SPENSER'S COLIN CLOUT: AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Thesis

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

CCCHA	Colin Clouts Come Home Againe
ECE	Elizabethan Critical Essays (Ed. by G. Gregory Smith)
FQ	The Faerie Qveene
OS	The Oxford Spenser
SC	The Shepheardes Calender
VS, FQ	The Variorum Spenser, The Faerie Qveene
VS, Life	The Variorum Spenser, The Life of Edmund Spenser
VS, MP	The Variorum Spenser, The Minor Poems

INTRODUCTION

"Vnder which name this Poete secretly shadoweth himself" [1]

In the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene, the reader is presented with a vision of the Graces and their attendants dancing on Mount Acidale to the piping of a simple shepherd. Spenser identifies this favoured musician as Colin Clout and then goes on to pose a seemingly inconsequential rhetorical question. "Who knowes not Colin Cloute?"[2] he asks. The note of confident pride which can be discerned in the query clearly reveals Spenser's peculiar interest in one of his most intriguing creations.

It is almost impossible to read a representative selection of Spenser's poetical works without noticing the hauntingly frequent appearances of his "Southerne shepheardes boye".[3] Colin appears or is named in no fewer than six of Spenser's poems. His most important appearances are those which he makes in The Shepheardes Calender (1579), in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe (1595) and in the last complete book of The Faerie Qveene (1596). However, "The Rvines of Time" (1591), Daphnaida (1591) and The Mvtabilitie Cantos (1609) also contain brief

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1 Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Frederick Morgan Padelford and Roy Heffner, gen. eds., The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, 11 vols, The Minor Poems, Vol.I, edited by Charles Grosvenor Osgood and Henry Gibbons Lotspeich (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), 18. Hereafter referred to as VS, MP, I.

2 The Faerie Qveene, VI.x.16, 1.4. Hereafter referred to as FQ. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from Spenser are taken from the Variorum Spenser.

3 The Shepheardes Calender, "Aprill", 1.21. Hereafter referred to as SC.

references to him. None of the other persons appearing in Spenser's poetry is allowed to enjoy so long and varied a career and this alone would seem to indicate that the figure of Colin Clout merits further attention.

Several critics, determined to make sense of Colin and his role, have put forward a number of possible interpretations of the nature of his character and functions within some or all of the poems mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Richard Mallette expresses a traditional view when he says that Colin is "a contiguous self-conscious portrait of the Spenserian artist".[1] While one may feel that Mallette's statement requires some qualification, quite a considerable body of evidence does exist to indicate that Colin Clout may well have been intended to "shadow"[2] his creator. For example, E.K.,[3] whose glosses accompany the first and indeed every subsequent edition of The Shepheardes Calender, describes Spenser's lovelorn shepherd and the name which his creator

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[1] "Spenser's Portrait of the Artist in The Shepheardes Calender and Colin Clouts Come Home Againe," Studies in English Literature, 19 (1979), pp. 19-20.

[2] I am following E.K's example in choosing to use this term to describe the relationship between Colin Clout and Edmund Spenser. See VS, MP, I : 18.

[3] E.K. has been identified by various scholars as Edward Kirke, Fulke Greville and even as Spenser himself. Whichever of these views one may elect to favour, it, nevertheless, remains evident that E.K. must have been someone intimately acquainted with the poet and that, therefore, Spenser would have been likely to have read and approved the contents of both the introduction and the glosses to The Shepheardes Calender.

chose to bestow on him in the following terms:

> Colin Cloute) [*sic*] is a name not greatly vsed and yet have I sene a Poesie of M. Skeltons vnder that title. But indeede the word Colin is Frenche, and vsed of the French Poete Marot (if he be worthy of the name of a Poete) in a certein Æglogue. Vnder which name this Poete secretly shadoweth himself, as sometime did Virgil vnder the name of Tityrus, thinking it much fitter, then such Latine names for the great vnlikelyhoode of the language.[1]

In his dedicatory epistle to the work, E.K. indicates his opinion of the relationship between Colin Clout and Edmund Spenser even more clearly by referring to the latter as "our Colin Cloute".[2]

Gabriel Harvey, another of Spenser's contemporaries, also makes direct reference to the unusually close ties which seem to have existed between Spenser and Colin, the unhappy shepherd poet. In 1580, a work entitled Three proper and wittie, familiar Letters: lately passed betvveene tvvo Universitie men touching the Earthquake in Aprill last, and our English refourmed Versifying was published in London. The letters purported to be the record of a correspondence between Spenser and Harvey and, in the last of them, his Cambridge friend addresses Spenser thus:

> But Master "Collin Cloute" is not euery body, and albeit his olde Companions, "Master Cuddy", and "Master Hobbinol" be as little beholding to their Mistresse Poetrie, as euer you wilt: yet he

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[1] VS, MP, I : 17-8. The last sentence of this particular gloss is a slightly ambiguous one. E.K. may be continuing to discuss Marot's use of disguised self-reference or he may be alluding to Spenser's use of the device. The evidence contained in the dedicatory epistle has inclined most people to favour the second interpretation of the sentence. Whichever view one holds, it is surely significant that E.K. so pointedly reminds Spenser's readers of the existence of a pastoral tradition of disguised self-reference in his gloss on Colin Clout.

[2] VS, MP, I : 7.

> peraduenture, by the meanes of hir special fauour, and some personall priuiledge, may happely liue by "dying Pellicanes", and purchase great landes and Lordshippes, with the money, which his "Calendar" and "Dreames" haue, and will affourde him.[1]

Harvey then goes on to conclude the letter by sending his regards to Mistress Immerito, his most beautiful "Collina Clouta".[2]

Spenser never refers to himself as Colin in the published letters but instead employs only the pseudonym, "Immerito". Despite this fact, there are several recorded examples of Spenser's being referred to as Colin or Colin Clout by both personal friends and some of his poetic successors.[3] This indicates that, after the publication of The Shepheardes Calender, many of Spenser's associates and disciples seem to have believed that the figure of Colin Clout was intended, even if only to a limited extent, to represent Spenser himself.

Further evidence in support of the idea that Colin can be said to shadow Spenser is provided by a close examination of the characters of some of Colin's fellow shepherds. The inhabitants of Colin's pastoral world seem to reflect some of the attributes of Spenser's own friends and contemporaries. Hobbinol, E.K. tells us, is "a fained country name whereby, it being so commune and usuall, seemeth to be hidden the person of some his very speciall and most familiar freend".[4] Spenser's well-publicised friendship with Harvey immediately predisposes the

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[1] J.C. Smith and E. De Selincourt, eds., The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, The Oxford Spenser (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.628. Hereafter referred to as OS.

[2] OS, p.632.

[3] VS, MP, I : 247 lists examples of the name Colin being used for Spenser.

[4] VS, MP, I : 18.

reader to associate the latter with the crusty Hobbinol. This identification is encouraged by the fact that Harvey refers to himself as "Hobbinolus" in one of his published letters to Spenser.[1]

Similarly, it seems certain that Elisa, the Queen of the Shepherds, whose praises are sung in "Aprill" is intended to bring the figure of Queen Elizabeth I to mind. E.K. makes no attempt to disguise this. He openly declares that "Aprill" contains "a songe, which the sayd Colin sometime made in honor of her Maiestie, whom abruptely he termeth Elysa".[2] Furthermore, as Paul E. McLane suggests, it may be possible that, when Colin says of Elisa that "Ne would she scorne the simple shepheards swaine"[3] and "als Colin cloute she would not once disdayne",[4] this is an allusion to Spenser's "late beeing with hir Maiestie" mentioned in one of Spenser's letters to Harvey.[5]

Other figures, like Rosalind, "the Widdowes daughter of the glenne",[6] are rather more difficult to associate with any of Spenser's contemporaries. Some critics, fired by E.K's gloss which states that Rosalind is "a feigned name, which being wel ordered, wil bewray the very name of hys loue and mistresse, whom by that name he coloureth",[7] have suggested that Spenser's beloved may have been a northern country lass named

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1 OS, p.632.

2 VS, MP, I : 36.

3 SC, "Nouember", l.97.

4 SC, "Nouember", l.101.

5 Spenser's "Shepheardes Calender": A Study in Elizabethan Allegory (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), p.57.

6 SC, "Aprill", l.26.

7 VS, MP, I : 18.

Rose Dinley or Rosa Lynde or even Eliza Nord.[1] Others have noted a later gloss which claims that the object of Colin's unrequited passion is

> a Gentlewoman of no meane house nor endewed with anye vulgare and common gifts both of nature and manners: but suche indeede as neede nether Colin be ashamed to haue her made known by his verses, nor Hobbinoll be greued that so she should be commended.[2]

These critics have then tried to associate Rosalind with a number of aristocratic young women[3] and even with the Queen of England.[4] Yet a third group of critics point out that Harvey, in one of his letters to Spenser, sends his good wishes to an unknown woman whom he calls both "*Rosalindula*" and his "*Domina Immerito*"[5] and, therefore, claim that Rosalind was probably intended to represent Spenser's first wife. Barring the discovery of new evidence, speculations seem likely to continue to be made. Nevertheless, although it may have proved impossible to link Rosalind to any one woman, it appears very likely that she was intended to shadow a real person to whom Spenser was sincerely attached.

The Shepheardes Calender is not the only poem in which Spenser introduces his readers to idealisations of real persons or chronicles, in an indirect fashion, some of the events of his own life. Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, for instance, has been thought of as primary

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[1] VS, MP, I : 651-5.

[2] VS, MP, I : 42.

[3] VS, MP, I : 651-5.

[4] McLane, pp.27-46.

[5] OS, p.632.

historical material by a number of scholars. Alexander C. Judson remarks in his biography of the poet that

> with the arrival of Raleigh at Kilcolman we enter upon a well-documented period of Spenser's life, for this famous visit, and the subsequent journey of the two men to England, are faithfully portrayed in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe.[1]

Certainly, as Judson demonstrates, a number of the particulars of the persons, places and actions described in the poem can be verified historically. The Shepherd of the Ocean is said by the poet to have come from the "main-sea deepe"[2] - Raleigh owned an estate on the east coast of Ireland. Colin sings of the Bregog and the Mulla - Mulla is Spenser's name for the river Awbeg which bounded his Kilcolman estate on two sides. The Shepherd of the Ocean complains of Cynthia's treatment of him - Raleigh is known to have been rejected by Elizabeth I after his marriage to Elizabeth Throckmorton. Colin and his companion journey to Cynthia's land - Spenser was undoubtedly in London between 1590 and 1591 and it is claimed that Raleigh voyaged from Ireland to England at the end of 1589. The Shepherd of the Ocean tells Colin that he has "in the Ocean charge to me assignd"[3] - Elizabeth granted Raleigh the title of Vice Admiral of Devon and Cornwall in 1585. Colin lists ten shepherds "in faithfull service of faire Cynthia"[4] and describes the

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[1] The Life of Edmund Spenser, attached to The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, edited by Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Frederick Morgan Padelford and Roy Heffner, 11 vols. (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1945) p.136. Hereafter referred to as VS, Life.

[2] Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, l.67. Hereafter referred to as CCCHA.

[3] CCCHA, l.253.

[4] CCCHA, l.381.

ladies of Cynthia's retinue at some length - five of the shepherds are clearly intended to represent prominent Elizabethan poets and ten of the women have been identified as specific ladies of rank whom Spenser might well have encountered at court. Finally, Colin claims kinship with the three sisters of a "noble familie"[1] - Spenser publicly claimed kinship with the Spencer sisters of Althorpe on several occasions.[2]

The characters and events contained in Spenser's pastoral poetry seem frequently, therefore, to figure forth the inhabitants and events of his own world. These parallels make it both credible and understandable that Spenser should have decided to create a pastoral representation of himself as well.

The view that Colin Clout is in some way intended to shadow Edmund Spenser seems, then, to be well supported by that evidence which can be gleaned from E.K's glosses to The Shepheardes Calender, the published components of the Spenser-Harvey correspondence and a close examination of the similarities which can be shown to exist between the poems and what is known about Spenser's life and associates. However, the strongest evidence for relating Spenser, the man, to Colin, the stylised pastoral musician, remains first those indications given in the text of the poems of Colin's character and preoccupations, and second the attitude of the narrator to Colin as it is revealed in the poems.

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1 CCCHA, 1.537.

2 For my discussion of the historical material contained in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe I am heavily indebted to the notes on the poem contained in VS, MP, I : 447-82, to VS, Life, pp.136ff., and to Sam Meyer, An Interpretation of Spenser's *Colin Clout* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1969), pp.142-76.

Colin's character may be said to reflect at least three of Spenser's own preoccupations, namely, his concern with his role as a poet; his practical ambitions; and his awareness of the forces of mortality and of his own frailty in the face of them. Beginning with the first of these, the poet's role, we note that Colin is no ordinary shepherd. He is primarily a maker of "rurall musick"[1] and, as such, he is concerned like Spenser with the nature and function of poetry. Those of Colin's songs which are quoted in the poems are clearly distinguishable from the verses which surround them. They tend to employ a more elaborate vocabulary than that used by the other shepherds and usually follow a strict form. The lay which is attributed to Colin's authorship in "August", for instance, is actually an imitation of the Italian sestina. Spenser's poems show him to have been metrically innovative. It is not surprising, therefore, that the lines which he attributes to his pastoral self, Colin, should be both complex and metrically accomplished.

With regard to the second of Spenser's preoccupations, his ambitions as a poet, A.C. Hamilton has suggested that Colin's probable death at the end of The Shepheardes Calender is meant to indicate

> a rejection of the pastoral life for the truly dedicated life in the world. For Spenser this life is that of the heroic poet whose high religious calling is to serve the Queen by inspiring her people to all virtuous action.[2]

The fact that Spenser completed his poetic career by composing six books of The Faerie Qveene means that Hamilton's position is not an untenable

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[1] SC, "Ianvarye", l.64.

[2] "The Argument of Spenser's Shepheardes Calender," ELH, 23 (1956), p.181.

one. However, it should be noted that The Faerie Qveene does not reject pastoral values, but actually includes a pastoral interlude in its sixth book. The interlude referred to will be examined at greater length in the fourth chapter of this thesis. Hamilton's suggestion cannot, then, be accepted without reservation, but, if one is reluctant to view Colin's struggles as the re-enactment of "the moral journey of the Spenserian poet"[1] or even as an exercise in introspection, a spiritual autobiography, one cannot deny that Colin is concerned about the role of poetry and the poet. He reveals his concern in almost all of the eclogues in which he appears, but he does so most poignantly, perhaps, in "Ivne" when he laments the death of Tityrus and voices his longing for fame and poetical ability.

> Nowe dead he is, and lyeth wrapt in lead,
> (O why should death on hym such outrage showe?)
> And all hys passing skil with him is fledde,
> The fame whereof doth dayly greater growe.
> But if on me some little drops would flowe,
> Of that the spring was in his learned hedde,
> I soone would learne these woods, to wayle my woe,
> And teache the trees, their trickling teares to shedde.[2]

It is also possible that Colin's piping for the dancing Graces in the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene and the adulation which he receives from his fellows in several of Spenser's pastoral poems reflect Spenser's own need for recognition and his own desire for greatness. Perhaps he, too, would have liked to hear his skill commended in the same terms in which

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[1] Mallette, p.23.

[2] SC, "Ivne", ll.89-96.

Hobbinol commends Colin's ability:

> I sawe *Calliope* wyth Muses moe,
> Soone as thy oaten pype began to sound,
> Theyr yuory Luyts and Tamburins forgoe.
> And from the fountaine, where they sat around,
> Renne after hastely thy siluer sound.[1]

Spenser's third important preoccupation is with the human condition and man's impotence in the face of it. For all his gifts, Colin, like Spenser, is mortal and cannot protect himself from the ravages of love or from the effects of the intransigency of the natural world. He cannot "teache the trees, their trickling teares to shedde"[2] nor win Rosalind by his "rurall musick".[3] The limitations of Colin's powers seem so cruel that Thenot is moved to ask, "And hath he skill to make so excellent,/Yet hath so little skill to brydle loue?"[4] Colin is presented as a mortal being; he is aware that eventually winter comes to us all and that "after Winter commeth timely death".[5]

Having traced some of the parallels which clearly do exist between Spenser, the man, and Colin, his pastoral creation, we must, nevertheless, approach the theory that Colin shadows Spenser with some caution. It should not be forgotten that Spenser himself never publicly acknowledges the close relationship which it has been suggested existed between him and his creation. At certain moments he even seems to deny subtly that

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[1] SC, "Ivne", ll.57-61.

[2] SC, "Ivne", l.96.

[3] SC, "Ianvarye", l.64.

[4] SC, "Aprill", l.19-20.

[5] SC, "December", l.150.

Colin is anything more than a figment of his imagination. In the opening lines of "Ianvarye", for instance, Spenser describes Colin as follows:

> A Shepeheards boye (no better doe him call)
> When Winters wastful spight was almost spent,
> All in a sunneshine day, as did befall,
> Led forth his flock, that had bene long ypent.[1]

Spenser's assertion that Colin is no more than a simple shepherd boy is, perhaps, a slightly puzzling one. It is true that Colin's life does not mirror Spenser's life exactly at all times. Examples of this are that, in "Ianvarye", Colin neglects Hobbinol and poetry because of his own rejection by Rosalind but, as McLane reminds us, "Spenser at this time certainly did not give up his friendship for Harvey or cease writing verses".[2] Similarly, Spenser was not close to death when he composed "December". Discrepancies between historical truth and the literary narrative can be found even in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe. Meyer points out that no other contemporary account describes a meeting between Ralegh and Spenser at Kilcolman in 1589, and then suggests that the two probably met there on a number of occasions rather than on just one.[3] Meyer also demonstrates that Colin Clouts Come Home Againe does not confine itself to descriptions of Spenser's experiences between 1590 and 1591, but contains material selected from a period of at least four years.[4] Finally, to end on a lighter note, it is highly unlikely that Spenser ever

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[1] SC, "Januarye", ll.1-4.

[2] McLane, p.309.

[3] Meyer, p.146.

[4] Meyer, p.150.

piped in reality for a hundred naked dancers as Colin does in the pastoral world presented to Spenser's readers in the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene. However, despite these discrepancies, the resemblances between Spenser and Colin would appear to outweigh the differences. Because of this, Spenser's insistence on denying that Colin is anything more than a humble shepherd musician may seem curiously perverse to the uninformed modern reader. Yet, perhaps Spenser's attitude is not as puzzling as it may appear. Spenser's aside would have been recognised by his contemporaries as an example of the use of a particular rhetorical convention. *Diminutio* was a rhetorical figure frequently used by medieval poets including Chaucer whom Spenser so much admired. Spenser's statement is not intended primarily as a denial of his close ties with Colin Clout. It is intended rather to stress Colin's simplicity and humility and, therefore, to protect Spenser by a traditional method from possible accusations of pride. Spenser's use of *diminutio* can, therefore, be regarded as a covert acknowledgement of the ties binding him to Colin. It is noteworthy that he makes no similar narrative interjections on the subject of Colin's fellows and clearly feels no necessity to do so. The remarks which Spenser makes about Colin within the texts of his pastoral poems serve, therefore, to emphasise the latter's unique role within those poems.

Traditionally, art orders and transmutes experience: it does not reflect events or people in a purely mimetic fashion. Because of this, no informed reader would assume a full identification between the maker of a poem and a person or persons within it. Following on this statement, it would appear that those discrepancies which do exist between Colin's life and Spenser's are not great enough to exclude, or

minimise in any significant way, the probability that Colin is intended to "shadow" Spenser in a number of important respects. In addition, most of the differences between Colin and Spenser can be explained away in terms of the social pressures and literary conventions which are suspected of having influenced the composition of Spenser's pastoral poems. The role of these factors in determining Colin's nature and functions will be discussed in the following chapter. However, it should also be remembered that Colin is not an independent entity, but a literary construct whose entire existence is confined to the poems in which he appears. Because of this, the body of my thesis will be concerned with the examination of Colin's contribution to the six works in which he is mentioned.

CHAPTER 1

EXPERIMENTATION AND EXPEDIENCY: SOME ELIZABETHAN NORMS AND FORMS AND THEIR POSSIBLE INFLUENCE ON SPENSER'S COLIN CLOUT

The relevance of biographical material and historical understanding to the study of literary works is a subject which has provoked considerable critical controversy. Some scholars have suggested that the value of literature lies not in what it allows us to learn about the lives and attitudes of its creators, but in the experience, order, and energy which the work itself embodies. While this may be true, it must, nevertheless, be obvious to the practical reader that a literary work can never be altogether free of the influence of external circumstances. Because of this, it would be unwise to deny that aspects of a writer's experience may well be of value for understanding his work. Admittedly, the use of biographical information is only one of many potentially useful critical avenues open to the student of literature, and its relative importance is likely to vary according to the particular author or work under review. However, it is important that readers should remember John A. Meixner's statement that

> if literature is meaningful it is because it is not apart from life - something gloriously going on in a test tube, in a laboratory we enter from time to time - but <u>of</u> life, experience distilled to essence.[1]

Certainly, in the case of Spenser's Colin Clout, any attempt to evaluate

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[1] "The Uses of Biography in Criticism," <u>College English</u>, 28 (1966), p.111.

the figure which ignores the experiences and probable attitudes of his creator is likely to be flawed.

It has been suggested in the previous section that Colin Clout may have been intended to "shadow" Edmund Spenser. This affinity between a poet and one of his inventions would have been far more unusual had Spenser published The Shepheardes Calender at an earlier date. Ernst Robert Curtius points out that while the Greeks and Romans seem to have banned the introduction of personal material only in their epic poetry, the same cannot be said of their Christian successors.[1] During the centuries which divided the Renaissance poets from their classical predecessors, writers were frequently warned to be on their guard against the sin of *vanitas terrestris*. This meant that until the beginning of the Renaissance any personal references in poems tended to be heavily disguised. Even the mention of the author's name was not encouraged. Often, when the writer did identify himself, he did so only in order to ask his readers to pray for the forgiveness of his sins or to draw their attention to the benevolence of his patron. This prohibition against the introduction of personal material into literary texts was not of course strictly adhered to by every medieval writer, but its influence was certainly wide-spread. Even as late as 1591 one finds Sir John Harington claiming that one of Ariosto's faults is that he speaks too much in his own person.[2] The change in attitude which allowed E.K. to state openly that Colin Clout "shadowed" Spenser demands some explanation.

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[1] European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, translated by Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), pp.515-8.

[2] "A Preface, or rather a Briefe Apologie of Poetrie", in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. Gregory G. Smith, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904), II : 217. Hereafter referred to as ECE.

Perhaps the most acceptable solution to the mystery is that proposed by John Buxton who reminds his readers that the Renaissance was a period of increased self-consciousness and that this phenomenon was supported by a new awareness of man's unique abilities and of the importance of his role within the cosmos.[1] Sir Thomas Browne, writing some decades after Spenser's death, expresses most movingly the ideas which must have been coming into flower during the poet's lifetime. Man, he writes, is

> that amphibious piece betweene a corporall and spirituall essence, that middle forme that linkes those two together, and makes good the method of God and nature, that jumps not from extreames, but unites the incompatible distances by some middle and participating natures; that wee are the breath and similitude of God, it is indisputable, and upon record of holy Scripture, but to call our selves a Microcosme, or little world, I thought it onely a pleasant trope of Rhetorick, till my neare judgement and second thoughts told me there was a reall truth therein....[2]

To Spenser and his contemporaries the fact that man had been created in the image of God was extremely significant. Theoretically, it seemed to indicate that, provided he made proper use of the divine quality of free will, man was capable of attaining a state of limited perfection. Education, accordingly, was seen as a process whose end was "to help nature to her perfection in the complete development of all the various powers".[3] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the writers of the Renaissance, men who had been encouraged to view themselves as unique

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[1] Elizabethan Taste (London: Macmillan, 1963), p.33.

[2] Religio Medici and Other Works, edited by L.C. Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.33.

[3] Richard Mulcaster, quoted in A.L. Rowse, The England of Elizabeth, 2nd edition (1950; reprinted, Bungay, Suffolk, The Reprint Society, 1953), p.567.

beings containing within their natures the potential for both good and evil and the freedom to choose to develop either, should have rejected any notion which implied either that their works were not creations of which they were entitled to be justly proud or that they themselves were not fit subjects for poetry.

The first signs of this revolutionary view that the personal was a proper subject for the literary endeavours of the individual can be traced to mid-fourteenth century Italy. Rosalie Colie observes that Petrarch who

> does not refer to himself by name, although he refers to his own situation in a deliberately recognizable way, set the tune to which Renaissance poets thenceforth sang.[1]

Following Petrarch's example, a number of other Italian and later French poets began to introduce elements of disguised self-reference into their work.[2] Yet others took to writing unashamedly autobiographical pieces and to expressing their sense of their own importance with self-assured enthusiasm. In 1580, for example, Michel de Montaigne published his *Essais* of which he declared, "I am myself the substance of my book".[3] The work was an immediate success. Montaigne's first readers seem to have been fascinated by the matter-of-fact way in which the writer accepted the fact that his own perception of himself was vitally important and that it was perfectly reasonable to compose a literary work

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1 Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p.364.

2 This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, pp.26-8.

3 Montaigne, Essays, translated and edited by J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), p.23.

exactly as his own whimsical preference dictated. An English translation of the *Essais* was published in 1603. However, it is clear that the work was known to Spenser and his countrymen before this date.

English writers were not slow to adopt the new attitude to the self which Montaigne embodied. During the second half of the sixteenth century, they produced a number of semi-autobiographical pieces written in prose, poetry or even a combination of the two. Rudolf Gottfried has noted this and suggests that the origins of autobiography as we know it today can be found in the works of Spenser's contemporaries. He writes:

> The prose account of his own life which the musician Thomas Whythorne composed about 1576 is probably the earliest English autobiography in the modern sense of the term: an honor for which it qualifies... because it is the earliest sustained history of an Englishman's life, written in the first person with a conscious attempt at literary form.[1]

One of the most interesting features of Whythorne's work is the fact that he includes in it a body of poems which he claims to have written at various times. Because of this, his prose passages occasionally seem to become no more than explanations of the circumstances which prompted his poetic endeavours. Another Elizabethan work which mingles poetry and prose in a similar way and which Gottfried seems to think may have been based, at least partially, on fact is George Gascoigne's The Adventures of Master F.J., which was first published in 1573. Gottfried also draws the attention of his readers to the autobiographical pamphlets of Robert Greene and, perhaps most significantly of all, to

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[1] "Autobiography and Art: An Elizabethan Borderland," in Form and and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser, Selected Papers from the English Institute, edited by William Nelson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p.111.

the "curious little tale of his sister's resistance to seduction which Gabriel Harvey set down about 1575".[1] Harvey was one of Spenser's closest friends; thus, the fact that a man whom he admired had seen fit to record such a personal tale may perhaps have influenced the young creator of the Calender.

Harvey was not the only one of Spenser's friends to produce semi-autobiographical material; Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence, Astrophel and Stella, for instance, contains several indications that Astrophel may well have been intended to stand for Sidney himself. Spenser certainly believed this. In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe he addresses his dead friend by that name.[2] In yet another of Sidney's works, The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, which was published in 1590, the figure of Philisides appears to have been intended to represent the author.

It seems, then, that in Elizabethan England at least three different kinds of autobiographical writing were in existence: early attempts at straightforward autobiography; poems which contained heavily disguised autobiographical elements; and poems, like Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, in which autobiographical material was fairly openly employed.

All this surely indicates that Spenser's use of the figure of Colin Clout to "shadow" himself was not the result of an eccentric impulse, but rather a response to a widely felt change in a particular literary convention. However, one cannot dismiss Colin Clout as being nothing more than a routine manifestation of Renaissance self-awareness. While similarities do exist between the shepherd-singer and his creator,

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[1] Gottfried, p.116.

[2] CCCHA, 11.449-50.

a literal equation of the two cannot always be sustained.[1] Because of this, it becomes necessary to try to determine whether any other prevailing social or literary norms can be found to have contributed to the shaping of Spenser's pastoral representative.

One of the strongest influences on poets writing during the Renaissance was the elevation of imitation to a literary doctrine. Spenser and his contemporaries knew that the Romans had to a large extent copied their Greek predecessors, and there followed, perhaps not quite logically, the inference that the merit of literature was increased rather than diminished by the use of imitation. John Buxton reminds his readers of this by stating that, to an Elizabethan,

> decorum was the principle by which the rational order of the world was represented in works of art of whatever kind, and which therefore governed the aesthetic judgement by which men appreciated them. Since the world was founded on reason, perfection was attainable and had once been attained in the arts of Greece and Rome which were therefore to be imitated.[2]

Roger Ascham, an influential educationalist, provides contemporary evidence in support of Buxton's assertion. At the end of his best-known work, The Scholemaster, he advises the aspiring English poet to look beyond the boundaries of his own time and country for his models. He writes: "And therefore, if ye would speake as the best and wisest do, ye must be conversant where the best and wisest are".[3]

Comparisons between the poets of antiquity and their modern

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[1] This matter is discussed more fully in the third chapter of my thesis, pp.100-4.

[2] Buxton, pp.36-7.

[3] ECE, I : 5.

counterparts were made frequently. Francis Meres' Palladis Tamia, which was published in 1598, contains a section entitled "A Comparison of English Poets" in which Meres lists poets who have made a noteworthy contribution to various genres and then names their English successors. His entry on pastoral reads as follows:

> As Theocritus in Greek, Virgil and Mantuan in Latine, Sannazar in Italian and the Author of Amintae Guadia... are the best for Pastorall: so amongst vs the best in this kind are Sir Philip Sidney, Master Challener, Spencer, Stephen Gasson, Abraham Fraunce and Barnefield.[1]

Furthermore, imitation, was not merely a dry critical doctrine; it was a living force and recognised as such by the leading poets of the day. The members of the *Pléiade*, including Du Bellay, whom Jefferson B. Fletcher refers to as the "god of Spenser's critical idolatory while he was at work on The Shepheardes Calender",[2] openly advocated it. In England, Sidney and his circle, like the poets of the *Pléiade*, deliberately followed classical and Italian models in much of their poetry, and even made largely unsuccessful attempts to write English poems using approximations of classical metrical forms. One of the best examples of the extent to which imitation was employed by the poets of sixteenth-century England can be found in one of the works of Thomas Watson. In 1582, Watson, whose death Spenser seems to lament in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe,[3] published The Passionate Century of Sonnets. Each of the poems contained in the volume was prefaced by a prose statement which

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[1] ECE, II : 321.

[2] "Areopagus and *Pléiade*," Journal of English and German Philology, 2 (1898), 445.

[3] VS, MP, I : 159-60.

indicated whose writing the sonnet was intended to imitate. It seems then, that Spenser and his contemporaries actively delighted in imitating not only the great works of Greek and Latin literature, but those of their more immediate European predecessors and contemporaries as well. Merritt Hughes comments on this as follows:

> The peculiarity of the laws of imitation...was that, while ancient poetry claimed first rank among the classics, French and Italian literature had almost equal standing, and the aspiring poet was at liberty to combine whatever material he could find in both sources, quite regardless of higher coherence and of the spirit of the Greek and Latin originals.[1]

There is clear evidence to suggest that Spenser was aware of the fact that he was writing within a literary tradition from the very start of his career. In his introduction to The Shepheardes Calender, E.K. states that, in choosing to write pastoral, Spenser is "following the example of the best and most auncient Poetes, which deuised this kind of wryting... ".[2] He then provides the reader with a rather heterogenous catalogue of the poets whose footsteps he claims Spenser to be following:

> So flew Theocritus....So flew Virgile....So flew Mantuane....So Pétrarque. So Boccace; So Marot, Sanazarus, and also diuers other excellent both Italian and French Poetes, whose foting this author every where followeth....[3]

In view of sixteenth-century attitudes to imitation and the fact that Colin Clout makes all of his significant appearances in Spenser's pastoral writings, it becomes important to note that the impulse

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[1] "Spenser and the Greek Pastoral Triad," Studies in Philology, 20 (1923), p.194.

[2] VS, MP, I :10.

[3] VS, MP, I : 10.

towards self-reference in pastoral poetry seems almost as old as the genre itself.

Little is known about the life of Theocritus, generally accepted for all practical purposes as having been the first pastoral poet. This means that it has become almost impossible to ascertain whether his idylls contain personal material or not. However, J.M. Edmonds indicates, in his introduction to The Greek Bucolic Poets, that evidence does exist to suggest that in the seventh idyll, popularly known as "Harvest Home", Theocritus may have been attempting to describe himself and a group of his friends. Edmonds lends his support to this contention after discussing not only the text of the poem itself, but also a long tradition of *scholia* which indicate that Simichidas, the narrator of the idyll, can be viewed as a representation of the work's author. Edmonds also suggests that autobiographical elements can be found in the sixteenth idyll, "The *Charites*" or "Hiero", in which Theocritus describes the powers of poetry and the role of the poet in human affairs, as well as in the thirtieth, "Love of Cynisca", in which he deals with the love of an ageing poet for a young boy.[1]

There is yet another level upon which the idylls of Theocritus can be said to contain personal material. The Greek poet was born and brought up in the country and R.C. Trevelyan says of his work that

> it is difficult to decide how close a relation the pastoral poems of Theocritus bore to the songs of the Sicilian, South Italian and Koan countryfolk of his day, because scarcely anything remains of Greek popular poetry and folksong. Yet the realistic pastoral idylls...seem to show a direct acquaintance

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[1] In this paragraph my discussion of Theocritus' work is heavily indebted to material contained in the introduction to The Greek Bucolic Poets, edited and translated by J.M. Edmonds, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1938), pp.ix-xxii.

> with the life of shepherds and herdsmen such as we very seldom find in the poems of later pastoral writers, whether classical or modern. Even the more artificial poems...may well be literary refinements of peasant singing-matches and serenades heard by Theocritus in his youth.[1]

The Eclogues of Virgil, arguably the greatest of the classical pastoral poets, are also infused with their author's awareness of, and affection for, country men and matters. However, the poems do not confine themselves to strictly rural themes. Virgil was an educated man and, even in his supposedly pastoral works, he seems unable to resist commenting on either public affairs or his own personal concerns. Unfortunately, the passage of time has successfully obscured most of Virgil's allusions to contemporary matters and this makes it difficult to prove or disprove the centuries old tradition which links Virgil to the figure of Tityrus. In the opening lines of the sixth eclogue, Apollo seems to address Virgil as Tityrus,

> cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem vellit admoniut: "pastorem, Tityre, pingues pascere oportet ovis, deductum dicere carmen".[2]

However, the association is not one which is clearly maintained. Virgil's self-portrait, if that is what it is, is not a consistent one. E.V. Rieu points out that, although Tityrus is a poet as Virgil was, another figure, Meliboeus, loses a farm, as Virgil almost did, and yet a third figure, Menalcas, presents a poetic petition to the emperor, as Virgil is reputed

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[1] A Translation of the Idylls of Theocritus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), p.ix.

[2] When I was used to sing of kings and battles, the Cynthian plucked my ear and warned me: "A shepherd, Tityrus, should feed sheep that are fat, but sing a lay fine-spun." The translation is my own.

to have done.[1] It seems, then, that while Virgil does deal with personal matters in the Eclogues, he does so in an oblique manner.

More than a millenium was to pass before the eclogue tradition, which went into a decline after the death of Virgil, was revived with any measure of success. The first serious attempt to breathe new life into the genre was made by Petrarch when he composed twelve Latin eclogues in imitation of Virgil's. Gilbert Highet says of these that

> although they are far less delicate and sensitive than Virgil's poems, they also are packed with many layers of meaning: the characters are not only nymphs and shepherds, but Petrarch's own friends, and contemporary dignitaries.[2]

In addition, it is widely accepted that Sylvius in the first eclogue and Stupeo in the third were probably both intended to represent the poet himself.[3] Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Petrarch does not assume a consistent role within the sequence.

Boccaccio was the next great Italian poet to write eclogues. He composed sixteen of these at various times during his life. It has been suggested that at least two of them contain personal material.[4] It seems possible, for instance, that the eclogue which, under the thinnest veil of pastoral, deals with the death of the child, Violante, may be an expression of Boccaccio's own grief at the loss of one of his

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1 "The Dispossessed," in Virgil's Pastoral Poems (The Eclogues), edited and translated by E.V. Rieu (London: Penguin, 1954), pp.123-8.

2 The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), p.86.

3 VS, MP, I : 590.

4 Walter W. Greg, Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama (London: Bullen, 1906), pp.25-6.

children. Similarly, it has long been believed that Sylvius, who appears in the fourteenth eclogue, "Olympia", was intended to represent his creator.[1] However, the evidence which has thus far been offered in support of both views appears inconclusive.

Boccaccio's eclogues are less satirical than those of Petrarch, but the work of Mantuan, their immediate successor, is so harshly satirical as to be almost offensive. The element of self-reference in these bitter attacks on widespread wrongdoing is, perhaps understandably, small. Nevertheless, it has been noted that interesting parallels can be drawn between Mantuan and the figure of Umber who appears in his fourth and seventh eclogues.[2]

Petrarch, Boccaccio and Mantuan all influenced the work of Sannazaro. Apart from his longer pastoral works, Sannazaro wrote five piscatory eclogues. Although they contain no single figure like Sincero in *Arcadia* with whom the poet may be identified, Phillis, who appears in many of them, is believed to represent Sannazaro's disdainful beloved, Carmosina Bonifacio.[3] In addition, the bay of Naples, which forms the setting of the poems, would have been familiar to the poet.[4]

Once the revival of interest in classical pastoral had occurred in Italy, it soon spread to France. One of the earliest French poets to take an interest in the eclogue form was Clément Marot. Like so many

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[1] Merritt Y. Hughes, Virgil and Spenser (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1929), p.288.

[2] VS, MP, I : 590.

[3] Greg, p.28.

[4] *Ibid.*

of his predecessors, Marot, too, introduces personal material into his texts. Robin, Colin and perhaps Thenot are three of the pastoral disguises which he seems to have assumed. He appears as Robin in what is probably his best known eclogue, the "*Eglogue au Roy soubs les noms de Pan et Robin*",[1] and as Colin in the well-loved "*Complaincte de ma Dame Loyse de Savoye*".[2]

In 1549, five years after Marot's death, a group of five young students bonded together with Pontus de Tyard and Jean Dorat to form a body which was to be known as the *Pléiade*.[3] Three of them are known to have produced collections of eclogues. Their leader, Pierre de Ronsard, is said to have included a representation of himself in both his third and fourth eclogues.[4] Du Bellay, the group's principal theorist, wrote *Divers Jeux Rustiques* but, as this work consists of direct adaptations of Latin pieces by Andrea Navagero, it contains no significant personal allusions.[5] Bäif, however, created numerous pastoral roles for himself and almost all of his eclogues contain autobiographical material.[6]

Spenser was the first English poet who can really be said to have

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[1] VS, MP, I : 417.

[2] VS, MP, I : 400.

[3] Sidney Lee, The French Renaissance in England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p.186.

[4] Hughes, Virgil and Spenser, pp.287-8.

[5] Lee, p.199.

[6] Hughes, Virgil and Spenser, p.288.

invigorated the Arcadian tradition, although he was not the first to employ the eclogue form. Alexander Barclay composed a number of eclogues in about 1514, a complete edition of which was appended to The Ship of Fools, published in 1570. Barnabe Googe also composed eclogues and published eight of them in his Eclogues, Epitaphs and Sonnets of 1563. However, as neither of these collections made any significant contribution to the development of the genre, and as neither appears to contain autobiographical information, they may be ignored for the purposes of this study.

It seems, then, that when Spenser took up the eclogue form, it carried with it a long tradition of self-reference. However, while this may have been so, Spenser's awareness of and indebtedness to the works of any one of his literary predecessors remains to be established. The task is not an easy one, for Spenser's eclogues combine originality and imitation so skilfully that, as E.K. noticed so many centuries ago, "few but they be wel sented can trace him out".[1]

Considerable controversy rages, for instance, over the question of the magnitude of Spenser's supposed debt to Theocritus, whose Idylls are mentioned in almost every Elizabethan reference to the sources of The Shepheardes Calender. Contemporary commentators are, however, almost undoubtedly under the influence of E.K. who, in the "General Argument of the Whole Book", mentions Theocritus"in whom is more ground of authoritie then in Virgile".[2] Spenser certainly was aware of the position occupied by Theocritus within the pastoral tradition, and it

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[1] VS, MP, I : 10.

[2] VS, MP, I : 12.

also seems probable that he had some command of Greek,[1] but whether he ever read the Idylls in the original seems, at the very least, questionable. Merritt Hughes points out that no edition of this work was published in England prior to the composition of The Shepheardes Calender and that, furthermore, Theocritus was not taught at Cambridge while Spenser studied there. Frank Kermode also seems to doubt that Spenser was directly influenced by Theocritus. He says of the often noticed linguistic similarities between the styles of the two poets that

> although the provincialisms and archaisms conscientiously used by Spenser in his eclogues descend ultimately from the Doric of Theocritus, it is not even certain that Spenser knew the Greek poet at first hand; he is showing his familiarity with the laws of poetry and the practice of the best modern French poets.[2]

It seems unlikely, therefore, that Theocritus' tentative and possibly ambiguous use of self-reference in his Idylls could have exerted any direct influence on the creation of Colin Clout. Nevertheless, the Greek poet established a precedent and was imitated by successive generations of poets. These poets in their turn are likely to have influenced Spenser.

While Spenser might not have been directly acquainted with the Idylls, he would certainly have read, and might even have studied, Virgil's eclogues. E.K's glosses indicate that he is aware of the possible element of disguised self-reference present in the Eclogues and that he believes that Spenser has been influenced by this. In his first

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[1] VS, Life, p.14 and p.106.

[2] English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell, edited by Frank Kermode (London: Harrap, 1952), p.30.

gloss on "Ianvarye" he informs the reader that Colin Clout is the name under which

> this Poete secretly shadoweth himself, as sometime did Virgil under the name of Tityrus, thinking it much fitter then such Latine names, for the great vnlikelyhoode of the language.[1]

Spenser's identification with Colin is far more consistent than that of Virgil with Tityrus, but when one remembers that Spenser's education would have grounded him thoroughly in all the popular Latin classics,[2] that Virgil was universally admired during the English Renaissance, that the text of the Eclogues, both in the original and in various translations,[3] would have been readily available to Spenser, and that the English poet not only translated and adapted the *Culex*,[4] but also chose to begin The Faerie Qveene with lines which echo what was then generally accepted as the opening of the Aeneid,[5] then it becomes difficult to believe that no direct link exists between Tityrus and Colin Clout.

Nevertheless, it is also important to remember that Spenser and his contemporaries appear to have been as much influenced by the poets of Italy and France as they were by those of Greece and Rome. Harvey comments dolefully on this situation in one of his published letters to Spenser. He writes: "The French and Italian when so highlye regarded

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[1] VS, MP, I : 18.

[2] VS, Life, p.14.

[3] Henry Burrowes Lathrop, Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman (1477-1620), University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, 35 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1933), p.156.

[4] VS, MP, II : 545.

[5] FQ, I.i.1, ll.1-4.

of Schollers? The Latine and Greeke, when so lightly?"[1] Despite opposition from conservatives like Harvey, the influence of Italian literature on that of Elizabethan England was considerable. J.R. Hale points out that over four hundred titles, covering the work of two hundred and twenty-five Italian authors, were translated into English between 1549 and 1640 and that more than one third of the English plays which survive from the same period show signs of Italian influence.[2] Furthermore, it is likely that many poets, including Spenser, would have been able to read Italian works in their original form.

The influence exerted on Spenser by Boccaccio's pastoral poems and Sannazaro's piscatory eclogues seems to have been slight. Parallels between the poets' works can be traced, but all of the features which they have in common occur in numerous other pastorals as well. The influence of Petrarch and Mantuan on the composition of the Calender is more clearly discernible. Petrarch's eclogues would almost certainly have been known to Spenser, as they would by that time have been brought to prominence by the publication of the Cologne folio edition of 1473. It, thus, seems very likely that Colin's role as an unhappy lover may have its roots in Petrarch's presentation of himself in a similar guise. Mantuan was widely read in the sixteenth century and was particularly popular in England.[3] George Turberville published a translation of Mantuan's first nine eclogues in 1567. However, Mantuan's influence

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[1] OS, p.621.

[2] England and the Italian Renaissance (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p.20.

[3] Patrick Cullen, Spenser, Marvell and Renaissance Pastoral (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp.2-3.

on Spenser appears most marked in the moral eclogues of The Shepheardes Calender. The figure of Colin Clout seems very different from that of Umber. Mantuan's pastoral representative is primarily a satiric mouthpiece whereas Colin is a complex creation whose function in the Calender is not an overtly satiric one.

The thirty years war which raged between 1494 and 1525 brought Frenchmen into contact with Italian culture. A number of new ideas soon took root in French soil, and, after the signing of the Peace of Troyes between England and France in 1564, these quickly spread to the former country.[1] Many translations of French works were published in England during the sixteenth century, but, as Lee points out,

> it was not only avowed translation from the French which...largely fashioned Tudor literature, but adaption, imitation and assimilation of suggestion as well.[2]

Spenser, like many poets of his generation, shows signs of all of these influences in his work. His first published poems seem to have been renderings of a translation by Marot of one of Petrarch's canzoni, "*Standomi un giorno solo alla finestra*", and of a number of Du Bellay's sonnets. These appeared in A Theatre wherein be represented as wel the miseries and calamities that follow the voluptuous Worldlings, as also the greate ioyes and plesures which the faithfull do enioy. An argument both profitable and delectable to all that sincerely loue the Word of God. Deuised by S. John vander Noodt published in London in 1569. The translations indicate that Spenser had a good command of

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[1] Hugh M. Richmond, Puritans and Libertines: Anglo-French Literary Relations in the Reformation (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1981), p.14.

[2] Lee, p.48.

French, and that he had the opportunity to encounter at least some of the poems of both Marot and Du Bellay at an early age.

The figure of Colin Clout can be shown to owe a great deal to Marot's influence. E.K. says in his gloss on Colin that "the word Colin is Frenche, and vsed of the French Poete Marot".[1] E.K. seems to have been referring to Marot's "*Complaincte de ma Dame Loyse de Savoye*" in which the figure of Colin appears to represent its creator. Lines from this elegiac eclogue are echoed not only in "Nouember", which E.K. claims imitates Marot's dirge,[2] but also in "Ianvarye" and "Aprill" in which Colin Clout plays a prominent role.[3] Marot also makes use of disguised self-reference in another of his pastoral poems, the "*Eglogue au Roy soubs les noms de Pan et Robin*" on which Spenser's "December" seems to have been based.[4]

However, while there are links between the poems, they are by no means indentical. Owen J. Reamer shows that less than twenty percent of Marot's "*Eglogue au Roy*" was directly or near-directly translated by Spenser.[5] Marot's poem is an appeal to his royal patron. It makes little mention of winter and ends optimistically. "December" ends on a note of undisguised melancholy. The young Colin has much in common with the young Robin, but in old age their roles diverge. Robin, in the autumn of his days, cries out for acknowledgement; Colin, with winter

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[1] VS, MP, I : 17.

[2] VS, MP, I : 104.

[3] VS, MP, I : 244-52 and 274-90.

[4] VS, MP, I : 417-26.

[5] "Spenser's Debt to Marot - Re-examined," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 10 (1969), pp.504-27.

already upon him, makes a profound comment on life itself. Nevertheless, while Spenser never uses Colin to demand recognition for himself as Marot does Robin, it is worth noting that Colin is presented as a great poet and that, by depicting him in this way, Spenser may have been hoping to enhance his own reputation. Spenser does not ape Marot, but, as Reamer indicates, he finds in the French poet "certain ideas and details which he can readily employ to further a preconceived purpose of his own".[1]

It is also possible that Ronsard and Bäif influenced Spenser's presentation of Colin Clout. Both poets assume pastoral masks in some of their poems, but, in spite of this, none of their disguises seems to have been full enough or consistent enough to have had a really significant effect on the complex character and functions of Colin Clout.

It is far from easy to determine the extent of Spenser's debt to any one of his predecessors and, perhaps, it is not vitally important that one should do so. Disguised self-reference was an accepted feature of pastoral poetry by the sixteenth century and, as Hallett Smith points out,

> when a poet is writing in a convention he is aware of more than one example of the convention he is using. He feels the meaning of that convention and is therefore more significantly guided by it than he is by the wording of any particular example of it.[2]

It seems, then, that Spenser's Colin Clout can be viewed as the product of a cumulative process of creative imitation but it would be foolish

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[1] Reamer, p.521.

[2] "The Amoretti: 'Most Goodly Temperature'," in Form and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser, edited by William Nelson, Selected Papers from the English Institute (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p.124.

to assume that Spenser was influenced by the pastoral norms of disguised self-reference to the exclusion of all other literary manifestations of the device.

Evidence of disguised self-reference can also be found in a great deal of satiric writing. While the poems in which Colin Clout makes his appearances are not formal satires, they do contain satiric elements. In The Shepheardes Calender and the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene, Colin utters no overt condemnations of vice or folly, although he does seem to serve an implicit moral purpose in both works. In the Calender he exemplifies the dangers of loving foolishly, and in The Faerie Qveene he explains the moral significance of the dancing Graces to Calidore. In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe he appears to fulfil a far more clearly discernible satiric function. The poem includes a passage in which Colin presents his fellow shepherds with a scathing denunciation of some of the examples of vice and folly encountered by him at Cynthia's court. Colin may not have been created to serve a consistent satiric purpose, but the poems in which he appears all contain didactic elements and, when it suits Spenser to do so, he does not shrink from using Colin as a satiric mouth-piece.

A close association traditionally exists between satire and pastoral. Peter V. Marinelli claims that "satire, moralizing and allegory are merely the inborn tendencies of pastoral rendered overt and explicit",[1] and Hallett Smith expresses a similar view by stating that the great device of pastoral is "to contrast the simple, natural goodness of the pastoral ideal...to the vanity and ambition of the world".[2] It seems probable

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[1] Pastoral, The Critical Idiom (London: Methuen, 1971), p.12.

[2] Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning and Expression (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952), p.56.

that Spenser and his contemporaries would have been in full agreement with these opinions. Sir Philip Sidney, himself a pastoral poet, wrote of the genre that it

> sometimes, vnder the prettie tales of Wolves and Sheepe, can include the whole considerations of wrong dooing and patience; sometimes shew that contention for trifles can get but a trifling victorie.[1]

There are a number of possible explanations for the fact that pastoral seems to lend itself to the inclusion of satiric elements. Satire is a dangerous form which can easily provoke the wrath of its butts. Spenser would have been well aware of the risks involved in writing satire. His first printer, Hugh Singleton, was at one time condemned to lose his hand for publishing John Stubbs's The discouerie of a gaping gulf, a work which offended Queen Elizabeth I.[2] The assumption of a pastoral disguise may help to protect the satirist from the consequences of his actions by making it appear that his accusations proceed from an innocent and virtuous source. One of Spenser's contemporaries, William Webbe, clearly felt that many pastoral poets were aware of this. He writes:

> although the matter they take in hand seemeth commonlie in appearaunce rude and homely, as the vsuall talke of simple clownes, yet doo they indeede vtter in the same much pleasaunt and profitable delight. For vnder these personnes, as it were in a cloake of simplicitie, they would eyther sette foorth the prayses of theyr freendes, without the note of flattery, or

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[1] ECE, I : 175-6.

[2] Jonathan Goldberg, "The Poet's Authority: Spenser, Jonson and James VI and I", Genre, 15 (Spring/Summer, 1982), p.82.

> enueigh grieuously against abuses, without any token of bytternesse.[1]

The satirist's role is an ambivalent one. Ronald Paulson suggests that the satirist is

> purifier and saviour while at the same time scapegoat. What he does is good - what he asserts is true; but the fact that he does it...makes him a figure to be feared and driven out of decent society. This primitive ambiguity is a two-edged weapon that most satirists...have to cope with....[2]

One of the most effective ways of coping with the two-edged blade of satire is to assume an appropriate personality in order to deliver one's attack. By associating himself with a shepherd, the satirist not only presents himself as being free of guile, malice and ambition, but also invests himself with a vast and mysterious authority. Christ is often described as the great shepherd in Christian literature. In addition, most Elizabethans would have been aware that the legendary figures of Orpheus, David and Menenius Agrippa were shepherds before fate intervened in their lives. Colin's words, as Spenser must have known, carry far more weight than they would have had they been delivered by the poet of whom John Aubrey writes, "Mr Beeston sayes he was a little man, wore short haire, little band and little cuffs".[3]

Spenser's Colin Clout does, on occasion, serve as his creator's satiric mouth-piece, but he is very different from the urbane satirist-personae which can be found in the works of the great classical satirists,

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[1] ECE, I : 262.

[2] The Fictions of Satire (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p.76.

[3] Aubrey's Brief Lives, edited by Oliver Lawson Dick (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960), p.282.

Horace, Juvenal and Persius. Instead, Colin seems to owe a debt to an English satiric tradition. William Nelson notes this without surprise. He comments that

> it was inevitable that Spenser would place himself in the tradition of Langland. During his apprenticeship to poetry when decorum demanded that he follow earlier poets, the Piers tradition of satire was the only continuous poetic tradition in England which he could imitate.[1]

By associating himself with Langland and his heirs, Spenser stood to gain a number of advantages. In the first place, early English satire is inextricably bound to some of the conventions of medieval dream vision poetry and to the traditional figure of the dreamer who controls the form. The latter figure, who is often represented as the recipient of divinely inspired wisdom and as the chosen instrument of God's will, possesses far more authority and is a far more flexible and complex figure than is that of the classical satirist-persona. In the second place, the rural simplicity embodied in the Piers figures of early English poetry enabled them to address themselves directly to the concerns of what was still essentially an agrarian society. Spenser's humble shepherd would have struck a different chord in the hearts of his English readers from that which would have been struck by the cultured criticisms of Horace's eminently civilised speaker. Finally, by acclaiming his English predecessors, Spenser would have effectively established his credentials as a modern, innovative poet who, like Du Bellay, openly advocated a pride in the vernacular and in native poetic traditions.

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[1] "The Visions of Piers Plowman and The Faerie Queene," in Form and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser, edited by William Nelson, Selected Papers from the English Institute (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p.4.

The two most important English influences on Spenser's Colin Clout seem to have been the works of Langland and those of Skelton. The high regard in which Langland was held by the Elizabethans is indicated not only by the numbers of his avowed imitators,[1] but also by the fact that he is commended by several of the period's leading critics. He is, for instance, the only English poet mentioned by Puttenham as being a suitable model for satire.[2] It is also clear that the Elizabethans associated Piers with his creator. Francis Meres mentions "Piers Plowman" first in his list of those English writers noted for satire.[3] Piers Plowman and Colin Clout do have something in common. They are both simple rural figures who perform a didactic function. The parallel is most clearly marked in the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene, when Colin, like Piers, is granted a miraculous vision of divine truth which he then proceeds to interpret.

Skelton's influence on Colin is even more clearly discernible. The name Colin Clout is quite obviously intended to remind Spenser's readers of Skelton's shepherd of the same name. Paul McLane draws some interesting parallels between the two figures. He writes:

> Another somewhat ignored influence on the language of the Calender is the choice of Colin Clout from Skelton's poem of the same name as the main character. This choice is, of course, motivated by the allegory, for Colin, as in Skelton, at times represents the people of England. Besides being a man of the people, Skelton's Colin is a rustic. Hence he uses

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[1] Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry, pp.206-12.

[2] ECE, II : 27.

[3] ECE, II : 320.

> a homely, colloquial speech and deliberately rough verses....In the Latin Epilogue, Skelton acknowledges that Colin's lines are purposely unpolished and clumsy. Similarly, in the June eclogue Spenser's Colin confesses: "I wote my rymes bene rough and rudely drest." Spenser's Colin is a man of the people as well as a shepherd, it is likewise fitting for him to speak as an untutored rustic.[1]

Colin's modest description of his verses is not supported by the text, but this does not negate the importance of his disclaimer.

It seems, then, that Spenser's Colin Clout, as well as being a product of Renaissance self-awareness and of a long pastoral tradition of disguised self-reference also owes a debt to an essentially English satiric tradition. However, even this is not enough to account for his peculiarities. It has already been indicated that the poems contain too little accurate biographical material to be viewed as an exercise in autobiography, and also, that Spenser's identification of himself with Colin is far more consistent than was usual in terms of pastoral conventions. One should also note that Langland makes no overt attempt to associate himself with Piers and indicates only indirectly that he may be linked to the dreamer.[2] Similarly, Skelton avoids declaring openly that Colin is his mouthpiece. Spenser, however, seems to wish to publicise his connection with Colin. If one of the chief functions of assuming a satiric persona is to protect the satirist from those whom he attacks, why should Spenser seem so eager to acknowledge that Colin is his pastoral shadow?

The answer to this question can, perhaps, be found in considering

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[1] McLane, pp.306-7.

[2] Langland's use of autobiographical material in Piers Plowman is briefly discussed in Piers Plowman: An Edition of the C-text, edited by Derek Pearsall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp.97-9.

three related matters: the social conditions under which Spenser lived, the audience for whom he wrote, and the Renaissance attitude to praise. It has already been suggested that the Renaissance was a period of increased self-awareness in which new value was placed upon the individual. Yet, in spite of this, a man's progress often depended on his ability to attract the notice of a powerful patron. Some Elizabethan poets, like Sidney, were themselves influential personages, but, as John F. Danby points out, those who were not "depended on patronage, if not...for the very means of livelihood, certainly for advancement".[1]

Spenser's career shows him to have been no exception to this norm. His association with Leicester's household, his Irish appointments, his Kilcolman estate, and his pension of fifty pounds a year were all granted to him as a result of his poetic ability, and it seems possible that, had he been more fortunate in his patrons, his material rewards might have been even greater.[2] Spenser's work also shows that, far from having been the passive recipient of these favours, he deliberately sought them by dedicating poems to potential patrons and by frequently including complimentary references to public persons in his works. Of the major poems in which Colin Clout appears, The Shepheardes Calender is dedicated to Sidney, Colin Clouts Come Home Againe to Raleigh, and The Faerie Qveene to Elizabeth I. In addition, the last of these poems is accompanied by no fewer than seventeen dedicatory sonnets addressed

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1 "The Poets on Fortune's Hill: Literature and Society, 1580-1610," Cambridge Journal, 2 (1949), p.201.

2 Of Spenser's patrons, Sidney died young, Leicester was too conservative, and Raleigh, and later Essex, fell into royal disfavour. In addition, all of these alienated Burghley.

to the same number of influential courtiers.

Thomas H. Cain makes the interesting point that, when praise for living persons occurs in Spenser's writing, the poet's self-representation usually accompanies it.[1] In the "Aprill" eclogue, the "lay of Elisa", for instance, is attributed to Colin and it is that shepherd too who praises Cynthia's nymphs and poets in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe. Cain explains this phenomenon by stating that, while it is in part a manifestation of the humanist's glorification of the poet, "the speaker of praise also advertises his role because encomium expects a reward, and Spenser is a candidate for no less than royal patronage".[2] However, for fear of being accused of *braggadoccio*, Spenser could not associate himself too ostentatiously with his work.[3] For this reason, he adopts the pseudonym of "Immerito", pretends that E.K. is responsible for the publication of the Calender, allows Ponsonby to take the blame for publishing the Complaints, and assumes the guise of Colin Clout, while making sure that E.K's gloss will prevent any reader from failing to notice the association.

Modern readers occasionally seem to feel that Spenser's use of praise detracts from the dignity of the poet's role. Those who adopt this view have failed to realise that encomium had an established position within the pastoral tradition,[4] that the rules of epideictic rhetoric and the

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1 Praise in "The Faerie Queene" (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p.2.

2 Cain, p.2.

3 J.W. Saunders, "The Façade of Morality," in That Soueraine Light: Essays in Honor of Edmund Spenser (1552-1952), edited by William R. Mueller and Don Cameron Allen (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), pp.17-8.

4 Cullen, p.4 and W. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), pp.13-4.

form itself would have been familar to Spenser's first readers,[1] and that Spenser and his contemporaries saw praise as having a moral or didactic function.[2] The Renaissance belief in the moral utility of praise was based on the following premises: that by praising a virtuous man, others, and particularly the young, would be encouraged to emulate him, that the object of the praise might thus be moved to lead an even better life, and that the corrupt by reading the praises of the worthy might come to a realisation of the depths of their degradation.[3] In this way, by appealing to the accepted place of praise poetry in pastoral writing and classical literature and by emphasising its didactic functions, the Renaissance poet could successfully defend himself against charges of adulation.

The question of Colin's moral or didactic function is an extremely interesting one. Curtius notes that didactic poetry is one of the few poetic genres in which some degree of self-reference has always been permissible.[4] Colin is in many ways a moralist. By presenting him as such Spenser is protecting his poetry from being stigmatised as foolish and worthless. Medieval doubts about whether poetry had any value at all still lingered in many sixteenth-century minds. Several of Spenser's contemporaries, including Lodge, Markham, Turberville, Grimald, Gascoigne, Edwards, Underdown and Howell, actually retracted

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1 O.B. Hardison, Jr., The Enduring Monument: A Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p.42.

2 ECE, II : 25.

3 Hardison, pp.30-1.

4 Curtius, p.515.

all but their moral poetry at various stages of their lives.[1] It is also noteworthy that three of the four best-selling books of verse produced during the sixteenth century are overtly didactic in their purposes. The volumes in question are the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter, Robert Southwell's Saint Peter's Complaint and William Hunnis's Seven Sobs of a Sorrowful Soule for Sinne.[2] The readers responsible for buying these works in such numbers would have warmed to Spenser's moral gravity and appreciated what Saunders refers to as the "eminently quotable homilectic didactism" which can be found in some of Colin's statements.[3] By introducing himself into his poems as a moralist, Spenser both conforms to a tradition and ensures that his pastoral persona will appeal to a wide circle of readers.

There remains yet another possible reason for Spenser's decision to "shadow" aspects of himself in the figure of Colin Clout. One of the characteristic claims of the Renaissance poet is that his gifts give him the ability to confer immortality on those whom he chooses to describe. This conviction was probably occasioned, at least in part, by the fact that the new interest in classical literature made Spenser and his contemporaries familiar with long-dead figures like Catullus's Lesbia and Horace's Maecenas and, thus, made them aware that the names and characteristics of their own friends and lovers might be preserved in poetry. Sidney Lee also points out that "Ronsard and his friends and

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[1] Saunders, pp.10-11.

[2] Saunders, pp.3-4.

[3] Saunders, p.15.

disciples repeatedly claimed immortality for their names, for their poetry and for all whom they celebrated in verse",[1] and that, where the French poets led, the English soon followed. Spenser's desire for immortality can be discerned from the very beginning of his career, for he not only models himself on famous poets of the past, but also boldly claims that his first work will defy the ravages of time.

> Loe I haue made a Calender for euery yeare,
> That steele in strength, and time in durance shall outweare:
> And if I marked well the starres reuolution,
> It shall continewe till the worlds dissolution.[2]

This view of poetry as a defence against time and death allows the poet to offer a gift of inestimable worth to his friends and patrons. Is it not possible that Spenser, in choosing to associate himself with Colin, was hoping by that means to ensure for himself a kind of immortality which would preserve more than just his name?

It would appear, then, that Spenser's Colin Clout is more than a careless attempt at autobiography. Instead one should perhaps view him as the product of two forces, that of the desire to experiment and that of the need for expediency. Colin seems to have been created in response to a Renaissance desire to experiment with self-presentation, self-exploration and the recreation in the vernacular of classical forms like the eclogue. In addition, he also appears to have been designed to serve certain fundamentally pragmatic ends. Spenser's Colin Clout appears in didactic pastorals several of which contain satiric elements. The conventions of this type of poetry not only permitted, demanded that, if decorum was to be observed, Spenser should make

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[1] Lee, p.276.

[2] VS, MP, I : 120.

use of disguised self-reference. The figure of Colin Clout was perhaps also created in order to protect Spenser from the anger of the objects of his satire, to make his satire more effective, to shield him from accusations of flattery or *braggadoccio*, to serve as his signature and to ensure for him a limited kind of immortality.

CHAPTER 2

COLIN CLOUT IN THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDER

As the preceding chapter indicates, to generalise about the character or role of Spenser's Colin Clout may be hazardous. Most critical attempts to ascribe a single clearly-defined function to the figure seem, if followed to their logical conclusions, to end in over-simplification and, consequently, in some degree of falisification. A possible reason for this is that generalisations encourage one to neglect the fact that literary characters can only really be said to exist in relation to the text or texts in which they appear. As David Lawton points out, a literary persona "is more likely to be a means than an end".[1] The primary function of any such figure is rarely to attract attention to itself for its own sake. We should not, therefore, regard Colin Clout as an independent entity, but should view him as a means whereby Spenser emphasises various aspects of his poems and adds a further dimension to his presentation of some of the more important issues, themes and conflicts appearing within these works. It is important to examine closely the poems in which Colin appears, to consider the possible reasons for their composition, and to inquire into Colin's function within them.

Colin Clout first appeared in The Shepheardes Calender, a work

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[1] "Skelton's Use of Persona," Essays in Criticism, 30 (1980), p.9.

which was entered on the Stationer's Register by the printer, Hugh Singleton, on the 5th December, 1579.[1] This collection of eclogues was Spenser's first serious bid for poetic fame and, as such, was undoubtedly successful. The high regard in which Spenser's contemporaries held the work is clearly demonstrated by the amount of critical praise which was lavished upon it. In An Apology for Poetry (probably composed c.1583 although not printed until 1595) Sir Philip Sidney, despite the fact that he obviously has grave reservations about the rustic language employed in the eclogues, describes The Shepheardes Calender as "worthy the reading".[2] Similarly, George Puttenham, in his Art of English Poesy (1589), lauds Spenser's poetic ability on the strength of the evidence provided by these twelve brief poems,[3] and Francis Meres, in his critical addendum to Palladis Tamia (a work appearing in 1598 only months before Spenser's death), refers to The Shepheardes Calender and likens Spenser's eclogues to those of Theocritus and of Virgil.[4]

Spenser's poetry was favourably received, not only by his fellow writers and scholarly peers, but also by the ordinary Elizabethan reader. The Shepheardes Calender was republished no less than four times during its creator's lifetime[5] and, in addition to this, a number of extracts from it were published in various popular anthologies. J.W. Saunders, for instance, points out that Robert Allot's anthology of quotations, England's Parnassus (1600), contains almost twice as

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1 VS, Life, p.63.

2 ECE, I : 196.

3 ECE, II : 65.

4 ECE, II : 316.

5 H.S.V. Jones, A Spenser Handbook (New York : F.S. Crofts, 1947), p.39.

many quotations from Spenser as it does from any other poet.[1]

However, while Spenser's contemporaries may have shown genuine enthusiasm for the Calender, some later critics have been less kind. Although most of them pay tribute to the work as having heralded the New Poetry of the Elizabethan Age,[2] few seem to have been able to read the poems with any pleasure. William Webbe, in his Discourse of English Poetry (1586), writes of the Calender with unrestrained enthusiasm: "I neuer hearde as yet any that hath reade it, which hath not with much admiration commended it."[3] C.S. Lewis, writing in 1954, makes a very different claim: "I have never in my life met anyone who spoke of it [The Shepheardes Calender] in the tones that betray real enjoyment."[4]

The disparity between these two comments seems to indicate that, at least to some extent, the original popularity of the Calender was rooted in the social conditions and literary mores which prevailed at the time of its publication. As a result of this, modern readers, familiar with very different conventions and unable or unwilling to suspend their allegiance to these, will almost certainly find themselves unable to echo the delighted responses of Spenser's first readers. It is important, therefore, not only to study Colin Clout in relation to his role in The Shepheardes Calender, but also to study the Calender itself in relation to its historical context.

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1 Saunders, p.4.

2 Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry, p.33.

3 ECE, I : 264.

4 English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, The Oxford History of English Literature, III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p.363.

It has been suggested in the previous chapter that Spenser may have composed much of his poetry because he wished to establish himself as a serious poet in the eyes of his contemporaries and to attract the notice of those who possessed the necessary influence to advance his political career. However, E.K.'s preface to the Calender would seem to suggest that Spenser was also attempting to produce work of such merit that it would continue to be read and admired for generations to come. Given that Spenser may have had these three objectives in mind while he was composing his eclogues, it may also be valuable to attempt to assess the possible influence of each of them on both the form and content of the finished work of which Colin Clout is an integral part.

Colin Clout appears, is mentioned, or is quoted in seven of the Calender's twelve eclogues. He is the centre about which the themes and concerns of the work revolve, the character whose life is defined by the poems, and the figure which most consistently reflects the ambitions and experiences of the Calender's creator.

Walter W. Greg describes Colin's role in shaping the design of The Shepheardes Calender as follows:

> the architectonic basis of Spenser's design consists of the three Colin eclogues standing respectively at the beginning, in the middle and at the close of the year. These are symmetrically arranged: the "Ianvarye" and "December" are both alike monologues and agree in the stanza used, while "Iune" is a dialogue and likewise differs in metrical form. This latter is supported as it were by two subsidiary eclogues, those of "Aprill" and "Avgvst", in both of which another shepherd sings one of Colin's lays and refers incidentally to his passion for Rosalind. It is upon this framework that are woven the various moral, polemical and idyllic themes which Spenser introduces.[1]

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[1] Greg, p.91.

Greg's analysis of Spenser's design contains certain flaws. He neglects to note, for instance, that Colin appears in "Nouember" and also that he is discussed by Cuddie and Piers in "October". Nevertheless, while one may feel that Greg's suggested design is too neat and restricted to be accepted without reserve, it remains true that Colin forms a vital part of The Shepheardes Calender. This makes it likely that Spenser's presentation of Colin shows the influence of the three objectives of the poem suggested above.

If one considers textual evidence alone, then Spenser's primary intention in composing his twelve eclogues seems to have been to produce an enduring work of art. The opening lines of his epilogue to the Calender, for instance, clearly assert this ambition:

> Loe I haue made a Calender for euery yeare,
> That steele in strength, and time in durance shall outweare:
> And if I marked well the starres reuolution,
> It shall continewe till the worlds dissolution.[1]

Colin Clout plays an important role in Spenser's "Calender for euery yeare". He fulfils a number of functions within it and each of these, as the following discussion will seek to show, contributes significantly to that intrinsic merit which has ensured the Calender's survival for more than four hundred years.

We have already noted Greg's suggestion that the Colin eclogues provide the Calender with a balanced design. In addition, Colin's continuing presence within the poems contributes to the thematic unity of the work. Without Colin, Spenser's eclogues might appear to the casual reader as an uncomfortably heterogenous assortment of poems. It may, of course, be argued that a lack of unity within the Calender

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[1] VS, MP, I : 120.

would be unlikely to have been regarded as a serious flaw by Spenser's contemporaries. Unity is not a distinguishing feature of the collected eclogues of Theocritus nor of those of Virgil. Spenser's first readers would certainly have been aware of this. On the other hand, Spenser's adoption of a calendar format clearly shows that he was interested in composing not twelve disparate poems, but twelve poems which could be seen to be linked, albeit loosely, one to another, and which, therefore, would form an aesthetic whole. The framework of the year which supports the eclogues of The Shepheardes Calender provides the work with no more than an illusion of unity. It is Colin's fortunes, Colin's frustration, and Colin's blighted love for Rosalind which catch and keep the reader's attention. The name Colin echoes through the eclogues until the reader's concern for him almost equals that voiced by his fellow shepherds. Colin utters the eclogues which begin and end the Calender and this, together with his presence in so many of the intervening eclogues, infuses the work with an element of harmonious coherence which it might otherwise have lacked.

However, it is unlikely that Spenser would have created a figure as complex as Colin Clout merely for reasons of architectural convenience. Because of this, it becomes necessary to try to determine Colin's nature and functions more precisely. Two main schools of thought appear to emerge from the many conjectures which have been made on the subject. The first of these holds that Colin is intended to stand for Spenser and that, therefore, the character should be regarded primarily as an example of an early attempt at autobiography.[1] The second, on the other hand, contends that Colin is an allegorical figure and that he

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[1] This theory is discussed in the introduction to my thesis, pp.2-11.

should be viewed as an anonymous representative of all mankind. This group tries to discover some pattern within the seemingly arbitrarily linked eclogues of the Calender. Many of its members see Colin's existence as a reflection of the natural seasonal round of birth, growth and decay to which all sublunary life is subject. Certainly, this is an idea which does seem to be present in the work and, furthermore, it is an interpretation which E.K. himself seems to have favoured. In his preface to "Ianvarye", he states that within the poem Colin "compareth his carefull case to the sadde season of the yeare".[1] Moreover, he introduces "December" by describing it as a complaint in which Colin "proportioneth his life to the foure seasons of the yeare".[2] Further evidence in support of this view is provided by the possibility that Spenser's Calender was influenced in a number of important ways by a translation of an anonymous French work, *Le Compost et Kalendrier des bergiers*, first published in Paris in 1493. This influential medley of prose and verse was first translated into English in 1503 and was titled The Kalender of Shepherdes.[3] The main body of the work is introduced by a master shepherd who describes the ways in which a man's life can be said to parallel the progress of a year. Mary Parmenter is one writer who has seen The Shepheardes Calender as "a calendar of man's life".[4] Her article, "Spenser's Twelve Aeglogues Proportionable to the Twelve Monethes", probably

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[1] VS, MP, I : 15.

[2] VS, MP, I : 113.

[3] VS, MP, I : 240.

[4] "Spenser's Twelve Aeglogues Proportionable to the Twelve Monethes," ELH, 3 (1936), p.217.

contains the most comprehensive and convincing exposition of the theory that Spenser's eclogues are based on the traditional moral lessons associated with each of the months of the year. However, even she is not able to provide a satisfactory explanation for Colin's despondency in "Ivne", the month during which nature in the northern hemisphere is at its most fruitful and presents its most benign aspect to man. This discrepancy suggests that Colin Clout's career is not wholly explicable in terms of the relationship between a man's life and the annual natural cycle.

Certain other commentators have tried to overcome the difficulties posed by this recalcitrant eclogue by concentrating on Colin's spiritual growth rather than on his physical or emotional development. Paul McLane writes:

> In terms of the calender pattern and the cycle of the seasons, Colin...is the Christian man, or Everyman..., passing through life and experiencing the disillusionment that dependence on things of this world inevitably brings.[1]

While this view of Colin's role in The Shepheardes Calender may help to account for Colin's persistent gloom, it, too, is not wholly convincing. McLane's theory implies that the central theme of the Calender is the worthlessness of all material things. It is difficult to support this opinion from the text of the poems. In "Aprill", Colin's beautiful lay celebrates the delights offered man by the natural world. In "December", Colin does bid farewell to that world, but he seems to do so, not because he questions its worth, but because his love for Rosalind, a mortal being, has robbed him of the pleasure which he was once able to take in his surroundings, possessions, music and friends.

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[1] McLane, pp.320-1.

Colin forsakes the "things of the world" under the influence of earthly love not under that of divine guidance. Because of this, he cannot be regarded as "the Christian man".

Isobel MacCaffrey offers a different solution to the problem. She suggests that Colin Clout is intended to embody an image of failure and that the purpose of the Calender is to demonstrate the ultimate futility of all human endeavour. She writes that Colin's life

> is congruent with the circle's movement toward "experience" and imminent death. He is an anti-hero, his unredeemed existence tracing a movement which defines the failure of man to realize his own nature. Colin recognizes that submission to the seasonal round has led only to death; his life has passed like a dream, and...he is left alone in a winter landscape.[1]

It is difficult to believe that the primary purpose of the Calender is to express such an uncompromisingly nihilistic view of human existence. In order to accept Isobel MacCaffrey's view one would have to credit Spenser with what seems a curiously modern viewpoint.

An alternative is to regard Colin's trials as having a literary purpose. A.C. Hamilton, for instance, seems to suggest that Colin's life reflects Spenser's poetic development. He views the Calender as being concerned with "the rejection of the pastoral life for the truly dedicated life in the world".[2] This perspective on the poems is also unsatisfactory. Hamilton presents pastoral poetry as a trap from which Spenser must break free if he is ever to embrace the life of the heroic poet "whose high religious calling is to serve the Queen by inspiring her people to all virtuous action".[3] This approach leads

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[1] "Allegory and Pastoral in The Shepheardes Calender," ELH, 36 (1969), pp.90-1.

[2] Hamilton, "The Argument of Spenser's Shepheardes Calender," p.181.

[3] *Ibid.*

him to condemn Colin as self-absorbed and barren and to see "December" as a description of Spenser's escape from pastoral frivolity. Hamilton ignores the fact that Spenser and his contemporaries would have viewed the writing of pastoral poetry as a necessary and fruitful stage in the development of an epic poet. They would not have considered it to be an idle indulgence likely to distract the poet from more important tasks.

John Moore is another who perceives a literary dimension in Spenser's presentation of Colin Clout's development. However, Moore, unlike Hamilton, does not regard the Calender as a description of Spenser's struggle to choose between two conflicting poetic roles. He suggests instead that Colin shows his determination to move beyond pastoral poetry, not just in "December", but throughout the Calender. Moore views the fact that Colin breaks his pipe in "Ianvarye", for example, as being the first indication of his awareness of pastoral limitations. Thereafter, according to Moore, the Calender chronicles a process whereby the aspiring epic poet is educated, by means of his pastoral experience, in the requirements of his new vocation. Colin is described as embarking on a spiritual odyssey which involves him in three main issues.

> First, he must progress from allegiance to Pan, the nature god, to the real Pan, the real All, Christ, the God of all nature, the complete universe he inhabits. Second, he must seek his values not in the temporary and fragile beauty of nature's spring, but in the enduring beauty of heaven's eternal springtime, the non-visible world of the infinite. By doing this, he will not define human happiness in terms of an earthly harvest, but will seek a heavenly harvest free of mutability.... Third, he must define his social role not as a good shepherd who is also a poet, but as a poet who functions as a good shepherd.[1]

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[1] "Colin Breaks His Pipe : A Rendering of the 'January' Eclogue," English Literary Renaissance, 5 (1976), pp.22-3.

Moore's interpretation of Colin's experiences is supported to some extent by the Calender's text. By the end of the work, Colin does indeed seem to have renounced his allegiance to Pan:

> But ah such pryde at length was ill repayde,
> The shepheards God (perdie God was he none)
> My hurtlesse pleasaunce did me ill vpbraide,
> My freedome lorne, my life he lefte to mone.
> (ll. 49-52)

In "December", he also laments the fact that the harvest of his life has been blighted and, in the closing stanzas of the eclogue, abandons his pipe:

> And thus of all my haruest hope I haue
> Nought reaped but a weedye crop of care:
> Which, when I thought haue thresht in swelling sheaue,
> Cockel for corne, and chaffe for barley bare.
> (ll. 121-4)

> My Muse is hoarse and weary of thys stounde:
> Here will I hang my pype vpon this tree,
> Was neuer pype of reede did better sounde.
> (ll. 140-2)

However, as we have already noted in an earlier discussion of McLane's theories, Colin shows no signs of replacing his lost pagan beliefs with Christian ones. In "December", he talks only of death and oblivion, never of resurrection. It seems, then, that the Calender cannot be said to be concerned primarily with the maturation of a pastoral poet into an epic one. Nevertheless, it remains possible to view the work as one which is concerned with poetry, and the shepherd singer, Colin Clout, as an instrument whereby Spenser is able to examine the duties and attributes of the poet.

Approaching the work with this in mind, it is interesting to note that the Calender contains only three poems written in complex verse forms and that all of these are attributed to Colin. The three songs are the "lay of Elisa" which occurs in "Aprill", the sestina of "Avgvst",

and the elegy for Dido which can be found in "Nouember ". The rest of the Calender is written in couplets or in simpler stanzaic patterns.

The first of Colin's songs, the "lay of Elisa", is sung to Thenot by Hobbinol and consists of thirteen nine-line stanzas. Within the stanzas long and short lines recur in a regular pattern. The first, third, fifth, sixth and ninth lines are relatively long, while the intervening lines are relatively short. The metre of the poem has given rise to controversy. C.S. Lewis has suggested that too much time has been devoted to praising the song and too little to the study of its form.[1] He himself seems to have found it impossible to explain the lay's metrics. Helena Shire has offered a most convincing solution to the problem posed by the lay's apparently irregular and yet clearly controlled metre. She points out that the lay seems to have been "devised in the spirit of older English stressed alliterative poetry".[2] She then goes on to state that most of the longer lines contain four main stresses while the shorter ones generally contain two and that the only exception is the last line of each stanza which contains three stressed syllables. According to her observations, then, only the number of unstressed syllables in each line is unpredictable. A close look at the poem appears to support her theory.

Of fáyre *Elísa* be your síluer sóng,
that bléssed wíght:
The flówre of Vírgins, may shee flórish lóng,
In príncely plíght.

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[1] Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, pp.360-1.

[2] A Preface to Spenser, Preface Books (New York : Longman, 1978), p.139.

For shée is *Sýrinx* dáughter without spótte,
Which *Pán* the shépheards Gód of her begót:
So spróng her gráce
Of héauenly ráce,
No mórtall blémishe may her blótte.
(ll. 46-54)

Having analysed the lay's metrics, Helena Shire then goes on to relate Colin's song in praise of the Queen to the Elizabethan dance song, a form in which the poet was free to vary the metrical foot but was encouraged to preserve the stress pattern.

The rhyme scheme of the lay is easier to establish. Each stanza rhymes a b a b c c d d c. Couplet and alternate rhyming are skilfully combined. In addition, the first and second and the third and fourth lines of each stanza often form a syntactical unit. This means that the opening four lines of each stanza suggest two longer lines, each containing six stressed syllables and employing both internal and end rhyming. The opening lines of the lay illustrate this particularly clearly:

Ye dayntye Nymphs, that in this blessed Brooke
doe bathe your brest,
Forsake your watry bowres, and hether looke,
at my request.
(ll. 37-40)

Generally, each stanza seems to fall into three parts. These consist of the first four lines, the next two, and the final three. Each of these parts forms a unit of sense and the division between these sections is emphasised further by the rhyme scheme, although the latter also links the conclusion of the third section to that of the second and, therefore, ensures that each stanza continues to function as a whole.

Other factors which contribute to the impression of ordered harmony created by the work are Spenser's use of alliteration and assonance, his

diction, his carefully chosen images, his symbolic handling of the flowers mentioned in the song and the classical allusions with which it abounds.

A closer look at two of the central stanzas of the lay clearly reveals some of the effects created by Spenser's subtle use of language. Stanzas seven and eight read as follows:

> *Pan* may be proud, that euer he begot
> such a Bellibone,
> And *Syrinx* reioyse, that euer was her lot
> to beare such an one.
> Soone as my younglings cryen for the dam,
> To her will I offer a milkwhite Lamb:
> Shee is my goddesse plaine,
> And I her shepherds swayne
> Albee forswonck and forswatt I am.
>
> I see *Calliope* speede her to the place,
> where my Goddesse shines:
> And after her the other Muses trace,
> with their Violines.
> Bene they not Bay braunches, which they doe beare,
> All for *Elisa* in her hand to weare?
> So sweetely they play,
> And sing all the way,
> That it a heauen is to heare.

Spenser opens stanza seven with a reference to Elisa's supposed parentage. Throughout the lay he suggests that she was fathered by Pan upon Syrinx. Traditional praise poetry frequently credits its object with divine parents. However, in this case, Spenser's choice is particularly appropriate. As E.K. points out, Pan is the "shepheards God".[1] Pan's daughter, therefore, must also be especially important to shepherds. E.K. completes his gloss on Pan by suggesting that, in some places, the pagan deity stands for Christ "who is the verye Pan and god of Shepheardes".[2] In this way, Spenser is able to imply

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[1] VS, MP, I : 43.

[2] *Ibid.*

through his use of pagan and Christian terms that Elisa is of divine descent. Ovid writes that Syrinx was a nymph with whom Pan fell in love and that she was turned into a reed as she fled from him.[1] Ovid describes Syrinx as being very like Diana, the chaste goddess of the hunt, a figure sometimes associated with Queen Elizabeth in poems and paintings of the period.[2] The phrasing of the first four lines of the stanza is very pleasing. Previously, it has been suggested that Elisa's parentage is a reason for honouring her:

> For shee is *Syrinx* daughter without spotte,
> Which *Pan* the shepheards God of her begot:
> So sprong her grace
> Of heauenly race,
> No mortall blemishe may her blotte.
> (ll. 50-54)

Now Spenser seems to suggest that it is Elisa who brings honour to her parents. Pan is urged to be proud of having fathered her. Alliteration links "Pan" and "proud", lending strength to the connection. Similarly, Syrinx is told that she may rejoice at her good fortune. The third and fourth lines of the stanza may contain a discreet reference to the "Magnificat" in which Mary praises God for conferring on her the honour of bearing his son. Syntactically, the third and fourth lines of the stanza parallel the first two. The repetition of words and phrases which this involves heightens the reader's impression of Elisa's exceptional qualities. Interestingly, Spenser uses the rustic term, "Bellibone", meaning "fair maid", to refer to Elisa. By so doing, he emphasises her dual nature and his own humble status. Elisa is both a divine being

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1 The "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, edited and translated by Mary M. Innes (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1955), p.51.

2 E.C. Wilson, England's Eliza (Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press 1939), chap.5, and Frances A. Yates, Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p.29, p.80 and p.169.

and a human maiden. Colin uses occasional rustic or archaic terms to remind his readers of the lay's context. It is supposedly the creation of a simple shepherd.

In the next two lines of the stanza, Colin indicates that he will soon offer Elisa a "milkwhite Lamb". The lines are rich with associations. The lamb is a traditional symbol of purity. It is also used to refer to Christ and is, therefore, associated with redemption. Spenser may also be hoping that his readers will remember that shepherds bearing lambs were the first to honour the infant Christ. The lamb which will be offered to Elisa is to be "milkwhite". The image is significant. Milk is associated with nurturing. In addition, the simile is a rustic one. Combined with Colin's description of lambs crying for their dams, it reminds the reader once again of Colin's rural role.

The relationship between Colin and Elisa is stated simply and explicitly in the next two lines. She is a goddess. He is an adoring shepherd. Again the lines parallel each other syntactically. Elisa's nature is described in the first line which also indicates her relationship to Colin. Colin's very different nature is described in the second line and his relationship to Elisa is restated.

The last line of the stanza forms a strong contrast to its opening lines. The opening lines contain classical references and, except for the use of "Bellibone", are couched in polished language. The closing line of the stanza is almost comically rustic in both content and style. Colin declares that he is Elisa's swain even though he works and is covered in sweat. He uses the archaic words "forswonck" and "forswatt" to describe his condition. Alliteration and assonance give these two words added emphasis and prominence.

The next stanza also opens with a classical reference. Colin sees Calliope, the muse of epic poetry and rhetoric, lead her sisters to where Elisa sits. The use of "I see" is significant. The lay is full of vivid, visual images. Colin frequently describes what he sees or has seen, begs others to see or asks them if they have seen.

In the following two lines Colin suggests that the Muses are bearing tributes of bay leaves to the radiant Elisa. Bay or laurel symbolises victory. The gift of the muses implies that they recognise that Elisa excels in all the arts which they represent. The fact that Elisa is described as shining is also significant. The phrase describes her radiant power and beauty, but also reasserts her connection with Cynthia, the moon goddess. This link has been mentioned earlier in the lay. In the fifth stanza, Colin has claimed that even the sun has been abashed by Elisa's brightness. The tone of the fifth and sixth lines of the stanza is one of reverent wonder. Hardly able to believe his own eyes, Colin phrases his observations in the form of a question. Alliteration links the key words, "bene", "Bay", "braunches" and "beare". The added emphasis thus given them helps to convey his breathless awe more powerfully and, so, assists the reader to share in it.

The last three lines of stanza eight quoted above are simple and melodious. Each of the two shorter lines consists of an iambic foot followed by an anapestic one. This, combined with the alliterative 's' sound in "so", "sweetely" and "sing", gives a gentle, lilting quality to the lines. The slightly longer final line of the stanza is given greater authority by its length. "Heauen" and "heare", the two most important words in the line are linked by alliteration.[1] This

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[1] Of course, the "h's" might not have been sounded in Spenser's day. However, even if this was so, assonance would still have bound the words together.

encourages the reader to make the same association between them which Colin has made. The alliteration on soft, unvoiced sounds in these three lines contrasts pleasingly with the alliteration on the voiced plosive 'b' and the unvoiced plosive, 'p', which dominates the ninth stanza. The reader is left with the impression that ceremonious grandeur has melted into harmonious delight.

The themes and techniques which Spenser uses with such skill in the seventh and eighth stanzas of the lay to Elisa recur throughout the poem. Elisa is praised for her virginity in several stanzas and is linked with the moon, Phoebe or Cynthia, almost as often. She is also associated with the Lady of the Lake, a figure from British rather than classical mythology, and it is even suggested that she should be regarded as a fourth Grace. The flowers, plants and colours with which she is surrounded are significant, too. As well as being decked with bay, she is offered olive branches, a traditional symbol of peace. She is dressed in scarlet, a royal colour, and wears ermine as a symbol of purity. The two flowers with which she is frequently associated in other poems are the rose and the lily. In the lay she is said to be wearing roses and her complexion is compared to the mingled red and white of the roses of Lancaster and York. In the last stanza, Colin calls on the shepherds' daughters to bring her "loued Lillies", a symbol of purity. Both the rose and the lily are often associated with the Virgin Mary. The third stanza describes Elisa wearing red and white and sitting on the green. Her coronet is set with damask roses, daffodils, primroses and violets. The damask rose, as well as being a symbol of love and power, is associated with freshness and a good complexion. The daffodil is a traditional symbol of regard, the primrose of youth and the violet of modesty. In the final stanza of the poem, young girls are commanded to bring Elisa pinks, columbines,

cowslips, kingcups and gelliflowers. These are associated with boldness, the resolve to win, grace, wealth and affection respectively.[1] The maidens' gifts may be seen as the expression of Colin's wish to give these attributes to Elisa or as a recognition of these qualities in her.

The "lay of Elisa" is a fascinating blend of the simple and the sophisticated. Colin, the shepherd, celebrates Queen Elizabeth as chief shepherdess in an English pastoral. The lay's rustic terminology, use of alliteration and strong stress metre reflect this. On the other hand, the poem's classical allusions and courtly imagery keep it from appearing too rude and encourage the reader to consider Colin as a figure possessing considerable poetic ability.

The second of Colin's songs to appear in the Calender is the sestina of "Avgvst", a poem which favourably impressed many of Spenser's contemporaries. William Webbe directed the attention of his readers to it with the following words:

> Looke vppon the rufull song of Colin sung by Cuddie in the Shepheardes Calender, where you shall see a singuler rare deuise of a dittie framed vpon these sixe wordes VVoe, sounde, cryes, part, sleep, augment, which are most prettilie turned and wounde vppe mutually together, expressing wonderfully the dolefulnesse of the song.[2]

Colin's "heauy laye" (l.149) certainly offers proof of Spenser's metrical virtuosity. Technically, the poem is far more complex than the lay to Elisa, but it lacks much of the latter's freshness and charm.

In a number of ways, the work resembles the traditional sestina

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[1] Jean Marsh, The Illuminated Language of Flowers (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973).

[2] ECE, I : 276.

made famous by Petrarch. It consists of six parts each containing six lines of iambic pentameter and makes use of only six rhyme words. The first twelve lines give an indication of the control needed to master the form.

> Ye wastefull woodes beare witnesse of my woe,
> Wherein my plaints did oftentimes resound:
> Ye carelesse byrds are priuie to my cryes,
> Which in your songs were wont to make a part:
> Thou pleasaunt spring hast luld me oft a sleepe,
> Whose streames my tricklinge teares did ofte augment.
> Resort of people doth my greefs augment,
> The walled townes do worke my greater woe
> The forest wide is fitter to resound
> The hollow Echo of my carefull cryes,
> I hate the house, since thence my loue did part,
> Whose waylefull want debarres myne eyes from sleepe.

The poem concludes with an envoi made up of three iambic pentameters.

> And you that feele no woe, when as the sound
> Of these my nightly cryes ye heare apart,
> Let breake your sounder sleepe and pitie augment.

As can be seen above, the rhyme scheme of the envoi suggests that it would be heard as six lines of alternating iambic trimeter and iambic dimeter.

The rhyme scheme of Spenser's sestina is the most important respect in which his poem differs from the conventional form. As the following diagrams indicate, Spenser's sestina rhymes:

(1) a b c d e f
(2) f a b c d e
(3) e f a b c d
(4) d e f a b c
(5) c d e f a b
(6) b c d e f a

In Petrarch's sestinas the rhyme scheme is far more complex. He varies

his six rhymes in the following way:

(1) a b c d e f
(2) f a e b d c
(3) c f d a b e
(4) e c b f a d
(5) d e a c f b
(6) b d f e c a[1]

The sestina of "Avgvst" cannot match the delicacy and complexity of rhyme which characterise Petrarch's more memorable sestinas. Yet it is still significant that Spenser should have included an example of such a sophisticated form in his Calender and that, having done so, he should attribute the poem to Colin Clout. The "Avgvst" sestina lacks the cheerful simplicity and rustic wit evident in the quick roundelay which precedes it, but its polished intricacies, its Petrarchan subject matter and its elevated language would all have impressed the Elizabethan reader and helped to persuade him of Colin's exceptional ability. In fact, the different effects created by the comical, seemingly careless roundelay and the gloomy, severely disciplined stanzas of the sestina would probably have encouraged the reader to view the latter as superior to the former. The roundelay, thus, provides an excellent foil for the sestina.

Spenser's use of words in the sestina is also worthy of admiration. A close look at the first six lines of the poem quoted above shows the enormous care devoted to its construction, a care which is also evident in the rest of the work. In the opening section of his "heauy laye", Colin describes his relationship with the natural world. He tells the

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[1] For my discussion of Spenser's rhyme scheme, I am indebted to the commentary provided in VS, MP, I : 347-9.

reader that his wails echo through woods and harmonize with the songs of birds. He also presents his tears as being augmented by the waters of a spring. In this way, Spenser contrives to blur the distinction between Colin and his rural surroundings. Colin seems able to make nature share in his grief. As the song progresses, so Colin's condition begins, by implication, to alter that of the countryside more and more profoundly. The "wastefull woodes" become a "gastfull groue" (l.170) and the "carelesse byrds" are transformed into "banefull byrds" (l.173). Similarly, in the opening lines of the sestina, Colin notes that the stream which now mingles with his tears was once able to lull him to sleep. Several lines later, he cries "Let stremes of teares supply the place of sleepe" (l.163). Colin's growing gloom is thus reflected in his altered perceptions.

The first six lines of the poem fall into three sections of two lines each. The first contains Colin's plea to the woods, the second, his message to the birds, and the third, his comment on the spring. The first line of each section is linked to the second by a relative pronoun. In addition, each section opens with an address to the natural feature concerned. The address consists of a pronoun followed by an adjective and then a noun. This parallelism stresses the link between Colin and his surroundings and allows the seventh line of the poem, which breaks free from this pattern, to seem even more powerful: "Resort of people doth my greefs augment".

The sestina as a whole contains much alliteration and its opening lines are no exception. The alliteration on 'w' in "wastefull", "woodes", "witnesse" and "woe" gives the first line of the work considerable force. The fact that this alliterative pattern is continued in the

opening word of the second line emphasises the syntactic structuring which is to be repeated in the next four lines. The alliteration on 's' in the last two lines of the section being discussed creates an almost onomatopoeic effect. It seems to echo the soft, rushing sound made by flowing water.

The frequent repetition which occurs throughout the sestina emphasises Colin's despair. His misery is so absolute that he can never hope to escape from it. His weary thoughts can only revolve in the same dreary round. Rosalind's departure has robbed his world of all vitality. By the end of the poem Colin's pain has permeated everything. The concluding lines seek to draw even the reader into sharing Colin's desolation. The poem does lack a certain degree of spontaneity and variety, but, at this stage, so does its supposed creator. The sestina is an accurate reflection of both Colin's abilities and his state of mind, though not to the extent of being aesthetically unpleasing.

The third of Colin's songs to be found in the Calender is the elegy for Dido which makes up the body of the "Nouember" eclogue. E.K. says of this dirge that it "is made in imitation of Marot".[1] Although the resemblances between "Nouember" and Marot's "*Complaincte de ma Dame Layse de Savoye*" are not great,[2] the fact that Spenser allowed E.K. to state that the lament was derived from the French poet, indicates that he was eager to demonstrate that Colin's poems were related to and indeed a continuation of an accepted literary tradition.

Colin may be a simple rustic but his songs are neither simple nor

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[1] VS, MP, I : 104.

[2] Reamer, pp.504-27.

rustic. The elegy for Dido is written in iambic metre, as indeed is most of the verse in the Calender, and it has a relatively complex stanza form. The first of the fifteen ten line stanzas demonstrates this very clearly.

> Vp then *Melpomene* thou mournefulst Muse of nyne,
> Such cause of mourning neuer hadst afore:
> Vp grieslie ghostes and vp my rufull ryme,
> Matter of myrth now shalt thou haue no more.
> For dead shee is, that myrth thee made of yore.
> *Dido* my deare alas is dead,
> Dead and lyeth wrapt in lead:
> O heauie herse,
> Let streaming teares be poured out in store:
> O careful verse.

Each stanza repeats the pattern, a_6 b a b b_5 c c_4 d_2 b_5 d_2, which can be discerned above. The initial alexandrine is unusual but effective. The mourner appears to recover his composure and experience a surge of renewed vigour as each stanza begins. The speaker's emotions then threaten to overwhelm him again towards the end of each stanza as the lines get generally shorter and thematically more powerful. The eighth and tenth lines of each stanza rarely vary. In the first eleven stanzas they read "O heauie herse" and "O carefull verse." Thereafter, they become "O happy herse" and "O ioyfull verse." The repetition of these brief lines exaggerates the singer's misery in the first part of the poem and then helps to lighten the mood of the last four stanzas.

Although the elegy for Dido has a strict form, Spenser is careful to ensure that it does not become monotonous. He varies the position of the caesura in the alexandrine with great skill. In the first stanza, for instance, it occurs after the sixth syllable, as it also does in the third, sixth, eighth, ninth, fourteenth and fifteenth stanzas. In the fifth, tenth, twelfth and thirteenth stanzas it occurs after the fourth syllable while in the second, fourth, seventh and eleventh stanzas it occurs after the second, third, seventh and eighth syllables

respectively. Spenser also does not hesitate to depart from the expected metrical pattern when it suits him to do so. In the opening stanza, for instance, the seventh line is headless, containing only seven syllables and not eight. This has the effect of emphasising the initial syllable of the line. "Dídó mý déare álás ís déad, / Déad ánd lýéth wrápt ín léad" (ll.58-59). In addition the sixth and seventh lines of each stanza seem to be in a different prosody from the rest of the poem. Many of them contain extra light syllables. This may indicate that Spenser was experimenting with strong stress metre in these lines. The lines in question usually contain four strong stresses. Line 169, for instance, can be scanned as follows: "Dídó nís déad, bút íntó héauén hént". However, the sixth and seventh lines of the eighth stanza do not conform to this pattern. "Thé mántléd médówes móurne / Théyr sóndrý cólóurs tóurne."

Spenser's dirge follows the traditional form established by the classical elegy. The singer moves from extreme grief through a period of questioning and, by the end of his song, has found a measure of consolation. The lament for Dido, like the sestina of "Avgvst", is formal, sophisticated and polished. A close examination of the poem's final stanza makes this very clear.

> *Dido* is gone afore (whose turne shall be the next?)
> There liues shee with the blessed Gods in blisse,
> There drincks she *Nectar* with *Ambrosia* mixt,
> And ioyes enioyes, that mortall men doe misse.
> The honor now of highest gods she is,
> That whilome was poore shepheards pryde,
> While here on earth she did abyde.
> O happy herse,
> Ceasse now my song, my woe now wasted is.
> O ioyfull verse.

Metrically, the stanza is almost entirely regular. Its ordered rhythm complements the calm tone in which the lines are uttered. Spenser uses Dido's name only twice in the elegy, once in the first stanza and once

in the last. In the first stanza, he states: "Dido my deare alas is dead". In the final stanza, this cry is altered to "Dido is gone afore". The changed wording softens the impact of the utterance. The emphasis given the first version by the alliteration on 'd', a voiced plosive, is lost in the more euphemistic sentence which replaces it. Spenser then completes the line by reminding his readers that death is the fate of all men. He wonders who will be the first to follow Dido. The matter-of-fact manner which he adopts in phrasing this question makes Dido's death seem expected and normal rather than sudden and shattering. In the previous stanza, Colin has listed some of the delights which he suggests await men after death. In the final stanza, he mentions these again but, whereas his references to fresh fields and green grass seem reminiscent of a Christian heaven,[1] the nectar and ambrosia mentioned in the final stanza are more usually associated with the gods of Greece and Rome. As in the "lay of Elisa", Spenser allows Colin Christian allusions as well as classical ones. The second line of the stanza challenges the mourners' misery even more directly. They are told that Dido "liues" with the Gods. "Blessed" and "blisse" sound similar. This gives added emphasis to both words and stresses Dido's fortunate state once more. The fourth line of the stanza completes its opening sentence. The words "ioyes" and "enioyes" follow immediately after each other in the first half of the line. The repetition of joy in two different forms allows the listener to imagine that Dido is experiencing joy piled on joy in such a way that a mortal vocabulary cannot describe it adequately. Spenser strengthens this impression in the second half of the line by saying that these are feelings which "mortall men doe misse". The alliteration on 'm' in

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[1] Psalms 23.2.

"mortall", "men" and "misse" helps to separate the second half of the line from the first and, therefore, to increase the reader's awareness of the gulf between immortal bliss and the sufferings of mortal men.

The next three lines of the stanza also stress Dido's elevation. She who was once honoured by shepherds is now honoured by gods. The superiority of the gods is emphasised by the fact that they are mentioned in the line which precedes the mention of shepherds. Again, alliteration links key words in both lines. Dido is now the "honor" of the "highest" whereas once she was only the "pryde" of the "poore".[1] The use of "abyde" in the last of these three lines is also significant. The word can be used to mean either "stay" or "wait". Spenser implies that, while she was on earth, Dido was only waiting to join the gods.

The last three lines of the stanza bring the elegy to a positive conclusion. "Ceasse now my song, my woe now wasted is," says Colin. The line is beautifully structured. The strongly marked caesura after "song" has the effect of breaking the line into two short sections so that the stanza gains no impetus from the longer line. The almost chiastic arrangement of the components of the line also gives the reader the impression that the stanza is closing in on itself and that the poem is, therefore, drawing to an end. Colin's song and Colin's woe, the inner terms of the pattern, are intimately connected. The one is "wasted" and so the other must "ceasse", these being the outer terms of the line. The repetition of "now" is also noteworthy. Spenser may be implying that Dido's death is of the past and that the present moment should no longer be spent in unreasonable lamentations. The

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[1] Once again, it should be mentioned that the "h" might not have been sounded.

words, "O happy herse" and "O ioyfull verse", which seemed so unexpected and shocking when they were first used in the poem, appear reasonable and proper by the end of it. By listening to Colin's song the mourners have been able to experience a catharsis. They have been able to vent their grief through his and, thus, free themselves to share his optimistic view of Dido's fate.

Each of Colin's songs is, therefore, quite distinct in both form and content from the rest of the poems of the Calender. Within Colin's pastoral world, his poems are made to appear objects of rare beauty and his skill as a poet is lauded by all his fellows. A difference in kind is used by Spenser to create an illusion of a difference in quality. Colin's three obviously patterned lyrics are made to appear very different from the rest of the verse in the Calender. In addition, Colin's fellow shepherds frequently suggest that his songs embody the true essence of poetry. It seems possible, therefore, that Spenser may have created Colin in order to exemplify a poetic ideal. This theory is supported to some extent by the effect which Colin's poems seem to have on the external world. Each of them offers a vision of a universe in which nature echoes the emotions and desires articulated by the poet.

Colin and his verses symbolise the way in which the poet can use his abilities to create harmonies so strong that they can defy time itself. Colin's skill is such that his songs are remembered even when he is not there to sing them. Isobel MacCaffrey observes:

> Poetic skill is as "passing" as its human possessors, but its memory survives....The growth of Colin's own fame is signified in the action of the Calender by the presence of three of his songs, performed by his friends and betokening the true power of art. It cannot effect literal changes in the world of nature; but in its imagined worlds, perfect harmony can reign to be recreated each time the song is sung for our

instruction and delight.[1]

If The Shepheardes Calender is seen primarily as a poem which is concerned with poetry and Colin as a means whereby Spenser may comment on the duties and attributes of the poet, then "December" can be seen as containing not an end to all things and a denial of life but merely a description of the end of a particular cycle of experience.

Yet another possible explanation for the gloom and despondency of the "December" eclogue may be found in a study of Colin's dual role as a poet and a lover. In Colin Clout it is possible to discern both the image of Spenser, the poet, and beyond that an image of poets in general, for Colin's joys, pains, trials and rewards can be thought of as representing those experienced by all poets. Spenser presents Colin as a divinely inspired being, but he never presents him as one exempt from the anguish and turbulence of human life. Colin's fortunes as a lover reveal the limitations of his talents and the extent of his subjection to human emotions. We are reminded frequently that Colin's poetry has no power to win Rosalind who despises his "rurall musick".[2] Thenot puts this into words very clearly. "And hath he [Colin] skill to make so excellent, yet hath so little skill to brydle loue?"[3] Spenser's interest in Colin centres on the relationship between his role as a lover and his role as a poet and, as the following pages will attempt to show, Colin's failure to sustain the two roles and maintain a balance

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[1] MacCaffrey, p.101.

[2] SC, "Ianvarye", 1.64.

[3] SC, "Aprill", 11.19-20.

between them may well account for the Calender's doleful conclusion.

Colin is a poet and he is also a lover. The two roles cannot be considered in isolation. The reader perceives Colin as a whole, though complex, figure and there can be few who find his double role perplexing or disturbing. This becomes explicable if one remembers that, as Richard Mallette points out:

> Colin's personae as both poet and lover are almost thoroughly inclusive of one another. His progress as a poet accords intrinsically with his progress as a lover. This mutuality of roles derives, of course, from the accepted Neoplatonic notions that the poet's goal is the same as that of the lover, and that his devotion to the Heavenly Venus can be the viable route along which he ascends to the contemplation of Beauty....Colin's struggle...re-enacts the moral journey of the Spenserian poet through the perils of the world and chronicles his arduous ascent toward "universall understanding".[1]

While this may be true of Colin's career as a whole, he certainly does not manage to attain the vision of ultimate Beauty within the framework of The Shepheardes Calender. Colin's conviction, which he expresses in "December", that of all his harvest hopes he has "nought reaped but a weedye crop of care" (l.122), has led some writers to see Colin's role as a lover in The Shepheardes Calender as being antithetical to, rather than in intrinsic accord with, his role as a poet. Isobel MacCaffrey, for instance, states:

> The life of Colin Clout, then, traces for us the line of human life as it diverges psychologically from the life of nature, while remaining physically bound to it. Because of love the orderly cycle of human life is turned awry, its promise blasted.[2]

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[1] Mallette, pp.22-3.

[2] MacCaffrey, p.92.

Yet, in "October", Piers answers Cuddie's denunciation of love and its effect on Colin as follows:

> Ah fon, for loue does teach him climbe so hie,
> And lyftes him vp out of the loathsome myre:
> Such immortall mirrhor, as he doth admire,
> Would rayse ones mynd aboue the starry skie.
> And cause a caytiue corage to aspire,
> For lofty loue doth loath a lowly eye.
> (11.91-6)

Within the world of the eclogues, it is primarily Colin who is seen to experience love as a destructive force. This has led some Spenserian scholars to speculate on the nature of Colin's love for Rosalind and to reach some unflattering conclusions about it. Certainly, from the opening lines of the Calender to its closing ones, Spenser's readers are left in no doubt about the destructive effects of Colin's passion for Rosalind. Traditionally, the poet-lover either woos his lady successfully with his songs or finds solace for his unhappiness at being rejected in the creation of poetry. Colin does neither. Rosalind rejects his poems together with his advances, and his reaction to her scorn is to turn against his gift.

> I loue thilke lasse, (alas why doe I loue?)
> And am forlorne, (alas why am I lorne?)
> Shee deignes not my good will, but doth reproue,
> And of my rurall musick holdeth scorne.
> Shepheards deuise she hateth as the snake,
> And laughes the songes, that *Colin Clout* doth make.
>
> Wherefore my pype, albee rude *Pan* thou please,
> Yet for thou pleasest not, where most I would:
> And thou vnlucky Muse, that wontst to ease
> My musing mynd, yet canst not, when thou should:
> Both pype and Muse, shall sore the while abye.
> So broke his oaten pype, and downe dyd lye.[1]

It is the obsessive nature of Colin's love for Rosalind which leads to his destruction. Colin's love is unnatural and excessive. In

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[1] SC, "Ianvarye", 11.61-72.

"December" Spenser compares Colin to various natural objects and makes it clear in each case that his unhappy love has blighted his development and made something abnormal of that which was once strong, healthy and full of promise. In "December", Colin is likened to an ear of corn "that budded faire" (l.99) but then was blasted, to a blossoming tree that "promised of timely fruite" (l.104) but then was left barren, and to a garden of "fragrant flowres" (l.109) which then withered. In the same eclogue one can see that Colin's feelings have been allowed to pervert his view of the world about him. Where once he found the honey bee, he finds instead "the grieslie Todestoole" (l.69). Where once singing birds lulled him to sleep, "the ghastlie Owle her grieuous ynne doth keepe" (l.72). When the effects of Colin's love are examined, it becomes understandable that he should describe it in terms of its opposite, hate. "Loue they him called, that gaue me checkmate, / But better mought they haue behote him Hate."[1] If one were to study Colin's career in isolation from the rest of the Calender, one might be tempted to believe that Spenser saw love as an unnatural and disruptive force. However, his treatment of love in "October" and in his other works shows that it is not love which he thinks of as being a destructive force, but Colin's misuse of it. Colin's career is an illustration of the potential dangers of love rather than an argument for its repudiation.

Yet another attempt to rationalise the view of love presented by Spenser through the medium of Colin Clout involves an association of Colin with "the English people, in love with and mystically wedded to Elizabeth".[2] Paul McLane, a proponent of this view, claims that Colin's

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[1] SC, "December", ll.53-4.

[2] McLane, p.301.

increasing disillusionment may be intended to reflect Spenser's concern over the progress of the Alençon courtship. This may indeed have troubled Spenser, but his description of Rosalind in "Aprill" as "the Widdowes daughter of the glenne" (l.26) and Harvey's reference to "Rosalindula" in a letter to Spenser[1] would appear to indicate that the Calender's heroine was not primarily a representation of Elizabeth in a political allegory. In addition, McLane's view is heavily dependent on the assumption that Spenser's association with Leicester meant that he was opposed to the Alençon alliance and that the Calender was written at a later period than that normally allocated for its composition. The unreliability of McLane's interpretation highlights the manner in which some commentators, unable to find a clearcut allegorical significance for the figure of Colin Clout, have tended to look to biographical material for a solution to their problems. Turning from the general to the particular, they have hastened to lend their support to Renato Poggioli's contention that

> the pastoral concern with private life, and with its two external manifestations, which are love and friendship, means that bucolic poetry is largely indifferent to the lot of man in collective terms.[2]

Like De Selincourt, they claim that pastoral poetry was the art form in which Spenser first gave to the world his own idealized autobiography and that it "remained for him the metaphor by which to express his most intimate personal experiences".[3]

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[1] OS, p.632.

[2] The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), p.26.

[3] OS, "Introduction", p.xiv.

It is clear that The Shepheardes Calender does contain covert allusions to Spenser's friends and contemporaries, to local gossip and to other topical matters.[1] However, such allusions remain carefully indistinct, being occasional, digressive and extrinsic to the poem's unity. While it may be tempting to interpret Colin's yearning for Rosalind as a reflection of Spenser's feelings for a real woman, Colin's affectionate envy of Hobbinol as an indication of Spenser's attitude to Harvey, his reverence for Elisa as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth, his grief at Dido's death as a sign of Spenser's sorrow over the demise of someone dear to him, his humility as proof of Spenser's own attitude, his reputation as an indication of Spenser's own hopes for his future, and his despondency as an echo of Spenser's state of mind; to do so without considering his role as a literary invention within an ordered world of the imagination would be to excise all elements of genuine allegorical significance from the poem and, therefore, to impoverish it severely. The fortunes of Colin Clout serve to unify Spenser's diverse collection of eclogues and to add a new dimension of profundity to its concerns. Colin stands in some measure for Spenser himself, but, on other levels, he stands for all poets, all lovers, all pilgrims and all mortal beings. Any attempt to restrict his role to only one of those mentioned leads to a falsification of his status and a diminishment of his true worth, as a close examination of "Ianvarye", "Ivne" and "December", those eclogues which deal almost exclusively with Colin and his concerns, clearly shows.

"Ianvarye", the eclogue which begins The Shepheardes Calender,

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[1] These allusions are discussed in the introduction to my thesis, pp.2-6.

describes a shepherd boy leading his flock out onto the fields on a sunny day towards the end of winter. The sheep are thin and weak and we are told that "as the Sheepe, such was the shepheards looke" (l.7). After the shepherd, Colin, has led his flock to a hill, he begins to sing of his unhappiness and to draw parallels between his unrequited love for Rosalind and the desolation of his surroundings. At the end of his song, despair overcomes him. He breaks his pipe and throws himself to the ground. Then, as night falls in the final stanza of the poem, he rises and drives his flock homeward again.

Spenser's presentation of Colin in this eclogue is significant in a number of ways. In the first two stanzas of the eclogue, Colin is described as an ordinary shepherd fulfilling his pastoral obligations to his flock. Colin's sad and weak condition mirrors that of his sheep. They have suffered a hard winter. He is suffering the pangs of unrequited love. It is only in the last four lines of the two introductory stanzas that any other aspects of Colin's character and role are allowed to appear and it is interesting to note that the first references to Colin as a poet and Colin as a lover occur almost simultaneously:

> For pale and wanne he was, (alas the while,)
> May seeme he lovd, or els some care he tooke:
> Well couth he tune his pipe, and frame his stile.
> (11.8-10)

Colin's song which follows the two opening stanzas of the poem makes it even more obvious that his role as a poet cannot be separated from his role as a lover. Beginning his song with an invocation, he calls upon the "Gods of loue" (l.13) and on Pan, the shepherds' god, to pity his pain. He then turns his attention to the prospect before him and, in the next five stanzas, compares his emotional bleakness to the wintry landscape. It is important to note that the landscape, like the

condition of Colin's flock, seems to reflect the shepherd's pain and desolation. The sixth and seventh stanzas demonstrate this in some detail.

> You naked trees, whose shady leaues are lost,
> Wherein the byrds were wont to build their bowre:
> And now are clothd with mosse and hoary frost,
> Instede of bloosmes, wherwith your buds did flowre:
> I see your teares, that from your boughes doe raine,
> Whose drops in drery ysicles remaine.
>
> All so my lustfull leafe is drye and sere,
> My timely buds with wayling all are wasted:
> The blossome, which my braunch of youth did beare,
> With breathed sighes is blowne away, and blasted
> And from mine eyes the drizling teares descend,
> As on your boughes the ysicles depend.
>
> (11.31-42)

Until the end of the eighth stanza, Colin continues to be presented as being at one with his wintry surroundings. He makes no secret of the fact that he is in love and that he is experiencing pain because of it, but the extent of the destructive power of his love for Rosalind is not revealed until the beginning of the ninth stanza. Before he launches into a description of Rosalind and the circumstances in which he first saw her, his lovesickness only adds pathos to his song and thus draws him into a closer relationship with his surroundings.

The ninth, tenth and eleventh stanzas of "Ianvarye" introduce the first real elements of discord into the poem. Significantly, Colin mentions that it was his "desire the neighbour towne to see" (1.50) that was the factor which brought about his first fateful meeting with his beloved. Rosalind, a beautiful, sophisticated girl, rejects him and all pastoral values. "Shepheards deuise she hateth as the snake" (1.65). It is ironic that Spenser should employ this simile to depict Rosalind's attitude to shepherds and the country, for Rosalind herself is in many respects the serpent in Colin's pastoral paradise. For her sake, Colin neglects to maintain the bond of friendship between him

and his fellow shepherd, Hobbinol, and, finally, he rejects both his muse and his allegiance to Pan because neither can help him to win her: "So broke his oaten pype, and downe dyd lye" (l.72). Rosalind does not belong to Colin's world and, because of this, she is a danger both to his harmonious relationship with that world and to the poetry which is rooted in his responsiveness to natural forces. However, "Ianvarye" may also imply that Rosalind alone cannot be blamed for Colin's situation. The fact that Colin wished to see the town may indicate that he was experiencing the first stirrings of dissatisfaction with his state before he met her.

It seems that "Ianvarye" may also contain covert allusions to Spenser's own life and friends. E.K's glosses inform the reader that both Hobbinol and Rosalind are pseudonyms for real persons and that Colin shadows Spenser himself. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether these allusions are of more than peripheral importance. Only slight evidence for associating Hobbinol with Harvey, for instance, can be found in the text of the poem. Without E.K's gloss, it seems unlikely that the connection would ever have been made.

While "Ianvarye" is an unpretentious poem, it introduces some important concepts. Colin's song which consists of ten stanzas of iambic pentameter rhyming a b a b c c is considerably less simple than it may at first appear. It is rich in evocative phrases, alliteration and word play. In the fifth stanza, for instance, all of these features are used to good effect.

> Such rage as winters, reigneth in my heart,
> My life bloud friesing with vnkindly cold:
> Such stormy stoures do breede my balefull smart,
> As if my yeare were wast, and woxen old.
> And yet alas, but now my spring begonne,
> And yet alas, yt is already donne.
>
> (11.25-30)

The underlined letters demonstrate the frequency with which Spenser uses alliteration. His reliance on this poetical device probably arises out of his interest in traditional English alliterative verse. The repetition of "and yet alas" in the last two lines of the stanza gives a plaintive quality to the whole. The thematic force of Spenser's rhyming words should also be noticed. The first four rhyming words, "heart", "cold", "smart" and "old", are all tonally important and emphasise Colin's anguish. The stanza ends with a rhyming couplet. The last two rhyming words, "begonne" and "donne", are antithetical in meaning and form an ironic comment on Colin's mortal condition. In addition, Spenser uses a number of striking images in this stanza. Winter is seen as an active force and its effects as the products of rage. The image of Colin's life blood freezing is a particularly harrowing one.[1] Finally, the repeated use of "my" before words like "yeare" and "spring" strengthens the parallels between man and the seasons which Spenser is exploring in the Calender.

Just as the form of "Ianvarye" should not be lightly dismissed, so, too, the content should be carefully examined. "Ianvarye" presents Colin as a man in harmony with nature, as a poet and as a lover. In the last of these roles, Colin makes a conscious decision to reject the other two and so initiates the series of events which is to culminate in "December".

"Ivne" is the next eclogue in which Colin appears. Unlike "Ianvarye" and "December" which are monologues, "Ivne" is a dialogue between Colin and his friend, Hobbinol. The older shepherd praises pastoral delights

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[1] The image is derived from the Petrarchan language of courtly love. However, this does not lessen its effectiveness.

and urges Colin to rediscover them. Colin answers that his "ryper age such pleasures doth reproue" (1.36) and declares that he can no longer find joy or ease in either nature or poetry. Hobbinol then gives a moving description of the delight which Colin's poems used to give him and states that the Muses themselves would hasten to listen to them. Colin modestly denies this and replies that his songs are rude and worthless, for they can neither influence nature nor win Rosalind. Hobbinol is left with no alternative but to gather up his flock and return homeward, lamenting Colin's situation.

The design and form of "Ivne" are very different from those of "Ianvarye" and "December". In "Ivne" Spenser employs a different stanza form from that which he uses in the other two Colin eclogues. "Ivne" consists of fifteen eight line stanzas rhyming a b a b b c b c. Each stanza thus lends itself to the containment of two units of sense, each expressed in a quatrain. The rhyming couplet at the centre of each stanza links the two parts and helps the stanza to remain a unit. The lines are decasyllabic and the metre strict iambic pentameter, although, as in "Ianvarye" and "December", occasional lines have feminine rhymes and two, lines eight and forty-four, contain a trisyllabic foot: "Tó thé wáters fáll théir túnes áttémpér ríght" (1.8). The few appropriate metrical variations dispel any possible monotony and confer an air of ease upon the otherwise formal verses. At the same time, the fixed stanza form and the quick exchanges between Colin and Hobbinol maintain the pace of the eclogue and emphasise the lyrical beauty of lines like those in which Hobbinol describes the Muses' reaction to Colin's piping.

The dialogue form which the eclogue takes does not merely provide structural variety within the Calender, it is also well suited to the

development of some of Spenser's most important themes. In "Ianvarye", Colin, overcome by love, chooses to reject his place in the natural world and to forsake poetry. By comparing the figures of Hobbinol and Colin as they appear in "Ivne", the discerning reader can perceive some of the consequences of Colin's actions. In the first stanza of the eclogue Hobbinol takes Colin to a peaceful spot and describes it appreciatively. Colin responds to this in the following stanza by stating that he envies Hobbinol's ability to find joy and rest in natural beauty. He himself can find no such ease. In the third and fourth stanzas the distance between Colin and Hobbinol is emphasised again. Hobbinol urges his unhappy friend to return from the desolate hills to the fruitful dales which are described as being the haunts of the Graces, Nymphs, friendly fairies, the Muses, Pan and Cynthia. In contrast, Colin's hills, it is implied, are inhabited by ravens, ghosts and owls. Colin speaks again in the fifth and sixth stanzas and repeats that his loss of Rosalind has cut him off from Nature and the proper enjoyment of the summer season. His misery means that he can find no pleasure in gathering "Queene apples vnrype" (l.43) or making "gaudy Girlonds" (l.45).

While the first six stanzas deal with Colin's isolation from pastoral delights, the next seven show the tragic waste of his poetic gifts. In stanzas seven and eight, Hobbinol describes Colin's music as it once was. He states that Colin's piping was then so sweet that birds would cease singing for shame and that Calliope and the other Muses did at one time forsake their lutes and tambourines in order to run hastily after Colin's "siluer sound" (l.61). Colin's poetry is described as having been unearthly in its beauty. Hobbinol's description of it leaves the reader with a sense of sadness and loss.

Colin refuses to be moved or comforted. He says that his rhymes are "rough and rudely drest" (l.77) and that all poetic excellence died with Tityrus, "the God of shepheards" (l.81). He then goes on to wish that he possessed enough skill to allow him to teach the woods to wail his woe and the trees "their trickling teares to shedde" (l.96). Furthermore, if this were the case, then he suggests that his plaints would be able to fly to his love and pierce her heart. In Colin, as he himself says, "faultlesse fayth is turned to faithlesse fere" (l.110).

Hobbinol concludes the poem by gathering his flock and returning home, lamenting the fact that Colin has been lost to the pastoral world. The change in Colin is also emphasised by "Ivne's" emblem. In "Ianvarye" Colin's emblem was "*Anchora speme*".[1] In "Ivne" it is "*Gia speme spenta*".[2] All hope has been abandoned.

"December" shows Colin alone once more. In the opening stanza he is described sitting alone in the shade and making "of loue his piteous mone" (l.6). His song, which occupies the remaining twenty-five stanzas of the poem, is a hymn to Pan. In the first two stanzas he calls upon Pan to hear him. The next six stanzas, which owe a great deal to Marot's *Eglogue au Roi*,[3] contain a description of Colin's idyllic country childhood. The following seven stanzas deal with his unhappy maturity, a period during which, although he learned a great deal, his life was ravaged by love. In the three stanzas which follow this Colin

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[1] VS, MP, I : 17.

[2] VS, MP, I : 63.

[3] Reamer, pp.504-27.

likens himself to natural objects which have promised much at some stage during their lives, but which never fulfilled that promise. He returns to the subject of his blighted hopes briefly once more and then spends the last five stanzas of the poem contemplating the approach of winter and death and making his farewells to all which he has held dear.

"December", which employs the same metre and stanza form as "Ianvarye" does, brings the cycle of the Calender's year to a close and also describes the final stage of Colin's life. The tempestuous young man of "Ianvarye" is very unlike the resigned, tired man who waits for death in "December". Yet a closer look at the eclogue reveals that Colin's new patience arises from the resolution of a number of the issues which plagued him in "Ianvarye" and seemed about to destroy him in "Ivne". In the months between "Ianvarye" and "December" Colin has experienced severe emotional pain and disillusionment. "December" shows him overcoming both to regain his muse and restore his affinity with nature.

At the end of "Ianvarye" Colin rejects poetry and in "Ivne" he refuses even to acknowledge its value or the importance of his gift. However, in "December" he is heard singing once more. Nevertheless, Colin's attitude to poetry in "December" is not the same as it was in the opening stanzas of "Ianvarye". He has not returned to being the carefree singer that he was before he met Rosalind:

> And I, that whilome wont to frame my pype,
> Vnto the shifting of the shepheards foote:
> Sike follies nowe haue gathered as too ripe
> And cast hem out, as rotten and vnsoote.
> The loser Lasse I cast to please nomore,
> One if I please, enough is me therefore.
> (11.115-120)

It seems likely that "one" refers to Rosalind, the cause of his changed attitude. Even at the last, Colin cannot completely free himself from the lure of sophistication, but it is significant that he returns to

poetry to express a vision of his own life before tenderly relinquishing his pipe in the face of death:

> Now leaue ye shepheards boyes your merry glee,
> My Muse is hoarse and weary of thys stounde:
> Here will I hang my pype vpon this tree,
> Was neuer pype of reede did better sounde.
> (11.139-44)

It is significant, too, that, as the year draws to a close, Colin regains his harmonious relationship with the natural world. The coming of winter seems to him to bring with it his own death. A measure of his reabsorption of pastoral values can be found in his farewell to Hobbinol, who has come to personify them: "Adieu good Hobbinol that was so true" (l.155). Age has calmed Colin. At the end of "December" he shows his acceptance of the fact that death will part him from Rosalind and asks Hobbinol to bid her farewell on his behalf. Colin's realisation that he will never win Rosalind and that, because of her, his life has been blighted frees him from the most destructive effects of his obsession. His more moderate attitude enables him to admit once more that, while he is a lover, he is also a poet. Once he no longer denies his natural gifts, he is able to respond again to the pastoral world.

Colin Clout is a complex figure and his role in The Shepheardes Calender is an important one. It has even been suggested that he may be the shepherd referred to in the title of the work.[1] Certainly, the poem would be impoverished and its merits diminished if all references to him were to be deleted from it.

While Spenser's primary intention in composing the Calender may have been to produce a work of literary merit, it should not be forgotten

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[1] VS, MP, I : 235.

that, at the time of its publication, he seems to have been eager to establish himself as a serious poet and to attract influential attention by means of his verses.[1] The way in which Spenser chose to present the Calender to his readers is, in itself, evidence of his intention to persuade his contemporaries that he was not a poet to be dismissed lightly. At the end of the sixteenth century it was becoming common for great classical works to be published with glosses and annotations added to them.[2] By publishing the text of the Calender with E.K.'s glosses on it, Spenser was subtly attempting to pursuade his readers that his eclogues could bear comparison to the universally admired works of the Greeks and the Romans. E.K.'s glosses are worth examining with this in mind. Significantly, they are rarely used to explain. Their chief purpose appears to be to praise the poet and impress the reader. E.K. seldom loses an opportunity for pointing out parallels between the text of The Shepheardes Calender and the texts of works by Theocritus, Virgil and the better known European poets. Indeed, his enthusiasm occasionally leads him to point out a parallel where none exists.[3] E.K. makes it clear that Spenser is writing within a long and revered tradition. His glosses also seek to explain Spenser's use of rustic language which perturbed Sidney[4] and would probably have worried many of the Calender's first readers. In general, the glosses stress the breadth of Spenser's learning, the magnitude of his ability and the

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[1] This hypothesis is discussed in the first chapter of my thesis, pp.42-3.

[2] W.L. Renwick, Edmund Spenser: An Essay on Renaissance Poetry (London: Arnold, 1925), pp.34-40.

[3] VS, MP, I: 647 and 650.

[4] ECE I : 196.

seriousness of his intentions.

Apart from the material contained in E.K.'s glosses, Spenser's choice of genre alone would probably have favourably impressed his contemporaries. Pastoral was universally acknowledged as being the most suitable genre for the first works of an aspiring epic poet.[1] Within the realms of pastoral, the shepherd singer is an important figure and one which is traditionally often associated with the creator of the pastoral work in question.[2] Because of this tradition, Spenser would have known that he could use the figure of Colin Clout to emphasise or imply certain things about himself and his own abilities. In his first gloss on "Ianvarye" E.K. states that Colin "shadows" Spenser. Once this has been established in the reader's mind, he will continue to associate Colin with his creator. Spenser's descriptions of Colin and his skills are, therefore, presumably intended to heighten the reader's awareness of Spenser and his skills.

When Colin is examined in this light, certain aspects of his character and role assume added significance. Colin's poetry is frequently admired by his fellow shepherds and, in "October", Cuddie actually implies that Colin has the ability to be an epic poet. Cuddie and Piers lament the passing of the heroic poets of antiquity, but then Cuddie remembers Colin and says:

> For Colin fittes such famous flight to scanne:
> He, were he not with loue so ill bedight,
> Would mount as high, and sing as soote as Swanne.
> (11.88-90)

Colin is not mentioned at any other point in "October" and, unless one

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[1] VS, MP, I : 10. This matter is also discussed in the first chapter of my thesis, p.23.

[2] This idea is discussed in the first chapter of my thesis, pp.24-8.

accepts that Spenser, through the medium of Colin, was hinting at his own poetic ambitions, there seems to be little reason for Cuddie to have mentioned Colin at all.

A close examination of Colin's poems also yields some interesting information. Colin's relatively complex songs are evidently intended to be perceived as superior to anything which his fellow shepherds are capable of producing. Throughout the Calender, Colin is presented as a poet of unusual ability. It seems very likely that, by portraying Colin in this way and then subtly indicating a close relationship between them, Spenser was hoping to enhance his own reputation.

During the sixteenth century ordinary civil servants could not hope to further their careers unless influence were exerted on their behalf. In the late 1570s Spenser's position makes it likely that he might have been anxious to attract the attention of a patron.[1] His poetry would probably have appeared to him as a possible means of achieving this goal. The patriotism, moral views and impressive displays of learning which are contained in The Shepheardes Calender are all features of the work which Spenser must have hoped would appeal to those who controlled the England of his time. While Spenser may have wished to find a patron at the time of the Calender's composition, it would be a mistake to overemphasise the influence of this factor on the work. It would also be a grave error to assume that, because Spenser's patriotism, protestant outlook and veneration for Elizabeth would probably have been well received by his more influential contemporaries, they cannot have been sincere expressions of his own attitudes and beliefs. To the uninformed modern reader the "lay of Elisa" may seem too formal and extravagant to be

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[1] This possibility is also mentioned in the first chapter of my thesis, pp. 42-3.

anything but hypocritical, but to impose such prejudices on the song is to misunderstand not only the norms of eulogy, but also the symbolic importance of Elizabeth I to her subjects.

Finally then, Colin Clout plays a number of roles in The Shepheardes Calender. In many of these he contributes to the aesthetic merits of the work while in others he aids Spenser in his intention to establish himself as a serious poet and, to a lesser extent, to attract an influential patron. Isobel MacCaffrey writes:

> We lose something by insisting on any single meaning of a Spenserian image, for the reason that all the meanings are related to and shed light on each other.[1]

An examination of Colin Clout's role in The Shepheardes Calender certainly supports her statement. Colin can be viewed in a number of different ways most of which increase the reader's appreciation of Spenser's skill and the Calender's complexity.

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[1] MacCaffrey, p.90.

CHAPTER 3

COLIN CLOUT IN *COLIN CLOUTS COME HOME AGAINE*

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, the second of Spenser's poems in which Colin Clout plays a prominent part, was printed in London for William Ponsonbie in 1595, but the date of its composition has yet to be established. The dedication to Sir Walter Raleigh is dated December 1591. However, it has been suggested that this date is an error because the work refers to the death of the Earl of Derby which occurred on 16 April 1594 (l.434) and to Raleigh's disgrace (l.164). Raleigh fell into disfavour after his marriage to Elizabeth Throckmorton which took place in 1592. Besides this, Spenser congratulates Daniel within the poem for his "tragick plaints and passionate mischance" (l.427). It is generally accepted that these works must be his *Complaint of Rosamond* which was published in 1592 and his tragedy, *Cleopatra*, which was published even later in 1594.[1] Yet it has also been pointed out that Spenser could have written *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* in 1591 and then revised it for publication at a later date.[2] Kathrine Koller, for instance, suggests that Raleigh's imprisonment was probably the reason for the poem's delayed publication.[3] Nevertheless,

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[1] I am indebted to VS, *MP* I: 450 for material used in this discussion.

[2] VS, *MP*, I : 451.

[3] "Spenser and Ralegh," *ELH*, 1 (1934), pp.51-2.

whatever date one favours for the work's composition, it is clear that it must have been written at least ten to twelve years after the publication of The Shepheardes Calender in 1579. This makes it particularly interesting that both should share the same central character and seem to be closely related in other ways.

In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe Colin tells his fellow shepherds of his meeting with the Shepherd of the Ocean, of their journey to Cynthia's court, and of his impressions of that court. The direction which the poem takes is determined by the questions which Colin's listeners put to him. Spenser begins the poem by establishing Colin's identity and setting the scene for the ensuing dialogue (ll.1-15). Hobbinol puts the first and most important question of the poem. He tells Colin that he has been missed and asks for an account of his adventures (ll.16-35). Colin indicates that he has been privileged to see a glorious sight (ll.36-50). This encourages his friends to gather around him and listen to his description of his meeting with the Shepherd of the Ocean and of the way in which they piped to each other (ll.51-79). Cuddy interrupts at this point with a request to hear Colin's song. Colin agrees to this (ll.80-103) and sings of the Mulla and the Bregog (ll.104-55). Thereafter, Colin's fellows ask about the Shepherd of the Ocean's song and discuss his misfortunes (ll.156-77). Colin resumes his tale and tells his friends of how he was persuaded to journey by sea to Cynthia's court (ll.178-99). Roused by this, Corydon asks about the sea (l.200). Colin responds with a magnificent description of the ocean and of his journey (ll.200-89). A second question from Cuddy (ll.290-1) then leads Colin into an enraptured description of Cynthia's land (ll.292-327). Prompted by Corylas, he goes on to describe his first sight of Cynthia (ll.328-51)

and, after an interruption from Alexis (ll.352-7), her kindness to him (ll.357-67). Alexis speaks again and asks about the court poets (ll.368-75). Colin praises them and lists their names (ll.376-455). After this, Lucida questions Colin about Cynthia's nymphs and is told of their beauty and virtue (ll.456-583). Aglaura then begs to hear more of Cynthia herself (ll.584-9). Colin answers her with a fervent expression of his admiration for the queen (ll.590-615). Cuddy is so impressed by this that he questions Colin's right even to sing of so great a lady (ll.616-9). Colin justifies his apparent boldness so well that he moves his audience to silence (ll.620-50). Thestylis recovers first and asks Colin why he left the court (ll.651-9). Colin responds by describing its less pleasant aspects (ll.660-731). Hobbinol interrupts this account to accuse Colin of generalising (ll.732-48). Colin admits the charge and agrees that some worthy persons do inhabit the court (ll.749-70). After this Corylas asks about love in Cynthia's domain and is told that it abounds there, but only in profane forms (ll.771-822). Cuddy praises Colin's speech before Colin goes on to describe the nature of love more fully (ll.823-94). Melissa then commends Colin's attitude to women and Hobbinol makes a bitter reference to Colin's unhappy love for Rosalind (ll.895-906). Lucida replies to him by claiming that love cannot be forced (ll.907-26). Colin agrees and states that his only ambition is to honour Rosalind (ll.927-51). In the poem's final quatrain evening falls and the shepherds lead their flocks homeward.

A brief glance at the synopsis above will show that Colin Clout is not the only figure from The Shepheardes Calender to reappear in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe. Hobbinol, Cuddy and Rosalind all feature significantly in both works. However, in spite of this, the world of the second poem differs noticeably from that of the eclogues. The

landscape of the Calender is misty, generalised and ill-defined, that of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe is described in surprising detail. In the later poem Colin sings of familiar rivers and mountains (ll.104-55), is awed by the power of the sea (ll.196-289), wonders at striking landmarks (ll.270-87) and locates Cynthia's court in a precise geographic setting at some distance from his own home (ll.293-327). This, combined with the fact that E.K.'s glosses on the Calender may indicate that Hobbinol and Rosalind were intended to "shadow" real persons, has led many writers to use the work as a source for biography. A.C. Judson, for instance, whose standard biography of Spenser forms part of the Variorum edition of the poet's works, seems to have considered the poem as primary historical material. He writes:

> With the arrival of Raleigh at Kilcolman we enter upon a well-documented period of Spenser's life, for this famous visit, and the subsequent journey of the two men to England, are faithfully portrayed in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe.[1]

Similarly, Kathrine Koller states that in the poem

> the poet becomes frankly autobiographical and tells the story of his meeting with Ralegh in Ireland, that nobleman's delight in Spenser's poetry, and the subsequent journey to the court where the Faerie Queene was presented to Elizabeth.[2]

Rudolf Gottfried goes even further and uses the work as evidence in support of his theory that the roots of English autobiography can be traced to the Elizabethan period.

> During the Elizabethan period, indeed, autobiographical poetry may be said to have reached its fullest development in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe. For

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[1] VS, Life, p.136.

[2] "Spenser and Ralegh," p.37.

> Spenser contrives to load it with more of the concrete reality of his own life than we can find in any of his other poems.[1]

The weight of authority in favour of the reliability of the biographical material which can be inferred from the poem is imposing. In his dedication to Raleigh Spenser himself describes the work as "agreeing with the truth in circumstance and matter".[2] Certainly, the account of the episodes given in the pastoral is both possible and plausible. It is known that Raleigh possessed land in Ireland and there is plenty of documentary evidence to prove that he was in Munster during the summer and autumn of 1589. It is also known that he lived in a manor house some forty miles from Spenser at Youghal for at least part of that period. The fact that the first three books of The Faerie Qveene were entered on the Stationers' Register by Ponsonbie on 1 December 1589 and published in the spring of the following year probably indicates that Spenser visited London at that time. The award of a pension to him on 25 February 1591 also seems to support this theory. Besides the evidence already given, numerous figures appearing in the work are quite clearly intended to stand for specific contemporaries of Spenser. The Shepherd of the Ocean can be no other than Raleigh to whom the poem is dedicated. By 1590, he was already known as a voyager, was Vice-Admiral of Devon and Cornwall and had written a poem, of which only a fragment survives, called The Love of the Ocean to Cynthia. Other identifications are equally obvious.

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[1] Gottfried, p.133.

[2] VS, MP, I : 147.

Daniel and Alabaster are even named outright and few would care to dispute that Cynthia can be associated with Queen Elizabeth, Astrofell with Sidney, Stella with Penelope Devereux (Lady Rich) or Urania with Sidney's sister, Mary. Similarly, the three nymphs described in lines 536-71 seem almost certainly to have been intended to represent Elizabeth (Lady Carey), Anne (Lady Compton and Mountegle) and Alice (Lady Strange), three of the daughters of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe, and, therefore, members of a family with which Spenser claimed kinship. Given this information, it seems possible that other figures described in the poem may also have embodied references to living persons and that time alone has obscured these. Finally, it has been shown that the river Bregog flowed through Spenser's lands and that it is likely that by the Mulla he meant the Awbeg river and by Old Father Mole, the chain of mountains which crosses the country from Buttevant to Cahir.[1]

It seems, then, that there is no positive evidence to contradict the theory that Colin's experiences in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe closely parallel those of Spenser between 1589 and 1592. It appears probable, therefore, that it is within this work that Colin can be said to come closest to "shadowing" his creator.

However, the plausibility of the factual parallels and the weight of authority notwithstanding, one must allow for the possibility that the poem may not be so minutely faithful an account of what actually happened as the Dedication claims and the biographers would like to believe. Writers who have suggested a virtually exact correspondence

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[1] For my discussion of the factual links between the events described in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe and those of Spenser's life. I am indebted to material contained in VS, MP, i :452-82 and VS, Life, pp.136-56.

between Spenser's life and the episodes of the poem which involve Colin have failed to prove their hypothesis because they have tended to assume that the details given in the work are accurate. They have frequently ignored the fact that, as Sam Meyer has pointed out, the main episodes depicted in the poem " - the meeting with Raleigh, the joint crossing, and so much of the sojourn at court - lack documentary or other corroborating evidence".[1] The supposed meeting between Spenser and Raleigh at Kilcolman in 1589 is not mentioned in any known contemporary account. The same lack of substantiation by any other source applies to the voyage across the Irish Channel which the poem represents Colin—Spenser as taking in company with The Shepherd of the Ocean—Raleigh. Even Spenser's audience with the Queen and his activities at court, except for the poem, depend for their authentication not upon positive proof but upon indirect and circumstantial evidence like the date of the publication of the first three books of The Faerie Qveene and the grant of Spenser's pension. It is possible that Raleigh never visited Kilcolman or that, if he did, his visit was not as it is described in the poem. What is even more likely is that Spenser has condensed the events of several visits into an account of a single one. If there were a number of meetings, then the poem exhibits a selective omission on the part of the poet and, to that extent, sacrifices historical accuracy. Another probable case of selective omission with a consequent blurring of historical exactitude appears in the work. Colin Clouts Come Home Againe alludes to only one homecoming by Colin. Yet Judson, who believes that Spenser's permanent return to Ireland took place after the granting of

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[1] Meyer, p.153.

his pension, points out that it is very likely that Spenser made a hasty trip to Ireland in the spring of 1590 to deal with Lord Roche, who was creating difficulties over Spenser's title to Kilcolman.[1] The whole question of Colin—Spenser's homecoming is a troublesome one. The very title of the poem is ambiguous. Is it to England or Ireland that the poet comes home again? England is his home by birth yet Ireland seems to have become his home by preference. Furthermore, the ambiguity which hovers about the term "home" in the poem stems from another, more fundamental, problem. It is made clear that Colin has never been out of Ireland before the visit to England which he describes, but the reader knows that Spenser, whom Colin is said to represent, came originally from England to Ireland. So, while Ireland is home for both of them in the end, it is home for each in a somewhat different sense, and, therefore, the hero of the poem is not altogether equivalent to the poet himself. In the same way, Hobbinol is depicted as being a native Irish shepherd, although Harvey, whom he is said to represent, never went to Ireland. Rosalind, too, undergoes a curious transformation. In the Calender she was referred to as a humble country girl, "the Widdowes daughter of the glenne".[2] In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe she becomes a noble lady in every sense of the term. "So hie her thoughts," Colin tells his friends, "as she her selfe haue place."[3] If the Rosalind of the Calender was, as has already been suggested,[4]

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[1] VS, Life, p.144.

[2] SC, "Aprill", l.26.

[3] CCCHA, l.937.

[4] This possibility is discussed in the introduction to my thesis, p.6.

a faint conventional representation of Spenser's first wife, then it is natural that he should have wished to erase her original identity as far as possible after his second marriage, to Elizabeth Boyle, a lady of good family, on 11 June 1594. Nevertheless, the fact that he does so indicates the freedom of the approach which he habitually adopts in dealing with autobiographical material.

When examining the possible factual basis of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, one should not forget that the poem appears to contain emendations bearing on happenings occurring during a four-year period between the date of its Dedication and the date of its publication.[1] This suggests that Spenser was not attempting to compile an accurate record of his visit to England, but was concerned rather with shaping a creative work which, while it might draw freely on the real, did not need to be bound by the facts or chronology of his own life. That Spenser was well aware of the distinction between narrative poetry and history is made clear in the "letter to the Authors" appended to the first three books of The Faerie Qveene. He writes:

> For the Methode of a Poet historical is not such, as of an Historiographer. For an Historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the time as the actions, but a Poet thrusteth into the middest, euen where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the things forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing Analysis of all.[2]

W.L. Renwick describes the subtle blend of personal material and literary conventions in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe as follows:

> Spenser was treating of actual people and actual happenings in his own life, and at the same time, even discounting the pastoral scheme, every episode in the poem is a well-known theme of poetry. The

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[1] These emendations are listed earlier in this chapter, p.95.

[2] VS, FQ, I : 168-9.

> meeting of the poets, the Ovidian horror of the sea, the panegyric upon a monarch, the courteous commemoration of friends and brother-poets, the attack on court life, the celebration of a mistress - in all these passages literary and personal motives and interests are inextricably bound up together.[1]

It seems, then, that even in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe details of Spenser's life have been so abstracted and generalised as effectively to depersonalise the poem. The experiences of Spenser as a living person with a given past history are no more than a starting point for the depiction of the imaginary character, Colin. To regard the poem's central figure as anything else is to ignore his importance as a fictitious creation operating in an invented dramatic setting which exerts considerable influence upon him. Yet to emphasise the poem's nature as imaginative is by no means to imply that there is nothing of the real Spenser in Colin, nor to maintain that none of the author's actual feelings are allowed to intrude upon his pastoral scene, but the relationship between the poet and the title character of his poem is certainly on a different plane from that of straightforward autobiography. Any reader who overlooks this will tend to misrepresent both the poem and Colin's role in it for two reasons: firstly, the private experience behind the work has been too greatly modified to be recoverable from the text of the poem; secondly, the biographical facts that can be reconstructed from evidence contained in both the poem and external documents are relatively few.

It seems, then, that Colin Clout's character in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe can be seen to have been influenced by both personal and literary motives. Because of this, it is necessary for anyone wishing

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[1] Renwick, p.125.

to understand the figure to examine it not only as a potential source of biographical material, but also as a literary construct.

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe is very different from The Shepheards Calender. It is three times as long as the longest eclogue in the latter work and consists of a single, sustained narrative unit. As we have already seen, Colin's appearances in the Calender are only sporadic,[1] though a consciousness of his existence seems to infuse much of the work. In the later poem the focus on Colin is almost unremitting. His words sound through most of the work and govern our response to its different moods. The poem is shaped to resemble a conversation, but it is worth noting that Colin delivers all but 186 of its 955 lines. Spenser permits the other shepherds to speak merely in order to vary the pace of the poem, to emphasise its informal atmosphere and pastoral setting, to ease the internal transitions from one subject to another, and, of course, to provide Colin with a pretext for telling his tale in the first place. In a sense, Colin and his fellow shepherds can be seen as rhetorical extensions of the poem's narrative. Spenser uses their simplicity to increase the appeal of the work for a more sophisticated audience. Naive, eager questions like Coridon's "And is the sea...so fearfull?" (l.200) or Cuddy's bewildered "What land is that thou meanst.../And is there other, then whereon we stand?" (ll.290-1) lighten the tone of the poem considerably. Similarly, the beautiful passage in which Colin repeats the Shepherd of the Ocean's description of Cynthia as a great, marine shepherdess (ll.229-63) is made more meaningful when one remembers that Colin is a shepherd and

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[1] This matter is mentioned in the second chapter of my thesis, pp.51-2.

that his friend is calming his fears by likening the unfamiliar sea to a familiar pastoral landscape.

Humphrey Tonkin writes:

> The assumption of shepherds' weeds and the entrance into Arcadias of the mind reveal that a poet can conceive of two ways at least of looking at himself and at reality, at complex matters from the perspective of simplicity, at simplicity itself from the point of view of the complex.[1]

Spenser uses this dual perspective with great skill and sensitivity throughout the poem.

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe is written in iambic verse as is most of the Calender. However, there are few other metrical similarities between the works. The verse of the later pastoral shows a considerable advance in smoothness and command of rhythm over the non-lyrical sections of its predecessor. Colin Clouts Come Home Againe consists of ten-syllable lines which combine to form quatrains.

> The shepheards boy //(best knowen by that name)
> That after *Tityrus* //first sung his lay,
> Layes of sweet loue, //without rebuke or blame,
> Sate (as his custome was) //vpon a day,
> Charming his baten pipe //vnto his peres,
> The shepheard swaines //that did about him play:
> Who all the while //with greedie listfull eares,
> Did stand astonisht //at his curious skill,
> Like hartlesse deare, //dismayd with thunders sound.
> At last //when as he piped had his fill,
> He rested him: // [2] (ll.1-11)

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[1] Spenser's Courteous Pastoral: Book Six of "The Faerie Queene" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p.38.

[2] The scansion offered above is only one of several possible ways of hearing the lines. Certain feet could be treated differently. "Who all" at the beginning of line 7, for instance, could be scanned as "Whŏ all".

Spenser varies this scheme in a number of different ways. An examination of the lines quoted above reveals several of these. The rhythm of the poem, while regular, is kept from monotony by the use of an inverted initial foot in many lines. In the extract, lines three, four, five and seven are varied in this manner. Spenser is also careful to change the position of the caesura. In the last four of the eleven quoted lines the caesura falls after the fifth, fourth, second and fourth syllables respectively, while in the fourth line his use of parentheses gives the effect of a double caesura. In addition, the sense of Spenser's verse often continues beyond its metrical divisions. Sentences frequently end within a quatrain rather than at its conclusion. This tendency is particularly marked in the opening lines of the poem. In the extract, for instance, it should be noted that the opening sentence of the work finishes at the end of line nine, the first line of the third quatrain. A change of speaker also occurs regularly within the quatrain. In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, Hobbinol replaces the narrative voice in the middle of line eleven, the third line of a quatrain, and establishes a precedent which is followed in much of the rest of the poem. Finally, Spenser occasionally varies his rhyme scheme by repeating the same rhyme in consecutive quatrains or linking a quatrain to those which precede and succeed it by means of shared rhymes. The rhyme scheme of the extract demonstrates his use of both devices. The lines rhyme as follows: a b a b c b c d e d.

The style of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe is also different from that of the Calender. In the latter great use is made of rustic terms and rural dialect. The diction of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe is more conventional. Colin and his friends speak simply, but in standard English. This accords well with Colin's increased

sophistication and allows the lines to flow more freely. Spenser implies in the poem that country life is in some ways preferable to life at court (ll.660-894). His presentation of the shepherds as reasonable people using ordinary language makes this more acceptable. In the Calender Colin's songs are carefully distinguished from the rest of the verse by being made to appear both verbally and metrically more accomplished. In the poem being discussed Colin's tale winds in and out of his friends' comments upon it. It is as if Spenser has grown in confidence and no longer finds it necessary to emphasise the poetic skills of his pastoral representative by making his songs differ too obviously from those of his fellows. One result of this is that Colin Clouts Come Home Againe has come to be regarded as a particularly pleasing example of poetry written in a middle style. It uses familiar words, but never resembles prose. At its finest, as in the description of Cynthia (ll.332-51 and ll.592-615), the tale of the Mulla and the Bregog (ll.100-171), the depiction of the ship (ll.201-31) or Colin's words upon the lady whom he serves (ll.464-479), it rises to passages of memorable lyric beauty.

Kathleen Williams writes of the piece:

> None of the shorter poems exemplifies more brilliantly than does this seemingly informal and nonchalant work the sophistication of Spenser's rhetorical art, and especially of his use of the voice of the shepherd poet, here a character in the fiction as well as the interpreter of it.[1]

A closer look at the poem reveals just how deftly Spenser is able to manipulate Colin in his dual role as both a character in an invented story and the teller of that same narrative.

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe can be divided into five sections

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[1] "Vision and Rhetoric: The Poet's Voice in The Faerie Queene," ELH, 36 (1969), p.138.

in each of which a new topic is discussed and a different facet of Colin's nature displayed. These sections are the opening lines of the work, including the song of the Bregog and the Mulla (ll.1-177), the description of Colin's journey to Cynthia's domain (ll.178-289), his favourable comments upon the land and its inhabitants (ll.290-650), his criticisms of the same (ll.651-822), and his final words on the subject of love in general and Rosalind in particular (ll.823-955).

Spenser uses the first part of the poem to capture his readers' attention, to establish the setting in which Colin's tale is to be told, to allude to Colin's previous role in The Shepheardes Calender, and to re-emphasise the extraordinary nature of his central character's poetic gifts as well as his importance within the pastoral world. Interestingly, the opening line of Come Home Againe is very similar to that of the Calender. The earlier poem begins: "A Shepeheards boye (no better doe him call)", the later one opens with the line, "The shepheards boy (best knowen by that name)". Spenser thus establishes a close relationship between the poems from the start. The line also allows him to hint tantalisingly that his shepherd-poet may be more than he seems. Spenser's mention of Tityrus (l.2), a name closely associated with Virgil[1] and used to represent Chaucer in the Calender,[2] also indicates that Colin should not be taken lightly. Having subtly suggested this, Spenser proceeds to describe a traditional pastoral scene, that of shepherds gathering to listen to one of their number play. However, the simile used to describe the response of Colin's listeners to his skill is far from conventional. They stand

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[1] This connection is explained in the first chapter of my thesis, p.25.

[2] VS, MP, I : 7.

"like hartlesse deare, dismayd with thunders sound" (l.9). Spenser seems to imply that Colin's gifts are so powerful as to be frightening to those whose own talents are more limited and who, therefore, find it difficult to understand his ability. The simile emphasises the fact that Colin is more than a singer of pretty, rustic lyrics. Hobbinol, a character who also features prominently in the Calender, speaks next. His words serve a double purpose by indicating both that Colin has been away and that the pastoral world has suffered without him. The reader is made aware that Colin has probably had an adventure which will be described later in the poem. In addition, Hobbinol's depiction of the effect of Colin's absence on the woods, the birds, the flowers, the flocks, the waters and even the fish endows the "shepheards boy" with some of the attributes of a nature god. He is shown as a source of life, growth and joy. One is reminded of Orpheus, the classical musician, whose songs were able to guide him safely through the underworld and even bring trees to listen to him.[1]

Colin responds to Hobbinol by announcing that he has been privileged to see a vision besides which all earthly pleasures fade into insignificance. Colin's friends, their curiosity now thoroughly aroused, crowd even closer. The reader, too, should feel eager to know what can have stirred Colin so strongly. The description of the shepherds and their flocks re-emphasises Colin's pastoral surroundings. The story which is about to follow is going to be told to simple shepherds living in a safe and peaceful environment. Colin begins his tale by describing an encounter with a strange shepherd with whom he piped and sang. After this, he repeats the song which he sang to his appreciative visitor. It is

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[1] Ovid, Metamorphoses, pp.245-8.

difficult to be sure of Spenser's motives for including this self-contained lyric in his poem. One remembers Colin's beautiful lays in the Calender, but this song seems different. It uses the same metre and rhyme scheme as that of the work in which it is imbedded and, therefore, does not draw attention to itself in the same way that the "lay of Elisa",the sestina of "Avgvst" and the lament for Dido do. Nevertheless, the song does establish Colin's poetic credentials and completes the image of a gifted pastoral singer which Spenser has been at pains to create. The tale of the Bregog and the Mulla roots Colin in a particular environment. It is noteworthy that he does not leave that world until persuaded to do so by a stranger, the Shepherd of the Ocean. The simplicity of the concerns of Colin's first song in Come Home Againe serves as a foil for the complexities of his view of the court. The detailed geographical information and the place names given in the poem make it clear that Colin inhabits a particular region of Ireland rather than some mythical Arcadia and, thus, point to the closeness of Spenser's relationship to Colin. This prepares the reader for further parallels to be drawn between the two later in the poem. It has also been suggested that what appears to be a simple tale of rivers and mountains may in fact be an allegorical representation of Raleigh's love affair with Elizabeth Throckmorton and the Queen's angry reaction to it.[1] If one accepts this, then the whole song should be regarded as a later addition to Colin Clouts Come Home Againe. It is clear that Spenser does refer to Raleigh's disgrace in other parts of the poem,[2] so it seems very possible that the tale of the Bregog and

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[1] I am indebted to Dr. J.S. Gouws for this suggestion.

[2] CCCHA, 11.164-175.

the Mulla may also be intended to contain a subtle reference to the same subject. Nevertheless, the song does not appear to the reader as an incongrous digression. It has been shown that it serves other functions in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe and these are enough to ensure that even a reader who is ignorant of the details of Raleigh's marriage will not be disturbed by the song's presence in the work.

In the opening section of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe Colin is presented as a gifted poet appreciated by his friends and secure in his environment. This image of him lends weight to his statements and allows him to deliver his tale of the Mulla and the Bregog in an unforced, graceful manner ideally suited to the simplicity of its narrative and the familiarity of its characters. The Colin of the second portion of the poem is most unlike that of the first. The Shepherd of the Ocean's travelling companion is portrayed as a gauche countryman overwhelmed by the unfamiliar setting in which he finds himself. As a consequence of this, Colin's role as the interpreter of the narrative becomes a slightly comic one. Significantly, he has to be won away from his pastoral environment before this change is possible. The Shepherd of the Ocean removes Colin from his Arcadia not only physically, but spiritually as well. He does this by persuading the shepherd that his pleasant surroundings are a waste in which he is "quite forgot" (l.183). Once Colin leaves the valley, he seems to lose much of his dignity and all of his authority. His first sight of the sea terrifies him and his description of his emotions is at once powerful and yet, because of the extreme nature of those feelings, amusing as well. The sophisticated reader smiles at Colin's fear, but at the same time recognises in it echoes of the terror which strikes all men on encountering the potentially dangerous unknown:

> A world of waters heaped vp on hie,
> Rolling like mountaines in wide wildernesse,
> Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse crie.
> (11.197-9)

Coridon's awed question prompts Colin to go even further. He likens the sea to a "thousand wyld beasts with deep mouthes gaping direfull" (1.202). The image is particularly remarkable when one considers its probable effect on Colin's listeners. One of the most serious threats to a shepherd's life and livelihood is the wild beast. Colin's reaction to the sea has more than comic value. Because of his fear, the ship is transformed from a conventional means of transport into a daring animal possessed of "armes and wings, and head and taile" (1.218). A routine crossing of the Irish Channel becomes an heroic venture which grips the reader's attention.

Like Colin's fear, the Shepherd of the Ocean's extended simile in which he compares the marine world to a pastoral one is both moving and slightly amusing. It is entertaining because it seeks to calm Colin by making his new environment seem just an extension of the one which he has so recently vacated. This entails altering the facts so as to make them correspond to a restricted viewpoint. At the same time, the simile is also a pleasing one. It domesticates the wild seascape described by Colin, extends the range of Cynthia's dominion, prepares Colin's audience for the additional wonders in store for them, and probably reassures them as it did him. The image of Cynthia as a shepherdess is a significant one. It allows Colin's audience to identify with her and also carries connotations of divine love and protection. Christ, after all, is often referred to as the great shepherd of his sheep. Cynthia is also associated with classical deities. In the Shepherd of the Ocean's description of her, he mentions that she is served by Triton (1.245) and Proteus (1.248).

This mixture of Christian and pagan images characterises much Renaissance and medieval praise poetry.

After Colin's companion has completed his simile, Colin resumes his tale. He mentions the isle of Lundy and describes in some detail the port at which he landed. This circumstantial material returns the reader to an awareness of Colin's close links to Spenser. The fact that Colin may be said to "shadow" Spenser is also emphasised at the start of this section of the poem. Colin's new acquaintance bewails the "lucklesse lot" (l.181) which has caused the shepherd to be "banisht" (l.182). Spenser may have felt forlorn and strange in Ireland. However, unless one accepts that Colin is to some extent his representative in the poem, there seems to be no reason for Colin to be referred to as an exile. In fact, the poem suggests that he has always lived in his rural surroundings.

In the second section of the work, Colin is presented as being very close to his audience of shepherds. Their responses to his words mirror the reactions which he is describing. The voice of an outsider, the Shepherd of the Ocean, is used to counteract the mood which Colin's story has created. This pattern is not maintained in the third section of the poem. Instead, Colin withdraws slightly from his fellows and begins himself to modify their initial responses to his account of his experiences. This change in Colin's role means that he can no longer appear quite as unsophisticated and bewildered as he did in the preceding portion of the work. His fear is, thus, replaced by awe and his bewildered distrust of his novel surroundings by fervent admiration. The altered relationship between Colin and his audience is stressed from the very beginning of the new passage. Cuddy asks if

other lands beside their own do exist and Colin rebukes him with tolerant superiority for his folly:

> Ah *Cuddy* (then quoth *Colin*) thous a fon,
> That hast not seene least part of natures worke:
> Much more there is vnkend, then thou doest kon,
> And much more that does from mens knowledge lurke.
> (11.292-5)

Colin then embarks on a description of Cynthia's land where "all happie peace and plenteous store/Conspire in one to make contented blisse" (11.310-1). Interestingly, this paradise is described largely by means of negatives. Colin stresses that it is a country free of misery, disease, famine, war, evil spirits, wolves or outlaws. This pattern has a powerful cumulative effect. Nevertheless, the relatively weaker emphasis on the positive goods which can be encountered in Cynthia's domain prepares the reader for the criticisms which Colin is to voice later in the poem. In this respect, it is noteworthy that Colin indisputably qualifies his favourable description of the land in its final lines:

> For end, all good, all grace there freely growes,
> Had people grace it gratefully to vse:
> For God his gifts there plenteously bestowes
> But gracelesse men them greatly do abuse.
> (11.324-7)

Colin's words stress that men have free will and that, while they may be blessed with an environment conducive to virtue, they cannot be forced to live exemplary lives. This observation gives added dignity to the figure of the shepherd-singer. Spenser shows Colin to be shrewd and wise although simple. The fact that Colin was not dazzled by the seeming perfection of his new surroundings encourages the reader to pay more attention to his wholehearted admiration for Cynthia.

After travelling for some time, Colin and his fellow voyager are

admitted to Cynthia's presence. The "shepheards boy" is overwhelmed by her magnificence. He tries to describe her by likening her to the most beautiful things which he has thus far encountered. However, for the first time, his pastoral frame of reference proves inadequate for his needs. "But vaine it is to thinke by paragone/Of earthly things, to iudge of things diuine," he says in despair (ll.344-5). He then goes on to mention that Cynthia enjoyed hearing his music. Alexis interrupts to ask why a lady served by so many musicians should wish to hear Colin's simple tunes. The interruption is perfectly timed. The mood of the work lightens immediately and the reader is amused to hear the retailer of such wonderful events described as "a simple silly Elfe" (l.371). Alexis' scornful question also reminds the reader that Colin is speaking to his peers and that, while these may appreciate his gifts, they do not stand in awe of him. In addition, the intervention of Alexis allows Colin to leave the subject of Cynthia and begin his commemoration of his fellow poets. He completes the long passage which follows by suggesting that Cynthia treated him well, not because of his own merits, but for the sake of his dead friend, Astrofell. Colin, thus, demonstrates humility and helps Spenser to avoid the risk of being charged with arrogance.

Spenser's lines in praise of Cynthia's shepherds are followed by a passage in which he praises her nymphs. It has already been mentioned that many of the figures which Colin describes can be linked to persons living at the time. Yet it has also been pointed out that both of these long speeches correspond to established literary conventions. It seems best, then, to view both passages as being intended to demonstrate Colin's familiarity with the inhabitants of Cynthia's domain while also discreetly complimenting Spenser's friends and potential

patrons. John F. Danby, in an article which discusses the relationship between literature and society in this period, stresses Spenser's need to win preferment and suggests that he used his poetry to achieve his purpose.[1] This may have been the case, but it should also be noted that Spenser's references to living persons in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe do not overstep the bounds of decorum or transgress against traditional poetic norms.

The passage which deals with Cynthia's shepherds is separated from that which deals with her nymphs by a haunting little lyric in which Colin dedicates himself to an unknown maiden.

> The beame of beautie sparkled from aboue,
> The floure of vertue and pure chastitie,
> The blossome of sweet ioy and perfect loue,
> The pearle of peerlesse grace and modestie:
> To her my thoughts I daily dedicate,
> To her my heart I nightly martyrize:
> To her my loue I lowly do prostrate,
> To her my life I wholly sacrifice:
> My thought, my heart, my loue, my life is shee,
> And I hers euer onely, euer one:
> One euer I all vowed hers to bee,
> One euer I, and others neuer none.
>
> (11.468-79)

The rhetoric used in these lines make them stand out from the surrounding text despite the fact that, metrically, they conform precisely to the overall pattern of the whole poem. The lyric consists of three quatrains each written in strict iambic pentameter and rhyming a b a b. In addition, each quatrain forms a single unit of sense. The poem's distinctive charm lies in its syntax and word play. Spenser makes extensive use of balance, anaphora and repetition throughout the tiny love song. In each of the four lines which make up the first quatrain a concrete noun is linked to an abstract one in the first half of the

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[1] Danby, pp.203-5.

line. In the opening line the concrete noun is described in action. In the next three lines the concrete noun is associated with not one, but two abstract nouns. The effect of the continual linking of the concrete with the abstract is to emphasise the lady's physical beauty as well as her spiritual worth. She is a sparkling beam, a flower, a blossom and a pearl. She is also virtuous, chaste, a bringer of joy and love, and the epitome of grace and modesty. The adjectives used in the quatrain accentuate her extraordinary nature. They are "pure", "sweet", "perfect" and "peerless". Although each of these qualifies an abstract noun, they seem by association to describe the lady herself. In the second quatrain Spenser allows Colin to describe his own reactions to the lady. These four lines are linked together by means of disseminative recapitulation, a familiar Petrarchan device. Each line begins with the words, "to her", and then indicates something belonging to Colin which he gives up to his love. The second half of each line begins with the word, "I", and then describes the manner in which Colin gives up each of the things mentioned in the first half of the line. In this quatrain, the final words of each line are significant. "Dedicate", "martyrize", "prostrate" and "sacrifice" are all words associated with religious worship. In addition, "martyrize" and "sacrifice" carry connotations of pain and suffering. Spenser's adverbs are equally important. In this quatrain they are "daily", "nightly", "lowly" and "wholly". They indicate the totality of Colin's dedication to the lady. He worships her at all hours and is always conscious of his unworthiness to do so. The syntactic patterning of each of these quatrains has a cumulative effect. The glory of the lady and the extent of Colin's passion for her is thus emphasised. Spenser opens the final quatrain in a way which links it to its predecessor.

Colin states once more that the lady possesses his thoughts, his heart, his love and his life and implies that, because of this, she is part of him. The lyric ends with three lines in which the syntax is so contorted that the meaning has to be established intuitively rather than logically. Colin states that he will always worship the lady and that, because of this, he will remain a part of her. The emphasis on the word, "one", stresses the closeness of their bond. The song seems to possess neo-platonic overtones. Colin's love for the lady's physical being leads him to love her spiritual qualities. The intensity of his feelings then allows him to form a mystic union with their object. It is possible that the song describes Colin's veneration for Cynthia, but the connotations of pain which can be found in the second quatrain make it more likely that he is referring to his love for Rosalind. Whatever the poem's subject may be, it demonstrates the extent of Spenser-Colin's mature poetic ability. It is strictly disciplined and uses only conventional images, yet it is remarkably beautiful.

Although this brief song is noticeably different from the poetry which surrounds it, it is, nevertheless, firmly embedded in the text in which it appears. The "one" of the final lines quoted above is matched by the "one" (ll.465-8) of the quatrain which precedes the opening lines of the lyric. This, in turn, is a response to the "none" (l.463) of Lucida's earlier remark. The compositions attributed to Colin which are quoted in the Calender are far less closely bound to the rest of the text of the eclogues which frame them.

Colin completes his description of the court by returning to the subject of Cynthia. Once more he describes her attributes in terms of natural images which remind Spenser's readers of the speaker's

pastoral audience and Arcadian origins. The images used are also reminiscent of biblical ones.[1] The religious dimension of Colin's description becomes more marked towards the end of this passage. Cynthia's words are like honey, her deeds like grapes, and her looks like the sun's rays at dawn. Her thoughts, however, are like the fumes of frankincense and she herself is like an angel. Again, Colin has to abandon natural imagery in his attempt to describe Cynthia, a woman who is almost divine, whose words can raise the dead (l.599), and whose cradle of creation was heaven itself (l.613).

Colin's second description of Cynthia is also interrupted by a comment from one of his peers who cannot believe that Colin is worthy even to sing of Cynthia let alone to sing to her. Cuddy's shocked accusation of boldness allows Colin to defend his seeming temerity from within the poem and, thus, protect Spenser from similar charges. Colin excuses himself on the grounds that he is able to teach nature to admire Cynthia and that his songs will confer immortality on her. The poet's ability to defy time was a common theme among writers during this period.[2] Colin's listeners accept his explanation and, indeed, are so moved by it that they fall silent.

The fourth section of the poem is closely related to the third and yet very different from it. Thestylis begins this new passage by asking Colin why he left the court. Colin replies by describing the

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[1] The natural imagery used in the opening lines of this passage resembles that which can be found in The Song of Solomon, while that which is employed later in the passage is more overtly religious in tone and content.

[2] This matter is discussed in the first chapter of my thesis, pp.45-6.

guile and corruption which he found there. He also says that he feared to be caught up in it and, therefore, decided to return to the familiar dangers and discomforts of a shepherd's life. As the subject matter of the fourth section of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe differs from that of the third, so does the presentation of Colin Clout. The Colin who cries out against the court's vice is a grave moralist. His voice rings with authority and, although he self-deprecatingly puts forward his lack of sophistication as the reason for his retirement (ll.668-73), Spenser makes it clear that, in this context, Colin's simplicity is to be envied rather than despised.

Alvin Kernan has said that, to the Elizabethans, satire meant essentially the satirist, the creating of "the correct personality to deliver the attack".[1] Colin Clout is a character particularly well-suited to the voicing of satire. His very name indicates this. He is named after the central figure in a long verse satire by Skelton. Like his predecessor, Colin is an uneducated rustic who, in some ways, can be said to speak for the people of England. The traditional description of Christ as a good shepherd lends authority to his statements. In addition, his obvious simplicity and integrity make his accusations even more difficult to refute. He becomes a measure besides which the courtiers are found wanting. Is is also clear that he observes the court with the eye of an impartial stranger and, thus, cannot be accused of personal involvement with that which he denounces. Unsophistication, which has been presented as a source of amusement elsewhere in the poem, is here shown to be preferable to courtly vice

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[1] The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance, Yale Studies in English, 142 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p.141.

and dissoluteness. In this section of the work Colin is portrayed as a Christian moralist. He uses words to wage war on corruption and makes it apparent that, while the court's attractions may tempt him, ultimately he cannot be persuaded to abandon his moral principles.

The insertion of a satiric passage in a pastoral poem would not have surprised the Elizabethan reader. Ronald Paulson has pointed out that, historically, the satirist has often had to be on his guard and hide his satires "beneath the sheep's clothing of a commonly accepted form".[1] This form has often been pastoral. George Puttenham, a contemporary of Spenser, wrote that eclogues should "containe and enforme morall discipline for the amendment of mans behaviour".[2]

In the case of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, Spenser's satire seems to have been a nod to literary convention rather than a serious attempt to reform. The contrast between the favourable and unfavourable aspects of court life was a common theme in sixteenth-century poetry.[3] Moreover, other works by Spenser also view the court in different ways. In Mother Hubberds Tale, for instance, he combines the portrait of the perfect courtier (ll.717-93) with a description of the unhappy condition of the seeker after royal preferment (ll.891-914). Works published after Colin Clouts Come Home Againe also contrast the two sides of court life. Book VI of The Faerie Qveene commends the court in the prologue and in the initial stanza of the first canto, but allows

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1 Paulson, p.5.

2 ECE, II : 40.

3 Cf. Edwin A. Greenlaw, "Spenser and the Earl of Leicester," PMLA, 25 (1910), p.548 and W.D. Elcock, "English Indifference to Du Bellay's Regrets," MLR, 46 (1951), p.180, n.1.

Meliboe to criticise it in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth stanzas of Canto IX. Prothalamion, a celebration of two noble marriages, opens with criticisms of the way in which the narrator has been treated. Admittedly, Spenser himself may have suffered indignities at court, but it would be dangerous to see his conventional and generalised criticisms of it in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe as expressions of personal feeling without concrete evidence to support this view.

The general nature of Colin's passage condemning the court contrasts oddly with the manner in which he praises individuals in the third section of the poem. Even Hobbinol comments on this.

> Ah *Colin* (then said *Hobbinol*) the blame
> Which thou imputest, is too generall,
> As if not any gentle wit of name,
> Nor honest mynd might there be found at all.
> (11.731-4)

Hobbinol's interruption allows Colin to admit that worthy persons can be found at court (11.751-5) and to defend his own integrity as a satirist. "Blame is (quoth he[Colin]) more blamelesse generall,/ Then that which priuate errours doth pursew" (11.749-50). By these two means Spenser is thus able to soften the impact of his harsh words and make it unlikely that any one of his criticisms would cause personal offence.

The fourth section of the poem ends with a passage in which the court is denounced for its incorrect attitude to the rites of love and the shepherds are praised for the spirit in which they observe these rituals. Love is shown as a sacred force and the highest good of which humanity is capable. Because of this, the shepherds' attitude to it reveals their moral ascendancy over the courtiers. Colin's defence of love, therefore, both brings the fourth section of the poem to a satisfying conclusion and prepares the reader for the work's final lines

in which Colin's love for Rosalind is discussed.

It is, in fact, difficult to draw a line to indicate where the fourth section of the poem ends and the fifth one begins. Spenser handles the transition with considerable skill. Colin's contrasting descriptions of love at court and love in Arcadia prompt Cuddie to suggest that Colin should be a priest of love (l.832). The praise encourages Colin to speak of love in more abstract terms. It seems reasonable, therefore, to regard Cuddie's words as the introduction to a new section of the poem in which love and not the court is discussed and in which Colin is presented primarily as a lover rather than as a critic.

Colin's celebration of love is powerful and moving. The "shepheards boy" claims that love existed before the world did and was, indeed, the power responsible for its creation. As evidence for this, Colin points to the power which love has to reconcile opposites and suggests that it is by the combination of disparate elements that new life is made:

> Through him the cold began to couet heat,
> And water fire; the light to mount on hie,
> And th' heauie downe to peize; the hungry t'eat
> And voydnesse to seeke full satietie.
> So being former foes, they wexed friends,
> And gan by litle learne to loue each other:
> So being knit, they brought forth other kynds
> Out of the fruitfull wombe of their great mother.
> (11.847-54)

In Petrarchan love poetry the object of the poet's desire, though usually pictured as cold, is also represented as being able to inspire a blaze of feeling. In Colin's song Spenser uses this tradition in an innovative way. Love's ability to unite warring qualities is presented, not as inexplicable or paradoxical, but as natural and inevitable. By showing that creation arises out of fusion even at the geophysical level, Spenser manages to imply that love is a power whose influence is not

confined to the affairs of human beings. In a world created by love it seems right that the first impulse of its inhabitants should be to celebrate the force which made them, by loving one another and begetting more of their kind. Colin mentions that lions, turtle-doves and dolphins behave in this way. The animals chosen are significant. They represent loving creatures of the land, the sea and the air. Man is shown to be like these noble animals and yet, by virtue of his possession of reason, different from them. Colin indicates that man should love with his mind as well as his body and should choose "the fairest in his sight" (l.869) to adore. Spenser's emphasis on the importance of beauty should be viewed in the light of neo-platonic thought which presents physical beauty as the "shadow" of spiritual beauty. Colin stresses that love which has only a physical dimension is an affront to the creative power.

> So loue is Lord of all the world by right,
> And rules the creatures by his powrfull saw:
> All being made the vassalls of his might,
> Through secret sence which therto doth them draw.
> Thus ought all louers of their lord to deeme:
> And with chaste heart to honor him alway:
> But who so else doth otherwise esteeme,
> Are outlawes, and his lore do disobay.
> For their desire is base, and doth not merit,
> The name of loue, but of disloyall lust:
> Ne mongst true louers they shall place inherit,
> But as Exuls out of his court be thrust.
> (11.883-94)

In Colin's speech human love is associated with religious worship and shown as "shadowing" an aspect of the divine. The breadth of Spenser's vision permits him to write of a harmonious universe of interlocking parts with convincing skill. Melissa is uplifted by the vision he presents, but Hobbinol, bitter about Colin's condition, is unable to respond in a similar way. He attempts to condemn Rosalind for her treatment of Colin, and thus brings Colin's abstractions down to earth.

For a moment, the reader fears that the whole fabric of Colin's song is going to be destroyed. However, Lucida comes to Rosalind's defence. In the Calender, Rosalind's conduct was always treated as indefensible. In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe this attitude changes. Lucida points out that love cannot be forced, and Colin claims that the fault is his for having looked so high and announces that he wishes only to honour Rosalind. The cessation of Colin's dissatisfaction and resentment allows him to view his unhappy love in a positive rather than in a negative light. Rosalind becomes a symbol of the divine (11.929-34) and Colin is shown to be blessed by his love for her. The fact that Colin's love has been purified and allowed to transcend his physical desires and frustrations enables him to return once more to poetry.

> Yet that I may her honour paravant,
> And praise her worth, though far my wit aboue,
> Such grace shall be some guerdon for the griefe,
> And long affliction which I haue endured:
> Such grace sometimes shall giue me some reliefe,
> And ease of paine which cannot be recured.
> (11.941-6)

Colin's love has matured. It no longer has a destructive influence upon him. Instead, his own experience strengthens his poetic abilities. Even death which, in the Calender, was presented merely as the only way in which Colin could escape his pain is here presented as the ultimate act of worship. Colin, freed of desire, becomes an almost inhuman figure. He faces death without fear or regrets and this emphasises his new strength and purity. At the end of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, Colin rises above the pain of mortality and seems able to glimpse the "real" world of the spirit.[1]

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[1] The idea of dying for love is a conventional one in Petrarchan love poetry. However, Spenser's handling of it at the end of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe seems more than a routine expression of a traditional image.

Colin Clouts Come Home Againe is more than a simple, possibly semi-autobiographical tale of travel and a homecoming. It is also a guide to a spiritual journey. In it the actual world of Spenser, Raleigh and Elizabeth is held in shifting relation to that of Colin, the Shepherd of the Ocean and Cynthia, through Spenser's handling of his pastoral "shadow". Yet, at the same time, Colin directs the reader, as he does his audience, to a proper understanding of the true significance of his experiences.

Richard Mallette sees The Shepheardes Calender and Colin Clouts Come Home Againe as comprising "a diptych".[1] Certainly, the poems are closely related and the Colin of the later work seems to have resolved many of the issues which perplexed his predecessor, but the poem looks forwards as well as backwards. The Colin of the final section of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe is aware of how "song that gives present pleasures can confront and, if not transform and celebrate, then accept and reconcile man to the stresses and realities of his situation".[2] Because of this, he prepares the reader for the Colin who is to appear in the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene.

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[1] Mallette, p.19.

[2] Paul Alpers, "The Eclogue Tradition and the Nature of Pastoral," College English, 24 (1972), p.353.

CHAPTER 4

COLIN CLOUT IN THE FAERIE QVEENE AND OTHER POEMS

The figure and concerns of Colin Clout dominate much of The Shepheardes Calender and all of Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, but his other appearances in Spenser's work are more fleeting. "The Rvines of Time", Daphnaida, the "Mvtabilitie Cantos" and the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene all contain references to him.[1] While Colin is mentioned only in the ninth and tenth cantos of the last complete book of The Faerie Qveene, he makes a significant contribution to the poem as a whole and, in the process of doing so, brings his own career to a satisfying conclusion. His role in the three other works mentioned above is far less important. Nevertheless, a close examination of even these brief references to him can enhance the reader's appreciation of Spenser's subtle and flexible handling of his "shepheards boye".

"The Rvines of Time" first appeared in Complaints, a collection of poems by Spenser published in 1591. The lament is dedicated to the Countess of Pembroke, Sir Philip Sidney's sister. In it, the poet-speaker writes of walking beside the Thames and encountering the weeping

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[1] Colin Clout also figures prominently in "A Pastorall Aeglogue vpon the Death of Sir Phillip Sidney, Knight, etc.", one of a series of poems collected by Spenser in memory of his friend. However, the eclogue does not appear in VS, MP and De Selincourt points out in his introduction to OS, p.xxxv, that of these elegies, only two, "Astrophel, A Pastorall Elegie" and "The Doleful Lay of Clorinda", can be even tentatively attributed to Spenser. For these reasons, I have decided not to comment on the work.

genius of Verulamium (ll.1-21). This figure mourns the destruction of her former glory (ll.22-175) and then consoles herself by noting that all things are soon forgotten once the fates have shorn their vital thread (ll.176-82). She mentions Leicester's death and chides his friends for not having mourned him more publicly (ll.183-238). After this she speaks of Sidney and describes him as having found eternal bliss (ll.139-343). She concludes her lament by claiming that literature alone can allow man to cheat death (ll.344-469). The spirit then disappears and the poet-speaker sees twelve visions (ll.470-672). The first six visions emphasise the vulnerability of all earthly things and the next six stress the power of words to defy the ravages of time. In the final lines of the poem, Spenser dedicates his work to Sidney and asks the Countess of Pembroke to weep for her dead brother and turn her thoughts to heavenly things (ll.673-86).

The genius of the vanished Roman city mentions Colin Clout in the thirty-third stanza of the poem while she is lamenting the fact that Leicester's glory has been allowed to vanish:

> Ne doth *Colin*, carelesse *Colin Cloute*,
> Care now his idle bagpipe vp to raise,
> Ne tell his sorrow to the listning rout
> Of shepherd groomes, which wont his songs to praise:
> Praise who so list, yet I will him dispraise,
> Vntill he quite him of this guiltie blame:
> Wake shepheards boy, at length awake for shame.
> (ll.225-31)

This passage is a good example of Spenser's exceptionally skilful use of self-reference in his poetry. In The Shepheardes Calender, which was published in 1579, he indicated to his readers that Colin was to some extent intended to "shadow" his creator. The readers of Complaints, published twelve years later, are, therefore, likely to have been aware of the existence of a close relationship between Colin Clout

and Edmund Spenser. Many of them would also have known that Spenser had benefited from Leicester's patronage.[1] Because of this, it seems probable that they would have interpreted the extract quoted above as a passage of self-recrimination.

However, the way in which the poem is structured makes the lines more interesting. While the reader knows that Colin can be viewed as Spenser's pastoral representative, the use of "I" in the opening stanzas of the poem also encourages him to make a tentative association between the wanderer who hears the lament and the poet who composed it. In addition, from line 239 onwards "Verlame" seems to speak in Spenser's voice rather than her own.[2] The stanza is, therefore, spoken by a figure which Spenser seems to use as a mouthpiece, addressed to another which may also be linked to the poet, and concerns the behaviour of yet a third figure which is even more clearly intended to stand for its creator.

"The Rvines of Time" celebrates Leicester and his family. Ironically, Spenser accuses himself of ingratitude while demonstrating its opposite. This brief reference to Colin Clout, thus, indicates that Spenser's use of self-reference in his work is both subtle and complex. Colin Clout is by no means Spenser's only invented "shadow". Similarly, it should be remembered that Spenser stresses this particular relationship only when it suits him to do so. In this case, Colin is described as uncaring so that the poet can demonstrate that Edmund Spenser is not guilty of that fault.

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1 Danby, p.203.

2 VS, MP, I : 525.

Daphnaida, a pastoral elegy on the death of Lady Douglas Howard, the wife of Spenser's friend, Arthur Gorges, also contains a stanza in which the activities of Colin Clout are described. However, whereas in "The Rvines of Time" Colin is blamed for failing to sing someone's praises, in Daphnaida he is commended for his hymns to Elizabeth:

> Ne let *Elisa* royall Shepheardesse
> The praises of my parted loue enuy,
> For she hath praises in all plenteousnesse
> Powr'd vpon her like showers of Castaly
> By her own Shepheard, *Colin* her owne Shepherd,
> That her with heauenly hymnes doth deifie,
> Of rustick muse full hardly to be betterd.
> (11.225-31)

Once more the body of the poem is supposedly delivered by an invented figure in response to a concerned question from an anonymous speaker. The poet-speaker walks out over barren fields on a wintry evening and encounters Alcyon, a bereaved husband. Like "Verlame", Alcyon gives voice to sentiments which might be Spenser's and, like the unnamed listener of the first poem, that of the second is also referred to in the first person. Colin, too, can be regarded as Spenser's representative in both works. However, while the two references to Colin may occur in similar circumstances, their purposes clearly differ. In Daphnaida, Spenser seems to wish to compliment the Queen. Alcyon begs Elisa, Spenser's name for Elizabeth, not to resent the praises of his dead "loue" (l.226). He reminds her that Colin Clout lavishes praise on her. In the quoted stanza, Alcyon's words distinguish Colin as a figure quite separate from the poet-speaker whom he is addressing. By this means Spenser cleverly contrives to praise another woman extravagantly while also emphasising his complete devotion to Elizabeth.

The form and diction of the stanza aid him in achieving his objectives. Daphnaida is written in a variation of Chaucer's seven-line

rhyme-royal stanza.[1] Instead of rhyming a b a b b c c Spenser's stanza rhymes a b a b c b c. The introduction of a new rhyme, "c", helps to highlight the fifth line. In the extract quoted above Spenser uses this line to stress Colin's attachment to Elisa. The word "Colin" is placed in the middle of the line and is both preceded and succeeded by the phrase, "her own Shepheard". The stanza itself compliments the "royall Shepheardesse" (l.225). By using these words to describe Elisa, Spenser likens her to Christ and suggests that she is both good and powerful. The alliteration on "p" in "praises", "plenteousnesse" and "powr'd" in the first half of the stanza points to the extent of Colin's admiration for Elisa. Colin's songs are likened to "showers of Castaly" (l.228).[2] They are, therefore, shown as benefic ent, life-giving and unusual. Colin's lyrics are also described as "heauenly hymnes" (l.230) by which Elisa is deified. This comparison heightens the apparent worth of both the songs and their subject. The final line of the stanza is simple and direct. Colin's lays are described as probably the best of their kind. In Daphnaida, then, Spenser's brief reference to Colin Clout embodies both a compliment to Elizabeth and a favourable comment on his own poetic ability.

Colin is also mentioned briefly in the "Mvtabilitie Cantos". In the fortieth stanza of the first of these the following lines occur:

> Amongst the which, there was a Nymph that hight
> *Molanna*; daughter of old father *Mole*,
> And sister vnto *Mulla*, faire and bright:

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[1] Spenser's debt in Daphnaida to Chaucer's Book of the Duchess Blanche is fully discussed in VS, MP, I : 430-3.

[2] Classical poets refer to Castalia's speaking streams, VS, MP, II : 324. This makes Spenser's simile particularly appropriate.

> Vnto whose bed false *Bregog* whylome stole,
> That Shepheard *Colin* dearely did condole,
> And made her lucklesse loues wellknowne to be.
> But this *Molanna*, were she not so shole,
> Were no lesse faire and beautiful then shee:
> Yet as she is, a fairer flood may no man see.
> (11.352-60)

The stanza clearly contains a reference to Colin Clouts Come Home Againe in which Colin tells the tale of the Mulla and the Bregog to a circle of his friends. It has already been pointed out that these two rivers can be linked to two which flowed through Spenser's Irish estate.[1] By making Molanna a daughter of "Old father Mole" (1.353) and a sister to the Mulla (1.354), Spenser stresses again that the tale which is to follow is set in Ireland.[2] Molanna aids Faunus to spy on Diana bathing. He is discovered and, after punishing the nymph for her disloyalty, Diana curses and abandons the region. The story illustrates a process of change and decay as the once fair country becomes a prey to wolves and thieves. The reference to Colin adds an extra dimension to the fable of mutability which follows it. In the stanzas described above Spenser indicates that Molanna's land is no imaginary haunt of classical gods, but a real and now troubled country. In this way, the reader is prepared for the stanza at the end of the canto in which Spenser hints at his own association with Ireland once more and expresses distress at that country's condition:

> Since which, those Woods, and all that goodly Chase,
> Doth to this day with Wolues and Thieues abound:
> Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since haue found.
> (11.493-5)

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[1] This connection is discussed in the third chapter of my thesis, p.100.

[2] In the thirty-eighth stanza of this canto, Spenser specifically states that his story is to take place in Ireland.

In "The Rvines of Time", Daphnaida and the "Mvtabilitie Cantos" Spenser uses the relationship which he has established with the figure of Colin Clout to achieve certain objectives. Nevertheless, Colin's activities are not central to the themes and concerns of any of these works and his appearances in them are too brief to contribute significantly to our overall view of the character. This is not the case in the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene which contains Colin's final really noteworthy appearance.

In the ninth canto, the central figure of the book, Calidore, the knight of courtesy, while pursuing the Blatant Beast, stumbles on a group of shepherds who offer him food and shelter. He falls in love with one of their number, a fair maiden named Pastorella and, because of this, decides to linger for a while in Arcadia. It is in this appropriate setting that he encounters Colin Clout. The "shepheards boye" is first mentioned in the ninth canto of the book. On a fine day, Pastorella and her companions decide to dance and call upon Colin to pipe for them:

> As they are wont in faire sunshynie weather,
> The whiles their flockes in shadowes shrouded bee,
> They fell to daunce: then did they all agree,
> That *Colin Clout* should pipe as one most fit.
> (6.IX.xli,ll.3-6)

The shepherds' decision alerts Spenser's readers to Colin's presence in the community, reminds them of his remarkable talents, and prepares them for Calidore's important meeting with him in the succeeding canto of the work.

One day while Pastorella is away, Calidore wanders out into the fields. He comes upon a hill set on a plain and surrounded by trees. At its foot, he sees a beautiful river. He draws nearer to it and discovers a hundred naked maidens dancing in delight on its summit. The

maidens encircle the three Graces and a fourth figure more beautiful than any of those which surround her. To Calidore's amazement, all of these beings appear to be moving in response to the piping of a shepherd, Colin Clout. Entranced, Calidore abandons caution and reveals his presence. As soon as he does so the beautiful maidens vanish and he is left alone with Colin who breaks his pipe in frustration. Calidore regrets his action and approaches Colin for an explanation of what he has witnessed. Colin reveals the identity of the ladies and presents the Graces as embodying all the "complements of curtesie" (6.X.xxiii, l.6). He then suggests that human beings should attempt to exemplify similar qualities. After this Colin goes on to express his love and reverence for the fourth maiden whom he describes as the epitome of all beauty and virtue. Finally, he asks Gloriana to pardon him for praising another with such fervour. Calidore listens to Colin's words and apologises again for his intrusion. Colin accepts his apology and Spenser then indicates that Calidore remains in the pastoral world for some time learning from both Colin's words and the beauty of his surroundings:

> In such discourses they together spent
> Long time, as fit occasion forth them led;
> With which the Knight him selfe did much content,
> And with delight his greedy fancy fed,
> Both of his words, which he with reason red;
> And also of the place, whose pleasures rare
> With such regard his sences rauished,
> That thence, he had no will away to fare,
> But wisht, that with that shepheard he mote
> dwelling share. (6.X.xxx, ll.1-9)

The inclusion of a pastoral episode in the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene would probably not have disturbed Spenser's contemporaries. Marinelli points out that pastoral "is capable of assuming a form peculiar to itself and also of interpreting other forms as a creative

element".[1] He then goes on to suggest that perhaps this accounts for the capacity of pastoral "traditionally the humblest of poetic forms to take on various tonalities grander than the shepherd's flute can offer, and to marry, frequently and bigamously, above itself".[2] In this context, it should also be remembered that many Renaissance writers, Spenser among them, began their careers by composing pastorals before turning to more ambitious works. From pastoral, Petrarch went on to write the *Africa*, Boiardo to write *Orlando Innamorata*, Ariosto to write *Orlando Furioso* and Sannazaro to write his *Arcadia*.[3] The epic-romances of these and other great Italian poets often contain pastoral interludes and it is likely not only that Spenser was influenced by these works but also that many of his readers would have been encouraged by their familiarity with Italian poetry to expect pastoral episodes to appear in The Faerie Qveene.[4] Prominent poems and plays of the period which contain pastoral material include the *Arcadias* of Sannazaro, Lope and Sidney, Montemayor's *Diana*, Boccaccio's *Ameto*, Longinus' *Daphnis and Chloë*, Tasso's *Gerusalemne Liberata*, Poliziano's *Orfeo*, Tasso's *Aminta*, Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, and Peele's Arraignment of Paris.[5]

The inclusion of a pastoral oasis in a major non-pastoral work is thus not without precedent.[6] Renato Poggioli even suggests that the

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1 Marinelli, p.9.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cullen, p.10.

4 Spenser's probable exposure to Italian literature is discussed in the first chapter of my thesis, pp.31-3.

5 Cullen, p.10.

6 This is discussed at some length in VS, FQ, VI : 452-8.

pastoral life appears to the best advantage when it is presented as a temporary retreat from an active career rather than as a permanent mode of existence:

> Man may linger in the pastoral dreamworld a short while or a whole lifetime. Pastoral poetry makes more poignant and real the dream it wishes to convey when the retreat is not a lasting but a passing experience, acting as a pause in the process of living, as a breathing spell from the fever and anguish of being. Then it fixes the pastoral moment within the category of space as well as of time, as an interval to be chosen at both the proper hour and the right point.[1]

The question of whether Spenser allows Calidore to withdraw into the pastoral world at the correct time is one which may trouble some readers. In choosing to stay with the shepherds, Calidore seems to abandon the moral responsibility of his quest. However, certain writers have defended Calidore's decision by emphasising that the pastoral episode in The Faerie Qveene plays a vital role in the unfolding of Spenser's vision of courtesy. C.S. Lewis, for instance, writes as follows:

> The greatest mistake that can be made about this book is to suppose that Calidore's long delay among the shepherds is a pastoral truancy of Spenser's from his moral intention. On the contrary, the shepherd's country and Mount Acidale in the midst of it are the core of the book, and the key to Spenser's whole conception of Courtesy.[2]

Kathleen Williams also views the pastoral cantos of the book as being central to the whole. She comments that "the pastoral interlude is not really an interlude at all but the point at which the circle

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[1] Poggioli, p.9.

[2] The Allegory of Love: A Study in a Medieval Tradition (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p.350.

completes itself".[1] It seems likely that Spenser, too, viewed Calidore's experience of retirement in this way, for, at the beginning of the book's final canto, he justifies the structure of the work in similar terms:

> For all that hitherto hath long delayd
> This gentle knight, from sewing his first quest,
> Though out of course, yet hath not bene mis-sayd,
> To shew the courtesie by him profest,
> Euen vnto the lowest and the least.
> (6.XII.ii.,ll.1-5)

The hypothesis that Calidore's stay in Arcadia should be regarded as thematically significant is also supported by the fact that the pastoral cantos seem to occupy an important position in the structure of the book. A close examination of the remaining five full-length books of The Faerie Qveene shows that in three of them the tenth canto presents an environment which exemplifies the salient features of the particular virtue being treated and is thus symbolic of that virtue. In the tenth canto of the first book Redcross and Una visit the House of Holiness, in that of the second book, Guyon undergoes instruction in the House of Alma, and in that of the fourth book Scudamour describes the Temple of Venus. R.F. Hill refers to these buildings as embodying "the allegorical core"[2] of the books in which they appear.

It seems,then,that, while Calidore may appear to have abandoned his quest by choosing to live among the shepherds, his encounter with Colin on Mount Acidale, nevertheless, forms an important component of

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[1] Spenser's "Faerie Queene": The World of Glass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p.201.

[2] "Colin Clout's Courtesy ", Modern Language Review, (1962), p.492.

his moral education and, thus, contributes significantly to the development of Spenser's presentation of courtesy. In order to appreciate the full importance of Calidore's experience, one needs to see his quest as having a double purpose. He is required by Spenser to embody courtesy and yet, at the same time, to attack discourtesy in the shape of the Blatant Beast. The two objectives are not always easy to reconcile. No doubt courtesy can be shown in battle but, as J.C. Maxwell points out,

> it is impossible to feel that Calidore's courtesy culminates in the allegorical fight with the Beast, as Guyon's temperance does in his destruction of the Bower of Bliss or...the Red Cross Knight's holiness...in his fight with the dragon.[1]

Maxwell suggests that a possible reason for this may lie in the fact that the attacks of the Blatant Beast seem to symbolise attacks by discourteous persons rather than "the attempt of discourtesy to establish itself in the human soul".[2] Because of the nature of his quarry, Calidore cannot demonstrate that he exemplifies courtesy merely by defeating it. Instead, he has to neglect his pursuit of the Beast for a while in order to further his spiritual growth and display his courtesy in an appropriately simple and virtuous setting. The image of the Graces dancing on Mount Acidale is the most complete allegorical expression of courtesy contained in the book. Colin's conversation with Calidore after the disappearance of the dancers ensures that the knight realises the importance of what he has seen. In the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene Colin becomes a link between the sublime and the

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[1] "The Truancy of Calidore," in That Soueraine Light: Essays in Honor of Edmund Spenser (1552-1952), edited by William R. Mueller and Don Cameron Allen (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p.67.

[2] Maxwell, p.68.

mundane. He creates and controls an order which is almost divine, yet retains sufficient humanity to destroy his pipes in a moment of disappointment. His exceptional gifts enable him to form a part of the dance while his mortal nature allows him to act as Calidore's interpreter. Calidore's encounter with Colin is the single incident which both morally and aesthetically does most to justify his sojourn among the shepherds.

Colin Clout is, thus, the central figure in an episode of crucial importance in the last complete book of The Faerie Qveene. Like Dame Cœlia in the first book or Alma in the second, he seems possessed of special knowledge and teaches the hero important truths about the particular virtue which he is attempting to represent. However, while the importance of Calidore's adventure on Mount Acidale is quite obvious, Spenser's reasons for choosing Colin Clout to guide his knight of courtesy seem less clear. In the earlier works in which he appears, Colin is consistently linked to Spenser himself. In the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene this connection seems relatively unimportant. Certainly, Colin praises Gloriana who may "shadow" Queen Elizabeth I and speaks of his love for a country girl who may originally have been intended to stand for a living woman, but both of these figures are too close to ideals to merit serious consideration as the representatives of real people. Similarly, while Calidore's experience emphasises Colin's exceptional poetic abilities, by the time that these stanzas were published Spenser was an established poet and would not have needed to draw attention to his own powers by such devious means. Spenser places Colin on Mount Acidale rather than Meliboe or some anonymous shepherd-singer because Colin's career has made him particularly suitable for this role. The following discussion will attempt to demonstrate that Colin is an appropriate mentor for Calidore, not because

he can be regarded as Spenser's pastoral representative, but because he is a shepherd, a poet, a lover and a man who has acquired wisdom by transcending the pain of mortality in pursuit of the ideal.

There are a number of reasons why the fact that Colin is a shepherd makes him a particularly fit instructor for Calidore. The shepherd is a traditional symbol of benevolent authority. Christ himself is often likened to a good shepherd in Christian writings. In addition, pastoral poetry looks back to a lost Golden Age of unfallen innocence. Accordingly, in both Classical and Renaissance pastoral works, the shepherd is usually presented as being more concerned with love than with politics. In addition, his retired life ensures that his actions rarely determine the fate of any but his immediate fellows. This places the figure of the shepherd in direct opposition to that of the epic hero whose life normally embodies the principle of physical action and whose deeds may often influence the lives of many others. The truly courteous man needs to know the value of both involvement with the urban world and retirement from it. The Calidore who comes by chance into Arcadia is a figure of martial action. His new companions encourage him to doff "his bright armes" (VI.ix.36,l.3) and put on shepherd's clothes. Instead of carrying a "steelehead speare" he learns to wield "a shepheards hooke" (VI.ix.36,l.5). Only after he has spent some time living as a shepherd and helping Pastorella to tend her flock is he allowed to witness the dance on Mount Acidale. The dance embodies the essence of harmony and, thus, of courtesy. It is appropriate that the Graces should be dancing to Colin's piping. In traditional pastoral, Gods and semi-divine beings often consort with humble shepherds. Spenser uses this convention to extend his vision of courtesy beyond the confines of a mortal world. Calidore's glimpse of the dance and his conversation with Colin, who here exemplifies

contemplative values, complete his education and provide him with the necessary knowledge to overcome the Beast. When he resumes his quest he does so in full awareness of the nature and importance of both love and war. This is as it should be for, as Humphrey Tonkin points out, "unlike heroic romance which implies antagonism, pastoral implies reconciliation and the virtue of courtesy is after all founded on reconciliation".[1] Colin's role as a shepherd, thus, guarantees his integrity, increases his authority, makes his contact with the Graces and the handmaidens of Venus more acceptable in terms of literary convention, and allows him to embody qualities which Calidore lacks and which he needs to be taught to appreciate.

In the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene the fact that Colin is a poet is even more important than the fact that he is a shepherd. John Buxton writes of the Elizabethan poet that he "did not impose a human order on experience but revealed the divine order on which it was framed; his imagination presented this in forms which would give pleasure in themselves".[2] The dance on Mount Acidale celebrates order and grace in precisely this way. It is, therefore, appropriate that a poet should be both a part of that harmony and the interpreter of it. Kathleen Williams notes this and comments:

> The shepherd, Colin, piping on Mount Acidale his vision of the Graces and the shepherd lass dancing in delight, moving like the stars in order excellent, is a fuller picture of the poet at his task of seeing meaningful order, an ultimate concord, and making it actual and influential in harmonious sound.[3]

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[1] Tonkin, p.306.

[2] Buxton, p.3.

[3] Kathleen Williams, "Vision and Rhetoric," p.144.

Millar MacLure has suggested that in The Faerie Qveene "the chief images of the glory and goodness of art are those in which art, conceived of either as working upon the "stuffe" of nature, or as bringing nature's forms to perfection, creates a splendid order".[1] In Calidore's encounter with the dancing maidens nature and art seem to be at one and the product of this reconciliation is unquestionably pleasing. Before reaching Mount Acidale Calidore finds himself wandering through unusually beautiful scenery far from any human habitation:

> For all that euer was by natures skill
> Deuized to worke delight, was gathered there,
> And there by her were poured forth at fill,
> As if this to adorne, she all the rest did pill.
> (VI.x.5,ll.6-9)

Mount Acidale is described as being "plaste in an open plaine" (VI.x.6,l.1) bordered by a wood "of matchlesse hight" (VI.x.6,l.3) whose trees never lose their leaves. Birds sing from the lower branches of these trees and magnificent hawks keep watch from their tops. At the foot of the hill runs a silver stream remarkable for its clarity. Spenser emphasises that the rivulet is free from all natural blemishes and states that it is the haunt of supernatural beings:

> And at the foote thereof, a gentle flud
> His siluer waues did softly tumble downe,
> Vnmard with ragged mosse or filthy mud,
> Ne mote wylde beastes, ne mote the ruder clowne
> Thereto approch, ne filth mote therein drowne:
> But nymphes and Faeries by the bancks did sit.
> (VI.x,7.ll.1-6)

At the summit of the magical mount stretches a "spacious plaine" (VI.x.8,l.1). Significantly, the plain is said to "spred it selfe, to serue to all delight" (VI.x.8,l.2). The landscape is, thus, presented as being eager to please. The whole passage seems to imply that Nature

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[1] "Nature and Art in The Faerie Queene," ELH, 28 (1961),p.4.

has artfully created a perfect setting for the dancers.

The maidens, like the landscape about them, appear to embody the most pleasing aspects of both art and nature. The attendants of Venus are naked and dance to the tune of a solitary bag-pipe. The beauty at the centre of the concentric circles of dancers is crowned only with roses. The movement of the maidens is compared to a work of art, Ariadne's crown, and also to a natural wonder, a sparkling constellation of stars. The easy rhythm of the dance complements the artful ordering of its setting. Calidore seems to have wandered beyond space and time to witness a harmonious expression of a union between nature and art. Significantly, the perfect order which the knight disrupts is a product of the creative imagination, the only human faculty which can transcend the limitations put upon all sublunary life.

Arnold Williams suggests that Calidore can do no more than glimpse the dancers because they belong to "a world which exists only in the imagination and is accessible only to those who, like the artist, can body forth the imagined in concrete form".[1] Calidore belongs to the practical world of men not to the higher world of perfect social order. He can experience the latter only through a poet's eyes and, even then, it will vanish as he reaches out to grasp it.

In these stanzas Colin can be viewed as Spenser generalised into the poet or the maker. On Mount Acidale Spenser uses his pastoral "shadow" to demonstrate that both poetry and courtesy reflect a belief in order and are, therefore, closely connected. The one involves the disciplining of words; the other the disciplining of behaviour. Richard

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[1] Flower on a Lowly Stalk: The Sixth Book of "The Faerie Queene" (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967), p.58.

Neuse describes the relationship as follows:

> Courtesy,...combining as it does the profoundly ethical and spiritual with the esthetic (rite, gesture, 'ceremony'), appears as the supreme poetic possibility in human existence, and as such represents the perfect point of transition from...art to...life.[1]

In this section of The Faerie Qveene it is not enough for Colin to be a shepherd or a poet. He must be both. His piping needs to combine a shepherd's simplicity with a poet's sophistication in order to express the disciplined harmony which is the essence of courtesy. Kathleen Williams writes: "In learning the lowly things of pastoral Calidore finds the most fruitful of controlled freedoms, the most subtle interweavings of nature and art: in so doing he necessarily finds poetry".[2]

It is important that Calidore, and through him the reader, should be brought to realise that poetry and courtesy are merely different facets of the same ideal. Love and courtesy are also closely related and this, too, is something which those who wish to practise true courtesy need to learn. Colin who is both poet and lover is, therefore, ideally suited to instruct Calidore in the proper conduct of these two arts.

The unknown woman at the centre of the dance seems, for instance, to represent both Colin's love and the source of his poetic inspiration. Kathleen Williams writes:

> Calidore sees the Graces within the ring in their own interwoven circle, and at the centre of all the single figure of the shepherd's lass, Colin's love, around whom the glorious order of poetry forms

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[1] "Book VI as Conclusion to The Faerie Queene," ELH, 35 (1968), p.367.

[2] Kathleen Williams, The World of Glass, p.199.

> itself.... Colin's nameless love is everyone's love
> in poetry, and the poetic inspiration which Calidore
> is allowed momentarily to see....[1]

The maiden about whom the attendants of Venus revolve is, thus, more than a "iolly Shepheards lasse" (VI.x.16,l.1). She is also the reflection of an ideal. It appears that both the dancers and the landscape draw joy and purpose from her presence. She shines in their midst like a jewel:

> And in the middest of those same three, was placed
> Another Damzell, as a precious gemme,
> Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,
> That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced.
> (VI.x.12,ll.6-9)

Colin's love seems to be both the epitome and the source of all beauty, virtue and joy. In this way she becomes a fit embodiment of courtesy itself:

> Another Grace she well deserues to be,
> In whom so many Graces gathered are,
> Excelling much the meane of her degree;
> Diuine resemblaunce, beauty soueraine rare,
> Firme Chastity, that spight ne blemish dare;
> All which she with such courtesie doth grace,
> That all her peres cannot with her compare,
> But quite are dimmed, when she is in place.
> She made me often pipe and now to pipe apace.
> (VI.x.27.ll.1-9)

The presentation of one's lady as the earthly image of a divine idea is, as A. Lytton Sells points out, a theme of Petrarchan origin.[2] However, in Spenser's case, the convention is lent new strength by his known interest in Neo-Platonic theories. In this context, it is noteworthy that Ficino, one of the most prominent of the Italian Neo-Platonists, appears to have viewed beauty as emanating from God in

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[1] Kathleen Williams, The World of Glass, p.216.

[2] The Italian Influence on English Poetry: From Chaucer to Southwell (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955), p.181.

order to inspire love in its beholders and, thus, lead man to turn in delight to the Creator. He writes: "The divine quality of beauty stirs desire for itself in all things: and that is love. The world that was originally drawn out of God is thus drawn back to God".[1] The dance on Mount Acidale pays homage to love and beauty, but it also celebrates the divine order of the universe.

However, while the glorious maiden at the heart of Colin's vision of courtesy may appear to be primarily an imaginative manifestation of ultimate beauty and virtue, one should not overlook the fact that Spenser continually reminds his readers that she is also a living girl: "Yet was she certes but a countrey lasse" (VI.x.25,l.8). Colin's love has been transfigured by his devotion, a devotion which her own beauty and virtue have brought into being. The relationship between Colin and his beloved indicates that women of true courtesy can inspire the like in those who love them. Colin's "Shepheards lasse" represents all beautiful and virtuous women and, because of this, her central position in the dance is relevant to Calidore and, indeed, to all men.

Spenser emphasises this aspect of the lady's nature even further by establishing parallels between Calidore's glimpse of her and his first sight of his own love, Pastorella. Shortly after entering the pastoral world, Calidore comes upon Pastorella seated upon a hillock and wearing a circlet of flowers on her head (VI.ix.7-8). Colin's radiant maiden is encountered on Mount Acidale and is described as being crowned with roses. Similarly, while the figure of the fourth Grace is surrounded by a hundred naked dancers, Pastorella is shown at the centre

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[1] Quoted by Kathleen Williams in The World of Glass, p.213.

of a group of "louely lasses" and piping "shepheard swaynes" (VI.ix.8,ll.4-5). Significantly, Spenser says of these shepherds that they rejoice in Pastorella's presence as if she were a heavenly being come down among them:

> The which did pype and sing her prayses dew,
> And oft reioyce, and oft for wonder shout,
> As if some miracle of heauenly hew
> Were downe to them descended in that earthly vew.
> (VI.ix.8,ll.6-9)

As Colin's lady seems to resemble a purified and exalted image of Pastorella, so, too, it seems to be implied that Colin's attitude to her reflects an ideal response to love which Calidore should attempt to emulate. Colin asks nothing from his beloved. Instead, he is content to forget himself in paying homage to poetry in the shape of his song and to love in the form of the heavenly maiden. By his self-effacing behaviour, Colin shows that he is capable of demonstrating courtesy and it is this which impels the handmaidens of Venus to dance to his piping.

Colin, the simple shepherd, is thus able to teach Calidore that love, poetry and courtesy are all closely connected. As R.F. Hill points out,

> With his sight of the ideal beyond the actual, looking directly through the eyes of the poet, Calidore's instruction is fulfilled, it is an instruction in love, virtue and courtesy, for the three are a "knot intrinsicate" in Spenser's mind.[1]

The vision on Mount Acidale is shaped and ordered not only by Spenser's conception of courtesy but also by the history and abilities of the shepherd singer who appears to generate it. The fact that Colin

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[1] Hill, p.503.

Clout is both a poet and a lover makes a vital contribution to the nature of the dance upon which Calidore stumbles. However, while the harmony of the dance is intensely beautiful, it is too fragile and personal to survive Calidore's intrusion. It is left to Colin, in his final role of the wise interpreter, to build an enduring structure based on reasoned analysis rather than imaginative perception to support and sustain the flash of intuitive understanding which the jewelled pattern of the vanished dance has generated in the reader. Rosemary Freeman points out that Spenser habitually treats ideas underlying themes with some degree of detachment and suggests that the chief function of the Palmer who appears in the second book of The Faerie Qveene is to introduce independent moral comment.[1] Certainly, in Book Six, the description of the dance is quite separate from Colin's interpretation of it. By distinguishing between substance and explanation in this way, Spenser is able to convey the mystery and wonder of the dance while still ensuring that his readers appreciate its full allegorical significance.

Spenser places a description of Colin's distress at the destruction of his vision between Calidore's intrusion into the dance and his eager request to be told "the truth of all" (VI.x.18.l.9). Colin bursts into loud lamentations and breaks his bag-pipe. The act of physical violence echoes the act of spiritual violence which dissolved the dance, while Colin's expressions of misery re-inforce the reader's own feelings of sadness and loss. At the same time, by destroying the very instrument of his joy, Colin not only breaks his last concrete link with the dancers, but also distances himself spiritually from their ordered

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[1] "The Faerie Queene": A Companion for Readers (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), p.26.

and harmonious dimension. Colin's first response to Calidore's greeting reflects his changed state. He does not reply courteously to Calidore's eager questions, but, instead, reproaches him for having caused the dancers to disappear. Calidore apologises humbly and this act of courtesy seems to restore Colin's equilibrium, for he then embarks upon an explanation of all that the knight has seen.

The first information that the reader is given about the dancers occurs before Calidore's apology. Colin brushes aside the knight's compliments and informs him that the essence of the dance lies in its voluntary nature. "For being gone, none can them bring in place,/ But whom they of them selues list so to grace" (VI.x.20,ll.4-5). Courtesy, too, cannot be created by compulsion. Calidore is then told that the dancers were the handmaidens of Venus. In this way, Spenser again emphasises the connection between love and courtesy. The three dancers in the inner circle of the vision are identified as the three Graces, Euphrosyne, Aglaia and Thalia. Colin comments on their parentage and thus stresses their supernatural origins. Colin then lists the qualities which they are able to bestow on mankind. These include beauty, wit and kindness. Furthermore, Colin states that the Graces can teach civility. The three sisters are shown, in fact, to be responsible for all "the complements of curtesie" (VI.x.23,l.6). Colin also comments on their own appearance and behaviour and indicates the lessons which can be drawn from their features and conduct. Because the graces smile, men should be mild and gentle. Similarly, their nakedness is taken to imply that human beings should not dissemble, but should be free from covert malice. Finally, Colin points out that, while two of the sisters always face in one direction during the dance, the third always faces in the opposite direction. He suggests that this indicates that "good

should from vs goe, then come in greater store" (VI.x.24,l.9). Colin's explanation thus associates the Graces with love, beauty, truth, civility and what Kathleen Williams calls "the circular movement of giving and receiving".[1] All of these qualities are essential attributes of courtesy.

After speaking of the Graces, Colin goes on to talk of the single maiden who stood in the midst of them. He begins his description of her with a question. This heightens the reader's curiosity.

> Such were those Goddesses, which ye did see;
> But that fourth Mayd, which there amidst them traced,
> Who can aread, what creature mote she bee,
> Whether a creature, or a goddesse graced
> With heauenly gifts from heuen first enraced?
> (VI.x.25.ll.1-5)

Having posed this question and thus emphasised his beloved's extra-ordinary qualities, Colin goes on to provide an answer to it. He tells Calidore that the lady was once an ordinary girl blessed only with exceptional beauty and virtue. He claims that the Graces recognised that she excelled all her peers and elevated her to their ranks because of this. The Graces are shown by Colin to be the semi-divine embodiments of Courtesy, and the maiden whom they honour is represented as being the supreme human embodiment of that virtue. Her presence in the dance indicates that even frail human beings who demonstrate courteous qualities can transcend the mortal world of strife and discord, particularly if they are aided by the powers of love and poetry.

In the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene and also in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, Colin is presented as both an actor in a drama and the interpreter of it. However, while his explanations of the true

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[1] Kathleen Williams, The World of Glass, p.213.

significance of ordinary events in the earlier poem are in some ways more satisfying and more aesthetically pleasing than his accounts of the events themselves, this is not the case on Mount Acidale. Kathleen Williams points out that, although Colin's interpretation of the dance serves a necessary function, it has only a limited helpfulness. She writes:

> It [Colin's explanation] can point a general direction, but in the end it is inadequate, for it is less complete and living than the figures of the dance, the stars, the jewelled circle, stillness and movement, in which the vision of courtesy has been actualised.[1]

In these cantos, therefore, Colin demonstrates the limitations of reason as well as its uses. In his role as the wise teacher he indicates many truths to Calidore, and perhaps the most important of these is that sublime perfection can never be reached by the mind alone but must be intuitively perceived by the imagination as well.

Colin Clout, shepherd, poet, lover and guide, plays a vital role in the education of Spenser's knight of courtesy. In the process of so doing, he also brings many of the themes and concerns which have dominated his own career to a triumphant resolution. In the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene, Colin is shown as a poet *par excellence*, as a mature admirer of his queen and as a lover whose passions no longer torment him.

Both The Shepheardes Calender and Colin Clouts Come Home Againe contain the texts of lyrics which are attributed to Colin. The Faerie Qveene, however, presents descriptions of Colin's songs or, rather, descriptions of their effect upon those who hear them. Pastorella

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[1] Kathleen Williams, "Vision and Rhetoric," p.144.

prefers Colin's tunes to all others and Calidore is enchanted by Colin's piping on Mount Acidale. Even the Graces dance to his music, as Hobbinol once suggested they would.[1] In this way, Colin's gifts are made to seem truly extraordinary. This impression is further strengthened by the language which Spenser uses to describe the dance on Mount Acidale of which Colin's music is an integral part. In the thirteenth stanza of the tenth canto, for instance, the maiden at the centre of the dance is compared to Ariadne's crown:

> Looke how the Crowne, which *Ariadne* wore
> Vpon her yuory forehead that same day,
> That *Theseus* her vnto his bridale bore,
> When the bold *Centaures* made that bloudy fray,
> With the fierce *Lapithes*, which did them dismay;
> Being now placed in the firmament,
> Through the bright heauen doth her beams display,
> And is vnto the starres an ornament,
> Which round about her moue in order excellent.
> (VI.x.13,ll.1-9)

The crown of which Spenser speaks is not only a symbol of authority but also a symbol of excellence. The lady's beauty and virtue are beyond compare. She appears to honour the dancers by her presence. The reference to Ariadne is both a compliment to the lady and a means of reminding the reader that the dancers belong to a mythical world. Ariadne's forehead is described as being of "yuory". The conventional adjective denotes the colour of her skin, but also has connotations of the rare and the precious. The reader is told that Ariadne wore the crown on her bridal day. Brides are traditionally associated with purity. The ordered beauty of the stanza is then disturbed by a reference to a bloody battle waged by creatures half man and half brute. In the sixth line of the stanza, the crown is removed from the disorderly

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[1] SC, "Ivne", ll.57-63.

sublunary world and placed in the immutable firmament. It is noteworthy that in the ninth line of this stanza Spenser uses the pronoun, "her" to refer to both the lady and the crown. The use of pronouns without strict antecedents frequently occurs in both medieval and Elizabethan literature. In this case the ambiguity which results enables Spenser to emphasise that the crown is a metaphor for the lady. The word "ornament" in the eighth line is significant. It implies that the crown-lady enhances the beauty of the stars-dancers and also maintains the pattern of jewel imagery evident in the cantos which deal with the dance. The simplicity and seeming naturalness of the stanza's diction beautifully sets off the images and mythological references which it contains. The harmony described in the final lines of the stanza is made more attractive because it follows a reference to bloodshed. The concluding alexandrine is metrically regular. Its extra length gives it added emphasis and Spenser uses this feature of the line to stress the calm delight which order can give. The line refers both to the patterns of the dance and to the wheeling of the stars in the great, ordered movement of the universe. The reader is left feeling that, if Colin's music reflects such harmony, it must indeed be worthy of admiration.

It is also noteworthy that Spenser does not allow Colin to comment on his own importance to the dance. The omission means that Colin and his skills are left clothed in wonder and mystery. The Colin of whom Cuddy said that he "would mount as high, and sing as soote as Swanne"[1] achieves his full potential in The Faerie Qveene. His action in destroying his pipe reflects the change in him. In The Shepheardes

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[1] SC, "October", l.90.

Calender, he breaks his instrument in petty anger because his poetic skills have failed to win him his desires. In The Faerie Qveene he breaks his pipe in despair when he finds that even gifts such as his can offer only a brief respite from the discords of human existence.

Colin's attitude to Gloriana, who appears to represent Queen Elizabeth I, also seems slightly different from his attitude to her earlier "shadows", Elisa and Cynthia. In the tenth canto of The Faerie Qveene, he likens her to the sun and apologises for placing his love rather than his sovereign at the centre of his celebration of courtesy:

> Sunne of the world, great glory of the sky,
> That all the earth doest lighten with thy rayes,
> Great *Gloriana*, greatest Maiesty,
> Pardon thy shepheard, mongst so many layes,
> As he hath sung of thee in all his dayes,
> To make one minime of thy poore handmayd,
> And vnderneath thy feete to place her prayse,
> That when thy glory shall be farre displayd
> To future age of her this mention may be made.
> (VI.x.28)

However, Colin confines his address to Gloriana within one stanza and mentions his long service to her as one confident that this should be enough to excuse his fault. In the closing lines of the stanza he dedicates his song to her saying that this will ensure its survival. In this way he both compliments his queen and subtly reminds his readers of the ability of poetry to endure and, thus, of the power of poets to confer immortality. The tone of the whole stanza seems more assured than that of the "lay of Elisa" or the description of Cynthia. Spenser, a recognised and pensioned poet, appears to have allowed his new security to modify the behaviour of his pastoral representative.

Colin's struggles with love play an important part in all his major appearances in Spenser's poetry. In The Shepheardes Calender he is almost destroyed by it. In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe he claims to

have overcome his bitterness at Rosalind's rejection of him and states that he wishes only to serve her. Nevertheless, he gives no concrete demonstration of his new attitude. In The Faerie Qveene, however, his music finally appears to have freed him entirely from the torments of physical love. He no longer pipes in order to win his lady, but does so in order to express his selfless joy in her existence and his delight in being able to praise her. Colin's resolution of his unhappy situation represents a spiritual triumph. His hymn to courtesy proves, as Kathleen Williams points out, "that loneliness, sorrow and death are transcended in beatitude in immortal heaven and in immortal art".[1]

The Colin Clout of the sixth book of The Faerie Qveene is not used to comment on the historical circumstances of his creator, but, in spite of this, the lessons which he teaches about love, poetry, courtesy and suffering are the products of experience and, because of this, his final significant appearance in Spenser's work makes the last complete book of The Faerie Qveene a satisfying conclusion to the entire poem and to Spenser's poetic career.

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[1] Kathleen Williams, The World of Glass, p.218.

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