedland and Variorum); an allusion to Erasmus, who believed that the adage meant, not that old men do not fear God, but that they are not superstitious and do not worship false gods or idols; and a puzzling statement, perhaps referring to Erasmus's interpretation, that "olde men are mucho more enclined to such fond fooleries, then younger heades." E.K. seems to be both favouring, and mocking, old men in his explanations of the
emblems, even after siding with Thenot throughout his gloss.

E.K.'s commentary clearly does not support the opinion that multiple viewpoints exist side by side and are of equal weight in the February eclogue. Even when self-contradictory, E.K. does not side with youth: he seems to believe that old men, regardless of their weaknesses, should be respected and obeyed by young men. E.K. does not see the inclusion of balanced perspectives of winter and spring, age and youth in February, but interprets the month only as the last month of winter's reign. He therefore does not clearly see the analogy as it relates to the winter-spring struggle.

Again Spenser has juxtaposed various perceptions of winter and of the transition from winter to spring. The old man cannot see the coming of spring, since he may never see the next spring. The young man is impatient with winter, since he is already mentally living in spring. There is no indication here of a spiritual transcendence of the year's cyclical, or linear, development. The old man, like Colin Cloute in both "Januarye" and "December," is bitter and resigned to his fate. The young man, who is what Colin could have been had he not been embittered by an unrequited love, believes in the cycle, but in a natural sense, not a spiritual one. All the winter speakers, except perhaps the narrator, are
immature in their understanding of the analogy between human beings and nature, and are limited by age, bitterness, or a failure of vision. One may conclude that in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* each character has created an individual calendar. A calendar is, after all, a human attempt to visualize the complex structure of the universe and to understand one's place in it. It is not so strange that each person's calendar would be based on a different perception of time and of the relationship between humans and nature.

There is a connection between the views of linear time and cyclical time. The two concepts exist simultaneously, but not necessarily as opposites. As Stephen Jay Gould writes:

> How, then, can we judge the interaction of time's arrow and time's cycle within each object? I can specify two incorrect approaches: we must not seek one in order to exclude the other . . . ; but neither should we espouse a form of wishy-washy pluralism that melds the end-members into an undefined middle and loses the essence of each vision -- the uniqueness of history, and the immanence of law. Arrows and cycles, after all, are only categories of our invention, devised for clarity of
insight. They do not blend, but dwell together in tension and fruitful interpretation. (Gould 199-200)

Spenser's winter eclogues and indeed the whole *Shepheardes Calender* depict the interaction of the two views of time and of many different attitudes to time and the seasons of the year.
CHAPTER III

"... then will I singe his laye":

THE SPRING ECLOGUES AND THE MAKING OF FICTIONS

Like the winter eclogues, the spring eclogues, here identified as "March," "Aprill," and "Maye," present several voices all expressing different points of view about the relationship between human beings and the pattern of nature. Spring, according to the Kalender of Shepherdes and Spenser's Two Cantos of Mutabilitie is analogous to youth in human beings (Cullen 127 - 133) and, since it is the time of rebirth and fertility, should be a time of rejoicing and loving. Yet many of Spenser's characters are not merry at this time and, for various reasons, are unable to participate in the festivities. Palinode says, "How falles it then, we no merrier bene" ("Maye," 3); in fact, all three eclogues begin with an expression of unhappiness because of an inability to participate in the spring season. While Spenser is not denying that there is an analogy to be drawn between human youth and spring, he is indicating by his juxtaposition of viewpoints that there are internal and external hindrances to a person's ability to enjoy spring, and that an analogy cannot readily be seen because of multiple and shifting perceptions of reality.
The attempts of human beings to find, deny, or understand a relationship between themselves and nature's patterns may lead to the creation of fictions. Like the winter eclogues, the spring eclogues include both obvious and subtle fictions, and, in fact, a feast of stories within stories. Storytelling is such a frequent motif that Spenser seems to be pointing to the creation of, and the borrowing of, fiction as a major theme of the poems. The use of a story in order to explain a facet of reality (or one opinion of it), like Christ's telling of parables, makes a lesson more vivid and comprehensible; softens a message, thus making it more palatable, through the distancing effect of fictionalization; or, like poetry, makes an abstraction concrete and therefore more understandable.

Each "story" has its own voice and can therefore be termed one of the voices of its poem, a voice connected yet separate from its teller. The existence of all these disparate voices produces a fragmented vision of life.¹ It is humans who can envision a harmony in the cosmos and a relationship between microcosm and macrocosm; yet it is also humans who have separated microcosm from macrocosm, religion from nature, spirit from body. This joining and separating are often accomplished through the creation or

¹The Shepheardes Calender depicts "a community of dispersed names and shades" according to Goldberg, Voice Terminal Echo 39.
re-telling of stories.

When myth, fable, and song are used in these eclogues, they appear in juxtaposition with other views of reality and are often undercut by the response of another speaker, the situation or mood of the teller, a failure to understand the meaning, the obvious bias inherent in the telling of the tale, or the presence of another story with contradictory significance. Spenser makes it clear that all these stories are fictions and that their meanings are open to interpretation and often ambiguous. If one is to consider that Spenser the author is behind all the eclogues, manipulating characters and reader, the whole Shepheardes Calender may be said to possess a palinodic structure, in which one opinion is a denial of the previous one (Fogel 106). If each character contradicts the others, and sometimes himself, Spenser then is constantly contradicting himself as he presents different viewpoints and different possibilities.

The fictional images presented by Spenser may at times be called "icons"; yet Spenser, by shifting interpretations continually, does not allow them to become fixed "idols." Spenser, as Kenneth Gross has explained, is an iconoclastic writer, destroying or changing idolatrous images before they can be frozen into lifeless
stone.² Gross writes, in reference to *The Faerie Queene*,

The strenuous play of Spenser's writing

involves more than working out a redemptive

iconography or syncretistic plenitude of

symbolic meanings. Spenser always

multiplies and opposes perspectives in his

poem, always sets one mode of imagination

against another -- not for the sake of

rhetorical display but to keep his ideals

from turning into idols, his tropes into

traps. The poem tries to keep its hieratic

icons from becoming reductive types,

ideologically determined vehicles for

propaganda, or a mere home for private

obsession. Spenser, indeed, comes to us as

a paradox; he is a skeptical visionary, a

demythologizing iconographer. His writing

inevitably develops a highly figured,

wholly nonmimetic surface, as if the

allegorical argument depended on images

with an almost magical power to evade

determinate shape. Or rather, theirs is a

determinacy and a centrality that transcend

²Gross defines idolatry as a "reductive, usurping
identification of man and god, god and image" (37), an
image frozen into stone. Goldberg also applies the "stone"
metaphor to Spenser's work, in *Voice Terminal Echo*. 
the fixed attractions of simple rhetorical patterning, freeing imagination and desire where they might otherwise threaten to bind. (Gross 15-16)

Spenser indeed "multiplies and opposes perspectives" (Gross 15) to prevent his images, or icons, from becoming reductive types. The icon, an "image, figure, or representation" (OED, s.v. "icon," 1) may become an idol that is worshipped for itself. Spenser will not allow his text to become an idol, or a stone, as did Niobe (mentioned in the April lay) who became "an endless monument, an implacable text, wearing itself out and never worn" (Goldberg 53). In Goldberg's terms, the voices are dispersed and remain fragmented:

The text is silent and the voices we "hear" or name accrete language without thereby emerging speaking. The text is, at the very least, an intertext, a play of text against text transferred indiscriminately from voice to voice, formally structured so that its movement fractures the formal markers and the inside is brought outside, the outside turned in . . . .

(Goldberg 54)

Spenser's display of multiple perceptions, paradoxical truths, and fictions within fictions keeps the icons from becoming reductive, while indicating the difficulty of
relating stages of human life to nature’s patterns in any simplistic or final way.

All three of the spring eclogues display icons in danger of becoming idols. Each icon is a story containing other stories and is juxtaposed with yet different stories. Within the poem, as well, the icon shifts, changes, disappears, is assigned different meanings by different characters, or is told from different, sometimes overlapping, points of view. The many stories may also function as mirrors, which are more likely to reflect something about the teller of the tale than about the reality of the situation or the listener, and may also reflect reality backwards or inside out; or they may function as palinodes, rejecting or denying a message given previously by poem or song. Spenser never lets any one story become final or indicative of an absolute truth.

The stories of the spring eclogues come from many different traditions and are told by different speakers. They are sometimes once or twice removed from the original teller or tale. Spenser’s characters borrow stories from classical mythology, from the fabular tradition, and from their colleagues.\(^3\) The subject of Spenser’s use of

\(^3\)The use of mythology to portray ideas or emotions and to convey a moralized significance was not uncommon in Spenser’s day, when readers and writers had available to them dictionaries and mythographies (e.g. Conti, Cartari, Stephanus, et al.) which collected myths from various sources and often explained their moral and psychological significances (Lotspeich, Starnes and Talbert, and Douglas
mythology is a broad one: in a very general sense, Lotspeich's conclusion will suffice:

Classic myth, as it came to Spenser, was "polyseme," rich in the meanings and associations given it by generations of poets and commentators. Much of it was ready-made for his purposes; all of it was plastic and adaptable. In many ways he made it serve his intentions: as poetic ornament for the high style; as a means of expressing a poetic response to nature; as a way of pointing out, through analogies and formal similes, the links of kinship between the people and actions of his created world and those of the world of classical antiquity. It provided him with abundant materials for moral allegory and so became central to the most important avowed purpose of his work. It was a means whereby abstract

Bush discuss sources of Spenser's allusions to mythology, and Wind and Panofsky explore the significances of mythological representations in art). In fact, Starnes and Talbert claim that Spenser (or at least E.K.) borrowed his myths from the dictionaries and mythographers, rather than directly from the classical sources.
ideas became intensely concrete, became persons who walk about his pages as characters in action. It furnished him with a body of symbols that could be used for feelings and intuitions for which no other terms would do. It was a language for his most personal emotions and aspirations. In all these ways it became organic and integral to his poetry, traditional and conventional to be sure, but also living and vital, because it expressed what was vital to him. (Lotspeich 27-8)

In the spring eclogues the mythological characters and tales are in some ways related to the season of the year, to the weather, to the position of the planets, and to the stage of human life analogous to the month.\(^4\) The myths are also related to the states of mind of the characters, either by similarity or by contrast. These myths often contrast ironically with the plights or words of the characters, since the shepherds cannot relate to or understand the significance of the stories ("March"), the morals they teach ("Maye"), or the vision of harmony they

\(^4\) J.M. Richardson's dissertation explores the astrology of *The Shepheardes Calender.*
represent ("Aprill"). Because of the multiplicity of interpretations of the myths referred to in these eclogues, the moral significances so often assigned by the mythographers (Comus, Cartari, Boccaccio) and by the compilers of the dictionaries (Cooper, Stephanus, et al.), are not clearly discerned: that kind of interpretation is only one way of understanding the myths, and a naive one.

The speakers in the eclogues also borrow at times from the fabular tradition (the Fox and the Kid fable, and the story of the Ape and her child in "Maye"), although these fables are usually changed and re-interpreted (Friedland). Some stories are borrowed from other characters (Hobbinol's singing of Co:in's lay and Willye's telling of his father's experience). The speakers frequently use the stories of others in order to understand themselves, or explain to someone else, their stages of human life or their relationships with nature. Often within all these fictions are other stories, or allusions to other stories.

ii

In "March"5 the stories are about Cupid as a

5 Despite critics' claims that the eclogue describes or warns of the dangers of lust (Durr, MacCaffrey), that it is a mock-epic or parody, or a story of false heroics (Hallett Smith, Cullen, Rosenberg, Hyde), or that the characters are "talking at comic cross-purposes" (Cullen 102), "March" is better described as simply a tale of two boys beginning to experience adolescent love pangs. Feelings of lust are not evident in the poem; if there is comedy, it is not from any misunderstanding of each
mythological figure of complex significance. His paradoxical figure is often related to the spring season and the corresponding stage of human life, adolescence, with its initiation into love and lust; this is the stage and the season in which Willye and Thomalin confront the power of Cupid, that is of puberty and love. The two boys tell tales of Cupid from their own experience or from those of others in an attempt to understand the new emotions they are feeling. Spenser is using mythology not only to represent a stage of human life and the awakening of certain physical and emotional desires, but also to show the way human beings use those myths and stories to help them interpret their emotions and experiences.

As Spitzer points out, Willye and Thomalin, though capable of telling stories about Cupid, understand love only "theoretically" (497). These stories are therefore essential aids to their education. Spitzer also believes that "March" shows the transformation of a "purely verbal mythological entity into a living reality" and represents thematically "the coming alive of mythology" (503). The two shepherds are beginning to understand that there is a real meaning behind all the stories about Cupid, one that affects them directly. Cupid is not merely a supernatural force in this eclogue, although Hyde claims him to be so other's stories, but from the depiction of the characters' innocent attempts to understand this stage of life and these inexplicable emotions.
(114), but an internal human impulse that has been made visible and concrete through storytelling.

The two speakers of the eclogue are attempting to interpret this symbol, icon, or myth that has been revealed to them, just as readers of literature and viewers of art may seek an "occult" meaning (see Wind, Panofsky, Gombrich on artistic representations of mythological characters and their symbolic significances); yet the boys find this icon difficult to understand. The search by Thomalin for hidden knowledge and the attempt by Willye to comprehend the knowledge conveyed to him by his father and by Thomalin are thwarted because of the paradoxical nature of love, the presence of multiple voices, and the fact that each tale mirrors the attitudes of both the original teller and the present teller. The figure of Cupid, representing a love both divine and sensuous, both pleasurable and painful\(^6\), does not convey a meaning that can be definitely pinned down. The sleeping child or the harmless boy trapped in a fowling net by Willye's father, imagined or heard about by Willye, is transformed into the dangerous attacker encountered by Thomalin, and the immoral lust described by E.K. The figure of Love represented by Cupid is changeable, depending on one's stage of love and experience, and on

\(^6\)Wind and Panofsky discuss in some detail the paradoxical significances of Cupid.
the viewpoint of the person describing him.

While Willye's stories are of an idealized and controlled mythic figure, whose symbolical imports are safe in iconology's trapped images, Thomalin's stories tell of a real fall from innocence and a painful awakening to experience. Mythology has indeed come alive, as Spitzer claims (503); the interpretations are no longer controlled by the storyteller but are controlling him. Thomalin's icon has become an idol and Thomalin, in rebellion or a desire to know and be equal to his idol, becomes an iconoclast. For him a harsh reality has replaced the idealized visions of reality presented in the imagined pictures related by Willye.

The analogy between spring and adolescence is denied, not only by these different interpretations of nature and myth, but also by the difference between human awakening and nature's awakening in the spring. Nature is an integral part of the cosmic pattern of life. Human beings, however, do not so easily wake up or grow up. The process of nature's awakening is referred to throughout the poem with words connoting awakening and appearing, e.g. "appeareth" (9), "refresht" (10), "peepes out" (11), "cleareth" (12), "vpryst" (18). The awakening of Cupid is also described as the waking up of someone who has been sleeping. For the young men, however, it is more difficult to wake up and they are constantly struggling to
see and to know. References to seeing occur ten times in the eclogue, with versions of the word "see" used six times. There are also many references to knowing or to seeking information: Thomalin says that he "spyde" and "knewe" Cupid; Willye says that he will have a "double eye" to watch over his and Thomalin’s sheep; Thomalin tells Willye that his "seeing will not serue"; Thomalin listens for and seeks Cupid by "peeping" into the thicket; Thomalin finally does see Cupid and shoots at him, but is unable to hit him. That hidden truth sought by the adolescent boys is neither easily revealed to them nor pleasurable. Although they must question the meaning of everything, they may never fully understand their place in the cosmic order because of their limited knowledge. Hoffman’s claim, then, that in the March eclogue "landscape mirrors adolescent qualities of mind" (83) is only true on a superficial level: while "pleasant spring appeareth" (9), human beings must spy, listen, peep, and see in order to relate to their own lives the hidden meanings in the iconography of nature and art. Yet only too often the "seeing will not serue" (43). The transformation that occurs so easily in nature is only achieved through a process of struggle and gradual discovery in human experience.

While Thomalin, Willye, and probably the reader interpret the stories related in "March" as symbolic of
human emotions and stages of growth, E.K. interprets them as moral lessons - warnings of the dangers of lust. In his gloss E.K. calls Flora "a famous harlot," describes the symbolism of Cupid’s appearance in relation to the paradox of love, explains that Thomalin’s wounding in the heel means "lustfull loue," and interprets the emblem, and the whole eclogue as a description of love as "but follye mixt with bitternesse, and sorow sawced with repentaunce." E.K.’s tale, however, is not consistent with those told within the eclogue, nor even with itself. In contradiction to his later comments about the evils of lust, E.K.’s "Argument" states that the characters of "March," "taking occasion of the season, beginne to make purpose of loue and other plesaunce, which to springtime is most agreeable." As well, there is no evidence of lustful behaviour by Thomalin or of dangers encountered by Willye in the text. As Goldberg writes, E.K.’s voice is only another one in the text, and E.K. is in fact rewriting the text (64).

The different stories about Cupid told in "March" have shown the danger that can occur if icons become idols and are either substituted for the real thing, misinterpreted, or held to one rigid interpretation. In Gross’s words,

If the idol is the medium of mythological religion’s sacred identification of man,
god, and nature, Psalm 115 warns that without any purifying alienation between humanity, creation, and divinity, without the continual questioning of inherited images of God, human worship and human work issue only in divisive confrontations of the self with its most reductive images -- mythological self-expression becoming over time an idolatrous self-enslavement.

(Gross 41)

Idolatry without iconoclasm presents a false, simplistic picture to the human being of his own mental state and of his relationship to the natural and the cosmic cycles. Ironic juxtapositions of various points of view and interpretations, and the inclusion of paradoxical or ambiguous readings of myths and stories lead to a fuller version of a complex truth. It is neither possible nor beneficial to enslave oneself to a rigid analogy between human beings and nature's cycles. Willye, Thomalin, and E.K. all interpret Cupid differently; Spenser's Cupid is multifaceted, ambiguous, flexible, a combination of all, and a precise reflection of none. The spring season and the pangs of love represented by Cupid in "March" are never fully understood by the characters in the eclogue, nor is the analogy between adolescence and spring. Understandings and interpretations cannot remain caught in
a net for long, nor are they vulnerable to "pumie" stones. By including several voices, and stories, within the poem, Spenser has prevented the reader from freezing this depiction of the process of interpretation into a fixed monument of meaning.

Cupid himself remains, to be interpreted and used in different ways. Denise Levertov's poem "Eros" suitably describes the Cupid of "March":

The flowerlike
animal perfume
in the god's curly
hair--

don't assume
that like a flower's
his attributes
are there to tempt

you or
direct the moth's
hunger--
simply he is
the temple of himself,

hair and hide
a sacrifice of blood and flowers
on his altar

if any worshipper
kneel or not.

(Levertov, "Eros," The Sorrow Dance)

"Aprill" as well concerns that inter-relationship of
idolatry with iconoclasm. The poetic myth, which includes
and harmonizes interpretations of traditional myths and
historical realities, is denied and disrupted by the
reality described in the framework of the eclogue, as
well as by the ending of the song and the necessary return
to reality.

The "Aprill" eclogue presents to the reader different
worlds and different perceptions of the relationship among
human beings, nature, and cosmos. These worlds,
fragmented, separated from each other, juxtaposed with
each other, are presented by Spenser in such a way as to
emphasize the role of storytelling in creating an ideal
reality to set against actuality. The fact that this ideal
harmony is a created fiction is emphasized by Spenser's
framing of Colin's song with a conversation about a
less-than-ideal world, and by the presence of multiple
voices and multiple interpretations of the stories. Both
the lay composed by Colin and the frame of the eclogue
have within them disruptions and contradictions, and many
voices which function as mirrors within mirrors. Also within the poem is a palinode, for both Colin and Hobbinol deny the perfect vision that they present in the lay. The eclogue, particularly Colin’s song, includes stories within stories, all of which can be interpreted in various ways. All of the stories must be considered, as well, in relation to the speaker and to the creator of that particular fiction. Spenser makes certain that the ideals and icons created by art do not become idols: he does not allow Eliza to reign forever or to remain a perfect goddess in the real world (Gross 15).

In the frame of the eclogue shepherds tell stories about themselves and others which reveal the paradox of the analogy between young men and spring. "Aprill" begins with a simultaneous endorsement and denial of that analogy. Hobbinol and Colin are unhappy: this is inappropriate for a season in which flowers are blooming, but appropriate to the age at which love strikes and causes misery. Indeed, the tears of the lover correspond with the frequent occurrence of showers in April. Thenot says to Hobbinol,

Or bene thine eyes attemprcd to the yeare,
Quenching the gasping furrowes thirst with rayne?
Like April shoure, so stremes the trickling teares
Adowne thy cheeke, to quenche thy thristye payne.

(5-8)
The sad mood continues when Hobbinol tells Thenot the story of Colin's unrequited love for Rosalinde and of his (Hobbinol's) unrequited love for Colin. Therefore, it is clear that the beauty and harmony of the spring season have been disrupted: Colin has broken his pipe and can no longer make music; Hobbinol is weeping. In the closing frame Thenot laments Colin's foolishness and wonders that someone who created such a song could have given up his art because of lust. The telling of Colin's story has effectively disrupted the spring season and severed the relationship between the characters and nature.

However, during this ambiguous season, a song written by Colin and sung by Hobbinol creates a vision of harmony, a picture of an ideal world in which all elements -- human, natural, mythological, historical, pagan, Christian -- are victoriously and joyfully unified. As Louis Montrose has described it:

Spenser's Apriill brilliantly epitomizes the synthetic achievement of the English literary Renaissance that it inaugurates. It fuses Vergilian imperial pastoral, Gospel nativity pastoral, and Arcadian erotic pastoral; eclogue, hymn, and love song. Elizabeth achieves an ideological fusion of classical imperium and Christian reform; Spenser's Elizabethan celebration achieves a poetic fusion of
classical and humanist with medieval and native literary traditions. ("Eliza, Queene," 168).

Yet it is clearly shown in the eclogue that the song is a fictional creation of the poet Colin Cloute. This vision may be one of "possibility" (MacCaffrey 134), of a golden world created by the poet (Sidney, Cullen, MacCaffrey). This vision exists only in art and must end, returning us to "a homely, dejected, and somewhat prosaic world" (Rosenberg 66).

Not only must this vision end, but even within the lay itself it is contradicted and disrupted by other stories. This vision is not a static icon, but a dynamic combination of forces, characters and mythologies not usually found together in one world. These elements are unified in the poem, but the possibility of fragmentation and disruption, which in fact occurs when the poem is over, is ever present.

Within the fiction, or story, of the lay are other stories and fictions which have within them or behind them other stories and fictions, some of which are referred to by E.K. One of the stories is of the creation of the April lay itself. As many critics have recognized, "Aprill" has as one of its major themes the creation of poetry, with Elisa, as daughter of Pan and Syrinx, representing poetry or song itself (Cullen, Johnson, et al.). The April lay tells the story of the process of
poetic creation: the invoking of the muses; the union of divine and earthly, natural and human, mythological and historical through poetry; the elevation of a human being to the level of a goddess; and finally the return to the mundane after the poem ends. By telling of the process, and by making the product a portrait of the process, Spenser (or Colin here) has prevented the freezing of his art into stone, which he cautions against by telling the story of Niobe. He has therefore prevented icon from becoming reductive idol.

The lay also tells of the qualities of Queen Elizabeth and of the possibility of harmony in her reign. Yet this harmony envisioned by poetry is temporary, easily disrupted, and far from factual. The poet has power over his poem, but not over the social and political situation in his world. Montrose, in "Eliza, Queene . . ." claims that "poetic power helps to create and sustain the political power to which it is subservient" (168);7 nevertheless, the poet cannot make an illusory vision reality. Elisa may represent a Queen Elizabeth who has become a goddess -- "O dea certe," as Hobbinol's emblem proclaims (Cain, Yates) -- but the text subtly alludes to

7 Montrose, in "'The perfecte paterne . . .'", writes that "Spenser qualifies a visionary conception of poetry by placing it within the context of his own historical and social existence and by expressing it as the erotic idealization of a power relationship" (42).
realities that undercut the elovation, or suggests hidden paradoxes. The real Elizabeth is not a goddess and even Elisa of the poem returns to earth at the end of the lay.

References to the nymphs, to the Muses, to Parnassus and Helicon, with E.K.'s added information (E.K. is indeed a true storyteller), and the identification of Elisa as the daughter of Pan and Syrinx (with E.K.'s telling of the story of Pan and Syrinx and its historical significance -- Pan is Henry VIII and at times Christ) place Elisa in an idealized setting and give her extraordinary power and divinity. The mythological gods of sun and moon, Phoebus and Cynthia, react and respond to Elisa; therefore, she finds a place in the cosmic order of the planets.

Elisa has indeed become an "icon" (Cain, "Strategy"). Elisa, Cain suggests, is "very much the creation of the poet" (51), an icon which has a "symbolic effect" (51) in the pastoral setting where she is placed. Elizabeth has been elevated by her association, in the poem and in the real life of that time, with the goddess Astraea, the Virgin Mary (Yates), and with both Venus and Diana (Wind 75, Cullen 116, Wells, Strong, Yates). The two emblems of "Aprill" from Virgil's Aeneid are spoken to Venus who is disguised as a nymph of Diana; Elisa then is identified as a goddess who reconciles love with chastity (Cullen 114), and who is simultaneously virgin and bride (Johnson 85).
Yet this elevation of Elizabeth to goddess figure is paradoxical and includes within it a questioning of her deification. According to Hoffman, Spenser's mingling of rustic names for flowers with mythological and Christian vocabulary has made it possible for him to "deify and not deify Elizabeth" (75). The emblems which refer to Venus disguised as a nymph of Diana can be interpreted as a symbol of harmony or as a symbol of deceit and disruption. They may be read optimistically, as praise of Elizabeth's reconciliation of opposites, or pessimistically, as criticism of her possible marriage to Alencon (McLane; Cain, Praise; Iser, "Spenser's Arcadia"). Even if the contradictions are ignored, it must be admitted that Elisa's elevation to icon is halted when the song ends and the listener is brought back to earth.

The appearance of the Three Graces is also paradoxical. E.K. explains their significance, in relation to the importance of giving, receiving, and thanking. L. Staley Johnson discusses the issue of thankfulness as "central both to the ideal pastoral paradise of Elizabethan England and to Spenser's vision of it in 'Aprill'" (86-7). It was believed that this thankfulness should characterize human social relationships and the relationship between human beings and God. However, in "Aprill" there is a "broken triad of giving" (87), for Colin is no longer writing about Elisa, Hobbinol and Colin
are no longer friends, and Rosalinde does not return Colin's love. This fragmentation in the world of "interdependent love" (Johnson 87) in The Shepheardes Calender can only be restored by the ideal presented by Elisa. Yet, as Johnson also points out:

Elizabeth and her harmony are not less real for Colin's silence and exile, but they are less actual. Colin, or any citizen, can break the triadic motion of true liberality by refusing to accept the harmony of Elizabeth and thereby not return again" (87-88).

Other myths referred to in the song, or by E.K. (such as his discussion of the olive as a symbol of peace, using as his example the story of Minerva's naming of Athens), add to the elevation of Elisa to the level of a divinity, yet do so by creating and borrowing fictions. Within those fictions told by E.K. are other fictions, contradictions, and questions as well. For example, concerning the muse Calliope, E.K. admits that there are different interpretations of her significance: some say she is muse of "Poetical Invention," of "Heroicall verse," or of "Rhetorick"; according to Virgil, E.K. writes, she represents:

Action and elocution, both special partes of Rhetorick: bysyde that her name, which (as some construe it) importeth great remembraunce,
conteineth another part. but I hold rather with them, which call her Polymnia or Polhymnia of her good singing. ("Calliope," gloss to "Aprill")

There are many interpretations of this muse, and many interpretations of Elisa.

The many flowers in the April lay display those same paradoxical qualities which characterize Elisa. As critics have pointed out (see Cain, Praise; Variorum 282), the flowers are not all appropriate to the spring season and would not be in bloom at the same time. The flowers, then, are to be taken symbolically (Hoffman, Johnson, Cullen). They may identify Elisa as Queen Elizabeth, suggest her characteristics, and point to her divinity.

Flowers that symbolized Queen Elizabeth often surrounded her in her official portraits (Yates, Strong). She was associated with roses — her union of the white rose of Lancaster with the red rose of York is well-known. Interestingly, roses are also Venus’s flowers. The bay and the olive, which Cullen interprets as symbolic of Elizabeth’s reign of peace and harmony (116-118), are also mentioned in "Aprill." Paradoxically, Elisa is offered flowers associated with young love and sometimes lust: the columbine could be associated with the dove (OED, s.v. "columbine," sb. 1), or its horned nectaries used to symbolize cuckoldry (Gerard ch. 169, "Of Columbine"; OED,
s.v. "columbine," sb. 2); coronations and sops in wine were associated with revelries (OED, s.v. "coronation," 3; s.v. "carnation," 3, and s.v. "sops-in-wine," 1); and pawnace, or pansies, were also called "love-in-idleness" (OED, s.v. "pansy"). The symbolism of these flowers is contradicted, or balanced, however, by flowers with very different associations, such as lilies, which symbolize purity (OED, s.v. "lily," 1), and primroses, which often signify the youth and innocence of spring (OED, s.v. "primrose," 3).

Thomas Cain believes that the contradictory significances of these flowers demonstrate Elizabeth's combination of virginal and loving qualities, of humanness with divinity (Cain, *Praise*, 22-24). Yet the qualities of Elizabeth remain enigmatic: is she Venus, Diana, and Virgin Mary combined, or does one kind of characteristic undercut the others, disturbing the image of a goddess and reminding the reader of her frail and fallible humanity?

The poet, then, will not elevate Elisa too highly. His cautionary words about Niobe, who lost her children and was turned to stone for her pride (E.K., Ovid *Met.*, 6 and Lotspeich 91), reveal his hesitation in claiming divinity for Elisa. According to Goldberg, the reference

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8 A. Kent Hieatt, in "A Spenser to Structure Our Myths," discusses the etymologies of some of the flowers used by Spenser and particularly flowers used as sexual symbols.
to Niobe is a reference to the creation of this poem and
indicates the transformation of praise to elegy. The stone
is "the monument," the work of art, which cancels out the
poet and lays to rest its object, Elisa -- "Elisa at rest,
the poet reduced, the text remains" (53). Goldberg's
opinion that Elisa is petrified by the same process that
elevates her is, however, only one way of understanding
the figure of Elisa, and one that is probably too rigid to
apply to a pluralistic, layered work such as this one by
an author who presents a variety of viewpoints and a
complex structure of interwoven themes. It can reasonably
be said, however, in accordance with Gross's
terminologies, that Elisa is an icon in danger of becoming
an idol. Nevertheless, Spenser's artistry prevents this
icon from becoming an idol by creating Elisa as vital and
moving, unstonelike. Elisa is more alive because of the
questioning of her divinity. Johnson writes,

... Spenser offers the possibility of
harmony to his readers by praising the
queen, but he balances her virtues by
intimating the distractions and sorrows of
human life. In this eclogue, he hints at
the concerns of the entire poem by
juxtaposing scenes that, in their relation
to one another, place the critical burden
on his reader, who must deduce the
liberality, inspiration, wisdom, peace, and virtue of the one world, the barren self-interest and despair of the other. (88) Elizabeth may hold that world together temporarily, but she is herself a human being who is enigmatic and self-contradictory in her uneasy combination of divine and human characteristics.

The song which praises Eliza is even more enigmatic because it is sung by more than one person and because of the presence of many other, overlapping, voices in the eclogue. Colin and Hobbinol speak at the same time, in a sense, since Hobbinol is singing the song written by Colin. Colin, though not physically present in the poem, is spoken about, and is quoted. E.K., too, overlaps with the text, if his gloss is read in relation to the words of the other speakers. Hobbinol not only sings a song created by Colin but tells stories about Colin’s love and his own, while E.K. tells the stories behind the stories, the derivations of myths and flower names, the sources of information. Thenot functions primarily as a questioner, a straight man of sorts, asking and provoking, and occasionally commenting. Only Thenot, of the speakers, is not a storyteller, but is the perfect listener to and encourager of stories.

Another interesting paradox of the April song is the use throughout of the pronoun "I" to signify the narrator.
The repeated use of the personal pronoun keeps the reader aware that the song is a created fiction, whose creator is present in the song. The question of whether the "I" is Colin, Hobbinol, or Spenser adds to the paradox and to the recognition of multiple layers of narration in the poem. As Hoffman writes, "The poet, as both director and actor, involves the reader wholly and, by use of his 'I' voice, creates an Elizabethan masque before our eyes" (100). For Hoffman, the effect of what she terms a strongly manipulative "I" (100), and of a "you" voice as well, involves the audience in the masque. The inclusion of the "I" adds to the awareness that this "icon," Elisa, has been created by the author and can, at any moment, be destroyed by him; it adds to the awareness that the song, and the whole poem, is the creation of a created human being whose identity is enigmatic and multiple. The identity of the "you" person changes throughout the poem, while the "I" represents different speakers simultaneously. At the end, the controlling poet, rather than let his poem end as a fiction, disperses his characters:

Now ryse vp Elisa, decked as thou art,
in royall aray:
And now ye daintie Damsells may depart
echeone her way.
I feare, I haue troubled your troupes to longe:
Let dame Eliza thanke you for her song.
And if you come hether,
When Damsines I gether,
I will part them all you among. (145-153)

Although Colin has succeeded in praising and in elevating his Eliza to divinity, he brings her back to reality at the end of the song. He thanks his characters for serving him, offering them gifts, then reminds us of his own identity and of his talents and limitations. This is perhaps a commentary by Spenser on the creator, Colin, himself, whose egotism is what has, after all, destroyed his artistic ability and his power. It is interesting that Thenot asks, immediately after Hobbinol stops singing, "And was thilk same song of Colins owne making?" (154), as if he cannot believe that the Colin he knows could have composed such a song. Even Colin's assertion of his own identity throughout the poem has become less important than the poem itself; despite his attempts to assert his identity as author and controller of the poem, the poem is sung by another, and its authorship questioned by a listener.

The April eclogue offers not only a comparison of a frame and a song which contradict, yet perhaps comment on, one another, but also the many textures of layered identities. Elisa is goddess of love (Venus) masquerading as a nymph of chastity; Astraea; human being and goddess;
historical personage and fictional character. The speakers of the poem, as well, have different yet merging identities. Colin's song (created by Spenser but created as Colin's song) is sung by Hobbinol and thus tinged by their mingled identities; any idealism is therefore disrupted by the fact that both Colin and Hobbinol are unhappy. The obvious intrusions by multiple narrators point to the fact that the song is fictional and that therefore the golden age of Elisa may not exist. The frame, which is not really separate from the song, and the contradictory elements in both song and frame (stories within stories), in E.K.'s commentary, and in the surrounding poems, "March" and "Maye," disrupt the creation of a golden world by a poet. E.K.'s comments add additional texture to the poem, by his telling of the stories behind the stories, his allusions to sources and to the real people on whom the characters were based, his moral interpretations, and his identifications of obscure words. In "Aprill" E.K.'s comments add to the prevailing theme, that of the power yet limitations of poetry, of the simultaneous possibility and impossibility of a golden world, and of the complex relationship between teller and tale, tale and listener. Behind all these is Spenser, the actual poet, shifting and manipulating the reader's interpretations.

As Goldberg writes of The Shepheardes Calender:
The book offers the illusion of solidity and totality, but, like the statue of Niobe, it wears itself away in its reinscriptions. Its elements do not simply add up to a totality; they add to -- supplanting, supplementing, never resting (55).

Yet what Goldberg reads negatively, may be interpreted as a positive attribute. The icon of Elisa, the icon of the song of April, the icon of "Aprill" is not a fixed idol, since the identities of its own narrators, its messages, its interpretations, its images, are always changing and active. Spenser, the Iconoclast, does not let his art rest in one interpretation or even in one, fixed icon. That harmonious union of humans with nature, art with life, fiction with reality, pagan and classical with Christian, is questionable and questioned by the poem itself -- partly because the poet remains separate from his poem (Colin from his song, Spenser from The Shepheardes Calender): it is only too easy to tell the "dancer from the dance" (W.B. Yeats, "Among School Children").

It may be said then that the focus of the April eclogue is on the storytelling or poem-making itself, its possibilities and its limitations, and the difficulties it presents to a human being who wishes to create harmony in his life and art. E.K. gives one definition of the verb
"to make" as "to rime and versify." E.K. continues,
For in this word making, our olde Englishe
Poetes were wont to comprehend all the skil of
Poetrye, according to the Greeke woorde Ποιησι, to make, whence commeth the name of Poets.
What the poet makes may or may not reflect himself and the world around him; it may attempt to create a better world, or criticize the world the poet lives in. By creating multiple identities, and stories within stories, Spenser has expressed the difficulty of creating harmony, but also the beauty of the attempt.

iv

In the May eclogue as well Spenser emphasizes the creation of fictions and icons while showing his iconoclastic tendencies. The relationship between human beings and nature can therefore not be pinned down. Kenneth Gross's theory is fitting here:

To break an image is, again, a necessarily symbolic act, as much a movement of substitution as of demystification. The violences of the iconoclast may seek to expose the violence or violations hidden under the lie of idolatry; they may help us to recover a difficult power, a revelation, an otherness, an
openness, in the face of blockage, reification, and reduction. But even if iconoclasm avoids simply raising up one idol in the place of the old, the desacralizing act may have to defend itself against becoming a dead ritual of desecration, or an empty iconoclasm based merely on the illusion of freedom. (41)

Spenser, by means of Piers' storytelling, shows the dangers of an icon -- in this case the mirror, which, as an icon of the self, can prove destructive or even fatal (a danger similar to that threatening Colin Cloute in other eclogues). Even the name "Palinode" signifies shifting interpretations: a "palinode" is a recantation, a repudiation, "an ode or song in which the author recants something said in a former poem" (OED, s.v. "palinode"). The mirrors within mirrors, the stories within stories, and the multiple perspectives prevent the solidifying of any one story into an idol.

Each story tells more about the teller than the listener, and is a mirror of the self who holds the mirror, rather than a lesson to the other person. "Who, then, is not caught in the mirror?" asks Goldberg (56), as he theorizes that Piers' story of the Fox and the Kid is a "mirror for Palinode" and even a mirror for Piers, who
becomes the fox of the fable, seducing Palinode with his tale. The eclogue is filled with mirror images which reflect, yet reverse, different accounts of the truth, all accounts told second-hand as stories heard or invented by the teller. Each story may be called a "palinode," since each reverses or repudiates the previous story.

One issue in these stories is the question of whether nature does mirror stages of human life or human moods; another is what the relationship between human beings and nature should be. In the January eclogue Colin states that nature has become a mirror of his plight; in "Maye" Palinode, though he believes in the concord of nature with humans and in the unity of all things, wonders why his mood and his apparel are not suitable for the spring season. Piers, however, believes that such a unity would be false and even evil; he equates participation in spring rites with a lapse into "lustihede and wanton meryment" (42) and a neglect of duty, especially for "pastors."

The disagreement between Piers and Palinode at first hinges, as Cullen believes, on the question of participation in or withdrawal from the seasonal rites. Cullen has theorized that neither speaker of "Maye" is correct, that both sides are limited. It seems true that Piers' rigid religion, especially in consideration of the abuses that he describes, is not an acceptable substitute for the pagan rites of nature celebrated in honour of the
season. Yet the argument is not a clear debate: the two characters often speak at cross purposes, and have very different interpretations of spring rituals and the place of human beings in the natural world. Shore has pointed out that:

if Palinode and Piers do not embody opposing states of being, they do adopt very different perspectives. The result is to establish the effective presence in the poem of two quite different worlds, each requiring for its preservation the values affirmed by its particular beholder. Because each world is governed by different criteria, both coexist with equal authority (32).

The frequent emphasis on the opposition of the two positions has often led to a failure to recognize the blurring of boundaries and shifting of perceptions in the poem.

The attention of critics to the poem as religious satire against either the Catholic or the High Anglican church (Higginson, McLane, Hume, Herford, H. Smith, Palgrave, Greenlaw) and to the question of the one-sidedness or balance of the two positions presented (McLane, Hume, Dixon, Rosenberg, Durr, Palgrave, Jones,
Cullen) has perhaps detracted from an understanding of the complexity of the eclogue and its focus on the act of storytelling. E.K.'s reading of the eclogue as a debate between Catholic and Protestant positions and as a condemnation of Romish practices is only another position presented in the poem, and should be questioned: even E.K., the great moralizer, has a penchant for storytelling and fictionalizing.

The stories told by Piers and Palinode are taken, as are those in "March" and "Maye," from the mythological and fabular traditions. While Palinode finds significances in pagan mythologies, Piers is more comfortable with Christian mythology and with beast fables. Each character's choice of stories relates directly to his interpretation of the myth of the Golden Age and the source from which his view of that world is derived. As Cullen states, Palinode believes that the Golden Age still exists, while Piers sees his world as fallen and the Golden Age long past (Cullen 133). Palinode, with his "carpe diem" philosophy and his favouring of participation in nature rituals, is pagan in his outlook, while Piers follows a moralistic system of Christianity, which stresses the importance of duty and of watchfulness against sinful pleasures. Piers' position has led to a distrust in others, while Palinode still believes in trust and in possible concord. Each has chosen the kind of
traditional story that mirrors his own attitude to a
golden-age tradition and to nature.

As do "March" and "Aprill," "Maye" frequently refers
to mythological deities who symbolize nature's season and
who may also reflect the relationship of the characters to
the season. While the Cupid of "March" was both promise
and threat to the young men, and the Elisa of "Aprill"
presented an idealized picture of harmony between humans
and nature (a harmony disrupted by the moods of the
storytellers and the frame of the poem), the Lady Flora of
"Maye" shows a nature even more distant from humankind
than were the deities of the other spring eclogues (Flora
has been called a "parody" of Elisa of "Aprill," Hamilton
179). The hope of a relationship between nature and
humankind seen in "March" and "Aprill" is unrealized in
"Maye," in which the division between nature and humans is
growing wider.

Unlike the mythological stories told by Palinode, the
fables and references to animals used in Piers' stories
are all for the purpose of conveying moral lessons to the
listener. As in the original beast fables, the beasts
represent humans, or human traits to be guarded against,
in ourselves or in others. A beast fable could only be
invented in a fallen world, a world full of wolves and
foxes, where there is a need for watchfulness and
protection, since the world of the beast fable is one in
which human beings are not in harmony with nature. Still, it cannot be simply said that the world of mythology is one of harmony, for in Palinode's world, and even at times in the mythic world itself, the harmony has been disrupted and a universal sympathy is not always possible.

Palinode's first story is of a festive world in which pagan and Christian, mythological and actual, natural and human, co-exist. Palinode does not find this mythic world inconsistent with Christianity and the role of priests. He believes that these revelries would please even the saints, and are preferable to the world in which he and Piers "sytten as drownd in a dreme" (16). Palinode tells of the Mayday rituals, derived from ancient fertility rites, and despised by the Puritans in Spenser's day, in which young people go to the woods, return with the May bough, then choose a May king and queen (Stubbes, Spicer, Thomas, and Hole describe different versions of these rituals). The May Queen in this eclogue is Lady Flora, who E.K., in his gloss to "March," calls not only goddess of flowers but also "a famous harlot." E.K.'s opinion is similar to that of Piers, and very different from Palinode's. Palinode is describing ancient but continuing activities which signify a close relationship between human beings and the season of the year. This acting out of the season, so reprehensible to the Puritans and to Piers, indeed shows a kinship with the season that
Palinode would like to enjoy.

However, the myths and rituals described by Palinode, like the interpretations of Flora, have contradictory meanings. While these pagan rituals symbolize harmony, fertility, and revelry, they imply a *carpe diem* philosophy, which is based on the finality of death for human beings and hence their dissimilarity with nature. Fertility rituals were also often opportunities for licentious behaviour, rather than celebrations of life. The flowers mentioned by Palinode have double meanings: the hawthorn, the eglantine, and the roses have thorns, as well as flowers; sops in wine are associated with revelry, and not with spiritual life; all flowers are beautiful when they bloom, but are short-lived.

Yet Palinode longs to participate in the May festivities and is painfully aware that he is not part of that world, perhaps because he is a priest (as most critics read the poem), or because he is a shepherd who must watch his flock (Shore 31). Perhaps, too, Palinode cannot join the festivities because he is "of elder wit," (18) as is Piers, and can no longer participate in spring rituals, which symbolize youth. It is not necessarily true that Spenser agrees with Piers that participation in these May activities is immoral, or that "the simple pastoral life of enjoyable ease must then be rejected for the dedicated life where man does not live according to Nature
but seeks escape out of Nature" (Hamilton 175-6). The existence of a golden world and the nature of that world depend very much on the perception and personality of the individual.

Piers interprets the festive rites in a very different manner: he finds they represent not only lust, but also neglect of duty, which is akin to worship of the Devil (43). Piers' Golden Age is a Christian one, and his Pan is symbolic of Christ, rather than the pagan god (54 and 111). Piers tells of a Golden Age of the past, which, in contradiction to his pessimistic philosophy, he says "may againe retorne" (103)). This world, unlike Palinode's which is unreachable only because of his state of mind, profession, and place, is a Christian one, from which Piers is separated by time and the fall of man. Piers' story is a satirical allegory against the abuses of the church and puts much of the blame on human beings themselves. Palinode's world of festive revelry in which joyful humans imitate nature's patterns is so different that neither shepherd can understand the other's attitude. If each speaker is attempting to hold up a mirror of the world and the self to the other, both must fail, for the mirror does no reflect the world that the other perceives.

Even when Piers calls Palinode a "worldes childe" (73), he is reflecting his own beliefs and his own
personality, for he is as much a world’s child as is Palinode. Piers’ stories are of the material world, the abuses in the world, and the need for watchfulness and hard work. The stories are warnings to the speaker rather than to the listener, for they warn of the temptations that the speaker is most subject to -- a desire for revelry and involvement with nature, in the case of Palinode, and criticism of church abuses rather than attention to spiritual life, in the case of Piers.

Piers’ view of humankind is pessimistic and negative. He believes that the golden world was destroyed when "wolves" crept in (127). His reference to the ape who killed her child by embracing him too tightly shows clearly his lack of faith in human beings:

Sike mens follie I cannot compare
Be ter, then to the Apes folish care,
That is so enamoured of her young one,
(And yet God wote, such cause hath she none)
That with her hard hold, and straight embracing,
She stoppeth the breath of her youngling.

(95-100)

Palinode, however, remains optimistic and trustful. He believes that Piers is too serious, finding life too "heavy," and is finding fault where there is none to be found (144). Palinode still believes that "conteck soone by concord mought be ended" (163). Piers, however, claims
that opposites can never be joined, and that falseness persists, as he will exemplify by telling his own version of the fable of the fox and the kid.

Piers' re-interpretation of this beast fable reflects his own disposition and philosophy more than it relates to the weaknesses or needs of Palinode. Palinode is correct when he says of Piers' fable, "Furthest fro the marke, weening it to hit" (307), for the fable seems unrelated to the original issue of participation in spring rituals as opposed to attention to duty. The fable of the fox in sheep's clothing is most obviously about hidden dangers and falseness, i.e., the dangers to the naive person who forgets lessons taught by an elder. This tale may also be read as religious satire, with the fox representing the Roman Catholic, or high Anglican, religion or prelate. The mirror and bell which seduce the kid may represent, on an allegorical level, a narcissistic love of self, and, as well, the trappings of high church ritual. E.K. notes, by such trifles are noted, the reliques and ragges of popish superstition, which put no smal religion in Belles: and Babies .s. Idoles: and glasses .s. Paxes, and such lyke trumperies.

("As belles," Gloss to "Maye")
Piers has changed the argument from one that opposed pagan revelries with duty to one that opposes high Christian rituals with low ones. Somehow, ironically, he has chosen
to argue in favour of distrust and discord.

As Goldberg claims, Piers has held up the glass to himself as well as to Palinode, and has become the tale-telling fox; yet Piers probably considers himself analogous to the kid's mother, as he tries to warn Palinode of hidden dangers. Palinode, like the kid, cannot comprehend the warning in realistic terms, and Palinode, even if he wants to be careful, is not willing to subscribe to a philosophy that represents such a lack of faith in humanity. Piers has exposed his own philosophy as yet another idol to be smashed. The fable then reflects Piers' view of his relationship with Palinode, but shows more than he meant to show. The mother is cynical and negative in her warnings, as is Piers, while the kid, like Palinode, in his naive faith, is more attractive and human than the mother or Piers can ever be.

Palinode, despite his dismissal of the fable, asks to borrow it for Sir John to say in church the next day. One wonders if Palinode, as would befit his name, has recanted and accepted the message of the fable. However, while he may be borrowing the tale for Sir John so that Sir John will improve his sermon ("For well he meanes, but little can say," 311), he may also be borrowing it because it suits Sir John, as a tale which indeed says little. This would be consistent with Palinode's description of Piers' attitude as foolish: "But of all burdens, that a man can
beare, / Moste is, a fooles talke to beare and to heare" (140-141). The meaning here remains ambiguous.

While the speeches and stories of Piers and Palinode serve as mirrors, reflecting more of the teller than of the listener, the two emblems are mirror images of each other, reflecting each other backwards. Palinode's emblem, "for every faithless man lacks faith," is juxtaposed against Piers' question, "for what faith then is there in the faithless?" These emblems, and the relationship between them, are paradoxical. Palinode seems to be critical of those who do not have faith, for they cannot then be trusted themselves, yet he believes in trusting others and in establishing concord. Piers seems to think that a person who cannot be trusted does not have faith, yet he does not trust others. The inversion of faith and faithlessness makes each a mirror image of the other, but the meaning is slippery and the double mirror reflects more than one view of reality. It is also difficult to apply these emblems to Palinode's original dilemma concerning participation in the season's festivities. Because of the juxtaposition of mirrors within mirrors and the refusal by Spenser to allow any one icon to solidify into an idol, a reflection of human life cannot be clearly seen in nature's patterns. Although a desire may still exist to live in harmony with nature and to re-enact the season's coming through rituals and festivities, that
desire is thwarted by the new religion's insistence on duty and by religious controversies between and within churches.

The tales told by both speakers to some extent explain why each teller no longer feels a kinship with nature (for none of the speakers does). Palinode is a lover of storytelling. His description of the seasonal rites is given with pleasure, yet he never attempts to join the rites. He is perhaps a pagan at heart, with no belief in an afterlife and with a *carpe diem* philosophy—but he knows that the union with nature is no longer possible for him. Piers, because of his own distrust of others (in perhaps an obsessive fear of ending up like the kid), his unnatural fear of the accounting Pan will take afterwards (54), and his obsession with the very material objects he derides, is as much a "worldes childe" as is Palinode. His purpose is to warn of evils and to champion distrust. He does not speak of spiritual things, and his perception rests in negatives and in material objects. Both speakers have lost touch with any relationship between themselves and nature, or between themselves and a god, though Palinode is closer to the natural order of life and therefore remains optimistic.

E.K., too, has lost contact with the natural cycles and, because of his tendency to find moral interpretations for every story, cannot establish a relationship with
either the material or the spiritual worlds. He sides with Piers in condemning sensual delights, and also reads the whole poem as an attack on Roman Catholicism. E.K., in addition, relates stories to other stories (Pan, Sardanapalus and the Earl of Devonshire, Atlas, the Lord Hasting), and assigns Christian symbolical interpretations to ancient tales (Pan as Christ and, in the fable, the Kid as a Christian, the dame as Christ, and the Fox as a Papist). His tales and interpretations add complexity, rather than explaining the meaning of the eclogue. Nature, like the god Pan, has become a symbol, one which can be interpreted in different ways.

If the stories told in the eclogue reflect the icons upheld by either speaker, their juxtapositions with other stories and with conflicting arguments prevent their solidification into idols. The bells and mirrors of the fable are the idols of one kind of religion, while Lady Flora and May are idols of another kind of religion. Both can become inflexible idols; neither one is perfect in itself. Spenser, the iconoclast, has mirrored that variety and that shifting of perceptions that occur in our relationships with the icons which represent our beliefs, beliefs which are characterized by a changing of minds, an inability to understand others, a reversed or biased account, and the resulting distance created between human beings and nature. The mirrors within mirrors and the
fictions within fictions presented in the May eclogue succeed in subverting idolatry and perhaps in creating an awareness in the reader of the dangers and benefits, limitations yet riches inherent in storytelling.

The speakers in all three spring eclogues have difficulty seeing a relationship between themselves and nature; yet there may be a kinship with nature that they are unable to realize. Each spring eclogue, and each eclogue of The Shepheardes Calender, ends in the same way. The sun is setting, the sky is growing dark, and it is time to go home:

And stouping Phebus steepes his face:
Yts time to hast vs homeward.

But let vs homeward: for night draweth on,
And twincling starres the daylight hence chase.
("Aprill," 160-1)

And for the deawie night now doth nye,
I hold it best for vs, home to hye.
("Maye," 316-317).

Nature is determining when it is time for the speakers to end the conversation, to put away debate, and to depart, usually together, for a place of comfort and security.

The telling of stories invented by the teller,
borrowed from a friend, or derived from traditional fable, mythology, or religion, not only helps people explain and understand the major questions of life and death and the possibility of a relationship with the patterns of nature, but may also lead to the establishment of beliefs and relationships. Yet in the spring eclogues of The Shepheardes Calender the juxtaposition of many stories with each other shows that the complexity of human life, and the difficulty in understanding one’s place in the pattern of things, makes it impossible to form any one interpretation of the story of humankind.

Nevertheless, the creation and telling of stories is satisfying. Hobbinol says,

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," 33-36)

Colin’s kinship with nature that made it possible for him to tune a song to the waterfall has ended now -- but the song lives on.
"Whether on hylls, or dales, or other where":

CHOICES OF LANDSCAPE

IN "IVNE," "IVLYE," AND "AVGVST"

i

Like the winter and the spring eclogues, the summer eclogues include a variety of viewpoints concerning the relationship of human life to nature's patterns. However, these eclogues emphasize the possibility of choice: people can choose landscapes which suit their moods and can therefore establish relationships with nature which might not have existed in different locations. As Hoffman writes of "Iulye":

Proportioning one’s life to nature or proportioning one’s art to nature means seeing nature’s patterns (high and low places in this case) in a way to suggest a healthy variousness in man’s life choices -- a defiance of neat systems and unequivocal moral dicta (32).

The theme of choice is appropriate to these months--"Iune" and "Iulye" coming at the height of summer and "August" providing a transition between summer and autumn. According to the conventional analogy between human beings

154
and nature's patterns, the summer season is equivalent to maturity in humans, as well as in plants. One may then surmise that the human being of that age will have chosen a suitable location as a permanent home or will have somehow reconciled him or herself to a particular dwelling place. Although that is often the case, these eclogues also deviate from the analogy between human beings and nature by showing that a person may not be fully mature and settled at that age, nor happily ensconced in a familiar, orderly, and harmonious landscape.

The appropriate choice of a location is a relative matter. What Judith Anderson writes of the July eclogue may be applied to all three of these eclogues, and indeed to the whole Shepheardes Calender:

the views expressed . . . are relative, rather than absolute, in value. Further, their attitudes are clearly relative to their situations (locations) (18).

Despite many critical opinions, Spenser does not espouse one view or the other, or choose one landscape as better than the others; neither does he claim that the two, or three, major points of view delivered in an eclogue

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1According to The Kalender of Shepherdes, "Than co[m]eth. Iune & th[n] is the sone hyest i[n] his meridyornall he maye asssende no hyeer in his stacyone his glemarynynge goldene beames rypeethe the corne and than is man xxxvi. he may assende nor more for than hathe nature gyven hym beauty and strength at the full/ and repyd the sedes of perfet understondynge (III, 11).
achieve a balance. Spenser instead shows the reader that there are choices, perhaps some better than others, but that the choice made must be determined by the personality and subjective impression of the chooser.

Pico della Mirandola wrote of free choice in his treatise "On the Dignity of Man":

O supreme generosity of God the father, O highest and most marvelous felicity of man! To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills. . . . On man when he came into life the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of every way of life. Whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit. . . . Who would not admire this our chameleon?

(Pico 225)

Spenser, however, is not quite so optimistic about human possibilities, for he is aware of the many limitations within human beings and the many hindrances placed in their way.

Each of "Iune," "Iulye," and "August" describes several landscapes from which to choose. These landscapes form relationships with each other that are highly paradoxical. A paradox, according to Rosalie Colie, exploits "the fact of relative, or competing, value
systems" (10), and is impelled "beyond its own limitation
to defy its own categories" (11) by "drawing attention to
the limitations it questions and denies" (12). As a
result the paradox "is an oblique criticism of absolute
judgment or absolute convention" (10). In each eclogue the
various descriptions of the landscapes paradoxically both
affirm and deny their suitabilities as dwelling places.

The paradoxes formed by these contrasting landscapes
relate to the cosmic and universal paradoxes that are the
major concerns of the entire Shepheardes Calender--
constancy and mutability, life and death, death and
immortality, art and life, the cycle of time and the arrow
of time. Related to these are the concepts of order and
disorder, which also form a paradoxical, and not
necessarily polarized, relationship to each other:

... the distinction between order and disorder
tends to disappear when the domain of both is
the universe. Perfect chaos has a uniformity
about it that renders it perilously close to
order. Total order and total disorder may prove
to be the same thing. (Feibleman 10)

Attempts to define order, understand it, and create it
have existed for as long as we know. Since concepts
concerning the order of the universe are always changing
with new discoveries, and since different cultures and
religions have different concepts of order, it is
legitimate to claim that ideas of order are relative.

Different kinds of order in nature are perceived, or desired, by different viewers. Paul Weiss writes:

From different perspectives, different things stand out in prominence and other things fall away. One perspective need not be better than another. . . . Depending upon where one starts, one has a distinct way of ordering the entities comprising the world (20).

A person may then select, or design, a landscape which suits his concept of order and his relationship with nature. Two "Christian" views of nature are of nature as the "creation of God" and of nature "as the product of the defection from God" (Arnheim 156). Those holding the former belief will humbly follow a natural pattern which imitates the divine order; those believing in the latter will try to master nature and impose human order "upon the disorderly raw material of the physical world" (Arnheim 156). As Arnheim explains,

Different states of mind require different degrees of order and complexity and, in consequence, suggest different interpretations of nature. If the mind is in need of measure and limpid harmony, it will either conceive of nature as an orderly cosmos -- the way the Pythagoreans or Neoplatonists did -- or abhor it
as the savage foe of reason and safety, as exemplified by Western man's attitude toward mountainous wilderness through the Middle Ages until fairly recently. If, on the contrary, the mind longs for inexhaustible and unpredictable abundance and rejects order as artificial it will either seek refuge in the unfathomable variety of nature or condemn its lawfulness as mechanical. The historian is accustomed to distinguishing these attitudes as the classic and the romantic. (154)

Arnheim classifies four types of landscape design: homogeneous, coordinated, hierarchical, and accidental. In homogeneous order, all parts are the same, with no differentiation among them (Arnheim 159-60). In a coordinated structure, the parts are of equal weight but different from each other (161-2). The hierarchic pattern has a dominant element, to which all other parts are subordinated (162), and the accidental is a pattern which is not disorderly, but in fact highly organized, though irrational: the different parts relate to each other in individual ways, to form an order that consists of "nothing but the individual configuration of the individual parts constituting it" (163-4).

The eclogues discussed here include landscapes of different designs, which suit the preferences of the
inhabitants. "Iune" contrasts the harmonious and classical "coordinated" pattern of Hobbinol's dales with the seemingly disorderly, romantic hills of Colin Clout's landscape. Colin, however, is beginning to coordinate his landscape into a new kind of order. "Iulye" takes place in an hierarchical world, with the two characters arguing about whether the upper or lower level is the better choice. In "August" the order of playful accident, multiplicity, and contrast forms a complex texture, in which all kinds of landscape patterns interact with each other until the eclogue forms a subtly ordered pattern all its own.

The landscapes of "Iune" show a marked contrast with each other in the kind of order each possesses. This is evident even in the woodcut, which contains a variety of landscapes relating to each other in no clear way. The landscape favoured by Hobbinol is extremely orderly, a place of "trimly trodden traces" (27) which seems cultivated and controlled. Heaven and earth are not separate places here: gods and goddesses inhabit the landscape, consortiing with the humans. Nature, humanity, and divinity are in harmony; this landscape is highly coordinated in its parts.

Colin's landscape, however, is wild and uncontrolled: he frequents "wastfull hylls" (50) and untamed woods.
This world is neither man-made nor god-made, but one in which nature is in its lawless and primitive state. Its very disorder, however, gives Colin freedom from the regularity of the other world -- a greater freedom to choose the life and art that best suits him.\textsuperscript{2} Colin's landscape of disorderly order reflects his view that life is changeable and that nature is imperfect and perhaps controllable. He is uncomfortable in Hobbinol's conventional, artificial, static landscape, preferring a world which allows him the freedom to choose and to attempt the transformation of his landscape with his songs.

These contrasting landscapes can also be understood as subjective impressions of the speakers, rather than as literal sites. According to Nancy Jo Hoffman, there are three pastoral worlds described in "Iune," each "a state of mind" (64). Colin struggles with "changing but self-created landscapes" (62), and Hobbinol as well lives in a landscape which is self-selected and, according to Colin, a re-creation, and possibly a fictional one, of the lost paradise. In addition, Hoffman includes as another mental landscape Colin's former, alternative world which he rejected, because of his realization that that world was

\textsuperscript{2}The paradoxes relating to order, including the simultaneous need for order and desire for independence from the restrictions of that order, are discussed by Paul Weiss in his article "Some Paradoxes Relating to Order."
only a "psychological and poetic moment" (64). Perhaps one could add a fourth landscape, the "pleasaunt syte" in which Colin and Hobbinoll are situated at the beginning of the eclogue, for it is not necessarily synonymous with Hobbinoll's paradise of fairies and graces. I would not, however, agree with Hoffman that these landscapes are states of mind, but believe rather that each represents the attitude of the person who chooses it in order to establish a relationship of analogy between himself and nature.

One can label the two value systems presented in "Iune" in many different ways. However, the truth of each landscape description and the suitability of that landscape to its inhabitant are questioned by the other speaker and by the paradoxical language of the descriptions given by both the proponent and the opponent.

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Colie would probably call them the worlds of Being (Hobbinol) and Becoming (Colin), since those are the two aspects she sees united in some of Spenser's other works. Hoffman believes that Colin is a restless wanderer, while Hobbinol has found his contented "garden," and that Colin rejects all three landscapes presented to him (61-64). Cullen finds the opposition to be between sensible man and passionate man, fallen world and unfallen world, arcadian and mantuanesque view of pastoral, ambition and moderation (83-88; 134-5). Durr writes that Hobbinol's world of the tried estate is the one favoured by Spenser and that Colin errs because of his worldly attachment to love (282-4). Berger and others label the two landscapes paradise found and paradise lost. MacCaffrey believes Colin to be in disharmony with nature, and Hobbinol in harmony with his landscape, and Shore calls Hobbinol's world a recreative one that Colin can no longer live in (80-1).
of each site (see Colie 13). The reader cannot actually discern two opposite worlds in these landscapes, or states of mind, and cannot easily identify polarized themes. We must also note that we have only the words of the narrators themselves to tell us of their worlds and their attitudes.

The first place described is Hobbinol's co-ordinated landscape, where both speakers are at present located. Hobbinol verifies this as his landscape by saying: "here the place, whose pleaant syte / From other shades hath weand my wandring mynde" (1-2). This place of harmony, "where Byrds of euey kynde / To the waters fall their tunes attemper right" (7-8), is a place Hobbinol can find "no where else" (5). He asks Colin, "Tell me, what wants me here, to worke delyte" (3), a question whose answer is implied in Colin's final song, or speech. If Colin had remained in Hobbinol's orderly world he would never have had the freedom to influence nature's mood or to create his own kind of order.

Hobbinol's description of this locale focuses on nature: the daisies, bramble bush, birds, and waterfall, the cool shade and the grassy ground. Colin, however, immediately undercuts and questions the nature and perhaps

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Hallett Smith believes that the conflict between the views of Hobbinol and Colin in "Tune" leads to paradox, a paradox exhibited by the differing views of Colin's artistic abilities and by the different moods (174).
the very existence of that locale by saying, "That Paradise hast found, whych Adam lost" (10). Colin confirms, though, that this is Hobbinol's "state," one into which he, Colin, does not fit. It is further described by Colin as a place where the flocks are safe because of the absence of wolves, a place where Hobbinol can freely sing his songs, a world that Colin "can nowhere fynd" (16). The repetition of the word "nowhere" makes one wonder if this ideal paradise is, in fact, "nowhere."

Hobbinol, despite Colin's ironic descriptions of the two landscapes, encourages Colin to leave his hills and come to the dales. Hobbinol describes the two landscapes by means of alternating negative and affirmative statements. By using this technique traditional to the paradox, Hobbinol implies much that is neither stated nor proven about both landscapes. Hobbinol says that Colin's hills do not have harbour, holybush, briar, or "winding witche," (20) implying, but not stating, that these things exist in the dales. He says of the dales that the flocks are fertile and the shepherds rich, implying that the hills do not have those benefits; then, in terms of negatives again, he claims that in the dales there are no night ravens, elvish ghosts, or "gastly owles,"(24) implying that those exist in the hills. It is never confirmed that the world of the hills is as ghastly and barren as implied by Hobbinol's negative description.
Hobbinol describes the world of the dales in affirmative terms, as he had also described his natural surroundings in stanza one. This supernatural world may be the same world in which Hobbinol and Colin are now sitting, transformed by art or perception, with mythological beings replacing objects and forces of nature. The simple dale has become the classical world of Mount Parnassus, or its equivalent, the gentle warbling wind is now heard as the voices of the Muses, the daisies have been transformed into nymps and goddesses, and the birds have become the singing god Pan. The calm, cool "pleasaunt syte" has become a heaven of "pierlesse pleasures" (32). The transformation of the landscape by poetry, a major theme of this eclogue (in the views of Hoffman, Shore, and H. Smith), fits the landscape to Hobbinol's subjective impression and endows it with an imagined or invented order. Hobbinol has included in his impression of the natural world surrounding him a supernatural reality and has described his locale as orderly and paradisical, though the truth behind the description is unknown to the reader.

Hobbinol tries to transform Colin's former landscape in the same way by reminding Colin that even his "wastfull hylls" (50) were once comparable to Mt. Parnassus because of a visit from the Muses who wished to hear Colin's songs. Hobbinol is perhaps encouraging Colin to transform
his woods as he transformed his dales -- through poetry that will bring supernatural, mythological beings into the natural setting and create a harmonious order.

Colin, however, denies Hobbinol's allegations and refuses to create a conventional system of order. His rejection of poetic power seems contradictory to his wish to possess the skill of Tityrus so that he might "learne these woods, to wayle my woe, / And teache the trees, their trickling teares to shedde" (95-6), yet it is not so. Colin does not wish to order landscape, to perceive the relationship between human beings and nature, or to create a poetic landscape in the same way that Hobbinol does. His desire to teach nature to reflect and imitate his state of mind is a very different way of relating to nature -- a romantic way in which he is the central figure, imposing human order on nature (Arnheim 156). His view of nature is very different from that of Hobbinol, who submits himself to the order of nature and the universe as he perceives it, yet does not include himself in his landscape.

Colin, however, wants free choice of landscape design, and the power and freedom to create poetry in an original way. Because his life is not analogous to the summer season, as a result of his unrequited love and his inability to sing, he cannot follow conventional patterns of order. He simultaneously wishes he could follow the
conventions and fears the restrictions they would place upon him. Ironically, Colin's complaint of his loss in "Iune" is delivered in verse that is regularly patterned and designed. His song finds the order that he thinks is lost to him.

The landscapes of Hobbinol and Colin are not opposites: the relationship between them is paradoxical and ambiguous. The "shade of lowly groue" (71) and "these woods" (95) that Colin mentions may be on the hills he inhabits (according to Hobbinol), or in the present location, or elsewhere; Hobbinol's dale may have Mt. Parnassus within it; the pleasant site of the present may or may not be the same as any, or all, of the others, dependent on change of mood, speaker, moment in time, or the speaker's poetic skill.

The relationship between the speakers and nature is also ambiguous and paradoxical: if there is an analogy, it may change or may indeed have been created by poetry. Yet this paradox is consistent with the paradox of mutability and constancy, of time's arrow and time's cycle. Colin adheres to the pattern of mutability and of time's arrow, believing that it is too late to retrieve his lost youth and his lost love. Hobbinol imitates the constancy of the cycle of nature, by perceiving his natural setting as a timeless, harmonious paradise. The concepts of order and disorder become relative and
subjective as these two speakers compare their landscapes and their value systems with no resolution, but with sympathy for each other's choices.

The use of mythology by each speaker is consistent with his attitude towards his own life and the natural world. As in "Maye," each chooses myths that suit his view of the patterns of life and of the place of a human being within cosmic and natural patterns. The view of time held by the speaker (as in "Februarie"), and therefore his response to the issue of mutability versus constancy, as well as his interpretation of the Golden Age (as in "Maye"), are likely to influence strongly his choice of myths and stories used as references. These myths, as discussed in chapter III, can either harmonize human beings with nature or separate them from the natural patterns.

Hobbinol has chosen mythological characters and stories which imitate the cosmic and natural cycles. The "frendly" (25) Faeries are dancing, with Graces and Nymphs, a dance called the "Heydeguy" which, according to E.K., is "a country daunce or rownd" ("a particular kind of hay or dance, in vogue in 16th and early 17th c." OED, s.v. "haydeguy," sb. 4, 2 of "hay"), an intricate, winding dance as indicated by its derivation from the word "hay," "a country dance having a winding or serpentine movement, or being of the nature of a reel" (OED, s.v. "hay," sb. 4,
1). The dance may then be said to imitate both the cyclical and the labyrinthine movements of human beings through life. The Muses are making music, and Pan, "to kisse their christall faces" (30), is piping and dancing. The picture is one of harmony and orderly delight. Hobbinol later mentions Calliope and the other Muses in relation to Colin's singing. Calliope, according to some authorities, is the Muse of "all Poetical Invention, and the firste glorye of the Heroicall verse," (E.K., gloss, "Aprill"). This would indicate that Hobbinol believes that Colin has the talent to make his world harmonious with cosmic and natural cycles, perhaps to aspire beyond the pastoral level, and even to tempt the Muses to leave their world to hear him.\(^5\) Hobbinol is assuming, however, that his system of order is preferable to Colin's seemingly disorderly landscape.

Colin's selections from mythology, unlike Hobbinol's, represent disharmony, or an untraditional, more loosely coordinated, kind of order. Colin feels no connection with the Muses, and denies that he has the ability to attain such heights. His reference to Pan is very different from

\(^5\) The Muses represented not only the Arts but the harmony of the universe. Abraham Fraunce writes in The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Vvychurch (1592) that the eight Muses are "the tunes of those eight Spheres, whereof is made the perfect concert and melodious harmonie, figured by the ninth, called Calliope, a sweet concert, the chiefe and guide of all the Muses" (33-4). (Also see Heninger on the Music of the Spheres.)
Hobbinol's reference: Colin alludes to the contest between Pan and Phoebus, an unbalanced contest, unfairly judged by Midas who was consequently punished (see E.K. and Ovid, Met., 11. 153-79). Colin refers to this myth because he does not believe one should "presume to Parnasse hyll" (70), nor that he should be judged as having such talent. Despite his doubts, Colin's choice gives him the freedom to create new kinds of order and new kinds of relationships with nature.

This conflict between the views of constancy and inconstancy is appropriately placed in the month of June, whose presiding planet is the moon. The moon waxes and wanes, grows fuller and thinner, is inconstant but regular in its changes. Hobbinol can reconcile his vision to the cycles of the moon and to the myths associated with that planet and its goddess. Colin, however, replaces that goddess, Phoebe, with the human Rosalinde, whose inconstancy may persist, and whose future actions are not predictable. For Colin human life is not analogous to nature's patterns; people change, and people die. The existence of their poetry is not complete consolation for the loss of their lives. In the world created by "Iune" the power and the powerlessness of poetry exist paradoxically side by side, as do the order and disorder, constancy and mutability of human and natural patterns.

E.K.'s viewpoint provides another contrast with the
perceptions of landscape held by the other speakers. E.K. draws the reader out of the poetry and its creation of golden worlds (and dismal ones), and into the real world of history and living persons. E.K.'s interpretations of the landscapes and characters of the eclogue are based on the historical and literary sources used by Spenser.

For E.K. the "whole Argument" of "Iune" is the story of Colin's "ill successe in his loue." E.K. has expressed his belief, throughout the Calender, that Colin's romance has as its source a real love affair of Spenser's. Here E.K. also claims that Mænalcaz is "a person vunknowne and secrete" and that the references to places, particularly hills and dales, are references to real places where Spenser was lived. "This is no poetical fiction, but vnfeynedly spoken of the Poete seife." E.K. writes, claiming that the hills are the "Northparts" where Spenser once lived, and the dales the "Southparts," probably Kent. As well, he repeats his assertion that Tityrus represents Chaucer, as "hath bene already sufficiently sayde."

E.K. makes literal some of the mythological reference. Paradise is defined as an actual place, not a creation of mythology or poetry -- "a Garden of pleasure, or place of delights," such as Eden, which was thought to be in Mesopotamis, between the Tygris and Euphrates rivers. He traces the derivation of the words elfs and goblins to the battling houses of Guelfes and Gibelins in
Italy, creating an historical identity for those mythological creatures. He explains other stories, however, as "tales," such as that of Pan’s challenge to Phoebus, and gives a metaphorical meaning for the phrase "Many Graces." Yet many of the poetic and metaphorical meanings are ignored or missed by E.K., and the important themes of the eclogue misconstrued because of E.K.’s interest in the author, rather than in the poem as a poem.

Nevertheless, E.K. has created another place, an alternate "syte" to those of Colin and Hobbinol, one rooted in the here and now, in human relationships through history, in word derivations, and in mythology. By doing so, he is providing a picture of the continuity of life and of literature, and is reminding the reader of the fact that each specific incident or story is part of a whole, never-ending story reaching across time and place. He also reminds the reader that this eclogue is part of a whole work, and that it was written by a human being at a particular time and in a particular place. Paradoxically, while pointing out these realities and usually ignoring metaphoric realities, E.K. reminds the reader that the work is a fictional creation by that real person. If we read E.K.’s gloss as part of The Shepheardes Calender, we move in and out of Hobbinol’s paradise and Colin’s dark woods, in and out of poetic creation and real world, always remembering that this work combines imagined and
real worlds in various paradoxical relationships. E.K.'s landscape is the wide world surrounding the hills and the dales, a landscape with the pattern of "accident" in which unrelated items brought together haphazardly form an irrational yet implicit system of order. These unrelated parts all relate to Spenser's poem, in which past and present co-exist, and in which real, mythological, and fictional mingle freely and, somehow, comfortably.

The shapes of the many landscapes of "Iune" -- the co-ordinated parts of Hobbinol's (both his natural and his artificial) worlds, the disorderly, uncoordinated pattern of Colin's, and the even more chaotic and irrational pattern (which nevertheless relates to Spenser's poem) created by E.K. -- all reflect the moods and mental states of the characters who choose them. Each narrator has chosen a landscape which suits him. Even the ambiguous nature of each landscape is suitable, since its nature is analogous to the paradoxical mind and situation of the character struggling to choose, or create, a system of order, while at the same time possibly trying to escape that order.

"Iulye," like "Iune," shows that the value of a landscape is relative, and that different landscapes suit different people. Appropriately to the time of year and
the ages of the speakers, both speakers have made their choices and are not ready to change their beliefs. In July the sun is high and humans at mature middle age. All the months and eclogues before July show some attempt to find a suitable landscape, or to shape the self to the landscape or vice versa. All the months and eclogues after July include some of the results of those choices (though there is still the possibility of change).

The landscapes that the two speakers of "Iulye" inhabit were chosen to suit their attitudes to society, religion, and nature. Thomalin and Morrell have chosen the same structure of landscape --a hierarchical system of order. This hierarchical pattern is structured so that the landscape "depends directly on one center" and "is keyed to a state of mind that welcomes a centralized organization or upon which the power and glory of such centralization is to be impressed" (Arnheim 163). Thomalin and Morrell have chosen the same type of structure for their world because both of them live in a world that is organized hierarchically and believe in a God who is superior to humans and the earth.

They have, however, chosen to live at different ends of the spectrum of that system. Both locations, hill and plain, are extremely orderly and controlled, as suits a belief in a central focus. The divergence of opinion rests in the problem of choosing one's relationship with
and attitude to the hill -- whether to climb it, or to
worship it humbly from below. The person who climbs it
lives in an eternal present, believing that there can be a
paradise on earth, and that every human being is worthy
even to rise to a higher level. The person who remains
on the humble plains feels unworthy before the central
high point of his landscape. He separates paradise and
the world of God from his own world, and believes that,
because of the fall of Adam and the loss of the Golden
Age, any attempt to move closer to the godhead is an
immoral and presumptuous act. Morrell believes that human
beings are worthy enough to live on the hill and capable
of withstanding the dangers (they possess the "dignity"
Pico writes of), while Thomalin does not wish to risk
dangers of pride, of falling, or of being burned by the
sun. Thomalin remains humble before nature and subservient
to its order, but critical of those who abuse their roles
as caretakers; Morrell does not attempt to change nature
to suit his view of himself, but uses nature to assume a
role that suits him.

The respective locations of the speakers, and their
positions within the landscape, symbolically represent
their philosophies -- their attitudes to their landscape
and the choices they have made. Both speakers' viewpoints
are highly biased and subjective -- as Anderson labels
them, "relative," with neither view proven to be better
than the other (18). One difference between the views of Thomalin and Morrell may lie in their ways of interpreting landscape and life. Anderson believes that Thomalin describes his landscape in physical and literal terms, excluding all meanings which are not moral, while Morrell describes his hills in relation to their symbolic values without consideration of moral content (19). Shore terms Morrell's interpretation as the way of poetry and Thomalin's of reality (45). This kind of reading is, however, paradoxical. Although the difference between the two viewpoints expressed in the eclogue may be that Thomalin interprets landscape literally and Morrell figuratively (see MacCaffrey 129), it may also be claimed that it is Morrell who understands his hill literally, thinking that hills are closer to heaven, while Thomalin symbolically interprets hills and plains, and intends figurative meanings for the myths and stories he tells.

Place is an important element in these paradoxical interpretations: both shepherd and goatherd, in their argument with each other, focus on geographical location, on the nature, history, and symbolical import of place, in order to strengthen their opposing positions. Morrell lists sacred hills, in orde: to extol the virtues of those places -- S. Michel's mount, S. Briget's bowre, the hill of the Muses, Mt. Olive, Mt. Synah. He mentions the hills from which Titan (the sun) rises, and the place where
Phoebe kept Endymion. Geographically, the hills are "nigher heuen" (89), according to Morrell. Morrell, in his focus on geography, is favouring a literal interpretation of high places. Despite this, the reader is aware that Morrell's landscape does indeed function symbolically in reflecting Morrell's frame of mind.

Thomalin, on the other hand, is aware of symbolic import and of its possible divergence from physical appearance. He emphasizes the paradox of appearance vs. symbolic reality, since he believes that the lowest, simplest place may be closer to heaven than the highest one. He takes the protestant position that worshipping a symbol for itself is idolatry; one should love the hills because saints once lived there, but should remember that the saints have left those hills to live in heaven. Thomalin focuses less on physical place, and more on the qualities hills and plains symbolize -- pride or ambition, and humility respectively. His examples of high places are Mt. Ida (with the bad example of Paris) and Rome (with its many abuses of power and wealth). He also compares Moses with Aaron, and mentions others whose pride led to corruption, or whose humility led to goodness. To Thomalin the appearance of a place does not necessarily signify its nature; height and goodness or holiness are not necessarily synonymous, as Morrell seems to think.

The difference between these interpretations of
landscape is not simply the difference between symbolic and literal ways of perceiving. While Morrell can be accused of seeing high places as literally closer to heaven, it is also true that he interprets reality in a symbolic, and highly imaginative, way. He "denies . . . the implications of the fall" (Shore 44) and finds pleasure and beauty more valuable than duty and humility; a paradise on earth is possible in his view, and he lives in one, or at least thinks he does (there is no real evidence that his landscape is a paradise). While Thomalin sees hills and plains as metaphors whose significances may not be entirely related to their appearances, his descriptions are literal and matter-of-fact, and he faces the harsh aspects of reality without colouring them with idealism. Thomalin's way demands duty and a denial of earthly pleasures, while Morrell's is an affirmation of human pleasures and of the possibility of finding paradise during one's lifetime.

It is not true, however, that Morrell believes that humans, and nature, are unfallen. In what seems highly contradictory to his argument, he speaks of Adam's fall "that all the rest did spill. / And sithens shepheardes bene foresayd / from places of delight" (58-70). Despite this, Morrell remains on his hill and urges Thomalin to climb. Morrell has chosen to ignore the fall, unlike Thomalin who believes that sinful human beings must humbly
follow the straight path. Perhaps Morrell sees the fall as fortunate, a lesson in human fallibility but a confirmation that that same free will which led to the fall can also lead to higher human achievements. Morrell, like Colin Cloute in "June" and "August" perhaps, chooses to transcend the natural order of hierarchy and rise above the humble plain. One wonders, however, who is the more democratic, the one who praises the humble position, or the one who believes it possible for the humble man to rise up.

It is clear, then, that contradictions exist within each landscape, as well as between the hill and plain. The woodcut reveals rough edges on the hill, and dips and variations in the plain. Likewise, the descriptions reveal corruption, danger, and moral blindness existing in one or both worlds. While Thomalin is aware of the disorder in his world, and on the hill, and wishes to eradicate it, Morrell is blind to that disorder, just as he chooses to be blind to the results of original sin.

Morrell's view of his hilltop as ideal may, therefore, be false, and Thomalin's humble opinion of his landscape too negative at times. For example, Morrell's location is not perfect, since he needs the melampode and teribinth that grow there to heal his goats when they are

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6 Hoffmann believes that the eclogue is pervaded by the paradox of the "fortunate fall" and the paradoxes of high vs. low, striving vs. humility (32-3).
ill. Thomalin, in the lowly plain, claims that he does not need those herbs for his sheep, who remain healthy, despite the fact that Thomalin's world is a fallen one.

The relevance of the identities of Morrell and Thomalin as goatherd and shepherd respectively is ambiguous as well. E.K.'s claim, "By Gotes in scripture be represented the wicked and reprobate, whose pastour also must needs be such," is based on the traditional belief that goats symbolize evil (Matthew 25, 31-46), and even the Devil, a claim endorsed by many critics of "Iulye" who, like E.K., believe that Spenser favoured Thomalin's position and censured Morrell's (Helen Cooper 376-7). This is not necessarily the case. As Cullen claims, the association may be merely that goats live on hills and sheep live on plains (60-61). Goats may have a positive significance as well, since they are associated with Pan, who at times, even in this eclogue, is equated with Christ. The symbolism of sheep and goats is relative, like the landscapes they live in, depending on the attitude of the narrator and the context of interpretation.

The final emblems In medio virtus and In Summo foelicitas are both true, as even the moralistic E.K. agrees. Although each speaker holds to his position, the two do not disagree when it comes to Algrind, who is associated with both height and lowliness (Shore . . ); his actions are approved of by both Thomalin and Morrell, for
he has managed to combine humility with high position.\footnote{\textit{It is fairly obvious that Algrind is modelled on Grindal, the Archbishop who defied Queen Elizabeth and was sequestered (Herford, in variorum 335-6 and Hoffman 108). It may seem unusual that E.K., who is so fond of informing the reader of the actual models for the characters in the eclogues, would say that Algrind is "the name of a shepheard afforesayde, whose myshap he alludeth to the chaunce, that happened to the Poet AESchylus, that was brayned with a shellfishe." However, Spenser's criticism of Queen Elizabeth in this instance was a highly dangerous act, and clarification of the allusion by E.K. would have been foolish and risky.}}

The story of Algrind, on whose head an eagle dropped a shellfish, is cryptic. The eagle fairly obviously refers to Queen Elizabeth, since eagles often symbolized rulers (Wittkower 42), and since the story fits Grindal's situation, but it may also relate to the eclogue in other ways. The eagle is a solar symbol (Wittkower 17), and hence is appropriately mentioned in July, when the sun is at its highest and hottest, causing dangerous heat according to Thomalin (18 -29). Perhaps the eclogue alludes obliquely to the myth of Icarus. Thomalin is aware of the dangers of flying too close to the sun; Morrell, however, would admire the courage of someone who would make that attempt. The eagle may also represent God: whether one cowers before the highest of authorities, or attempts to draw close to the heights, depends on one's attitude to the hierarchical system. Algrind, usually humble and respectful, defied authority only when he thought a wrong was being done. Therefore, his actions
would be acceptable to both Morrell and Thomalin.

E.K., as usual, takes a moralistic position, condemning goats as wicked, interpreting the word "climb" as ambition, and criticizing the Trojan War, the idolatry of Aaron, and the garments of popes and cardinals "which use such tyrannical colours and pompous paynting." E.K. is obviously on the side of Thomalin and against what he sees as the ambition and pride of hill climbers, popes, etc. He points to Morrell's error of literal interpretation of landscape: "Note the shepheards simpelnessse, which supposeth that from the hylls is nearer waye to heauen." He also identifies "Our Ladyes bowre," one of the places mentioned by Morrell, as "a place of pleasure so called," ignoring the possibility that Our Lady could be the Virgin Mary. He thus makes Morrell's recitation look sensual and earthy, in comparison with Thomalin's moral approach. E.K.'s interpretation of the eclogue is, for the most part, based on a view of the two positions as opposites, one good and one bad. E.K. describes the poem in his "Argument" as "made in the honour and commendation, of good shepheardeus, and to the shame and dispraye of proude and ambitious Pastours. Such as Morrell is here imagined to bee" ("Argument" to "Iulye"). His commentary gives a one-sided and biased reading of the poem.

However, E.K.'s explanation of the emblem is fair and
balanced. The two emblems, translated by E.K. as "vertue dwelleth in the middest" and "perfect felicitye dwelleth in supremacie" are not exactly contradictory. The choice lies between a virtuous life and a happy life. E.K. describes the virtuous life as "safetie without feare, and quiet without danger" and says that "happinesse is placed in the highest degree." Although he is quoting or paraphrasing learned philosophers on both sides, rather than stating his own opinion here, his position, in contradiction to all his other comments, seems to lean towards "happiness." The reader is left with a message conveying the virtues of both. By providing information that is outside the poem, E.K., despite his moralistic intentions, has helped the reader see the intermingling of the two positions presented in "Iulye" and the difficulty in judging either one as better than the other.

The landscapes presented in "Iulye" are not simple opposites, not merely different levels of a hierarchic order. The value of each depends on the way it is perceived by the individual, according to that individual's religious and political predilections and to his position in his world. The landscapes are not opposed, as are those of Hobbinol and Colin in "Iune," because one is less orderly than the other. Both landscapes in "Iulye" are orderly, and belong to the same system of order, yet both have elements of disorder within
them. The speakers recognize, as well, that their landscapes demonstrate both the possibility of paradise, and the distance from paradise. Morrell and Thomalin have chosen the locations that suit them, but both inhabit the same world, a truth which they can realize only when they step back and see the larger landscape that includes both their worlds.

iv

The August eclogue is not merely a "recreative interlude" (Hamilton 180), nor is it "slight in substance" (Durr 284). This eclogue interweaves the themes and patterns presented in other eclogues to create a design that can be related to the paradox of order and disorder. The speakers in "August," however, stand in much looser relationships with each other than do the speakers in "Iune" and "Iulye," and live in a world which is disorderly if compared to an ideal or highly regulated system of order (such as Hobbinol's harmonious world of "Iune" and the hierarchical pattern described in "Iulye"). Neither in themselves nor in their relationships to each other have the speakers found order or coordination in any conventional sense. Yet, mature now in this season which spans both summer and autumn, the speakers are willing to form their own systems of order which are unconventional and which do not rely on coordination, regularity, or
hierarchy. The combined worlds of all the speakers form a landscape design which allows for equality, freedom, and invention -- gifts that come in maturity after the pains and pleasures of youth have been endured.

"August" is structured according to a system of order comparable to the "accidental" structure of landscape design. "Accident" is an irrational kind of order focusing not on the whole but on "the individual configuration of the individual parts constituting it" as is appropriate to a "decentralized community" (Arnheim 164). The theme of the poem matches this structure of disorderly order. Perigot's world is out of order because of the chaos created by love; as he says, his old music has been marred by "a newe mischaunce" (12). However, Perigot is prepared to learn a "newe daunce" (11), a new way of ordering, and to accept the complexity of life, the contradictions, and the ironies (as befits the state of mind of the mature human being, if the ages of human beings are analogous to nature's seasons). Perigot, as well as the other speakers (Willye with his ironic commentaries and Colin with his mixed messages), seems aware that life consists of a variety of experiences, moods, and values. He is willing to accept different kinds of ordering even in his own landscape. He and the other characters of the poem are even prepared to overthrow whatever conventional systems of order may exist to create new systems.
The movement and change in the poem make reading the eclogue a lively, energizing experience. One can read "August" in the same way that Arnheim describes someone walking through a "stroll garden":

In the stroll garden . . . the changing viewpoint of the walking visitor provides a succession of settings and a perspective shifting of relative positions within each setting. Given the infinite variety of arrangements deriving from the moving viewpoint, there is naturally no valid order to many of these aspects in itself. The sequences tend rather to be made up --like much music or film action -- of rigorously composed high spots connected by transitional passages, which are ordered in time rather than in the simultaneity of space. (Arnheim 165-166)

The reader strolls from section to section of the poem, passing through the dynamic discussion between Perigot and Willye about disorder; their planning of the song contest, whose new order will replace an old one; the entrance of Cuddie, whom they call to be judge; the new order of the roundelay, which is an interweaving of two orders, one
ironically undercutting the other and "accidentally" changing the system of order to create a new one; the awarding of the prizes (both win) and the decision to balance even further the action by following the "mery thing" with a "doolefull verse" (this includes a further threat to the old order, in that Cuddie could be crowned "in Colin's stede" (146) if he sings Colin's song well). Cuddie's performance of Colin's song echoes the themes of Colin's other songs, particularly the one in "Iune," but is composed in a new verse form, the sestina, which contrasts sharply in pattern, rhyme, and rhythm with the other verses in the Calender.

This variety amongst the parts of the eclogue and the points of view presented is mirrored by the various kinds of landscape. The landscape in which the herdsman are located is not described, although we know the weather is very hot. Perigot, in his part of the roundelay, describes himself on a hill and "the bouncing Bellibone" walking by in the dale. Yet, instead of forming a hierarchical pattern, the hills and dales playfully interact as Perigot observes the lady "tripping over the dale" (63) and as he is brought low by the wound of love he receives from her eyes. Any order to this landscape is formed by an uneasy combination of hills and dales, with one always threatening to overthrow the other, and with each ironically mocking the other, constantly disordering
any order constructed.

Colin's song is set in the "wastefull woodes" (151) again: he is very clear about his choice of landscape, saying, "I hate the house" (161) and "Here will I dwell apart / In gastfull groue therefore, till my last sleepe / Doe close mine eyes" (169-171). Colin chooses to leave the city and the civilized world in which an order is set for the individual. Paradoxically, his freedom from that order is contradicted by the fact that he encloses himself in the untamed order of nature that he finds there. All the singers, having found disorder in their landscapes, are attempting to create order, while simultaneously defying the whole concept of order by their disruptions of harmony and balance.

The woodcut also shows the variety and complexity of landscape. The three herdsman are on a small hill with their sheep and the mazer, two herdsman performing and one judging. On the right is a wild woods; on the left is a cultivated field, depicting the harvest. Although the hill is the centre of the woodcut, there is no centre to the eclogue: one section, or one landscape, follows another in a seemingly accidental succession.

Though the succession may seem accidental, the theme is consistent throughout -- the effect of love on one's art and on one's relationship to nature. The fact that there are such contrasts and contradictions forms another
theme. Spenser seems to be pointing to the relativity of choices by his contrast, or ironic undercutting, of each landscape and viewpoint with another landscape and/or viewpoint. Cullen writes that "the August eclogue, therefore, is more a series of contrasts than parallels" (111). The roundelay contains within itself a contrast of attitudes, one which ironically mocks and thus exposes the frivolity of the other. This mixture of mock-seriousness and comic mockery contrasts with Colin's woeful sestina which is on the same subject as the roundelay—unrequited love. As Hoffman writes, "the poems themselves represent conflicting possibilities that join paradoxical human emotion to a transitional season of the calendar year" (84).

Both songs, if they do not solve the love problems of the singers, create an order out of the disorder of their situations— the order of art. The roundelay invents a new song and dance, even while it imitates the disorder caused by Perigot's love problems and even as it expresses the different attitudes of the two singers. The prizes, too, mirror the disorder: the mazer portrays violence (bears and tigers fighting, a lamb in the wolf's jaws, the slaying of the wolf) and wantonness (the wild vine and "wanton Yuie" (30)). Yet that mazer is a work of art which has captured disorder into an orderly form. The gift of the lamb offered by Perigot is as well a product of
disorder, since it has lost its mother and since its brother was bought by Colin against Perigot's will.

The roundelay is also an excellent example of disorderly order, since it combines in one poem two different attitudes to the same event. Willye's undersong comments ironically on Perigot's love complaint and changes the mood of Perigot's words by exposing his concept of a "tragic" situation as frivolously naive and foolishly obsessive. However, Willye accomplishes this alteration in a lighthearted, teasing manner, rather than in a sternly critical one, making the song a friendly game, rather than a moralistic rebuke.

Without Willye's mocking lines, Perigot's would sound almost serious and worthy of sympathy:

It fell vpon a holly eue,
When holly fathers wont to shriue:
Sitting vpon a hill so hye,
The while my flocke did feede thereby,
I saw the bouncing Bellibone,
Tripping ouer the dale alone,

(53,55,57,59,61,63)

And though my bale with death I bought,
Yet should thilk lasse not from my thought:
But whether in paynfull loue I pyne,
Or thrie in welth, she shalbe mine.
And if for gracelesse greefe I dye,
Witnessse, shee slewe me with her eye:
And you, that sawe it, simple shepe,
For priefe thereof, my death shall wepe,

(105,107,109,111,113,115,117,119)

Note the difference when the undersong is added:

Itfell vpon a holly eue,
    hey ho holli daye,
When holly fathers wont to shrieue:
    now gynneth this roundelay.
Sitting vpon a hill so hye,
    hey ho the high hyll,
The while my flocke did feede thereby,
    the while the shepheard selfe did spill:
I saw the bouncing Bellibone,
    hey ho Bonibell,
Tripping over the dale alone,
    she can trippe it very well:

(53 - 64)

And though my bale with death I bought,
    hey ho heauie cheere,
Yet should thilk lasse not from my thought:
    so you may buye gold to deare.
But whether in paynefull lone I pyne,
    hey ho pinching payne,
Or thrive in welth, she shalbe mine.
but if thou can her obteine.
And if for gracelesse greefe I dye,
hey ho gracelesse griefe,
Witnessse, shee slewe me with her eye:
let thy follye be the priefe.
And you, that sawe it, simple shepe,
hey ho the fayre flocke,
For griefe thereof, my death shall wepe,
and mone with many a mocke.

(105 - 120)

Willye’s "hey ho" chorus makes Perigot’s words seem much less serious and tragic. Willye points out moral truths (though he does so comically) about Perigot’s "fall" and about the foolishness of his love, mocks the woman and her intentions and virtue ("she can trippe it very well" and "so you may buye gold to deare"), and is playfully cynical about the possibility of Perigot’s ever winning the woman.

The two singers together have created one song and therefore a system of order in which seriousness and mockery, hills and dales are part of the same mood and landscape. They both win the contest, and this shared victory shows that more than one person, or viewpoint, can share a landscape. Yet this poetic order, like The Shepheardes Calender, and like the "Aprill" lay, is framed by reminders that it is a fictional creation which must
end: Willye makes it clear when "now gynneth this roundelay" (56) and "now endeth our roundelay" (124). (Paradoxically again, the poem by Spenser in which this song is found has lasted for many years.) The order of the song is also threatened by Perigot's framing of it by mentioning that the day he succumbed to love was a "holly eue . . . When holly fathers wont to shrieue" (53,55), a reminder of a serious and sacred ritual that is disrupted by secular love problems; Willye in turn disrupts both the sacred and the secular by his "hey ho hollidaye" chorus. These multiple ironies throughout the roundelay threaten the order created by the song, but the song remains as an orderly portrait of disorder.

Likewise, Colin's sestina is an attempt to create order out of disorder, a new kind of order. In this poem Colin is closer to fulfilling his hope expressed in "Iune" of teaching the woods to wail his woe. Colin, in his chosen landscape, the wild woods, again laments the loss of his love and asks nature to participate in his woe. He has, as in "Iune," chosen a landscape that suits his mood, in which he hopes he can create sympathy between himself and nature, the reader, and Rosalinde.

There are several contradictions to an assertion that

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8 MacCaffrey believes that Colin has created perfect harmony in his sestina, even if that success cannot change his situation (131), while Cullen sees the sestina as a reflection of Colin's tragic abnormality (108).
Colin has indeed created a new kind of order. Colin is not present to sing his own song in "August" and therefore may have isolated himself too much from the world. It is also apparent, on careful reading of the sestina, that Colin never claims that nature is, at the time of his song, mirroring his state of mind; he only asks it to do so. Though as art it is solid enough to exist without him, Colin's sestina is less solid in its message because it is based, not on facts, but on suppositions. The poem is a prayer, or a plea, for sympathy, not a statement that this sympathy exists at the present time. Colin asks sympathy of the woods, the birds, the spring, and a certain type of listener or reader, "you that feele no woe" (187). Colin requests that sympathy with words such as "beare witnesse of my woe" (151), "let" (163, 164, 178, 189), "may" (164), and "helpe me" (173).

Another contradiction is that Colin's choice of art form, the sestina, along with his organization of the parts of his poem into a whole and his selection of words, is a very disorderly system of order, even when compared with the disorderly roundelay. In the roundelay Perigot relates his story in chronological order, moving from past, to present, to future. Colin's sestina, on the other hand, jumps about in past, present and future (immediate and distant) in no logical order. Perigot's story, though described with an emotion which is mocked
and contradicted by Willye, is told in a seemingly factual and concrete way -- unlike Colin's which consists of hopes and conditions. The roundelay includes metaphorical allusions (love as arrow, the sun as Phoebus, the moon as Cynthia), which are, however, conventional and melodramatically overplayed, trappings of civilization which Colin has left behind. Colin no longer uses the ornaments of mythological metaphors and literary conventions, but is confronting bare nature in its wild disorder.

Colin has left behind many of the conventions of poetry. Yet his song is ordered by the format of the sestina, with its repetition of the same six words throughout, and by the rhythm. This order, though it follows a strict format, has elements of disorder, or variety, within it: the words can vary, subtly or obviously, in meaning or tone at different times. The word "sound," for example, is part of "resound" in its first three uses, to describe Colin's complaints resounding through the woods. Then "sound" is the shrieking sound of birds, the possible return of Rosalinde safe and "sound," her voice's silver "sound," and the "sound" of Colin's nightly cries, which breaks his listener's "sounder sleepe." Colin, by composing a poem of this kind, has created a new kind of order, rather than mimicking, or echoing, the conventional kinds of order of
his society or of more traditional landscapes.

Despite the uncertainty of the outcome of Colin's situation, the disorder of the woods, the new, flexible structure and ordering principles of the verse, and the decision of Colin to isolate himself from his society in order to satisfy his obsession for wailing his woe, the poem is neither disorderly in form nor wholly pessimistic in content. Colin has exercised his freedom to choose by selecting a landscape that suits him better than the "house" (161) or "bedde, or bowre" (167), and has felt confidence enough in his poetry and himself to voice a plea to be heard and understood. I cannot agree with Cullen that this sestina reflects "the tragedy of human waste and unnatural disorder" (111). Colin has selected his landscape, arranged his argument or complaint, and found appropriate words to communicate with nature and with people. Indeed, his song has affected the listener, Perigot. Colin's statement about Rosalinde's possible return is far from hopeless and bitter: ". . . the daye in woe / I vowed haue to wayst, till safe and sound / She home returne, whose voyces silver sound / To cheerefull songs can chaunge my cherelesse cryes" (179-182).

Neither does there have to be a pessimistic interpretation of Cuddie's recital of Colin's song, in place of Colin himself. It is never intimated that Cuddie is the singer because Colin has been too incapacitated by
love to perform or produce. Colin's song may be sung by others because it is worthy enough to exist without his presence (as was the "Aprill" lay). It may then be inferred that Colin has succeeded in creating an order out of his disorder, a beauty out of his sad situation, in his art if not in his life. What is so painful that it threatens to obliterate poetic talent is what in the end gives the poetic work its power and greatness. Colin's suffering, his withdrawal from the conventional pastoral world and his entrance into a more primitive natural world, give him the freedom to compose with originality and raw, honest emotion (not the "posed" emotion of the roundelay or the artificially ordered harmony of Hobbinol's landscape in "Iune"). Paradoxically, his freedom contains within it an imprisonment caused by his situation and his emotions; his new system of order is rooted in the disorder he is trying to control.

Unlike Perigot and Willye, who are obviously at home in their conventional setting, in which love and song are games played to pass the time while watching the sheep, Colin is no longer comfortable in a setting of conventional order; because he has chosen to create his own order in the disorderly woods, he cannot be present in their landscape. A further reason that his song must be sung by someone like Cuddie, then, may be that Cuddie belongs in that conventional landscape while Colin has
withdrawn from it, or escaped it. Nevertheless, his song enters the pastoral world he has rejected, briefly uniting the different landscapes and points of view. Yet the songs remain separate, commenting on each other but not joining into one truth. 9

E.K.'s voice is heard only briefly in the August eclogue. 10 As usual, E.K. is more interested in Spenser's sources than in his innovations, and is interested in the living models for the characters: "By Perigot who is meant, I can not vprightly say: but if it be, who is supposed, his love deseruetl no lesse preyse: then he giveth her." In addition, E.K. reminds us, indirectly, of the major themes of the poem. The description of the engraved mazer reminds him of Theocritus's Idylls and reminds the reader of the poem's underlying theme of the possibilities and results of artistic creation: "for

9Hoffman writes, "The two songs appear to be separate, but Spenser also indicates his desire that they be read as commentary upon each other, that the two landscapes of country dale and dreary wood and the two singers of holiday and everyday represent one truth, just as the month of August points both to fruition and death" (87). I agree that the songs comment upon each other, but believe that they remain separate and do not form one truth. The positions are relative, different points of view that are all possible and acceptable.

10Because E.K.'s gloss does not mention the sestina, it has been conjectured that the poem was added later (Botting 434, Herford xl, in Variorum 339), though E.K. was certainly aware of the inclusion of the sestina whenever he added his Argument, in which he writes that Cuddie "reciteth also himselfe a proper song, whereof Colin he sayth was Author."
Idyllion in Greke signifieth the shape or picture of any thyng, wherof his booke is ful." E.K. also mentions three of the female figures in the poem (women who both disturb and inspire the men): Cynthia, Venus, and the Harvest Queen. If one adds Rosalinde's name to this list, one has a list of all the female figures mentioned, all now absent from the landscape. Their absence may point to the theme of loss, particularly the loss of the Golden Age, since these absent women, and particularly the Harvest Queen, may be reminiscent of Astraea, who left earth at the end of the Golden Age (Ovid, *Met.* I. 149-150).

E.K.'s discussion of the emblems may be used to support the theory that the positions in the eclogue are relative and a matter of choice. There are three emblems, for Perigot, Willye, and Cuddie respectively: *Vincenti gloria Uicti, Vinto non Uitto*, and *Felice chi puro.* E.K. writes that:

The meaning hereof is very ambiguous: for Perigot by his poesie claming the conquest, and Willye not yeelding, Cuddie the arbiter of theyr cause, and Patron of his own, semeth to chalenge it, as his dew, saying, that he, is happy which can, so abruptly ending but hee meaneth eyther him, that can win the beste, or moderate him selfe being best, and leaue of with the best.

The poems and performances of all three are judged to be
equal -- "peregall to the best" (8), as is suitable in a democratic, "accidental" landscape; the "delectable controuersie," as E.K. calls it, is not really a controversy. Each singer has presented a version of love that comments on the others without denying them; the lighter attitudes soften the harshness of the melancholy ones by contrast or frivolity. All three songs are admired by the listeners; it is not thought necessary to choose one over the others.

The reader walks through the poem as does a visitor through a Japanese stroll garden -- through "a succession of settings and a perspective shifting of relative positions within each setting" (Arnheim 165). Even when the reader stands back after reading the eclogue to see it as a whole, he or she finds it difficult to see the relationships among the parts in any clear, solid way. Arnheim writes that:

gardens meant to convey a sense of permanent solidity tend to be surveyable; whereas a conception of life as constant change expresses itself in gardens that shun vistas and lead us along the crooked path of wonder" (166).

The various landscapes, and various portraits of the relationship between human beings and their landscapes, that are presented in "August" strengthen the view of life as changeable. The matters of choice, and of relativity,
are explored by the characters in their friendly conflicts with each other; nevertheless, all the speakers are winners in a world of choice and change. The paradox is that all this change is part of an orderly constancy: human beings are part of the cycle of nature and the pattern of cosmos, but must choose their paths through the labyrinth of change that lies within the ordered pattern that they cannot see.

The variety of landscapes presented in the June, July, and August eclogues reflect in their different systems of order the relativity of one's choice of landscape and one's vision of the structure of life in nature and in the cosmos. These landscapes, in relation to each other, convey a significance which relates to the paradox of order and disorder and its connection to other great paradoxes. The speakers of "Iune" and "Iulye" argue about the suitability of their respective places and attempt to convince each other to move to the other location. The speakers of "August," however, are content to remain in their own positions while respecting the choices of others. If the landscape of "Iune" is, as a whole, shaped horizontally, with a circle and a straight line representing the two contrasting landscapes on that plane, and "Iulye" is vertical in its hierarchical pattern, the shape of "August" is erratic -- consisting of many shapes and varied patterns.
CHAPTER V

"No such countrye, as there to remaine":

RIISING OUT OF THE FALL -- ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE NATURE

IN THE AUTUMN ECLOGUES

In the September, October, and November eclogues the analogy between human beings and the season is again both affirmed and denied. The herdsmen, who are old and experienced, appropriately make references to nature's and their own decay in the coming winter. The placement of these eclogues near the end of The Shepheardes Calender emphasizes winter and death, rather than natural or spiritual rebirth, and therefore points to the contrast between nature's autumn and that of humans, of which the speakers seem to be aware -- that nature dies only to be reborn, while human death is, in a physical sense, final. While nature's cycle combines constancy and mutability, the human life pattern is controlled by mutability.

Unlike the Colin Cloute of "December," who accepts the fact of his decay and death, some of the characters of the autumn eclogues wish to escape their landscapes in order to transcend (or deny) their ties to nature and to the physical world. They are caught in the paradox of the interwoven concepts of constancy and mutability, between a wish to escape the fixity of one unchanging landscape and a desire to stay in a landscape not subject to mutability.
They would like to escape the aspect of nature that brings death in the winter, and imitate nature's rebirth in the spring.

The methods of escape vary with different speakers, but all suit the autumn season when choice becomes less possible or valuable than it was in the summer, or age of maturity (see Chapter IV), and when people are more skeptical about fictions they hear or tell than they were in their innocent spring seasons (see Chapter III). The complex contradictions of winter (see Chapter II), and the intermingling of fiction and reality, are now better understood, and therefore less easily labelled, by the autumnal characters.

Nevertheless, the methods of escape attempted are related to possibilities of fictionalizing or of making choices, and to a person's attitude to the landscape and the season. In "September" Hobbinol, who has created a fiction for himself in his static landscape, accepts the fact of mutability while living as if constancy prevails, and as if his pastoral location is superior to others. Diggon Davie, on the other hand, dissatisfied with the pastoral landscape, has attempted an escape by travelling to a new location in hopes of improving his situation and realizing his ambitions. In "October" Piers and Cuddie, who are simultaneously contented and dissatisfied with the pastoral landscape, discuss escape from Cuddie's position
by means of poetry, but cannot agree about the kind of poetry Cuddie should write or about whether improvement, or even transcendence, is possible. In "November" escape is attempted both by art and by belief in immortality. The characters do not reject their landscape, but only their bondage to the physical realities of nature and human nature, recognizing both the truth and the fallacies of the analogy between themselves and nature.

The attempts to escape or deny one's ties to nature meet with no better success than do the attempts to prove the analogy or to ignore the fact of mutability. Neither choice of landscape, nor fictionalization, nor the interrelated acts of accepting and denying, can elevate one beyond human limitation and physical death. In "September" Diggon Davie fails in his attempt to escape his landscape by travelling; because he finds a place that is far from superior to the pastoral world, he returns with knowledge of corruption in that external location, and recognition of imperfections in his pastoral home. In "October," despite the discussion concerning poetic escape, Cuddie chooses to remain in his static, pastoral world. In "November" the escape from nature, and from death, is achieved by means of poetry, although the speakers return to earth and their mutable worlds at the end of the song. Paradoxically, spiritual rebirth is both analogous to nature, in its revival of life, and divergent
from the cycle, as the soul transcends spiritually what it cannot escape physically.

The presence of many voices and the multi-layering of the poem add to the complex vision of the analogy, and involve the reader in an experience like that of the characters who are attempting to escape their bondage to nature. The reader’s attempts to escape into the fiction of the poem are thwarted by E.K.’s intrusions, by the commentaries which separate eclogues from each other, and, invisibly, by the presence of Spenser the author. On the other hand, the reader’s attempts to escape the fiction and remain in the real world of Queen Elizabeth’s England or in the world of literary criticism are also thwarted: Spenser catches the reader up in fictions whenever the reader turns to the eclogues again, and whenever E.K. refers to fictions (not to mention fictionalizing some of his interpretations and explanations). Yet neither Spenser, with his inclusion of stories within stories, and fictions surrounded by frames, nor E.K., who reminds the reader that this poem is a work of fiction, lets the reader escape back into the fiction for long. The reader moves back and forth from fiction to real world, from one level to another.
In "September"¹ Diggon and Hobbinol enact in their relationship with each other the paradox of constancy and mutability. Both speakers believe in the analogy. Both are aware of the decay of nature at this time of the year, and recognize the suitability of their ages to that season. Diggon says that his day has turned to night (3-6); Hobbinol complains of being "stiffe" and "stanck" (47), and refers to the blowing of the "Westerne wind" (49). . . / Beating the withered leafe from the tree" (51). Yet there are differences in their attitudes to the season: Diggon seems, at first, to represent a philosophy of mutability, and Hobbinol one of constancy.

Diggon's perspective suits the philosophy of change; he believes that one has choices that can change one's life, and that life itself can change. He, indeed, has been so changed by his experience abroad that he is almost unrecognizable to Hobbinol (2), or even to himself (3-4): "The iolly shepheard that was of yore, / Is nowe nor iollye, nor shepehearde more" (26-27). Hobbinol promotes constancy, contentment, and acceptance, refusing to acknowledge that wolves are present in his world or that

¹ This eclogue has been called "the least interesting and the r st difficult" (Herford, Variorum 351) of the eclogues; "only a tedious, though fluent stream of commonplace complaint . . . " (Palgrave, Variorum 350); and "the darkest eclogue of The Shepheardes Calender" (MacCaffrey 126). However, the eclogue suits, not only the season of the year, but the major themes of the entire Calender, and is not completely pessimistic.
change has any value. He says,

That seeldome chaunge the better brought.
Content who liues with tryed state,
Neede feare no chaunge of frowning fate:
But who will seeke for vndonwne gayne,
Oft liues by losse, and leaues with payne.

(69-73)

However, the positions of the two speakers are not opposites, and are not easily defined or separated;\(^2\) nor is either solely negative or positive.\(^3\) Not only are the points of view ambiguous, but each is inconsistent and self-contradictory. While Hobbinol chooses to remain in a static landscape and is averse to change, he accepts the fact of mutability; while Diggon has rejected constancy

\(^2\)Cullen labels Hobbinol a naive idealist who is blind to evil and danger in his world, and DeNeef suggests that while Hobbinol does not see evil in his world, Diggon cannot see good (22). (I don’t think that Diggon is wild-eyed and impractical, as Cullen proposes.)

\(^3\)Early critics of this century, and some later ones, for the most part believed that Diggon Davie was Spenser’s mouthpiece (Cory, Higginson, Renwick, Hamilton) in his criticism of either the Catholic (E.K., Higginson), or the Anglican clergy (Herford, Higginson). To others it is Hobbinol’s "philosophy of moderation" (Jones) that represents Spenser’s view (Jones, Durr). Cullen, of course, emphasizes the limitations of both viewpoints, Hobbinol’s naive idealism and Diggon’s impractical, but austere, perspective: "The September eclogue, in fact, provides us with the most direct confrontation of a legitimate form of the Arcadian pastoral ethic, Hobbinol’s, with a legitimate form of the Mantuanesque austere and wintry ethic, Diggon’s, and in so doing this eclogue, perhaps more than any other, interprets for us the dual limitation and strength of these two contending forms of conventional pastoral wisdom" (68).
for change, he wishes to fight the negative changes that have occurred in the pastoral world and to restore its constancy. Hobbinol's view of nature is not so much that nature is unfallen, as that unpleasant realities should be ignored and that humans must accept their bondage to physical reality. Diggon's view is not so much that nature is fallen as that human corruption has disrupted the ideal life and that humans should attempt to re-establish that ideal. Diggon may in fact be the one who has the greater belief in an ideal landscape and an ideal world, and the one who is more optimistic, since he believes in mutability.

Hobbinol, the accepting and lazy proponent of contentment and "the tried state" (70), who says that "seeldom change the better brought" (69), accepts control by fortune and is therefore not likely to be a believer in free will. He prefers to ignore evil, and to accept the superficial appearances of things, without taking action against possible threats. Yet this same Hobbinol, so firmly claiming his negative interpretation of change, seems optimistic that "fayrer Fortune" will "shewe forth her head" (257) for Diggon. Paradoxically, Hobbinol accepts change, even though he has chosen a static landscape. He himself changes on occasion: although Hobbinol first asks for a clearer explanation of what Diggon found abroad ("Diggon, I pray thee speake not so
dirke. / Such myster saying me seemeth to mirke" (102-3)),
he is quick to change his mind when he hears more of the
abuses Diggon discovered:

    Nowe Dig gon, I see thou speakest to plaine:
    Better it were, a little to fayne,
    And cleanly couer, that cannot be cured.
    Such il, as is forced, mought nedes be endured.

    (136-139)

Although Hobbinol has tied his life to nature, and to
the straight line of a human's physical life in the world,
without any vision of spiritual or symbolical
interpretations (unlike Diggon who has begun to see
alternative interpretations for the words "poverty" and
"plenty"), the intimation that he foresees changes in his
fixed landscape indicates some belief in mutability.

Hobbinol, then, judges by appearances, or by what he
wishes to be true, while Diggon seeks the evils hidden
beneath the surface. (There are some similarities here to
the "Iulye" debate.) The theme of falseness pervades the
eclogue, and is emphasized by the animal imagery
throughout (Diggon refers to various kinds of people as
dogs, wolves, and bulls) and by the story of Roffy and the
wolf. The fable, which is an integral part of the eclogue
(see Friedland and H. Smith), emphasizes the importance of
watchfulness in a world where evil can take on so many
different disguises. The wolf disguises itself as a
sheep, as the dog, and as Roffy himself, but is finally caught because of Roffy's watchfulness.

The use of a fable, of a fiction within a fiction, builds another layer into the poem. The fable is meant to relate to the reality of the fictional world in which the two speakers live, but, like the fables in "Februarye" and "Maye," conveys a subjective reality as well, telling as much about the speaker as it does about the situation. This fable reflects Diggon's view of a corrupt world, in which everyone must be always watchful. This is not the world that Hobbinol chooses to see.

Hobbinol disagrees with Diggon's statement about the need for constant watchfulness:

Ah Diggon, thilke same rule were too straight,
All the cold season to wach and waite.
We bene of fleshe, men as other bee,
Why should we be bound to such miseree?

(236 - 239)

He refuses to heed the moral of the fable, even if he is partially convinced that there are beasts lurking in his pastoral world. Yet his belief in "chaungeable rest" (240) may be after all what rescues Diggon from his misery, by providing him with solace and comfort for at least a time. The phrase "chaungeable rest" expresses the major paradox of "September," of the whole Shepheardes Calender, and of the relationship of human beings to
nature. There is a constancy to the mutability of nature's pattern which Hobbinol may be aware of, even while blind to the realities of the temporal world. Diggon, caught in the world of change, perhaps does not recognize the difference between constancy and stasis, while Hobbinol does not realize that change can be progressive and positive. "Rest" means both relaxation and stasis; "chaungeable" may mean that the rest itself is a change, that it can be changed, or that it brings change. Rest and change, constancy and mutability, are necessary parts of each other, like the order and disorder discussed in Chapter IV. Both Hobbinol and Diggon are changing as they grow older, but according to the same pattern which human beings have always followed. They cannot escape the similarities and differences between their lives and nature's pattern by ignoring unpleasant realities, by moving away from a pastoral world of nature, or by fighting against the realities of their world.

The reader, as well, cannot escape the paradoxical patterns of Spenser's work. He or she is reminded again that the whole work is a fiction by E.K.'s references to author, sources, and significances. E.K. interprets the eclogue as a satire against "Popish prelates" ("Argument"), against the religious corruption of the
time, and against the abuses of the Catholic Church. 4 Although there is obvious satire against religious practices in the eclogue, E.K. sees only that aspect of a complex poem; he delivers moral messages to the reader and conveys his own beliefs, rather than interpreting the text as it exists.

He also forces the reader to consider the external world by reading the eclogue as biographical. Diggon Davie is someone who spoke in the dialect used in the eclogue, "who being very freend to the Author hereof, had bene long in forraire countryes, and there seene many disorders, which he here recounteth to Hobbinoll" (Gloss); Colin Cloute is "the Authour selfe"; and Hobbinol is Gabriel Harvey (whom E.K. praises highly). 5 E.K. also provides aids by which the reader can more easily interpret the poem. He explains the references to wolves (and the Saxon king), and to Kent, and gives the meanings of some of the unusual words (though by no means all of

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4 Some critics have hypothesized that Spenser was criticizing Anglican abuses, rather than Catholic ones. Higginson believed the Calender was the Puritan's criticism of the high Anglican church, McLane wrote that although E.K. thought all the satire was directed against the Catholic Church, Spenser and E.K. were not always in agreement (121), and Greenlaw ("The Shepheardes Calender") thought that Spenser was sometimes criticizing the pride and the abuses of the Anglican church.

5 Perhaps E.K. is Gabriel Harvey, as previously proposed by Welpy (see Variorum 650), and recently by S.K. Heninger in "The Typographical Layout of Spenser's Shepheardes Calender."

them). He locates the source of the emblem in Ovid, but writes that "our Diggon vseth it to other purpose, as who that by tryall of many wayes had founde the worst, and through greate plentye was fallen into great penurie" ("September," Gloss on "Embleme"). E.K. again draws the reader out of the text and toward his contemporary world and the literary world, serving as go-between between reader and author, text and real world. He does not allow the reader to escape into the text.

The "September" eclogue finds no escape from the paradox of the nature-human analogy. Diggon once escaped his pastoral landscape to a place which turned out to be "no such countrye, as there to remaine" (35); in contrast, Hobbinol is offering him the comfort of "chaungeable rest." Neither Hobbinol nor Diggon can escape his landscape, his tie to his own human nature and to the pattern of nature, or the decay of his earthly body. The contrast between Hobbinol's and Diggon's viewpoints forms a paradox which reflects the paradox of the analogy between human beings and nature. The reader, caught in a paradox between fictional and real worlds, the calendar and art on the one hand, and history on the other, moves back and forth among several realities all of which reflect the paradox symbolized in the relationship between Hobbinol and Diggon.
In "October" the escape from nature is attempted by means of poetry. Two shepherds discuss different theories of poetry in an attempt to solve the problem of a person's bondage to the material world. Yet the shepherds do not actually attempt to escape; they merely discuss various means of achieving praise and gain through poetic endeavors. While in other eclogues herdsmen use fictions in order to verify or escape a relationship with nature, in "October" the two speakers discuss the very act of creating poetic fictions. They have therefore moved one step beyond the text in which they reside. They debate the issue of whether poetry is intended to delight or to instruct; argue about whether or not the praise is better than the price; and contemplate whether Cuddie should change his poetic style and purpose from pastoral to heroic. Piers proposes a neoplatonic theory of poetry, in which love can inspire the poet to reach great heights, while Cuddie argues that love prevents the writing of great poetry and that wine is a better stimulus. Yet Cuddie is unable to choose amongst the alternatives, nor is he able to change his life and art. Even his art cannot bring him escape or transcendence.

If this eclogue expresses Spenser's theory of poetry, that intention is greatly masked. The equation of either of the speakers with Spenser's viewpoint (see Variorum
366-378, and Cullen 68, note 16) is misleading, since there is no indication in the poem that any one view is accurate. The argument about the role of poetry and the commendable kind of poetry is not resolved, nor do the disputants attempt to take any action. As Cullen writes, "'October's' debate ends in a standstill. None of the questions introduced is finally resolved. But the whole thrust and intent of the eclogue was not to resolve them, but to expose and explore them" (74).

The reader cannot say that this eclogue signifies that Spenser intends to leave the pastoral behind (Hamilton) or that he favours Piers' philosophy of a platonic interpretation of poetry (Hamilton, Durr, H. Smith, Nelson). In fact, each speaker shifts his view as he speaks, and as he explores different possibilities. An opposition between practical and ideal (Cullen 69), contentment and moral action (Shore 59-66) is not clear. In fact, as Goldberg suggests, the two voices may not be separate, or opposing, voices at all, but "scattered as traces on a path of generation" (42).  

The voices heard in this poem are indeed many. Not only do we hear directly from Piers, Cuddie, and E.K., and indirectly from Spenser, but allusions to the poetic

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6Goldberg even denies that there is any identity behind the voices: "There is nothing behind or in these voices. The terms that would fix identity or establish voices are, precisely, what the text disperses" (54).
skills of Orpheus, Mercury, Virgil, and Colin add to the levels of this discussion of poetry. Great heroes are mentioned in the poem proper, including Queen Elizabeth, and the gods Bacchus, Phoebus, and Bellona; E.K., in addition, refers to various poets and rulers. Even potential audiences for different types of poetry are included: shepherds, youths, princes, or gods. Although Cuddie says, "Vnwisely weaues, that takes two webbes in hand" (102), Spenser has woven together many voices to create a complex texture, a poem about poetry that alludes to all kinds of voices, poems, and audiences.

The kinds of poetry explored in the poem can be related to different environments, or landscapes. There is a kind of poetry suitable to each landscape, whether the poetry be pastoral (a term which signifies both poetry and landscape), heroic (city or court), or platonic love poetry (heaven). (The woodcut for "October" appropriately depicts all of these landscapes.) Just as one's choice of, and perception of, one's landscape is subjective and relative (see chapter IV), so is the choice of the most appropriate genre for the poet and his chosen milieu. It is only to be expected that Cuddie will not attempt to strive beyond his landscape and type of poetry, nor will he be able to answer the questions he and Piers have proposed about the proper role of poetry. The issue of poetry as a means of escape or transcendence is clearly
not resolved in the eclogue.⁷

On a literal level, the eclogue concerns the various proposals offered by Piers and Cuddie for gaining material rewards; these proposals are all contradicted or undercut by one or both speakers. Although Piers offers an idealistic view of the role of poetry and a judgment of poetry as divine and worthy, his every proposal is undercut by Cuddie as impossible or undesirable. Piers inadvertently contradicts himself, as well: his view that "the prayse is better, then the price" (19), and that the admiration of others may give poetry power, is undercut by his own example. Orpheus, he says, achieved power through his poetry, for he "did fetch his dame / From Plutoes balefull bowre withouten leaue: / His musicks might the hellish hound did tame" (28-30). Piers omits the rest of

⁷ Some critics believe that Spenser’s purpose was to show that poetry could help human beings escape the material world (MacCaffrey, for example). Alpers, on the other hand, proposes that "October" "does not render a successful transcendence of earthly matters, but rather dwells on poetry’s failure to live up to its lofty mission" and that Spenser’s purpose is to show that people may remain bound to earth while "accepting their bondage, to the earth from which we came and to which we shall all return" (362). According to Montrose ("'The perfecte paterne'"), as well, both Piers and Cuddie realize that poets of their times cannot transform society (49). Cullen claims that Spenser presented two viewpoints in the two speakers, that of Cuddie, who has a "thoroughly legitimate fear that he will be mastered by the year" and that of Piers, who believes that "the poet himself can master the year, and triumph through lasting fame" (71). Yet neither speaker is able to escape the bondage of nature or the difficulties inherent in the poet’s life and art.
the story, the dark side of the myth of Orpheus, that he lost his wife again because he could not restrain himself from looking back at her (Goldberg 43-44). The power of poetry cannot over-ride one's human failings.

When Cuddie contradicts Piers, he makes reference to the beauty of the Peacock, with Argus's eyes, but says that its beauty brings no material rewards. Cuddie, by alluding to that myth, however, undercuts his own argument. Argus, despite his many eyes, was lulled to sleep by Mercury's songs: this story may therefore be an example of the power of poetry, rather than its failure.

Neither speaker escapes or transcends the natural, physical world, even by means of poetry. Piers' suggestion that Cuddie change his style of poetry to heroic in order to receive rewards from the Queen is rejected by Cuddie, since he perceives his world as a corrupt one, with no heroes to write about, and no poets with the skill to write about heroes. Cuddie then rejects Piers' platonic theory of poetry, stating that love prevents the creation of poetry, rather than inspiring it. Although he thinks wine might elevate the mind to poetic heights, he decides to remain "content . . . in thys humble shade" (116). Cuddie chooses to remain tied to the pastoral world and the cycle of nature, and even Piers, while espousing transcendence, does not attempt it, since he is apparently not a poet.
On a symbolic level, the speakers may be discussing more than the rewards offered by poetry and the means to achieve them. The argument between the two speakers may signify the paradoxical analogy between human beings and nature, especially when winter, and old age, are near. Piers warns Cuddie that he should not value the material world, but should instead treasure the praise, fame, or spiritual vision that can be attained by means of poetry. He seems to believe that transcendence of the physical world is possible by means of poetry, that the glory is "greater then the gayne" (20) and that Cuddie should listen to his advice to "lyft vp thy selfe out of the lowly dust" (38). Cuddie, however, does not think it possible to escape his bondage, or at least believes that he lacks the ability and the courage to do so. Escape from nature is not possible for these two speakers who are facing the limitations within themselves and those imposed on them by their pastoral world. Neither choice, nor fiction, can release them from their bondage.

While Piers and Cuddie discuss the act of creating poetry, and analyze the possibilities, E.K. frames their critical exploration, creating an even greater distance between reader and poem. E.K. asks the reader to criticize this critique of poetry and to see it in the light of the real world. He reminds the reader of the author's presence, and, in this instance, of other work by
him. "The English Poete," which never came to light, was, according to E.K., a book in which Spenser revealed his theory of poetry. E.K. also suggests, tentatively, that Cuddie may represent the author, as does Colin (a suggestion that suits Goldberg's proposal of dispersed voices in the text). By awakening the reader's awareness of the real presence of an author who is actively writing other works and who has a strong interest in poetical theory, by providing information about classical sources of philosophies and mythologies, and by referring to the Queen and her favorite, the Earl of Leicester, E.K. again helps the reader relate this work of fiction to the world at large. Despite E.K.'s allusions to the author, however, the reader is left with more questions than answers, and again moves among different layers of identities, various fictions, and different concepts of reality.

E.K., by indicating a neoplatonic theory of poetry as that prevailing in the text, and ignoring other theories, presents a lop-sided interpretation of the poem. His application of the emblem to the poem seems completely inaccurate:

Hereby is meant, as also in the whole course of the AEglogue, that Poetry is a diuine instinct and vnnatural rage passing the reache of comen reason. Whom Piers answereth Epiphonematicos as
admiring the excellencye of the skylle whereof in
Cuddie hee hadde alreadye hadde a taste.

("October," gloss on "Embleme")

No one in the eclogue states that Poetry "is" a divine
instinct at all times; only that it may be at times,
under certain conditions. Not only does Piers never
witness Cuddie reaching divine poetic heights of platonic
poetry, but Cuddie rejects that kind of poetry. E.K. is
proposing a platonic theory of poetry; Spenser is not.

E.K. also includes a lengthy gloss on the high
opinion worthy men have of poets: "Such honor haue Poetes
always found in the sight of princes and noble men. which
this author here very well sheweth, as els where more
notably" (Var. 102). This statement does not express
Spenser’s opinion, for it clearly is contradicted by the
content of the poem. Cuddie is discovering, in fact, that
poets do not always receive high standing, or material
rewards. Nor does "October" indisputably present a
statement that poetry is powerful and divine; in fact,
there is much doubt expressed about the ability of poetry
to change, or escape, anything (see Montrose, "The
perfecte paterne"). By leaving out the rest of Orpheus’
story (Goldberg 63), as does Piers, E.K. is avoiding the
negative side of poetic power and the limitations to its
achievement.

One wonders if E.K. is serious when he writes that
Cuddie represents the "perfecte paterne of a Poete," or if he is mocking Cuddie's apparent laziness and lack of success. Perhaps his phrase has been misinterpreted. E.K.'s "Argument" for "October" further declares that that pattern of a poet is one "which finding no maintenaunce of his state and studies, complayneth of the comtempete of Poetrie, and the causes thereof." Perhaps this is the pattern of the life of a contemporary poet, according to both E.K. and Spenser. There is a difference between the "perfect pattern of a poet" and the "pattern of a perfect poet" (Cullen, 68-9, note 17.) Cuddie is not a perfect poet, but a typical one.

None of the speakers (not even E.K.) discovers a way to escape the forces of nature, the material needs of life, or the fact of physical death. Piers and Cuddie decide to remain in their pastoral world, submitting to the seasonal cycle and ignoring outside disturbances, choosing not to transcend. E.K.'s only escape is an intellectual one: he bridges the distance between times and between social and political levels by his knowledge of books and his acquaintance with events at court. He does not escape the real world, nor does he allow the reader to do so. All three minds are caught in the physical, natural world, despite their mental travels.
iv

In "November" the paradoxical analogy between humans and nature is even more obviously symbolized. Humans and nature are shown to reflect each other's grief and joy, and to imitate each other's patterns, even while they are following divergent paths. The elegy sung by Colin simultaneously ties a human being to the seasonal cycle of nature (life-death-rebirth) while overcoming human bondage to that same physical cycle. While some readers have found in this eclogue a statement that escape from Nature's cycle is possible for the individual (MacCaffrey, Hamilton\(^8\)), others believe the emphasis to be on the poet's return to nature at the end of the poem (Alpers, Montrose, Shore). The eclogue then suitably reflects the paradox of the similarity, yet difference, between the human life pattern and that of nature.

"November" not only includes many seasonal references, but is itself a ritualistic acting out of the death of nature in winter, a death imitated by human beings when they reach their own winter seasons. Despite the erroneous zodiac sign designated by both Spenser and E.K. (see Variorum 414-415), this eclogue belongs very much to its season. Not only is Dido "a personification of the death of nature in winter" (Cullen 145), and

\(^8\)Hamilton writes of "November" that "Here, for the first time, is shown the ultimate defeat of Nature with man's release from the state of mutability" (181).
referred to appropriately as "the fayrest May she was that euer went" (39) as she is carried out in death (a perfect reversal of the bringing in of May in the "Maye" eclogue), but the entire elegy, and the entire eclogue, re-enact the death and rebirth sequences of both humans and nature, separately and together, with humans symbolically mirroring nature’s sequence.

Although Dido may be said to imitate the cyclical pattern of nature, Thenot and Colin, in the frame to the elegy, are firmly bound to earth and the straight-line progression of human life within nature. Colin invokes the season and its analogous mood, the sadness associated with the dark time of the year, when "sadde Winter welked hath the day" (13). This season is not a season for mirth, as is May, but "Thilke sollein season sadder plight doth aske" (17). Thenot encourages Colin to sing a song suitable to this season:

But if sadde winters wrathe and season chill, 
Accorde not with thy Muses meriment: 
To sadder times thou mayst attune thy quill, 
And sing of sorowe and deathes dreeriment.

(33-36)

At the beginning of the eclogue, then, both shepherds believe themselves to be bound not only to nature, but to the particular season in which they are found. At the end, they return to nature and to physical reality -- but
perhaps refreshed by the song and psychologically less tightly bound to their linear existence.

In the elegy, the fiction within a fiction which is surrounded by the frame, a human being is able to transcend her physical reality. In the beginning of the elegy, the relationship between Dido and nature is obvious. Her death symbolizes the death of the spring and summer seasons. With Dido’s death,

The sonne of all the world is dimme and darke:
The earth now lacks her wonted light.
And all we dwell in deadly night. (67-69)
She is compared to a flower who now "is faded quite and into dust ygoe" (76). Yet Dido is also human. The paradox of the analogy between human beings and nature is poignantly expressed in Colin’s song:

Whence is it, that the flouret of the field doth fade.
And lyeth buryed long in Winters bale:
Yet soone as spring his mantle hath displayd,
It flooureth 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.

O heauie herse,
The braunch once dead, the budde eke needes must quaile,
O carefull verse.

(83-92)

Dido will not be revived in her youth and beauty as will nature: "Ay me that dreerie death should strike so mortall stroke, / That can vndoe Dame natures kindly course" (123-124). Dido may also represent the pastoral world itself, with her cakes and cracknells, her curds and "clouted Creame" (99). That world is disappearing, only to be revived in the Elysian Fields.

Despite the fact that Dido's path must diverge from nature's, both in the finality of her physical death and the transcendence of her spiritual revival, all nature mourns for her. She is herself a flower, and is associated with flowers. Yet even the flowers are paradoxical in their symbolical meanings. The rushrings and nosegays associated with her earthly life were often associated with weddings and love (OED, s.v. "rushring"), but the rosemary she gave her lover prefigures her death in its association with both weddings and funerals, with memory and with the soul's immortality (OED, s.v. "rosemary," 2; Gerard ch. 185, "Of Rosemary"). Colin sings that Dido is no longer given bay branches, which symbolize victory and honour (OED, s.v. "bay," sb. 1) or olive branches, which represent peace (OED, s.v. "olive," sb.

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9See Shore 87-8 and Hoffman 59-61 on the harmony and disharmony between humans and nature.
1), but instead cypress and elder branches. The cypress, though symbolic of mourning (E.K. mentions its use in funerals and see OED, s.v. "cypress," sb. 1) is an evergreen, which does not die in the winter; elder could mean "alder" (OED, s.v. "elder," sb. 1), a tree whose wood does not decay easily or quickly (OED, s.v. "alder," sb. 1). The plants may then have in themselves contradictory meanings. The bay and olive branches which seem inappropriate because of Dido’s death become instead fitting, for she achieves victory over the bondage of nature and the finality of death, therefore achieving peace.

The plants of paradoxical significance all may suit the message of Colin’s song, that heaven is not on earth, but in a spiritual paradise to be found after death. Dido "hath the bonds broke of eternall night, / Her soule vnbodied of the burdenous corpse" (165-166); she has entered a spiritual paradise, which is also described as a natural setting with green grass and fresh fields. She has been elevated beyond her lowly pastoral identity to become a goddess in a superior paradise.

It is, however, true, as it is with the April lay, that the song must end. Thenot and Colin are still living in the world of nature, and are still bound to the linear pattern. The simultaneous joy and weeping stimulated by the elegy and its combination of sorrow at the loss of
someone loved, and joy at her apotheosis, are what remain -- the "doolful pleaunce" (204) described by Thenot.

Unlike the other eclogues, this eclogue has consistency in its voices. Colin and Thenot are not in disagreement, and even E.K. has caught the appropriate spirit, mood, and message. Colin's emblem "La mort ny mord," translated by E.K. as "death biteth not," is a message of joy, but the grief is denied neither by Colin's song nor by Thenot's response. Still the reader is reminded that the elegy, which, unlike the failed attempts to escape described in "September" and "October," succeeds in transcending earthly nature, is a poem within a poem, a song in response to a challenge. The poem ends in the physical world, where the rain sends Thenot and Colin hurrying home. The song was a fiction, but one with symbolic meaning if the reader chooses to accept its message. The possibility of spiritual transcendence of death does not deny death's existence, nor the fact that people must first live out their lives in the natural world.

Even though the voices are in agreement, the reader does not know whether they are all taking the poem's message seriously, or merely judging the poem as a poem. Thenot appears to be responding to the poem itself, while E.K. responds to its message, interpreting it in a Christian sense, as a message of hope concerning the
soul's immortality. Colin has succeeded in combining earthly and heavenly, natural and human worlds, paradoxically joining them while keeping them separate from each other.

The reader has not escaped completely into either fiction or reality, but, as in the rest of The Shepheardes Calender, must move among several layers. Not only is the reader aware that the elegy is a fiction within a fiction, but he or she is also reminded by E.K. that the whole eclogue is a fiction and that that fiction was derived from another fiction, a poem by Marot. E.K. in quick succession reminds the reader of real world and of fictional worlds: although the November eclogue integrates fiction and reality more fully than do the other eclogues, E.K.'s stories and explanations do not merge into a unified picture.

E.K. reminds the reader of reality by, once again, alluding to his contemporary earthly world, and hinting that Dido may have some secret identity, as does Lobbin. (This may be a reference to Elizabeth and Leicester if Elizabeth marries Alençon, although that identification is not certain: see Variorum, 402-404.) E.K. also reminds the reader that the work is a fiction when he explains difficult words, refers to another work by the author, and explains mythological references and other sources. E.K. makes it obvious that he himself has an identity, separate
from the text, from the other speakers, and from the author. (Even if E.K. were Spenser, his voice is a fictional one, a different voice that is only one aspect of Spenser.) His interpretation of the poem, and the emblem, is his own, one that is, again, much more one-sided than that presented by Spenser. Spenser the author provides for the reader a much richer and more complex view of the paradox of the relationship between human beings and nature, and of the question of the finality of death or the possibility of immortality.

The two landscapes, the dreary, wintry world of Thenot and Colin's actual landscape, and the fair, fresh fields and green grass of Elysium, point out, by their contrast, the difference between real world and fictional world, literal and metaphorical truths, physical and spiritual landscapes, and nature and human being. The November eclogue not only shows the difference between human and natural cycles, but also the similarity. The possibility of escape, or transcendence, may exist because, as some religions teach, the soul is immortal; or it may exist because that immortality is created by poetry. In "November," ironically, the shepherds transcend their bondage to nature and to the physical world by means of poetry and a hope of the immortality of the soul, but come back to earth at the end of the poem. Although Colin says that one should not trust earthly things, "That nys
on earth assurance to be sought" (157), he and Thenot do not condemn earthly life, only hate the fact that death will make them leave it.

The thought of death is frightening, despite Colin's assurance in his elegy that "Dye would we dayly" if we knew what death brought (186). When Colin asks "whose turne shall be the next?" (193), we do not hope it is ours. Colin's song is indeed a "doolful pleasaunce," for the promise of immortality does not completely annihilate the sorrow and fear prompted by any thought of death.

When we reach "December" we see that escape is not possible after all. Death appears to be inevitable and final, at least in the eyes of Colin Clout. Yet nature's cycle itself rescues us from the linear route through time and the calendar year. The reader may now look forward to January once more, and to the promise of spring. As Spenser tells us in his closing poem, his calendar is cyclical, "a Calender for every yeare." Therefore, we are expected to circle again to January and to renew our lives in imitation of nature.

The great escape is both possible and impossible. The poems human beings create, and their calendars, are fictional works that imitate nature in hopes of achieving harmony with it; at the same time human beings wish to transcend the calendar year to a place of fixed immortality -- a pastoral paradise to replace the one
lost. The autumn eclogues show very strongly the desire of human beings to leave the world of change for a world of constancy, even while they desire to change the linear pattern of human existence.
CHAPTER VI

"Goe lyttle Calendar, thou hast a free passeporte":
AFTER READING THE SHEPHEARDES CALENIDER

Readers of The Shepheardes Calender are actively involved in the text, and must rely on their own subjective impressions for interpretation, since the author offers little direction amongst the multiplicity of possibilities. These readers are engaged in a process like that recently defined by Linda Hutcheon (see chapter I) -- they are active participants in interpreting, and even in creating, the text as they read.

Because so many choices are offered to readers, it is understandable that so many varying interpretations of the poem have been made. The structure of this calendar, which seems so logical and orderly, is not so, nor are the many voices consistent or even identifiable in any clear way. To further complicate readings of the text, Spenser has chosen to remain invisible, yet to provide a reader, and critic, within the text itself, who, in attempting to guide readers to a certain interpretation and to encourage them to see the relationship of the text to the real world, actually inhibits interpretation. The obvious subjectivity of E.K.'s reading hinders readers' acceptance of it, and therefore encourages other subjective readings.

The relationship between Spenser and his readers is
indirect and dependent on their impressions of the inconsistent voices and the paradoxical structure of the poem. The constant reminders that the poem is a fictional creation discourage any intimate involvement with a character, or any final assessment of a character's situation. Even Colin's story, the one most fully explored throughout the poem, is open to multiple interpretations and changing readings.

The reading of the poem, in the context of the relationships of the different voices or personalities with each other, may be described as a movement through a series of concentric circles. The reader is in the outermost circle, looking inside at the text, but somewhat aware of Spenser, who is also outside the text but in the next circle moving inward. In the next circle is E.K., in the next Colin, and then the many voices of the other speakers. The many voices which are inside the text do not have clear identities. The reader has difficulty separating them from each other, or seeing any consistency of identity in characters who have the same name (except for Colin Cloute and Hobbinol, perhaps). There is some validity to Goldberg's viewpoint:

Authorial intention is felt to be 'behind' or 'underneath' these voices, if not 'in' them; or, at the very least, they sustain a relationship with an 'eisewhere' where meaning resides, a
transcendent resolve into some unity or integrity (not even some false "paradise principle"). There is nothing behind or in these voices. The terms that would fix identity or establish voices are, precisely, what the text disperses. . . . The text is, at the very least, an intertext, a play of text against text transferred indiscriminately from voice to voice, formally structured so that its movement fractures the formal markers and the inside is brought outside, the outside turned in, whether we take . . . the "speakers" or the "sections" of the text to be those formal signposts. . . . To progress we traverse the spacing of the text that allows blankness of a bankruptcy that fills the text with refigurations. In this reading, those figures offer a theory of the text composed of the elements whose relationships "define" the text -- language, author, reader (or patron); the text as we read it represents the theory of the text we read. (Goldberg 54)

Although the identities of the different speakers are sketchy and inconsistent, this does not concern readers unless they choose to explore the question of identity, for the establishment of identity does not seem important in the poems themselves. (It is, of course, important to
E.K., and some later critics, to identify the speakers with historical counterparts; these identifications are at times valid, and provide one way of reading the text, yet have little significance in other possible readings.) It is difficult to find similarities between characters of the same name: the Thenot of "Februarie" and the Thenot of "Aprill"; the Willyes of "March" and "August" (one naive and one cynical); the Thomalins of "March" and "Iulye"; the Piers of "Maye" and "October" (see Goldberg 56); the Cuddies of "Februarie," "October," and "August" (though the latter two are both poets). Only Hobbinol and Colin seem to have identifiable personalities.

One may attempt to read the characters as aspects of Colin as he explores different options, or as Colin at different times of his life. One may see the difference between the personalities of Colin and Hobbinol repeated in the differences between other pairs of characters. However, these readings are neither obvious nor easily proved. The names do not seem memorable or important, because identity is not the issue here. These speakers could be anyone, could represent the reader, for all are similar in their attempts to escape, or confirm, the calendar itself -- the analogy between themselves and nature as they live out their lives from youth to death. These people of different ages, religious beliefs, attitudes to love, poetry, and nature, struggle to live in
the world of nature, as we all do. They are real only as their moods and struggles are recognized by readers as analogous to those they experience and understand.

Readers attempt to understand the voices and to relate them to each other, and to their own lives and environments; Spenser created the voices to attempt to understand himself and his world; Colin Cloute creates poetry in an attempt to understand himself; E.K. tries to convey his understanding of the poetry to readers and to relate that poetry to the outside world. The concentric circles, then, have bridges that tie them to each other. The major personalities of the poem -- author, reader, E.K., Colin Cloute -- are all involved in acts of creation and interpretation.

None of the personalities stays in one place -- all move among a variety of configurations and contexts. Characters are not tied to any one month or season, nor any one point of view; they change and move throughout the poem, the year, and human life. The configurations seem flexible and changeable, when the reader looks at the poem as a whole. The Calendar is neither linear nor cyclical, but constantly changing. Perhaps its structure is like that of the moebius strip (Goldberg 173, note 22); more likely, its structure, or any pattern of voices, is indeterminate and undefinable.

The reader's voice is one of many and is part of this
multi-layered poem, finding itself in one of the layers, as part of the structure. The reader, like Spenser, and all the speakers taken together, is young, middle-aged, and old; in love and skeptical of love; a failed and a successful creator; a symbolist and a literalist; a wanderer and a homelover. By obscuring the identities of his characters, Spenser has made it possible for each reader to remain aware of the fiction of the poem, to merge, at times, with the characters, and to move freely among the layers of the poem.

The reader, after finishing the poem, is able to compare the many voices with each other, and especially to compare them all with Colin's voice, as is encouraged by the December eclogue. When Colin reminisces in "December" about the different seasons of his life, readers remember not only Colin's life, but the eclogues that apply to the season named; these comparisons lead to further questioning of Colin's viewpoint, since not all attitudes to the season are the same. The December eclogue, then, concludes the Calendar by summing up and bringing together materials from all the eclogues.

Colin's account in "December" of his spring may be compared to accounts of spring in "Februarie," "March," "Aprill," and "Maye." Colin describes himself as a heedless wanderer, falling prey to lust; this was also true of Cuddie in "Februarie," Thomalin in "March," and
Colin himself in "Aprill." In "March" Thomalin describes the swallow, peeping out of her nest, and warns Willye that "lustie Loue" (26) is now awake; in "December" Colin compares himself to a swallow ("Like Swallow swift I wandred here and there" 20). Colin's story also recalls "Februarie": Colin scaled the oak and cut down the walnut tree (lines 31-36), treating them with a proud disrespect, just as Cuddie treats Thenot and the Briar treats the oak. Like Cuddie, Colin believed when he was young that his "spring would euer laste" ("December" 30). Interestingly, the older man Thenot is also present in "Februarie," presenting a point of view similar to that of the old Colin, while Cuddie's attitude is like that of the young Colin (see ch. II).

Colin's relation in "December" of the development of his poetic talent (40-48) touches a theme discussed, and demonstrated, in "Aprill," as does his unrequited love of Rosalinde. In "December" Colin says "Loue they him called, that gauze me checkmate, / But better mought they haue behote him Hate" (53-54). The themes of the negative effects of love, and the inability to enjoy spring as it moves into summer, are continued in the May eclogue, where characters discuss the morality of participation in spring rites, and the frustrated desire to enjoy the season. Colin's description of his spring recalls the spring eclogues, but his viewpoint has become bitter and
critical, as he looks back from old age at his youthful folly.

Colin’s memories of his summer recall incidents, and even phrases, from the "Iune," "Iulye," and "August" eclogues. Summer is the stage of human life when choice is possible (see Chapter IV); in fact, Colin in "December" says that that was the time "When choise I had to choose my wandring waye" (62). Unfortunately, as Colin says in "December," he chose the bush, the bramble, and the woods, a landscape that he also describes in "Iune," when he speaks of the "shade of lowly groue" ("Iune," 71). He repeats in "December" words he uttered in "August": "Ye wastefull woodes beare witnesse of my woe" (151) become in "December" "The Woodes can witnesse many a wofull stowre" (66). Hobbinol says in "Iune" that Colin’s landscape has no "holybush, nor brere, nor winding witche" (20), but both Hobbinol of "Iune" and Colin of "December" place "gastly owles" ("Iune," 24; in "December," "The ghastlie Owle," 72) in Colin’s chosen setting, and both are critical of the landscape chosen by the younger Colin. The heat of summer during the reign of the sign of Leo, the Lion, mentioned in "December" is also referred to in "Iulye," but in December Colin applies the metaphor to the "raging fyre" (58) of love. It should be noted, however, that in all the eclogues the different and often opposing attitudes presented provide alternatives to those
favoured by Colin in "December."

Colin's account of his autumn in "December" both repeats and contradicts accounts in the "September," "October," and "November" poems. Colin even contradicts himself (see Chapter II): he claims that his life was wasted and barren, and thus depreciates his valuable education. Colin's view of his life makes it comparable to the experience of Diggon Davie in "September," who wandered from the right path and wasted his life. One must remember, however, that Hobbinol's autumn is different from Diggon's, and from Colin's. Colin may also be compared to Cuddie of "October": both are prepared to abandon their roles as poets, but Cuddie, though he states that Colin, unlike himself, has the ability "So high to sore," (86) will continue to write pastoral poetry, while Colin claims to be finished with all kinds of poetry. As he did in "November," Colin speaks of withered flowers and the spilling of flowers from a woman's garland (in "December" it is Rosalinde's garland). Yet in "December" Colin, speaking of his own death rather than Dido's, does not transcend his bondage to nature and the physical world by means of his poetry, but hangs his pipe on the tree while saying his farewells.

Colin has discovered ways in which his life fits, and does not fit, a calendar based on nature's patterns. His patterning is based on his own concept of the movement of
time and of the pattern of human life. Other voices in other eclogues have different views of the relationship between human life and the seasons, and have seen other kinds of analogies, or deviations from the analogy. The paradoxes of the relationship between human beings and nature, constancy and mutability, order and disorder, time's arrow and time's cycle, make it even more difficult to understand the path of human life. Behind all the voices is Spenser, who sees all sides, but chooses none.

The decision to organize this dissertation according to the seasons was an obvious one, but the choices of eclogues corresponding to each season and the choices of themes to fit the eclogues were arbitrary and based on categories suited to my own emphasis. My views are as subjective as those of the many voices in the Calender. E.K.'s categories, and those of other critics, are still valid; the reader has a choice. As one particular reader, I selected themes that suited me, and struggled against the human tendency to choose one preferred voice over others; I did not completely succeed in doing that. The attempt to see all sides and to hear all voices equally, however, has led me to a broader understanding of The Shepheardes Calender and a fuller appreciation of Spenser's art.

The most surprising fact is that Spenser, then a young man, saw the whole of human life with its ambiguity
and contradictions, looked beyond a dualistic approach to reality, and wrote a poem that would live on without him while he continued his life in the world of time. He created a poem that, because it mirrors the process of discovery experienced by the creator during the act of creation, is always new and changeable whenever it is reread -- "a Calender for every yeare." He would go much further with this approach in The Faerie Queene. In that work voices merge with each other, separate, disappear, reappear, and interweave; the author teases readers with brief appearances; readers confront an even more difficult task of interpreting the ambiguous and paradoxical words of this multi-layered allegory. Spenser never lost interest in the paradoxical nature of poetry itself, its relationship to order and disorder, time and eternity—poetry which he wished to be "for short time an endlesse moniment" ("Epithalamion" 433). Rather than freeze it into a static, deathlike pose, his monuments mirror life in all its movements and changes.
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