This is all my own work: all sources have been acknowledged.

A. Spencer  Spenser’s Faerie Queene 5 vols. (Oxford 1919).


In addition I would like to acknowledge my grateful use of the Loeb editions of classics) authors and the invaluable if overwhelming notes of the Variorum Spenser and the Variorum Paradise Lost. I should also like to acknowledge the patience and fortitude of my supervisor Professor J.P. Hardy, in his help with my unclear oral explanations and still less clear prose.

David Rofe
The following editions have been used to provide quotations from the relevant authors.


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INTRODUCTION

Classical allusion has been used to describe a wide variety of effects, ranging from a mention of Jove in reference to the weather to a sort of epic structure which may be termed classical. As a general term it is certainly useful, but we should not lose sight of the distinctive forms and functions which may be grouped under its name. In this introduction I wish to clarify my use of three terms, all of which may be regarded as types of allusion, but each at least partially different from the others: textual allusion, mythological allusion and structural allusion. I shall try to describe what I mean by these terms and outline some of the difficulties inherent both in classing and in analysing them.

Textual allusions are the most difficult to identify and the most problematic to analyse. I define the term as meaning the functional use of a text by a later author to gain a specific effect. When he reshapes the earlier author's words he wishes to make the connection between the two passages so that there is a resultant increase in the meaning of his own text. This definition is admittedly unsatisfactory, in the way in which it depends on intentionalistic criteria, but I can see no way around the problem. I hope that it does make a distinction between a source and an allusion, but the differences are not always clear. Even the etymology of these words: 'allude' from the Latin 'alludere' - 'to play with' and 'source' from the Old French 'sors' - 'a spring' -

1. I have called these allusions textual although a strong case could be made for calling them textual/contextual allusions or even contextual allusions, since the effect depends on the interaction of the contexts in two different works. I have, however, settled on the term textual allusion because it emphasises the link between distinct, specific texts.
implies that intention is the basis of their difference. Frequently we find similarities between the words of two texts where there is neither a parallel nor an ironic disjunction in the contexts of the passages: this type of likeness I would call a source, and often, though not always, I would consider such a parallel unconscious on the later author's part. There still, however, remains the problem that what seems an intensely meaningful link to one reader may seem nothing more than a remotely possible source to another. Analysis of textual allusions must depend upon the individual reader's perception of a link and there is no general rule other than experience and common-sense which can serve to arbitrate between differing interpretations. This is of course true of any act of interpretation in literature, but when discussing textual allusion the problem is exacerbated by the question whether the allusion is present or not. Critics might rage over the quality of a metaphor, but generally there would be a consensus as to its presence.

Allied to the problem of identification is that of the limits of meaning implicit in a specific allusion. How far should we take the interaction between two texts? Most textual allusions act as implicit similes. A likeness in the verbal structure of two sets of lines makes us see the likeness of their contexts. The process of reading is not as straightforward as the reading of the simile but the analogy is perhaps a useful one. The examination of a specific example may make my meaning clearer.

During the debate in Hell, in Paradise Lost, the applause given to Mammon's speech is compared with the sound of a storm wind:
He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
Th' assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'erwatched whose bark by chance
Or pinnace anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard
As Mammon ended.

This simile is like passages in the *Iliad* (2. 144-6) and the *Aeneid*
(10. 96-8). While neither simile is a precise analogue for that in
*Paradise Lost*, the three all take the form of the reaction to a
speech compared with the noise of wind over the sea. In the *Iliad*
the reaction is to a speech by Agamemnon, inspired by a false dream
sent by Zeus, in which he counsels a return to Greece. In the *Aeneid*
the simile follows a speech by Juno in which she gives a distorted
account of Aeneas' actions and motives, then advocates an unfair
course of action toward him. Milton's simile comes within a tradition
of similes describing a group's reaction to bad advice. While the
reader should have noticed that Mammon's argument contains a number
of logical flaws, the allusion contained within the simile hints at
the author's response to the speech and guides us to a similar
reaction. The classical analogues of the simile act to give the
passage the structure of a simile within a simile, which prods us to
reexamine the Miltonic passage and so to gain something of a surprise
when we realise what Milton is doing.

One of the central uses of allusion is to force us to concentrate
on a passage in order to understand it. The author may be controlling
our reactions but we feel little tendency to resist the pressure. It
is instructive to compare the effect of the simile I have just
discussed with a passage in which Milton makes an explicit comment concerning Belial's speech:

his tongue
Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels. (2. 112-5).

This comment immediately precedes Belial's speech, and alerts us to observe him making 'the worse appear/The better reason.' Belial advocates that the angels peacefully remain in Hell to avoid provoking God, and he argues that non-resistance may obtain some remission from their punishment. Belial's argument is at times based on false assumptions, but if he had won the day, there would have been no voyage by Satan and consequently no Fall of Man. Milton's comment prepares us for something like the fiendish cunning of Beelzebub's speech, which seeks to anger God by corrupting innocents. The comment seems excessive in the light of Belial's actual speech. In this case, at least, the tact of the implied simile in the allusion following Mammon's speech is preferable to the blunt authorial comment preceding Belial's. While the superiority of indirect over direct comment is not inevitable and should not be elevated into a general rule, we can see that textual allusion is an extremely useful device for gathering and focusing the meanings of a text.

Our willingness to press the links between two texts should be at least partially conditioned by our sense of a continuous if implicit connection between the two outside of the allusion. If we vaguely feel that one text has many similarities with another, then a clear allusion may focus our previous inklings and the series of likenesses will become apparent. It is this focusing and
concentrating process which I see as the basic function of both textual allusion and the simile.

The question as to how far we should be willing to press links between two texts may best be studied by looking at another simile from *Paradise Lost*. As Satan travels through Chaos his difficulties are compared with those of Jason and Odysseus, the classical types of the traveller:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Harder beset} \\
&\text{And more endangered than when Argo passed} \\
&\text{Through Bosporus betwixt justling rocks,} \\
&\text{Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned} \\
&\text{Charybdis and by the other whirlpool steered.} \\
&(2. 1006-20).
\end{align*}
\]

Satan's journey, although it only occupies about 200 lines, is given an amplified duration and difficulty by the link, since his travels are of a similar order to theirs, but even more difficult. If this was the complete significance of the simile, it would be apt, but slightly unexciting.

From the beginning of Satan's departure from the conclave in Pandemonium the reader feels that Satan has a latent similarity to the three great travellers of classical epic; Aeneas, Jason and Odysseus. Although there are no explicit connections made, we feel that the meeting of Satan, Sin and Death resembles a perverted account of the re-union of Odysseus, Penelope and Telemachus. ² Similarly

² I don't want to press this connection too hard, as I think both Steadman and Don Cameron Allen have done, but there are resemblances there.
when Satan leaves them and flies into Chaos we again feel that he resembles Odysseus. When we come to the simile where he is explicitly compared with both Jason and Odysseus we are prepared to see an explicit link of text with text. The simile itself is a precise compression of the account in the *Odyssey* though there is no great degree of likeness in the actual phrasing; but because the link between Satan and Odysseus has been continuous we are prepared to go to the classical original to see whether it is illuminating when applied to *Paradise Lost*.

Both of the events mentioned in the simile are those in which certain fixities are negated. The passage in the *Odyssey* describing Charybdis is particularly interesting:

> When she vomited it up like a cauldron over a strong fire
> the whole sea would boil up in turbulence, and the foam flying
> spattered the pinnacles of the rock in either direction;
> but when in turn again she sucked down the sea's salt water
> the turbulence showed all the inner sea and rock around it.  
> 
> (bk. 237-41).

Here we see the confusion of gas, liquid and solid which is like the characteristic consistency of Chaos. The allusions to classical descriptions of voyages where the certainties of the environment are removed provide a basis for our imagination of the difficulties of Satan's journey. We move through a series of increasingly uncertain environments: from Jason's voyage where the land is not fixed but the danger is clearly seen, to the difficulty of
Odysseus' voyage where sea, land and air are confused, and finally Satan's frightening surroundings, where land is not solid, and the 'air' is neither a liquid nor a gas. We also note that both of the allusions refer to sea voyages, which suggest the viscosity of the medium through which Satan 'flies'.

The allusions thus suggest both the extent and danger of Satan's voyage. They also give us some help in imagining the frightening nature of the medium through which he travels. The allusions also suggest the way in which we are meant to consider Satan. While his journey is more difficult than that of Odysseus or Jason, he is placed within the same pattern: he is the epitome of the classical hero. The simile is part of a pattern of images linking the fallen angels, particularly Satan, with the classical heroes whereby Milton effects a revaluation of classical heroic ideals.

Mythological allusions are much easier to identify than textual ones, for except in the most elliptical euphuistic allusions we have the name of a classical god or person to alert us. But of course we cannot say that any passage containing a classical name is necessarily only a mythological allusion, since most of the myths descend from specific classical texts. There are exceptions; for example Demogorgon found in both The Faerie Queene and Paradise Lost. His existence and attributes descend from Boccaccio's misinterpretation of a medieval copyist's spelling mistake of the Platonic 'demiourgos.' But this kind of thing is unusual. How are we then to say whether an allusion is textual or mythological? If we can say that an author is not relying on and reusing the words of a specific classical author, then the allusion is mythological. The major use of mythological
allusion is in simil es; where the author wishes to evoke a general idea of the qualities of a person or an event, rather than force us to focus on one particular author's description of that event. However, even when we are able to attribute indebtedness for a description to one particular author, it doesn't necessarily mean that the allusion is textual. In Paradise Lost Milton models Eve's behaviour, just after she is created, on that of Ovid's Narcissus in the Metamorphoses, but to understand the meaning of the connection we don't have to have read that particular passage of Ovid. If we know the myth from any source, be it a Renaissance mythographer or the Pelican guide to Roman Mythology, we know enough to grasp Milton's use of the myth. Both earlier and later mythographers may use Ovid but they don't give us Ovid's exact text. The association in Paradise Lost is a parallel of story not of specific wording. A textual allusion requires a parallel in words which leads us to see a parallel in situation, while a mythological allusion only requires us to have a knowledge of a myth or story, so that we can assimilate a likeness.

The problem that we encounter with mythological allusions is the range of suggestiveness that should be allowed to them. In many cases the author will limit the amount of a myth, or mythic attributes that he wishes the reader to remember. Thus when Spenser refers to angry Jove wreaking vengeance on unjust mortals, we are clearly not meant to recall the god's amorous feats. Often things aren't so simple. In Paradise Lost and The Dunciad the mythological similes are almost always precise and the myth described is apt in its context, but there are a great number of mythological similes in The Faerie Queene where Spenser doesn't control the associations which a myth
may evoke. I shall examine two of these in detail to clarify the point I'm making.

In some of Spenser's similes we are almost forced to notice the dissimilarity between subject and analogue. For example, Florimel is described running from the witch's hyena:

Not halfe so fast the wicked Myrrha fled
From dread of her reuenging father's hond.
(3.VII.xxvi. 1-2).

Myrrha fled from her father Cinyras whom she tricked into having sexual intercourse with her. In reading these lines the reader must forget every detail of the myth but the fact that Myrrha fled quickly. If we remember why she was fleeing the parallel with the virtuous Florimel seems almost grotesque. Instead of the Miltonic simile, where the harder we look, the more points of similarity we are likely to perceive, we must concentrate here on the one point of likeness and ignore the differences that Spenser himself suggests. In this particular case, I think that the simile is a bad one since it necessarily distracts us from the apparent subject of the narrative. If we attend to the details involving Myrrha, then we are confused as to what our response to Florimel's situation is supposed to be.

The problem of how far we are meant to recall a myth is occasionally not even so clear as in the previous example. Another simile involving Myrrha perhaps best demonstrates the problem. In a later passage another virtuous lady, Amoret, who is fleeing to avoid being raped, is also likened in speed to Myrrha. She is 'more swift
than Myrrh' or Daphne in her race' (4.VII.xxii.8). In this instance we have the bare name as well as a more apt comparison with Daphne. How much should the details of Myrrha's story distract us when no details are supplied by the author? Certainly the earlier simile with its epithet 'wicked' and the reference to Myrrha's father almost forces us to recall Myrrha's incest. Where we have just the bare name, we may pass over the reference, on the way noticing that Myrrha must at some stage have run quickly because Amoret is doing so now. Thus Spenser is saved by shoddy reading. On the other hand the mention of Daphne may gain our attention and be illuminating (in a minor but useful way) because her situation was more like Amoret's. For while Daphne, and Amoret are remembered for the extremity of their desire to avoid rape, this is scarcely true of Myrrha. This particular allusion is at best inert, at worst mildly distracting.

If these two similes had occurred in a simple narrative poem, I would consider my analysis unduly harsh, but the allegorical mode of the poem (even though it is not a continuous allegory) trains us to look for moral significance when comparisons are made. Certainly these are two relatively short and unimportant similes in a very long poem, but they point to a larger difficulty. Few Spenser critics would quibble if these two similes had been felicitous and my analysis had added a scruple of meaning to the poem, since our habit of close reading depends on the assumption that every little bit helps. The type of criticism which has revealed some of the intellectual strength of The Faerie Queene and its surprisingly subtle use of language has not been used to show its glaring faults; its frequent lapses into vagueness, Spenser's
distressing habit of not considering the implications of many of his similes, and the poem's sheer wordiness. If we approach the poem looking for a vital and suggestive use of language, are we to blink when we find the reverse? Of course we can say that Spenser is often digressive, but are we to use one type of criticism for successful parts of the poem and use a neutral term for the others? Certainly Spenser's use of mythological allusion is often excellent, and I hope that my chapter on *The Faerie Queene* shows just how exact and illuminating his uses can be; but we would fail to come to terms with the texture of the poem, if the analysis of his failures was less precise than that of his successes.

The final term I wish to discuss is structural allusion, which is perhaps the most nebulous of the three kinds of allusion. I use the term to cover such things as: a poet's beginning in medias res, the descent into hell, the prophetic utterance concerning the hero's future, the journey by one of the heroic figures, the games and invocations. The one thing that this ragbag of items has in common is that they all derive from the classical epics, primarily the *Aeneid*. The difficulty in discussing the varieties of structural allusion is that the very diversity of the list would seem to preclude any unity of effect, and so it does if we are thinking of *The Faerie Queene*; but as soon as we think of *The Dunciad* such a grouping begins to make sense. Pope has modelled the structure of his poem so closely on the *Aeneid* that we risk missing the point of the poem if we ignore the allusions and the uses to which they are put. In *The Dunciad*, and to a lesser extent in *Paradise Lost*, structural allusion acts as an extended kind of textual allusion, with similar though more general effects.
The use of the word allusion in connection with structure may seem at first sight to be a little curious. For example Milton uses most of the features that I mentioned but we only feel with some of them that he is alluding to the classical epics. *Paradise Lost* has an *in medias res* structure but we don't feel that the English poet is 'alluding' to previous uses of the technique. Milton has taken it over so completely, and used it so skilfully, that we could almost believe that the classical authors have learnt from him. The word allusion does, however, come to mind when we think of the second canto of Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene*, where the structural device obtrudes. As I try to show in my thesis, this results from Spenser's attempt to link his poem with the *Aeneid*. I am uncertain whether or not Spenser is doing something similar in his descriptions of Night and Duessa's descent into Hades and Guyon's descent into the cave of Mammon. Both of these last passages recall Book 6 of the *Aeneid* in a very general way, yet the tone, atmosphere and significance are so different from Virgil's descriptions that I'm inclined to see the *Aeneid* Book 6 as a structural source. I don't find that remembering Virgil enhances my reading of Spenser. Perhaps I am underreading, but I have found that excessive caution in this kind of interpretation is the preferable vice. One of the main problems in detailed consideration of structural allusion is that it involves looking at very large sections of several texts, and detailed analysis often makes sweeping claims look foolish.

I shall conclude this introduction by a short explanation of my use of classical texts. In assessing the likelihood of textual allusions, I have used Loeb editions (and relevant dictionaries). Where it has seemed that there is some possibility of the later poet
having used the words of the classical poet, I have allowed at least the possibility that a textual allusion exists, and have then proceeded using the criteria outlined earlier in the introduction. This method works very well in discussing Paradise Lost, since Milton often retains the syntactic structure of the original. It is, however, less decisive for Spenser and Pope. With Spenser I have perhaps erred on the side of caution, but I am very doubtful that any textual allusions exist in The Faerie Queene. With Pope there is virtually no problem since the notes are at least a statement of intention if not fulfilment.
Spenser's first stanza in the proem to The Faerie Queene is a free translation of the proem to the Aeneid which Virgil probably didn't write.¹ Spenser was following the pattern of growing into genres, which was to be a desired ideal by Milton's time and almost prescribed for Pope's contemporaries. This allusion creates an expectation, which is disturbed when we notice that it is the muse of history (Clio) who is invoked. It is jolted still further as we continue to read the poem; for not only is the poem of a different kind from the classical epic that its opening leads us to expect, but the world of the poem, though frequently classical in name, is rarely so in nature. The only time that we feel as if we were reading a poem akin to or dependent on the Aeneid is at 2.II.xxxix, where Guyon begins to describe his previous adventures to Medina, just as Aeneas did to Dido. Unfortunately, since Guyon has done very little up to this point in the book, there is little for him to say, and what he does say appears to contradict what we have read earlier. For while Guyon here describes his search for Acrasia as an ordained task, we were earlier led to believe that he is seeking to destroy the Bower of Bliss because of a chance meeting with the dying Amavia. In any case the structural device remains, and as Merritt Hughes has remarked: 'Guyon has no story to tell - nothing but a literary device to explain - but the intended analogy is all the more marked for that reason.'²

1. The authenticity of the proem is disputed, but most authoritative editions reject it as spurious. The important point is that Spenser believed it to be genuine.

These are the two allusions which probably most directly refer to the Aeneid. We may see them either as evidence of Spenser's idea of epic, or as an unfulfilled intention of associating his own poem with a different kind of poetry. The Faerie Queene is not necessarily the poorer for this dissimilarity but we shall be mystified very quickly if we attempt to read the poem as anything like a classical epic. The reader will similarly encounter difficulties if he expects the kind of textual allusions that we find in Paradise Lost and more frequently in The Dunciad. Harry Berger Jr., in his book The Allegorical Temper, has presented a case for the presence of classical textual allusion within The Faerie Queene. While this is not the intention of his book as a whole (the analysis I shall discuss is only a subsidiary argument to his main concern), it is worth examination since he is the only critic I've read who argues for the presence of this type of allusion in the poem. The passage he cites is one of the few where there is a close parallel between a classical text and The Faerie Queene, so a discussion of his analysis may serve as a test case.

Berger cites the stanza 2.111.xxxi where Belphoebe is compared to Diana:

Such as Diana by the sandie shore  
Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus greene,  
Where all the Nymphes have her vn^wares forlore,  
Wandreth alone with bow and arrowes keene,  
To seeke her game. (1-5).

These lines resemble lines 495-8 of the first book of the Aeneid:
qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per iuga
Cynthi/exercet Diana choros, quam mille
secutae/hinc atque hinc glomerantur
Oreades; illa pharetram/fert umero
gradiensque deas supereminet omnis...

The names Eurotas and Cynthus are unusual enough to render
the possibility of coincidental similarity most unlikely.
Berger sees the Virgilian passage as more than a source;
rather it is a text to which Spenser alludes, 'a work
which the poet points to for functional purposes affecting
and revealed by his poem.'^ Berger quotes the passage from
Virgil then analyses the differences in detail.

Spenser's changes provide a good index of
the specific effect he was seeking: exercet
and supereminet are abandoned, and with them
the nymphs. But the nymphs are not neglected
by the poet; they are inserted as if to remind
the reader that Belphaebe's Diana, quite unlike
Dido's, has forgotten her nymphs. There was
in Virgil's Diana a certain sense of her own
majesty, comparable with Spenser's Penthesilea:
supereminet supplied this and gradiens which
suggested a measured pace. But this choric
quality has entirely disappeared along with
the self-consciousness. By virtually pointing
to Dido's Diana, Spenser reminds us of a

3 'The queen, Dido, moved towards the temple, of surpassing
beauty, with a vast company of youths thronging round her.
Even as on Eurotas' banks or along the heights of Cynthus
Diana guides her dancing bands, in whose train a
thousand Oreads troop to right and left; she bears a
quiver on her shoulder, and as she treads overtops all
the goddesses; joys thrill Latona's silent breast - such was
Dido.' I have quoted the translation of the context to the
lines referred to by Berger.

4 Harry Berger Jr., The Allegorical Temper (New Haven, 1957),
p.124.
quality temporarily withheld from his Diana and thus from Belphoebe: a certain social feeling, a responsibility for the group she leads, and even something else which hovers vaguely over the comparison - unlike Dido, Belphoebe has no need to be concerned about justice, about the building of a future state, about anything but the fine sylvan present.

It was just this kind of joy which Virgil illustrated by his comparison, it is just this kind of joy which Spenser shows as missing by his comparison. 5

The crucial line of Spenser's passage (in Berger's analysis) is the third: 'Where all the Nymphes have her vn\^wares forlore.' The line is difficult since 'vn\^wares' may apply either to the Nymphs or Diana or both; in addition the words 'vn\^wares' and 'forlore' both have two possible meanings. 'Vn\^wares' may mean 'suddenly' or 'unwittingly' while 'forlore' may mean 'lost' or 'forsaken'. Thus the line has a variety of possible meanings. As far as I can tell, Berger reads the line as meaning: 'where all the Nymphs have lost her (Diana) unbeknownst to her.' Even with this meaning he is overreading when he says that 'Belphoebe's Diana... has forgotten her Nymphs,' since the verb 'forlore' applies to the Nymphs not Diana. I would read the line as meaning - where all the Nymphs have unwittingly lost her, with perhaps a slight suggestion that they have forsaken her. This meaning would be more appropriate in implying the vulnerability of Belphoebe faced by the two (albeit cowardly) rogues Trompart and Braggadoccio.

Even if we allow Berger's interpretation of the sense of this line, we must still find his analysis of its effect troubling. The crucial question is how much of its 'functional purpose' is

5op.cit. pp155-6.
'revealed' by the poem? To follow Berger's reading we must remember the Virgilian passage in detail without being given any help by Spenser, since Berger's analysis depends on our noticing differences rather than similarities. (If the discrepancies were blatant or ironic we might be alerted to the presence of the allusion, but this is not the case. We are faced with the problem of just how much work an author can expect a reader to do.) Reading of this degree of sophistication and difficulty is not demanded in Paradise Lost, and while it is in The Dunciad, the ironic parallels are extended and indeed Pope provides notes which point to the links. If, in The Faerie Queene, Diana was doing something unusual, which might alert us to a specific deviation from her normal attributes, then we might go hunting for a source, to see whether it was any aid to our comprehension, but here we see Diana hunting, which we would expect. Berger would argue, I presume, that the fact that she is alone is significant, but this is surely a small foundation for such an edifice of ingenious analysis.

Even if we allow that the link between the two passages is clear enough for Spenser to be able to expect an educated reader to recall it, we must still wonder whether Berger's interpretation is correct. The Diana in the Aeneid is directing a procession; no mention is made of hunting. We see Diana enjoying the presence of a group. Berger's analysis of the Virgil is very slippery since he appears to

6. In Paradise Lost, Milton either signposts the fact that he is alluding to a text (Malciber/Homer) or the classical text is very famous (Narcissus/Ovid) or the parallel is obvious and extended (1. 84-8). On the rare occasions where none of these apply, Milton is using a classical form (e.g. epic simile) which would suggest where we might find the analogue.
be talking about Diana when he is in fact describing Dido (and he isn't even referring to the Dido of the immediate context when he mentions justice). While he qualifies his remarks by suggesting that these ideas 'hover vaguely', he is still overreading the passage. For the Virgilian Diana is not engaged in building a city, nor is she dispensing justice; the detail we notice is that she is surrounded by a 'thousand mountain-nymphs and a multitude of dancers'. Spenser's Diana is alone, and hers is not the solitude of forgetfulness, but that of one who has either been lost or forsaken by her companions. If we compare the two passages it is the contrast between alone and a thousand (mille) that we notice. While we know that Trompart and Braggadocchio are speakers rather than doers, and, as we see, Belphoebe is scarcely the passive fainting maiden, there is still some drama in the confrontation of the solitary woman and the two men, one of whom tries to rape her and then remarks:

What foule blot
Is this to knight, that Ladie should againe
Depart to woods vntoucth, and leave so proud disdaine?
(2.III. xliii. 7-9).

If the allusion is a significant textual allusion, it is used to stress Belphoebe's solitude, and we don't really need to notice the allusion for that. I suppose that remembering the Virgil increases our awareness of this fact, but Spenser's text says this already.

7. The simile in the Aeneid directs our attention to Dido's security at this point. When she becomes a tragic figure, it is her terrible solitude that we remember: "It was night and tired creatures all over the world were enjoying kindly sleep. Not so Dido."
(4. 529-30).
I have examined this passage from Berger's book in such detail, not only to show that textual allusion is unlikely here, just as it is unlikely elsewhere, but also to present an example of the type of analysis which is the particular bane of Spenser criticism. We find extraordinary ingenuity combined with a cavalier approach to the exact words of the poem. We see the urge to give a complex and unlikely explanation to lines which are comparatively lucid. These lines present a perfectly sensible, intelligible reading to the ordinary reader. The urge to turn a source into an allusion, or a possible philosophical source into the Key to the poem, is felt by any critic, particularly one who is interested in allusion, but I know of few quicker ways of turning an allegorical narrative poem into discrete units of unimportant fact. There are, of course, some points in the poem where we need to have some historical or philosophical knowledge to appreciate the full meaning of the text, but these are exceptional. The poem neither can nor should be read as a continuous allegory. Far too many critical hypotheses collapse when we ask what relevance they have when applied to the immediate situation in the poem. Berger's explanation of this stanza suggests themes which are neither the concern of this canto nor of this book of the poem.

Spenser's use of classical texts is as a source for names or descriptions. His description of Venus in Book 3 is an almost direct quotation from the opening of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura, but our understanding of this passage is not enhanced by remembering the original and its context. There are a large number of similes which have classical analogues. Unlike the Diana simile they generally have no names to alert us to their sources. However, one
in particular seems very close to a combination of the two in the Aeneid. In 2.XI the enemies of temperance led by Maleger attack Alma's castle; their forces are described in terms of a flooding river:

Like a great water flood, that tombling low
From the high mountainees, threats to overlow
With suddein fury all the fertile plaine,
And the sad husbandmans long hope doth throw
A downe the streame, and all his vowes make vaine,
Nor bounds nor banks his headlong ruine may sustaine.

(2.XI.xviii 4-9).

This simile closely resembles two in the Aeneid:

When...the rushing torrent from a mountain-stream lays low the fields, lays low the glad crops and labours of the oxen and drags down forests headlong, spell-bound the bewildered shepherd hears the roar from a rock's lofty peak.

(2.305-8).

And

Not with such fury, when a foaming river, bursting its barriers, has overflowed and with its torrent overwhelmed the resisting banks, does it rush furiously upon the fields in a mass and over all the plains sweep herds and folds.

(2. 496-9).

In both cases Aeneas is describing the Greek sack of Troy, which he is powerless to stop. In the first simile he wakes to hear the sack proceeding; in the second, the takeover is almost complete. Neither of these similes add to our comprehension of Spenser's text, since Troy is taken whereas Alma's castle remains secure. Can we then say that Spenser is demonstrating his virtuosity by the creative
and more sensitive re-use of an earlier poet's words, as Milton does in *Paradise Lost* in the Mulciber simile? Certainly Spenser gives no hint of this intention, but if he did intend it we must conclude that he has failed. The simile suggests an overwhelming force which the individual is powerless to halt; he can only look on. While the simile is digressive, it suggests a link between Arthur and the herdsman, just as Maleger's army is linked with the flood. Such a link is appropriate in the *Aeneid* where Aeneas is unable to stop the Greeks in their conquest of Troy; but the comparison is not really apt in *The Faerie Queen*. The army compared to a 'great water flood' in stanza eighteen becomes 'raskall flockes' in the next and they drop before Arthur's sword like autumn leaves. The simile in stanza eighteen is almost too successful in suggesting overwhelming force, since the actual conflict described in the next stanza is almost bathetic in its one sidedness. The memory of the Virgilian analogues can only act to increase our sense of the inappropriateness of this simile to its context, by comparison with Virgil's sensitive use of the figure in his own poem. Virgil's similes are a source for Spenser's own simile, rather than forming the basis for some complex interaction between the contexts of the two texts.

The attempt to turn Spenser's possible classical sources into significant textual allusions is a fruitless and exasperating task. By contrast his mythological allusions provide us with an embarrassment of riches. These range from short euphuistic usages to cantos formed around a classical myth. We find that many of his monsters are descended from classical or quasi-classical ancestors, or they are more horrible than their classical predecessors. We also notice that
most of his heroes are braver, stronger or more morally upright than their classical antecedents (most notably Hercules). Classical and biblical examples of both good and bad are found side by side and we don't find a moral polarity established between Christian goodness and classical badness, as we do in Paradise Lost. There is no single function for the classical mythological allusions within The Faerie Queene, for while they are scattered throughout the poem, it would be an overstatement to see them as the backbone around which Spenser constructs his own fables. It would be an equal mistake to see them merely as one of the species of ornament found in the poem. Although they have no one overriding function, they are not always only local in effect; in at least one book (the fifth) a myth perhaps serves as a sort of background to the activities of its hero.

Spenser's mythological usages range from the local and ornamental to the pervasive and structural. The descriptions and analyses which follow are an attempt to describe the variety of Spenser's uses of the myths and to analyse their effect on the texture of the poem.

The most common mythological references are the short epithets, short similes and mythological paraphrases. The paraphrases are the easiest to notice, though they are not frequent and certainly aren't a habit of Spenser's style. In Book 3, Britomart and her squire take off their armour, 'To dry them selves by Vulcane's flaming light.' Vulcan as a god is not present here and the sentence represents a heightened way of saying; 'To dry themselves by the fire.' (If we didn't know that Vulcan was the classical god of fire then the line would still mean something.) This description, like several others, is an exceptional form of ornament; though not necessary, it is not
unpleasing. (As a trope it risks being inert and confusing if used habitually, but Spenser is not guilty of that). More interesting are his phrases which at first glance look like periphrases but on consideration suggest something more. This is the case in 3.XI.xxvi, where Scudamor tries to follow Britomart:

Whom whenas Scudamor saw past the fire,
Safe and vntoucht, he likewise gan assay,
With greedy will and enuious desire;
And bad the stubborne flames to yield him way;
But cruell Mulciber would not obay
His threatfull pride, but did the more augment
His mighty rage, and with imperious sway
Him forst (maulgre) his fiercenesse to relent,
And backe retire, all scorcht and pitifully brent.

Initially 'Malciber' in line five seems synonymous with fire; an elegant variation to avoid overusing 'fire' and 'flames'. But perhaps this does not do the stanza justice. These particular flames are magical and will only allow the chaste to pass through them, while they furiously attack others. By inserting 'Malciber', Spenser evokes the universal human sense that we are actually fighting a responsive enemy when we try to get through or quench a fire. This sense is embodied in the now dead metaphors of fire fighters, or fire attacking or ravaging property. In this particular instance the mention of the god conveys a sense of the imbalance in the contest, for like a divine antagonist, the flames easily render Scudamor's human efforts painfully futile. We feel that the reference is literally true and the god is present forcing the human back. As well as conveying the magical nature of the flames, the allusion finely presents the way in which we react to fire.
In *The Faerie Queene* there are a great number of references to classical gods and persons, which are used to make us aware of the magnitude or greatness of Spenser's own creations. Many of these are simple comparisons but some are more complex. At the end of Book 1 Redcrosse slays the dragon and Spenser uses a sort of poetic slow motion to describe its fall:

So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath,  
That vanisht into smoke and clouds swift;  
So downe he fell, and th'earth him vnderneath  
Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;  
So downe he fell, as an huge rockie clift,  
Whose false foundation waues have washt away,  
With dreadfull poyse is from the mayneland rift,  
And rolling downe, great Neptune doth dismay;  
So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.

(1.XI.liv).

The cliff falling down dismays Neptune. It is very easy to miss this half line in the clamour of the other eight and a half, but once it is noticed it is a slightly troubling allusion. One's first impulse is to read this as a description of the disturbance caused to the sea by the falling cliff, but the word 'dismay' is really only applicable to a human or divine reaction. Yet the event is so generalised and so unspecific in its reference that it is difficult to construct the story in which Neptune is present here. The line suggests that the falling cliff would dismay any observer; it would particularly dismay an observer in the sea and even so august an entity as 'great Neptune'. The god as such with his history is not being evoked here; we are only being asked to remember that he is the god of the sea. The magnitude of the fall of the cliff is conveyed by the divine status of the beholder, (this is emphasized
by the epithet 'great'), and the simile implies that the fall of the dragon would arouse a response of at least equal dismay in Neptune.

This passage functions in a very similar way to the large number of direct similes in The Faerie Queene. I shall examine one of these then return to the reference to Neptune. Duessa's beast in 1.VII.xvii is compared to the Lernean Hydra:

Such one it was, as that renowned Snake
Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,
Long fostred in the filth of Lerna lake,
Whose many heads out budding ever new,
Did breed him endlesse labour to subdew;
But this same monster much more ugly was. (1-6).

Spenser at first says that his is virtually the same beast ('such one it was'), then affirms that it is worse. We remember all the horrors of the original monster, which Spenser is at some pains to evoke, and then we are forced to amplify this horror. This simile is perhaps defter and more direct than most but it is clearly representative of that class of similes which proceed: 'to compare great things with small' where the 'small' are classical. The classical original is inserted so that the poet can assert that his representative possesses more of a quality - in this instance, ugliness. (This is a tactic familiar to the reader of Paradise Lost). As we saw with the simile involving Neptune, the greater the reaction that the poet hopes to arouse, the greater his classical person or event must be. As we shall see later, the poet risks being bathetic if there is a large discrepancy between the level of his own creation and that of the analogue he chooses. The classical myths furnish a standard
that Spenser uses to suggest the grandeur of his own creations: they are a sort of past Guinness Book of Records which he uses to show how the records have been broken by his characters and their actions, both good and bad.

I have so far considered only the shorter similes involving mythological allusions - where the similes are bound to the subject that they are describing. Later in this chapter I shall consider the effect of a series of long similes within a canto, and how they influence one another and the texture of the canto as a whole; but before I do this I shall consider the general quality of Spenser's longer similes by looking at several characteristic examples.

The extended simile is one of the less successful devices in The Faerie Queene. While apt and enlightening examples are to be found, they are rare. The problem is not the quality of Spenser's imagination or writing; rather we find many similes distractingly digressive or misplaced. I am not attacking the digressive simile per se, but rather that form of simile which appears to be apt in an extended manner, but stops being so before it is complete. This distinction may best be observed by looking at a digressive Homeric simile. Menelaus has been wounded:

and straightway from the cut there gushed a cloud of dark blood.

As when some Maionian woman or Karian with purple colours ivory, to make it a cheek piece for horses; it lies away in an inner room, and many a rider longs to have it, but it is laid up to be a king's treasure, two things, to be the beauty of the horse, the pride of the horseman:
so, Menelaüs, your shapely thighs were stained with the colour
of blood, and your legs also and the ankles beneath them.  

(IV. 140-7).

When we read this simile we are certain of the sharp break between
the comparison proper and the extended description of the analogue.
After 'ivory' in line 142, it is clear that Homer has changed his
point of reference; there is no urge in the reader to read the
description that follows as applying to Menelaus. It has been
objected that such a simile slows down the narrative, but we could
never say that it is confusing. In many of Spenser's similes we do
not have a clear line between the direct comparison and its continuation.
We may see this if we return to the simile comparing Maleger's army
to a great flood which I referred to earlier.

Like a great water flood, that tombling low
From the high mountaines, threats to overflow
With suddein fury all the fertile plaine,
And the sad husbandmans long hope doth throw
A downe the streame, and all his vowes make vaine,
Nor bounds nor banks his headlong ruine may sustaine.

(2.XI, xviii. 4-9).

There is no point in this simile where it becomes clear that Spenser
is simply describing a flood rather than continuing the simile. The
opening of Spenser's simile serves as a description of the force
of the army; then the mention of the husbandman seems to apply equally
well to Arthur in his defence of Alma's castle in the cause of
Temperance: but the sense we get of the flood - and thus Maleger's

forces - being irresistible, and the defencelessness of the husbandmen - and implicitly Arthur - is faulty when we see Arthur easily defeat these forces in succeeding stanzas. We find that the reading which the simile invites is distracting in the context of the succeeding events. Quite often Spenser's stanza-length similes appear to be focusing on one subject, only to veer slightly, then return to the apparent subject.

The problem with both distracting and misplaced similes in *The Faerie Queene* is inherent in Spenser's stanzaic form. Since he tends to treat his stanzas as the basic units of his poem, we see him too often having to pad a stanza to complete it, or, on the other hand, having to wait until he finishes one stanza before he can insert an extended simile. There are some modes of allusion which *The Faerie Queene* accommodates easily (both shorter and longer than a stanza), but his chosen form inhibits the sensitive use of extended mythological similes. There are of course exceptions to this generalisation, where Spenser gets both his timing and his detail right, but the extended simile is rarely a source of unqualified pleasure to the reader of the poem.

Perhaps the most beautiful exception to my generalisation occurs in Book 5. When the false Florimel is set beside the true, the former disappears. Spenser devotes a stanza to the disappearance.

As when the daughter of Thaumantes faire,
Hath in a wat'ry cloud displayed wide
Her goodly bow, which paints the liquid ayre;
That all men wonder at her colours pride;
All suddenly, ere one can looke aside,
The glorious picture vanisheth away,
Ne any token doth thereof abide:
So did this Ladies goodly forme decay,
And into nothing goe, ere one could it bewray.

(5.III.xxv).

A feature of this simile which is unusual in Spenser's work, (which we expect in Homer, Virgil and Milton) is the way in which the subject is returned to at the end of the stanza; we are not allowed to lose sight of the initial subject of the simile. As we know from 3.VIII.vi, and the reminder in the previous stanza, the false Florimel was formed from snow. The way in which the lady seems to evaporate leads Spenser to his beautiful description of the rainbow. This description works by a gradual focusing on the subject. The initial reference to 'the daughter of Thaumantes', Iris, prepares us for the subject of the description; we are prepared to start imagining the rainbow. This expectation is strengthened when we see 'wat'ry cloud', and we envisage the generalised form of the rainbow at the beginning of line three with the mention of 'Her goodly bow'. Spenser then focuses on the phenomenon by referring to the 'liquid ayre'. This is very similar to 'wat'ry cloud' but it is more specific and we are closer to seeing the rainbow before us. In line four the picture is made complete, and we, like 'all men', admire its splendour. The next two lines enact the process of its vanishing: it is as if we see it going in the action of looking away, until there is truly nothing left of it by the sixth line.

9. I am indebted for the general ideas I use here, and the proceeding discussion, to J.B. Bender Spenser and Literary Pictorialism (Princeton 1972)
The whole of these six lines is a splendid enactment of the process of seeing. The momentary delay caused by our sorting out who 'the daughter of Thaumantes' is, allows Spenser to gradually approach the subject of his description. The rainbow is not just described, it is built up before our eyes. Of course the simile is not just a virtuoso description of the poet's observation of a rainbow. It describes the mysterious vanishing of what was an apparently beautiful woman. Certainly it is apt as a pictorial description, but it also evokes the transient showiness of what is false. The Platonic idea of the insubstantiality of the false is bolstered by the terms of the simile: 'paints', 'watry', 'cloud', 'displayed' and 'picture', and perhaps Spenser is even ironically playing with the word 'forme' in line eight. So what is a wonderful piece of pictorial poetry, also contains as though by implication the moral frame in which we view the event. The simile is both beautiful and intellectually satisfying.

The rainbow simile is both evocative and apt. Indeed most of Spenser's extended similes are evocative, but there is often a question concerning their aptness. The discussion that follows should elucidate some of the problems that I've found. In 1.III Spenser describes Una's relief and pleasure in finding what she believes to be her knight.

Much like, as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wandred in the Ocean wide,
Oft soust in swelling Tethys saltish teare,
And long time hauing tand his tawney hide
With blustring breath of heauen, that none can bide,
And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound,
Soone as the port from farre he has espide,
His cheareful whistle merrily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates him pledg around.

(1.III.xxxi).

When considered in abstract, the comparison of Una's feelings, on finding her knight, to the feelings of a sailor on his homecoming after a long, hard and dangerous voyage, is very appropriate. The points of likeness are manifold, but Spenser convinces us all too well of the reality of the sailor's return at the expense of its relevance to Una. Indeed the points of likeness make the terms of comparison seem very odd: the phrase 'tand his tawney hide' is almost grotesque in a simile in which Una is the subject of comparison. Similarly the last two lines of the stanza, 'His chearefull whistle merrily does sound,/And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates him pledg around,' place us in a world which is earthy and manly in a way that Una is not. This disjunction is still more apparent when we see that the first line of the next stanza appears to relate the sailor's joy in the companionship of his mates (in a tavern presumably) to the very different joy that Una feels. The use of the mythological names in the simile seems to be an attempt to generalise the scene, even to elevate it, but the vividness of the sailor's life remains, for while 'Tethys saltish teare' is almost over-refined, it is the sailor's 'tand hide' that we remember.

Spenser appears to be trying to rescue the simile, when in the following stanza he associates the joy of the false Redcrosse with that of a merchant who sees his ship returning:
And eke th' enchaunter ioyous seemd no lesse,
Then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground
His ship farre come from watrie wildernesse,
He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth blesse;
So forth they past, and all the way they spent
Discoursing of her dreadfull late distresse.

(1.III.xxxii. 2-8).

The theme of the image is analogous to the previous simile, and the mood of boisterous masculinity of the line 'he hurles out vowes and Neptune oft doth blesse', is almost identical to the last two lines of the previous stanza. The evocation of this same atmosphere is almost equally bizarre when applied to the courtly Redcrosse. The rough vitality of the images of the sailor and the merchant are at odds with the quietly happy meeting of Una and Redcrosse. In addition, since Spenser doesn't use a framing formula, such as 'such was the joy of the false Redcrosse', when we read 'So forth they past', we are, at least initially, inclined to see the false Redcrosse still 'hurling out vows'. It is not merely overscrupulous or fastidious reading to be worried about the propriety of these similes since they conflict with the tone and atmosphere of the meeting, which Spenser has been at some pains to create.

This type of simile presents one sort of difficulty with Spenser's longer similes. A different kind of problem may perhaps best be seen by examining a cluster of epic similes in Book 5. One of the most puzzling features of The Faerie Queene is the way in which the frequency of these allusions fluctuates. The most spectacular example of this variation occurs in canto VIII, where there are four long mythological similes in the space of seventeen stanzas. I shall examine the group in order to describe their
individual characteristics and also to see how much they affect each other.

The first simile compares the Souldan with Diomedes of Thrace:

Like to the Thracian Tyrant, who they say 
Into his horses gave his guests for meat, 
Till he himselfe was made their greedie pray 
And torn in pieces by Alcides great. 
So thought the Souldan in his follies threat 
Either the Prince in pieces to have torne 
With his sharpe wheeles, in his first rages heat, 
Or under his fierce horses feet have borne 
And trampled downe in dust his thoughts disdained scorne. (5.VIII,xxxii).

The simile is proleptic since it hints at the Souldan's death through the instrument of his own weapon, which was Diomedes' fate. It also continues the link of Hercules with the heroic figures of Book 5; Hercules as a classical type of heroic justice is frequently linked with Artegall, and here we see him linked with Arthur. In both of these ways the simile is complex and satisfying. It fails, however, to justify the original 'like'; for Diomedes' horses are an aberration from normal equine nature and are evil in themselves, whereas the Souldan's horses are fearsome but merely instruments of an evil man's will. By asserting their likeness, Spenser presumably wished to give us a sense of the horror of being attacked by raging horses, but the analogue is in a different class from the situation he is describing. Spenser's own description in lines 2-3 leads us to see the dissimilarity between the two and the simile, rather than being an epic evocation of terror, is shrill.
The next simile is at least initially more apt, but the final effect is similar:

As when the firie-mouthed steeds, which drew
The Sunnes bright wayne to Ihaeton's decay
Soone as they did the monstrous Scorpion vew,
With vgly craples crawling in their way,
The dreadfull sight did them so sore affray,
That their well knowen courses they forwent,
And leading th' euer-burning lampe astray,
This lower world nigh all to ashes brent,
And left their scorched path yet in the firmament.

(S.VIII.xl).

The simile is describing the horses' fury, and follows several lines describing the Souldan's attempt to regain control of them after Arthur has unveiled his magic shield. The simile admirably conveys the Souldan's fear after he has lost control over his previously tractable property. Phaeton is the classical example of overweening pride getting its just deserts and this is the way in which we are meant to see the Souldan; but again there is a discrepancy in the level of Spenser's action and its analogue. This discrepancy is particularly evident in the last two lines of the stanza. The consequences of Phaeton's actions were of cosmological proportions (the earth was nearly burnt to ashes) while the Souldan's actions have few consequences and they are certainly not of the same magnitude. One might defend the simile by saying that it is digressive, and by line six Spenser is telling the complete story for its own sake, but the closeness of the analogy, in the earlier lines, leads us to continue reading the lines as an exact simile, suggesting that the Souldan's fall is momentous for all men. Even when we notice the
historical allegory of the canto - the defeat of the Armada by the English - the lines are still inflated. It is as if Spenser were trying to assert the magnitude of his subject by his analogues alone, without really considering how they would look in the context of his own poem.

The third simile of this group is, if anything, odder than the first two:

Like as the cursed sonne of Theseus,
That following his chace in dewy morne,
To fly his stepdames loves outrageous,
Of his owne steedes was all to peeces torne,
And his faire limbs left in the woods forlorne,
That for his sake Diana did lament,
And all the wooddy Nymphes did wayle and mourne.
So was this Souldan rapt and all to rent,
That of his shape appear'd little moniment.

(5. VIII. xliii).

The word 'cursed' is at first sight ambiguous. It could mean something like unlucky; in addition we remember that Hippolytus was literally cursed by Theseus; furthermore the epithet is one that we could apply to the Souldan, meaning lacking God's grace or completely evil; but as we read on we find the first of these meanings to be dominant. The parallel is one of situation; both Hippolytus and the Souldan were torn to shreds because their horses were terrified and became uncontrollable. Apart from this the two are strikingly dissimilar; Hippolytus is the wronged victim who is mourned by Diana and the nymphs, while the Souldan is an evil man getting his just deserts, and even his lady rages over his death rather
than grieves over it. As we read line eight we expect to find out how the Souldan is related to the two previous lines,'so was this Souldan...', but in fact the continuation returns us to lines 4-5, so we are left wondering why Spenser inserted lines 6-7. They are beautiful and evoke the full pathos of Hippolytus' death, but they are inappropriate when applied to the Souldan. Even if the ambiguity of the word 'cursed' is taken as a signal for us to notice the ironic disjunction between the two, the parallel in situation in the first five lines is precise enough to make us lose any expectation of irony; indeed this precision leads us at least momentarily to apply the pathos of Hippolytus' death to that of Souldan. It would be odd if this was Spenser's intended effect, since he has spent so many stanzas convincing us of the Souldan's inhuman cruelty, but this is the effect his digressive addition to the simile has.

The fourth and last mythological simile is of the same kind as that describing Duessa's beast:

Like raging Ino, when with knife in hand
She threw her husbands murdred infant out,
Or fell Medea, when on Colchike strand
Her brothers bones she scattered all about;
Or as that madding mother, mongst the rout
Of Bacchus Priests her owne deare flesh did tear.
Yet neither Ino nor Medea stout,
Nor all the Maenades so furious were,
As this bold woman, when she saw that, Damzell there.
(5.VIII.xlvii).

This simile is of the type, x is like a and b and c but more so.
The simile is slightly inexact since all of the classical analogues
committed outrages against their own blood relations while the "Damzell" is unrelated to Adicia, but it is effective in communicating the extent of her fury which makes her act in a way contrary to her best interests. The simile also prepares us for Adicia's transformation into a tiger two stanzas later. The references to Agave, Pentheus' mother, also lends a certain pathos to the simile, suggesting Adicia's insanity. This is the only one of the four similes where there is no great degree of disjunction between the poem's fable and the analogues that Spenser selects. It should be noted that the stanza is composed of three smaller similes which aren't digressively developed and this is how Spenser maintains the aptness of his comparisons.

The four similes demonstrate a number of stylistic habits. We notice the absence of any thematic connecting link. The first one loosely fits into the Hercules theme of the book, but it is a reminder rather than a development of the theme. With this possible exception of the first, the effect of these similes on the meaning of the poem is purely local. With very few exceptions, Spenser does not use thematically connected similes. This is one of the clearest differences between his poem and Paradise Lost; in Milton's poem we nearly always feel that an individual image connects into a larger pattern, while Spenser's remain isolated and independent. We also notice that Spenser is using the similes to try to heighten the style and thus the tone of his poem, and so to impress upon us the magnitude of the events that he's describing. The problem is that the analogues he chooses heighten the style too much and they stand out against the general level of the story in this canto. Certainly they are too powerful for the particular historical
allegory of this section of the poem; for while it is allowable
to associate Phaeton with the Souldan and implicitly the Spanish
Armada as examples of excessive pride, to give the details of
Phaeton's fate is to risk the reader's noticing the disparity
between the magnitude and significance of the events.

We also notice in three of these four similes that Spenser
does not care about the bounds of relevance of his classical
analogues. By including too many extraneous details he regularly
weakens the validity of his original insight. Spenser continues
a story or adds an extra detail because it is part of the myth
associated with that person. This is at least partly attributable
to the nature of his stanza form, which often forces him to
continue an idea or an image past the point which is necessary or
relevant. His stanza form also gives rise to another
questionable feature of his poetry, namely the misplacement of
images, particularly stanza-length similes. Spenser sometimes
inserts a simile after the moment where it is strictly
applicable.

This misplacement occurs quite often though it rarely
distracts us greatly in our reading; the two most notable
occasions are at 3.IX.xxii and 5.VII.xxxix. The former is not
crucial yet it still disturbs the flow of our reading. Britomart
is disarming and the fact that she is woman as well as a warrior
becomes apparent.
She also dofte her heavy haberieon,
Which the faire feature of her limbs did hyde,
And her well plighted frock, which she did won
To tucke about her short, when she did ryde,
She low let fall, that flowd from her lanck syde
Downe to her foot, with carelesse modestee.
Then of them all she plainly was espyde,
To be a woman wight, vnwist to bee,
The fairest woman wight, that euer eye did see.

Like as Minerua, being late returnd
From slaughter of the Giaunts conquered;
Where proud Encelade, whose wide nosethrils burnd
With breathed flames, like to a furnace red,
Transfixt with the speare, downe tumbled ded
From top of Hemus, by him heaped hye;
Hath loosd her helmet from her lofty hed,
And her Gorgonian shield gins to vntye
From her left arme, to rest in glorious victorye.

(3.IX.xxi-xxii).

Stanza 21 completes the process of transformation and the warrior becomes the gloriously beautiful woman. The simile which follows is perhaps too loud; Athena's conquest of the Giants is of a different order to Britomart's victory over the negligible Paridell, but the resemblance is tolerable. However, the simile describes a fully armed warrior maiden who is only beginning to take off her arms. By line 9 of stanza 22 we have moved backwards from the time of line 2 of stanza 21, consequently when we begin stanza 24 we feel disorientated, since we return to the fully disarmed Britomart.
In principle the simile is apt, since it continues the association of Britomart with the Olympian warrior/huntress virginal goddesses. This association establishes Britomart's stature, and is an important way of describing her, but the simile's positioning (regardless of its merit as a simile) to some extent neutralises its usefulness and certainly creates an awkward disruption in the narrative.

This displacement is not critical; it is a minor though characteristic flaw. We may be distracted but we return to the line of the narrative with little difficulty. The second instance is more important; it occurs just after Britomart has rescued Artegall from Radigund:

At last when as to her owne Loue she came,  
Whom like disguize no lesse deformed had,  
At sight thereof abasht with secrete shame,  
She turnd her head aside, as nothing glad,  
To haue beheld a spectacle so bad:  
And then too well beleev'd, that which tofore  
Jealous suspect as true vntruely drad,  
Which vaine conceipt now nourishing no more.  
She sought with ruth to salue her sad misfortunes sore.

Not so great wonder and astonishment,  
Did the most chast Penelope possesse,  
To see her Lord, that was reported drent,  
And dead long since in dolorous distresse,  
Come home to her in piteous wretchednesse,  
After long trauell of full twenty yeares,  
That she knew not his fauours likelynesse,  
For many scarres and hoary heares,  
But stood long staring on him, mongst vncertaine feares.
Ah my deare Lord, what sight is this (quoth she)
What May-game hath misfortune made of you?

(5.VII.xxxviii-xxxix,xl.1-2).

Both of these stanzas are good in themselves and the scene is a moving one, but the simile seriously breaks into the description of the process of Britomart's emotional response to the situation. The simile basically applies to Britomart's first reaction:

At sight thereof abasht with secrete shame
She turnd her head aside, as nothing glad,
To haue beheld a spectacle so bad.

(5.VII.xxxviii.3-5).

She is astonished and shocked; but she develops a deeper more compassionate feeling for Artegall's plight, where forgetting her own unworthy jealousy, she cares only for how he feels.

If stanza 39 had come at line 5 of stanza 38 it would have conveyed the ambivalence of Britomart's first reaction, with enlightening precision, but by the time the simile occurs, Britomart's response has developed. As we read the simile we feel jolted by its apparent irrelevance to the final lines of the previous stanza. The change in Britomart's response, which stanza 38 conveys so movingly, is undercut by our having to revert to a moment which is past. The problem arises because Spenser wanted to do two things at once which couldn't both fit into his rigid verse form. He wanted to convey the rapidly successive emotions which Britomart feels, while at the same time enhancing our perception of her first response by using a well chosen classical simile. In an open verse form, like Milton's blank verse in Paradise Lost, this would have been relatively easy to accomplish (at least if one were Milton), but because Spenser uses
stanzas as discrete units it couldn't be managed. Instead he did the next best thing by inserting the simile in the next stanza. Just as in 3.IX.xxi-ii, we emerge from the simile to be surprised that the narrative is more advanced than we expect it to be.

The difficulty of Spenser's stanza form is at least in part responsible for a certain diffuseness which makes the poem extremely difficult to remember. Most readers have great difficulty in keeping the various episodes in place in their memory of the fabric of the whole, without fusing at least some of the less outstanding events in the poem. This is unfortunate in a poem which occasionally requires that the reader be aware of connections of events and themes separated by a great number of lines. Of course the stanza form can provide a type of discipline, which forces Spenser to refine images and ideas, but I feel that the problem of filling remains prevalent.

Another feature which adds to the diffuseness of *The Faerie Queene* is the presence of catalogues of thematically linked classical persons or things. For example, when Spenser wants to suggest that all golden apples derive from the Garden of Proserpine in Mammon's cave, he lists all of the occurrences of golden apples in classical mythology. And when Britomart is looking through the Cave of Busyrane, she notices tapestries depicting the amorous feats of the gods. Though at times the poetry is active, its length and lack of descriptive detail impart the sense of a catalogue notable mainly for its exhaustiveness. When the Thames and the Medway are married we are

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10. Several critics, most notably Paul Alpers, have remarked upon this quality of the poem though their conclusions would differ from mine.
treated to the name of just about every classical sea or river
deity and many other rivers besides. It is worth pausing for a moment
to wonder just why Spenser did this.

Perhaps the easiest list to explain is the canto devoted to
the sea and river deities. It is a demonstration of the poet's
learning and a manifestation of his ability to make poetry out of
any material no matter how unpromising it may seem, and one may see
it as a display of poetic virtuosity. While I can believe that at
some time a reader could have enjoyed this canto (4-XI), particularly
if it were read by a person familiar with some of the rivers and
wishing to discover others, I find it an extremely dull catalogue.
This may be an unfair, ahistorical, even lazy judgment, but I find
it impossible to be interested in a long, unfamiliar and frequently
unqualified series of names. I feel as if I should admire Spenser's
achievement, but I find as little pleasure in reading this canto as
I do in the cantos where Arthur's and Elizabeth's pedigrees are
documented. One may see the function of the poetry, even admire the
achievement in abstract, yet dread the actual process of reading such
sections of the poem.

The description of the tapestries showing the gods' sexual
encounters with mortals (3.XI.xxx-lxv) is partially motivated by the
same desire to show the author's learning and poetic ability, but
there is at least one further function. The very size of the list
makes us assent to the dominion of Cupid over men and even the gods.
This alerts us to the isolation of Britomart, since she alone resists
this power, but also to the source of her strength; she is immune
to the influence of 'Cupids wanton snare'. The sixteen stanzas
devoted to the depiction of the tapestries give Spenser the chance to show some of his descriptive skill. At times the poetry is inert, little more than a series of names, as we see towards the end of the description of Jove's conquests:

In Satyres shape Antiopa he snatch'd:
And like a fire, when he Aegin' assayd:
A shepheard, when Mnemosyne he catcht:
And like a Serpent to the Thracian mayd.

(3.XI.xxxv.1-4).

The names seem interchangeable, and the verbs are merely the product of the exigencies of rhyme. Some of his descriptions, however, are excellent, particularly that of Leda:

When was he turnd into a snowy Swan,
To win faire Leda to his louely trade:
O wondrous skill, and sweet wit of the man,
That her in daffadillies sleeping made,
From scorching heat her daintie limbes to shade:
While the proud Bird ruffling his fethers wyde,
And brushing his faire brest, did her inuade;
She slept, yet twixt her eyelids closely spyde,
How towards her he rusht, and smiled at his pryde.

(3.XI.xxxii).

The passage splendidly succeeds in describing the myth as a tapestry. Spenser selects the critical moment and evokes both the feeling of impending movement and the beauty of the scene at this particular moment. The excellence of the last two lines consists in the sensitive appraisal of the ambiguous expression on Leda's face. For while it is the god who is active, one senses that the mortal woman is in control of the situation and that she almost condescendingly
accepts the god. Spenser conveys the latent sexuality of the scene without becoming either gross or merely pretty.

This series of myths does contain some wonderful poetry, and certainly has a specific function within the narrative, yet even here the length of the passage distracts us from the tension implicit in Britomart's situation. Certainly the bestial and eccentric forms the gods are willing to take, to satisfy their desires, testifies to Cupid's power, but the very length of the list distracts us from perceiving this clearly. What is clear, when we examine the passage as a whole, is much less so while we are reading.

The last passage I wish to mention is not really a list since it is only two stanzas long and it only refers to four separate events, yet it still has the same sense of thoroughness as the other two. Spenser is describing a tree in the Garden of Proserpine:

Their fruit were golden apples glistring bright,
That goodly was their glory to behold,
On earth like neuer grew, ne living wight
Like euer saw, but they from hence were sold;
For those, which Hercules with conquest bold
Got from great Atlas daughters, hence began,
And planted there, did bring forth fruit of gold:
And those with which th' Euboean young man wan
Swift Atalanta, when through craft he her out ran.

Here also sprung that goodly golden fruit,
With which Acontius got his lover trew,
Whom he had long time sought with fruitlesse suit:
Here eke that famous golden Apple grew,
The which emongst the gods false Ate threw;
For which th'Idaean Ladies disagreed,
Till partial Paris dempt it Venus dew,
And had of her, faire Helen for his meed,
That many noble Greekes and Troians made to bleed.

(2.VII.liv-lv).

Spenser refers to all instances of classical golden apples. We could explain this by remarking that Spenser wanted us to be certain that this was indeed the source for all other occurrences of the fruit. Spenser's phrase for stating that this is the source virtually forced him into listing all examples (liv 3-4). Curiously, this urge or need for thoroughness has led Spenser to adapt the myth of Acontius by converting an ordinary apple in the original (Heroides, 20.237-40) into a golden one.

The significance of the individual myths involving golden apples is more difficult to ascertain. The context of these two stanzas suggests that the tree symbolizes wealth, and the urge to pluck the fruit may be characterized as avarice. (This is perhaps too arid and abstract to do the suggestiveness of this section of the poem justice, but it may serve as a general formulation). The 'Euboean young man' (either Melanion or Hippomenes) won Atalanta by appealing to her acquisitiveness, and similarly the Trojan War was an indirect consequence of the avarice of the 'Idaean Ladies'. We may see a theme of avarice developing which connects with the following section of the poem devoted to the punishment of Tantalus, but this ignores

11. The only notable absentee from this list is the apple in Eden (which isn't classical anyway). This apple was golden by iconographic tradition (it is also golden in Paradise Lost) but the mention of it here would have given rise to an unproductive historical paradox.
the applies of the Hesperides and that of Acontius where there is no such thematic connection. In the first instance the reference is purely descriptive, and in the second, Acontius' success did not depend on the fact that the apple was golden. He tricked Cydippe but he neither bribed nor enticed her. The reader must conclude that Spenser included all four examples to substantiate his claims in lines 3-4 of stanza 54. We must also conclude that by being exhaustive he has sacrificed thematic unity. By inserting superfluous examples in a canto where there is a sustained and satisfying allegory, Spenser has risked confusing his reader by causing him to hunt significance where none exists.

I have so far dealt mainly with the more explicit and local forms of mythological allusion, in particular the mythological similes. I shall now turn to the more subtle, then the broader uses of classical allusion. One of the most interesting of these uses is the ancestry he gives his bad characters and monsters, and the foster parentage of several of his good characters, most notably Artegall. If, for example, we know that the Blatant Beast is a product of the union of Typhoeus and Echidna, then we expect what we find - a wild and dangerous creature. Spenser's description of the beast's parentage acts as a guarantee of its evil nature, just as Neptune's dismay is an assurance of the magnitude of the dragon's fall. Although Spenser doesn't fully develop the qualities entailed by the Blatant Beast's ancestry, he does so with some of his other horrors. The nature of the products of a monstrous union is made clear in the case of Argante, the nymphomaniacal giantess of Book 3:
That Geauntesse Argante is behight,  
A daughter of the Titans which did make  
Warre agaist heauen, and heaped hils on hight,  
To scale the skyes, and put Ioue from his right:  
Her sire Typhoeus was, who mad through merth,  
And drunke with bloud of men, slaine by his might,  
Through incest, her of his owne mother Earth,  
Whilome begot, being but halfe twain of that berth.

(3.VII.xlvii 2-9).

Argante's characteristics are virtually the sum of those of her parents; she is large, lawless, violent, incestuous and a sexual deviant. It would be hard to present a more detailed description of her character, yet the passage is apparently concerned with ancestry. The characterization of Orgoglio works in a similar if more detailed manner:

The greatest Earth his uncouth mother was,  
And blustring Aeolus his boasted sire,  
Who with his breath, which through the world doth pas,  
Her hollow womb did secretly inspire,  
And fild her hidden caues with stormie yre,  
That she conceiu'd; and trebling the dew time,  
In which the wombes of women do expire,  
Brought forth this monstrous masse of earthly slime,  
Puft vp with eptie wind, and fild with sinfull crime.

(1.VII.ix).

Orgoglio's parentage suggests his pride and his baseness. His father 'puft up' the Earth and he is the 'uncouth' 'puft up' result. There is a further undermining of his baseless pride in Spenser's positioning of the ambiguous word 'boasted': it at once implies that this is not the whole truth of his conception and suggests his excessive pride in his parentage. Similarly we see the way in which Spenser alerts us
to his angry nature; the 'stormy yre' might pass as a meteorological description were it not that it also applies to Orgoglio's character. His ancestry and size suggest that he may have been related to the classical Giants whose parents were the Earth and Sky. By implicitly linking him with the Giants, Spenser suggests Orgoglio's disrespect for the gods and their representatives on earth.

Spenser's descriptions of bloodlines act as a quasi-dramatic means of suggesting the character of the offspring found in his own fiction. They also act to give his own creatures the sanction of authority. Authority may seem an odd word to use about creatures that every reader knows to be mythical, but it is always easier to imagine the known, however vague it is, than to start imagining something new in a totally unknown context. Blake's prophetic books are so difficult at least partially because we have no external guides to help us morally label or describe his original creations. Certainly this can make reading his poetry very exciting, but it can also be hopelessly confusing. By using a known mythology, to develop his own creations, Spenser at least secures the comprehension of his audience.

This comprehension would have been aided by the mythographers' moral interpretation of the significance of many of the myths. For example, Natalis Comes' description of the meaning of the Giants is probably the source of Spenser's description of Orgoglio. I would emphasize that Comes is rarely, if ever, the key to our understanding
of the poem, but Spenser did use Comes, although he never felt bound to the mythographer's moral generalisations. Comes and to a lesser extent, Boccaccio, Cartari and Alciati represent a background from which Spenser develops his own detailed story with its own particularized significance, but we must realise that they are there, if we are to understand Spenser's use of well known classical myths in sections of his poem, ranging in size from several stanzas to almost an entire canto.

At several points in The Faerie Queene we encounter a narrative which seems to be loosely based on a classical analogue. Guyon's descent into the Cave of Mammon occasionally reminds us of Aeneas' descent into Hades in the Aeneid Book 6, particularly in the descriptions of the environment. The similarity is not continuous and there is a profound difference in the moods of the two poems, but we are constantly reminded of Virgil by similarities of detail in Spenser's poem. Less tangibly though more pervasively, Guyon's journey to and arrival at the Bower of Bliss reminds us of Odysseus' description of his wanderings. We find analogies for Scylla and Charybdis, the Sirens, the Wandering Rocks (only mentioned in the Odyssey but described in Apollonius of Rhodes' work The Voyage of the Argo) and most specifically Circe; we also find many episodes which aren't in the Odyssey. This section of Homer's epic is present as an informing myth, in which Spenser has taken over the structure

12. I hesitate to say never, but I can't find an occasion where the text is meaningless without referring to Comes. Certainly he is often the source of Spenser's use of a myth, for example 2.VII. xlvi - the golden chain connecting earth and heaven signifying ambition, but Spenser makes this meaning clear enough himself, in the poem.
of the narrative without being bound to the details of that story. Episodes have been taken from the *Odyssey* and explicitly moralized. This is certainly nothing new: explanations of Homer's moral meanings existed before Christ, and became a thriving area of scholarship during the later Roman Empire; indeed the business of allegorizing the classics was almost finished by Spenser's time. However, Spenser appears to use these allegorizations, and the most likely source is Comes' *Mythologiae*. Perhaps the clearest example of this link is found in Spenser's description of 'The Rock of vile Reproch', which is clearly reminiscent of Scylla:

> For thy, this hight The Rocke of vile Reproch,  
> A daungerous and detestable place,  
> To which nor fish nor fowle did once approch,  
> But yelling Meawes, the Seagulles hoarse and bace,  
> And Cormoyrants, with birds of rauenous race,  
> Which still sate waiting on that wastfull clift,  
> For spoyle of wretches, whose vnhappie cace,  
> After lost credite and consumed thrift,  
> At last them driuen hath to this despairefull drift.

The Palmer seeing them in safetie past,  
Thus said; Behold th' ensamples in our sights,  
Of lustfull luxurie and thriftlesse wast:  
What now is left of miserable wights,  
Which spent their looser daies in lewd delights,  
But shame and sad reproch, here to be red,  
By these rent reliques, speaking their ill plights?  
Let all that liue, hereby be counselled,  
To shunne Rocke of Reproch, and it as death to dred.  

(2.XII.viii-ix).

C.W. Lemmi has discussed this passage with reference to Comes:
Conti (Comes) suggests voluptuousness as the meaning of Scylla - then adds 'Others explain the myth as a warning against excessive expenditure; for there are reckless people who run into debt as a ship runs upon Scylla, wherefore afterwards they lose all their substance at once.'

We don't need to have read Comes to understand this passage; rather the mythographer could serve as a basis for explaining why Spenser has used the classical myths in this particular way.

I don't wish to discuss this canto (2.XII) in detail since its interest resides more in the consideration of source study than allusion, but it illustrates the danger of using an older story to structure a new one. Although the resemblance between the fictions of the Odyssey and this canto of The Faerie Queene is slight, the similarity is sufficient to invite comparison which is not flattering to Spenser's poem. The fully dramatized episodes of the Odyssey become moral ciphers. We see a series of moral dangers which Guyon all too easily avoids rather than a series of physical dangers, where we only gradually appreciate the extent of the peril. This is not true of the second half of the canto, where Guyon arrives at the Bower; this is one of the high points of the poem, and can stand comparison with the Circe episode; but Spenser's description of Guyon's voyage resembles a guided tour of the sins against continence. By comparison with the Odyssey, what becomes apparent is the absence of danger and the mechanical quality of the narrative.

The poetry of the first thirty seven stanzas of this canto is not inherently bad; it is, for example, far superior to that in the cantos involving the castle of Medina, or Alma's house and the allegory of the body, yet the poetry describing the voyage does not stand up to the sort of scrutiny invited by Spenser's use of the myth.

Many critics have argued that Spenser uses the informing myth as a basis for his structuring of a whole book or books. For example A.C. Hamilton has seen two classical myths, those of Venus and Adonis, and Cupid and Psyche, as providing 'the pattern within the diverse actions' of Books 3 and 4. Other critics have suggested, rather more cogently, that the myth of Hercules provides the frame for Book 5. T.K. Dunseath perhaps makes the point more explicitly:

Spenser has so carefully integrated the character of Hercules with that of Artegaill and has implicitly or explicitly presented some of the labours of Hercules that the myth emerges as a major image of Book Five, the myth determining the structure and controlling the imagery. In this the myth of Hercules is a vehicle for the action in which image and meaning coalesce.

Hercules is explicitly referred to three times in Book 5: on the first occasion as a lawgiver, at 5.I.ii. 6-9, where Artegaill is compared with him. The next is at 5.V.xxiii-xxiv where Hercules' subjection to Iolas is compared with that of Artegaill to Radigund.

Finally there is the mention of Diomedes and his horses, where Hercules is implicitly associated with Arthur, which I have referred to earlier. The explicit link between Artegall and Hercules is scarcely overwhelming; however, there are several implicit links noted by Dunseath which seem to be present. Spenser's treatment of the episode involving Sir Sanglier (5.I. xv-xxx) recalls the myth of Hercules and the Erymanthean boar (Sanglier has travelled from the Old French into the English language and means a wild boar).

Artegall's dispensation of justice and restraint of this man is a service to the community in the same way as Hercules' capture of the boar. Similarly in 5.IX.vi-xix, the capture and destruction of Malengin by Artegall and Arthur is strongly reminiscent of Hercules' treatment of Cacus. Like Cacus, Malengin is chiefly notable for his guile. Artegall and Arthur's achievement of capturing then destroying this dangerous individual resembles Hercules' actions in the way that they beat the adversary at his own game.

This list constitutes the series of links which I would characterize as being either explicit or clear. Dunseath suggests that there are quite a few more. He remarks that the ermine on Artegall's shield (3.II.xxv.7) was the animal associated with Hercules, therefore this was Hercules' shield not that of Achilles (as the text appears to state). Artegall's behaviour as a child (5.I.v.1-5) reminds Dunseath of that of Hercules, in particular the famous scene where he strangles the snakes sent by Juno. Like Hercules, Artegall produces fear in wild beasts, (5.I.viii. 4-5). In perhaps his least clear argument, Dunseath suggests that the description of Chrysaor (Jove's then Artegall's sword) in some way reminds us of Hercules. Since the sword was used by Jove to quell the
Giants, and since Hercules was the actual instrument of the
destruction of the Giants we make a link of Hercules, Chrysaor and
Artegall. In reference to Artegall's successful debate with the
Giant of canto two, Dunseath notes that Lucian records that Hercules
is regarded by some as the god of eloquence. Finally at 5-XII-xxxi,
when Spenser describes the attack by Envy upon Artegall, Dunseath
refers us to Horace's 'Epistle to Augustus', where Hercules is the
eexample chosen to illustrate a similar theme.16

This summary obviously doesn't do justice to the detailed
argument supporting each of the links made by Dunseath, but it does
give the complete series suggested by a most ingenious critic. In
none of these cases am I convinced that the link is present. If we
look at the lines cited in the poem, the connections are so tenuous
as to be invisible to all but the most determined reader. For example,
the description of Chrysaor mentions both Titans and Giants (Titans
first) and Hercules wasn't involved in the battle with the Titans.
The text doesn't mention Hercules, indeed it focuses specifically on
Jove, so I find it impossible to see what could induce the reader to
see a reference to Hercules. Similarly the passage describing the
attack by Envy, on all men who perform praiseworthy deeds, is so
generalised that it seems gratuitous to remember the Horatian passage,
particularly since Dunseath himself cites a number of other classical
texts referring to the theme, which don't involve Hercules.

Most of Dunseath's examples of implicit links between Artegall
and Hercules are either very tenuous, or involve such a tortuous

approach to the text that they are highly improbable. His analysis seems to be an attempt to validate an unnecessarily sweeping claim. Yet the quotation from his book, which I've cited, isn't wrong-headed or foolish. It does correspond to some feeling, albeit a slight one, that we have when reading this book of the poem. Despite the small number of explicit or clear links between the two heroes, we do feel that there is an extended parallel being made. The initial simile, at 5.1.ii. 6-9, continues to echo throughout Book 5, but it doesn't do so with anything like the dominance suggested by Dunseath. Artegall dispenses justice in a violent society in a somewhat arbitrary manner, which is occasionally reminiscent of Hercules' behaviour. The ambivalent response we feel towards Artegall perhaps finds its best analogue in our attitude to Hercules. It is rare that there is any precise similarity between the two, but we often feel that there is some slight intangible likeness. I do not agree with the way in which Dunseath makes this similarity almost the controlling myth of the book; indeed, I would hesitate even to invoke the more shadowy connection suggested by the term informing myth. Rather it is a very general likeness, varying greatly in its strength from canto to canto, which is occasionally enlightening.

The use of classical myths as an organising principle is not restricted to individual cantos or even books, for while Tanaquil may be the representative of earthly power, glory and order, the classical gods are the divine representatives. This does not mean that the christian God is excluded; rather we only find him where an explicitly christian situation demands his presence. When it is a matter of describing meteorological or astronomical phenomena, or when Spenser needs to embody a specific quality, be it Night or
Generative Love, we find him using the classical pantheon. This of course makes the personification allegory, which pervades the poem, much easier to manage: thus Spenser can show that 'Artegall in justice was vpbrught' by describing the process of his education by Astraea. The classical names provide a sort of literary shorthand which requires very little classical education to be understood.

Spenser uses the classical pantheon as one of the structural organising principles of his story. When he wishes to make a specifically Christian reference, he does so, and it is perhaps one of the wonders of the poem that he can do this, without our feeling that there is some grave contradiction at the heart of The Faerie Queene. Only occasionally do we wonder who or what Jove is: generally he may be considered as the earthly manifestation of God's providence, similar to Chaucer's Fortune in Troilus and Criseyde, but sometimes we feel that there is an uncomfortable ambiguity in his references. For example, the simile describing the blow given by Artegall to Britomart is odd in its details:

Like as the lightning brond from riuen skie,
Throwne out by angry Ioue in his vengeance,
With dreadfull force falles on some steeple hie;
Which batttring, downe it on the church doth glance,
And teares it all with terrible mischance.

(4.VI.xiv. 1-5).

It won't do to see Jove as a symbol for the operation of the weather: the word 'vengeance' implies both activity and will. What is troubling is the subject of his vengeance: a church with a
steeple. This can't be a classical structure, it has to be a christian church. There are two possible explanations: the first is that we are meant to read God for Jove; then the simile becomes unusually accurate, since the unnaturalness of Artegall inflicting such a cruel blow on his future wife is comparable only to the act of God smiting his church. This reading depends on our ignoring the actual word 'Jove' in the text and making a substitution which the rest of the poem doesn't encourage. The second explanation is both simpler and more likely. The simile is describing the power of Artegall's blow and Spenser chose the most powerful of natural phenomena as an analogue. He wanted to describe lightning hitting something important and had either seen such an event or remembered reading it. The adjective 'angry' and the reference to 'vengeance' are intended to invoke the guilt and awe of the viewer, in a society where a natural event would be viewed as a sign of divine communication. Though the first reading is not impossible, it is more likely that Spenser was unaware of the incongruity of having Jove strike a christian church.

This particular passage only presents a local difficulty; passages where the biblical and the classical are intentionally associated are more problematic. Spenser's syncretic passages have long been a source of interest to critics. Several critics, most notably James E. Phillips, have tried to prove that the philosophical basis for these sections is to be found in the neo-Platonist syncretic writings of men in France and Italy. I find such attempts to pin the influence down to one source (ranging from Ficino to Mornay) unconvincing, but they do suggest the intellectual milieu in which Spenser wrote. He was certainly not alone in believing 17. J.E. Phillips 'Spenser's Syncretistic Religious Imagery' E.L.H. 36.1 (1969) pp. 110-130.
that similar universal truths could be found in both classical and biblical myths. We find Parnassus admitted as a mountain of inspiration very much like Sinai and Olivet (l.x.liii-liv) or the music of Orpheus described as calming discord in much the same way as that of David (4.II.i-ii). The particular points where the biblical and classical are mixed represent an acknowledgment of the basic fabric of the poem, where the names are frequently classical but the more basic moral approach is christian. These references contribute to holding the poem together under the apparent strain of the two systems of belief. It is worth considering for a moment what would have happened if Spenser had explicitly differentiated them.

The Faerie Queene depends on an enormous range of classical myths. Throughout the poem, Jove deals justice to both men and inferior gods; Night and her brood, together with Aesculapius, are in Hades; blessed souls go to the Elysian fields (4.X.xxiii. 4-5); and many gods of the pantheon, most importantly Apollo, Venus and Diana, are scattered through the world of the poem. The classical heroes and heroines have lived, performed their famous deeds and died, leaving their exploits to be excelled by Spenser's heroes and heroines. The classical cosmos is the one which is almost always nominally present; the morality by which the action is judged is always christian. Spenser has constructed his world with a classical basis. If at any point he had used one of Milton's formulae, like "as fables feign", the poem would have collapsed in much the same way

18. I'm uncertain whether the "highest God" referred to at 2.VIII.i.6 is the christian God or Jove - highest god of the pantheon. The former is the more likely because of the explicit specificatcon, but it isn't certain.
as Camoens' *Lusiads*, in which Camoens denied the truth of the classical framework which he used throughout the poem. By denying the truth of the classical fable, the author casts doubt upon his own. Spenser either had to maintain the truth of the myths or seek a different method of organising his world.

There is one exception to this consistency of conception, but this is perhaps a special case. As Britomart is travelling to save Artegall from Radigund she comes to Isis' church. Spenser is very careful in his introduction to the more central later stanzas:

Nought is on earth more sacred or divine,
That Gods and men doe equally adore,
Than this same vertue, that doth right define:
For th' heavens themselves, whence mortal men implore
Right in their wrongs, are rule'd by righteous lore
Of highest Iouve, who doth true iustice deale
To his inferiur Gods, and evermore
Therewith containes his heavenly Commonweale:
The skill whereof to Princes hearts he doth reveale.

Well therefore did the antique world inuent,
That Iustice was a God of soueraine grace,
And alters vnto him, and temples lent,
And heavenly honours in the highest place;
Calling him great Osyris, of the race
Of th' old Aegyptian Kings, that whylome were;
With fayned colours shading a true case:
For that Osyris, whilst he liued here,
The iustest man aliue, and truest did appeare.

19. There is a further and expanded discussion of this point in my chapter on Milton pp. 70-1
His wife was Isis, whom they likewise made
A Goddesse of greate powere and souerainty
And in her person cunningly did shade
That part of Justice, which is Equity,
Whereof I have to treat here presently.

(5. VII. i-ii, iii, 1-5).

Spenser first presents a short aside on the value of justice, in which we note that Jove is presented without qualification: he is a god who exists in the same way as the princes for whom he serves as a model. He is a god who is in charge of his 'inferior Gods', as the princes are in charge of their people. This could serve as a model for the Christian God, a just God, in his justice towards his angels, but the literal meaning of the text is dominant. Spenser then speaks of first Osyris and then Isis, but for the first time in the poem, a qualification is made. Osyris as a god is 'invented', the godhead being bestowed with 'fayned colours'. This is the only euhemeristically based passage in the poem; although Spenser is at some pains to explain that the godhead was given to a person of outstanding merit, 'the wisest man alive'. Isis is 'likewise made/
A goddesse of greate powre and souerainty'. Even granted that Osyris and Isis were originally Egyptian gods, they found a place in the tolerantly syncretic pantheon of the later Roman Empire, and were discussed as gods by a number of classical authors (most notably Apuleius), so Spenser's qualification would still seem odd.

The first and perhaps primary reason resides in Spenser's sources. We know from the way in which he discussed the priests of Isis that he had read the relevant section of Comes in which Plutarch's De Iside and Diodorus Siculus' Archeologia are referred to and quoted.
In all three, Spenser could have found these gods explained euhemeristically. It would seem logical that Spenser should have transferred the explanation from his sources to his poem. Logical but exceptional, for Spenser must have read similar explanations of the classical gods in at least Boccaccio and Comes, yet we don't find him proceeding in this way anywhere else in the poem. The nature of Spenser's sources provides a partial answer to our problem but I don't find it totally convincing.

The deciding factor in Spenser's decision to explain these gods is the fact that he already has a classical goddess of justice, Astraea, who no longer resides on earth:

Now when the world with sinne gan to abound
Astraea lothing lenger here to space
Mongst wicked men, in whom no truth she found,
Return'd to heauen, whence she deriu'd her race;
Where she hath now an euerlasting place.

(5.I.xi.1-5).

To have included another god of justice and a goddess of equity, who in some sense continue to reside on earth, would have compromised the integrity of Spenser's original symbol. Thus if Artegall had been instructed by a goddess who seemed to be lacking facets of the virtue, which we found in other divinities, then Artegall's command of justice would seem even shakier than we find it to be. Spenser needed a symbol for justice as a whole, which he found in Astraea, but in the course of his allegorical examination of the
virtue, he found it necessary to invent more precise symbols to suggest the latent tension between justice and equity. His explanation of Osyris and Isis safeguards the consistency of his use of symbols of justice. Again, what appears to be an inconsistency has a reason within the poem.

20. It is worth noting how carefully Spenser defines his symbols here before he uses them in the complex allegory of Britomart's dream. If, as some critics imply, The Faerie Queene is a continuous allegory or 'dark conceite', it is extraordinary that Spenser should define his terms only in this particular case, before giving the complex story. If Spenser signals his intention explicitly here, why not elsewhere?
Spenser's use of classical mythology is very different from Milton's. While Spenser is willing to use this mythology with neither qualms nor qualification, Milton, at least in Paradise Lost, goes out of his way to make us aware that the classical myths are fables and at times dangerous fables. While there is something paradoxical and irritating in Milton's continual use and damnation of classical mythology, he yet attains a degree of imaginative unity which eludes Spenser. For while the classical gods are found throughout The Faerie Queene and the cosmology is classical, the myths are, as we have seen, only a background which is fundamentally local in effect. The allusions don't really cohere or interact to give the poem a (much needed) sense of unity.

There are several apparent exceptions to what I have suggested is Milton's use of allusion. In Paradise Lost God is several times referred to in terms that recall the attributes of Jove; he is the 'Thunderer' and his 'red right hand' is mentioned. In addition the occupants of heaven are described as 'the gods who live at ease'. The first of these is a common classical synonym for Zeus or Jupiter, the second is a Horatian description of Jove's might, while the third is one of Homer's labels for the Olympians. If these allusions were in the narratorial voice there would be cause for concern, but all three are spoken by the inhabitants of Hell. The first is uttered by Satan, the second by Belial and the third by Sin. Each reveals a lack of awareness of the true nature of the Son, God, and the occupants of heaven. The first two reveal a view of God, unable to transcend the idea of the angry, vengeful gods of the classical
pantheon, while Sin's comment reflects a lack of understanding of the source and true nature of beatitude in Heaven. Each allusion characterizes the speaker in a way which is consistent with Milton's association of the classical and the demonic in *Paradise Lost*.

There remains one disturbing mythological allusion: Milton is describing Adam and Eve's relationship:

He in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregn the clouds
That shed May flowers.


The allusion is unqualified, and even if its import is basically meteorological, it seems better suited to *Comus* than *Paradise Lost*, for the lines represent a way of looking at natural processes which we just don't find in the rest of the poem. Possibly Milton felt that the reference was so overtly symbolic that it didn't need qualification. Certainly the lines are very beautiful but the rest of the poem arouses an expectation of qualification from the author. This expectation is strengthened further by our knowledge that Jupiter and the other Olympians are in hell; furthermore Milton alludes to Jupiter's attitude to Juno in Book 9 to evoke the different sexual behaviour of the fallen Adam and Eve. We can't say that this is a proleptic allusion since Milton is doing his utmost to describe unfallen sexuality at this point, and any suggestion of the fall would be distracting. This is the sort of poetry which Spenser's tolerant syncretism allowed him to write and which Milton avoided in the interests of the consistency of his purpose.
The small shock we feel, when we read these lines, serves to emphasise how Milton used classical allusion as a unifying device. The allusions are introduced to serve as a parallel for a past fall, as hints of an impending fall, or to remind the readers that their own point of view is that of the fallen world. While this kind of generalisation might appear to admit exceptions, I would maintain that the passages in question have classical sources, rather than their being functional textual allusions. This is certainly true in sections of the poem where Milton uses classical authors as a source of scientific information or philosophical ideas. So Milton's description of the creation of the animals (particularly the lion) in Book 7 owes something to Lucretius, and Raphael's short account of the great chain of being in Book 5 is reminiscent of sections from Plato's *Timaeus* and Cicero's *The Nature of the Gods*; but in neither case are we tempted to read the passages in *Paradise Lost* as allusions. Slightly more difficult are passages where there are certainly verbal parallels but no parallel in substance is apparent. One of God's replies to the Son provides a good example of this:

"O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
My Word, my wisdom, and effectual might."

(3. 168-170).

Milton's phrasing, particularly in the repetition of the word 'son', is strongly reminiscent of that passage in the *Aeneid* (1. 664-5) where Venus is talking to Cupid. 'Son, you alone are my strength and all my might is in you. Son, you who even scorn the Father's Typhoean thunderbolts.' The contexts of the two passages are, however, totally different. God is about to state that he will extend
mercy to man but that some faultless being must die 'to expiate his treason'. In the *Aeneid* Venus is coaxing Cupid to help Aeneas. She is flattering Cupid to achieve her will. The difference in tones of the two passages is almost sufficient for the reader to suspect that the allusion is ironic, but remembering Virgil doesn't really help us to understand Milton. The irony, if it is present, is more likely to consist in Milton's virtuoso demonstration that he can adapt any lines to his purpose, but even this interpretation of the passage as a functional allusion isn't very satisfactory since our appreciation of the solemnity of this dialogue relies upon our suppressing the sense that there is a poet writing the lines. Our best approach to this passage is to see the lines from Virgil as a source, which aided Milton in constructing his own address. Any attempt to see an allusion here is likely to distract us from the content of *Paradise Lost*.

Where we find allusions in *Paradise Lost*, they are used to evoke fallen values within the poem. The very existence of classical myths and moral values conveys the actuality of the fall. When Eden's beauty is described as 'Hesperian fables true,/If true, here only' (4. 250-1), the lines remind us that the myth of the Hesperides is a product of the faulty vision of fallen minds, and that fallen men can only dream of such a paradise as Eden. A true vision of such a place can only result from the inspiration of the true God, while any other assertion of inspiration or of true description of Paradise is false. Milton acknowledges his own fallen state, and repeatedly stresses his reliance upon the christian muse Urania to help him overcome his innate incapacity. When he says, 'What in me is dark/ Illumine, what is low raise and support' (1. 22-2), the words 'dark'
and 'low' describe the position of the fallen poet who requires both the grace of God and the help of the Muse (or Holy Spirit) to overcome his limitations and describe the non-human parts of his story. Milton insists on this divine inspiration in each of the invocations, but we see it most clearly in the invocation of Book 9:

If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumb'ring or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse.

(9. 20-24).

Milton establishes that he is one of the elect few who are directly inspired by God. So when he alludes to the classical paradise of the Hesperides, he is reminding us that we are fallen men for whom paradise is no longer a reality, but an insubstantial and faulty dream. Milton introduces the classical analogue to emphasise the point that the classical authors had a distorted vision of sacred history, just as we the readers do.

Having established the polarity between Christian truth and classical distortion, Milton uses the classics to provide lesser analogues of size, fury and even fallenness; they are used to introduce anticipatory hints of the approaching fall of Adam and Eve; but they are not used to provide analogues for what we would consider to be the Christian virtues. Even when an allusion is used to introduce a virtue such as courage (Paradise Lost 1. 549-69, cf. Lycurgus 22) there is a hint that the virtue is not truly valuable without the correct motive underlying it. Milton uses the classical world to show action which is not inspired by divine enlightenment.
While he may regard the great classical authors as superb craftsmen, and all but one (3. 34-6) of his explicit comments lead us to doubt even that, he loses few opportunities to assert their errors. We see an aesthetic response clashing with firm religious conviction, but it is Milton's solution to this opposition which constitutes one of the triumphs of Paradise Lost. As we saw in The Faerie Queene, one solution is to ignore the opposition so totally that a reader, unaware of the debates that raged over the problem, could remain ignorant that anyone saw it as a problem at all. Milton, however, establishes a scale of values within the poem and adheres to it. The value of this recognition of the opposition of values is perhaps debatable when comparing Paradise Lost with The Faerie Queene but it is very clear indeed when we look at another Renaissance epic, the Portuguese poem The Lusiads, by Camoens.

Camoens used the full Virgilian machinery, employing Bacchus, Venus, Jove and other Olympians as movers of human action. He alludes to the classics to show that his heroes are braver or further travelled than the classical heroes. We see his heroes as having classical values and as being better than classical analogues within that scale of values. This might have been satisfactory if Camoens hadn't introduced the Christian dimension into his poem. When he calls the classical epics fables, we are aware that a large part of his own epic is a fable on the same level. In addition, he is forced to disown his own divine machinery. As Tethys explains the

1. Milton does more or less the same thing, but with reference to Satan and the fallen angels.
structure of the universe to Vasco de Gama, we come to an astonishing passage about the Empyrean and its inhabitants:

Here dwell the true saints in glory. Saturn, Janus, Jupiter, Juno myself, we are but creatures of fable, figments of man's blindness and self-deception.  

The sentiments expressed here would not be out of place in Paradise Lost but clearly Camoens has been forced into an extreme position by his borrowings from the classics. For the major part of the work he has accepted classical moral values and literary conventions, but here, to affirm Christian values, he has a speaker deny her own existence.

Milton, however, has incorporated a classical structure within his epic, but has adapted it to serve his own ends, and while we might talk of Paradise Lost as being basically modelled on the Aeneid, the debt is more easily noticed in an abstract consideration of the structure of Paradise Lost than felt while reading the poem. Milton has absorbed what is useful from Virgil but is never bound by the earlier poet's model. Indeed, Milton uses classical allusions to present a system of moral values by negation. Instead of Camoens' ambiguous presentation of classical material, Milton presents classical values as incorrect, leading both angels and men astray. He represents the difference between classical and Christian heroism as being one of kind rather than degree. While a hero in The Lusiads is braver than a classical hero but in a similar way, Milton shows that

Christian courage such as Abdiel's, or that of Christ, is different in nature. This courage is certainly less spectacular than the classical heroism of Satan, but the events of the poem show that it is a positive ideal which leads to harmony and peace, rather than the destructiveness in which the other ideal finds its expression.

When Michael is instructing Adam just prior to the expulsion from the Garden, the full weight of the poem reinforces the advice he gives:

"This having learnt, thou has attained the sum
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
Or works of God in heav'n, air, earth, or sea,
And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
And all the rule, one empire; only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love,
By name to come called charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A paradise within thee, happier far."

(12. 575-587).

This Christian ideal is in stark contrast to the demonic ideals, which Milton firmly links with the classics.

Perhaps the most obvious use of this tactic is the way in which the absolutely fallen world of the fallen angels is substantiated in terms of classical analogues. The environment shows many similarities to both Hades and Tartarus. This similarity forms the basis for the reader's imagination of the place, and when Milton does it by a series of small suggestions it works very well. There
is, however, one passage in which Milton takes over Virgil's description of Tartarus wholesale and the result is far less satisfactory. The angels are exploring Hell and find one particularly unpleasant section.

Thither by harpy-footed Furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round,
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But fate withstands, and to oppose th' attempt
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, th' advent'rous bands,
With shudd'ring horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feign'ned, or fear conceived,
This passage is disturbing in a number of ways. The last two lines use a similar technique to the reference to the 'Hesperian fables true.' The technique is satisfactory in itself, but we sense that a rhetorical device is being used to save Milton the trouble of actually describing his 'monstrous...things'. They may well be worse than 'Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire' but what are they? When Milton referred to the Garden of the Hesperides he had already described Eden, so that the device served as a confirmation of what he had already achieved rather than merely being an assertion. It is possible that Milton did not want to excite the reader's imagination as to what God could create 'by curse', but this absence of description doesn't really help with the theological problem of God's creation of a place and beings which are evil.

The reference to fables is equally troubling in another way. We agree to this sort of aside when Milton's version of the truth clearly differs from what he has described as fable, but in this passage he has taken over and developed the classical descriptions of Hades and Tartarus. This kind of denigrating aside is irritating when we see Milton refer to Lethe, Medusa (with Gorgonion terror) harpy-footed Furies and Tantalus. Milton hasn't bothered to adapt the classical descriptions to his own epic (indeed the unqualified reference to Tantalus seems to imply that Tantalus's punishment predates the arrival of the fallen angels) and shows an uncharacteristic failure to consider the implications of his assertions. And given that this is an exception, it also highlights just how well Milton
generally integrates his allusions into the framework of his own poem.

Milton's use of classical allusion in characterizing the fallen angels is masterly. He uses two main methods: the first is by linking the fallen angels with the Titans by epithets and mythological allusion; the second is by associating the fallen angels with exemplars of classical heroism, mainly by using textual allusion.

The rebel angels are linked with the Titans in both their nature and their fate. These links are established both by epithets, such as 'Typhoean' and 'Atlantean', and events such as the common unit of nine days for the descent from Heaven to Hell. The similarity in the condition of the rebel angels and the Titans would be apparent to a reader who was familiar with the classical authors, but Milton makes the link explicit. Satan

Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge  
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,  
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,  
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den  
By ancient Tarsus held.

(1. 196-200).

Milton mentions the Titans not only to stress how great and large the rebel angels are, but also to suggest the magnitude of their crime. He uses the classical mythology as a fixed measure, from which he establishes our awareness of the greater evil of the rebel angels. For example, he develops the Homeric and Virgilian descriptions of the distance between Heaven or Olympus and Hell or Tartarus (the abode
of the Titans). In the Iliad, we find that 'misty Tartaros' is 'as far beneath Hades as heaven is high up above the earth' (8.16).

In the Aeneid (6. 578-80) Tartarus

Goes sheer down under the Shades an an abyss double in depth the height that Olympus stands above a man gazing skyward:

while in Paradise Lost it is

As far removed from God and light of heav'n
As from the center thrice to th' utmost pole.

(1. 73-4).

Virgil increased Homer's figure to augment the reader's appreciation of the horror of Tartarus, while Milton has trebled this figure to gain a similar effect to Virgil, but he also uses it to suggest a more subtle spatial metaphor. In all three descriptions it is clear that the distance between Heaven and Hell is a measure of the distaste felt by the gods for the crimes of the renegades. The metaphorical expression of dislike by distance established here is used to telling effect when made explicit later in Paradise Lost.

I now must change
Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
And disobedience; on the part of Heav'n
Now alienated, distance and distaste.

(9. 5-9).

Following man's disobedience, there is a real distance between Heaven and earth, for the angels are recalled to Heaven. The word 'distance' has both the metaphorical meaning of 'aloofness' and its literal
meaning. Similarly Milton's positioning of his Hell in relation to those of his classical predecessors acts as a metaphor for the greater magnitude of the rebel angels' crime, which brings about God's greater 'distaste/Anger and just rebuke and judgement given'.

Milton establishes the link between the rebel angels and the Titans mainly by using mythological allusions, but he exploits this link more subtly by using textual allusion. His description of the solid parts of Hell gains much of its interest from the presence of a textual allusion. Satan alights from his flight from the burning lake on land which

... appeared in hue; as when the force of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thund'ring Etna, whose combustible
And fueled entrails thence conceiving fire
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet.

(1. 230-8).

Virgil described Etna in very similar terms to these. The passage in the Aeneid continues:

The story is told that huge Enceladus, whom the bolt
of thunder charred, lies crushed under Etna's mass and
that the enormous volcano stands there above him,
breathing flames from its bursting furnaces; and, each
time that Encladus tires and turns over, all Sicily
quakes and growls and veils the sky with smoke.

(3. 577-82).
Virgil attributes the volcano's activity to the movement of the crushed and wounded but not dead Titan. Ovid also ascribes Etna's activity to the presence of a crushed Titan beneath it. He describes how Typhoeus lies buried, part under Pelorus, other parts under Pachynus and Lilybaeum, and his head under Etna: 'as he lay stretched on his back beneath it, he spat forth ashes and flames from his cruel jaws'. (Metamorphoses 5. 356-7).

The passage from Paradise Lost at first sight looks like a simple description of a volcanic environment, but if we notice the allusion its effect is more complex. Milton has used the words 'whose', 'entrails' and 'conceiving', which all suggest that the environment is animate, and the lines 'whose combustible/And fueled entrails thence conceiving fire' make the reader hesitate as to whom or what they apply. If we keep the classical lines in mind, then Milton's lines imply that Hell's ferocity is not simply an external punishment upon the fallen angels, but provoked and in some way fuelled by their presence. Just as the Titan (be he Enceladus or Typhoeus) both caused and provided material for Etna's fury, so the rebel angels provoke and fuel the fires of Hell. This simile refers primarily to Etna, yet it contains a lingering suggestion that the combustibles are not purely mineral, but, at least partially, something animate, and serves as a physical counterpart to Satan's lament in Book 4:

3. It is perhaps, however, worth noting that in Milton's time, 'whose' was an acceptable grammatical replacement for the clumsier 'of which', and 'entrails' meant the inner parts of anything rather than the inner organs of animals and man.
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heav'n.

(4. 75-8).

In this passage there is the same sense of punishment by self-consumption as that conveyed by the allusion in 1. 230-8. In both passages we get a dizzying sense of eternally increasing punishment which is more profoundly horrifying than any of the picturesque fates of the more famous Titans, or indeed Milton's own descriptions of the various regions of Hell, which I discussed earlier.

Milton uses an old tradition when he links the rebel angels with the Titans. Such a link would have been expected by the reader familiar with the Christian explanations of the significance of the pagan myths. Milton certainly uses the similarities in the stories imaginatively, to expose the greater disobedience and subsequent punishment of the rebel angels, but he doesn't diverge significantly from what the educated reader might expect. Milton's use of the classical heroic tradition is, however, unexpected and constitutes one of the master strokes of the poem. Instead of opposing two forces which are basically similar, but with one marginally stronger, braver or more cunning, Milton has opposed the classical heroism of the rebel angels with the utterly different kind of heroism of Christian virtue. Satan and his cohorts fully embody the heroism of Achilles or Odysseus, and his speeches very often recall those of such heroes as Prometheus. His first speech is a particularly good example of this quality:
"Yet not for those
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though changed in outward luster, that fixed mind
And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of heav'n,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me."

(1. 94-111).

The power and rhetorical sophistication of this speech are utterly magnificent. While lines 94-7 are vaguely reminiscent of a speech by Prometheus in *Prometheus Bound*, the speech as a whole contains no textual allusions, yet surely Achilles would have been proud to make it, and that is Milton's point. This speech shows the great courage of the speaker, but it also shows his essentially destructive ideals. The crucial line is that in which Satan states his intentions, 'the study of revenge, immortal hate'; his kind of courage can only show itself in opposition to something or someone, just as is the case in *The Iliad*. The ideal we find here is certainly attractive, and Milton gives it the best possible expression, but it is neither Milton's ideal nor that offered to us in *Paradise Lost*. 
Milton's rebel angels are envisaged within the framework of classical heroism. At times they go to an extreme within this ideal, which is more extreme than even the most heroic of the classical heroes. When Satan claims that it is 'Better to reign in hell than serve in heav'n' (1. 263) we recall the lament of the dead Achilles to Odysseus:

O shining Odysseus, never try to console me for dying, I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another man, one with no land allotted him, and not much to live on, than be a king over all the perished dead.

(Odyssey 11. 488-91).

Satan's apparent heroism is deeply undercut by this textual allusion. Achilles is the Homeric embodiment of pride, yet he would overwhelmingly prefer life to such empty sovereignty. Thus later sections of Paradise Lost (notably 4. 75-8, which I quoted earlier) force us to see just how questionable Satan's 'better' really is. The ironic effect of the allusion in this line makes us see that Satan's heroism is far beyond the measure of reason, and becomes heroic folly. We may not totally deny his heroism, but our admiration is deeply qualified.

A similar type of qualification to our response to the apparent courage of the rebel angels is introduced in 1. 549-69 by an allusion to Plutarch's "Life of Lycurgus". The passage in Plutarch contains numerous parallels with Milton's description, but one brief passage is particularly interesting:

.....With no confusion in their souls, but calmly and cheerfully moving with the strains of their hymn into
the deadly fight. Neither fear nor excessive fury is likely to possess men so disposed but rather the firm purpose full of hope and courage, believing as they do that heaven is their ally.

("Lycurgus" 22)

The absence of the last line of the passage from the "Life of Lycurgus", as we find it in Paradise Lost, is perhaps the most significant part of the allusion. The Spartans, though they are fallen men with false gods, are yet inspired by a positive ideal. They are 'full of hope and courage' and 'neither fear nor excessive fury is likely to possess' such men, whereas the rebel angels are moved by rage (1. 553). Though the fallen angels are courageous, their virtue is flawed even from the Aristotelian point of view of its being the mean between fear and fury. Just as we saw in Satan's speech, the inhabitants of Hell are viewed as possessing courage pushed past the point of reason and uninspired by any positive ideal, which forces us to respond to their actions with a combination of admiration and bafflement at their folly.

In both of these passages we see the fallen angels and the classical heroes contrasted, but the contrast is only a matter of degree. We are more frequently asked to make a comparison of the values of the two groups and to note the similarity. Milton not only compares Satan and the rebel angels with defeated heroes such as Hector and Turnus, but he also uses Satan to reflect on the inadequacy of other exemplars of heroic virtue. If we re-examine Satan's first speech we find that it resembles the speeches of Achilles in the Iliad. When we notice that Satan's goals are destructive, we are invited to see that this is also true of

Achilles' ideals. The process is similar to that which occurs in mock-heroic poems, such as The Rape of the Lock, where the trivial is satirized by being linked with the heroic, but in which we are also forced to reflect on the adequacy of the heroic ideals. The mock-heroic poem tends to deflate both its subject and the grandeur of the classical heroic poem. In Paradise Lost, the likeness between Satan and the classical heroes forces us to see the inadequacy of the classical ideal. When we see Satan overcoming all odds to achieve his violent aims, we become aware that his rationale is similar to that of a classical hero such as Achilles or Odysseus. All three are unconcerned as to the merits of those on whom vengeance falls. Achilles' quarrel with Agamemnon causes the deaths of many men, including his friend Patroclus, who had no part in the initial strife. Odysseus punishes the various suitors and women alike, despite the varying extents of their guilt; and Satan revenges himself upon mankind, who are not his direct enemies. The allusions linking Satan with the classical heroes operate to form a critique of classical heroic virtue, and its essentially destructive ideal is presented as a foil to the regenerative heroism of Christ.

The link between Satan and the classical heroes is mainly achieved by textual allusion. Though occasionally the link is made explicit, as in the simile describing the difficulty of Satan's journey (2. 1016-20), in most cases we must rely on the fact that most of the classical texts Milton alludes to are very famous. Before discussing the more prominent examples of textual allusion, we must notice that there are a great number of lines (particularly in Satan's speeches) where there is some similarity to a classical
text, but the link is blurry. We see this in Satan's speech before he embarks on his journey to find the earth.

"...I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sov'ranty, adorned
With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honoured sits?"

(2. 445-456).

This speech may remind us of Sarpedon's speech to Glaukos in the Iliad.

"Glaukos, why is it you and I are honoured before others/
with pride of place, the choice meats and the filled wine
cups in Lykia,/and all men look on us as if we were immortals/and we are appointed a great piece of land by the banks of Xanthos,/good land, orchard and vineyard, and ploughland for the planting of wheat?/
Therefore it is our duty to the forefront of the Lykians/
to take our stand, and bear our part of the blazing of battle,/so that a man of the close-armoured Lykians may say of us:/ "Indeed, those are no ignoble men who are lords of Lykia,/these kings of ours, who feed upon the fat sheep appointed/and drink the exquisite sweet wine, since indeed there is strength/of valour in them, since they fight in the forefront of the Lykians."

The Iliad (12. 310-21).
Satan's speech is far more abstract, talking of power, danger and honour, while Sarpedon refers to the material privileges of power, and the actual fact of danger in battle. Nonetheless the passages express a similar notion of pre-eminent power resting on a foundation of responsibility. This responsibility is manifested in both cases by a willingness to face danger, without great consideration of the morality of the undertaking. Sarpedon is not defending his own town; rather he is striving to win the immortality of glory. The speeches of both Satan and Sarpedon presume the absolute worth of power and glory. It is certainly not necessary for us to notice this allusion to understand the speech in *Paradise Lost*, but once it is noticed it forces us to revalue not only Satan's but also Sarpedon's heroic stance. The allusion is not sharp and exact but the similarities in content and rhetorical construction make the link. Even if we deny that there is any allusion here, the similarities between the passages serve as an example of the large number of links that can't be pinned down to one source, yet whose presence we feel.

Within this background of blurred likenesses there are a number of clear textual allusions. One of the most notable of these occurs in Satan's first speech:

"If thou beest he - but O how fall'n! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
Myriads though bright."

(1. 84-7).

This is strongly reminiscent of Aeneas' address to the ghost of
Hector:

"O light of Troy! O sweet hope of the Trojans....Why is your face, serene once, so shamefully disfigured? Why do I see these wounds". 

(Aeneid 2. 281, 285-6).

Hight's comment on the effect of this allusion is excellent.

When Milton uses the words in which Virgil described Hector's ghost he is telling us that Satan and Beelzebub, though fallen are still powerful heroic figures; but that Beelzebub once 'clothed with transcendent brightness' now bears frightful wounds received in the rebellion against God - just as Hector's phantom appeared with its hair matted with blood, and its face indescribably mutilated by being dragged around Troy behind the victor's chariot. And so without any more direct description, merely by a brief allusion to the hero doomed to perpetual exile and visited on a night of danger by the ghost of his dead friend, he makes us feel the atmosphere of anguish and foreboding and defeat.

The allusion focuses the feeling implicit in the previous fifty lines and concentrates it. The allusion has a further effect not mentioned in Hight's analysis. The implication of this parallel is that heroic virtue has been found wanting. Hector, for all his strength and beauty, has been defeated, since he could not stand up to the attack of Achilles who was aided by the gods. As we see in Book 6 of Paradise Lost, the rebel angels' strength and courage is insufficient to combat Christ, whose power is of a different order. Thus the allusion not only introduces the emotional background

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to the fall of the rebel angels, but it also implies the insufficiency of heroic virtue without the aid of God or gods.

Milton uses a textual allusion to a similar end at the close of Book 4, but our reaction to this passage is more ambivalent; for while Satan is linked with a defeated classical hero, a link between the Christian God and the classical gods is also established. After the judgment represented by the scales, 'Satan fled/Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night' (4. 1014-5). These lines are very similar to the last two lines of the *Aeneid*; Turnus is killed 'and the life fled, moaning, resentful to the shades.' While the last clause of the line from *Paradise Lost* primarily suggests the coming of morning, its presence reinforces the similarity between the two passages. As with *Paradise Lost* (1. 84-7) and its Virgilian analogue, the parallel in situation is exact. Both Satan and Turnus made grand entrances, left in humiliation and fled into darkness. Virgil's 'moaning, resentful', finds its counterpart in 'murmuring'; both express the real humiliation of defeat. In the *Aeneid*, Turnus is the representative of high-flown (Achillean) heroic virtue, but his heroism avails him little in the face of the judgment of Providence. Similarly, Satan's pride in addressing Gabriel is reduced to murmuring when God shows his Providence. In both cases we see the weakness of this type of courage, for Satan and Turnus are reduced to inconsequential figures when confronted by a higher form of power and virtue.

However, the last thirty lines of Book 4 are troubling, because Milton does not completely convince us of the higher virtue of God at this point in the poem. While we admire the altruistic heroism of
Christ and Abdiel in later books, this kind of virtue is not manifest here. The difficulty begins when Milton uses a simile to describe the spears of the angelic squadron. They are

As thick as when a field
Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends
Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind
Sways them; the careful farmer doubting stands
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff.

(4. 980-5)\(^5\).

If we identify the 'ploughman' with God, as the structure of the simile seems to invite, then the word 'doubting' is puzzling. While it may be argued that the simile refers to the spears and God is doubtful as to the efficacy of armed combat, it still implies that God has less than complete knowledge of future events. If the simile refers to the angelic squadron, then the word 'doubting' suggests that God no longer trusts his angels, and the word seems even less appropriate. The problem is minor but it introduces an element of uncertainty in the reader at a critical point in the poem.

After this simile we come to the description of God's judgment manifested in the scales. Burden has described this passage as 'one of the intellectual triumphs of the poem',\(^6\) since he sees this

\(^5\) These lines have a great number of classical parallels, but in no case do I find a significant link between the context of the lines in Paradise Lost and their analogues. It may be that in his desire to outdo his predecessors in the use of the simile, Milton lost track of the implications of his own simile.

as the demonstration of the difference between God and the classical gods. For while the classical gods used the scales to discover Fate, God is demonstrating his omniscience in manifesting his Providence. However, the use of this classical device introduces the idea of the scales as the instrument of a final decision within the poem. In both the *Iliad* (22. 209-18) and the *Aeneid* (12. 725-7), the weighing of fates is the resolution of the main conflict. The result of the allusion is to imply that man's fate is being decided, since God is weighing the 'sequel each of parting and of fight', and as we know, the sequel of parting is man's fall. As is the case with the 'ploughman' simile the reader is made uneasy by a suggestion of some weakness or even malice on the part of God. When Satan is associated with Turnus, we are certain of the kind of virtue that we are witnessing, but to comprehend the limitations of this classical heroism, the reader needs to be convinced of the superiority of the higher virtue being offered as an alternative. While Milton succeeds admirably in the depiction of Christian heroism in the figures of Christ and Abdiel, there are unwanted suggestions of a qualification of the virtue of God at this point in the poem. Neither of the blemishes is particularly troubling read as discrete excerpts, but together they raise disturbing problems. Thus while we may see Milton's intention in associating Satan with Turnus, the passage is not wholly successful because of the failure to establish the justice and mercy of God's will, with the result that Satan and God are insufficiently clearly differentiated.

While Turnus explicitly emerges from the *Aeneid* as a character whose nature is found wanting, an allusion in *Paradise Lost* to the *Aeneid* casts doubts on the quality of the virtue of Aeneas.
When Satan is confronted by Sin we are told that he stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In th' arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war.

(2. 707-11).

The simile may be traced back to a simile conveying the menacing appearance of Aeneas. His shield is

like the sinister, blood-red glow of a comet on some clear night, or Sirius the star that brings thirst and disease to suffering humanity, as he rises and burns with sinister glare to spread a menace over all the sky.

(Aeneid 10. 272-5).

While Virgil's simile suggests that Aeneas' grandeur is in some way sinister, we cannot read it as a criticism of this type of heroic grandeur. On the other hand, the simile describing Satan is proleptic, since it suggests the harm that Satan will do to mankind. Satan's courage in confronting Sin then venturing through Chaos finally results in the seduction of Eve and the introduction of 'pestilence and war' into the world. This suggestion exists as a criticism of such a model of heroism, for it must finally express itself in destruction. Satan's journey through Hell and Chaos and his landing on Earth is modelled on those of Odysseus and Aeneas and is a latent criticism of the aims and achievements of such heroes. This allusion, together with the context of the journey, forces us to examine the heroic virtue of even such a civilised hero as Aeneas, for his actions are basically
motivated by pride and inevitably result in suffering. Both this
allusion and many others dramatically embody Milton's rejection of
'the whole notion that heroism lies in deeds which will bring earthly
glory or are concerned with human power.'

Milton's Satan (as well as the rest of the rebel angels) must
be accepted as a type of classical hero, albeit an exaggerated one.
To regard him merely as being absurd, as does C.S. Lewis, is to
misread the poem. We make an equal mistake, however, if we are not
aware that Milton criticises this type of heroic ideal from a position
which is dramatically embodied in the text. Milton links Satan and
the rebel angels with the Titans and the classical heroes, both by
fairly clear mythological allusions and by a large number of textual
allusions of varying degrees of explicitness. He sets up parallels
between the fallen angels and classical heroes which are continued
even when no textual analogue is apparent. Milton demonstrates his
notion of christian heroism in the actions of Christ and Abdiel, as
well as asserting its nature at several points, most notably 9. 31-2
and 12. 575-81. When we view Satan we must necessarily assess him
with this standard in mind, else we distort the poem by applying the
simplistic either - or judgement of dismissing him because he is Satan
or unduly elevating him because he behaves like a classical hero.
The complex response Milton evokes in this way is surely one of the
triumphs of the poem.

Milton also uses classical allusion to suggest the imminent

human fall. He does this by a series of proleptic mythological allusions (usually similes) which describe Eve's fate without stating that the Fall has occurred. One of the most explicit of these allusions is that which links Eve and Pandora:

More lovely than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed with all their gifts, and O too like
In sad event, when to the unwise son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.

(4. 714-9).

Here we see the standard pattern of Milton's proleptic allusions, although this one is slightly unusual in that Milton points out the likeness. The simile begins as one describing appearance but its significance is quickly broadened as we notice that Eve is like Pandora in causing man's downfall. While it is pressing the simile too hard to demand a one-to-one correspondence of details, we find that part of the description 'she ensnared/Mankind with her fair looks' is a good description of the fall of Adam and thus 'Mankind'.

Most of the ominous hints of the future course of action in the poem are provided more subtly than in the Pandora simile. Perhaps the most beautiful is the simile describing Eden in Book 4:

Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flow'rs,
Herself a fairer flow'r, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world.

(4. 268-72).
The passage is rightly one of the most highly praised in the poem, (even Leavis likes it!) for the way in which it delicately suggests the fall of Eve in Book 9. The mention of Proserpine's rape in the 'fair field/of Enna' anticipates Satan's seduction of Eve in the fairer garden of Eden. In addition the references to Ceres' pain suggests the painful struggle of mankind to win through to salvation. The simile lends a certain poignancy to the reader's perception of the impending fall, for while Eve's seduction may have been the most important event in mankind's history, it is still a fate with which we are familiar, and it arouses a purely human pity for the woman as well as the grimmer foreboding concerning the consequences of her fall. The classical reference introduces the broader context of the fallen world which Eve's fall will introduce.

This suggestion finds fuller expression in a later simile.

As Eve leaves Adam, Milton describes her beauty:

Likest she seemed, Pomona when she fled Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

(9. 394-6).

Both Pomona and Ceres are mentioned in their innocence, but the references remind us that the women in question were deflowered. We see Pomona and Ceres poised between innocence and seduction, as Eve is at this moment. In addition, the reference to Ceres and Proserpine inevitably reminds us of the simile in Book 4, and a sequence is established. Ceres' seduction by Jove results in Proserpine's birth and subsequent abduction and rape. The link that we make between Eve and Ceres prefigures the future pain for Eve, not only
from her own actions but from those of her offspring. The recall of the earlier passage involving Ceres implies that Eve will be seduced, and in addition that her seduction will bring about great pain for herself and for all of the rest of humanity, for whom she is the original mother. This becomes explicit in Books 11 and 12, but this allusion makes us aware of the magnitude of the offence Eve is about to commit.

At times Milton's proleptic allusions even suggest the mechanisms of the fall. We observe this in a speech by Eve describing her first moments after creation:

"As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the wat'ry gleam appeared
Bending to look on me: I started back,
It started back, but pleased I soon returned,
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love; there I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned me."

(4. 460-7).

Milton is ultimately drawing on Ovid's account of the self-love and death of Narcissus (Metamorphoses 3. 415-447). This passage in Paradise Lost is very important, since it must convince the reader that Eve is not fallen at this point in the poem, while suggesting that she will fall later. If we believe that Eve shows excessive and consequently sinful self-love now, then her deception by Satan is merely a result of faulty creation by God, rather than the decision of a person with an independent will. I believe that the comparison we make between Eve and Narcissus exonerates Eve at this point in the
poem, while implying the specific nature of the later fault.

Eve and Narcissus are different because at this time in her life, she is inexperienced and incapable of discrimination between right and wrong action, while Narcissus had the experience to have chosen correctly. The distinction is made clear in their different reactions to admonition from an outsider; for Eve abandons her self-love and comes to love Adam, whereas Narcissus rejects the option of the love of another being. The allusion also anticipates one of the causes of Eve's disobedience in Book 9. Between Eve's creation and fall, she has been repeatedly warned both by Adam and Raphael that she must be obedient, and the only test of her obedience is the fruit of the tree of knowledge. She acquires the information that makes her capable of discrimination between right and wrong action. Thus when Eve accepts Satan's exaggerated description of herself and eats the fruit to become a 'goddess humane', she has the knowledge not to have done so. Self love is one of the causes of the fall, but the allusion also suggests that this fault is to be inherited by men as a result of Eve's action, as the example of Narcissus demonstrates.

The proleptic allusions contribute to the pathos of Adam and Eve's fall by making us conscious of the temporary nature of the joys that we are witnessing. Similarly we become aware of the fragility of the innocence of the pair, but especially Eve. All of the beautiful women she resembles suffered and became knowing. The most

8. It may be argued that she has not acquired the experience to make the discrimination: however, the only way to acquire the experience is by falling. The poem does convince us that the knowledge is sufficient.
curious effect of the proleptic allusions is that we become conscious of the implications of actions before they occur, and thus paradoxically feel the events more fully. The reader is like a person watching a tragedy with a conclusion that is already known; we know what will happen, but as the events occur and move towards the climax, we feel the urge to intervene yet we are incapable of doing so. The final tragic climax is all the more shattering because we are so involved yet cannot warn the characters. The proleptic allusions generally act as a subtle form of the explicit comments that Milton places in the narrative; but the allusions have the more powerful effect on the reader, for they act with the surprise of recognition, where narratorial comment can only command assent.

The characteristics bringing about the fall of both Satan and Eve are partially envisaged in classical terms. Our view of the fallen Satan is certainly complex, and provides a useful comparison with our ambivalent response to the fall of Adam. The heroism and love Adam shows in his speech choosing to fall with Eve makes it one of the most moving sections of the poem and must engage the sympathy of any reader, but our response to this action should be similar to our appreciation of Satan's heroism. While acknowledging virtue we must see that Adam is lacking virtue of a higher kind. His speech shows a fully human nature but also a merely human nature, since he forgets his most important responsibility - that to God. Just as when we notice Satan's heroism, we must admit his virtue but maintain its limitations, so when we read Adam's speech, we have to avoid the simplifications of either an uxorious Adam or a purely heroic Adam. Milton's skill consists in making us see both Adam's virtue and its
inherent limitations. Certainly the reader's task is a stern one, but we have been guided to the correct level of response by earlier situations in the poem.

Our awareness of Adam's fall is thus controlled partly by the parallel we make with the fallen Satan, and partly by a number of textual allusions which exert an almost subliminal control on our response to this fall. When Adam first meets Eve after she has eaten the fruit, he

Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed.

(9. 890-1).

These lines are very similar to Virgil's almost formulaic description of the fear of death. The context of these lines in Paradise Lost makes it clear that Adam is resolved to fall with Eve, and this fact gives the allusion an appalling aptness, for Adam in falling must now fear death. In this near-fallen world, Adam's reactions become those of other men, where previously he could be seen as distinctly different from fallen mankind. The allusion to Virgil's description of a universal reaction serves to begin the process of establishing Adam's new context - the fallen world.

The next step in the fall is Adam's enjoyment of Eve. Adam's speech prior to their intercourse shows him referring to Eve as an object rather than a person.

9. The Aeneid 1. 92, 2.120 etc., but for example: 'My whole frame shook in a palsy of icy fear, and my veins were icebound.' (3. 29-30).
"But come, so well refreshed, now let us play, 
As meet is, after such delicious fare; 
For never did thy beauty since the day
I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned
With all perfections, so inflame my sense
With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever, bounty of this virtuous tree."

(9. 1027-33).

This speech is comparable to a speech of Paris to Helen,\textsuperscript{10} and still more so to a speech of Zeus to Hera:

\textit{...let us go to bed and turn to love-making
for never before has love for any goddess or woman
so melted about my heart inside me, broken it to
submission
as now: not that time when I loved the wife of Ixion
who bore me Peirithoos, equal of the gods in counsel,
or when... it was glorious Leto, nor yourself, so much
as now I love you, and the sweet passion has taken
hold of me.}

(The Iliad 14. 314-8, 327-8).\textsuperscript{11}

While such speeches do little credit to either Zeus or Paris, the change in Adam's speech from his earlier 'lofty discourse' is shocking. Adam is now part of the fallen world, in which men and classical gods are deceived by lust. In each instance the male (Adam, Paris and Zeus) speaks of and treats the female as an object, yet in each instance the male is deceived by his passion. Adam's speech together with its classical analogues acts as a demonstration

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} The Iliad 3. 441-6
\item \textsuperscript{11} Part of this rather extensive catalogue of past lovers has been removed.
\end{itemize}
of the fall by associating him with the rest of sinful humanity.

Another astonishingly complex allusion at once establishes Adam and Eve within the typological series of The Bible, fixes them within the human historical plane and suggests the decline of sanctity in the pair.

Nor important less
Seemed their petition than when th’ ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout.

(11. 9-14).

The allusion is to the Metamorphoses (1. 318 ff). One of the links that we make is between Adam and Eve and Noah, since the stories of Noah and Deucalion and Pyrrha have many points of similarity and had come to be linked when Ovid was interpreted symbolically. All of them pray as corrupt human beings for the grace to continue the human race. This is a suggestion of the sequence of such men, which will culminate in Christ who ensures this grace. 12 At another level we notice that Adam and Eve are being placed in a sequence in the history of mankind. Deucalion and Pyrrha are 'less ancient yet than these', and the implication is that Adam and Eve are now part of the historical span of fallen mankind. Prior to the fall, we sense that Eden is separated from the rest of the world both in time and space. Day and night may pass but Eden is both separate and different from

12. The narration of this sequence is the backbone of Books 11 and 12.
the world. We notice in addition that Adam and Eve now admit
comparison with beings from our fallen world. For though the
word 'chaste' would seem to be used in a limited sense of sexual
purity as distinct from the christian sense of morally pure or
innocent, it is still noticeable that Eve is implicitly rebuked
by the epithet. The word 'chaste' here, together with the classical
allusion to indicate piety, come as a shock to the reader, for they
illustrate the distance between Adam and Eve's innocence in Book 4
and their condition now. They, who were once above comparison,
are placed at the reader's level. They are now people like ourselves,
who are separated by God, making a request rather than the holy pair
who were assured of God's grace. Though they are 'not...mean
suitors', the comparison with Deucalion and Pyrrha indicates their
changed relation to God.

As well as the local (if interrelated) allusions Milton uses
to link the classical with fallen or corrupt values, we find him
using structural allusion to a similar end. When we read the
description of Satan's journey we are meant to keep those of Odysseus,
Jason and Aeneas in mind. This is not to say that Milton has
taken specific incidents from any of these previous epics; rather he
wishes to demonstrate a general similarity between Satan and
previous epic heroes in their courage, their aims and their methods.
Even after Satan reaches the Earth and assumes a less heroic guise,
there is still a lingering resemblance to Odysseus in his resource-
fulness and guile. Although Satan is both more courageous and

13. The similarity is made explicit in the simile which I discussed
in my introduction, (2. 1016-20), but the likeness also hovers
in the background, in this section of the poem.
and more destructive in his aims than previous epic heroes, the structural allusion enforces the basic similarity.

A slightly different purpose is found in the description of the games of Hell. Milton is drawing on the accounts of the funeral games in the classical epics. Although he is dependent on none of these earlier works for specific descriptions, he relies on our remembering the previous authors' accounts to highlight the essential aimlessness and wildness of the fallen angels' activities. The games are held in a moment of 'false presumptuous hopes' as Satan embarks on his mission to find the Earth, and the futility of the celebration is in marked contrast with the specific reasons for the games in the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad*. Though the rebel angels are unconscious of the fact, we are ironically aware that the games mark the occasion of the virtual deaths of the angels themselves. The violence of the physical activities of the angels is stressed and the chaos produced by them is spendidly conveyed by a classical simile.

Others with vast Typhoean rage more fell  
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air  
In whirlwind; hell scarce holds the wild uproar;  
As when Alcides from Oechalia crowned  
With conquest, felt th' envenomed robe, and tore  
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,  
And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw  
Into th' Euboic sea.

(2. 539-46).

14. The *Iliad* Bk 23, the *Aeneid* Bk 5, and possibly we are also meant to remember the quasi-games which occur while Odysseus is staying with Alcinous in Book 8 of the *Odyssey*. 
The games in the classical epics are a controlled exhibition of physical skills, whereas the competitive spirit of the angels mingles with their despair and finds an outlet in senseless destructive activity. The order of the classical games highlights the disorder of some of the angels' pursuits. Yet these activities are merely those of the classical heroes taken to an extreme of both violence and virtuosity. The angels who choose quieter activities perform them with dazzling skill.

Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should enthrall to force or chance.
Their song was partial, but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience.

(2. 546-55).15

The angels are doing something we see in the classical epics and the terms of their description are classical. The reader sees that the angels perform any act with greater skill than the classical heroes but they do so with no apparent aim. The games in hell are held by superbeings for whom competition no longer means anything. So while the reader feels that the participants in the games are criticised by comparison with the classical epic games, we also sense that the

15. The lines perhaps allude to Odysseus' narration of the war and its aftermath in the halls of Alcinous.
angels' activities are merely a logical extension of the activities of the classical heroes. As we see elsewhere, the rebel angels are more powerful and more capable than the classical heroes; they are similar in type to the classical heroes but they misuse their greater talents more grossly.

The most interesting of Milton's structural allusions is the war in Heaven. While there are few mythological or textual allusions in this section of the poem, the reader is constantly aware of the similarity of the progress of this war and the battles in the *Iliad*. The boasting and mockery prior to battle, the individual combats, the main figures mowing down large numbers of lesser fighters and the small victories and reversals punctuated by night conferences, all act to make us see just how like the Homeric battles this war is. Despite the might of the angels and the power of their weapons, the pattern of warfare is recognisably that of the classical epic, not that of warfare in Milton's time. This kind of war seems odd in *Paradise Lost* and our sense of its peculiarity is intensified by the way in which Milton stresses its futility.

When God and the Son are discussing the first stirrings of the rebellion, the Son states the future course of the war.

'Mighty Father, thou thy foes
Justly hast in derision, and secure
Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain,

16. The textual allusions are used to describe the coming of day. Milton may have used them to establish a vaguely classical background to the action, or it may be that he found the classical formula convenient and easy to use.
It is clear from this speech that the Son is to have the final victory. As we read the description of the fight between good and bad angels we are constantly aware that there can be no final result until the advent of the Son. Later, as the war commences, God orders his forces into the field:

'Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince, And thou in military prowess next, Gabriel, lead forth to battle these my sons Invincible, lead forth my armed saints By thousands and by millions ranged for fight, Equal in number to that godless crew Rebellious.'

(6. 44-9).

God is only sending half his available forces against the rebel angels, which we discover isn't sufficient to defeat the 'godless crew'. It is almost as if God is deliberately preparing the position of stalemate which develops, and the reader is led to wonder exactly what God is doing.

These doubts become still more pressing when we read of Abdiel's speeches after the war has begun. Abdiel is taunting Satan:
'Fool, not to think how vain
Against th' Omnipotent to rise in arms;
Who out of smallest things could without end
Have raised incessant armies to defeat
Thy folly; or with solitary hand
Reaching beyond all limit at one blow
Unaided could have finished thee, and whelmed
Thy legions under darkness.'

(6. 135-42).

This statement is true but its implications are troubling, since we are led to ask why God didn't do just that. Even if we accept that God wishes to use his faithful angels, we are again puzzled by his decision to limit the power of both sides to prevent the destruction of Heaven. Once again God has made a decision which renders a definite conclusion to this war still less likely. The futility of such a war is stressed when even the battle between the two leaders fails to produce a result, since neither side can kill or permanently disable members of the opposing forces. Satan is wounded,

Yet soon he healed; for Spirits, that live throughout
Vital in every part, not as frail man
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,
Cannot but by annihilating die;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive, no more than can the fluid air:
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense; and as they please
They limb themselves, and color, shape, or size
Assumè, as likes them best, condense or rare.

(6. 344-53).

After the first day's fighting the rebel angels have been defeated but not conclusively. Although there are no clear textual
parallels, the situation reminds us of the battle for the ships in the *Iliad*, where the Achaeans are pushed back and their leaders are wounded, yet they have not lost the war. During the conference of the rebel angels that night, Satan restates the essential paradox of this war: the angels are 'incapable of mortal injury/Imperishable and though pierced with wound./Soon closing, and by native vigour healed.' How can a war be won or lost where neither side can kill the other? The answer is of course the arrival of a superior power, the Son. When God orders the Son into the conflict, God's statement makes explicit what has become obvious much earlier.

'Second Omnipotence, two days are passed,
Two days, as we compute the days of heav'n,
Since Michael and his powers went forth to tame
These disobedient; sore hath been the fight,
As likeliest was when two such foes met armed;
For to themselves I left them; and thou know'st,
Equal in their creation they were formed,
Save what sin hath impaired, which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom;
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found.
War wearied hath performed what war can do,
And to disordered rage let loose the reins,
With mountains as with weapons armed, which makes
Wild work in heav'n, and dangerous to the main.
Two days are therefore passed, the third is thine.'

(6. 684-99).

What the Son announced before the fighting started then occurs. Using God's arms, the Son quickly defeats the rebel angels.
This war is fought by two essentially equal forces but Milton does demonstrate some differences in their natures and capabilities. The rebel angels lose some of their strength, together with their immunity to pain. In addition they are more ingenious in their weaponry but less willing to stand and fight. Despite these differences the forces are basically very similar. The analogue that comes to mind is that of Homeric forces; one army inspired and helped by the gods, the other not so.

There are, however, two primary but subtle differences between the obedient angels in Paradise Lost and the warriors of the Iliad; the angels' obedience to a higher will and their qualified quest for honour. When Abdiel says that God could easily wipe out the rebel angels, he says this with full awareness that God has not done so. By emphasising that Abdiel (and by implication the rest of the good angels) are fighting despite this knowledge, I think that Milton provides one of the reasons for the course of the war. It is a test of the obedience of the remaining angels. They perform God's will regardless of whether it seems the most efficient course of action. Abdiel's attitude to this war is similar to Aeneas' obedience to divine commands but differs radically from that of a Homeric hero who fights to be esteemed by his peers. Similarly the unfallen angels' attitude to honour differs from that of Homer's heroes. While the angels do not despise fame, their aim is to be closer to God rather than to be well known and paid homage by men. Raphael states that he
"...might relate of thousands, and their names
Eternize here on earth; but those elect
Angels, contented with their fame in heav'n
Seek not the praise of men."

(6. 373-6).

Milton distinguishes between the opposing forces in describing their ideals (using the Homeric ideal as a standard), but we remain conscious of the near equality of their power. The way in which this parity is consistently forced upon the reader suggests the second reason for Milton's particular presentation of the war: the futility of all war.

The insufficiency of force is demonstrated again and again in Book 6. Although the weapons being used become increasingly powerful, the only result is the destruction of the environment and a certain amount of temporary pain for the rebel angels. The war in Heaven is a distillation of human war as it will occur in the future, on Earth. For while the angels are virtually immortal, humans achieve a similar result through generation. Thus human war may have a temporary result, but will never cease, as another generation comes along to fight. In his account of the angels' war Milton has even managed to include a proleptic account of the arms race. 17 While

17. The mountain throwing episode inevitably reminds me of the science fiction novels of E.E. Smith, where in a seven volume series of almost two thousand pages the story consists of little else than the development of sophisticated weapons and defences. Finally, near the end of the series, the ultimate weapon is discovered, propelling asteroids (comparable in bulk to mountains) at one another. The idea that Smith takes so long to develop is clearer in fifty lines of Paradise Lost.
Milton does make a distinction between the two armies in terms of their ethics, they still seem similar. The other main reason for this fact is so that the godhead of the Son will stand out more clearly.

The Son as presented in Book 6 of *Paradise Lost* has posed some problems for readers of the poem. How much is he the Son of Book 3? Or, to put it another way, how much does he resemble the classical martial hero whom the rest of the poem seems to attack? A recent critic John Seaman has argued intelligently (though I believe incorrectly) that since Christ is the hero of the poem, Milton has at least partially modelled him on the archetypal classical hero Achilles:

As the angel legions withdraw in silence, one thinks of Achilles ordering his Achaean forces to withdraw so that he alone would have the glory of killing Hector. Christ here seems as much a Homeric warrior as Satan, and the epic paraphernalia thus seems incompatible with the passive virtues which are commonly thought to represent Milton's ideal of heroic virtue. 18

Later in his chapter on Christ, Seaman expands on this idea:

Christ fits the traditional heroic role most completely in quelling the devil legions in *Paradise Lost*. He is reminiscent of the mighty warrior Christ of the Caedmonian Genesis. The battle reaches a stalemate and Christ steps forth, unsurpassed in strength, assured by God that "the Glory may be thine/Of ending

this great War, since none but Thou/Can end it." (VI. 701-3) Milton bestows upon Christ the martial characteristics of the wrathful hero (VI. 824-6). He resembles Achilles and Aeneas going into battle: "into terror chang'd/His count'nance too severe to be beheld/And full of wrath bent on his Enemies." Christ's ensign blazes aloft as a sign in Heaven (VI. 775-6); Michael's assembled forces retire in silence (VI. 774-84) and Christ, like Achilles, resolves the issue by single combat (VI. 818-21). Christ has an Achillean effect on his enemies. "They astonisht all resistance lost/All courage." And he returns in splendid triumph, a mark of glory won. 19

Mr Seaman is not making a one-to-one connection between Achilles and Christ, but even if the link were as close as he suggests, then it would have a very disturbing effect on the whole poem. It is worth briefly examining Christ's role to see just how much he is like a classical hero.

Perhaps the crucial passage is that in which Christ arms himself and sets out to meet the warring forces:

"So said, he o'er his scepter bowing, rose
From the right hand of Glory where he sat;
And the third sacred morn began to shine
Dawning through heav'n. Forth rushed with
whirlwind sound
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel, undrawn
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed

By four Cherubic shapes. Four faces each
Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between:
Over their heads a crystal firmament,
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colors of the show'ry arch.
He in celestial panoply all armed
Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought
Ascended; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-winged, beside him hung his bow
And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored,
And from him fierce effusion rolled
Of smoke and bickering flame, and sparkles dire.
Attended with ten thousand thousand saints,
He onward came, far off his coming shone,
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen."

(6. 746-770).

Seaman's analysis suggests that this is where we start seeing the
Son as being like Achilles. This passage relies almost entirely on
biblical allusions and uses a mode of expression which is foreign to
the classical epic. Instead of the grand but human entrance of the
hero, we see an attempt to describe the full majesty and power of the
godhead. Certainly the Son's appearance is awe-inspiring but it is
not frightening to all observers. He is the source of joy to the
obedient angels not only because he brings aid but primarily because
He is who He is, the Son of God. His power is so great that just by
a command he restores Heaven to its previous state.

"By his own
First seen; them unexpected joy surprised,
When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
Aloft by angels borne, his sign in heav'n
Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced
His army, circumfused on either wing,
Under their Head embodied all in one,
Before him Power Divine his way prepared;
At his command the uprooted hills retired
Each to his place, they heard his voice and went
Obsequious; heav'n his wonted face renewed,
And with fresh flow'rets hill and valley smiled."

(6. 773-84).

The Son is presented here as the very antithesis of Achilles. When
God ordains that the Son defeat the rebel angels, the Son's role is
as a regenerator not a conqueror; his actions are curative not
destructive. Similarly when the Son accepts his role it is with
humility and his aim is to fulfil the will of his father.

'O Father, O Supreme of heav'nly Thrones,
First, highest, holiest, best, thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son, I always thee,
As is most just. This I my glory account,
My exaltation and my whole delight,
That thou in me well pleased, declar'st thy will
Fulfilled, which to fulfill is all my bliss.
Scepter and power, thy giving, I assume,
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee,
For ever, and in me all whom thou lov'st.
But whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on
Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on,
Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,
Armed with thy might, rid heav'n of these rebelled,
To their prepared ill mansion driven down
His actions have almost exactly the opposite motives and aims to those of Achilles. Certainly the Son can assume a martial aspect, but he has no wish to win glory for its own sake.

The description of the Son's actions and speeches prior to his actual defeat of the rebel angels is calculated to distinguish him from the classical martial hero. The description of his defeat of the angels also distinguishes him from an epic hero but in a different way. Those who show God and the Son obedience and love receive the same in return, but those who show hatred and disobedience face the representative of a 'just' and 'angry' God, who bears his Father's power. The Son's defeat of the rebel angels is utterly and startlingly quick, both in terms of time and even in the number of lines it takes to accomplish. The angels under Michael have very little success in 800 lines yet once the Son faces the rebel angels they are totally defeated in 45 lines. This may seem a crass or even bizarre method of approaching the poem, but the relation of these figures gives some idea of how speedy the Son's victory seems to the reader.

While Achilles was certainly formidable (men fled from him even when he was unarmed), even he took some time to defeat one man, whereas the Son overwhelms an enormous force of almost invulnerable opponents.
in next to no time. The effect of this description of the Son's battle and victory is not to make us think of a Homeric hero: the Son's victory is too swift and easy (indeed he refrains from using his weapons at full strength), and therefore we realise just how puny such a classical hero is. This description is Milton's way of showing just how great the difference between man and God really is. The angels are more powerful than men but their conflicts are similar in type. The judgment of God, and the subsequent punishment he metes out, allows the reader actually to realise the true power of God through his agent the Son.

Milton's use of structural allusion in describing the war in Heaven depends on the reader noticing a series of likenesses and differences. The Son of Book 6 is certainly not showing the same aspect as in Book 3, but we distort the poem badly if we try to define him in terms of the Achillean model; rather Milton relies on our differentiating between the two. Milton's use of the war to demonstrate the true obedience of the good angels, the futility of war, and the godhead of the Son, works well in principle but is perhaps less successful in practice. The depiction of the war between the angels as useless may well demonstrate the senselessness and futility of war in general but it relies on attributing some rather slippery motives to God. The conversations between God and the Son

20. Seaman is only telling half the truth when he says that Christ is like Achilles in resolving 'the issue by single combat.' The Son's achievement is of a startlingly different order since he single-handed overwhelms a countless number of angels, all at the same time.
in Books 5 and 6 have a sense of high spirited irony about them which is jarring. When God states that 'war wearied hath performed what war can do', we are left with the niggling question as to why he has let it happen. I hope that I have provided some answers to the question, but I cannot see them as being completely satisfactory. This is one of those very rare occasions in the poem where there is a lack of coincidence between the formal pattern and actual achievement.

Milton uses mythological, textual and structural classical allusion to establish a sense of moral polarity within the poem. Even when he refers to an example of classical virtue, we quickly sense that the value of this virtue is diminished through the want of christian enlightenment. In adopting this position Milton was virtually forced to prove the superiority of the christian poet over his classical counterparts. He suggests this by many derogatory asides concerning their material, such as 'to compare/Great things with small' and 'worse than fables yet have feigned', as well as in his direct references to previous epics. The aside about his own poem in Book 9 is the most famous:

Not less but more heroic than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foes pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;
Or Neptune's ire or Juno's, that so long

21. The conversation between two omniscient beings is difficult to manage. Although the problem here is different from that in Book 3, both sections are slightly unsatisfactory. Here we feel as if God is smiling at the futility of the good angels' efforts as well as the presumption of the bad.
Perplexed the Greek and Cytherea's son.
(9. 14-19).

More importantly Milton attempts to show that his poetry is of superior quality. While there is a pressure of this kind on any author writing within an established genre, Milton frequently makes it plain that he is imitating past authors, hoping to benefit by the comparison.

The first six lines of *Paradise Lost* are an excellent example of Milton's competitive virtuosity. While there are no specific textual allusions, we see him in the act of trying to soar 'above th' Aonian mount'. Both Homer and Virgil stated their themes in the opening lines of their epics, and so of course does Milton. From Homer to Virgil we notice a growth in claims; Homer refers to a past incident with little apparent relation to the present, while Virgil refers his work to the founding of his readers' city. Aeneas had to endure great suffering in warfare. But at last he succeeded in founding his city, and installing the gods of his race in the Latin land: and that was the origin of the Latin nation, the Lords of Alba, and the proud battlements of Rome.

(1. 6-9).

Virgil is showing how his poem refers to the reader. Milton goes one step further and asserts that his poem refers to an incident which is absolutely vital to all men, as well as introducing a vista of human history:
Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heav'nly Muse.

(1. 1-6).

Milton constructs his first sentence with the main verb held back
to the sixth line. By doing this the reader gains an almost physical
experience of the amount of material to be handled in one poem.

When we come to 'sing, Heav'nly muse', we have traversed the entire
history of mankind. In contrast to the specific and individual anger
of Achilles, voyages of Odysseus and divine harassment of Aeneas, we
have the general and the grand: 'man's first disobedience...whose
mortal taste/Brought death into the world... till one greater man/
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.' In this invocation,
the combination of the solemnity of the poetry together with its
success in gaining and keeping the reader's attention obtains our
acceptance of Milton's claim that his song

with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th 'Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose a rhyme.

(1. 14-16).

Just as Milton could not write his invocation without being
aware of the background against which it would be understood and
assessed, he uses a number of similes which had apparently been fully
explored and exploited by his classical antecedents. Indeed, on
occasion he chooses similes which were almost cliches of classical
writing. In most cases the similes would appear difficult to use
without plagiarism; Milton, however, has used them in contexts where they gain a many layered significance and obtain new life. His success may be seen best in his simile comparing the fallen angels inspecting \textit{Pandæmonium} to a hive of bees.

As bees
In springtime, when the sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state affairs: so thick the airy crowd
Swarmed and were straitened.

(1. 768-776).

Whaler cites no less than twenty classical analogues (from Homer to Virgil) for this comparison of the ordered activities of humanity with those of bees.\(^{22}\) The most notable is the extended description in Virgil's fourth Georgic, but a passage in the \textit{Aeneid} describing the construction of Carthage is most like that in \textit{Paradise Lost}.

It was like the work which keeps the bees hard at their tasks about the flowering countryside as the sun shines in the calm of early summer, when they escort their new generation, now full grown, into the open air, or squeeze clear honey into bulging cells, packing them with sweet nectar; or else take over loads brought by their foragers; or sometimes form up to drive a flock of lazy drones from their farmstead. All is a ferment of activity; and the scent of honey rises with the perfume of thyme.

(1. 430-7).

\(^{22}\) J. Whaler 'The Miltonic Simile' \textit{PMLA} 46 (1931) p.1051.
Virgil's simile is excellent in describing the zest of the workers and their orderliness in activity; but we feel a slight uneasiness as to its pictorial aptness. Of course the reader makes the logical links in the comparison very easily, but the similitude requires that we suppress our visual imagination. On the other hand Milton's requires our pictorial imagination for a full appreciation of the irony of the passage. The fallen angels 'who seemed/In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons', are here seen as possessing both the size and 'business' of bees. The main thrust of the simile comes, however, from the contrast between the bees that 'expatiate' and the angels who are 'straitened'. The fallen angels do not even possess the degree of freedom of insects; for even in their magnificent city they are bounded and confined. In this way the simile not only confers some of the less dignified qualities of bees onto the fallen angels, but also suggests that the angels are more limited in their freedom than bees. The simile has become more concrete and apt than it was in the Aeneid, and it is also enlightening on a moral level.

On most occasions the comparison Milton invites us to make between himself and Virgil or Homer is implicit, but in several passages Milton draws our attention to it. In Book 1 while describing the building of Pandæmonium Milton describes its architect.

Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
From heav'n, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos th' Aegean isle. Thus they relate, Erring.

(1. 740-7).

Homer had earlier described this event in the Iliad, where Zeus threw Hephaestus from Olympus.

He caught me by the foot and threw me from the magic threshold
and all day long I dropped helpless and about sunset
I landed on Lemnos, and there was not much life left in me.

(1. 591-3).

Homer's account, spoken by Hephaestus, is concise and certainly adequate as a description. Milton, however, has used all of his poetic skill in his own account and the lines are among the finest in the poem. The verse superbly enacts the motion of falling. With the elongated vowel sound of 'o'er' we begin the motion, then the leisurely pace in which time is described with the repetitions, morn-noon-eve-day, suggest a slow tumbling in the motion. The motion of the fall is also related to the motion of the sun. The verse slowly quickens as we approach the Earth, then we come to the sudden and final contact as we move from line 745 to the terse opening of line 746 as Mulciber lands 'on Lemnos'. The beauty of the description almost makes us forget the initial qualification of 'fabled', but like Mulciber we are brought to earth with the shock of the final comment 'thus they relate/Erring'. The word 'erring' has such a powerful effect because it stands isolated at the beginning of the line, and surprises the reader after the apparently
neutral comment 'thus they relate'. As T.J.B. Spencer remarks:

This is a sophisticated kind of poetic wit, which relates the poem to great traditions. But it does not use these great traditions to increase the dignity or elevation of the passage. Rather it persuades the reader to concede the new poet's superiority. 23

This passage (at least) gains our assent to Milton's dual claim to be the superior poet, both because his material is truly inspired and because he is the better craftsman.

Few readers would unconditionally agree to the superiority of Paradise Lost over the classical epics, for we are less prone to concede the innate superiority of Christian over classical material. Milton's complex and coherent use of classical allusion does, however, gain our admiration for the religious position which he holds. While at times he relies on the religious content rather than the quality of his poetry to keep the reader's attention, this is the exception rather than the rule. Regardless of our own religious principles, we stand in awe of a mind capable of the variety and subtlety of means that Milton uses in urging his 'great argument'.

3. T.J.B. Spencer 'Paradise Lost the Anti Epic' in Approaches to Paradise Lost Ed. C. Patrides (London 1968) p.87.
Pope alludes, in the Dunciad, to specific sections of a variety of texts far more often than either Milton or Spenser, and often we need to be aware of the allusion to understand the poem. Textual and structural allusion are the dominant modes of allusion in the Dunciad, but we do also find him using mythological allusions. These are generally one word references, occasionally short similes; and at one point he creates a myth involving Jove and Cloacina. In addition Pope creates his own goddess, Dulness, whom we come to see as a member of a corrupt pantheon. The mythological allusions often function in a similar way to the textual allusions and provide a useful introduction to the more complex allusive mode, but they are interesting in their own right not only because they are often very funny, but also because they bind the poem and provide the means for some of Pope's most brilliant satiric passages.

The cosmology of the poem is at least overtly classical. Jove is in the heavens rewarding mortals as he sees fit; Venus enters the poem as the Queen of Love and seems to be the patroness of promiscuous mortals; one of the dunces wishes to go to the 'Elysian shades' when dead, and in Book 2 we are shown a vision of the myriad duncical shades; and while Phoebus as the inspirer of poetry faces imminent extinction he is apparently alive in the poem. But most important we see the sovereign goddess of the poem, Dulness, as being like a classical goddess, if not as one of the pantheon. She is described in such a way as to give her the supernatural birth and attributes of the gods. Her parents were Night and Chaos which gives her a heritage like some of the horrors of
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The Faerie Queene. We also know that her birth preceded that of Pallas Athena (as ignorance precedes knowledge). The poem is built on the interaction of an old and known mythology with a new one, which is at least based on classical mythology. Pope maintains this classical universe, but like Spenser he is willing to introduce the christian God when needed to make a specific satirical point. When Settle says:

'Learn ye DUNCES! not to scorn your GOD',

we are aware that he is referring to the christian God; similarly the speech of the 'gloomy Clerk' is an ironic attack on the disbelievers in the christian God. Pope is careful to ensure that the reader may infer the orthodoxy of his own religious beliefs. As well as these more direct indicators of Pope's religious beliefs, he uses a series of biblical allusions to imply the religious deviancy of the dunces both in the direction of atheism and nonconformity. Pope's creation of the world of the dunces as an ersatz classical world is an almost equally important means of attack on the irreligion of the dunces.

At the beginning of the poem we notice that Jove is one of the deities of the dull:

....Say you, her instruments the Great Call'd to this work by Dulness, Jove and Fate
You by whose care, in vain decry'd and curst,
Still Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first.

(1. 3-6).

There is a curious note to line four written by Warburton.

By Dulness, Jove and Fate: i.e. By their Judgements, their Interests and their Inclinations.

Warburton seems to be attaching each of the specific deities to a particular quality: so their judgments are produced by the influence of Dulness, their inclinations are the work of Fate and their interests are the work of Jove. What seems to be implied both by the poetry and the note is that the dull are called to their work, indeed impelled to do the work of Dulness by Jove. Just as Aeneas was prompted to leave Dido by Jove's messenger, so the dull resume their 'heroic labours' at the command of 'Dulness, Jove and Fate'. What is clear from this allusion is that Jove is not to be a wholly respected deity in the poem. This early link with Dulness sets the tone of most of the later references. The next time Jove is mentioned is in a reference to the farcical Aesopic fable, where Gibber like Jove becomes king of the frogs. Later we see him as the supreme deity answering Curll's prayer from the divine toilet. Curll's prayer on this occasion reveals Pope's aim in using Jove in such a manner:

Hear Jove! whose name my bards and I adore
As much at least as any God's or more;
And him and his, if more devotion warms,
Down with the Bible, up with the Pope's Arms.

(2. 79-82).
Pope is not satirizing classical mythology as such; rather he is associating the classical machinery with the dunces and thus attacking the dunces' beliefs. While Pope does not make the crushingly direct statements that are in Paradise Lost, his aim is similar to Milton's. The dunces call for aid on members of the pantheon, Curll to Jove and the patron tickler to Venus, and both are rewarded. The perversion of the dunces' religious belief is suggested by the world that they believe exists. In Curll's prayer we notice the phrase 'Down with the Bible', but we take even more notice of the god to whom the prayer is addressed.¹

Pope's use of the standard classical pantheon is not intrusive; indeed it is really a series of asides. Of course the main deity of the poem is not traditionally a member of the classical pantheon, but Dulness partakes of certain of the attributes of other canonical classical goddesses. Her relationship with Cibber in Book 1 is modelled on that of Venus and Aeneas, but she is also associated with Juno. A textual allusion at 1. 269-70, 'This the Great Mother dearer held than all/The Clubs of Quidnuncs; or her own Guild-hall' associates Dulness with the Juno of the Aeneid; in

¹ I find it interesting that when Pope wishes to commend Handel by using a mythological simile, he chooses the rebel Giant Briareus as the analogue. (4. 66). The allusion is complicated by the reference to Jove and Mars immediately afterwards, but the implication remains that a rebel against the cause of Dulness is also a rebel against the pantheon. The fourth book differs from the preceding three in that Dulness is now seen as the dominant force in the world, and men like Handel are the rebels, whereas we sense in the first three that the dunces are a world within a world and slightly on the defensive. The use of Briareus in the simile is one of the less obvious means Pope uses to establish this change.
addition, the constant epithet 'mother' tends to remind us more of the matronly Juno than the vivacious Venus. It isn't really important which classical goddess she resembles; what we must notice is that Pope takes a great deal of care to convince us of her status as a goddess, and one means of doing this is by associating her with more traditional goddesses. Dulness may be ludicrous but she is 'every inch' a goddess. Part of the success of the poem results from the creation in her of a fusion of manic energy, deranged ambition and real power. Though the results of her impending reign and her exhortations to her devotees are very funny, we are convinced of her powers in the realization of the extent of her domination. The description of the arts and sciences bound, gagged and powerless at her feet is splendidly comic in its likeness to a deranged iconographic handbook, but it is also profoundly disturbing in its presentation of what many civilised people must, at least occasionally, believe to be true.

The strange power of the Dunciad results at least in part from Pope's fusion of the sublime and the ridiculous. Dulness is powerful but absurd and so are her subjects; the dunces believe passionately in ludicrous ideas and furiously uphold a mad set of moral values. The mythological allusions sustain this atmosphere by placing familiar names and attributes in unfamiliar contexts. There are also two classical historical references which serve a similar purpose. The allusions to Cimon and the early history of Rome strictly speaking don't come within the compass of this thesis, but they are sufficiently myth-like to be relevant to my discussion. The passages both work by highlighting the ignoble
present by referring to the heroic past, and they both conjure up a world where the form is mistaken for the heroic reality. Thus the Lord Mayor's procession becomes Cimon-like:

Twas on the day, when ** rich and grave,
Like Cimon, triumph'd both on land and wave:
(Pomps without guilt, of bloodless swords and maces,
Glad chains, warm furs, broad banners, and broad faces).

(1. 85-8).

Pope's ironic allusion depends on the shift in the meaning of the verb 'to triumph'. Applied to Cimon it refers to a military victory which broke the power of Persia in the Aegean Sea and Asia Minor, but the modern ceremony is merely a procession. It is an imitation of the Roman triumph, which had degenerated from a quasi religious re-enactment of victory to an empty form allowed only to the emperor. Pope presents the triumph more as a carnival than a significant event: its apotheosis will be its re-creation in doggerel by second-rate scribblers. By inserting the epithet 'rich', Pope implies the quality needed for the new hero. Instead of Cimon's bravery and ability all that is needed now, to be acclaimed as a hero, is to be rich. The satire isn't harsh but the allusion establishes the confused and unheroic milieu of the poem, while appearing to lend the action dignity through the elevated comparison.

The satire is more pointed when we find Cibber referring to two of the stories of Rome's early history:
Shall I, like Curtius, desp'rate in my zeal,
O'er head and ears plunge for the Commonweal?
Or rob Rome's ancient geese of all their glories
And cackling save the monarchy of Tories?

(1. 209-12).

In both of these couplets, the reference is to the trappings of the story not its substance. Gibber links himself with the slightly ludicrous act of Curtius, not his noble motive, while the geese he refers to were a sign of the good fortune of Rome, rather than being significant in themselves. The effect Pope achieves by having Gibber ask these questions is far more interesting than if he had made Gibber want to emulate famous examples of bad or dangerous actions. Gibber becomes a representative of a strange and very funny sort of heroic ideal, rather than the kind of anti-hero produced by the inversion of the classical heroic ideal. Both references are phrased in such a way as to reflect the morality of the speaker. The words 'O'er head and ears plunge' suggest a desire to achieve a political morality as confused and changeable as the motion of the falling Curtius, while the word 'cackling' beautifully identifies Gibber with the actual geese, not their significance in the story. The lines evoke Rome's heroic past to suggest the speaker's unheroic motives and desires, but we feel that he is mad and absurd rather than evil. This particular passage is so funny because the shortness of the focus distorts the significance of the stories so thoroughly.

2. Lines 209-20 refer to M. Curtius who sacrificed his life to save Rome in response to the pronouncement of an oracle, while lines 211-2 refer to the geese who warned the Romans of the imminent attack by the Goths.
It gains most of its satirical thrust from the way in which it catches up the theme of the distortion of the potentially great by the base, petty and trivial motives and actions of the modern dunces. These two historical allusions are a counterpart to the geographical transposition announced at the beginning of the poem.

The Mighty Mother, and her Son who brings
The Smithfield Muses to the ear of Kings.

(1. 1-2).

Aubrey Williams has intelligently analysed the geographical metaphor in these lines, which we see enacted throughout the poem. The realms of what should be the great and those of the base come in contact then mingle in the poem: similarly the dunces refashion history so that it becomes a strange melange of the re-enactment of the trivial forms of past great events. The dunces' world is not so much anti-Rome as Rome seen in a distorting mirror, in which we can see only absurdities.

The Dunciad relies for at least part of its success on the preservation of at least the appearance of epic decorum. Thus Dulness must be slightly awesome if often laughable; similarly the dunces' history preserves an external likeness to that of Greece and Rome. Most of the mythological allusions at least appear to heighten the tone of the poem by comparing the dunces with the worthiest of analogues. While the reader is kept constantly aware of the discrepancy between the august past and the manic present, the preservation of appearances lends the satire that additional bite we feel because the poet seems so innocent; indeed he seems to be
extolling the dunces' virtues. We see Pope performing a continuous balancing act, on the one hand making wicked insinuations while preserving the outward calmness of the writer of epic. Perhaps his most startling success is in his description of the urination contest in Book 2, particularly in the simile involving Eridanus:

... from shameless Curl; impetuous spread
The stream and smoking flourish'd o'er his head.
So (fam'd like thee for turbulence and horns)
Eridanus his humble fountain scorns;
Thro half the heav'n's he pours th' exalted urn;
His rapid waters in their passage burn.

(2. 179-184).

The simile stresses Curll's virtuosity in this degrading competition; it also implies that he is a cuckold who has venereal disease. What we notice though is not only the fact of these insinuations, but also the splendidly poised way in which Pope makes them. The reference to the mythological river deity is positioned in such a way as to make the mention of 'horns' and 'burning waters' seem apt, indeed it almost assures us that any reference to Curll is unintentional. Though we notice what the words imply about Curll, we are also aware of the sonorous tone of the passage. The pleasure we feel is partly that of recognition of the double entendres; but more importantly we appreciate the sheer virtuosity of an author who can write pictorially evocative poetry, preserve the tone of the inspired poet and yet contrive to attack his enemies. The attraction of such poetry is the way in which the poet seems so calm and concerned with his art and manages his attack so gracefully.
In this passage Curll is mythologized and the passage looks like part of a legitimate epic. We may gauge the general level of Pope's success by examining one of his very occasional failures. During the games a tapestry is awarded as a prize and Pope describes it in some detail:

With that she gave him (piteous of his case,
Yet smiling at his rueful length of face)
A shaggy Tap'stry, worthy to be spread
On Codrus's old, or Dunton's modern bed;
Instructive work! whose wry-mouth'd portraiture
Display'd the fates her confessors endure.
Earless on high, stood unabash'd Defoe,
And Tutchin flagrant from the scourge below.
There Ridpath, Roper, cudgel'd might ye view,
The very worsted still look'd black and blue.
Himself among the story'd chiefs he spies,
As from the blanket high in air he flies,
"And oh! (he cry'd) what street, what lane but knows,
Our purgings, pumpings, blanketings, and blows?
In ev'ry loom our labours shall be seen,
And the fresh vomit run for ever green!"

(2. 141-156).

The passage is acceptable until line 152 though not really Pope's best work, but the last four lines don't succeed at all. The attack is too open, and the poet is clearly too involved in making the abuse as violent as possible. While the description alludes to a passage in the Aeneid, the description of the tapestry is not sufficient pretext for the reference to the 'green vomit'. Curll isn't sufficiently mythologized and the passage loses even the appearance of epic. I would stress that such failures are
infrequent, and generally Pope is a master of the art of civilised denigration.

Pope uses a number of forms of mythological allusion to maintain his decorum; one of the more pleasant surprises in the poem is his use of periphrasis. As we saw in The Faerie Queene periphrasis may heighten the tone of the poem but it risks becoming poetically inert. Pope uses the device with great skill. When he has Settle describe the burning of the library of Alexandria, Vulcan is used as a synonym for fire:

Thence to the south extend thy gladden'd eyes;
There rival flames with equal glory rise,
From shelves to shelves see greedy Vulcan roll,
And lick up all the Physic of the Soul.

(3. 79-82).

The use of euphuism here emphasises the incongruity of the juxtaposition of the importance of the actual event and the eager elegance of the dunce's description. By personifying the fire Settle suggests his own relish of the event. The word 'lick' is emphasised by the rhythm of the line, and gives the description a grotesque physicality as we imagine the flames/god licking. A similar sense of description of physical events is lent to the apparent description of abstractions later in Book 3:

Some strain in rhyme; the Muses, on their racks
Scream like the winding of ten thousand jacks:
Some free from rhyme or reason, rule or check,
Break Priscian's head, or Pegasus's neck.

(3. 159-162).
By referring to the Muses, Priscian and Pegasus, Pope makes us feel the writing of bad poetry as something which is physically painful. The 'e' and 'i' sounds at the beginning of line 160 enact the tortured scream of the Muses, while the rhythm of the word 'Pegasus's' is as painful as the action which it describes. The success of the passage lies in Pope's ability to represent bad writing in terms of the torture and maiming of material beings. The mythological names allow him to generalise his point, yet present it in visible terms. We appreciate the skill of the poet who can reactivate these dead mythological metaphors in such a convincing way. The materialization and animation of the abstract is one of the most important ways in which Pope establishes the strangeness of the dunces' world, where ideas gain physical existence and where the solidity of the city often seems more like a surrealistic idea.

In examining the aim of the mythological allusions I (together with just about every other critic) find it very hard to keep in sight the fact that the poem is often very funny. If it is enlightening to see the cliche of Pegasus revivified, it is also amusing to see the metaphor treated as literal truth. Similarly when we read the Eridanus simile, we find ourselves chuckling to see what Pope is actually saying, underneath the consummate grace of the diction. The poem contains a great number of surprises, which sustain its disoriented atmosphere, but which also secure the smile of the reader when he recognises what Pope is doing. I shall discuss two more of Pope's mythological allusions, both because they illuminate how most of his textual allusions function
and because they show how funny Pope can be at his best.

During the patron tickling competition in the games of Book 2, an unknown youth wins the prize using his sister as bait. Pope compares his stratagem with that of a classical analogue:

The Queen of Love
His sister sends, her vot'ress, from above.
As taught by Venus, Paris learnt the art
To touch Achilles' only tender part.

(2. 215-8).

At first sight there seems to be an ironical disjunction between the two events. The youth gains a position of little importance by prostituting his sister, while Paris was taught the only vulnerable spot on Achilles' body by Venus: this could have influenced the course of the Trojan War. This is the way that Pope wishes us to read the simile at first, but if we look at it using a different Troy myth, it assumes a different meaning. In one version of the Trojan war (that used by Shakespeare), Polyxena - the sister of Paris - was Achilles' lover. Paris knew this and used his sister as a guarantee of his own safety, at least from the wrath of Achilles. Thus the 'tender part' referred to in line 218 becomes ambiguous, and its meaning depends on which myth we use. In the latter case it is sexually suggestive and applies equally well to the patron and Achilles. The Queen of Love and Venus are one and the same and we see a continuity between the corrupt past and the corrupt present. The ambiguity of the simile allows it to act as a criticism and a description.
of the activity in the games. While the morality of the tickler appalls Pope, he is clearly not taking the myth very seriously; he communicates his response to the situation, not with the bludgeon of Juvenilian outrage, but by a surprise, which exploits the latent ambiguities in the extraordinary variations of the myths of Troy. The deftness of the joke swats the dunce effectively, and in addition makes us conscious of the artistry of the author.

A later simile works in a similar way, but the surprise of recognition comes more quickly and makes it more immediately funny. Dulness is admonishing her editors:

"Thus revive the Wits
But murder first, and mince them all to bits;
As erst Medea (cruel, so to save!)
A new edition of old Aeson gave,
Let standard Authors, thus, like trophies born,
Appear more glorious as more hacked and torn."

(4. 119-124).

The structure of our reaction to these lines closely resembles that of a response to the best jokes. We read and pause for a short time, then understanding comes suddenly, almost explosively. At first sight we wonder what Pope is referring to, for while the myth is not obscure, nor is it one of the most famous. Gradually we remember that Medea rejuvenated Aeson - Jason's father - by replacing his blood with a foul potion, and then we make the connection between the myth and its subject, the 'new edition'. This analysis is very long winded, but we must remember that the
passage of time is necessary for the effectiveness of the joke. Like many of Milton's similes, the more scrutiny it is given the better it seems. The surprise we get when we realise its unlikely aptness, again leads us to concede the imagination of the author. When Pope characterizes Dulness it is not through some kind of imitative form, which makes her utterances dull or boring, rather he endows her with an air of exaggerated but perverse energy, and the poetic form embodies this quality. We notice in this passage how the word 'mince' is heavily emphasized: by the assonance with the rhyme words, 'wits' and 'bits', by the alliteration with 'murder' and 'Medea', and further by its being the first stressed syllable after the caesura. The stress that the word receives, highlights the relish, almost delight with which Dulness says it. The furious attack on what we almost see as the carcasses of the dead 'Wits' is encouraged with great gusto. This command by the speaker, like so many others, is for vigorous but mad activity, and in this case she uses the name of one of the cultural heroines of the imminent revolution to spur her cohorts on to still more furious activity.

This reference to Medea is not the only one in the poem: at the end of Book 4 she is referred to again:

Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
As Argus' eyes by Hermes' wand opprest,
Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after Art goes out, and all is Night.

(4. 633-640).

The context of this reference to Medea is different, but the success of the reference to 'dread Medea's strain' depends to a small extent on our memory of her use in the earlier simile. The link between the two references to Medea is not very important, but it represents one way of making the reader perceive the transition from command and prophecy throughout most of the poem, and the actual fulfilment of these at its end. This transition is still clearer if we look at the reference to Argus here. In Book 2 we see that the critics who attend the reading of Blackmore and Henley will need 'Ulysses ear with Argus' eye' to stay awake during the contest. The myth is used ironically to describe the narcotic power of these two authors. At that point we see a local victory for Dulness, as we see the attendant population sleep, and thus by implication Argus' eye is temporarily closed. The reference in Book 4 suggests the general and final defeat of the vigilant. The reading of the authors stupefied a small proportion of the people of London in Book 2, while at the end of Book 4 we see the defeat of true civilising culture in all of England and by implication, all of the world. Part of the reason most readers find the final section of Book 4 so impressive, is because it represents the achievement of all of the nightmarish possibilities suggested earlier in the poem. This is of course not the only or even the major reason for its success, but we are moved by the fact that what we might earlier push off as satiric exaggeration is persuasively
described as having happened. As several literal-minded critics (Highet and Reeves) have remarked, the end of Book 4 is not a description of actual fact; it too is an exaggeration, yet the close of Book 4 is the most potent description in English of the sense of cultural malaise, that any concerned observer must feel at some time about his own culture, when he sees worthwhile efforts swallowed up in a mass of triviality and mindlessness. The poem ends with a sort of apocalyptic joke, where the myth of Dulness finds its logical conclusion. Her reign is achieved with the sort of mythological aptness which characterizes Pope's use of mythological allusion throughout the poem.

The function of Pope's textual allusions is basically similar to that of his use of the myths. He uses them to maintain the apparent decorum of the poem while he makes a variety of satiric points. The actual effect of these textual allusions is often more complex than that of the myths, but we are frequently similarly surprised then delighted. The allusions continually stop us in our tracks and force us to take in anew the world Pope is describing. The constant deformation of poetic form entailed by ironic allusion comes to act as a metaphor for the distorted, perverse and topsyturvy moral values and physical surroundings of the dunces. In few poems can we find a more complete junction between the poetic form and meaning.

One of the most interesting of the textual allusions begins as a description of the millions of duncical shades awaiting rebirth:
Millions on millions on these banks he views,
Thick as the stars of night, or morning dews,
As thick as bees o'er vernal blossoms fly,
As thick as eggs at Ward in Pillory.

(3. 31-4).

Though the rest of the poem should prepare us for the fourth line we are still shocked. The previous imagery is filled with the light and colour of the stars, dew and blossom. The description gives a blurred but beautiful effect, since we take in the scenes as wholes rather than noticing the individual stars, drops of dew, bees or flowers. These effects set up an expectation of tone which the poet shatters. Our surprise is still greater when we realise that Pope has taken over the form if not the details of a Virgilian simile, in a similar context, in the Aeneid:

As numerous were they (the souls of the dead) as the leaves of the forest which fall at the first chill of autumn
and float down, or as the birds which flock from ocean-deeps to the shore when the cold of the year sends them in rout across the sea, and sets them free to fly to sunshine lands.

(6. 308-11).

If we see the allusion quickly enough, it makes the description of the individual dunce, in an ignoble position, come as an even greater surprise. 3 The primary effect of the allusion is to render

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3. A curious effect that I've noticed in my own reading, is that even in a poem where ironic allusion is the norm, a strange kind of 'readerly inertia' takes over, where I keep reading the alluding passage with the analogue in mind even when the poet has made the ironic divergence which theoretically terminates the allusion.
the comedy of the bathetic descent still greater. The effect is similar to, but quicker than, the mythological allusions where we finally grasp the likeness despite the apparent incongruity of the comparison. If we are sufficiently involved in the simile, the first picture we get is of an extraordinary number of eggs both about to be thrown, in flight and already covering the unfortunate Ward. Instead of the large but vague prospects of stars, dews, bees and blossoms, we have a picture of something very concrete here, a sort of *ne plus ultra* of egginess, which is at once mind boggling and extremely evocative of slightly revolting tactile values. Instead of the conventionally uncountable stars or dews we are faced with the unusually uncountable eggs: the resulting picture is at once comic and grotesque.

The surprise of this passage relies both on the beauty of the description and our awareness of the allusion: both of these factors contribute to make us temporarily forget the subject of the simile. Even the initial vision of the fact of the millions of eggs initially distracts us, but the reference to the individual in a specific situation, and the grating effect of the urge to rhyme 'pillory' with 'fly' return us to that subject. By referring to the fate of one particular dunce in a particular time, Pope makes us aware that the numbers he has been recounting have been those of future dunces who may go on to share Ward's fate. The simile thus suggests the numbers of the dunces and the quality of life they will achieve if generated. The final effect of the simile is quite complex since it mythologizes Ward, and conjures up a world which is spectacular, exaggerated, larger than life, and even almost
beautiful in a monstrous sort of way, while at the same time it is an attack on duncery and a suggestion of the future fate of both the dunces and the world which they will gradually fill up.

We frequently encounter this perversion of the pastoral mode in the Dunciad. What Pope describes is put into a conventional frame, but the individual items mentioned are such as suggest filth or corruption. The interaction of the form and content has a curious effect: initially we feel the bathos of the apparently complacent association of the conventionally beautiful and ugly, but we also occasionally feel as if we were looking at something perversely beautiful - beautiful partly because it seems so to the dunces but also because we do feel a slightly guilty attraction for what we are taught is repulsive. The description of the diving contest and the mud nymphs works so well because, although we realise the sheer dirtiness of the scene, the beauty of Pope's description almost impels us to revalue our attitude to mud. The dunces boisterously enjoy their games in the mud, and make the activity seem weirdly attractive. Such poetry establishes the dunces in a world in which they are at home. While this world shares some of the features of the historical London, we must finally see it as a London which has been edited with the selectiveness of a dream. Places float up to be seen quite clearly, only to vanish or be transmuted. This world is dirty and in some ways almost disgusting, but as with our reaction to the zest of the dunces themselves, though we may be initially alienated, we are never merely revolted. The comedy resulting from the confusion we feel in our responses is rich but hard to analyse - what comedy isn't?
We are simultaneously drawn into this world of ethical and physical confusion yet also stand outside of it and judge. The sense of play, that we see in the dunces and the poet's way of describing them and their world, attracts us while the fact of what is being described at least occasionally repels us.

Pope alludes to the classical pastoral mode to establish the world of his poem; he creates his characters largely by allusion to the epic, particularly the Aeneid. These characters are placed within the frame of the epic in several ways: by the use of the structural forms of the epic and its conventions and by specific allusions which link a dunce with an epic counterpart. I shall examine structural allusion later in this chapter, but first I'll analyse a number of the more incidental heroic allusions.

During the games, Pope pauses to describe the prize for the victor in the sprinting competition. This prize is a poet:

No meagre, muse-rid mope, ad'jest and thin,
In a dun night-gown of his own loose skin,
But such a bulk as no twelve bards could raise,
Twelve starveling bards of these degen'rate days.

(2. 37-40).

Pope is alluding to Virgil's account of the strength of Turnus near the end of the Aeneid:

He (Turnus) saw a stone of great size, ancient and huge, which chanced to lie at hand on the plain where it had been placed to mark a field's boundary, and save
the farmlands from dispute of ownership. Scarcely could twelve selected men of such physique as earth produces now have borne on their shoulders that stone; but heroic Turnus snatched it up with his hand in impetuous haste.

Pope is writing about the present while Virgil was writing about the past, but the use of the topos 'there were giants in those days' is basically apparently similar. The initial effect of the interaction of Pope's passage and the allusive analogue is to establish a quasi-heroic atmosphere, but when we compare the two passages more closely a number of comic differences present themselves. Instead of a figure of heroic strength and courage we see a figure of heroic bulk and supineness. Turnus is displaying a strength beyond that of mere modern men, whereas the prize poet displays such a bulk as to require a man of the strength of Turnus to lift him. There is a beautiful ambiguity in the word 'raise' in line 39; its primary meaning is 'grow' or 'accumulate', implying that the modern scribblers are far from fat, but the other meaning of 'lift' is also present, and it is this meaning which binds the passage so closely with Virgil's. Pope has altered the classical heroic standard in a number of ways, but the most interesting change is to establish the apparently neutral quality of bulk, as a heroic yardstick for the dunces. As we see so often in the poem, this apparently complacent acceptance of topsyturvy values gives the poem that sense of being a wild refraction of our world rather than being something merely alien. The classical analogue is used as the measure by which we judge this distortion. One
might be tempted to see the allusion as a parody - a distortion for distortion's sake - but this would ignore the type of effect generated by the allusion. The dunces' world is not the epic world inverted, rather it is a continuous deformed re-creation of such a world. Like Virgil, Pope implies that the inhabitants of his own time are weak, thin and poor, but this decline to 'degen'rate days' is from times when poets were fat, even bloated: we see an almost surrealistic picture of a line of past fat poets. Where Virgil evokes a heroic past of the brave and strong, Pope creates one of the empty but fat. Part of the real vitality of the Dunciad lies in the fact that Virgil and Pope's heroic qualities are not simple antitheses. Pope very rarely if ever travesties his models by allusion; rather he re-creates a world with values of its own and a vitality of its own.

The Dunciad depends on the continuous re-creation of the heroic ideals of the classical epic in terms of the literary heroic. The first three books use this substitution as their basic metaphor. Book 4 uses a different kind of metaphor which is far less dependent on the classical epic, but there are still occasional demonstrations of the corruption of the heroic; most interestingly in the description of the travelling dunce:

Thro' School and College, thy kind cloud o'ercast, Safe and unseen the young Aeneas past: Thence bursting glorious, all at once let down, Stunn'd with his giddy Larum half the town. Intrepid then, o'er seas and lands he flew: Europe he saw, and Europe saw him too.
There all thy gifts and graces we display,  
Thou, only thou, directing all our way!  
To where the Seine, obsequious as she runs,  
Pours at great Bourbon's feet her silken sons;  
Or Tyber, now no longer Roman rolls,  
Vain of Italian Arts, Italian Souls:  
To happy Convents, bosom'd deep in vines,  
Where slumber Abbots, purple as their wines:  
To Isles of fragrance, lilly-silver'd vales,  
Diffusing languor in the panting gales:  
To lands of singing, or of dancing slaves,  
Love - whisp'ring woods, and lute-resounding waves.  
But chief her shrine where naked Venus keeps,  
And Cupids ride the Lyon of the Deeps;  
Where eas'd of Fleets, the Adriatic main  
Wafts the smooth Eunuch and enamour'd swain.  
Led by my hand, he saunter'd Europe round.  
And gather'd ev'ry vice on Christian ground;  
Saw ev'ry Court, heard ev'ry King declare  
His royal Sense, of Op'ras or the Fair;  
The stews and palace equally explor'd,  
Intrigu'd with glory, and with spirit whor'd;  
Try'd all hors-d'oeuvres, all liqueurs defin'd;  
Dropt the dull lumber of the Latin store,  
Spoil'd his own language, and acquir'd no more;  
All Classic learning lost on Classic ground;  
A last turn'd Air, the Echo of a Sound!  
See now, half-cur'd, and perfectly well-bred,  
With nothing but a Solo in his head;  
As much Estate, and Principle, and Wit,  
As Jansen, Fleetwood, Cibber shall think fit;  
Stol'n from a Duel, follow'd by a Nun,  
And if a Borough chuse him, not undone;  
See, to my country happy I restore  
This glorious Youth, and add one Venus more.  
Her too receive (for her my soul adores)  
So may the sons of sons of sons of whores,
Prop thine, O Empress! like each neighbour Throne,  
And make a long Posterity thy own."  

(4. 289-334).

Pope and Warburton quote the Virgilian original and explain the allusion (in the opening lines) in the note to line 290:

290 unseen the young Aeneas past: Thence bursting glorious] See Virg AE 1. (411-4)

At Venus obscuro gradientes aere sepsit,  
Et multo nebulae circum Dea fudit amictu,  
Cernere ne quis eos; - 1. neu quis contingere possit;  
2. Molirive moram; - aut 3, veniendi poscere causas.

Where he enumerates why his mother took this care of him:

To wit, 1. that nobody might touch or correct him.  
2.might stop or detain him: 3. examine him about the progress he made, or so much as guess why he came to be there. (P.W.).

This note explains the ingenuity of the allusion, but it does not mention the theme of the ironic juxtaposition of the dunces with Aeneas. The structural allusions in the poem force us to relate Cibber to Aeneas in Books 1 and 3, and Dulness and Aeneas in Book 2. This continuous allusion exerts some control over our understanding of duncery in these sections of the poem. As I've remarked there is no such classical controlling image in Book 4, but in this passage we see another facet of Aeneas used as an implicit critique of the dunce. The lines that fix the bond between the dunce and Aeneas occur at the beginning and end of the passage I just quoted, and a frame is established, inside of which we are led to see many other points of general likeness and difference.
The opening passage is almost a direct translation of the lines from the *Aeneid*, but a series of ambiguities guides our response to the dunce. The 'kind cloud' of line 289 is very similar to the cloud veiling Aeneas, but as we have seen earlier in the *Dunciad*, such a cloud is one of the attributes of Dulness and she bestows it upon her 'kind', or true followers. The dunce needs the cloud to obscure his nature, because he would stand out by his 'bad eminence', whereas Aeneas needed the cloud because he is prominent in a crowd, and likely to attract unwanted attention because of his physical stature and bearing. This textual allusion, and the pointed reference to the young Aeneas, lock the young dunce and Aeneas together and the following lines depend on our having Aeneas in mind. As is usual in the poem, there isn't a one-to-one antithetical correspondence between the dunce and Aeneas, but the comparison is continuously enlightening.

Aeneas is the archetype of the man who travels for a serious purpose. As the proposition to the *Aeneid* states, he was fated to be an exile, he was the first to sail from Troy and reach Italy and its Lavinian shore. He met many tribulations on his way both by land and on the ocean... And he had also to endure great suffering in warfare. But at last he succeeded in founding his city, and installing the gods of his race in the Latin land: and he was the origin of the Latin nation, the Lords of Alba, and the proud battlements of Rome.

(1. 3-10).
The dunce's travels are a splendidly comic perversion of those of Aeneas. Where Aeneas slogs over land and ocean, the dunce flies 'o'er land and sea'. Aeneas encounters difficulties of all kinds and resists a variety of temptations, while the dunce succumbs to every possible corruption that comes his way, and each of the places that the traveller visits, provide experiences which will further corrupt him. The Grand Tour is envisioned not as a voyage of discovery, but a re-creation of Europe in the dunce's image. Lines 297-310 for example, succeed in lulling the reader into the kind of stupor which is the natural state of the dunce and which appears universal throughout Europe. These lines are a masterful evocation of languid vice. The satire of the sort of education one picks up on the Grand Tour is certainly there, but Pope uses that same mode of the twisted pastoral, which we see in the mud-nymphs passage, to create an atmosphere which is extremely attractive but absolutely corrupt. The lines about the convent are magnificent in the way that Pope makes apparently neutral or approving words like 'happy', 'bosom'd', 'slumber' and 'purple' combine to morally label the scene, yet makes us feel the delicious serenity of such a place. It is only the fact that convents aren't supposed to be such places that makes the passage satirical at all.

The description of the joys of Europe make it seem attractive, but we also see the waste and frivolity of such a trip. If we refer back to Aeneas we see that his travels were educative. He suffered on his journey from Troy, arrived at the comfort of Carthage but was forced to put his duty before his individual desires and so leave for more dangers. His decisions were always difficult but they taught
him the true extent of the burden of responsibility and prepared him to become a great leader. We see almost the reverse of this process in the dunce. He 'gather'd ev'ry Vice on Christian ground', and 'spoil'd his own language and acquir'd no more:/All Classic learning lost on Classic ground': the dunce's travels succeed in depriving him of any useful knowledge or moral judgement that he may at one stage have possessed. The trip is in a profound sense anti-educative, since it does form the corrupt being that he turns into. Aeneas was prepared by his journey for the responsibility of founding a great nation, similarly the dunce is fitted out to further the cause of Dulness by assuming a seat in Parliament. He has been perfectly prepared for the test that awaits him. Like Aeneas his importance will not cease when he dies. When the dunce returns to England with his 'nun', the 'attendant orator' makes a combined request and prophecy:

"Her too receive (for her my soul adores)  
So may the sons of sons of sons of whores,  
Prop thine, O Empress! like each neighbour Throne,  
And make a long posterity thine own."

(4. 331-4).

This alludes to Apollo's prophecy to Aeneas:

Seek out your ancient mother. And from this land the House of Aeneas, the sons of his sons, and all the descendants shall bear rule over earth's widest bounds.  

(3. 98-100).

The two men will be perfectly prepared to generate their respective qualities to their heirs. This allusion at the end of the passage
confirms the allusive parallel throughout the entire episode. The recognition and understanding of this parallel is essential before we can really appreciate the main thrust of the satire in this episode. The dunce represents the very antithesis of the serious traveller.

The episode of the young Aeneas is one of the highlights of the poem. Pope uses two framing allusions, but the more important allusion is completely embedded within the passage itself. This allusion allows Pope to develop one of his most successful evocations of the duncical heroic. Pope devotes all of his art to suggest the sensory attractiveness of the scenes and activities to which the dunce gives himself up. There is only a little wrong with the activities taken one by one, but we are gradually overwhelmed by the relentless pursuit of the trivial in the highest and noblest of societies. The passage works so well because it suggests the attractiveness of such a life and the ease with which one could succumb to it. Dulness is the cause of attractive vice, frivolity and triviality, as well as bad writing. Just as we see one quality of Dulness in the zest with which the dunces perform their dirty sports in Book 2, so here we see the almost heroic pursuit of immorality. Pope's creation of the world of Dulness is so telling because the dunces seem so unaware of the existence of any other kind of morality than their own. The irony of phrases like 'intrigu'd with glory' or 'judiciously drank' is potent to us, but the dunces seem so convinced that it is the measure of the true heroic, that we are almost accepting their own valuation. This amorality and more often immorality gives the poem the air of an hallucination, as we
simultaneously accept and reject the dunces' values. For example we are taken in by the almost Keatsian lines on the convent, only to draw back and think of the morality of the inhabitants of such a place. The technique of dramatic self-revelation that Pope uses throughout the fourth book often generates this sort of push-pull effect, but rarely does he use the device with such poise as he does here. In addition the use of the textual allusion universalises the portrait more than is true of most other episodes; The allusion also lends the passage a sense of rich confusion which is the mark of the poem at its best.

Though most of Pope's textual allusions are used to criticise or attack the dunces, they also give the effect of looking at a world in a distorting mirror. The fact that we are aware of the classical analogue creates an expectation of a continuation which Pope consistently doesn't supply. I have tried to suggest just what sort of atmosphere is produced by this factor in many of my earlier analyses, but I, like many others, find it very difficult to discover a word which describes the characteristic tone of the poem generated by the consistent use of ironic allusion. I find this difficulty almost chronic when talking about Book 2, and in particular, the description of Curll's attempt to seize his prize after he has won the footrace:

And now the victor stretch'd his eager hand
Where the tall Nothing stood, or seem'd to stand;
A shapeless shade, it melted from his sight,
Like forms in clouds, or visions of the night.

(2. 109-112).
These lines allude to the description in the *Aeneid* of Aeneas's attempt to grasp the shade of his dead father, Anchises:

Father, oh let me, let me, clasp your hand! Do not slip from my embrace! As he spoke his face grew wet with the stream of tears. Three times he tried to cast his arms around his father's neck; but three times the clasp was vain and the wraith escaped his hands, like airy winds or the melting of a dream.

(6. 698-702).

This passage is one of the most moving in the *Aeneid*. The memory of this pathos makes Curll's attempt to grasp the shade of the poet seem still more grotesque. Our memory of the sublimity of the classical analogue makes Curll's greed and voracity stand out in high relief. Like Aeneas, Curll tries three times to grasp the poet and his property; and this passing similarity stresses the overwhelming differences between the two men. The use of the allusion is harshly critical and prepares us for the acerbity of Pope's account of Curll's publishing practices.

The preceding analysis might be described as the 'meaning' of the allusion, but it seems inadequate to describe the actual effect of the poetry. The allusion makes us see Curll's greed; it also makes us see that he is so blinded by this quality he is unable to see Dulness' joke. Just as Aeneas is blinded by filial piety to the true nature of the situation, so Curll is by greed. Curll

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seems almost hemmed in by the unflattering comparison of the allusion and the unflattering joke being played on him by his own tutelary goddess. The actual disappearance of the phantom poet and his papers and suit has the atmosphere of a bad dream, and we see Curll trapped within the obsession of his 'ruling passion', unable to escape. Curll is forced to endure the laughter of everyone, including the reader, and he seems crass and despicable where Cibber, particularly in the first book, is merely ludicrous. When we laugh, we laugh because it is Curll and almost gloat that while Aeneas had the consolation of conversation with his father, Curll is left with absolutely nothing. He can't even learn from experience, for when Dulness repeats the joke it is Curll who is in the front line of the would-be poet seizers. Curll is trapped within a nightmare world of his own making. Just as he takes up the base and the trivial and tries to fob them off on the world as the worthwhile, so here we see him caught in the trap of his own making; he keeps finding the unexpected under what he expects to be the familiar. He trusts in the forms which he has done so much to corrupt and debase. Pope uses the slightly nightmarish quality of Aeneas's attempt to grasp Anchises and transfers it to Curll, but utterly denies him any of Aeneas's nobler qualities. The literary means of this passage - the ironic debasement of a sublime original -

5. Curll is probably the most ferociously attacked individual in the poem. The description of the footrace and later the tapestry are just about the only places in the poem where Pope is so eager for blood that he loses control over the poetry. Curll tends not to be taken up into the duncical sublime and mythologized as are most of the other dunces.
becomes a symbolic extension of the nature of the man described. Curll has survived by pirating and debasing literature; here he is pinioned by a literal re-creation of his own *modus vivendi*.

The duncical heroic does not merely consist of the inversion or perversion of the epic heroic; there are suggestions at several points in the poem that the dunces of Pope's day are the inheritors of an earlier tradition. The textual allusions point not only to literary ancestors like Bavius but also to the rash and foolhardy like Mezentius and Phlegyas. When Cibber is lamenting his lot in Book 1, there are two allusions which hilariously link him with Aeneas; these are followed by one which associates him with one of Aeneas's antagonists, Mezentius:

> What can I now? my Fletcher cast aside, 
> Take up the Bible, once my better guide? 
> Or tread the Path by vent'rous Heroes trod, 
> This Box my Thunder, this right hand my God?

(1. 199-202).

The last line of this passage is a free translation of a prayer by Mezentius:

> 'Right hand of mine, for you are my god, and 
> weapon which I poise to throw, aid me now.'

(10. 773-4).

The initial effect of this allusion is to make the duncical heroic, as embodied in Cibber, seem still more absurd when compared with Mezentius' almost psychopathic manifestation of the martial heroic. Cibber's box (the dicing box) is superbly wrong as the attribute
of one who aspires to godhead. Similarly the reference to his right hand becomes absurd when we know that he will use it for writing plagiarized nonsense (and possibly dicing) - neither of which fit well with the image of a god. Mezentius' impiety isn't very attractive, but he is sufficiently ferocious for us to respect or fear the man's militant individualism. The initial effect of the allusion is to stress the bathos of Cibber's speech.

Cibber's reference to 'vent'rous heroes' does, however, add to the implications of the allusion. While we see the bathetic discrepancy between the two men, we see that Cibber at least perceives some likeness. Both men go out of their way to stress their lack of reliance on any of the recognised gods. The impiety and ferocity of Mezentius are an example in martial terms of Cibber's complete lack of political or literary ethics. The allusion has it both ways - Cibber is absurd in his difference from Mezentius but damned by the deeper likeness. This allusion, together with almost the whole of Book 3, contributes to our sense of duncery as a historically pervasive phenomenon, which is reaching its height in the arrival of the anti-Messiah or 'anti-Christ of wit' in Pope's time. Just as there is a historical succession of bad poets, so there is a succession of 'vent'rous heroes' whose behaviour endangers the survival of civilised values; both successions find their fulfillment in Cibber.

A textual allusion in Book 3 linking Phlegyas and Settle has a similar but less complex immediate effect than that just analysed.
As Settle conducts Gibber through the literary Hades, he pauses to advise future dunces:

"Yet oh, my sons! a father's word attend:  
(So may the fates preserve the ears you lend)  
'Tis yours, a Bacon or a Locke to blame,  
A Newton's genius, or a Milton's flame:  
But oh! with One, immortal one dispense,  
The source of Newton's Light, of Bacon's Sense!  
Content, each Emanation of his fires  
That beams on earth, each Virtue he inspires,  
Each Art he prompts, each Charm he can create,  
Whate'er he gives, are giv'n for you to hate.  
Persist, by all divine in Man unaw'd,  
But, 'Learn, ye DUNCES! not to scorn your GOD.'"

(3. 213-224).

The last line is a direct (and acknowledged) quotation from the Aeneid (6. 620), where Phlegyas warns future men to avoid his crime. As we see it in the Dunciad, the line is ironically undercut by its context. Settle advises that the dunces attack all manifestations of this God in human society, but as a matter of policy they should avoid attacking God directly. He is not admonishing them with regard to belief, rather he is advising them to avoid punishment, as the reference to ears in line 214 makes clear. The final statement in itself makes sense, but we question the motives of the speaker when we know who he is quoting. Neither Settle nor Phlegyas hold religious belief valuable but both seek to avoid the punishment attendant on ignoring the advice. Both would seek to create a society in which the forms of religion are followed, but in which the substance is either ignored or attacked.
Once again we see evidence of a sort of tradition of duncery or viciousness which will attain its apotheosis in Cibber. The form of the speech in the Dunciad is beautifully wrought; the tension established by the withholding of the subject's verb makes it worthy of Milton's Satan, and the humour of the passage derives from our perception of the difference between form and substance, but the effect of the speech, intensified by the use of the allusion, is bitingly satirical.

The allusion to Phlegyas' speech has a further effect, which I have found very hard to pin down and describe. Throughout the Dunciad there are a series of hints which suggest the presence of the Virgilian Tartarus. Certainly the third Book is set in a duncical Hades, but the suggestions I'm referring to are found throughout the poem. Occasionally these suggestions become definite allusions as we see for example in the case of the lazy dunce in Book 4, who is 'stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair.' This sounds very much like a combination of the punishments of Ixion and Theseus in the Aeneid:

> Others hang, stretched and bound, on the spokes of a wheel. Hopeless sits Theseus and so will he for ever.  

(6. 616-7)

Although there are no classical textual allusions in the description of the triumph of barbaric Dulness in Book 3, again I sense the presence of the Virgilian and Miltonic hells. The specific allusion to the inhabitant of Tartarus, Phlegyas, catches up and
focuses the series of hints and suggestions. I don't want to overstated the effect of these elusive parallels, but when we add the sense we sometimes get from the Miltonic allusions, we often feel as if the London of the dunces is a terrestrial re-creation of hell. It isn't a hell for the dunces, they seem unaware of the environment which they've created, indeed they often seem to rejoice in it, rather the suggestion is that this is a kind of hell for those who haven't yet taken up the cause of Dulness: those, who like the author, can see it for what it is. This feeling (if it is there) is implicit, but as we see in other allusions, Pope subtly shapes our awareness of the world of his poem without our being aware of the force exerted by the poet.

Pope's short textual allusions often bring large sections of a classical analogue to bear on his own poem, to quite complex ends. A textual allusion at the beginning of the urination contest is a fascinating example of how much can lie implicit within an apparently straightforward allusion. As Pope is describing the contestants prior to the competition, he remarks:

One on his manly confidence relies  
One on his vigour and superior size.

(2. 169-170).

This is a free translation of Virgil's description of the boxing contestants Dares and Entullus in the Aeneid (5. 430-1). Pope's play with the word 'size' has the initial effect of making us see the disparity between the epic and duncical contexts. The boxers rely on using their whole body in an activity which requires
strength and stamina, whereas the dunces pride themselves in an art which is at best trivial and at worst disgusting. Indeed, cultivating the art of long distance urination would be almost regarded as obscene in both Pope's and our own society. Thus to be good at it, a skill which is by implication acquired by practice, condemns the winner to still greater ignominomy than the loser. Our first understanding of the effect of the allusion is thus what one might see as the standard effect of the textual allusions, the damning of the dunces by examining them in the frame of a higher standard.

Once again, however, things aren’t so simple. The allusion locks Pope's account of the urinators and Virgil's description of the boxers together, and the distinction between the two sets of competitors is not as clear as it might be. Both lots of athletes are more interested in the prizes than any abstract consideration of the athletic ideal, and if Pope's competitors are mildly revolting, they, at least, are not intent on killing one another. Dares is carried from the ring dragging his knees in pain, with his head lolling from side to side, and continually spitting out of his mouth, thick gore and teeth amid the blood.

(5. 470-2).

We also find the winner disgusting in his pride, as he fells the prize ox with a single blow. So although the athletic ideal theoretically fosters a spiritual ideal, we find the actual practice both brutal and dehumanizing. The effect of this comparison is
not so much to exonerate the dunces, though it does stress the virtuosity of the maker of the description. This particular episode in Pope's poem (2. 157-190) is remarkable for the way in which Pope maintains epic decorum. Certainly the lines I've quoted do contain a double-entendre, but part of the humour is that it is precisely these lines which Pope has translated from a previous epic. The passage contains several beautiful similes (which I looked at earlier) which are pictorially evocative in a manner that belies their subject. The episode succeeds by insisting on its decorum rather than using any overt satire. Pope's allusion draws our attention to the classical analogue and I believe that Pope is competing with his classical predecessor just as Milton did in the Mulciber description. Pope starts with the gross handicap of his material then proceeds to outdo Virgil in maintaining epic decorum, and indeed in the quality of his poetry. I'm not saying that Pope is implying that the Dunciad is superior to the Aeneid, rather it is the flash of a playful master of his craft showing just what he can do. This sense of play, in the actual composing of the poetry, is communicated or transferred, to the scene being described both here and at other points in Book 2.

Pope's use of both mythological and textual allusion is fundamentally serious, but he is never solemn in his use of them. While Pope is rarely merely a virtuoso in his use of classical material, we often sense his pleasure in his ability to adapt it to his own ends. We witness the poet's play and even delight in his own creation in both the Dunciad and The Rape of the Lock. The word parody has often been used to describe Pope's technique
in both of these poems, and while it may be appropriate to one or either of the poems, we should be very clear what we mean by the word before using it. Warburton wrote a note to Book 2 line 405 in which he offered a definition of what he sees as parody in the poem. This note is a useful and intelligent introduction to the subject and is worthy of examination. The lines referred to occur in the soporific reading of the rival dull authors, Blackmore and Henley:

As what a Dutchman plumps into the lakes,
One circle first and then a second makes;
What Dulness dropt among her sons impressed
Like motion from one circle to the rest.

(2. 405-8).

Warburton discusses the first line:

It is a common and foolish mistake, that a ludicrous parody of a grave and celebrated passage is a ridicule of that passage. The reader, therefore, if he will, may call this a parody of the author's own Similitude in the Essay on Man, Ep IV.

As the small pebble, and etc.

but will anybody therefore suspect the one to be a ridicule of the other? A ridicule is in every parody; but when the image is transferred from one subject to another, and the subject is not a poem burlesqued (which Scriblerus hopes - the reader will distinguish from a burlesque poem) there the ridicule falls not on the thing imitated, but imitating. Thus, for instance, when Old Edward's armour beams on Cibber's breast it is, without doubt,
an object ridiculous enough. But I think it fails neither on old king Edward, nor his armour, but on the armour-bearer only. Let this be said to explain our Author's Parodies (a figure that has always a good effect in a mock epic poem) either from profane or sacred writers. 6

This note is quite a useful account of most of the textual allusions in the poem. It is for example an excellent commentary on Book 1 lines 195-8. The lines contain two allusions: 1. 195-6 imitates Anchises' lament over the burning Troy, and 1. 197-8 alludes to Hector's statement to Aeneas as he advises him to leave Troy.

Yet sure had heav'n decreed to save the State, 
Heav'n had decreed these works a longer date. 
Could Troy be sav'd by any single hand, 
This grey goose weapon must have made her stand. 

(1. 195-8).

Gibber's utterance is made bathetic by the meaning of the word 'works' in line 196. Here it refers to the doom of ephemeral literature, whereas in the Aeneid the word would refer to the doom of a city and its inhabitants. In line 198 Pope had added the phrase 'this grey goose weapon' and this addition again changes the situation from the serious defence of a mighty city into the ludicrous defence of trivial writing. There is a massive disjunction between the contexts of the lines as they appear in the two works.

6. Sutherland attaches a note pointing out the fact that the 'parodic' lines appeared before the serious original, but this doesn't really alter the value of the note as literary theory.
The pathos of the lines in the *Aeneid* becomes bathos when they are applied to the floundering poetaster and his dedication to a bad cause. The allusion enforces the distinction between the heroic and the base, the great and the trivial. As Warburton remarks 'the ridicule falls not on the thing imitated, but imitating.'

This passage is one in which the allusion works in the way that Warburton states, but while there is no ridicule of the *Aeneid* in Pope's adaptation of Virgil's lines there is some movement of feeling from the original into the *Dunciad*. Despite Cibber's ludicrous activities and appearance and despite the triviality and even dangerousness of his concerns, we feel at least momentarily a certain poignancy in his situation. While his works may be dangerous, the allusion makes us feel, if only for an instant, that he cares about them as Hector or Anchises cares about their city. Certainly there is no absolute value in the act of caring, but the dunce appears human even if his ideals are perverted. As is the case in other parts of the poem, the dunces show an ability to be concerned and active in a bad cause, while often the characters in the *Aeneid* are wooden despite their laudable ideals.

Any feeling of pathos evoked by these allusions is undercut both by the fact that we know that Cibber is an actor by trade, and in addition by another classical allusion which reminds us of his true nature. Cibber gains the epithet 'Master of the sev'nfold Face' (1.244). This allusion refers to the shield of Ajax, and links Cibber with both Ajax and his shield. The allusion focuses the suggestions of lumpishness, thickness and madness which we see earlier
in the book, and in addition qualifies our belief in the genuineness of any feeling Cibber might express or emotion he might show. Thus the allusions at 1. 195-8 cannot be said to exert a continuous influence throughout the poem, but there is a local transfer of feeling from one work to the other. It is this effect that Warburton's analysis doesn't really cover.

Warburton's note basically denies that Pope ever used parody in the sense that it is defined in the O.E.D.

A composition in which the characteristic turns of thought or phrase of an author are mimicked and made to appear ridiculous especially by applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects.

This definition seems particularly well suited to a number of nineteenth century poems. If we look at Carroll's 'Aged, Aged Man' we see that it is a parody of Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence'. Carroll's poem is reasonably funny in itself but the reason for its existence is the attack on Wordsworth's way of telling the story. He does this by virtually quoting Wordsworth:

So, having no reply to give
To what the old man said,
I cried 'Come tell me how you live!'
And thumped him on the head.

The exclamation 'Come tell me how you live' is a slightly more insistent version of the original 'How is it that you live.' Carroll is mimicking and attacking the slightly repetitive structure of
Wordsworth's poem, as well as exaggerating the abruptness, and feeling of impertinence suggested by the questions of the persona in 'Resolution and Independence'. Carroll's poem is an attack on a particular kind of poetry, which works by distorting one poem. Rather than imitating Wordsworth's poem to attack something else, Carroll is focusing on and magnifying the eccentricities of Wordsworth's style as an end in itself. Thus we call 'The Aged, Aged man' a parody rather than a satire. We see something similar in any number of nineteenth century parodies, where the attack is on one particular poem. In some parodies the author may be savaging a distinct if widespread style, but even in these cases the meaning is limited to a comment on literary as distinct from social values. The clear distinguishing feature of what I would call parody is that it is essentially parasitic; it relies almost totally on some other poem for its meaning and indeed for its very existence.

Warburton seems correct when he points out that Pope does not parody serious poetry primarily to attack the literary values of the original authors. Even in The Rape of the Lock where he may be satirizing the conventions of the classical epic, the main direction of the allusion is to comment on his own society. Yet after saying all this we must ask ourselves whether the effect of the mock-epic style is as simple as Warburton suggests. One of the reasons why the Dunciad is truly funny, is the number of textual

7. Pope does, however, occasionally use this technique to attack his contemporaries, by using quotations from their work to furnish the actual attack. He also includes less direct references to their work, and makes this work seem absurd.
allusions where Pope deflects the meaning of the original by a small change. If we miss the allusive nature of these lines then the poem becomes a good deal less amusing (though never meaningless). The reader has to know and in some way care about the classical analogues or else the joke is likely to fall flat or even seem gratuitous. If the reader does see the allusion and thus get the joke, he does so by making a constant link between the text alluded to and the ridicule resulting from the allusion. When Milton uses a textual allusion, he may revalue the moral terms of the original text, but the value of the text as a piece of writing remains unchanged. Even when Milton re-uses a simile, we may feel that he is the better poet, but we don't feel prone to laugh at the classical original. In the Dunciad, despite Pope's conscious intention, it can be difficult at times to know whether we are laughing at the new lines Pope produces, or because we see how close to the ridiculous the classical passage is.

I selected Book 1 lines 195-8 for discussion because it is one that best fits Warburton's analysis of the effect of parody. There is at least one passage where I'm far less sure that he is correct: Dulness' speech before the noise-making contest:

"Now turn to diff'rent sports (the Goddess cries) And learn my sons, the wondrous pow'r of Noise, To move, to raise, to ravish ev'ry heart, With Shakespear's nature, or with Johnson's art, Let others aim: 'Tis yours to shake the soul With Thunder rumbling from the mustard bowl."

(2. 221-6).
Lines 221-6 are wonderfully developed. The way in which Pope establishes a rising series, 'move', 'raise', 'ravish' then keeps the poetry at the same pitch, complementing 'nature' and 'art' makes the extreme deflation of the next half line superbly bathetic. Our response as we read is almost to hold our breath, then let it explode in laughter as we read line 225. The rhetorical structure of these lines is very similar to the passage in the Aeneid where Anchises describes the destiny of Rome:

Others, for so I can well believe, shall hammer forth more delicately a breathing likeness out of bronze, coax living faces from the marble, plead causes with more skill, plot with the gauge the movements in the sky, and tell the rising of the constellations. But you, Roman, must remember that you have to guide nations by your authority, for this is to be your skill, to graft tradition onto peace, to show mercy to the conquered, and to wage war until the haughty are brought low.

(6. 847-52).

When we compare the two passages the primary effect is to stress the bathos of the descent in the Dunciad. This would be the kind of effect described by Warburton, but the relationship between the two passages may be more complex. Pope follows the structure of Virgil's lines very closely, though he compresses them, but this likeness in structure leads me to see a certain bathos in the original. The claim that we see Virgil making for the Romans is at once a lesser skill (at least in the way that the Romans actually managed it) and yet it is presumptuous to claim it. The implicit flattery of Augustus and the pat on the back that Virgil is giving the Roman people are the least attractive features of the Aeneid, and these
features find their fullest expression here. Thus it is possible to see this speech in the Dunciad as an attack on the 'imitated' as well as the 'imitating'.

The problem with the preceding piece of analysis is that it depends almost totally on my own reading of the Aeneid. There is no evidence to prove that Pope felt similarly about the passage except for a slight feeling generated by the closeness of the imitation. The only difference between my response to this passage and that from Book 1, which I discussed earlier, is that the emotion we find in the passages from the Aeneid to which Pope alludes earlier, is profound and genuine, whereas that under discussion verges on pomposity. If anything, the actual phrasing in the passage 1. 195-8 is closer to its classical analogues than this one, so it can't be claimed that Pope signposts a parodic intention, by exactly translating a passage with a meaning altered only by a change in context. One might go further and state that it is unlikely that Pope is satirizing Virgil's claim to Rome's greatness, since Pope uses the heroic history of Rome to attack the baseness and pettiness of those in power in his own time. There is little or no evidence here as to the existence of parody to be gained from examination of the subject matter. The only evidence of any kind, that I can offer for the presence of parody, is that the allusion is slightly superfluous, since we don't need to see it to recognise the bathos of Dulness's speech: but even this argument isn't very happy since we can easily argue that the passage from the Aeneid is a structural source rather than a functional allusion.

The only generalisation that all of this analysis affords us is that where ironic allusion exists, it may evoke an ambivalent
effect. When a passage imitates another, even only in structure, then it may be impossible for the reader to separate the later text and its analogue in his reading of either. If the original text is weak in any way then the process of ironic imitation will act to highlight this inadequacy.

The problems of detecting and analysing parody are like those of textual allusion, but made one step more difficult. After we have detected an allusion, we then have to decide the artist's intention before we can decide whether he is writing a parody or not. With a continuously parodic nineteenth century poem, the problem is relatively insignificant, but in a poem which is intermittently allusive, the detection of parody becomes nearly impossible. Several critics have discussed the presence of parody in the Dunciad with an assurance which seems at least somewhat dubious. Sutherland for examples states that:

With the Dunciad of 1728 Pope has returned to original work; but, if no longer translating, he was yet burlesquing, or parodying the Ancients. In this mock epic, as in The Rape of the Lock, he was careful to retain as many features of the true epic as possible; his model was, so to speak, the non-existent Margites of Homer. In addition to the epic features enumerated by Pope in "Martin Scriblerus of the Poem", one may note in Book I, the Proposition, Invocation, and Inscription; the Prayer to the Goddess and the Sacrifice (A i 135-212); the intervention of the Goddess, and her Prophecy (213-6, 245-55); the Acclamation of the Hero (A 256-60, B 319-30); in Book II the Games as in Odyssey [sic] XXIV and
Aeneid V: in Book III the Visit to the Underworld, and the Vision of future glories, with Settle acting the part of Virgil's Sybil. Pope's easy mockery of other and less important features of the classical epic will be found recorded in the notes; and Pope himself was careful to call attention to most of his verbal echoes of Homer, Virgil, Horace, and other authors, both ancient and modern, with whom he had made free.  

Highet goes one step further and assumes that the poem is a mixture of spiteful satire and venomous parody. He then prescribes a rule for parody which looks like an ill-considered rehash of Pound's advice to Eliot about the couplets in the first version of The Wasteland.

The essence of parody is that parody must improve on its original: it must concentrate the good qualities of its victim, and lighten his faults by humour.

Highet offers no evidence for this assumption; he offers no evidence for the presence of parody of classical authors in the Dunciad: he then proceeds to damn Pope because he doesn't comply with this rule. Both of these critics, and indeed many others, assume the presence of parody in the Dunciad, and both are using the word in the modern sense offered by the O.E.D. In my analysis of the speech in Book 2, I chose what I considered the most clearly parodic passage in the


poem, yet even here I found it impossible to prove the existence of parody. If these critics are so sure that the Dunciad is a parody, they must be able to point to specific sections of text and say 'this is parody' and prove it, but I have yet to see a critic who does so. Sutherland seems to assume that by listing the structural allusions in the poem, he has proved his point, but lists don't constitute proof. If Sutherland wants to talk of the 'easy mockery... of features of the classical epic' he must do more than annotate the sources of Pope's allusions. Similarly Highet's attempt to attack Pope by a silly definition of a quality, which he assumes in the poem, qualifies him for presence in that poem. We see allusion being used time and again to attack the dunces, but because the allusions are humorous we are not free to assume that they are necessarily parodic. The fact that classical allusions are associated with the folly of the dunces may lead us to make a kind of subliminal link between the two, but this sort of bond is a very different thing from real parody. While the effect of textual allusion may be more complex than it is described by Warburton, he was, I think, correctly describing Pope's intention in his use of classical textual allusion.

There are a large number of passages which Pope has composed by imitation of the classics, but the most noticeable classical features are the structural allusions. Certainly the use of consistent structural allusion can constitute parody, which I think happens in The Rape of the Lock, but the Dunciad doesn't work in the same way. Some of the features of the classical epic are there, but the poem is far less continuously reliant on the epic. Pope's material guides his use of epic forms rather than vice-versa.
Pope's use of structural allusion is basically similar to Milton's. In the previous chapter I showed how Milton uses it to suggest a moral response to the fallen angels. Similarly the primary and most noticeable effect of the structural allusion in the *Dunciad* is to suggest a moral response to the dunces. Despite this broad similarity, there are a number of differences in the two poets' use of the technique when we look in more detail. In reading the games in Book 2 and the War in Heaven in Books 5 and 6 of *Paradise Lost*, we do not need to remember sections of classical texts in detail for the effects of the allusions to be palpable. We need to know the outlines of the plots of the classical epics, and have some idea of the motives of the actions within them, but we don't need to consult specific lines to get Milton's point. Pope's structural allusions are more precise; he refers mainly to the *Aeneid* and a knowledge of the detail of the classical epic is helpful if not essential to our appreciation of the *Dunciad*. Unlike Milton, Pope inserts textual allusions within the larger framework, and the apparent separation of textual and structural allusion in my discussion is more for convenience than because the two are separate entities. If we look at Book 2 of the *Dunciad* we notice its similarity to Book 5 of the *Aeneid* as a structural unit, but there are a large number of textual allusions both to this and other books in Virgil's epic. So while we can talk of structural allusion working in both *Paradise Lost* and the *Dunciad* as an extended form of textual allusion, Pope's use tends to be more precise and consequently more amenable to analysis.
Although the Dunciad is not an epic, it yet has more of the epic about it than The Faerie Queene. Scattered through Spenser's poem we find a number of structural features of the classical epic, but they are used spasmodically and in an unclassical manner. If we compare the Proposition and Invocation in the two poems, this characteristic difference in style should be clear.

Lo I the man, whose muse whilome did maske
As time her taught, in lowly Shepherd's weeds,
And now enforst a far vnfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose prayses having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broad amongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithfull loues shall moralize my song.

Help then, O holy Virgin chiefe of nine,
Thy weaker Nouice to performe thy will,
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights and fairest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his underserved wrong:
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

(1 Pr I i-ii)

10. Many of the critical problems which have arisen from the poem seem to be there because the critics treat it as if it were a small classical epic. The most notable of these problems is the unity of the poem, and I shall discuss this later in this chapter.
The Mighty Mother, and her Son who brings
The Smithfield Muses to the ear of Kings,
I sing, Say you, her instruments the Great!
Call'd to this work by Dulness, Jove, and Fate;
You by whose care, in vain decry'd and curst,
Still Dunce the second reigns like Dunce the first;
Say how the Goddess bade Britannia sleep,
And pour'd her Spirit o'er the land and deep.

(1. 1-8).

Spenser is at least initially alluding to what he believed to be
Virgil's introduction to the Aeneid. For the first four lines he
follows this introduction quite closely, but quickly he discards
the terseness of the classical original. Three times in two stanzas,
Spenser uses a modesty topos: 'Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse
areeds', 'Help.../Thy weaker Nouice to performe thy will', and 'O
helpe thou, my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong'. I am not
suggesting that there is anything wrong with this use of a
convention, but it does slow down the pace of the introduction
considerably. In addition, the summary of the action to follow,
which we expect in the Proposition is both very vague and misleading;
for while the quest for Tanaquill by Arthur may have been the
projected core of the poem, it is a minor concern in the poem as
we have it.11 Spenser's Invocation and Proposition are leisurely;
they quickly lose any similarity to a classical analogue. The
lines establish the characteristic tone and pace of the whole poem,
and while we might commend their effectiveness, we are certainly
not tempted to see them as a re-creation of the classical epic.

11. This discrepancy cannot be attributed to the unfinished
state of the poem, since it should have become a major
theme by the time the action of the poem is half complete.
Pope's Proposition and Invocation to the *Dunciad* descends from its Virgilian counterpart. It catches some of the terseness and grandeur of the opening to the *Aeneid*, but it also establishes the ironic nature of the poem. As soon as we read the word 'Smithfield' we know that the poem is a mock-epic; but Pope doesn't burlesque the Virgilian original, for while the 'Smithfield Muses' may be present, so are 'Kings', 'the Great' and 'Jove'. Dulness may appear merely amusing as the sovereign goddess of the poem, but her first mention in the poem is as 'The Mighty Mother'. Thus the opening lines establish that ambivalence of feeling which continues throughout the poem. This opening stays close in tone to the Virgilian original despite the apparent plummet in the level of worthiness of the subject matter. Spenser intimates that he will be concerned with events which would merit the form of the classical epic, but he does so in a way which is foreign to the genre of epic, whereas Pope introduces his material in a very similar way to Virgil, but there is some suggestion that 'the Mighty Mother and her Son' are ludicrous subjects for such a treatment.

Pope relies on our noticing the similarity of his own introduction and the *Aeneid*'s, since much of the rest of the poem relies on our continuing to make this sort of link. It has a more important function in that it must establish the tone of simultaneous grandeur and absurdity, high comedy and seriousness, which we must appreciate to understand this poem. To grasp the *Dunciad* we must see that it is both very funny and very serious at the same time. If we exaggerate either quality we risk turning the poem into either an amusing period piece, or a grotesque and basically untrue
account of one man's sense of the death of a culture. It is very easy to fall into either of these positions but either one of them seriously damages the poem. If we look at Pope's introduction again we notice that the events that he is talking about are serious; the death of any culture is not merely funny. The re-use of Virgil's opening doesn't seem quite as inappropriate as it did at first sight, but we still do feel the oddness of seeing this corrupt society being treated with all the apparent seriousness and heightened tone that we find in the classical epic. As with so many other allusions, it is that sense of finding 'new wine in old bottles' that provides the poem's humour. The zest we feel in this writing comes from the way in which, though we expect the imitation, we are surprised by the ingenuity of the accomplishment. In the first version of the poem, the similarity between the Dunciad's Proposition and Invocation and that of the Aeneid was more marked. The lines had an effect more akin to parody than those in the second version. What Pope achieved in this second version is a sense of re-creation where the confusion of the form perfectly matches that of the subjects being described.

As we have seen in the discussion of other types of allusion, Pope almost always seems to be talking in the most elevated of voices. This ability, consistently to maintain an elevated tone, is one of the major reasons for the poem's success, but one senses that this is the reason for one of the longest standing grumbles about the Dunciad: that being a mock-epic, the poem must have an epic action. Dennis was the first to make this complaint, Warburton echoed it and more recently Highet, Reeves and to a lesser extent
Sutherland have perpetuated it. I should make one thing clear at the beginning of the discussion, and this is that I agree that the poem doesn't have a single unifying action. Williams' reply that the poem does have an action: the removal of the capital of the dunces from Grubstreet to St James' (modelled on Aeneas's resiting of Troy in Latium) is satisfactory in theory for the first Book, but not a felt presence within the poem as a whole. We may notice the hint in the Proposition and we may notice the series of allusions which suggest an action, but we are far more conscious of the individual happenings which aren't related to this epic action.

The term mock-epic is slightly misleading, since it has caused many readers to demand that the poem be a miniature funny epic, complete with an action as defined by Aristotle in the Poetics. What we find in the Dunciad is a series of episodes which are bound together by a unity of style and tone. The Dunciad is composed of a series of loosely connected structural conventions of the epic and Pope uses each of these structures as a basis from which he can organise his satirical materials. Within each situation we see Pope maintaining a unity of tone. Even the fourth Book which isn't

12. Williams of course takes the Scriblerian introduction as his starting point: but as Williams himself realises elsewhere, the use of Scriblerus as an outright mouthpiece for Pope's intentions is always dangerous. Williams seems to feel misgivings as to the validity of his own theory and he is careful to state that the poem's action is an 'analogy for an action' which operates as a symbol rather than as the backbone of the poem as a whole. Despite my disagreement on this point, I have found Williams' book Pope's Dunciad a very useful, intelligent and stimulating account of the poem and wish to acknowledge my general indebtedness to his work.
based on a classical structural allusion, maintains the elevated fiction of the duncical heroic. The sort of organisation that we find is not Aristotelian, but I (at least) find that it succeeds when we come to know the poem well enough. The Dunciad is one of the hardest poems in English to follow on the first reading. A number of factors contribute to this difficulty (perhaps the most major is the presence of the notes) but we certainly do feel disoriented by the shifts in what is being described. This particular difficulty decreases on subsequent readings, but it is also a feature intrinsic to the poem. The shifts I'm referring to aren't so much from one episode to another, (this difficulty of the first reading should disappear on the second), but the changes of attention within episodes. This constant alteration of the author's focus is one of the ways that Pope sustains the phantasmagoria which is the dunces' world. It is a world of palpable unfixity and transmutation. The union of form and meaning which I remarked on in my discussion of the textual allusions, is also present in the larger structural forms. These remarks are not meant to imply that I wholeheartedly approve of many of the difficulties of reading the poem; some of the satirical asides seem to me to deserve censure, but I am saying that the Dunciad is a unified whole and that most of the apparent difficulties of the poem result from a misapprehension of the poem's form. By over-emphasising form in terms of a hazy notion of genre theory, many readers miss the continuous almost surreal atmosphere of the poem, which binds the poem.

Pope's use of classical epic structures is to create a structure within his own poem from which he can gain his own ends.
If we look at his use of these conventions, we see Pope organising his own material around a certain theme, but not performing the sort of one-to-one inversion which is one of the marks of parody. Pope's description of Cibber's prayer and subsequent sacrifice of various books resembles similar accounts in earlier epics, and although there are several textual allusions in the passage, it isn't important that we notice them. What we must notice is that Cibber's actions are the re-enactment of actions of the epic heroic in terms of the duncical heroic. Just as an author of epic might use a set piece description of a prayer and sacrifice to demonstrate some of the qualities of his hero: his piety, his desire to help others, his desire for fame, and that quality possessed by those who have precise knowledge of ceremonies, so Pope does for his own hero, but in the _Dunciad_ everything is cast in terms of the (anti-)literary heroic. By using structural allusion Pope makes actions, which are inherently insane and wildly improbable, seem almost inevitable. Cibber is the hero of the poem, and it seems perfectly reasonable that he should perform the duties of the hero as prescribed in earlier accounts of heroic activity. The use of the classical form of the ceremony acts as an implicit criticism of Cibber's ideals; he prays for the continuation of the degraded status quo, and he sacrifices trivia, but more importantly Pope creates that characteristically hilarious vision of the dunces.

13. In this case the description seems to rely more on the _Iliad_, than the _Aeneid_, but the actual source is unimportant; Cibber's activity alludes to truly heroic activity.
The description of the actual sacrifice is superb in its balancing of the solemnity of the true epic and the absurdity of the actual event:

With that, a Tear (portentous sign of Grace!) Stole from the Master of the sev'nfold Face: And thrice he lifted high the Birthday brand, And thrice he dropt it from his quiv'ring hand; Then lights the structure, with averted eyes: The rowling smokes involve the sacrifice. The op'ning clouds disclose each work by turns, Now flames the Cid, and now Perolla burns, Great Caesar roars, and hisses in the fires; King John in silence modestly expires, No merit now the dear Nonjuror claims, Moliere's old stubble in a moment flames. Tears gush'd again, as from pale Priam's eyes When the last blaze sent Ilion to the skies.

(1. 243-256).

This passage is a splendidly transmuted piece of epic: the solemn repetition of 'thrice', the occasional epithet and the final sad simile, combine to make us recall other similar accounts. Indeed if we remember such occasions well enough and temporarily forget the word 'work' in line 249, the sacrifice is more spectacular than any classical sacrifice, since it appears to be a description of the sacrifice of great men. The vision of Caesar 'roaring' then 'hissing' and King John 'modestly expiring' would be tragic if it were real, but as the result of Cibber's 'Birthday brand' I find it irresistibly comic. There is a continuous comic tension maintained in the description, between the apparent pathos of the scene and the revelation of its inherent absurdity. For example the 'Tear' of line 243 suggests that we should pity the dunce, but this is undercut
by the fact that it is capitalized, as if there is something remarkable about it. The aside '(portentous sign of Grace!)' continues the ironic deflation of the dunce's sentiment, and finally the epithet, 'Master of the sev'nfold Face', completely destroys this latent pathos by suggesting that Cibber is merely a masterful actor. Having shaped our attitude to one manifestation of the dunce's emotion, Pope is free to describe Cibber's reactions, without any fears that the reader might be sucked in and mistake them for worthy sentiments. Indeed the more Cibber emotes the more ludicrous he appears. When he is compared with Priam he reaches the highest pitch of the absurdity, since we are led to see the immense discrepancy between the quality and the quantity of his emoting. The whole passage maintains an apparent seriousness which is worthy of the epic: even the wickedly apt epithet 'Master of the sev'nfold Face' looks genuinely classical, and we are consistently surprised by the smallness of the changes that Pope makes from the true epic to obtain his comic effects.

Most critics are happy with Book 1. They almost uniformly disapprove of Book 2. Several of the poem's most sensitive critics (Brower and Williams) disapprove of this episode. Both feel that the weight of proper names and the scatological content produce the sort of dulness which Pope satirizes in others. While I might agree with them about a few small sections of the Book, 14

14. For example the 'green vomit' lines in the description of the tapestry.
I can't agree with reference to the whole. Brower's evaluation of the parts of the Dunciad depends on his sensing the apocalyptic invasion of the world by duncery: when he finds this atmosphere he tends to approve of the poem, when he doesn't he tends not to. I think that he has divined the poem's central strength, but perhaps this guiding idea has made him insensitive to those parts where Pope's purpose is slightly different. As I have stated earlier, we risk distorting the poem if we forget that it is a comedy as well as a satire. Book 2 has two functions which I consider crucial to the success of the poem: the demonstration of the pertness, vitality and furious activity of the dunces, and the demonstration of Pope's ability as a poet even when compared with other past great poets. Pope writes with the assumption that 'mens sana in corpore sano' and proceeds by representing the result of the complete perversion of such an ideal. Having established the symbolic link between mental and physical activity, Pope is free to develop his theme. The zest and pleasure with which the dunces perform their sports becomes a powerful symbol of the gusto with which they perform their intellectual decivilising activities. Pope finds a superb solution to his problem of dramatizing and generalizing the dunces literary activities in the Games.

Unlike Book 1, Book 2 contains a large number of textual allusions which support the central structural allusion. I have examined a few of these earlier in this chapter: what I wish to do now is to consider the effect of this structural allusion to Virgil's games, in Book 5 of the Aeneid, with reference to a much larger section of the text. The presence of structural allusion
helps to bind together a series of apparently disparate events. Pope uses the Virgilian form of the description of the prize, followed by an account of the sport, then the prizegiving, then repeats and modifies the structure to describe each sport. He alludes to Virgil to maintain at least the outward seriousness of the description, for when he describes the scatological or merely absurd activities of the dunces, he needs the form to preserve decorum and the appearance of distancing himself from what he is describing. When Pope becomes merely abusive, the poetry tends to flag. The Virgilian model thus tends to act as a vessel for Pope's own creations and as an implicit criticism as we see the dunces re-enacting the athletic ideal in their own image.

All of these qualities are apparent if we look at the account of the diving contest. (2.269-358). There are a number of textual allusions in this passage which have a local effect, but the description of the contest as a whole doesn't have a particular analogue. Yet the structure of the description resembles that of a Virgilian description of one of his sports (the boat race is perhaps the closest). We are introduced to the site of the event, then the sport is named, the prizes are announced and the sport begins. The competition is fierce and close but finally the undisputed winner comes forth to claim his prize. All of this is done with the grandest of tones; even the repellent Thames is made to seem majestic. The use of words such as 'disemboguing', 'large tribute' and 'King of dykes' contributes to that sense we have that this is a worthy site for heroic games. Of course each of these phrases contains its own ironic suggestion: when we work out
what 'disemboguing' actually means, when we see what the 'large tribute' is and when we see that to be the 'King of dykes' is a mixed blessing, we feel the atmosphere of dirty grandeur, characteristic of the Book. The effect is not simply one of bathos but a perverse magnificence worthy of the dunces. When the goddess announces the sport we may see the activity as physically unattractive, but it is described in such a generalized way that again it seems a perverse re-creation of classic sports rather than merely disgusting. The phrase 'dark dexterity' morally labels the skill involved yet preserves the dunces' respect for their sport. It is this seriousness of the dunces and the straight face of the author which prevents the Book from collapsing into mere farce. The descent into pure bathos is just kept off, and a rich and vivid comedy results from the ever shifting balance of the surge of the diction and the reality being described.

The description of the actual contestants is splendidly mythologized. The links between Oldmixon and Milo, Mother Osborne and Niobe and Smedley and Hylas all create that sense of something rich and strange. This is a new kind of world created by refracting an old well known world. Smedley is just about as un-Hylas-like as one could get, yet in this upside-down world he evokes the same sort of emotions in his audience as Hylas did in the more normal world of the classical myths. This sense of deranged archetypes finds its finest description in the section on the mud-nymphs. Pope is

15. The initial link is forged at 2. 293-4 by the allusion to the Eclogues (6. 43-4) then the link is continued from 2.336.
creating his own mythology by using bits and pieces from the past. Here we sense that the poet has fully absorbed all external influences and is able to synthesize something of his own which embodies all the best features of the poem. The description is grand, it is pictorially evocative and it has the almost unique feeling of warped beauty found in the *Dunciad*. It is here, and in passages like it, that we see Pope forging a new version of the epic which is poetically rich and weirdly attractive. In over-emphasising the satire of the poem, we miss or discount the interest and vitality of Pope's new version of the epic-pastoral.

This episode in the Games and indeed almost the whole of Book 2 succeeds because Pope has used an epic form for re-creation not parody. The urination contest, which I discussed earlier, works with a very difficult subject yet emerges as a legitimate epic description in this strange new world. Pope does not use Virgil's accounts of each of the sports, then twist them to make them funny, rather he re-creates the sports in a manner suited to his own times. Rather than being parodic Pope relies on our being able to see the classic games intact so that we can see the interest and vivacity of his own Games. The interaction between Pope's creation and Virgil's description can be very amusing, but it isn't the simple and ultimately wearisome humour of parody or travesty. When Sutherland writes of the 'easy mockery' of burlesque or parody I think that he is mistaking the apparent form for the actual function of this and other allusions in the poem. Our urge in reading such poetry is not to laugh at Virgil, or any other classical author, but to concede the consummate skill of the poet who can dabble...
in describing dirty activities and still appear calm, even solemn: a poet who can create a strange kind of epic with the obstacle of such subject matter. Pope's claims are less than those expressed in Milton's competitive allusions, for Milton demands that we see him as a better writer than the classical authors; Pope is asking that we see his equality given the handicap of an apparently unworthy subject. Pope's Games are more vigorous and show a greater zest for writing than Virgil's occasionally flat fifth Book. The mad games of the dunces show competitors more interested in their sport and an author more interested in his subject than Virgil. This is not to say that the dunces' vivacity and flair are virtues; indeed they are the reverse, rather these qualities in the dunces are communicated by the enthusiasm and energy of Pope's style.

Book 3 is the closest in the **Dunciad** to a specific classical analogue. There are a large number of textual allusions to Book 6 of the **Aeneid**, particularly to the last section where Aeneas talks to Anchises, and the structure of Pope's work is very close to that of the second half of Book 6 of the **Aeneid**. Almost all of the incidents in this section may be tracked to a specific Virgilian original. Whereas in Book 2 of the **Dunciad**, the allusion was to a structural whole, with the specific likenesses being intermittent, here we see a number of one-to-one correspondences. This degree of similarity again prompts the question as to the presence of parody. Again I would state that I find it hard to see any evidence for its presence, indeed Pope transfers some of the grandeur of the original text into his own, and the vision of duncery triumphant that we witness is a re-enactment of the vision of the **Aeneid**, rather
than a travesty of it. There is, however, one very funny section at the start of Book 3 (23-34), the reincarnation of the dunces, where Pope gains his effect by adding to the Virgilian analogue rather than by changing it greatly.

The stoic neo-platonic metaphysics of Virgil's account of regeneration seems particularly open to attack, and one suspects that such metaphysics would have held little attraction for Pope; but if we read the passage and its context carefully, Pope's humorous attack seems to be focused totally on the dunces. The humour comes from the way in which the metaphysical mechanism seems so perfectly suited to the dunces, not because metempsychosis is laughable in itself. There may be the faintest undertones of parody, but our detection of its presence is swamped by the ludicrousness of the dunces themselves.

The first part of Book 3 draws on some of the sublimity of the prophecy in the Aeneid Book 6. The sense that we get of duncery as a whole is analogous to that we get of the destiny of Rome in the Aeneid, but where the influence of Rome is benign, that of duncery is destructive, and lines 67-122 are a catalogue of destruction. This progress is changed at 3.130, where there is a simile involving Berecynthia which is almost directly translated from the Aeneid (6. 784). This simile marks the presence of a transition in both works. In the Aeneid, Anchises' focus shifts from Virgil's distant past to the immediate past and the author's present, similarly the account in the Dunciad moves from the account of past dulness to that of Pope's contemporaries. In both
cases the author describes the present relevant to the contemporary reader. While the structural allusion of the first half of Book 3 acts to make us see the great and perverted destructive power of dulness, the second half is less straightforward. Initially we feel the overwhelming triviality of each of the dunces when we compare them with the exemplary behaviour of the Roman heroes. The structural allusion yokes each of the dunces with a specific hero and dismisses him by the comparison. The consideration of one example of this should make the effect clear:

A second see, by meeker manners known,
And modest as the maid who sips alone;
From the strong fate of drams if thou get free,
Another Durfey, Ward! shall sing in thee.

(3. 143-6).

Piteous boy, if somehow you can break through your harsh destiny, you also shall be Marcellus.

(6. 881-3).

In the *Aeneid*, Anchises prays that the mysterious figure may survive to become another great martial hero: if he lives he will certainly be a great man. Whereas the highest possibility open to the figure in the *Dunciad* is to be a miserable poet or scribbler. Instead of the mysterious but poignant 'harsh destiny' of the *Aeneid*, we see the ludicrous but self inflicted 'strong fate of drams' where the inclusion of the word 'fate', with its solemn implication of imposition, is perfectly incorrect. Instead of the heroic figure of the *Aeneid*, we see a trivial and corrupt figure whose only ambition is to be more trivial and more corrupt. The humour of the
episode derives from the implication that to act like the 'second' figure is to become the Marcellus of the dunces' world. Drunkenness and scribbling are the qualifications for entry into the heroic ranks of the dunces.

This process of belittlement is not, however, the only effect of the structural allusion. Rome's greatness resulted from the efforts of a series of heroes which culminates in the reign of Augustus. It is their cumulative efforts which make possible the age of Augustus. As Virgil states, he is

son of the Deified, and founder of golden centuries once more in Latium, in those same lands where once Saturn reigned; he shall extend our domain beyond the Garamantians and the Indians in a region which lies outside the path of the constellations.

(6. 794-7).

Similarly the great or golden/leaden age of dulness is only achieved through the efforts of the individual dunces, not by some fiat of their goddess. The apocalyptic success of dulness may occur in the time of Cibber but each of the earlier dunces has performed his individual acts which lead to the final achievement of 'Saturnian times'. The structural allusion thus paradoxically acts to enhance the importance of each of the dunces while it also belittles them. Though they may seem absurd, it is their acts which make the final dissolution possible. Pope creates a metaphor through the allusion, whereby the trivial scribblers become symptoms of the important malaise which afflicts his society. Through the structural allusion Pope makes us see that the dunces are ludicrous
but he also makes us see their importance as symbols.

The third Book, more than any other, depends on the interaction between it and its classical analogue. The distortion of Virgil's text results in our seeing the deformity and corruption of the society about to be created by and for the dunces. One comes to understand the prophecy in the Dunciad as being what Anchises might have said, had he been in Tartarus rather than the Elysian fields. By this I don't mean that Book 3 is a mechanical inversion of Virgil's positive ideals; rather it is a nightmarish transmutation of a vision of history. Pope uses Virgil's structure to remake the world in the image of the dunces, but the result, with its air of a bad dream, is all his own.

One cannot talk of the function of the structural allusion of the fourth book since it doesn't depend on a classical analogue. Indeed critics are still arguing as to what its structural source and basis really is. This implies neither that the Book is structureless, nor that it detaches itself from the poem to form an independent unit, because of the difference in structure. The characteristic tone of the poem is continued in Book 4, and if anything the almost surreal atmosphere of the duncical heroic is stronger here; so that the achievement of all of Dulness' desires furnishes a logical and satisfying conclusion to expectations.

16. Similarly the ascent of the mountain than the description of future events is like Michael's exposition of man's future to Adam. This section of the Dunciad suggests an account that Satan might have given Cain of man's future.
created in the rest of the poem.

If we review the analysis of the effects of structural allusion in Books 1-3 we see that the presence of parody would actually harm the effectiveness of Pope's use of allusions. Since the humour of these Books springs from our sense of a standard being perverted then re-created the satire of the dunces would become markedly less effective if the standard were also being satirized. When Sutherland remarks on the notes being provided to ensure that we see the 'easy mockery' of epic conventions, I believe that he is wrong. They are there to ensure that the reader won't miss the satiric function of the allusions. In the notes, we see how the dunces veer from classical standards; the notes are not an exposition of the foolishness of classical authors. I am being slightly unfair to Sutherland since he also argues for the primacy of the satiric intent of the allusions, but his failure to prove his assertion about parody is a flaw in an otherwise scholarly and intelligent introduction to the poem.

Paradise Lost and the Dunciad made it almost impossible for any author to successfully write an English epic of classical form. Between them they had covered the ground that any future author might hope to use. Milton sublimely fused Christian matter with

17. I would maintain however that The Rape of the Lock is at least intermittently parodic, since Pope is not merely satirizing his own society. We see the beauty of this civilisation as well as its weaknesses and the parody acts to stress some of the virtues of the time, as well as the allusion suggesting its weaknesses.
classical form, while Pope captured the tone of the Aeneid and adapted it almost perfectly to his subject. Rather than laughing the classical epic out of existence, Pope re-created it in such a way that any commonplace Virgilian imitator must necessarily appear to be following Pope. In the years that followed the publication of the final version of the Dunciad, epic continued to be written, but the authors became much shyer of epic machinery and structural conventions, indeed the title long poem rather than epic became more and more applicable. Even these compromise structures didn't really succeed and even their names are lost to all but the specialist literary historian.  

The next long poem/epic of great note was The Prelude, and while we might discuss the function of Miltonic allusion in this poem, it is clear that the poem is unlike the classic epic in both its subject and its structure.

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18. There is a fascinating description and discussion of these poems in P. Hagin The Epic Hero and the Decline of Heroic Poetry (Bern 1964).
CONCLUSION

When I started this thesis I hoped to call it 'The Changing Function of Classical Allusion in Three English Epics', where the crucial word in the title was the last. Although *Paradise Lost* is an epic by any criteria we might use, this cannot be said about either *The Faerie Queene* or the *Dunciad*. The standard generic description of *The Faerie Queene* is romance-epic, but both I and most other critics are more aware of the romance elements than those of the epic. A more appropriate description might be a romantic allegorical narrative. Similarly the *Dunciad* isn't really an epic, if only because of its subject and size. In its creation of epic forms, it comes closer to being an epic than *The Faerie Queene*, but for all the dangers of the terms, mock-epic is the more appropriate generic description.

Having established that I couldn't use a convenient unifying title, I have been left with the one I have; but despite the fragmentary implications of such a title, there is perhaps more continuity in this study than such a title or the contents of the individual chapters imply: for the poems represent an attempt to write similar poems under different historical circumstances. Spenser believed that he was writing an epic and so did Milton, and despite the satirical function of the scholarly apparatus to the *Dunciad*, and indeed the satire of the poem itself, the *Dunciad* represents an attempt to re-create epic in a form suitable for the times. Of course any epic that any of these three poets could have written, even if they had been contemporaries, would have been profoundly different because of their artistic personalities, but the genre they all aimed at was the epic. The results they
achieved were startlingly different. The study of how each of these three poets used classical allusion provides some index to both the nature of the poetry and the historical constraints imposed on the poet. A brief review of some of the findings of the earlier chapters may suggest some reasons for the changes we see.

The dominant allusive mode of *The Faerie Queene* is mythological. There are several structural allusions and no textual allusions. When Spenser wrote *The Faerie Queene* there were various compendia of mythological material available to him. We know that he used Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum* and Natalis Comes' *Mythologiae*, and he may have used other Italian mythographers. In these he could find summaries (of varying accuracy) of the actions and attributes of classical gods, goddesses, minor deities, heroes, heroines and generally noteworthy figures. There were, however, few commonly available editions of the Latin authors and even fewer Greek authors. Most scholars are uncertain how many classical texts Spenser knew, but apart from the *Metamorphoses* and the *Aeneid* I would be hesitant in asserting that he knew any others well. Even in cases where Spenser is directly imitating a classical author, we almost always find that passage cited by a mythographer. There is of course the chance that Spenser was remembering the original lines and their context, but the assumption that this is the case is very risky. I am not certain that there are no textual allusions in *The Faerie Queene* but I've yet to be convinced that one is present.
Spenser does, however, know his mythology very well (despite the occasional eccentricities) as we can see from the obliqueness and terseness of some of his allusions, but he is not always careful to control the suggestions generated by his allusions. Sometimes we feel that Spenser is continuing a mythological allusion after the point where it is relevant to his poem. I am uncertain why he does this, but one of the more plausible explanations is that such passages represent a demonstration of virtuosity akin to that we see in Milton's Mulciber simile. I can't prove this, but Spenser was writing at a time when mythological poetry, particularly the epyllion, was becoming popular, and the impulse to be seen to be a master of this kind of poetry must have been pressing. In addition, the use of the myths was new enough for them to seem interesting, but old enough for them to have an attractive familiarity. Spenser writes with the prodigality of one who is not afraid of the problem of originality. While the myths may have been explored by other poets at the time, he had little to fear from an earlier English tradition having fully 'used up' this material. He lived at a time when most authors were sufficiently ignorant of the classical tradition not to be blocked by it.

Though Spenser was respected as a classical student and scholar by some of his friends, it should be noted that they were his friends in Ireland, rather than his more educated acquaintances in England. I don't find evidence of a man who had read widely or deeply in classical literature. Milton is different in both his scholarship and his historical situation. The toleration of the pagan deities in a poetic fiction, that Spenser unquestioningly
assume is much less possible for Milton in his period, and one senses that it is impossible for this man in particular, at least towards the end of his life when he wrote Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. The problem of using classical material in Christian literature had been discussed even before Saint Augustine wrote on the subject; and the attitudes of theologians, and more generally that of the church oscillated between benevolent disinterest concerning what poets did with the myths, and (apparently) implacable condemnation of mythological poetry. One hears of few influential Elizabethans condemning the myths and their use, but by Milton's time, particularly during the Commonwealth, the use of the myths and classical literature generally fell into disfavour. Milton, as ever, establishes his own balance, and while he uses the classics he does so disapprovingly.

Milton is frequently referred to as the most widely read scholar of his time in England: both the number of his allusions and the obscurity of some of them bolster this assertion. It should be added that it was easier for him to become such a scholar than it would have been for Spenser. The production of more reliable editions (and in some cases first editions) of classical texts made it easier for Milton to become acquainted at first hand, with a large body of classical literature. Yet both Milton's scholarship and his historical position made it more difficult for him to write originally than Spenser. By the time that Milton wrote Paradise Lost, the use of mythological names, as a kind of literary shorthand, had developed to such an extent that the myths were difficult to use without the risk of either plagiarism or
cliché. Milton still uses the mythological allusions but most often there is an implicit moral comment in his references. They are introduced to serve as a parallel for a past fall, as hints of an impending fall or to remind readers that their own point of view is the fallen world. We find a unity of intent in the allusions in *Paradise Lost*. This is not found in *The Faerie Queene*, for while many of Spenser's monsters are supplied with impeccably classical bloodlines, he also likens several of his heroes to Hercules. Acrasia is compared to Circe, but the Venus of the Garden of Adonis is recognisably Venus Genetrix. Spenser uses classical analogues for both good and bad beings, while Milton reserves his uses for evil or at least flawed beings of his poem. The change in attitude from Spenser to Milton could be attributed to the difference between the decorum of a romance/epic and that of a religious epic, but this is at best a partial answer. We must also consider the religious atmosphere of the two periods, the greater intellectual rigour of the later poet, and the greater pressure on Milton to use the myths in an innovative fashion.

As well as the differences in their uses of mythological allusion, we also find a far greater number of textual and structural allusions in *Paradise Lost* than *The Faerie Queene*. This is attributable to the later poet's greater knowledge of the classical epic and his consequently greater awareness of how these poems work. This knowledge brings with it the problem of originality: how is a poet, who is a Christian, to write an epic without sounding like a weak echo of Virgil? The problem had defeated other great poets, notably Petrarch and Ronsard, but it
was triumphantly overcome by Milton. Milton's textual allusions are used to a consistent purpose to suggest the superiority of Christian over pagan material, and at least to imply the superiority of the Christian poet over his classical predecessors. Instead of using Virgilian forms and incidents without acknowledging that Virgil ever existed, Milton makes the distinction between himself and Virgil clear. He may take over some of the conventions of the previous epic but he reworks them in such a way that they become his own.

Milton's achievement in creating the Christian epic is staggering. He is virtually alone in Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe in managing to use the classical tradition without being either swamped by this tradition and becoming a mere imitator, or frustrated into the perverse eccentricity of a poem like the Davideis. Milton was faced with the problem of originality and overcame it in Paradise Lost, but his very success made the problem insuperable for all who came after him. The secular epic was impossible in a Christian civilisation yet the religious epic was now equally impossible. Epics following Paradise Lost make for fascinating reading as literary history, but very dull reading as Pope points out at the end of Book 2 of the Dunciad. Pope himself intended to write an epic ('Brutus') but gave up the task as fruitless. His responses to the urge to write epic were his translations, The Rape of the Lock and the Dunciad.

1 Tasso is perhaps the only poet who can bear comparison with Milton in this regard, and I, at least, find Milton's by far the more impressive performance.
By the time that Pope wrote the Dunciad, classical culture was immeasurably more easily available than for either Spenser or Milton. Despite his educational disadvantage in being a Catholic, there were both authoritative editions of large numbers of Greek and Latin authors and perhaps more important, translations of these authors into English or French, which were readily available. Pope had the benefit of a more easily acquired education but he also had the disadvantage of far fewer things to do with it. Mythological poetry was almost impossible to write seriously; indeed in the Dunciad we see that Pope almost relies on the sense of cliche associated with the myths in order to seem more witty in his use of them. Even classical imitation was becoming a crowded field; it was still possible, as Pope's own masterly 'Imitations of Horace' demonstrate, but it was difficult. Given the urge to write an epic, the task was nearly impossible: Pope's re-creation of the Aeneid was perhaps the only use that could still be made of it. The Dunciad involves much closer imitation of a specific classical epic than either The Faerie Queene or Paradise Lost, but while Pope's originality was limited by this link, it gave him a far greater number of poetic means at his disposal; allusion is far more central to the meaning of the poem than in Spenser's or Milton's poems. His re-creation of his own world in terms of a corrupt and degenerate imitation of the heroic world of the epic is a demonstration of the possibilities of allusion in the hands of a great poet.

The progression that we see in these three poets is an exploration and discovery of the uses of classical allusion; it
is put to more complex and more wide-ranging uses. With this growth in the sophistication of the poets' technique there is an almost directly proportional decrease in the variety of uses to which it can be put. The problem of originality was almost non-existent when Spenser wrote *The Faerie Queene* but was almost crushing by the time that Pope wrote the *Dunciad*. The classical forms and subjects were consumed as poets learnt more and more about them and thus we see a simultaneous growth and restriction within the English poetic tradition.

There is continuity in the use of classical allusion in these three poets. All of them use allusion to assert standards of morality and magnitude in their poems. This general similarity should not, however, blind us to differences in the precision and consistency of their uses. Each poet gains and loses something by the decisions that he makes: Pope, for example, risks the limitation of his meaning by being almost too precise in his allusions, while Spenser's poem suffers from a diffuseness which is in part attributable to his mode of allusion. Milton's use is the most intellectually satisfying, but this is of course only part of the achievement of the greatest English poet.
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