

ENLIGHTENMENT ALLEGORY: ADAPTING THE
ALLEGORICAL FORM IN BRITISH LITERATURE, 1660-1750

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Allegory is a literary form that teaches through misdirection, telling its readers it is about one thing while actually being about another. It encourages readers to interpret figuratively for religious, political, or moral meanings rather than look only at the narrative's literal meaning. *Enlightenment Allegory* argues that the period from about 1660 to about 1750 is especially important for the history of allegory. During this period, allegory adapted to many of the historical and cultural changes accompanying the British Enlightenment—including the increasing authority of empirical epistemology, the gradual spread of secular thinking, and the growing expectation for semiotic transparency. The project's main argument is that eighteenth-century writers responded to these changes by modalizing the allegorical genre, meaning that they separated the previously indivisible literary form into its components and used those components apart from their original overarching structure. This process of modalization resulted in the coexistence of generic and modal allegory, with some writers approaching it as a self-

contained, continuous genre and others as a mode that could be used selectively and discontinuously.

Many of the most eminent scholars of allegory contend that it did not survive the transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. *Enlightenment Allegory* challenges this argument. Enlightenment writers approached allegory not as an obsolete literary form, but as one that could be adapted for an audience becoming increasingly invested in empiricism and secularism—that is, in the here and now—as authoritative ways of understanding the world. But how individual writers adapted allegory in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries varied greatly: some wrote allegories with a degree of concrete detail unprecedented for the form; others used personified abstractions to describe secular, worldly concepts; and others encased allegories within predominantly literal texts. Allegory was a remarkably versatile form that had the potential for being, on the one end of the spectrum, a literary genre that consistently gestured towards ulterior meanings and, on the other end, a mode that could be used intermittently and even mixed with more literal and discursive modes.

Enlightenment Allegory consists of two parts, each divided into two chapters. Part I studies the changing role and status of allegory in Restoration England, using John Bunyan and John Dryden as chief examples. Chapter 1 argues that Bunyan responds to the growing authority of empiricism by infusing allegory with an unprecedented amount of concrete detail. This infusion leads Bunyan into a problem. Though empirical and concrete detail is a powerful way to teach his readers about the spiritual realm, it also runs the risk of reinforcing his readers' tendencies to focus on literal instead of allegorical meaning. Bunyan acknowledges this problem of overinvestment in the literal and

responds by, first, connecting his allegories to biblical precedent and, second, including marginal notes that draw the reader's attentions away from the literal signifiers and towards the allegorical signifieds.

Chapter 2 strengthens our understanding of Restoration allegory by shifting to Dryden's poetry. I argue that Dryden, like Bunyan, helps move allegory in the direction of the empirical and temporal. He does this not by including concrete detail in religious allegories (as Bunyan does), but by using allegory to represent the historical and political. In *Absalom and Achitophel* Dryden uses the *modus operandi* of political allegory—which functions by using one set of particular persons or characters to discuss real-life politicians—to discuss the events of the Exclusion Crisis under the guise of retelling the biblical story of Absalom's rebellion against King David. In *The Hind and the Panther* Dryden also uses the allegorical form to represent the political and temporal, but in a strikingly different way. He uses the beast fable form, understood at the time as a subsection of allegory, to criticize the Protestants' demonization of Catholics and to draw attention to the negative political manifestations of Protestant beliefs. Dryden also treats the allegorical beast fable as a mode of writing that can be mixed with more literal and discursive modes, departing significantly from earlier iterations of the form like those of Spenser and Bunyan.

Part II brings the analyses of Bunyan and Dryden to bear on eighteenth-century versions of the allegorical form. It looks at how various writers incorporated allegory into their texts, even when those texts were not members of the allegorical genre. Chapter 3 examines how writers incorporated allegory into their satires, using Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and Alexander Pope's *The Dunciad* as particularly illustrative examples.

Both of these two texts, though not allegories themselves, borrowed allegory as a powerful satirical instrument. In *Tale of a Tub* Swift oscillates between a religious allegory about three brothers—representing the Catholic, Protestant dissenting, and Anglican churches—and digressions that portray allegorical reading in a negative light, asking his readers to find a middle ground between unlicensed allegorical reading that can be used to serve one's self-interests and superficial reading that misses a text's hidden meaning. In *Dunciad* Pope intermingles personified abstractions such as Dulness with real-life individuals, using a traditional convention of allegory without committing fully to the genre. Despite differences between the two texts, both *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad* use allegory intermittently, pushing the form towards being an occasional mode as well as a self-contained genre. Both texts also use the allegorical mode to push against an over-reliance on the concrete and empirical, *Tale of a Tub* by satirizing the indulgent experiments of the Royal Society and *Dunciad* by modelling, through the speaker, how to think about history in both abstract and specific terms. Adapting allegory to the eighteenth century does not only mean bringing the form into accordance with emerging interests and investments. It also means using the form to react against those interests and investments.

The general shift from generic to modal allegory is not absolute, but rather leads to the coexistence of the two. This is made especially clear in Chapter 4, which focuses on the role played by both generic and modal allegory in eighteenth-century periodical essays. The chapter examines a range of periodical essays written during the period, looking both at how critics discussed allegory and at the uses of allegory in the essays themselves. I argue that Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Samuel Johnson and others

bring allegory into accordance with an increasing focus on literary decorum, if we understand this phrase not in the strict, overbearing sense sometimes attributed to the eighteenth century but as denoting a general focus on reception and plausibility and on the congruity of a text's various components. These writers created aesthetic principles for managing generic and modal allegory and then used specific strategies to satisfy those principles. *Enlightenment Allegory* ends with a coda focusing on one of Johnson's aesthetic principles, in particular. Johnson, in his comments on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, argues that writers should separate allegorical figures from literal characters when using modal allegory by making allegorical figures immaterial and literal character material. His argument is typical of contemporary criticism in its insistence that writers should properly distinguish between the literal and the allegorical.

My manuscript will make significant contributions not only to the field of allegory studies, but to our understanding of genre theory during the British Enlightenment. It argues against the kind of literary history that associates the transformation of traditional genres like allegory with the demise of those genres. In many ways, allegory is a test case: studying its transformation throughout the Enlightenment yields insights into how the period's writers approached a literary genre that many associated with the religious and political worldviews of medieval and early modern culture. Enlightenment writers were tremendously resourceful in picking and choosing components from traditional literary genres, treating them not only as genres in and of themselves but as modes that could be used within existing and emerging genres. Far from fading away, traditional literary forms persisted through changing literary and historical conditions.

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INTRODUCTION

Allegory in the Age of Enlightenment: Or, Rethinking Allegory's Demise

Allegory has always been the phantom in the opera of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholarship. It won't go away, but neither will it come forward for inspection.

Kevin L. Cope¹

I have found "allegorical" a splendid term to cover up one's ignorance, but a useless one for communicating any valuable information.

Arnold Williams²

Some of the most important scholarship on allegory claims that the literary form faded away after the Renaissance. In *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory* (1959), Edwin Honig argues that Enlightenment empiricism led allegory into a "literary dead end." He asserts that by the late seventeenth century allegory was a genre with nowhere to turn, because culture demanded a focus on the concrete and demonstrable over the abstract.³ Michael Murrin similarly contends that allegory died around 1660.⁴ Marilyn Francus's more recent references to the "abandonment of allegory, which began in the

¹ Kevin L. Cope, *Enlightening Allegory: Theory, Practice and Contexts of Allegory in the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1993), xiii.

² Arnold Williams, "The English Moral Play before 1500," *Annuaire Mediaevale* 4 (1963): 9.

³ Edwin Honig, *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory* (1959; reprint, Brown University Press, 1982), 39. He also writes that "Opinion about allegory in literary histories is fairly unanimous: most agree that it is dead but disagree about the date of its demise," 5. The notion that allegory is dead is ubiquitous in literary criticism. For a brief survey of accounts of allegory's purported demise, see *The Vitality of Allegory: Figural Narrative in Modern and Contemporary Fiction*, ed. Gary Johnson (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 1-5. J.E. Spingarn argues that Neo-Aristotelianism and Neo-Classicism made allegory practically obsolete by the time Ben Jonson was writing, *A History of Literary Criticism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1930), 276-79.

⁴ Michael Murrin, *The Veil of Allegory: Some Notes Toward a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 199-212 and *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in its Rise and Decline* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 173-96.

seventeenth century with the rise of empiricism” is even more telling because it restates Honig’s and Murrin’s shared argument as an established fact.⁵

In his poem “The Death of Allegory” (1999) Billy Collins engages with the notion of allegory’s demise, lamenting the loss of lamenting the loss of “those tall abstractions/that used to pose, robed and statuesque, in paintings/and parade about on the pages of the Renaissance/displaying their capital letters like license plates.”⁶ He reflects on the process by which the abstractions of allegory have been banished to a “Florida of tropes” to make way for condominiums and “objects that sit quietly on a line in lower case.”⁷ Collins treats with a degree of nostalgia the time when personified abstractions (Truth, Chastity, Courtesy, Villainy, etc.) and allegorical locations (the Garden of Mirth, the Bower of Bliss, etc.) were conventions, opposing it to the relative triviality of modern culture. The death of allegory is part of the process whereby the modern age has become insipid and lifeless.

The prevailing metaphors for discussing allegory after the seventeenth century—dead end, death, and abandonment—are inadequate. They are symptomatic of an overinvestment in the medieval and Renaissance notions of allegory, equating literary change with the demise of the form. Recently scholars—especially Theresa Kelley and Jane Brown—have pushed against allegory’s purported demise. They have argued compellingly that allegory, far from dying with the rise of empiricism, played a pivotal

⁵ Marilyn Francus, “The Monstrous Mother: Reproductive Anxiety in Swift and Pope,” *ELH* 61 (1994): 844 and *Monstrous Motherhood: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Ideology of Domesticity* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 41.

⁶ Billy Collins, “The Death of Allegory,” in *Questions about Angels* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), ll. 1-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 11, 24.

role in post-Enlightenment and even modern writing.⁸ This body of scholarship has done us the service of partially freeing us from the notion that allegory simply stopped being important after the Renaissance.

This dissertation arose out of the conviction that the more recent scholarship is on the right track, but that we still do not sufficiently understand the role and status of allegory during the Enlightenment.⁹ Until now, attempts to argue that allegory does continue through the eighteenth century have been defensive and even apologetic.

Enlightenment Allegory seeks to present a more positive and more sophisticated series of arguments about the transformation of allegory in the modern period. It looks at how allegory adapted to the cultural changes accompanying the Enlightenment—including the increasing dominance of the empirical worldview, the process of secularization, and the rise of the modern aesthetic.¹⁰ Limiting discussion to the purported death of allegory after the Renaissance means missing the complexities of the Enlightenment’s engagement with one of the most pervasive and influential literary forms of earlier periods. It also means holding onto a notion of allegory as a rigid form that is ultimately irreconcilable with

⁸ See Theresa M. Kelley, *Reinventing Allegory* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 70; Jane K. Brown, *The Persistence of Allegory: Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). Brown also calls the eighteenth century “the most difficult and significant period in the history of allegory, the period in which allegory is believed to have disappeared but in fact underwent profound transformation” in “*Reinventing Allegory* by Theresa Kelley: Review,” *Modern Philology* 98 (2001): 643.

⁹ Even those scholars focusing on the transformation of allegory tend to skip over the eighteenth century as an important period in that transformation. See Gay Clifford, *The Transformations of Allegory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1977); Paul de Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality,” in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 207; Brenda Machosky, *Structures of Appearing: Allegory and the Work of Literature* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013), 10-3. And a recent collection of essays dedicated to rethinking the history of allegory, *Thinking Allegory Otherwise* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), supports the notion that allegory persists throughout the Enlightenment, but the collection as a whole does not advance our knowledge of Enlightenment allegory. A notable exception to the tendency to gloss over the Enlightenment is the essay collection *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit..

¹⁰ Deborah L. Madsen argues that the understanding of allegory as a rigid genre has prevented us from putting the form within its changing cultural context, *Rereading Allegory: A Narrative Approach to Genre* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 132.

empiricism and secularization. Allegory, however, is far from rigid. Writers experimented with the form throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is in fact more versatile and resilient than scholars often recognize.

The term “The Enlightenment” has many different meanings for scholars, and can be a deceptive term because of its singularity and apparent simplicity. As it is understood in this dissertation, the Enlightenment was a process of uneven development through which the empirical, the secular, and the literal became increasingly authoritative as means of understanding the world.¹¹ It is not accurately characterized by a linear progression from an age of superstition to an age of reason (though many eighteenth-century writers understood it this way), but as a zig-zagging progression that involved, in general, a growing investment in the here and now.¹² During this period, the material and the literal became more than signifiers for the sacred; they became signifieds in and of themselves. As I understand it, the British Enlightenment thrived not on rejecting the artistic forms of the past, but on retooling those forms for an audience becoming increasingly invested in the here and now.¹³

I. Definitional and Methodological Questions: What is Allegory? How do we study it?

¹¹ The phrase “uneven development” is taken from a tradition of Marxist criticism that analyzes how historical processes occur at various social and economic levels at different rates. For a particularly helpful discussion of this term, see Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 5-6. The phrase emerges from discussions of historical and economic developments, but it also of great metaphorical value for talking about a range of historical and epistemological processes like The Enlightenment.

¹² The focus on the here and now, which is part and parcel of the Enlightenment, preexists the eighteenth century. It is particularly strong in Francis Bacon’s explication of the scientific method in *Novum Organon* (1620). See Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹³ See Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 18–19, 38, 50–51.

The term “allegorical” has had a particularly powerful significance within a tradition of biblical hermeneutics that understood the proper interpretation of Scripture as a process of reading for partially discrete, simultaneously functioning semantic levels. Medieval exegetes often explicated biblical passages according to a now-familiar four-fold interpretive technique. In *Summa Theologiae* (c. 1265-75), for instance, Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between the literal and the spiritual, the latter of which is itself divided into the allegorical, the moral, and the anagogical.¹⁴ Dante Alighieri subscribes to a similar sort of biblical interpretation, and argues that readers should apply the same reading interpretive methods to *The Divine Comedy* (1308-1320):

For the clarification of what I am going to say, then, it should be understood that there is not just a single sense in this work [*The Divine Comedy*]: it might rather be called *polysemous*, that is, having several senses. For the first sense is that which is contained in the letter, while there is another which is contained in what is signified by the letter. The first is called literal, while the second is called allegorical, or moral or anagogical. And in order to make this manner of treatment clear, it can be applied to the following verses: “When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a barbarous people, Judea was made his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.” Now if we look at the letter alone, what is signified to us is the departure of the sons of Israel from Egypt during the time of Moses; if at the allegory, what is signified to us is our redemption through Christ; if at the moral sense, what is signified to us is the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to the state of grace; if at the anagogical, what is signified to us is the departure of the sanctified soul from bondage to the corruption of this world into the freedom of eternal glory. And although these mystical senses are called by various names, they may all be called allegorical, since they are all different from the literal or historical. For allegory is derived from the Greek *alleon*, which means in Latin *alienus* (“belonging to another”) or *diversus* (“different”).¹⁵

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Questions on God*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), I.i.10.

¹⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Literary Criticism of Dante Alighieri*, trans. and ed. Robert S. Haller (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 99.

Here Dante uses a passage from Psalms 114 to demonstrate how to read for each level of significance: literal interpretation focuses on the narrative as history; allegorical interpretation (what we now often call typological interpretation), on how events of the Old Testament prefigure the coming of Christ; moral interpretation, on how Christians should act; and anagogical interpretation, on the individual's afterlife in Heaven. Each interpretive position acts as a lens, or a heuristic framework, through which to study God's word. And the significance particular to each interpretive level was not seen to contradict those of other levels. For Dante as for Aquinas, each lens had something uniquely valuable to contribute to the study of Scripture. The beauty of an interpretive method that focused on the polysemantic nature of Scripture was that each position would extrapolate a different sort of meaning from the very same narrative. It is also worth noting Dante's slippage in language. He first distinguishes between the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the anagogical and then reuses the term allegorical to denote non-literal interpretation in general. It is this second usage, which departs from how Aquinas and other theologians discussed allegorical interpretation, which would become increasingly popular later on.

Allegory emerged as a distinct literary genre during the medieval period, taking as its signature characteristic the ability to encourage readers to interpret the narrative allegorically. Etymologically, "allegory" comes from the combination of the Greek words *allos* (meaning "other") and *agoria* ("speaking"). Speaking otherwise entails putting a great deal of confidence in the reader's ability not only to identify when interpreting non-literally is necessary, but to then interpret the narrative according to the context surrounding the text. It asks them to look for something that is, simultaneously, absent

and pivotal to the text's meaning. Angus Fletcher writes that "allegory says one thing and means another. It destroys the normal expectation we have about language, that our words 'mean what they say.' When we predicate quality *x* of person *Y*, *Y* really is what our predication says he is (or we assume so); but allegory would turn *Y* into something other (*allos*) than what the open and direct statement tells the reader."¹⁶ The effect of allegory is akin to a sustained form of irony, asking readers to consistently interpret beyond or even against the words on the page. "Pushed to an extreme," writes Fletcher, the logic of allegory would "subvert language itself, turning everything into an Orwellian newspeak."¹⁷

Allegories are therefore predicated on a balanced skepticism towards language—treating words' potential for signifying something other than their direct meaning as a valuable tool for discussing religion, politics, literature and other topics. Allegory turns the relationship between signifier and signified essential to literal meaning into a three-way relationship between signifier, primary signified (on the literal level), and secondary signified (on the allegorical level). So, for instance, in the first book of *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596) Edmund Spenser uses the Redcrosse Knight to signify, simultaneously, the literal character (a knight fighting off various foes) and the everyday Christian. As Maureen Quilligan points out, it is important not only to recognize the potential gap between the literal and the allegorical, but also to look at "the relationships across the gaps."¹⁸ The allegorist's words simultaneously evoke literal and allegorical

¹⁶ Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1964; reprint, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 27.

signifieds (thus, for Quilligan, resembling a pun more than irony),¹⁹ and we should pay attention to how these signifieds interact with one another as well as how they differ. Even though allegory makes a practice of saying one thing and meaning another, it does not completely dismiss its literal narrative.²⁰

Allegories are more than narratives that can be interpreted allegorically.

Allegoresis (allegorical interpretation) can hypothetically be applied to any text, and indeed several scholars have written about how *allegoresis* sets the foundation for all sorts of textual commentary. Northrop Frye writes, “all commentary is allegorical interpretation...The instant that any critic permits himself to make a genuine comment about a poem...he has begun to allegorize.”²¹ Quilligan also distinguishes between *allegoresis* and allegory, reminding us of the former’s emergence from philosophical and religious discussions that found in Homer’s epics “things other than what they first meant.”²² *Allegoresis* has a negative connotation because readers can use it to rationalize what is immoral or wrong under the guise of looking for hidden meaning. But if *allegoresis* could be applied to any text to the extent that many scholars see it as inextricable from interpretation itself, then what makes allegory distinctive? Allegory is a literary structure that uses what is explicit to point readers towards what is implicit, thereby giving those readers reason to look at political, religious, and moral contexts. And as we will see throughout this dissertation, allegorists have a variety of ways to

¹⁹ Ibid., 21-6, 40-51.

²⁰ Quilligan makes a similar point, *ibid.*, 29. One testament to the importance of the literal level in Renaissance allegories is Kenneth Gross’s *Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Magic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), which focuses on how to read *The Faerie Queene* as a literal text.

²¹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957; reprint, 1990), 89. Ernst Curtius similarly writes that *allegoresis* is “the basis of all textual interpretation whatsoever,” *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1953), 204-5.

²² Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory*, *op. cit.*, 29.

indicate the existence of implicit meaning—such as the use of personified abstractions that represent mental concepts, the use of details connecting the narrative to recent political events, and the inclusion of morals that purportedly (and sometimes tendentiously) lay out the tale’s tropological significance.²³

These generalizations about how allegory typically functions should not be taken rigidly. Indeed, in this dissertation I will seek to find a middle ground between, on the one hand, the kind of inconsistent use of “allegory” that Arnold Williams mentions in the second epigraph and, on the other hand, what Deborah Madsen calls the “essentialist conception of allegory” that supports narratives of the form’s demise.²⁴ Williams is right that the unself-conscious use of “allegory” frustrates scholarly conversation because it can very quickly become a catch-all term with no concrete meaning. But equally misguided are attempts by scholars to apply a rigid definition of allegory, whether based on the term’s etymology or some other foundation, to the point of purifying the term by excluding related literary forms like the fable or personification. This second trend is represented by the criticism of Thomas Maresca, who blames Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and other post-Renaissance allegories for a confusion of allegory and personification. Maresca uses the definition of allegory as speaking otherwise as a basis for driving a wedge between allegory and personification, arguing that the names given to

²³ Frye and Quilligan each make a similar point, but take it too far. Frye argues that “We have actual allegory when a poet explicitly indicates the relationship of his images to examples and precepts, and so tries to indicate how a commentary on him should proceed,” *Anatomy of Criticism*, op. cit., 90. Quilligan goes even further, contending that allegories resist *allegoresis* because they contain their own interpretation. See Quilligan, “Allegory, Allegoresis, and the Deallegorization of Language,” in *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 185. I think the argument that allegory points towards its own interpretation is incontestable, but it is hardly the case that allegories contain their own meaning or even start to unpack themselves in any explicit terms.

²⁴ Madsen, *Rereading Allegory*, op. cit., 132.

personifications identify exactly what the writer is discussing.²⁵ Allegory speaks otherwise, while prosopopoeia or personification tends towards specificity and clarity. He further argues that the erroneous association between allegory and personification is a historically specific one that becomes widespread in the eighteenth century:

Baldly stated, it [my argument] is this: allegory has nothing to do with personification. Corollary: *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for example, is not an allegory. Corollary: an accurate theory of allegory cannot start by accepting such texts as *The Pilgrim's Progress* as bona fide allegories. Corollary: the confusion of personification and allegory is probably a chronologically late development (perhaps even traceable to Bunyan) and probably successfully contaminated the idea of allegory in the course of the eighteenth century when great rhetorical importance was attached to the notion of personification.²⁶

This passage represents an extreme to be avoided. The more generative approach is to remain sensitive not only to the etymology and original meaning of allegory, but to the constantly evolving ways of discussing the form throughout history. The changes in how writers and critics discuss allegory are worthy of study, not dismissal. Indeed, the major pitfall of Maresca's approach is that it makes it very difficult to understand allegory's transformation because of the overly rigorous way in which it defines allegory.

I agree with Maresca that speaking otherwise is the best description of the allegorical form throughout history. But I disagree with his understanding of speaking otherwise as a rationale for excluding related forms like personification. The phrase "speaking otherwise" is useful because it is both precise enough to be meaningful and capacious enough to include forms that contemporaries understood as being allegorical. It

²⁵ Thomas Maresca, "Saying and Meaning: Allegory and the Indefinable," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 83 (1980): 258. See also Maresca, "Personification vs. Allegory," in *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit., 21-39. Maresca takes Rosemond Tuve's point that personification is only one kind of allegory too far. See Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 25.

²⁶ Maresca, "Saying and Meaning," op. cit., 257.

characterizes a method of using signifiers to gesture towards ulterior signifieds, but does not place any limits on what those signifiers and signifieds can be: allegorists can use signifiers as diverse as animals, personified abstractions, and fictional or historical persons; and they can signify religious or secular concepts, real-life persons, or moral lessons. This dissertation does not seek to settle the ambiguity of allegory's meaning. It is to, rather, acknowledge that ambiguity as an important aspect of allegory's history because it is built into the essential function of the literary form.

The best way to improve our understanding of Enlightenment allegory is to approach the literature of the period with a degree of open-mindedness about the meaning of allegory, treating it as a term specific enough not to impede discussion but flexible enough not to exclude texts that contemporary writers and readers understood as allegorical. The Enlightenment retained a notion of allegory as a genre of speaking otherwise. One indication of this is the popularity with which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century lexicographers gestured towards the word's etymology. Edward Phillips's *The New World of Words* (1658), one of the first English dictionaries, defines allegory as "(Gr. *i.e.* saying one thing and meaning another) a Rhetorical Term, being a continued *Metaphor*, where there is something couch'd in the words, that is different from the literal Sense, and the Figure is carried on through the whole Discourse."²⁷ Many later lexicographers ascribed to at least part of this definition, which moves from the word's etymology to the notion of allegory (taken from Quintilian) as a continued

²⁷ Edward Phillips, *The New World of Words: Or, A Universal English Dictionary* (London, 1658). See also John Harris, *Lexicon Technicum: or, an Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London, 1702). About a century after Phillips, Samuel Johnson describes allegory as "A figurative discourse, in which something other is intended, than is contained in the words literally taken," *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755).

metaphor to the expectation that the conceit must continue throughout the entire text.²⁸

However, when we look at how writers and critics treated the form as opposed to how lexicographers defined it, there is much more flexibility.²⁹ Writers and critics used the terms “allegory” and “allegorical” to describe not only internally consistent texts with “dark” or “couched” meaning, but also components of predominantly non-allegorical texts that (often through personification) gestured towards the allegorical tradition. The *modus operandi* of this dissertation is to mostly include texts that were called allegories or allegorical by either contemporary readers or, in some cases, the writers themselves. Where such comments are absent—because we cannot depend on writers and readers to identify all of the period’s allegorical texts—I have included a text because enough contemporaries had discussed similar texts as allegorical. Such is the justification for including John Dryden’s *The Hind and the Panther* in the second chapter: Enlightenment writers did not regularly distinguish (as many modern writers do) between allegory and fable, and there is sufficient evidence to suggest that beast fables were understood as a subgenre of allegory.

The historical approach of this dissertation entails conceptualizing allegory as both a mode and genre—that is, as a rhetorical trope that can be used intermittently within a larger discursive framework and as a formally coherent kind of text defined by the continuous reference of a literal narrative to a consistent non-literal level of

²⁸ See Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education*, trans. David A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), vol. 3, VIII.vi.44. Compare definitions of allegory in Edward Cocker, *Cocker’s English Dictionary* (London, 1704) and John Kersey, *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum: Or, A General English Dictionary* (London, 1708).

²⁹ Thomas Vogler observes that “By the end of the eighteenth-century ‘allegory’ had become one of the most important words in the European aesthetic vocabulary. It had also become almost meaningless,” a point that says much more about how scholars and critics used the term than how lexicographers defined it, “The Allegory of Allegory: Unlocking Blake’s ‘Crystal Cabinet,’” in *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit., 75–130.

meaning.³⁰ Whereas Fletcher argues that allegory is fundamentally a mode that can be used within a variety of genres and Quilligan responds by contending that allegory is a genre because “there is a pure strain, that is, a group of works which reveal the classic form of a distinct genre,”³¹ in this dissertation I argue that allegory functions as both a genre and a mode. I suggest that it is not important to definitively describe allegory as a genre or as a mode, but rather to pay close attention to how writers and critics themselves conceptualize the form. Whether an author approaches allegory as genre or mode—or both—is a far more generative question than whether allegory is one or the other.

Understanding allegory as a form of speaking otherwise that has the potential for being either a genre, a mode, or somewhere in between accords with Frye’s formulation in *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). Frye places allegory on a continuum ranging from, on the one end, continuous allegories like those of Dante, Spenser, Tasso, and Bunyan and, on the other end, “a *freistimmige* style in which allegory may be picked up and dropped again at pleasure” like those of Ariosto, Goethe, Ibsen, and Hawthorne.³² I will argue that the eighteenth century, in general, moves allegory towards the “*freistimmige*” end of the spectrum, with authors increasingly tending to include personified abstractions and miniature allegories within texts that cannot be read allegorically as a whole. This is not to say that allegory as a distinct genre fades away, as we still have many important examples of generic allegories in eighteenth-century England. To name a few: Alexander Pope’s *The Temple of Fame* (1715), James Thomson’s *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), William Congreve’s *Quadrille: An Allegory* (1729), Herbert Lawrence’s *The Life and*

³⁰ For a discussion of allegory as a mode and genre, see Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 191-5.

³¹ See Fletcher, *Allegory*, op. cit., 3; Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory*, op. cit., 14.

³² Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, op. cit., 90-1.

Adventures of Common Sense: an historical allegory (1769), and Lucy Peacock's *The Adventures of the Six Princesses of Babylon; in their travels to the temple of virtue: an allegory* (1785).³³ To say that the eighteenth century pushes allegory towards the *freistimmige* pole of the spectrum means that eighteenth-century writers found uses for speaking otherwise even within predominantly literal texts. The stakes of this observation will become especially clear in the second half of *Enlightenment Allegory*, which focuses on how eighteenth-century satirists and periodical essay writers incorporated the allegorical form into their respective literary genres.

The modal use of allegory during the Enlightenment was certainly not unprecedented. There were some examples during the medieval and Renaissance periods of what Pamela Gradon calls "pseudoallegories," texts that use allegorical conventions without themselves being categorizable as allegories.³⁴ But these examples were few and far between. Enlightenment writing went a long way in making the modal use of allegory a more general practice, with many authors picking and choosing components of allegory and retooling them for an audience becoming increasingly invested in the here and now, instead of in the heavenly and eternal. The most extreme version of the modal use of allegory is the ongoing use of personified abstractions, which scholars have long

³³ This list is incomplete but it sufficiently demonstrates the ongoing relevance of allegory as a recognizable genre. There are also many examples of titles and subtitles which demonstrate writers and editors marketing texts as allegories. These include Benjamin Keach's *The Progress of Sin, or, The Travels of Ungodliness where, the pedigree, rise (or original) antiquity, subtilty, evil nature, and prevailing power of sin, is fully discovered, in an apt and pleasant allegory* (London, 1684), the anonymous *Star-Board and lar-board: or, sea-politicks. An allegory* (London, 1711), and Hannah More's *Sunday reading. The Pilgrims. An allegory* (London, 1790).

³⁴ Pamela Gradon, *Form and Style in Early English Literature* (London, UK: Methuen, Inc., 1971), 374. Mindele Anne Treip also argues that "episodic allegory" begins with Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581), though she uses the phrase to describe allegorical interpretation rather than allegorical writing. See *Allegorical Poetics: The Renaissance Tradition to "Paradise Lost"* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 4-6, 41, 63-72, 99-103, 131-2. See also Kenneth Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Heroic Form in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 77-8.

understood to be a major trope in poetry throughout the period. The use of personifications represented one way in which practices common to allegories had become effectively separated from their conventional genre. But, as we will grow to appreciate throughout this dissertation, the modal use of allegory took many other forms.

Scholars who have studied the persistence of allegory have not yet accounted for the wide range of Enlightenment texts that included allegorical components even if the texts themselves were predominantly non-allegorical: satires; essays published in periodicals; dramas and novels that included allegorical names for characters; and many others. The modal use of allegory was characteristic of the widespread Enlightenment tendency to break traditional genres into their component parts and then to create new wholes—multimodal texts as well as members of emerging genres—by combining those parts with those of other genres. Treated as a mode, allegory came into close contact with already existing and emerging practices associated with particular genres, as those genres had their own, constantly evolving ways of structuring temporality, space, and agency. The main questions facing Enlightenment writers wanting to use modal allegory concerned not how to push against or reject it in favor of more literal modes, but how they could manage the different modes within individual texts. Should writers separate the literal and allegorical modes from one another and, if so, how should they do so? How could writers use components of allegory to further their own purposes even if those purposes were far removed from those of medieval and Renaissance allegorists? The second half of *Enlightenment Allegory* will make it especially clear that Enlightenment writers and critics, across the board, had very different answers to these questions.

II. Adapting a Traditional Form

The great transitional text in this dissertation is John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674). In Book II, Milton uses Sin and Death alongside literal characters such as Satan and the other angels, incorporating two personified abstractions into a predominantly literal narrative.³⁵ Many scholars argue that Milton uses Sin and Death to mount an argument against allegory, characterizing him as an anti-allegorist.³⁶ Victoria Kahn gives a more promising account of Milton's relationship to allegory when she calls the scene with Sin and Death an "allegorical parody of allegory," noting Milton's ambivalence (rather than his opposition) towards allegory.³⁷ Milton turns allegory against itself, at once challenging the literary form as it has been practiced up until that point and preserving the conventions of that form.

Milton's miniature allegory of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost* encapsulates the dynamic relationship between preservation and subversion at the center of Enlightenment allegory. As a parody of allegory, *Paradise Lost* simultaneously preserves the literary form and detaches itself from it so as to criticize and subvert it. It is this dynamic between preservation and detached subversion that makes parody, in particular, a model of historical change. Parody perfectly embodies the historical process of adapting forms by creatively reappropriating those forms for new historical and social contexts. Similarly to

³⁵ Milton's poem is fundamentally figurative, even if it is not allegorical, in that it accommodates the realm of the spirit to human understanding by describing that realm as if it were physical. We will come back to this idea in more detail in this dissertation's coda, which focuses on how Johnson reads the allegory of Sin and Death.

³⁶ Kelley characterizes Milton an "anti-royalist, anti-allegorist" who anticipates the anti-allegorical thrust of the eighteenth century, *Reinventing Allegory*, op. cit., 4. See also Catherine Gimelli Martin, *The Ruins of Allegory: 'Paradise Lost' and the Metamorphosis of Epic Convention* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998) throughout, but especially 30-62; Vladimir Brljak, "The Satanic 'or': Milton and Protestant Anti-Allegorism," *The Review of English Studies* 66 (2015): 403-22.

³⁷ Victoria Kahn, "Allegory and the Sublime in *Paradise Lost*," in *John Milton*, ed. Annabel Patterson (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 189.

parodists, Enlightenment writers adapt the allegorical form to their ever-changing literary and historical surroundings, simultaneously preserving it and subverting many of the literary practices associated with the form. They were not interested in abandoning the form completely nor in simply carrying it over from the medieval or Renaissance periods. On the contrary, Enlightenment writers were invested in using what they could from allegory even with the increasing importance of an empirical, secular worldview.

The process of adapting traditional forms for the eighteenth century often entailed separating what medieval and Renaissance persons conceived as wholes into their component parts.³⁸ For literature, one of the effects of the British Enlightenment was that it broke traditional genres—previously conceived as wholes—into parts, so that those parts could be considered and analyzed apart from their original overarching structure. Writers then recombined the resulting parts with parts of other genres, in the process creating innovative literary mixtures.

The ongoing fragmentation and recombination of previously whole genres is a widespread process during the eighteenth century that included traditional literary forms such as pastoral, romance, and satire. Michael McKeon argues for the continuity of pastoral during the eighteenth century and brings our attention to how writers transvalued the form for their readers rather than abandon it.³⁹ Romance, similarly, did not die despite savage critiques of the form by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers. Writers working with other genres made use of pastoral and romance conventions, appropriating

³⁸ See Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), xxiv–v, 4, 15.

³⁹ McKeon, “The Pastoral Revolution,” in *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 267–89.

those conventions for their own purposes. The eighteenth-century novel, for instance, grew out of already existent forms including pastoral and romance. Early novelists used bits and pieces of these forms to contribute to the emergence of what was marketed at the time as a “new” genre of writing. In the creation of ostensibly new genres such as the eighteenth-century novel, as Claudio Guillén puts it in his *Literature as System* (1971), “all genres are potentially useful—and expendable.”⁴⁰ Novelists, to stick with one major example, make use of epic, romance, and pastoral conventions in order to contribute to the trajectory of an emerging genre. *Enlightenment Allegory* takes Guillén’s point to heart. It also extends such an emphasis on the ongoing relevance and usefulness of traditional literary genres to allegory.

The thesis that allegory transformed during the Enlightenment, thus, finds a strong rationale in various models of genre change. As the British public, in general, became increasingly empirical and secular in their thinking, writers often approached allegory not as an obsolete genre, but as a literary form that could be modified and combined with other literary forms in surprising and creative ways. This historical process—whereby allegory changed due to social and cultural forces rather than being led into a “literary dead end” or killed by them—included many texts of the Restoration and early eighteenth century and played a tremendously significant part in the literary form’s history.⁴¹ One final caveat: I understand the Enlightenment not as a dramatic

⁴⁰ Claudio Guillén, *Literature as System: Essays Toward the Theory of Literary History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971). Guillén argues that this idea is the major lesson arising out of reading Mario Fubini’s “Genesi e storia dei generi letterari.”

⁴¹ The forces of empiricism and secularization start to transform allegory as early as Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, though their influence is most conspicuous in texts like Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind and the Panther*, mock allegories like Swift’s *A Tale of a Tub* and Pope’s *The Dunciad*, many of Joseph Addison’s allegories in *The Spectator*, and Fielding’s *A Journey from This World to the Next*.

break from the early modern period, but as part of an already ongoing process. As we move through the eighteenth century, it will behoove us to look back at how certain aspects of eighteenth-century thought were anticipated by early modern writers.

As persons, in general, became increasingly invested in the material and became further removed from what David Rosen and Aaron Santesso call “allegorical culture,” Enlightenment writers approached allegory as a literary form to be experimented with in creative and surprising ways.⁴² The resulting experiments were remarkably multifarious, as writers had very different ideas about how allegory could be transformed for an eighteenth-century audience. Sometimes, as with Bunyan, writers infused allegory with the empiricism of the emerging New Science; sometimes, as with Dryden, writers used allegory to draw attention to the similarities and differences between two historical situations or to produce a shocking aesthetic effect by mixing allegorical and literal modes to the point that they were inseparable; sometimes, still, writers appropriated allegory for social satire; and at others, writers used allegory as a short, instructive mode within genres (like the eighteenth-century periodical) that were largely based on literal, direct speech. These different uses of allegory involved very different ratios of preservation and subversion, which are to be understood as two ends of a scale rather than as mutually exclusive antitheses: our job is not to categorize texts as pro- or anti-allegory, but to study how those texts balance the two opposites or fall somewhere in between them. *Enlightenment Allegory* should, if nothing else, demonstrate the

⁴² David Rosen and Aaron Santesso, “Swiftian Satire and the Afterlife of Allegory,” in *Swift’s Travels: Eighteenth-Century British Satire and Its Legacy*, ed. Nicholas Hudson and Aaron Santesso (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11-24.

extraordinary complexity of allegory as a literary form extending from the medieval and early modern periods to the end of the Enlightenment.

In this dissertation, I have chosen the word “adaptation” as a central term for thinking about what happens to allegory during the eighteenth century. The word is meant to evoke an analogy between the cross-media adaptation of particular texts and the transformation of literary forms over time. Adaptation studies—whether we are discussing books, films, musical compositions or any other narrative form—centers on looking for continuities and discontinuities between a text and its source material. To understand what an adapter does with his or her chosen text, we must study how the adaptation both follows and/or departs from that text. Similarly, when we study Enlightenment allegory, we must understand how certain writers follow and/or depart from precedents of the allegorical form. I would argue, that adaptation is also useful for thinking about eighteenth-century allegory because it entails a kind of artistic distance: like parody, adaptation functions by preserving past forms while also changing it to account for historical, social, and literary changes.

Let me conclude with a brief description of how this dissertation is structured. *Enlightenment Allegory* consists of two parts, each divided into two chapters. The first part looks in detail at the allegories of John Bunyan and Dryden, two Restoration models from which we can gain a fruitful perspective on the role and status of allegory during that period. Both Bunyan and Dryden experimented with allegory: Bunyan uses an almost unprecedented amount of concrete, empirical detail in *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678, 1684), *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), and *The Holy War* (1682); Dryden uses political allegory in *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) to place events in

sacred and secular history in typological relationship to one another, taking advantage of the similarities as well as the differences between the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion against King Charles II and Absalom's uprising against King David in the Old Testament. A prolonged focus on Bunyan and Dryden provides a promising foundation for asking questions about what happened to allegory throughout the Enlightenment.

In the second part of *Enlightenment Allegory*, I shift from the Restoration to the early-and mid-eighteenth century and from two particular figures to more general trends that have long been associated with Enlightenment writing. Chapter 3 addresses questions about how Jonathan Swift and Pope use allegory as a means of social satire, using *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad* as its central examples. These writers create a parodic or satiric distance between their readers and their allegories, detaching them from the overarching semantic structure that supports the unified experience of generic allegory and thus furthering its modal transformation. Chapter 4 studies discussions of allegory in eighteenth-century periodicals as well as the allegorical compositions printed in the periodicals themselves. Little attention has been paid to the miniature allegories within these periodical publications, or to their influence on how readers and writers conceptualized allegory during the period. The coda rounds off the dissertation by putting Samuel Johnson's comments on Milton's *Paradise Lost* within the context of the rise of the modern aesthetic and the focus on decorum.

As Chapter 4 and the coda make clear, the end-date of *Enlightenment Allegory* is meant to be flexible. The subtitle "Adapting the Allegorical Form in British Literature, 1660-1750," should not be understood to suggest that writers stopped adapting allegory after 1750. Indeed, I have taken many of the examples used in Chapter 4 and the coda

from texts written after 1750. Many of the questions and concerns generated in *Enlightenment Allegory* continue to be relevant into the Romantic period and beyond.

My manuscript will make significant contributions not only to the field of allegory studies, but also to our understanding of genre theory during the British Enlightenment. It is ultimately against the kind of literary history that conceives the transformation of traditional genres like allegory as their demise. In many ways, allegory is a test case: studying its transformation throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries yields insights into how Enlightenment writers approached a literary genre that had been strongly associated with medieval and early modern ways of understanding the world. Enlightenment writers were in fact tremendously resourceful in picking and choosing components from traditional literary genres, treating them not only as genres in and of themselves but as modes that could be used within existing and emerging genres like the novel or the periodical essay. Far from fading away, traditional literary forms continued to live on and adapt to changing literary and historical conditions.

PART I: TWO RESTORATION WRITERS

CHAPTER 1

“he makes base things usher in Divine”: Bunyan’s Allegories and Scripture

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

-John 16:25¹

We ought not to be thinking ‘This green valley, where the shepherd boy is singing, represents humility’; we ought to be discovering, as we read, that humility is like this green valley. That way, moving always into the book, not out of it, from the concept to the image, enriches the concept.

-C.S. Lewis²

God never meant man to be a purely spiritual creature. That is why He uses material things like bread and wine to put the new life into us. We may think this is rather crude and unspiritual. God does not: He invented eating. He likes matter. He invented it.

-C.S. Lewis³

Bunyan published all of his major allegories between 1678 and 1684, securing his place in literary history relatively late in his career. He had already made himself into a prominent preacher and writer of sermons in the 1650s, before his imprisonment for preaching without a license from 1660 to 1671. Together, his *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678), *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), *The Holy War* (1682), and *The Pilgrim’s Progress, The Second Part* (1684) represent some of the most fascinating experiments with allegory in Restoration England. Bunyan uses the allegorical form for two major purposes. The first is to portray the constant uncertainty and despair felt by

¹ *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*, ed. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008). Henceforth all citations from the Bible, unless otherwise noted, are from this edition.

² C.S. Lewis, “The Vision of John Bunyan,” in *The Pilgrim’s Progress: A Casebook*, ed. Roger Sharrock (London, 1976), 198.

³ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1980), 64.

Christians in Restoration Britain, whether at the hands of constantly-shifting political and religious authorities or because of a predestinarian belief that one's salvation or damnation has already been decided. Bunyan does this by using personified abstractions and other imaginary beings, externalizing the components of the embattled Christian's consciousness into a series of individuals who seemingly stand apart from the central figure (whether that central figure is, as in *The Pilgrim's Progress* explicit or, as in *The Holy War*, implicit). The second is to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between Christian experiences and Scripture, with the marginal glosses modelling how the Bible can be used to reflect on everyday life and vice versa.

This chapter looks at the relationship between Bunyan's major allegories and the Bible, which Bunyan uses not only as support for his form of writing but as a primary component of his allegories' content. It also lays the groundwork for *Enlightenment Allegory* by placing Bunyan's narratives firmly within the trajectory of Restoration and eighteenth-century allegory. Many scholars have focused on Bunyan's indebtedness to earlier allegories, but they have not yet taken full advantage of his experiments with the allegorical form. They typically situate *The Pilgrim's Progress* and his other allegories at the literary form's breaking point—that is, at the very point when allegory dies away and the novel starts to emerge as the dominant literary form.⁴ Such an argument underestimates the influence of Bunyan's allegories on the form by paying attention to its proto-novelistic components. But his allegories are not part of the endpoint. On the

⁴ For instance, see Brian Nellist, "The Pilgrim's Progress and Allegory," in *The Pilgrim's Progress: Critical and Historical Views*, ed. Vincent Newey (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980), 132. The tendency to regard *Pilgrim's Progress* as a final installment of the allegorical genre also characterizes the attempts of many scholars to present the text as an unusually literal allegory. I will cite some of these attempts in the third section and deal with them in detail there.

contrary, they exert a strong influence on the allegories written throughout the eighteenth century.

In the first section of the chapter, I discuss Bunyan's self-conscious defense of allegory in his paratextual materials, especially in those accompanying the two parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He consistently associates his mode of writing with biblical precedent, dovetailing allegorical writing with the practice in Scripture of producing spiritual light from rhetorical darkness. In his defense, however, Bunyan also recognizes the notorious instability of allegory: allegorists have a tremendously difficult time guiding interpretation because the fundamental characteristic the literary form—according to Bunyan and many of his contemporaries—is rhetorical darkness. In the second section, I argue that Bunyan uses marginal glosses to address this instability and to direct interpretation while allowing the literary worlds of his allegories to remain relatively uninterrupted. In other words, his use of sidenotes is an expression of the same ambivalence towards allegory evident in his paratexts. In the third and final section, I shift from Bunyan's attempts to draw attention to the spiritual significance hidden within his literal narratives—which are so conspicuous in his use of paratext and sidenotes—to the engaging nature of the narratives themselves. This shift is partly due to the paradox unearthed in the first two sections: despite Bunyan's investment in encouraging readers to look beyond the literal levels of his texts, he also demonstrates a clear investment in engaging his readers with those literal levels. Indeed, one of the main benefits of Bunyan's allegories over his sermons is that the allegories engage readers through verisimilitude and sensory detail. Bunyan is acutely aware of the advantages and pitfalls

of the allegorical form, and the trick is to recognize these without losing what is useful or distinctive about it.

I. Bunyan's Paratexts

In the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan includes "The Author's *Apology* for His Book" and a concluding poem, both of which address his use of the allegorical form. Together with "The Author's Way of Sending Forth His Second Part of the Pilgrim," appended to the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, these paratextual materials constitute what William Tindall has called Bunyan's "miniature essays on criticism," condensed statements about how allegory functions as a literary form.⁵ These paratextual materials provide remarkably self-conscious reflections on what it means to write allegories at the end of the seventeenth century. Bunyan begins his apology, for instance, by casting himself as an unwitting allegorist who gets caught up in his own writing process while working on another project. On the verge of finishing *The Heavenly Foot-man* (1698, published posthumously), he feels compelled to write an allegory. Scholars often dismiss the entire apology as disingenuous, and to a degree Bunyan merely mimics the self-deprecation typical of medieval and Renaissance writers who credit divine inspiration (whether through God or the muses) for their literary works. Dismissing it too quickly, however, takes attention away from the extraordinary complexity of Bunyan's self-description as a writer who ultimately decides to complete a tangential book project to protect his current one:

⁵ William York Tindall, *John Bunyan: Mechanick Preacher* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1934), 43. U. Milo Kaufmann also calls the apology in *The Pilgrim's Progress* an "aesthetic brief," *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 8.

*When at first I took my Pen in hand,
 Thus for to write; I did not understand
 That I at all should make a little Book
 In such a mode; Nay, I had undertook
 To make another, which when almost done,
 Before I was aware, I this begun.
 And thus it was: I writing of the Way
 And Race of Saints in this our Gospel-Day,
 Fell suddenly into an Allegory
 About their Journey, and the way to Glory,
 In more than twenty things, which I set down;
 This done, I twenty more had in my Crown,
 And they again began to multiply,
 Like sparks that from the coals of Fire do flie.
 Nay then, thought I, if that you breed so fast,
 I'll put you by your selves, lest you at last
 Should prove ad infinitum, and eat out
 The Book that I already am about.⁶*

Given these lines, it is easy to see why scholars tend to read the apology as a harbinger of allegory's decline. Bunyan himself presents *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a tangential writing project that threatens to take over his primary one. The allegory, once begun, practically writes itself. Bunyan's ideas about how to put "the Way/And Race of Saints" into allegorical form soon "multiply,/ Like sparks that from the coals of Fire do flie," as if they simply get away from the writer. At this point, Bunyan seems to be genuinely apologizing for his chosen mode of writing by depersonalizing it.

Brenda Machosky begins a recent essay on *The Pilgrim's Progress* by suggesting that we read the word "fell," from this passage, "quite literally." "The fall into allegory," she writes, "is analogous to the fall from the realm of heaven and true light into the dark and profane world in which we live, implying that the fallen world is always already allegorical."⁷ Her analogy is particularly useful. It links Bunyan's statements about

⁶ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3. For the claim that this apology refers to *The Heavenly Foot-man*, see, 291, n3.

⁷ Brenda Machosky, "Trope and Truth in *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *SEL* 47 (2007): 179.

allegory to his cosmological worldview, presenting the practice of reading allegorically as looking beyond the material and literal. It also suggests that *The Pilgrim's Progress* fallen nature is exactly what qualifies it as a vehicle for spiritual meaning in a fallen world: the text, unlike printed sermons like *Heavenly Foot-man*, will appeal to humans who have lost the ability to directly understand spiritual truth.

Later in the apology, Bunyan launches into a defense of allegory, responding to common anxieties about teaching religion through ostentatiously fictional narratives by extending biblical hermeneutics to his own text.⁸ For the speaker of the first two lines, who embodies the contemporary skepticism towards allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* lacks solidness because its characters and events are imaginary. Bunyan, in turn, argues against this interpellated speaker by suggesting that the improbability of *The Pilgrim's Progress* does not mean it lacks “solidness” because its imaginary elements mediate spiritual truth:

But they [metaphors] want solidness: *Speak man thy mind:*
 They drown'd the weak; Metaphors make us blind.
Solidity, indeed becomes the Pen
Of him that writest things Divine to men:
But must I needs want solidness, because
By Metaphors I speak; was not Gods Laws,
His Gospel-laws in older time held forth
By Types, Shadows, and Metaphors? Yet loth
Will any sober man be to find fault
With them, lest he be found for to assault
The highest Wisdom. No, he rather stoops,
And seeks to find out what by pins and loops
And Calves, and Sheep; by Heifers, and by Rams;
By Birds and Herbs, and by the blood of Lambs;
God speaketh to him: And happy is he

⁸ James F. Forrest covers some of these Puritan anxieties in “Allegory as Sacred Sport: Manipulation of the Reader in Spenser and Bunyan,” in *Bunyan in Our Time*, ed. Robert G. Collmer (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1989), 93; Barbara A. Johnson, “Falling into Allegory: The ‘Apology’ to *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Bunyan’s Scriptural Methodology,” in *Bunyan in Our Time*, 118.

*That finds the light, and grace that in them be.*⁹

The bone of contention between the two opposing sides is the relationship between representation and content. For the first speaker, who prefers plain writing over figurative discourse, representing spiritual truths through a fictional narrative amounts to a lie. For the second, what matters is that the narrative is consistent with Scripture. *The Pilgrim's Progress* has “solidity” as long as its meaning is in-line with the word of God. This second argument, which wins out throughout the course of the apology, hinges on the point that Scripture itself uses figurative tropes including allegory. It vindicates allegory as mode of representation so long as it uses the similarities between its signifiers and signifieds to reinforce and emphasize the laws of Scripture.

By coupling *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the Bible in the apology, Bunyan reinforces the primary argument of the frontispiece and title page, two paratextual materials that simultaneously announce the story's fictionality and its connections to the methods of writing found in the Bible. The largest word on the title page is “DREAM.” (Fig. 1) In the frontispiece, the image of a sleeping Bunyan looms large. Centered and significantly larger than anything else in the illustration, the image emphasizes that Christian's journey is above all a mental event. Taken together, the frontispiece and title page remind us that *The Pilgrim's Progress* fits into a long history of allegorical dream visions—including *The Romance of the Rose*, *The House of Fame*, and *Piers Plowman*—where the dreamscape functions simultaneously as a space inhabited by imaginary beings and as a vehicle for spiritual meaning. Guillaume de Lorris begins *The Romance of the Rose* by arguing that dreams can have true meaning: “Some say that there is nothing in

⁹ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, op. cit., 5-6.

dreams but lies and fables; however, one may have dreams which are not in the least deceitful, but which later become clear.”¹⁰ The paratext of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* similarly suggests that Christian’s journey, though a dream, contains useful information about spiritual enlightenment. The title page, for instance, creates a parallel between the “Similitude of a DREAM” and the similitudes found in Scripture. The words from the Book of Hosea—“I have used Similitudes”—encapsulates the *modus operandi* of the Bible and thus gives authority to Bunyan’s own method. For Bunyan it is tremendously important that, in the Book of Hosea, these words are spoken by God himself to Ephraim, who is noteworthy as a deceitful and conniving ruler who eventually offends God and dies. God says to Ephraim that “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”¹¹ God sets up similitudes as one instrument through which He speaks to humankind. And in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan uses the epigraph to associate his text with how God himself inculcates spiritual knowledge through similitudes to earthly things.

¹⁰ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Frances Horgan (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3.

¹¹ *Book of Hosea*, in *The Bible*, op. cit., 12.10.

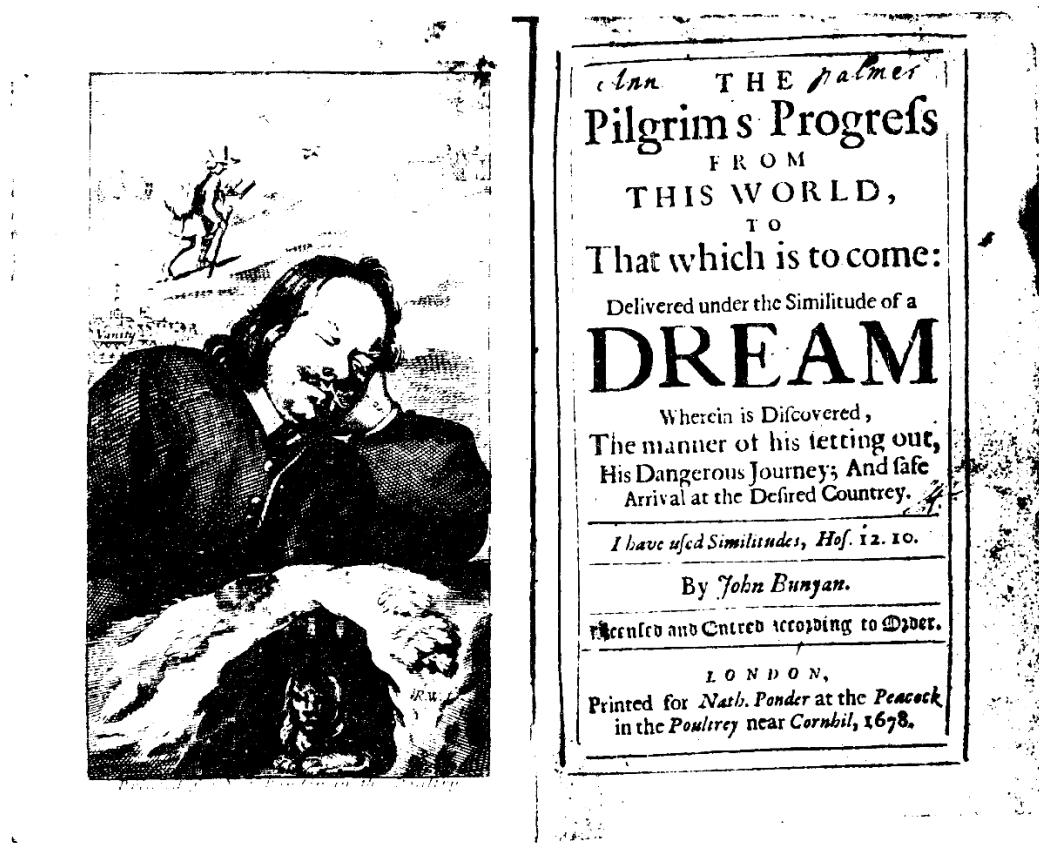


Figure 1. Frontispiece of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (London, 1678). *Early English Books Online* 4 December 2015.

Bunyan thus opens *The Pilgrim's Progress* by dovetailing his mode of writing with the methodology of biblical hermeneutics, which relies on the infallibility of God's word to encourage what Bunyan calls "stoop[ing]." Stooping involves a particular kind of readerly temperament whereby readers suspend their criticism—because finding fault with the Bible would amount to "[assaulting]/The highest Wisdom"—and takes for granted that nothing is superfluous: all details, no matter how unnecessary they may seem, have a hidden meaning. It is a mode of clue-hunting that results from investing spiritual narratives with an authority resembling that of the Bible. Readers are to look

closely at how the details of Bunyan's narratives resemble or figure forth spiritual concepts just as they are to look closely at the pins, loops, calves, sheep, heifers, rams, birds, herbs, and lambs of the Old Testament. Such a clue-hunting mindset is characteristic of traditional *allegoresis*, in which readers take humble positions with respect to the text and understand mysteries as resulting from humans' limited capacity.

Bunyan's claims are part of an extensive historical and literary process, which had been in motion long before the publication of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, that extends scriptural hermeneutics to non-biblical, and even literary, texts.¹² Indeed, his use of biblical precedent to defend his writing is common to seventeenth-century allegory. In the immensely popular *The Isle of Man: Or, the Legall Proceeding in Man-shire against Sinne* (1627), the Puritan preacher Richard Bernard likens his method of writing to the narratives told by Nathan and Ezekiel: "If the manner of laying these things down in a continued allegory, be the offence to some, I do suppose they know, that *Nathan* did teach *David* by an allegorie...*Ezekiel* taught the Jews so too, and...our Saviour spake many parables to his hearers."¹³ The prophets' allegories do not "derogate any thing from their holy aged gravities," but rather enlighten others through making God's lessons accessible to mankind. Both Bernard and Bunyan set up their allegories as imitations of prophetic language that seeks to accommodate divine knowledge to humans' limited capacities. Bunyan is especially adamant on this point. Elsewhere in his apology he

¹² In *Typologies in England, 1650-1820* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), Paul J. Korshin traces the importance and status in Enlightenment England, but his comments also demonstrate how the process of applying what he calls "abstracted" typology to literary texts started before the eighteenth century. See also Michael Austin, *New Testaments: Cognition, Closure, and the Figural Logic of the Sequel, 1660-1740* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2012), 79-122 and "The Figural Logic of the Sequel and the Unity of *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Studies in Philology* 102 (2005): 484-504.

¹³ Richard Bernard's *The Isle of Man: Or, the Legall Proceeding in Man-shire against Sinne* (London, 1627).

writes that the Bible “*Is every where so full of all these things,/(Dark Figures, Allegories,) yet there springs/From that same Book that lustre, and those rayes/Of light, that turns our darkest nights to days.*”¹⁴ Moreover, towards the end of the apology, he argues that allegory is not merely ornamental. The Bible uses allegories to reach its readers and to highlight lessons without compromising truth: “I find that in holy Writ in many places/Hath semblance with this method, where the cases/Doth call for one thing to set forth another:/Use it I may then, and yet nothing smother/Truths golden Beams; Nay, by this method may/Make it cast forth its rayes as light as day.”¹⁵

It was common for classical and Renaissance writers to describe allegories as a form of dark speech. Quintilian, for instance, defined allegory as “a duplicite of meaning or dissimulation under covert and darke intendements.”¹⁶ And Edmund Spenser called it a “dark conceit” which, because of the covertness of its commentary, is especially prone to misinterpretation.¹⁷ Bunyan picks up on these descriptions of allegory as dark or obscure speech, creating a play between allegory’s rhetorical darkness and its ability to encourage spiritual enlightenment.¹⁸ Allegories produce light from darkness by convincing readers to look closely at the literal and the material for what might resemble, represent, or figure forth the spiritual. Indeed, this ability gives allegories a didactic

¹⁴ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, op. cit., 7.

¹⁵ Ibid., 7-8.

¹⁶ Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education*, op. cit., vol. 3, VIII.vi.44.

¹⁷ Edmund Spenser, “Letter to Raleigh,” *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton (New York, NY: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 714.

¹⁸ Maresca argues that Bunyan confuses allegory and personification, suggesting that the two actually move in opposite directions (with the first characterized by covert commentary and the second by openness). See Maresca, “Saying and Meaning,” op. cit., 257-8 and “Personification vs. Allegory,” in *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit., 21-39. But these lines demonstrate that Bunyan himself understood his allegories to be kinds of dark speech.

advantage over plain-spoken sermons. As Bunyan puts it in his “The Author’s Way of Sending Forth His Second Part of the Pilgrim”:

*Things that seem to be hid in words obscure,
Do but the Godly mind the more allure;
To study what those Sayings should contain,
That speak to us in such a Cloudy strain.
I also know, a dark Similitude
Will on the Fancie more it self intrude,
And will stick faster in the Heart and Head,
Then things from Similies not borrowed.¹⁹*

For Bunyan, allegories have two main advantages over texts like *Heavenly Foot-man* or the majority of his published sermons. First, they “alure” godly minds by convincing them that there is hidden meaning behind the narrative—something that evades an initial reading and which is recoverable only through close attention. Secondly, allegories have a greater capacity for “stick[ing] faster in the Heart and Head” because they delight as they instruct. They serve as powerful mnemonic devices for teaching moments and lessons from Scripture.

More than Quintilian or Spenser, Bunyan insists that allegory’s darkness can be used to produce spiritual light through encouraging Christians to look beyond the literal narrative and, correspondingly, the material world to uncover spiritual meaning. He does not, in general, write about allegory as duplicitous or unruly, but as one pedagogical tool amongst many that can be used to captivate and instruct. As he makes clear elsewhere in his apology, teaching through rhetorical darkness can succeed where teaching through plain speech does not: “*Dark Clouds bring Waters, when the bright bring none;/Yea, dark, or bright, if they their silver drops/Cause to descend, the Earth, by yielding*

¹⁹ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, op. cit., 163.

Crops,/Gives praise to both, and carpeth not at either.”²⁰ What matters is the end result. As long as writers “Seek the advance of Truth,” imparting spiritual knowledge through whatever means, it is not ultimately important how they do so.²¹ In fact, in the apology Bunyan argues that writers should use whatever is in their arsenal to reach their readers so long as they serve the truths of the Gospel. He, for instance, compares writers to fishermen and fowlers who diversify instruction in order to catch their prey. Fishermen use a variety of “Engins,” including “*his Snares, Lines, Angles, Hooks and Nets:/Yet Fish there be, that neither Hook, nor Line;/Nor Snare, nor Net, nor Engin can make thine.*”²² And fowlers similarly use “*divers means*” to catch birds because “*he must Pipe, and Whistle to catch this;/Yet if he does so, that Bird he will miss.*”²³ Allegory is just one mode of representation amongst many, suited for engaging some readers and ill-fitted for engaging others. There is nothing wrong with this representational mode so long as it is bolstered by the authority of Scripture.

Bunyan pushes against a one-size-fits-all model of spiritual instruction, preferring instead a reader-centered approach that takes into consideration the audience members’ different needs. This stands to reason, since for Bunyan allegories are effective only if they convince readers to perform their own interpretations. Readers must feel the desire “*To study what those Saying should contain,/That speak to us in such a Cloudy strain.*” They need to take it upon themselves to search for meaning as diggers do for gold amongst the dirt or as people do for pearls in toads’ heads and oyster shells.²⁴ In his

²⁰ Ibid., 4.

²¹ Ibid., 7.

²² Ibid., 5.

²³ Ibid., 5.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

various metaphors for how allegories function, indeed, Bunyan consistently puts the onus of interpretation on the readers rather than the writer. We saw this already in the logic of stooping, where readers treat the text's details as clues to a hidden spiritual meaning. Allegories, if they are to "make truth to spangle, and its rayes to shine" rely on rhetorical darkness to send readers on this interpretive journey.²⁵ Allegory ideally puts readers in humble positions with regard to the text, convincing them to look through "things that promise nothing, [which] contain/What better is then Gold."²⁶ To produce spiritual light from rhetorical darkness, allegorists must lead their readers along—hinting at hidden meaning but not presenting it outright.

According to Bunyan, allegorists must be acutely aware of what kinds of texts will reach their audience and, therefore, of their reading patterns. They should use a variety of genres and modes in order to inculcate spiritual truths, and these didactic methods are legitimate as long as they further the truths found in Scripture. It is because of this reader-centered approach that Bunyan figures so prominently in reader-response criticism. Both Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser include chapters on *The Pilgrim's Progress* in seminal texts on reader-response theory, Fish in *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (1972) and Iser in *The Implied Reader* (1972).²⁷ From this angle *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an interesting example partly because of Bunyan's conspicuous investment in getting readers to perform their own interpretations and to apply the modes of interpretation found in *The Pilgrim's Progress* to their personal lives.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁷ See Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 224-64; Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 1-28.

Bunyan, like Spenser before him, is fully aware that the mysteriousness of allegories make them prone to misinterpretation. He ends *The Pilgrim's Progress* with a poem that warns his readers to “take heed/Or Mis-interpreting: for that, instead/Of doing good, will but thy self abuse;/By mis-interpreting evil insues.”²⁸ For Bunyan, readers misinterpret allegorical texts when they “[play] with the out-side” of the story, failing to look inside it for the intended spiritual meaning.²⁹ The problem emerging from Bunyan’s discussion of allegory, in other words, is that allegory’s darkness makes it difficult for the writer to direct interpretation. This issue, which we see play out so conspicuously in the paratexts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, drives Bunyan’s literature even on the level of the page. All of Bunyan’s major allegories include marginal glosses that attempt to impose certain kinds of interpretation on the readers. As such, they serve to ward off misinterpretation by making connections for readers and by aligning their interpretations with the writer’s intended meaning. These glosses are the subject of the next section.

II. The Key in the Window

In the 1960s, Penguin Books and Houghton Mifflin published editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* without the marginal glosses included in the original text. James Thorpe, the editor of the Mifflin edition, writes that they cut out the glosses from *The Pilgrim's Progress* to make the text “more readable.”³⁰ The assumption is that the glosses interfered with the diegesis of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and made it seem less original, less engaging than it would have appeared without them. According to Thorpe, modern

²⁸ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, op. cit., 155.

²⁹ Ibid., 155.

³⁰ James Ernest Thorpe, ed. *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), xxiv.

readers share a distaste for literary texts that direct their own interpretation. Cutting out these glosses altogether, as an editorial decision, brings attention to the engaging nature of the narrative while ignoring Bunyan's clear desire to condition how readers understand it. The decision accords with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's comment that *The Pilgrim's Progress* shows the victory of the "Bunyan of Parnassus" over the "Bunyan of the conventicle" precisely because removing the glosses discounts Bunyan's attempts to connect his narrative to Scripture.³¹ But, as scholars have come to appreciate since the Penguin and Mifflin editions, the marginalia are central not only to *The Pilgrim's Progress* but to all of his allegories.³² Bunyan separates the allegory proper from its *allegoresis*, effectively modeling for his readers how to interpret his texts. He provides us with an especially clear example of allegorists' tendency to, in the words of Frye, "indicate how a commentary on him should proceed."³³ Indeed, Bunyan himself argues that readers should use his glosses to avoid getting lost in the allegories' divine mystery and, instead, to arrive at his intended meaning. Like the various guides in *The Pilgrim's Progress* that keep Christian from straying from God's path, the glosses help prevent readers from "los[ing] their way" by guiding them towards correct interpretations.

Bunyan describes the importance of his marginalia in *The Holy War*:

Nor do thou go to work without my key,
 (In mysteries men soon do lose their way;)
 And also turn it right, if thou wouldst know
 My riddle, and wouldst with my heifer plough.
 The margent. It lies there in the window. Fare thee well,

³¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Lectures of 1818," in *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 31.

³² See Valentine Cunningham, "Glossing and Glozing: Bunyan and Allegory," in *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus*, ed. N.H. Keeble (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1988), 217-240; Maxine Hancock, *The Key in the Window: Marginal Notes in Bunyan's Narratives* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2000), 13-24.

³³ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, op. cit., 90.

My next may be to ring thy passing-bell.³⁴

Here Bunyan works through one of the primary problems with allegory, which emerges from the imitative logic expressed in his apology to *The Pilgrim's Progress*: because allegories imitate the biblical practice of instructing through similitudes—of illuminating spiritual truth through the darkness of allegorical conceit—it is notoriously difficult to exert control over their meanings. Spenser also broaches this problem in his “Letter to Sir Raleigh,” where he explains the design and meaning of *The Faerie Queene*, “knowing how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed.”³⁵ Bunyan takes a different course of action. Rather than attempting to lay out the significance of his allegories in a letter appended to the texts, he includes a complex apparatus of marginal glosses that refer readers to his intended meaning as well as the passages from Scripture that undergird his narratives. The process of using these glosses, however, is not without its problems. Not only must readers refer to the key in the margins as interpretive guides, but they must also learn to “turn it right”; even with these notations, readers can misinterpret the allegory if they apply them incorrectly. In other words, as interpretive guides the margins are reflexive. If you interpret them correctly you are well on your way to interpreting the allegory correctly.

Bunyan’s use of marginal glosses is far from new. The Geneva Bible, which Bunyan knew well despite its replacement as the official English Bible by the King James Version in 1611, uses glosses to encourage an intensely typological form of interpretation that cross-references passages from the Old and New Testaments. Throughout the English Renaissance, as literary historians like William W.E. Slights point out, writers of

³⁴ Bunyan, *The Holy War*, ed. James F. Forrest (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1967), 6.

³⁵ Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, op. cit., 714.

devotional and secular texts regularly use the apparatus of the Geneva Bible for a variety of purposes: to connect their texts to scriptural language and themes; to summarize the narrative's events for readers; to make explicit allegorical meanings that would otherwise have remained implicit.³⁶ Devotional texts like *The Plain-man's Pathway to Heaven* (1601) and Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* (1616)—the texts that Bunyan received as a dowry when marrying his first wife in 1648—both feature extensive marginal notes that support their claims about spiritual enlightenment.³⁷ Richard Bernard's immensely popular *The Isle of Man* (1627), which Bunyan almost certainly read, includes margins with biblical citations, moralizations, and plot summaries. And Phineas Fletcher's *The Purple Island* (1633), a loco-descriptive poem that uses a fictional place to represent human physiology, features lengthy glosses that lay out the most recent anatomical findings.

³⁶ See William W. E. Slights, *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 19-60.

³⁷ Bunyan himself informs us that he received these two books as dowry and frequently read them with his first wife, Elizabeth, in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. W.R. Owens (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1987), 9.

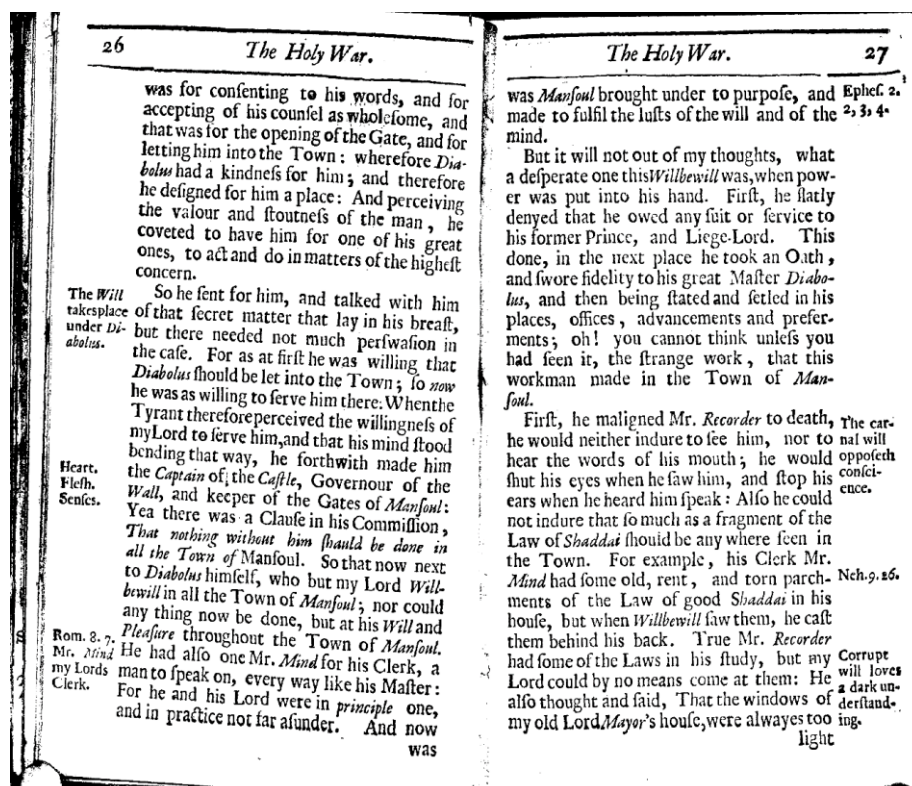


Figure 2. Excerpt from Bunyan's *The Holy War* (London, 1682). *Early English Books Online*. 4 December 2015.

Bunyan borrows the spatial layout of the Geneva Bible and Renaissance devotional and allegorical texts to circumscribe the meanings of his allegories, demonstrating the kinds of connections readers should make without infringing on the narratives' integrity. As Slights points out, ever since the medieval period "The margins were conceived of as a space in which readers' responses to a text could be influenced."³⁸ For Bunyan in particular, sidenotes serve to demonstrate how an *allegoresis* of his texts should proceed. Consider the selected passage from *The Holy War*, which represents in a convenient form the variety of functions these glosses perform. (Fig. 2). At this moment

³⁸ Slights, *Managing Readers*, op. cit., 11.

in the allegory, Diabolus (Satan) has taken over the Town of Mansoul for the first time, and Bunyan is in the process of aligning certain concepts (the will, the mind, and the conscience) with either Diabolus or Emmanuel (Jesus). In addition to picking out particularly important plot points—as he does here with “The Will takes place under *Diabolus*”—he includes three major kinds of interpretation. The first involves uncovering one-to-one correspondences, as when Bunyan identifies the different parts of the Town of Mansoul with particular concepts: the captain of the castle is man’s heart; the Governor of the wall is man’s flesh; and the keeper of the Gates is man’s senses. With these notations, Bunyan helps his readers work through the major conceit of *The Holy War*, which consistently matches up the Town of Mansoul with the Christian body. The frontispiece, indeed, features a large-scale sketch of Bunyan superimposed onto the Town of Mansoul, both of which are located between the warring forces of Emmanuel and Diabolus. (Fig. 3). By consistently pointing back to the one-by-one correspondences, Bunyan makes sure that his readers keep an eye on that conceit even while becoming engaged with the literal narrative.

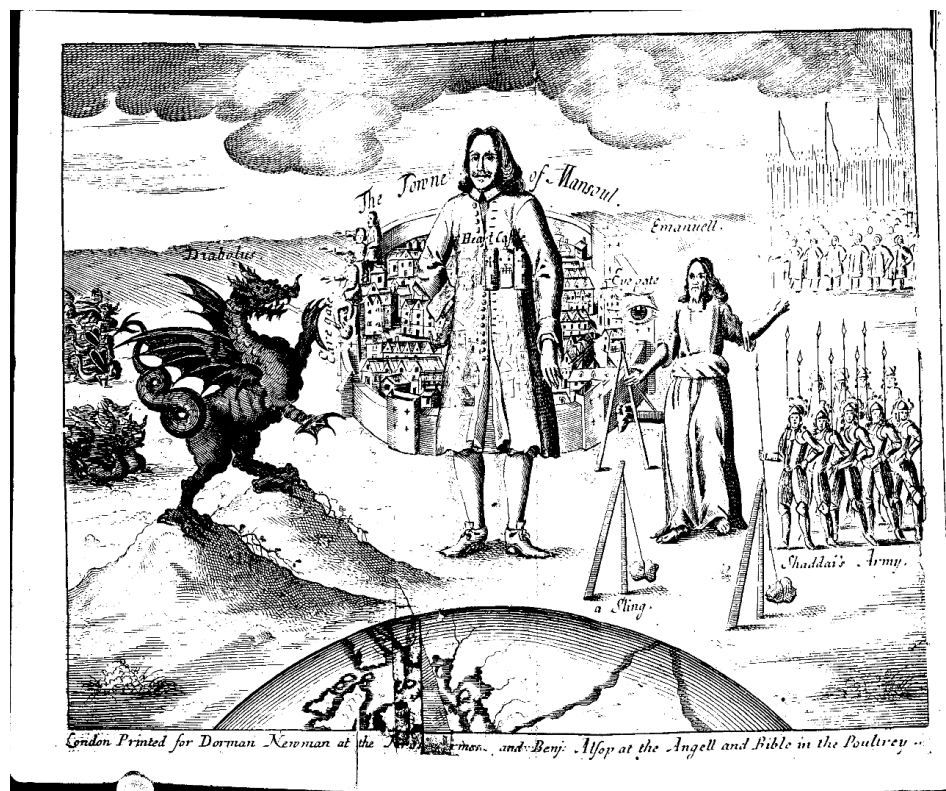


Figure 3. Frontispiece of Bunyan's *The Holy War*. *Early English Books Online*. 4 December 2015.

In his sidenotes, Bunyan also offers generalizations about the Christian experience. These notes, like the plot summaries, are less about uncovering the texts' hidden references than about how readers should apply the texts to their own lives. For instance, when Shaddai is trying to take back the Town of Mansoul from Diabolus, the townsmen panic and shout "The destroyers of our peace and people are come!" The sidenote explicates this moment with a generalization: "When sinners hearken to Satan they are set in a rage against godliness."³⁹ This kind of sidenote is especially prominent throughout *The Holy War*, though Bunyan certainly uses them in *The Pilgrim's Progress*

³⁹ Bunyan, *The Holy War*, op. cit., 46.

and *Mr. Badman*. Their function closely resembles that of Aesopian morals, in the sense that both offer generalizations that justify the fables' content. They supply readers with spiritual truths that are infinitely iterable—applicable to a wide range of Christian experiences. In the current example, Bunyan's sidenote supplies readers with a way to understand the panic felt by the ungodly in the face of the holy. Though these morals clearly derive from the narrative's details, they also pertain to the Christian experience in a more abstract sense.

The third kind of marginal glosses, and perhaps the most well-known, consists of citations of Scripture. These glosses are used throughout *The Holy War* and *Mr. Badman*, but are perhaps most prominent in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. They function as if they were modern footnotes, displaying Bunyan's extensive knowledge of the Bible without encumbering the narrative with detailed theological discussions.⁴⁰ In the passage from *The Holy War*, Bunyan supports his alliance between Diabolus and Mr. Mind by citing Romans 8.7: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And when Willbewill casts Shaddai's laws behind his back, Bunyan cites Nehemiah 9.26, a moment in Scripture that describes a strikingly similar situation: "Nevertheless they [the Levites] were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations." These scriptural glosses thematically link the narrative to the Bible, bringing attention to the spiritual lessons undergirding the story's logic. They work primarily by attaching aspects of the narrative to biblical precedent and bringing the story in-line with the language and themes of

⁴⁰ Anthony Grafton provides a wealth of information about the history of the footnote in *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), especially 7, 108.

Scripture. They highlight the consistencies between the allegory and what Quilligan calls its pretext, “the source that always stands outside the narrative...the text that the narrative comments on by reenacting it.”⁴¹ Bunyan repackages situations and morals from Scripture into plainly intelligible narratives, using marginalia to link those narratives to their shared pretext. In other words, Bunyan presents his allegories as ultimately deriving from God’s word. He says as much in his apology to *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, where he writes that his allegory “seems a Novelty, and yet contains/Nothing but sound and honest Gospel-strains.”⁴² A similar argument is found in *The Holy War*’s preface, where Bunyan writes, “The town of Mansoul is well known to many/Nor are her troubles doubted of by any/That are acquainted with those histories,/That Mansoul and her wars anatomize.”⁴³ Bunyan glosses “those histories” as “The Scriptures,” pointing out that the subject of *The Holy War*, like that of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, derives from the Bible. At these moments, Bunyan presents his allegories as indexes of scriptural content as well as imitations of the Bible’s practice of enlightening through rhetorical darkness.

With these scriptural sidenotes Bunyan encourages his readers to find echoes between his narratives and Scripture, harmonizing them into a unified, consistent system of religious belief and morality.⁴⁴ In our current example from *The Holy War*, these sidenotes match up moments in the story with one or a couple of moments in the Bible. But elsewhere, especially in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan includes lengthy lists of scriptural citations that cut across the Old and New Testaments and test the readers’ abilities to connect a variety of biblical passages. The 1610 translation of the Geneva

⁴¹ Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory*, op. cit., 97-98.

⁴² Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, op. cit., 8.

⁴³ Bunyan, *The Holy War*, op. cit., 2.

⁴⁴ See Hancock, *The Key in the Window*, op. cit., 32-33.

Bible, which Bunyan very well have been familiar with, includes a guide created by “T. Grashop” that details reading Scripture and applying it to one’s own life (Fig. 4). The guide provides readers with a chart for interpreting the Bible properly. It advises readers to, among other things, consider the “coherence of the text and how it hangeth together” and the “agreement that one place of Scripture hath with an other, whereby that which seemeth darke in one is made easie in another.”⁴⁵ It is clear at this point that Bunyan’s scriptural citations function by the same logic, collating a variety of biblical passages in order to explain seeming contradictions. It is also clear that Bunyan places his spiritual allegories within the context of those passages, inserting his spiritual texts into a coherent system of Christian belief.

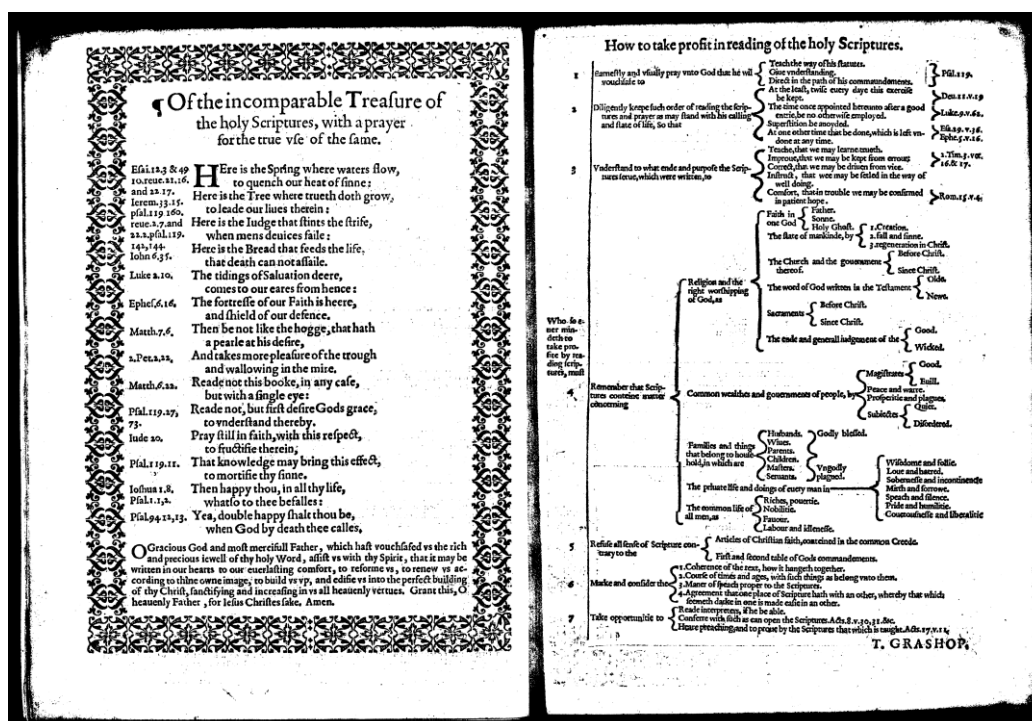


Figure 4. “How to take profit in reading of the holy Scriptures,” appended to *The Bible: that is, the Holy Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament*. Early English Books Online. 29 July 2016.

⁴⁵ *The Bible: that is, the Holy Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament*, (London, 1610).

This is not to say that the relationship between *The Holy War* and Scripture is unidirectional, with the allegory merely reshaping what is already in the Bible. Indeed, the brilliance of Quilligan's formulation of the pretext is that it allows for movement in both directions: the text comments on the pretext while reenacting it, functioning as a space for discovery as well as redundancy. The narrative's literal level thus doubles as an interpretive tool and an object of inquiry. Throughout *The Holy War* and the rest of Bunyan's allegories, there is a constant interplay between text and margins: the narrative offers a particular reading of Scripture just as the citations of Scripture offer a particular reading of the narrative.⁴⁶ Consider the previously mentioned passage from *The Holy War*. Bunyan claims that the Bible "anatomize[s]" the Town of Mansoul and its wars, setting up his narrative as consistent with Scripture despite its use of imaginary beings. But it is equally true that in *The Holy War* Bunyan refocuses Scripture to depict the individual Christian's experience with the uncertainty and despair of coming into contact with one's powerlessness. This refocusing is true of Bunyan's works at large, including not only his allegories but his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) and several of his sermons.

Bunyan enacts a reciprocal relationship between the Bible and his narratives' literal levels that closely resembles that between the Bible and experience in the seventeenth century. As Barbara Lewalski writes, in the seventeenth century "The Christian's experience is to comment upon the biblical text, and the text upon his

⁴⁶ Hancock discusses the reciprocal relationship between sidenotes and Scripture in *The Key in the Window*, op. cit., 21, 25.

experience,”⁴⁷ meaning that everyday life doubles as an object of inquiry and interpretive tool. Bunyan’s allegories mimic this back and forth movement: just as Christians toggle between Scripture and experience, with the two illuminating one another, so readers of Bunyan’s allegories move between the narratives of individual characters and citations from Scripture and apply both to their own experiences. In *Mr. Badman*, Wiseman voices a similar relationship between Scripture and experience when discussing repentance: “This [that no man is saved without repentance], as it is testified by all the Scriptures, so it is testified by Christian experience.”⁴⁸ Scripture and Christian experience serve to mutually confirm and illuminate one another. Bunyan, accordingly, incorporates biblical themes and language into his narratives to support his own generalizations about spiritual enlightenment. In one of our passages from *The Holy War* (depicted in Fig. 2), after citing Nehemiah 9.26 Bunyan includes his own narrative detail—that the laws of God kept by Mr. Recorder (representing the conscience) are inaccessible—in order to bolster his statement that “Corrupt will loves a dark understanding.” Bunyan regularly adds onto moments from Scripture to demonstrate how the story’s literal level illuminates as much as it revisits the lessons of the Bible.

Such a use of sidenotes closely resembles Bunyan’s experiments with the page in his printed sermons. Throughout his career as a sermon writer, Bunyan uses a variety of sidenotes to direct interpretation by, above all, linking his statements about the Christian experience to collections of passages from Scripture. In most of his printed sermons—including *Some Gospel-Truths According to the Scriptures* (1656), *A Few Sighs From*

⁴⁷ Barbara K. Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century English Lyric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 155.

⁴⁸ Bunyan, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (London, 1680), 331.

Hell (1658), *A Barren Fig-Tree* (1675), and *Heavenly Foot-Man*—he uses sidenotes in order to bolster his comments with textual evidence. In others—such as *Christian Behaviour* (1663) and *Light For Them That Sit in Darkness* (1675)—he places clusters of scriptural citations at the end of sections, encouraging readers to retrospectively assign scriptural authority to those sections. Regardless of where these glosses are placed, they clearly promote a method of real-life *allegoresis* whereby readers connect their own life experiences with Scripture, so that life and the Bible mutually reinforce one another. When we couple Bunyan’s sermons with his allegories, we see that the interpretation of everyday life and stories with imaginary beings functions according to the same logic: his allegories imitate the darkness of everyday life, but in a less extreme form. As Bunyan writes in his apology to *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, those skeptical of allegory should reflect on how the literary form imitates divine mysteries in everyday life: “Come, let my Carper, to his Life now look,/And find There darker Lines, then in my Book/He findeth any.”⁴⁹ The process of *allegoresis*, which Bunyan systematizes through his sidenotes, imitates not only the *modus operandi* of Scripture but the reciprocal relationship between life and the Bible that characterizes Bunyan’s sermons and, more broadly, seventeenth-century typology.

In the second part of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* Bunyan uses sidenotes to set up the first part as a pretext, encouraging readers to cross-reference the two parts as they would the Old and New Testaments.⁵⁰ Bunyan sets up the second part as a fulfillment and clarification of the first: “*Besides, what my first Pilgrim left conceal’d,/Thou my brave*

⁴⁹ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, op. cit., 6.

⁵⁰ Recently, Austin has argued that this setup foreshadows a development within the early British novel, in which sequels have typological relationships to their original texts. See Austin, *New Testaments*, op. cit., 59-120.

Second Pilgrim *has reveal'd; / What Christian left lock't up and went his way, / Sweet Christiana opens with her Key.*"⁵¹ Like the sidenotes in *The Holy War* the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* reads back onto the first part, clarifying its central themes and conditioning the ways in which readers interpret both texts. And the sidenotes themselves are partially responsible for making this typological relationship clear, as Bunyan frequently cross-references moments in Christiana's narrative with those in Christian's narrative. For instance, when Christiana encounters the Slough of Despond, Bunyan writes in the margins "I Part, pag. 16-17."⁵² Such sidenotes, unlike those in *Mr. Badman* (which Bunyan also presents as a sequel to the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*),⁵³ make the two parts into a cohesive unit—unified by similar personifications and topography. They encourage readers to connect the events of the second part not only to the Bible but to the first installment, creating a web of intertextual references that together amounts to a depiction of the trials and vicissitudes accompanying the Christian condition.

Bunyan's sidenotes differ dramatically from text to text. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, they teach readers how to interpret through cross-referencing—whether that means linking the narrative to the Bible or, as is often the case in the second part, to moments in the first part. In *The Holy War*, which Bunyan presents as a reformulation of Scripture, they are more frequently spiritual generalizations than scriptural citations. The mix in *Mr. Badman* is more evenly balanced, as Bunyan seems as interested in generalizing about the desperate states of Badman and his nefarious cohort as tying their

⁵¹ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, op. cit., 163.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵³ For Bunyan's presentation of *Mr. Badman* as a sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, see *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, op. cit., "The Author to the Reader."

actions to passages from Scripture. Despite these differences, however, we can say with confidence that his use of sidenotes is a direct response to the difficulty of guiding the interpretation of allegories—a difficulty which plays out so conspicuously in the paratexts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In his marginalia, Bunyan urges his readers not to get too bogged down in the details of the literal narrative, but to use the elements of that narrative to gain insights into Scripture as well as general truths about the Christian experience.

For Bunyan, deciphering dark texts involves looking between as well as beyond texts. It entails, in other words, searching for intertextual in addition to extratextual meaning. Bunyan argues against isolating texts, instead preferring that readers approach them as components of a broad spiritual and textual framework, or to what Michael Riffaterre has called the “intertext,” “a corpus of texts, textual fragments, or textlike segments of the sociolect that shares a lexicon and, to a lesser extent, a syntax with the text we are reading.”⁵⁴ Uncovering this intertext is an essential part of Bunyan’s model of *allegoresis*. Spiritual texts, including Bunyan’s allegories, are part of the same framework as the Bible: all of these texts share a lexicon for discussing the trials and tribulations of the Christian individual. The point of interpreting Bunyan’s allegories is not necessarily to uncover all the echoes of Scripture, but to consistently understand the narratives as part of a larger framework—a literary embodiment of Bunyan’s cosmological perspective in which all components of the world are part of an overarching system of meaning. It is also to apply the lessons of Scripture to one’s own life, understanding the sidenotes not simply as scholarly footnotes but as models for this application.

⁵⁴ Michael Riffaterre, “Intertextual Representation,” *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984): 142.

III. The Literal Levels of Bunyan's Allegories

We have established, through a close look at his claims about allegory and his use of marginal glosses, that Bunyan consistently encourages his readers to look beyond the literal level of his narratives to uncover their undergirding meanings—whether that entails connecting the story to moments in Scripture or generalizing about spiritual enlightenment. However, despite Bunyan's claim in the conclusion to *The Pilgrim's Progress* that readers should “*throw away [the dross,] but yet preserve the Gold,*”⁵⁵ throughout his writing Bunyan clearly demonstrates a profound investment in allegory's literal level. This much is clear from the abundance of scholarship on *The Pilgrim's Progress*'s influence on the emerging novelistic form. As early as 1818, for instance, Coleridge writes that we read the allegory “with the same illusion as we read any tale known to be fictitious, as a novel, [and] we go on with his characters as real persons, who had been nicknamed by his neighbors.”⁵⁶ In 1927, Gwilym Griffith declares Bunyan “the first of our modern novelists” on the basis of his use of concrete, verisimilar detail.⁵⁷ Finally, in the most advanced study of the prehistory of the British novel, McKeon presents *The Pilgrim's Progress* as an unusually literal allegory that anticipates many strategies of later novelists.⁵⁸ If we take anything away from this important scholarship, it's that setting up allegories as mediators of spiritual truths (as Bunyan does) does not necessarily entail devaluing the narrative's literal meaning. To the contrary, the enduring

⁵⁵ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, op. cit., 155.

⁵⁶ Coleridge, “Lectures of 1818,” op. cit., 31.

⁵⁷ Gwilym O. Griffith, *John Bunyan* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), 228.

⁵⁸ McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 295-314. Hans Frei similarly brings attention to “Bunyan's more sober mode of allegorical representation” as “presaging the rise of the modern novel,” *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), 51.

popularity of *The Pilgrim's Progress*—which went through 160 editions by 1792 and which continues to be read and taught in a variety of contexts—is at least partially due to the concrete detail of its literal narrative.⁵⁹ In fact, the concreteness of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is one of the main differences between it and its Medieval and Renaissance predecessors and it is why *The Pilgrim's Progress* has remained such a powerful model for interactive, homiletic literature that draws readers into the protagonist's situation.⁶⁰

Less appreciated is that these comments could easily apply to *Mr. Badman* or *The Holy War*, though the verisimilarity of these texts is less striking than that of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In each of these narratives, Bunyan seeks to balance a concrete, literal diegesis with an allegorical purpose to gesture towards a pretext that validates the narrative. His use of marginal glosses is one way of achieving this balance: the citations from Scripture stand apart, reminding readers of the pretext while also allowing for the imaginative engagement which has caused numerous scholars to associate Bunyan's allegories with the rise of the British novel. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Holy War*, Bunyan draws his readers in by describing the events in rich, sensory detail and by depicting his characters more as individualized beings than as personified abstractions merely performing what Fletcher calls “fated actions,” which accord with the

⁵⁹ For information about the publication history of *Pilgrim's Progress*, see Frank Mott Harrison, “Editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*,” *Library* 4th ser., XXII (1941), 73. See also Isobel Hofmeyr's important study of the ongoing use of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in Africa, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of “The Pilgrim's Progress”* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), especially 11-44.

⁶⁰ One interesting result of this influence is the adaptation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* for games. In *Little Women* (1868, 1869), Mrs. March's pupils play a game based off of Christian's journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. See Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women: An Annotated Edition*, ed. Daniel Shealy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 51-2. Moreover, *McLoughlin Brothers, Inc.* released *The Pilgrim's Progress Board Game* in 1875. See Gregory Jackson, “The Game Theory of Evangelical Fiction,” *Critical Inquiry* 39 (2013): 451-85; Jackson, “The Novel as Board Game: Homiletic Identification and Forms of Interactive Narrative,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 235-7.

abstractions' names.⁶¹ And *Mr. Badman* reads less like an anti-progress narrative, with a degenerate journeying towards Hell just as Christian journeys towards the Celestial City, than a composite of negative examples.⁶² Despite the implication of "fatedness" that may be felt in their allegorical names, Christian and Mr. Badman clearly exhibit an extraordinary degree of agency. As Christopher Hill observes, "One of the significant paradoxes of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is that nevertheless one feels that the Pilgrim is making free choices all the time, deciding for himself," an issue that relates not only to Bunyan's predestinarianism, but also to his use of allegorical embodiments.⁶³ I would suggest that *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Mr. Badman* maintain the feeling of suspense and the possibility for spiritual growth by focusing on figures whose governing concepts are too broad, too encompassing to provide readers with accurate barometers for what those abstractions will do next.

Bunyan's literary project is to intermingle the literal and the allegorical, drawing readers into his texts through engrossing, verisimilar detail but ultimately showing the insufficiency of that literal world (and the material world) for depicting spiritual enlightenment. He resists the ongoing secularization of British culture, which had begun during the Renaissance and which extended well into the nineteenth century. As many scholars have pointed out, secularization does not entail pushing against religion, but relegating religious belief to socially appropriate spaces. José Casanova proposes that we

⁶¹ Fletcher, *Allegory*, op. cit., 49.

⁶² The notion that *Mr. Badman* is meant to be an anti-progress narrative derives from Bunyan's own preface, where he writes that "It came again into my mind to write, as then, of him that was going to Heaven, so now, of the Life and Death of the Ungodly, and of their travel from this world to Hell," *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, op. cit., 1. It is my contention, however, that Mr. Badman and Christian have different statuses as allegorical figures, since the former does not regularly come across other personified abstractions and emblematic spaces as does Christian.

⁶³ Christopher Hill, *A Turbulent, Seditious, and Factious People: John Bunyan and his Church, 1628-1688* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 209.

think about secularization as an ongoing process of differentiation: “this world” (Earth) is recognized as fundamentally different from “that world” (Heaven) and is then split up into religious and secular components.⁶⁴ This differentiation occurs on both social and phenomenological levels. On a social level, institutions are designated as religious or secular, allowing for religion to be bracketed from certain kinds of public discourse. C. John Sommerville writes, “in the late seventeenth century...social and cultural life began to grow away from manifestly religious assumptions, and it became possible to discuss politics, economics, and philosophy without reference to Christian doctrine.”⁶⁵ On a phenomenological level, secularization produces what Charles Taylor has called the “buffered self,” a distinctly modern notion of the individual that (unlike the “porous self”) stands disembedded from the divine world.⁶⁶ Despite the differences between the theories of secularization espoused by Casanova, Sommerville, and Taylor, it is clear that they are all writing about a historical process by which the modern individual becomes disembedded from the spiritual realm and religious concerns are given their proper sphere apart from secular life.

Bunyan’s literary texts are not secular narratives. They delineate spiritual truths in strikingly material terms, subordinating the literal to the allegorical but also demonstrating the need of the literal for spiritual instruction. In his allegories, Bunyan seeks to use the literal level without becoming overly invested in it. His project, hence,

⁶⁴ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 211-34.

⁶⁵ C. John Sommerville, “Religious Typologies and Popular Religion in Restoration England,” *Church History* 45 (1976): 32.

⁶⁶ See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 27, 37-42.

bears resemblance to St. Augustine's discussion in *On Christian Doctrine* (ca. 397-426) of how to "use" the physical world without losing sight of the spiritual one:

To enjoy something is to cling to it with love for its own sake. To use something, however, is to employ it in obtaining that which you love...Suppose we were wanderers who could not live in blessedness except in home, miserable in our wandering and desiring to end it and return to our native country. We would need vehicles for land and sea which could be used to help us to reach our homeland, which is to be enjoyed. But if the amenities of the journey and the motion of the vehicles itself delighted us, and we were led to enjoy those things which we should use, we should not wish to end our journey quickly, and, entangled in a perverse sweetness, we should be alienated from our country, whose sweetness would make us blessed.⁶⁷

There is a way in which Augustine and Bunyan are engaged in parallel projects, as both seek to instrumentalize the material and literal without allowing them to become the central focus. In Augustine's discussion, there is great danger in treating the vehicles, or travel itself, as the desired destination. Doing so would cause travelers to wander aimlessly without their original sense of purpose, "entangled in a perverse sweetness" because they, in the language of metaphor studies, have mistaken the vehicle for the tenor.⁶⁸

Augustine's discussion of using the material world for accessing the divine is a tremendously useful analogue for understanding what Bunyan is doing with his allegories. Bunyan continually asks readers to look beyond the literal levels of his narratives without discounting them. Like Augustine's vessels that are necessary but not sufficient for the traveler to reach his homeland, the literal level of Bunyan's stories appeal to the imaginations of seventeenth-century Christians, but in order to reach

⁶⁷ Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), I, iv, 9-10.

⁶⁸ The most famous discussion of metaphors in terms of vehicle and tenor is I.A. Richards's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1936; reprint, 1965), 120-38.

spiritual enlightenment readers must understand the stories as dark texts with ulterior meanings. As we have seen in Bunyan's apology and concluding poem to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the danger is that readers will lose touch with the allegorical meaning and, by so doing, enjoy rather than use the literal level.

But still, for Bunyan, using the literal level as a vehicle for spiritual meaning demands a real investment in that level. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in particular, is filled with scenes in which Bunyan draws readers into the literal narrative rather than consistently pointing them to the undergirding spiritual meaning. Perhaps the most famous scene, in this respect, is the fight between Christian and Apollyon. Indeed, in 1797, the American writer Royall Tyler satirizes the engaging nature of this scene when he has his protagonist, Updike Underhill, poke out Apollyon's eyes with a penknife "to help Christian beat him."⁶⁹ Tyler's satirical detail is consistent with what Bunyan is doing. Bunyan, that is to say, encourages the very kind of imaginative transport and personal engagement that Underhill participates in so conspicuously. Rather than beating his readers over the head with heavy-handed didacticism, Bunyan consistently cultivates an intimacy between his readers and the literal text. Part of the point of Bunyan's allegories lies in this intimate relationship: Bunyan enlivens and reinforces doctrine, using imaginary creatures and personified abstractions to explain and clarify various moments in Scripture. Behind Bunyan's verisimilar allegories is a major theological point. Individuals should perform an Augustinian utilization of their material world just as they should the surface-level details of Bunyan's allegories. Such a worldview—where the material and the literal are useful, but should not be enjoyed for their own sake—

⁶⁹ Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive* (Hartford, CT: Peter B. Gleason, 1816), 26.

demands a calculated investment in the different components of the world without understanding those components as the end-all of our existence. The investment in the material, indeed, is the crucial mechanism for spiritual teaching. This quasi-material worldview emphasizes that all things, even the base ones used to usher in the divine, are mediums for spiritual truth—an emphasis that insists on their utility but also their ultimate insufficiency.

Such a utilization puts the material world and the literal level of an allegorical narrative in an analogous relationship to one another. Bunyan seeks to convince his readers to look beyond the literal level of his narratives—an effect that is especially prominent in *The Pilgrim's Progress*—just as they should look beyond their material surroundings to their spiritual significance. As Barbara A. Johnson writes, “*The Pilgrim's Progress* is allegorical as a means of being mimetic, since its subject is a special kind of experience: the process of moving from one kind of reality to another and therefore simultaneously the discovery of that other reality and a rediscovery of this one.”⁷⁰ *The Pilgrim's Progress* is mimetic in the sense that it portrays the experience of encountering the material world as a medium for the spiritual. Like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan's other allegories function by encouraging his readers to simultaneously become engaged in and look beyond the narrative's literal level, thereby imitating the doubleness central to the Augustinian utilization of the material world and getting his readers to question and rediscover their own sense of reality. He extends his suggestion in *The Pilgrim's Progress* that readers should “read thy self” in the narrative, applying the story to their personal situations.

⁷⁰ Johnson, “Falling into Allegory,” op. cit., 137.

To get a sense of how this utilization works according to Bunyan, I propose looking at the House of the Interpreter in the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Here, as James F. Forrest notes, Bunyan constructs an “allegory within an allegory,” where “the emblems are themselves allegories in miniature.”⁷¹ He follows Spenser’s practice of using houses—places where travelers learn about their own significance—to illuminate the allegory’s meaning and to self-consciously bring attention to the significance of certain allegorical figures.⁷² In *The Pilgrim's Progress* the central theme of Bunyan’s “houses” is interpretation itself. He describes seven emblems, designed to teach Christian (and the reader) how to interpret allegory: a picture of Christ, holding the Bible and looking up at the Heavens; a dusty Parlor that represents the heart of man; a scene involving two personified abstractions, Passion and Patience, waiting for their rewards; a Fire burning against a wall, with two persons (representing, respectively, the Devil and Christ) sprinkling water and oil upon it; a beautiful palace into which a Christian gains admittance by fighting the guards; a man of despair, who tells his story to Christian while locked in an iron cage; and a man who constantly trembles because he has dreamt of Judgment Day and God’s wrath. For most of the emblems, Christian prompts the Interpreter to immediately assign meaning to the scene by asking the question “*What means this?*” or telling the Interpreter to “*Expound this matter more fully to me.*”⁷³ The question-and-answer structure keeps the Interpreter in control of his meaning; Christian almost never offers his own interpretations nor do the emblems stand on their own for

⁷¹ Forrest, “Allegory and Sacred Sport,” op. cit., 111.

⁷² In Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, for instance, the Redcross Knight learns about holiness under the tutelage of Fidelia at the House of Holiness, I.x; in book II, Guyon learns about Temperance in the House of Temperance, II.ix.

⁷³ See Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, op. cit., 29-35.

long before having their hidden meaning revealed. In his first five explanations, the Interpreter proceeds by painstakingly laying out one-to-one correspondences between the emblems' details and their intended meanings. Consider his explanation of the parlor emblem:

This Parlor, is the heart of a Man that was never sanctified by the sweet Grace of the Gospel: The *dust*, is his Original Sin, and inward Corruptions that have defiled the whole Man. He that began to sweep at first, is the Law; but She that brought water, and did sprinkle it, is the Gospel: Now, whereas thou sawest that so soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did so fly about, that the Room by him could not be cleansed, but that thou wast almost choaked therewith, this is to shew thee, that the Law, instead of cleansing the heart (by it working) from sin, doth revive, put strength into, and increase it in the soul, even as it doth discover and forbid it, for it doth not give power to subdue.⁷⁴

*Rom. 7.6
*I Cor. 15.56
*Rom. 5.20

After being prompted by Christian, the Interpreter substitutes for the details of the image their spiritual equivalents: the Parlor is the heart of man; dust is original sin; the sweeper is the law; the woman sprinkling water is the Gospel. His function is similar to Bunyan's sidenotes that match up the stories' details with their spiritual signifieds. His presence, that is to say, is evidence of Bunyan's profound investment in directing allegorical interpretation at the same time that he leaves such interpretation up to his readers.

As an analogy for allegorical reading, the Interpreter's explanation of the parlor emblem serves as a model for personal investment in a conspicuously contrived situation so that a physical or emotional response to a text becomes a signifier of spiritual meaning rather than being necessarily indicative of an overinvestment in the allegory's literal level. The Interpreter incorporates Christian's own physical reaction to the dust—above

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30-31.

all, a material substance—into his explanation, understanding it as a signifier of the law’s inability to exonerate man from sin. To follow the Interpreter’s explicatory method, that is to say, Christian would have identified himself into a major actor in the allegory, ultimately decreasing the distance between himself and the miniature allegory which characterizes some of the other emblems (like the painting of Christ, the beautiful palace, and the allegorical figures who explain their own significance). This reading suggests that Bunyan is far from antagonistic towards the personally engaging nature of his allegories. On the contrary, he wants his readers to turn a critical eye on their own emotions and, by so doing, understand their own physical and emotional reactions to the text as fundamental to that text’s usefulness as a didactic tool.

At the end of the parlor emblem, Bunyan cites Romans 7.6, Corinthians 15.56, and Romans 5.20—all biblical passages that somehow concern the insufficiency of law for saving individuals from sin. And a few lines later, after turning from law to spiritual purification, he cites John 15.3, Ephesians 5.26, Acts 15.9, and Romans 16.25 and 26. Bunyan’s scriptural glosses thematically link the narrative to the Bible, bringing attention to the spiritual lessons underlying the story’s logic. In John 15.3, for instance, Jesus tells his followers that they “are clean through the word I have spoken unto you.” Ephesians 5.26 discusses God’s ability to “sanctify and cleanse it [the soul] with the washing of water by the word.” The same process repeats throughout the scene at the Interpreter’s house: the Interpreter applies morals to his various scenarios while Bunyan shores up these moralizations with a sophisticated marginal apparatus. After taking Christian from the parlor, the Interpreter takes him to see Passion and Patience. Patience receives a bag of treasure, but soon spends all his money and becomes destitute with only rags for

clothing. Patience waits until the afterlife to receive his treasure, making him wealthy forever, for “he therefore that hath his Portion *first*, must needs have a time to spend it; but he that has his Portion *last*, must have it lastingly.”⁷⁵ In the margins, Bunyan associates the Interpreter’s language with that of Luke 16, which covers the economic reversal of Dives and Lazarus. Like the parlor emblem, the scene with Patience and Passion is a conspicuously contrived situation that reinforces and intensifies lessons from Scripture.

The scenes at the House of the Interpreter, I want to suggest, highlight one of the major paradoxes of late-seventeenth-century allegory which Bunyan runs up against repeatedly. Though Bunyan patterns his miniature allegories on the dark speech of Scripture, his emblems are effective means of instruction because the Interpreter is present at the scene to make the intended meanings known and to prevent Christian from applying his own interpretations without guidance. The Interpreter’s emblems, like *The Pilgrim’s Progress* as a whole and Bunyan’s allegories in general, simultaneously withhold meaning and make it apparent: they are instances of “dark” speech which are immediately decoded by the Interpreter as the presiding authority. Even in the final two emblems where the Interpreter forbears from explaining their meaning, Bunyan allows the man of despair and the dreamer to describe the causes of their own misery. These explanations, whether from the personified abstractions themselves or a presiding interpreter, are analogous to Bunyan’s sidenotes, as they effectively work through the meanings of different allegorical moments.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 32.

Bunyan's allegories are about the necessity, but inherent insufficiency of mediums for representing the divine, whether they be the material world or the literal level of a fictional narrative. They require a kind of double vision whereby readers simultaneously pay close attention to superficial details and look beyond them to an ulterior spiritual meaning. Consider, again, Bunyan's discussion of "stooping," a form of close reading that looks beyond the literal level but also highly values the figures themselves. The Bible's dark figures are inherently insufficient for imparting God's meaning, not because of any rhetorical missteps but because of the audience's incapacity for understanding God directly. The same logic obtains in Bunyan's allegories, especially *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in which the narrative framework is a useful but insufficient means of describing the Christian experience. For this reason, Fish takes *The Pilgrim's Progress* as the self-consuming artifact *par excellence*, a text that eats away at its own foundational premise. "The illusory nature of the pilgrim's progress," he writes, "is a large part of Bunyan's point, and the reader's awareness of the problematics of the narrative is essential to his intention, which is nothing less than the disqualification of his work as a vehicle of the insight he pretends to convey."⁷⁶ Fish correctly identifies Bunyan's ambivalence towards his central conceit, which matches up physical travel with stages in Christian's spiritual development. Indeed, in his paratext and sidenotes Bunyan himself discusses the very "problematics of the narrative" that Fish explicates at length. To Fish's account we can add those moments when Bunyan self-consciously disrupts the seeming equivalence between travel in the narrative and the acquisition of spiritual insight. Shortly after leaving the Interpreter, for instance, Christian encounters Formalist

⁷⁶ Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, op. cit., 224-5.

and Hypocrisie after they scale the wall to get to the path rather than entering through the Wicket Gate. Formalist and Hypocrisie respond, in unison, that “besides...so we get into the way, what’s matter which way we get in? if we are in, we are in: thou art but in the way, who, as we perceive, came in at the Gate; and we are also in the way that came tumbling over the wall: Wherein now is thy condition better than ours?”⁷⁷

Christian responds appropriately to this inquiry by saying that he adheres to God’s rules while they “walk by the rude working of ...[their] fancies.”⁷⁸ The scene effectively decouples Formalist and Hypocrisie’s (and potentially the reader’s) impulse to understand spatial progress within the narrative as synonymous with spiritual progress. Bunyan makes similar moves elsewhere in the poem, condemning pilgrims who follow the same path as Christian. To cite one more instance, towards the end of the narrative Ignorance is cast down to hell just as he is arriving at the Gates of Heaven. The narrator observes, “Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the Gates of Heaven, as well as from the City of *Destruction*.”⁷⁹ Pilgrims are always on the verge of damnation, no matter how far they have traveled.

Bunyan also muddies the typically closed, unchanging epistemological conditions of the allegorical form by presenting some names as changing and negotiable. In *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, we find out that Christian’s name used to be Graceless.⁸⁰ And Mr. *By-ends* rejects his name (without giving an alternative): “That is not my name, but indeed it is a Nick-name that is given me by some that cannot abide me, and I must be

⁷⁷ Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, op. cit., 40.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 40.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 154.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 47.

content to bear it as a reproach, as other good men have born theirs before me.”⁸¹ By making names somewhat changeable, Bunyan gives his personified abstractions the possibility for development and growth. Such a move is characteristic of Bunyan’s allegories. Perhaps his most profound and prolonged reflection on the seemingly direct epistemological status of allegorical names—which appear to identify persons, places, and things exactly as they are—can be found in *The Holy War*. The middle of the allegory features a series of trials, in which the clerk tries to discern whether certain individuals have sided with Diabolus or Emmanuell. The Diabolonians, who “love to counterfeit their names,”⁸² argue that they are virtues instead of vices. Thus, Mr. False-peace contends that his name is Mr. Cheer-up; Mr. Covetousness, Mr. Good-Husbandry; Mr. Pride, Mr. Neat or Mr. Handsome. Consider, for instance, Mr. False-peace’s defense:

Then said Mr. False-peace, ‘Gentlemen, and you now appointed to be my judges, I acknowledge that my name is Mr. Peace, but that my name is False-peace, I utterly deny. If your Honours shall please to send for any that do intimately know me, or for the midwife that laid my mother of me, or for the gossips that was at my christening, they will, any or all of them, prove that my name is not False-peace, but Peace. Wherefore I cannot plead to this indictment, for as much as my name is not inserted therein; and as is my true name, so also are my conditions. I was always a man that loved to live at quiet, and what I loved myself, that I thought others might love also. Wherefore, when I saw any of my neighbors to labour under a disquieted mind, I endeavoured to help them what I could, and instances of this good temper of mine, many I could give.’⁸³

As is usually the case with these trials in *The Holy War*, the defendant betrays himself throughout his speech. It becomes clear that Mr. False-peace deserves his name for lulling others into a false sense of peacefulness and certainty despite the ongoing struggle between Diabolus and Emmanuell. But more important than this conclusion is that

⁸¹ Ibid., 98.

⁸² Bunyan, *The Holy War*, op. cit., 148.

⁸³ Ibid., 143.

Bunyan, here and elsewhere, explores the possibility that vices can masquerade as virtues—that the allegorical names, and therefore the essences, of conceptual abstractions can be deceiving.

Such a notion, which Bunyan hints at in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and addresses in more detail in *The Holy War*, inverts the direct epistemology we tend to associate with allegorical names. In *The Holy War*, Bunyan puts the clerk and readers in the position of discerning the individuals' names by listening to their speeches—a setup that presents allegorical names as epistemological problems at the same time that it embraces the underlying logic of allegorical names. To put this another way, the trial scenes ultimately reinforce the idea that conceptual abstractions can only perform what Fletcher calls “fated actions” or what we might call fated speech (which agree with the figure's name),⁸⁴ but keep the clerk and the readers temporarily in the dark about the individuals' actual names. They waffle between two sides of a similar concept and thereby highlight the frequency with which individuals misidentify vices as virtues in the real world, which seems diametrically opposed to the purported directness of conceptual personification.

The Pilgrim's Progress provides a more subtle but more radical revision of fated actions. Despite the predictable actions and speeches of the demonic vices as well as those of Faithful and Hopeful, Christian's actions are strikingly difficult to foresee. His governing concept is too big, too encompassing to provide readers with an accurate barometer for what he will do next. And within a predestinarian framework his actions are only coincidental to his salvation. Bunyan, then, presents Christian as a conceptual abstraction, but not of the sort that merely performs predetermined actions and speech (a

⁸⁴ Fletcher, *Allegory*, op. cit., 49.

notion of allegorical persons that would become increasingly popular in eighteenth-century critical discussions of *prosopopoeia*). He hardly seems like Fletcher's obsessed persona or Steven Knapp's self-absorbed agent, who only perform actions that explicitly align them with their governing concept to such an extent that they cancel out their own agency.⁸⁵ Christian consistently demonstrates his ability to, in Hill's words, "[make] free choices all the time, deciding for himself"—a description that speaks to his complex status as an allegorical figure as well as his place within a predestinarian framework.⁸⁶

I want to suggest that Bunyan's tweaks to the allegorical form—the use of broad or vague abstractions (such as Christian and Faithful in *The Pilgrim's Progress* or the Town of Mansoul in *The Holy War*), and the subtle critique of the allegories' central conceits—are what help maintain a sense of suspense for readers, encouraging them to become invested in the literal narratives as well as in the allegorical subtext.⁸⁷ The point is not simply that the allegorical form appeals to unenlightened readers who (like the young Bunyan, as recounted in *Few Sighs From Hell* and *Grace Abounding*) tend to become more entranced by romances and chapbooks than theological treatises, but that Bunyan's process of looking beyond allegories' concrete, verisimilar detail closely resembles his proposed method for instrumentalizing the material world without idolizing that world as an end in and of itself, as do Obstinate, Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, and the attendants at Vanity Fair in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

⁸⁵ See *ibid.*, 25-69; Steven Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime: Milton to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 4. Andrew Escobedo recent research points out that the idea of personified abstractions as self-cancelling agents does not gain currency until the eighteenth century, "Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels," *ELH* 75 (2008): 787-818.

⁸⁶ Hill, *Turbulent, Seditious, and Factious People*, *op. cit.*, 209.

⁸⁷ See Benjamin Lyle Berger, "Calvinism and the Problem of Suspense in *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Bunyan Studies: John Bunyan and His Times* 8 (1998): 28-35.

In sum, the strangeness of Bunyan's allegories results from his commitment to poking at their forms. In various moments throughout *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Mr. Badman*, and *The Holy War*, Bunyan pushes against some of the most conventional assumptions of allegorical compositions in order to point to the insufficiency of his own text. We might, now return to Fish's comment on *The Pilgrim's Progress* with greater clarity. Fish, the reader will remember, argues that "the reader's awareness of the problematics of the narrative is essential to his [Bunyan's] intention, which is nothing less than the disqualification of his work as a vehicle of the insight he pretends to convey." Fish is right insofar as Bunyan in no way suggests that *The Pilgrim's Progress*, or any of his other allegories for that matter, neatly contains a roadmap for acquiring spiritual enlightenment. It is, however, not the case that Bunyan disqualifies his texts as instructive vehicles. Bunyan, on the contrary, suggests that allegory is the only way to reach certain readers. What Fish calls these texts' "disqualification[s]" are, in fact, what Bunyan understood as their qualifications. Allegory's distinct didactic advantage over sermons, that is to say, derives directly from its relationship to humans' own fallen state. As fallen creatures, humans lack the ability to understand God directly. God and his disciples must speak through similitudes, representing spiritual truth using material embodiments.

The bone of contention between Fish and my chapter is, to put it in a slightly different way, whether the problematics of Bunyan's allegories disqualify them as instructive vehicles or whether the fallen nature of his allegories—which imitate the Bible's representation of spiritual truths in earthly similitudes—makes them particularly useful as means for reaching not only the saved but the reprobate. In his *Few Sighs from*

Hell, a text which like *Grace Abounding* uses Bunyan's past reprobate nature as a way to coax his listeners out of their sinful state, he recounts his own encounter with Scripture as a young man: "[G]ive me a Ballad, a Newsbook, *George on Horseback*, or *Bevis of Southampton*, give me some book that teaches curious arts, that tells of old fables; but for the holy Scriptures I cared not."⁸⁸ There is ultimately little evidence that the problematics of Bunyan's allegories—which he not only recognizes but actively draws attention to—make it any less useful as a pedagogical tool for enlightening his readers. Bunyan, indeed, borrows conventions from early modern allegories and chapbooks, which had become so popular for middle-class readers, in order to appeal to a broad array of individuals. For Bunyan, allegories and romances are not necessarily a tool of Satan—though, as evidenced by some of his sidenotes, they certainly can be. In *The Holy War*, for instance, Bunyan writes that Mr. Filth has an "odious nasty, lascivious piece of beastliness to be drawn up in writing" and he clarifies in the sidenotes that he means "Odious atheistical pamphlets and filthy ballads and romances full of baldry."⁸⁹ The trick is to use what is useful about these pamphlets, which are noteworthy because of their popularity, and to retool it for spiritual purposes.

The effect of Bunyan's use of romance and verisimilar detail is a series of allegorical narratives where nothing stands on its own, precisely because they are structured as networks of dialectical relationships between seemingly different but actually connected components: the literal and the allegorical modes of representation; the texts and the margins; the narratives and Scripture; matter and spirit. These

⁸⁸ Bunyan, *A Few Sighs from Hell*, in *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, vol. I, ed. T.L. Underwood (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1980), 333.

⁸⁹ Bunyan, *The Holy War*, op. cit., 35.

components of Bunyan's allegories interact with each other in complex, sometimes startling ways. Bunyan consistently pulls the rug out from under his readers, making them question their own worldviews and encouraging them to harmonize their own personal experiences with the Bible as well as with the cosmos.

In my introduction, I argue that the British Enlightenment is above all a process of differentiation whereby wholes become separated into component parts and put in relation to one another. The process of secularization—as emphasized by the work of Casanova, Sommerville, and Taylor—is one major component of this overall process. Modern modes of knowledge, indeed, arise from the subjection of medieval and Renaissance modes of knowledge to vigorous analysis. This lengthy historical process is perhaps one of the most important influences on the form which allegory eventually takes by the end of the eighteenth century. But Bunyan's allegories are curious because they so actively push against this process of differentiation by intermingling the literal and the allegorical, the secular and the spiritual, the mimetic and the imaginary. We should have trouble classifying texts like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Mr. Badman*, and *The Holy War* because Bunyan exerts a great deal of energy bringing what had been differentiated from one another back into conjunction. Perhaps the most important aspect of Bunyan's project is to encourage readers and writers to use whatever sources—even if they are material or imaginary—to further the advancement of God's Truth. Bunyan wanted to appeal to a wide variety of readers, whether they were Christian or reprobate, and did not see any reason why writers should not use any artistic means necessary to inculcate truths as they are represented in Scripture.

Soon after Bunyan's death in 1688, the practice of printing marginalia as a way of guiding interpretation goes out of style.⁹⁰ Eighteenth-century editors seem to prefer footnotes to glosses, perhaps because moving the notes from the side to the bottom of the page makes the distinction between the text and notations even more emphatic. Thanks to an emerging eighteenth-century aesthetic that privileges narrative consistency and imaginative transport, and an emerging focus on original genius, glosses are soon understood to be unnecessary or even harmful. Indeed, Thorpe's decision to cut out the glosses to make *The Pilgrim's Progress* more readable rings true only because modernity has largely latched onto the notion of original genius, which understands the kind of gesturing and self-interpretation that characterizes Bunyan's literature as breaking a perceived fourth-wall between writer and readers.⁹¹ Modern readers dislike being lead through a text and having the author designate appropriate connections and interpretations. In fact, this dislike emerges at least in part from the eighteenth century. By the time we get to Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, the kinds of interpretation represented by Bunyan's glosses and the Interpreter's explanations are fuel for satire. In the fight over the father's will at the center of *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), for instance, Swift exposes *allegoresis* to be deeply involved with vested political interest: the process of reading and interpreting Scripture is a potentially tendentious process where people can rationalize their actions through creative close reading. It is important that we see Swift's critique of biblical exegesis as part of the same trajectory as Bunyan's writings. When we

⁹⁰ See Slights, *Managing Readers*, op. cit., 250-1; Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 131.

⁹¹ Kaufmann makes a similar point when he argues that *The Pilgrim's Progress* presents a problem to "many modern readers...[who are] troubled by suspicions about the originality and wholeness of a work that so persistently points beyond itself." See *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation*, op. cit., 25.

read the scenes at the House of the Interpreter without referring to the marginal glosses, Bunyan does not seem so distant from Swift. The primary difference is that Bunyan places a lot of confidence in the interpreter's (and the reader's) ability to unpack the allegories according to their intended meaning, while Swift understands interpretation to be necessarily caught up with personal and religious interests. If it were not for the glosses, that is to say, it would be easy to imagine a farcical reading where the Interpreter's substitutional method of interpretation is not so different from the over-the-top allegorical reading which Swift later mocks.

A close look at Bunyan's allegories makes it abundantly clear that change is under way by the 1670s. Bunyan works firmly within the tradition of Christian allegory, but he also imbues the form with a degree of concreteness and self-reflexivity not characteristic of earlier iterations of the form.⁹² He demonstrates not only that allegory can adapt to the increasing importance of empiricism, which is often identified as sounding the death knell for the form, but that an ambivalence towards allegory (like that we find in the apology to *The Pilgrim's Progress*) does not necessarily prevent writers from experimenting with it. Bunyan seeks to perfect the form by more closely aligning it with empiricism, which celebrates the force of the literal and the material as crucial to the spiritual signified.⁹³ Though *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*,

⁹² Self-reflexivity is part and parcel of the process of modernization and the rise of the modern notion of "the Aesthetic," understood as the principle that art is about art. See McKeon, "Politics of Discourses and the Rise of the Aesthetic in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 35-51.

⁹³ There is an important historical parallel here between Bunyan's use of empirical detail in his allegories and physico-theology, which argues that we must look for traces of God in the natural, material world. See Robert Markley, *Fallen Languages: Crises of Representation in Newtonian England, 1660-1740* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 1-33; Peter Harrison, *Theology and the Mixed Sciences: The Science of Nature in the Seventeenth Century* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 165-83. For additional information about the argument from design, specifically within the context of Romantic literature, see Colin Jager, *The Book*

and *The Holy War* are not themselves secular narratives, they do participate in the general cultural movement in a materializing direction. In the next chapter, we will see how Dryden uses allegory under similar historical conditions, though the emphasis will be on political allegory and beast fables rather than on religious allegory.

CHAPTER 2

Dryden's Use of Allegory

It is a matter of greatest wonder to me to observe how exactly the *two Histories* run *parallel*. Insomuch that it were no hard matter for an *ingenious phancy*, by altering the Names of *David, Absalom, Joab, Abishai, Zadock, Abiathar, Shimei, Ziba, Mephibosheth, Jordan, &c.* into others proper to our later affairs, to insert *verbatim* the *greatest part of the Chapter into a Chronicle of these Times*.

-Simon Ford¹

The Hind and the Panther...is full of "good things," but...what are we to say if not that the very design of conducting in verse a theological controversy allegorized as a beast fable suggests in the author a state of mind bordering on aesthetic insanity? *The Hind and the Panther* does not exist...It is not a poem: it is simply a name [for]...a number of pieces of good description, vigorous satire, and 'popular' controversy, which have all been yoked together by external violence.

-C.S. Lewis²

Bunyan and Dryden experimented with allegory at roughly the same time. Dryden published *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), a political allegory as well as a typology about the Exclusion Crisis in England, between the publications of the two parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. And from 1682 to 1684, he co-wrote *The Duke of Guise* (1683) and *King Arthur* (1691), two dramas that use coded references to parallel contemporary with past events.³ Moreover, after his conversion to Roman Catholicism (the religion of the newly anointed King James II) Dryden wrote *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), a poem that represents the belligerence of Protestants towards Catholics in a partially realized beast fable. In this poem, which is the main topic of this chapter's second section, Dryden

¹ Simon Ford, *Parallēla; or, The Loyall Subjects Exultation for the Royall Exiles Restauration, in the Parallel of K. David and Mephibosheth on the One Side; and Our Gracious Sovereign, K. Charls, and His Loving Subjects, on the Other* (1660), 1-2.

² C.S. Lewis, "Shelley, Dryden and Mr. Eliot," in *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (1939), 8-9.

³ John M. Wallace argues that *The Duke of Guise* invites allegorical interpretation in "Dryden and History: A Problem in Allegorical Reading," *ELH* 36 (1969): 265. Andrew Pinnock focuses on *King Arthur* as an allegory in "A Double Vision of Albion: Allegorical Re-Alignments in the Dryden-Purcell Semi-Opera *King Arthur*," *Restoration* 34 (2010): 55-81.

sets up and then breaks his allegorical beast fable, working against the expectation that fables be internally consistent.

The goal of this chapter is to build off the discussion of Bunyan's religious allegories to better understand the role and status of allegory in Restoration England and to establish a foundation for thinking about what happens to the literary form during the Enlightenment. How does Dryden's use of political or historical allegory compare to Bunyan's religious allegories? How can writers use allegory as a way of discussing the here and now, in addition to discussing the heavenly and eternal? What further information can we glean from analyzing how Dryden teaches his readers to interpret his texts?

To address these questions, in this chapter I will focus on Dryden's two most interesting and creative allegorical texts, *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind and the Panther*. I will have recourse to other texts within Dryden's *oeuvre* when doing so should prove illuminating. My primary argument is that Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind and the Panther* share two major similarities with Bunyan's allegories. The first is the general movement towards the material and concrete. We have seen how Bunyan uses specific strategies to instrumentalize the material and literal as methods, no matter how insufficient in and of themselves, for representing what Bunyan understood as spiritual and theological truths. Dryden also participates in the general cultural movement in a materializing direction, but his focus is (unlike Bunyan's) is ultimately on the here and now. Dryden uses allegory to represent the political rather than the theological. Even in *The Hind and the Panther*, which features figures for the Catholic and Anglican Churches, focuses primarily on the political manifestations of certain religious beliefs.

The second major similarity between Bunyan and Dryden is a clear investment in using allegory self-consciously and self-reflexively. The drive towards self-referentiality needs to be understood within the context of the rise of the aesthetic in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. The rise of the aesthetic in modernity, as I understand it, involves the growing focus on contemporaries' reading practices and on how texts can be used to provoke certain responses in readers.⁴ The modern aesthetic emerges from the Enlightenment's analytical focus on epistemological questions relating to how individuals approach and understand the concrete world around them.⁵ It relates to how individuals understand and react to texts. In *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind and the Panther* we have two astounding examples of texts that bring attention to themselves as texts and, correspondingly, to their readers. We could accurately say that both poems are fundamentally concerned with the expectations and interpretive patterns their readers bring to understand and decode allegorical texts.

The first section of this chapter argues that, in *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden uses political allegory to set up a poem that is part political-biblical allegory and part typology. Dryden uses one set of signifiers (taken from sacred history) to discuss another set of signifieds (taken from recent political history). But he designs the poem to go even further than using the signifiers as vehicles for the signifieds. He uses the form of

⁴ My understanding of the rise of the aesthetic in modernity is informed most powerfully by the work of M.H. Abrams. See Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1953), 271-84; Abrams, "Art-as-Such: The Sociology of Modern Aesthetics," *Bulletin of the American Academic of Arts and Sciences* 38 (1985): 8-33. Douglas Patey provides more information about the role probability played in the formation of the aesthetic in *Probability and Literary Form: Philosophic Theory and Literary Practice in the Augustan Age* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 142-45.

⁵ For more information about the relationship between literature, the empiricist sciences, and the rise of the aesthetic in Enlightenment England, see McKeon, "Mediation as Primal Word: The Arts, the Sciences, and the Origins of the Aesthetic," in *This is Enlightenment*, ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 384-412.

political allegory to bring two historical situations into a typological relationship with one another, emphasizing how the events in the Bible prefigure and anticipate events in modern, secular history. He does this for particular political and rhetorical reasons, using these two literary forms to support his own ideas about Charles II as the rightful king of England. The second section focuses on *The Hind and the Panther*, a poem that similarly demonstrates Dryden's investment in appropriating and experimenting with the allegorical form (specifically, the beast fable) for rhetorical effect. As with *Absalom and Achitophel*, it is impossible to separate the form of *The Hind and the Panther* from the surrounding political and historical context.

From focusing on two of Dryden's major allegorical poems, we do not get an image of allegory as a shackling, rigid literary form—which is often how literary scholars understand it. We get an image of allegory as a promising form that can be bent and used for a variety of purposes. What we witness in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind and the Panther* is a sense of how, according to one writer, allegory was a flexible form that could be reformulated to account for historical changes and literary trends.

I. *Absalom and Achitophel* as Political-Biblical Allegory

Enlightenment Allegory is based on the premise that it is not enough to assume the allegorical significance of a particular narrative, even if that allegorical significance seems obvious enough. To accurately say that a writer uses allegory in a particular text, we must first find evidence that the text itself encourages readers to look for hidden meanings. I want to begin this section by discussing the specific techniques Dryden uses to prompt his readers to interpret *Absalom and Achitophel* as a political allegory, and then

move on to the extensiveness of his coded references. What strategies does Dryden use to teach his readers to connect the events and persons in biblical Israel—the ostensible subject of the poem—to those in 1680s England?

Dryden begins drawing attention to the poem's political signifieds with his letter to the reader, which was appended even to the earliest editions. Here, Dryden includes many references to the contemporary contention between Whigs and Tories:

*Tis not my intention to make an Apology for my Poem: Some will think it needs no Excuse; and others will receive none. The Design, I am sure, is honest: but he who draws his Pen for one Party, must expect to make Enemies of the other. For, Wit and Fool, are Consequents of Whig and Tory: And every man is a Knave or an Ass to the contrary side. There's a Treasury of Merits in the Phanatick Church, as well as in the Papist; and a Pennyworth to be had of Saintship, Honesty, and Poetry, for the Leud, the Factious, and the Blockheads: But the longest Chapter in Deuteronomy, has not Curses enow for an Anti-Bromingham. My Comfort is, their manifest Prejudice to my Cause, will render their Judgment of less Authority against me.*⁶

Dryden does not open *Absalom and Achitophel* by claiming that the poem rises above political controversy or that it depicts some sort of universal truth. Instead, he positions it within the ongoing political strife over the English throne between the Whigs and Tories, during which time the political name-calling needs to be taken with a grain of salt. The compliments and insults—"Wit," "Fool," "Knave," and "Ass"—are to be understood as politically motivated, since they are "*Consequents of Whig and Tory*." Dryden draws attention to the poem as a form of political argument, suggesting that he brings both praise and insults upon himself because he has "[drawn] *his Pen for one Party*."

Members of the opposing party, the Whigs, will oppose it not because of any lack of literary merit, but because of its suggestions about the Exclusion Crisis and the politicians

⁶ John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 2, ed. H.T. Swedenburg (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 3.

involved. With these lines, Dryden begins priming his readers to look for those suggestions.

Towards the end of the letter to the reader, Dryden includes a not-so-hidden reference to how the relationship between David and Absalom in the poem represents a relationship between two real-life individuals. He writes, “*Were I the Inventour, who am only the Historian, I shoud certainly conclude the Piece, with the Reconcilement of Absalom to David. And, who knows but this may come to pass?*”⁷ It is because of the hope of a reconciliation between David, Absalom, and Achitophel that “*he [Achitophel] is neither brought to set his House in order, nor to dispose of his Person afterwards, as he in Wisdom shall think fit.*”⁸ Dryden connects the open ending of his poem, in which David is restored to the throne after a lengthy speech, to his hope that the events in 1680s England will not continue to follow the pattern of the biblical narrative. After all, in Scripture Absalom is killed by David’s soldiers and Achitophel commits suicide after the failure of Absalom’s rebellion.⁹ Here Dryden, like that passage earlier on in the letter, points to the poem’s implicit signifieds though, unlike that passage, he focuses specifically on how he has changed the ending of the biblical narrative to allow for the kind of reconciliation that the Bible does not. From the outset, Dryden makes it difficult for his readers to miss the connections between his depiction of Absalom’s rebellion against David and those readers’ own historical and political moment.

In the poem itself, Dryden supplements the biblical narratives revolving around David, Absalom, and Achitophel with narrative details that draw attention specifically to

⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁹ See *The Bible*, op. cit., 2 Samuel 17.23.

the poem's political context. Sometimes, he does this by including in *Absalom and Achitophel* linguistic echoes of certain phrases and words circulating in 1680s England. Early on in the poem, for instance, the speaker describes the gradual growth of factions in Israel, with some Israelites calling for the ascension of Absalom to the throne while others call for peace:

The sober part of *Israel*, free from stain,
Well knew the value of a peacefull reign:
And, looking backward with a wise affright,
Saw Seames of wounds, dishonest to the sight;
In contemplation of whose ugly Scars,
They Curst the memory of Civil Wars.
The moderate sort of Men, thus qualifi'd,
Inclin'd the Ballance to the better side:
And *David*'s mildness manag'd it so well,
The Bad found no occasion to Rebell.
But, when to Sin our byast Nature leans,
The careful Devil is still at hand with means;
And providently Pimps for ill desires:
The Good old Cause reviv'd, a Plot requires.
Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
To raise up Common-wealths, and ruin Kings.¹⁰

These lines contain several coded references to England's political and historical situation, suspending the idea that *Absalom and Achitophel* is about biblical Israel. The sober, peaceful Israelites curse the memory of the Civil Wars because they irreparably damaged the authority of monarchical government (implicitly gesturing towards the English Civil Wars); the phrase "The Good old Cause" was commonly used by political rebels in the 1680s who connected their actions to the Puritan rebellion of the 1640s;¹¹ the word "Plot," used here and throughout the early lines of the poem, draws attention to the language of the "Popish Plot" used regularly in the 1680s.¹² The speaker, despite the

¹⁰ Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, op. cit., ll. 69-84.

¹¹ See Swedenburg's footnote to line 82, in *The Works of John Dryden*, op. cit., vol. 2, 241.

¹² Dryden uses the word "plot" in lines 108, 275, and elsewhere.

fact that the subject of the poem is ostensibly about biblical Israel, uses terms that gesture towards the political signifieds of contemporary England.

The passage encapsulates how Dryden uses language to subtly encourage readers to look for hidden political meaning in the poem. In addition to linguistic cues, Dryden also fleshes out the biblical narrative with details that draw attention to well-known events and rumors revolving around the Exclusion Crisis. In the poem, the speaker mentions the Triple Alliance (“Triple Bond”) formed by England, the Netherlands, and Sweden in 1668 in order to defend against an increasingly ambitious France;¹³ he refers to the rumor about a black box ostensibly containing the marriage certificate for Charles II and Monmouth’s mother;¹⁴ and he refers to the well-known and contentious fact that Charles II had recently asked for money from France.¹⁵ Dryden adds myriad details to the biblical narrative in order to make it clear to his readers that they are to connect the events, thoughts, and persons in *Absalom and Achitophel* to contemporary political figures.

Further evidence that Dryden uses specific literary strategies to draw attention to *Absalom and Achitophel* as a political allegory is an anachronism that he includes relatively early on in the poem. The speaker rejects the notion that the Jebusites (representing Roman Catholics in 1680s England) had been plotting to kill David—in effect, rejecting the legitimacy of the Popish Plot used by Shaftesbury and Oates to incite anti-Catholic fervor. The speaker says “Some thought they [the Jebusites] God’s Anointed meant to Slay/By Guns, invented since full many a day.”¹⁶ The image of gun-

¹³ Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, op. cit., l. 175.

¹⁴ Ibid., ll. 467-74.

¹⁵ Ibid., ll. 709-10.

¹⁶ Ibid., ll. 130-3.

wielding Jebusites conspiring to kill David is conspicuously anachronistic. Dryden uses it to disrupt the fiction that *Absalom and Achitophel* is about biblical Israel and to drive his readers to connect what they read in the poem to their surrounding political context. The small detail of the gun-wielding Jebusites, like the letter to the reader and the linguistic echoes, push the reader's attention away from the signifiers and towards the signifieds.

With these three techniques—a paratext that draws the readers' attentions to the contention between Whigs and Tories over the Exclusion Crisis, the supplementation of the biblical narrative with details that refer specifically to well-known phrases, events, and rumors in 1680s England, and an anachronism—Dryden teaches his readers to interpret his poem allegorically. He points to how the biblical narrative is a vehicle for talking about recent events. *Absalom and Achitophel* is a political allegory that uses one set of persons taken from sacred history to represent another set of persons taken from secular history. Dryden superimposes 1680s England onto biblical Israel, specifically using various sections of the Bible pertaining to David and Absalom as a framework for depicting and commenting on the events of the Exclusion Crisis and the Popish Plot. Through this superimposition, Dryden keeps in play two subjects—the one explicit (ancient Israelites) and the other implicit (modern Whigs and Tories). The poem functions by substituting persons from Scripture for contemporary political actors: Charles II is King David, the Duke of Monmouth is Absalom, the Earl of Shaftesbury is Achitophel, Titus Oates is Corah, the Duke of Buckingham is Zimri, and so on. If we take a brief look at a “Key” printed at the end of the 1727 edition of *Absalom and Achitophel* (Fig. 5), we get a sense of the extensiveness of Dryden's allegory.¹⁷ The key consists of

¹⁷ Earlier editors and responders to *Absalom and Achitophel* also included keys, but the 1727 key is one of the most extensive and, as such, goes further than earlier ones in unlocking Dryden's coded references. For

four columns, with the biblical persons and location in columns 1 and 3 corresponding to the persons and locations in columns 2 and 4.

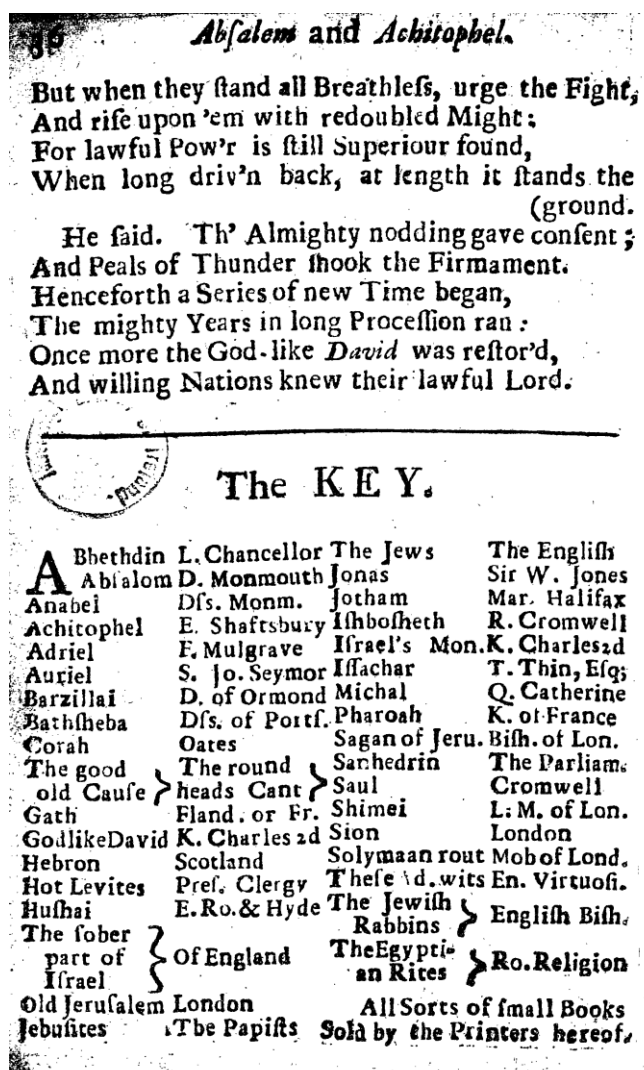


Figure 5. Page from Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*. A poem to which is added an explanatory key neve[r] printed before (London, 1727). *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. 11 June 2016.

The key emphasizes that the poem includes an impressive number of coded references to modern politicians. *Absalom and Achitophel* is no less allegorical than *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War*, or *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* in the sense

comparable examples, see Christopher Ness, *A Key (with the whip) to open the mystery & iniquity of the poem called, Absalom & Achitophel shewing its scurrilous reflections upon both king and kingdom* (London, 1680) and the eighteenth edition of *Absalom and Achitophel* (London, 1708).

that it uses literal signifiers to represent allegorical signifieds. But unlike Bunyan's allegories, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* is a political allegory because its coded references are to earthly, real-life individuals instead of to spiritual concepts. It functions by substituting one set of particulars for another. And once readers start looking for implicit signifieds, they are greeted by an astounding number of them.

Thus far, we have established that *Absalom and Achitophel* gestures towards its own allegorical meaning and prompts its readers to connect biblical Israel to 1680s England. We have also established the extensiveness of the political allegory in the poem. But what does Dryden achieve from signaling to his readers that the persons in the poem are stand-ins for political actors? For the rest of this section on *Absalom and Achitophel*, I will focus on two primary answers. Dryden uses political allegory to, first of all, point out to his readers the parallels between the two historical situations and, secondly, to bring those two historical situations into a typological relationship with one another.

Let me briefly compare Dryden's use of political allegory in *Absalom and Achitophel* to some precedents. *Absalom and Achitophel* differs significantly from political allegories in the tradition of Philip Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, in which the level of the signifier is not another political sequence but an ostentatiously fictional romance narrative. In this tradition, for instance, is Spenser's political allegory in Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, in which Artegall and others transparently represent historical persons.¹⁸ Another comparable example of political allegory is Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684, 1687), published shortly after *Absalom and Achitophel*.

¹⁸ For information on Spenser's political allegory, see Judith H. Anderson, "'Nor Man It is': The Knight of Justice in Book V of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *PMLA* 85 (1970): 65-77; Donald V. Stump, "The Two Deaths of Mary Stuart: Historical Allegory in Spenser's Book of Justice," *Spenser Studies* 9 (1988): 81-105.

In this prose narrative, Behn represents the events leading up to and immediately following the Monmouth Rebellion by using fictional characters to compare the uprising to a private romance.¹⁹ *Love-Letters* uses fictional signifiers to discuss real-life political signifieds, though the signifiers are much less ostentatious in their fictionality than those found in *Old Arcadia* or Book V of *The Faerie Queene*.

Absalom and Achitophel, like these texts, uses one set of particulars to signify another set of particulars but, unlike these texts, takes its signifiers from sacred history. Dryden takes most of his signifiers from the story of Absalom's rebellion against David in 2 Samuel 14-18, but he also uses persons and events taken from other sections of the Old Testament.²⁰ Dryden thus works with biblical history more generally, rather than merely with a single historical event. This work with biblical history is tremendously significant, because it means that Dryden uses political allegory to compare and contrast two different historical situations. *Absalom and Achitophel*, it is accurate to say, is a political-biblical allegory that treats events and persons from the Bible as invaluable tools for understanding the current political situation in 1680s England.

Dryden works with the Bible as a readily identifiable pretext, drawing attention to the similarities, differences, and tensions between his signifiers from that sacred pretext and the signifieds taken from the surrounding political context. By doing so, he creates what contemporaries called "parallels" between two historical situations. Parallels were

¹⁹ See McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity*, op. cit., 506-13. Behn also casts Monmouth as Silvio in "Silvio's Complaint: A Song, to t Fine Scotch Tune" (1684), in *The Works of Aphra Behn*, ed. Janet Todd, vol. 1: Poetry (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1992), 82-4.

²⁰ For instance, Dryden selects the representative of Titus Oates, Corah, from Numbers 16.1-40—which describes how Corah rebels against Moses. And to represent Buckingham, Dryden selects the name "Zimri," which appears twice in the Old Testament. The first use of Zimri is in Numbers 25.6-14, which describes him as a worshiper of Baal-peor, the false God of the Moabites. The second use is in 1 Kings 16. 9-20, in which another person named Zimri conspires against Elah (the King of Israel), kills him, and reigns for seven days.

an extraordinarily popular literary form during the seventeenth century. As John M. Wallace points out, “The construction of parallels was the most popular game of the century, always played most earnestly when times were bad and another great crisis had occurred.”²¹ These parallels forge connections between seemingly disparate historical events and persons, and participate in (to borrow a phrase from Alan Roper) a widespread “game of identifications” that hinges on the identification of similarities and differences between two historical moments.²²

Homing in on a few examples gives us a more general sense of how writers played the game of identifications with their parallels. In *Parallēla* (1660), the source of this chapter’s first epigraph, Simon Ford suggests that the events of King Charles II’s restoration and those of Absalom’s rebellion against King David are so similar that we could change the names of the biblical persons into those of contemporary politicians without departing significantly from either biblical or modern history. The two histories are so close, he argues, that an edited version of the biblical narrative would serve surprisingly well as “*a Chronicle of these Times.*” And in 1670, Thomas Lambert parallels the assassination of the late King Charles I to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, apotheosizing Charles and ultimately bolstering his own Royalism.²³ Roger L’Estrange, Charles II’s Surveyour of the Press, makes a common move in comparing the Exclusion

²¹ Wallace, “Dryden and History: A Problem in Allegorical Reading,” op. cit., 279.

²² Alan Roper, “Absalom’s Issue: Parallel Poems in the Restoration,” *Studies in Philology* 99 (2002): 268-94.

²³ Thomas Lambert, *Sad Memorials of the Royal Martyr; or, A Parallel betwixt the Jewes Murder of Christ, and the English Murder of King Charls the First* (London, 1670). See also George Stradling, *A Sermon Preach’d before the King At White-Hall, Jan. 30, 1674* (London, 1675). These parallels pick up on one of the major conceits behind King Charles I’s own *Eikon Basilike* (London, 1649), in which the king places himself within the tradition of *imitation Christi*.

Crisis to the English Civil Wars.²⁴ William Dugdale, to give one more example, anticipates the central conceit of Dryden's *The Duke of Guise* with his *A Short View of the Late Troubles in England; briefly setting forth, their rise, growth, and tragical conclusion. As also, some parallel thereof with the barons-wars in the time of King Henry III. But Chiefly with that in France, called the Holy League, in the reign of Henry III and Henry IV, late kings of that realm* (1681). Parallels are an important part of how seventeenth-century writers used what they perceived to be historical repetitions, linking current events to those of the past to mount political arguments. They functioned by creating analogies between past and present, defamiliarizing contemporary events by placing them within a different framework. And, as Philip Harth emphasizes, Restoration parallels were never innocuous: they were sites of intense political argument between Whigs and Tories well before these terms came into use.²⁵ Opposing political parties were very invested in making connections between historical events and persons and in dismantling the connections made by writers from the opposing party.

Dryden himself wrote several parallels. *The Duke of Guise*, which Dryden co-wrote with Nathaniel Lee, is a parallel between the Holy League in sixteenth-century France—which the Duke had formed in an attempt to expel all Protestants from Catholic France—and the Exclusion Crisis in England. *King Arthur*, which Dryden wrote shortly after *The Duke of Guise* but did not publish until 1691, parallels the political events in 1680s England with the dispute between the Britons and Saxons during the medieval

²⁴ Roger L'Estrange, *An account of the growth of knavery under the pretended fears of arbitrary government and popery with a parallel betwixt the reformers of 1677 and those of 1641 in their methods and designs* (London, 1678).

²⁵ See Phillip Harth, *Pen For a Party: Dryden's Tory Propaganda and Its Contexts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 11-7.

period.²⁶ And, as David Bywaters points out, Dryden's *Don Sebastian* (1689) may very well be a political parallel between the events revolving around the Portuguese king's court in the sixteenth century and the events of the 1688 revolution.²⁷ These dramas demonstrate Dryden's commitment to the creation of political parallels.

Absalom and Achitophel is a little different than Dryden's other parallels because it connects an historical situation from contemporary history to one from sacred history. But it is similar to his other parallels, and to those written by other writers at this time, in using the connections between two historical events to his own personal and political advantage. He supports his own royalism by casting Charles II as David and Monmouth and his followers as Absalom and his fellow conspirators. *Absalom and Achitophel*, it is important to remember, is a poem that borders on being self-serving and opportunistic: Dryden's political allegory creates a parallel that serves his own position as an advocate for Charles II during a time of great political upheaval. The poem pushes for at least a partial equivalency between his signifiers and signifieds, as it asks readers to align Charles II with the rightful king of Israel and Monmouth and his followers with rebellious individuals who try to take the throne for their own personal gain.

In *Absalom and Achitophel* we see how political allegory can be used to play the "game of identifications" that, according to Roper, is pivotal to how parallels work. Dryden uses a well-known set of stories from Scripture revolving around David, Absalom, and other persons in biblical Israel and then supplements those stories with

²⁶ Curtis Price, a music historian, offers one way of reading *King Arthur* as a parallel, and even as a political allegory: Arthur represents Charles II, Oswald represents Monmouth, Osmond and Grimbald both represent the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Britons represent the Tories, and the Saxons represent the Whigs. See Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 290-3.

²⁷ Bywaters, "Dryden and the Revolution of 1688: Political Parallel in *Don Sebastian*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 85 (1986): 346-65.

enough details to get his readers to guess the identity of the politicians being represented. This act of interpretive guessing on the part of the readers is so important to *Absalom and Achitophel*, and we tend to underestimate its importance when (as is often the case) we start with the political signifieds rather than how the poem points towards them. It is only after the gradual amassing of details that readers can accurately identify the persons in the poem as stand-ins for modern political actors. The poem is fundamentally reader-oriented. It is about, at least partially, the interpretive process through which readers need to go through in order to connect the poem to their surrounding political context.

Describing *Absalom and Achitophel* as a political-biblical allegory that parallels two historical situations (the one explicit, and the other implicit) only tells part of the story. The poem, as several scholars have pointed out, is also a typology.²⁸ Traditionally, typology refers to a method of biblical interpretation that approaches the persons and events of the Old Testament (types) as prefiguring those of the New Testament (antitypes). It emphasizes that the two testaments are part of a single holy text, and encourages readers to move back and forth between the two testaments. Moses, for example, was understood to prefigure Christ—with the latter fulfilling and spiritually completing the former. Built into the typological pairings between Old Testament types and New Testament antitypes was the implicit notion of non-equivalency: type and antitype were part of a single unit, but they were also their own stand-alone historical events. By the seventeenth century, typology had become not only a method of writing as well as an interpretive method, but had also become much more flexible. The period saw

²⁸ One of the strongest discussions of Dryden's engagement with the tradition of typology is McKeon's "Historicizing *Absalom and Achitophel*," in *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (New York, NY: Methuen, Inc., 1987), 25-9. See also Korshin, *Typologies in England*, op.cit., 51, 71.

the formation of what Paul Korshin has called “abstracted typology,” a form of typology that uses the form but in a way that is far removed from traditional theological concerns.²⁹ The century helped normalize the use of secular typology, as writers extended the traditionally religious interpretive technique to secular, modern history.³⁰ Writers regularly used typology not only to discuss how to properly understand the Old and New Testaments in connection to one another, but to make arguments about contemporary politics. Typology was often used to give secular argument the form of spiritual authority. It was especially fruitful for polemic writers, who set up what Ira Clark calls “neotypes,” secular antitypes that supposedly fulfill biblical types.³¹

During the seventeenth century typology proved useful for writing about personal as well as political history. In his poem “Redemption,” for instance, George Herbert modifies and combines several narratives from Scripture—applying the typological structure traditionally used for pairing passages from the Old and New Testaments to his own person and setting up his own search for redemption as the fulfillment of biblical antitypes.³² Herbert’s poem features a speaker who, hoping to exchange his current lease for a new one, searches for his “rich Lord” first in heaven and then “in great resorts;/In cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts.”³³ The speaker eventually finds his lord with “thieves and murderers,” where he promptly grants the speaker’s suit for a new lease and

²⁹ Korshin, *Typologies in England*, op.cit., 101-132, especially 101-103.

³⁰ See Barbara K. Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*, op. cit., 111-46; Zwicker, *Dryden’s Political Poetry: The Typology of King and Nation* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1972), 16-23; McKeon, “Historicizing *Absalom and Achitophel*,” op. cit., 25-9; and Korshin, *Typologies in England*, op. cit., 31-2.

³¹ See Ira Clark, *Christ Revealed: The History of the Neotypological Lyric in the English Renaissance* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1982), especially 18-22, 85-6.

³² For information about the poem’s source material, see Dennis H. Burden, “George Herbert’s ‘Redemption,’” *Review of English Studies* 1 (1983): 448; Esther Gilman Richey, “The Property of God,” *ELH* 78 (2011): 302-5.

³³ George Herbert, “Redemption,” in *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), ll. 1, 10-11.

then immediately dies without offering or signing any new contract.³⁴ Because the Lord represents Jesus in poem, his death is that new contract. Herbert uses narratives from Scripture to describe his own search for redemption through the covenant of grace (the new lease sought by the speaker) rather than through the covenant of works (the old lease, under which the speaker is “not thriving”).³⁵

The most famous discussion of the relationship between typology and allegory is Erich Auerbach’s “Figura” (1938). In this essay, Auerbach argues that typology, or figurism, and allegory are easily distinguished from one another. “Most of the allegories we find in literature or art represent a virtue (e.g. wisdom), or a passion (jealousy), an institution (justice), or at most a general synthesis of historical phenomena (peace, the fatherland)—never a definite event in its full historicity.”³⁶ Auerbach aligns typology with historicity, since it connects distinct historical events into a pairing of type and antitype. He aligns allegory with fictiveness because, according to him, the literary form is inextricable from ostentatiously fictional personified abstractions like Wisdom, Jealousy, Justice, Peace, and the Fatherland. Auerbach’s well-known discussion does not account for political allegories that use topical allusions to talk about real, historical events.³⁷ However, even if typology were antithetical to allegories that do use personifications, it need not be antithetical to political allegories. The form of *Absalom*

³⁴ Burden points out the legal complications resulting from the lord’s death in “George Herbert’s ‘Redemption,’” *ibid.*, 451.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1. 2.

³⁶ Erich Auerbach, “Figura,” in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 54.

³⁷ Fletcher makes a very similar, and surprising, exclusion. He classifies allegory in groups related to “*Personification*” (religious allegory) and “*topical allusion*” (political allegory), and then writes “The former [personifications] will be our chief concern, since they are essential to the mode and are more problematic and permanently important (because less topical) than agents representing contemporary or historical persons,” *Allegory*, *op. cit.*, 25.

and Achitophel demonstrates how difficult it actually is to separate typology from allegory, especially as Dryden and his contemporaries approach each of these as flexible forms rather than rigid structures. Dryden uses the *modus operandi* of political allegory to cast contemporary politicians as persons from sacred history, creating a parallel between two historical situations and vindicating his own royalism. But Dryden also allegory to set up a typological pairing where 1680s England is the antitype and biblical history is the type.

What would it mean to understand *Absalom and Achitophel* as an allegory that not only creates a parallel between contemporary history and biblical history but that also creates a typological pairing between sacred type and secular neotype? How would this understanding add to our sense of what the poem achieves through political allegory? These questions will drive the remainder of the section of this chapter devoted to *Absalom and Achitophel*.

Understanding *Absalom and Achitophel* as a typology means recognizing that the relationship between Dryden's signifiers and signifieds may go beyond parallelism. Parallels are not necessarily typologies, because the first of these draws attention predominantly to the similarities and resonances between two historical situations whereas the second results from a built-in inequality between type and antitype. As Clark argues "while types foreshadow similarities they also manifest disparities."³⁸ In a typology, the antitype refers back to and fulfills the promises of the type, but it is also its own recognizable historical event. So when Dryden prompts his readers to uncover the hidden political meanings in the poem, he is asking them to not only parallel two

³⁸ Clark, *Christ Revealed*, op. cit., 18.

historical moments but to recognize the scene in the Bible as prefiguring the scene revolving around the Exclusion Crisis.

Dryden sets up a series of typological successions in which contemporary persons are the successors of ancient persons. He casts King Charles II as the antitype of King David, Monmouth as the antitype of Absalom, Shaftesbury as the antitype of Achitophel, and so on. He places contemporary persons in long lines of, respectively, spiritually anointed kings, foolish sons, and diabolical and overly ambitious politicians. By setting up these particular lines of typological succession extending from biblical times to the modern day, Dryden supports his own royalism and gives his particular depiction of 1680s England a degree of sacred authority.

Dryden reinforces his own set of typological pairings by introducing, and ultimately rejecting, alternative pairings. Achitophel begins his first speech by Absalom, in which he attempts to convince Absalom to seize the throne of Israel, by casting the prince as a “second *Moses*” sent to deliver the chosen people from an undeserving king.³⁹ By so doing, Achitophel sets up Absalom as a figure who, like Christ, stands as an antitype of Moses. He also casts David as the antitype of Satan.⁴⁰ Shortly after Achitophel sets up these typological pairings, the speaker shows them to be rhetorically ineffectual: after the first speech, Absalom argues against Achitophel’s logic. It is not until much later in the poem, after Achitophel’s second speech, that Absalom is convinced to rebel against David. As a typology, *Absalom and Achitophel* is extraordinarily self-reflexive. With Achitophel’s speech to Absalom, Dryden draws

³⁹ Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, op. cit., l. 234.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, ll. 273-4.

attention to typology as a powerful rhetorical form while, at the same time, rejecting certain kinds of typology.

It is because Dryden uses political allegory to create a poem that is part parallel and part typology that Samuel Johnson, in his *Life of Dryden*, argues that the “original structure of the poem was defective: allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.”⁴¹ But Dryden never meant for Charles and David, or Absalom and Monmouth, or Achitophel and Shaftesbury to “run continually parallel” with one another. Johnson demands of *Absalom and Achitophel* a strict correspondence between Charles and David because he misses the poem’s dual function as a parallel that points out the similarities between two historical events and as a typology that creates lines of succession that rely on a degree of kinship but not on the complete agreement of signifiers and signifieds.

Describing the form of *Absalom and Achitophel* has proven tremendously difficult for scholars. A.E. Maurer, for instance, writes about the many “considerations of it as an epic, epyllion, epic episode, satire, epic satire, Varronian satire, formal verse satire, classical oration, Jonsonian masque, political pamphlet, painting, biblical allegory, narrative, drama, chronology, music (fugal fantasia), typology, folklore, ‘Poem,’ and varying combinations of some of these.”⁴² This humorously long list of options for *Absalom and Achitophel*’s form, which is by no means exhaustive, emphasizes that in this poem Dryden combines a variety of literary forms rather than working from within one identifiable genre.

⁴¹ Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, ed. John H. Middendorf, vol. 21 of *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 463.

⁴² A.E. Wallace Maurer, “The Form of Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*, Once More.” *Papers on Language and Literature* 27 (1991): 334.

For the purposes of this dissertation, we have obviously homed in on the ways *Absalom and Achitophel* is what Maurer refers to as “biblical allegory.” By this phrase, Maurer does not mean that Dryden follows Bunyan in writing an allegory that gestures towards specific events or concepts in the Bible. He means, on the contrary, that Dryden uses several narratives from the Bible as a vehicle for talking about recent events. In other words, *Absalom and Achitophel* is a political allegory that uses one set of persons taken from sacred history to represent another set of persons taken from secular history. But in working through *Absalom and Achitophel* as a political-biblical allegory, we have come to appreciate how the poem uses allegory, in particular, to work with other literary forms like the parallel or typology.

What we are left with at the end of our analysis of *Absalom and Achitophel* is the conviction that Dryden adapted a traditional form of allegory to late-seventeenth-century literary tastes that included widely popular forms such as parallels and typologies. One of the reasons why the form of *Absalom and Achitophel* is so difficult to pin down is, in fact, because Dryden uses political allegory to cut across a variety of literary forms.

II. Dryden’s Modal Use of Allegory in *The Hind and the Panther*

The previous section demonstrates how Dryden uses the *modus operandi* of political allegory set up a series of parallels and typologies between Charles II’s court and David’s, advancing his own interests by aligning modern politicians with biblical persons. The result is a remarkably extensive political allegory that takes advantage of the differences as well as the similarities between the level of the signifier and the level of the signified—encouraging an interpretive method whereby the biblical pretext serves as

a malleable tool for understanding modern, secular events. *Absalom and Achitophel* has a great deal of narrative integrity,⁴³ but its ulterior meaning is apparent thanks to the prefatory letter, to the linguistic echoes that gesture towards 1680s England, and to the narrative details that Dryden adds to the biblical narratives revolving around David and Absalom. Now, we will turn our attention to *The Hind and the Panther*, a strange and expectation-breaking Restoration poem that Dryden wrote shortly after his conversion to Catholicism in the middle of the 1680s.⁴⁴ Margaret Doody registers the strangeness of the poem when she calls it “the great, the undeniable *sui generis* poem of the Restoration era,” which “is its own kind of poem...[that] cannot be repeated (and no one has repeated it).”⁴⁵ In this section, we will come to a greater appreciation of what role the allegorical form played in Dryden’s creation of a “*sui generis* poem.”

In some ways, *The Hind and the Panther* is a very different text than *Absalom and Achitophel*, because it uses the beast fable form rather than a tactical coupling of sacred and secular history. Despite the differences between these two poems, however, I will emphasize that in *The Hind and the Panther* shares with *Absalom and Achitophel* an investment in experimenting with and adapting the allegorical form for contemporary

⁴³ As Maresca argues, “With very few exceptions, Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel* maintains a narrative integrity that few political allegories ever reach; its fable (in our terms, its vehicle) achieves a kind of autonomy which renders it complete and satisfying in itself and perfectly transparent as a metaphor for other things,” See Maresca, “The Context of Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*,” *ELH* 41 (1974): 340.

⁴⁴ My reading of *The Hind and the Panther* will focus on Dryden’s experimentation with allegory. For further information about the roles of Dryden’s conversion and of Catholicism more generally in the poem, see Earl Miner, “The Significance of Plot in *The Hind and the Panther*,” *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 69 (1965): 446-58; Victor Hamm, “Dryden’s ‘The Hind and the Panther’ and Roman Catholic Apologetics,” *PMLA* 83 (1968): 400-15; David Haley, “Was Dryden a Cryptopapist in 1681?” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 32 (2003): 277-96; Bryan Berry, “The Cost of John Dryden’s Catholicism,” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 12 (2009): 144-77.

⁴⁵ Margaret Anne Doody, *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 80. W.D. Christie also called *The Hind and the Panther* “the triumph of Dryden’s art,” *Dryden: Select Poems*, 5th ed. C.H. Firth (1926), lx. These are some of the few positive evaluations of Dryden’s poem.

readers. *The Hind and the Panther* contains an even more heightened version of the self-referentiality we have already identified in *Absalom and Achitophel* and in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Looking at this poem confirms the idea that Restoration allegory was moving in the direction of being self-conscious and reader-centered. It also demonstrates how multifarious experiments with the allegorical form can be, even those written by the same author.

I must, first, clarify the relationship between allegory and fable. Though modern scholars often differentiate allegory from the fable form, no such distinction obtained during the Restoration or eighteenth century in any consistent way. In his widely influential *Fables of Aesop and Other Eminent Mythologists* (1692), for instance, Roger L'Estrange uses the terms "allegory" and "fable" interchangeably.⁴⁶ This interchangeable use was in fact common, as most contemporary fabulists regarded the fable not as a genre separate from allegory, but as a particular species of allegory that often (but not always) used morally spatially separate from the narrative.⁴⁷ Fables were regarded as morally instructive tales that used the act of speaking otherwise to get those morals across to their readers. And beast fables, in particular, were allegorical narratives that used animals to talk about morality and other human-based concerns.

Dryden begins *The Hind and the Panther* by setting up a beast fable in which a hind signifies the Catholic Church and a panther signifies the Church of England. He describes the hind as simultaneously immortal and endangered, a manifestation of his

⁴⁶ Roger L'Estrange, *Fables of Aesop and Other Eminent Mythologists* (London, 1692), preface.

⁴⁷ See *The Fables of Aesop. With the moral reflexions of Monsieur Baudoin* (London, 1704), 57, 126; *Aesop's Fables. With Instructive Morals and Reflections, Abstracted from all Party Considerations, Adapted to All Capacities; And design'd to promote Religion, Morality, and Universal Benevolence* (London, 1740), 37, 59. Towards the end of the century, Hugh Blair also describes beast fables as a subset of allegory in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (Dublin, 1783), vol. 1, lect. XV, 375.

desire to keep aspects of both the signifier (the hind, which is in constant danger from other animals) and the signified (the immortal Catholic church) in play within the same lines.

A Milk white *Hind*, immortal and unchang'd,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chas'd with horns and hounds,
And *Scythian* shafts; and many winged wounds
Aim'd at Her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to dy.⁴⁸

The effect is jarring. Dryden taps into a long history of beast fables that function by naturalizing animosity—so that religious and political differences are converted to matters of instinct and survival (in terms of predator and prey)—but also works against those fables by depicting the hind as, in the appositive of the first line, “immortal and unchang'd.” The paradox of the hind being “doom'd to death, though fated not to dy” seems particularly appropriate as an image of the Catholic church. The church is doomed by a predominantly Protestant England despite providential decree that it will live on as a religious institution as long as it remains “without unspotted, innocent within.” What results is a modification of the corporate notion of the “King’s Two Bodies,” the belief (extending back to the medieval period) that kings have both natural and political bodies, the first of which is mortal and the second of which exists far beyond the life of the king himself.⁴⁹ Dryden uses the hind to represent the similar concept that Catholics are themselves mortal, but are also part of the larger, immortal church. The hind is kept safe,

⁴⁸ Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. 3, ed. Miner (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), I. 1-8.

⁴⁹ Ernest H. Kantorowicz gives an extremely influential discussion of this concept in *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), especially 3-6, 42-86.

specifically, from the panther and her other predators by a lion that uses fear to prevent these predators from giving into their murderous impulses.

But there is a lot of carnage at the beginning of *The Hind and the Panther*, as the hind's immortality does not transfer to her offspring. The hind's young, representing the persecuted English Catholics, are subject to the violence typical for Aesopian beast fables despite the oversight of the regal lion. That is to say, whereas the hind's immortality keeps her mostly outside the prey-predator dynamic of conventional beast fables, the hind's offspring live under the legitimate, constant threat of other beasts. The lion can protect the hind by inspiring fear in her natural predators, but he cannot shield the hind's children because they are "half humane, half divine./Their earthly mold obnoxious was to fate,/Th' immortal part assum'd immortal state."⁵⁰ The children, slaughtered by their enemies, lay "Extended o'er the *Caledonian* wood" while their mother watches "With grief and gladness mixt."⁵¹ The hind's offspring leave her in a position similar to that of Christian after the execution of Faithful in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, when Christian is both happy and saddened that Faithful has become a martyr and, in doing so, has taken the only acceptable shortcut to the Celestial City. And yet, in spite of the children's deaths in the beginning of *The Hind and the Panther*, those children's "vocal bloud" calls for "pardon on their perjur'd foes," extending a notion of tolerance and peace even to those religious sects that caused their deaths.⁵² The opening of the poem acknowledges that both Catholics and Protestants have been harmed by centuries of religious and

⁵⁰ Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, op. cit., II. 10-12.

⁵¹ Ibid., II. 14, 21.

⁵² Ibid., II. 15-6.

political belligerence. From the outset, *The Hind and the Panther* is about transcending belligerence and coexisting despite doctrinal differences.

In his description of the hind's enemies as well as in *The Hind and the Panther* overall, Dryden works on the level of resemblance—bringing attention to the shared characteristics between the different sects (the signifieds) and the animals used to represent them (the signifiers). As Earl Miner argues convincingly, throughout *The Hind and the Panther* Dryden demonstrates an acute awareness of early modern and Restoration zoology and natural science.⁵³ Perhaps the most important of Dryden's sources is Wolfgang Franzius's *Historia Animalium Sacra* (1612, 1670), a sacred zoology that pairs descriptions of animals with passages from Scripture as well as from empirical observation. Franzius describes the bear, for instance, as "a very large Creature, and very strong; mischievous, perfidious, and deformed" and as being "very fierce and cruel when she hath young; therefore *Solomon* saith, *that is it better to meet a Bear robbed of her Whelp than a fool in his folly*, *Pro. 17.12.* thus we find God speaking, *Hos. 13.8, I will meet them as a Bear that is bereaved of her Welps, and will rend the caul of their hearts*; so *2 Sam.17.8.* we find that *David's* counsellours were compared to *Bears*."⁵⁴ And Franzius notes the timorousness of hares, for "as soon as he feareth any danger, he flyeth so swiftly, that sometimes in the midst of his flight he dieth; he is so fearful, that oftentimes to avoid one danger, he runneth into another."⁵⁵ Dryden uses descriptions of certain animals by Franzius and others to flesh out his political commentary, casting particular churches as animals in a way that supports his own political beliefs and

⁵³ Miner, *The Works of John Dryden*, op. cit., vol. 3, 343, 347-8.

⁵⁴ Wolfgang Franzius, *The History of Brutes; Or, a Description of Living Creatures* (London, 1672), 56.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 154.

interests. *The Hind and the Panther* is indeed in close contact with the tradition of political allegory—which includes the medieval poem, *Reynard the Fox*—that uses characteristics of beasts to support its own political commentary, but also with the discipline of zoology as it was developing in the seventeenth century.

The beginning of Dryden's poem is predicated on connecting the physical characteristics of certain animals, according to sacred and secular zoologies and common conceptions, to the behaviors and assumptions of certain churches' members. In some ways, Dryden's decisions for representing different religious sects as particular animals based on Renaissance and Restoration zoological studies is analogous to his decision, in *Absalom and Achitophel* and his other historical parallels, to cast political actors as particular persons from biblical history. In *The Hind and the Panther*, Dryden chooses certain animals because of how their physical and behavioral characteristics resemble the actions of certain churches' members towards Catholics just as he had chosen, for example, Absalom as an appropriate type for giving a "*Picture to the Wast*" of Monmouth. The Congregational church shares the bear's cruelty and ferocity; the Quakers share the hare's temerity and self-interested neutrality; atheists share the ape's ability to imitate; Baptists share the boar's frenetic nature; Socinians share the fox's craftiness; and so on. It is important to note that the resemblances between animals and churches relate to the public and political manifestations of religious beliefs rather than directly to the beliefs themselves. Even in a poem that centers on questions about religion, the ultimate focus is on earthly conduct more than on spiritual belief. Here and

in other poems such as *Religio Laici* (1682), Dryden's chief concern with religion tends to focus on its social and political implications rather than on its theological doctrines.⁵⁶

It is worth stressing the differences in how *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind and the Panther* approach temporality as a result of their structures. As we saw in the first section of this chapter, in *Absalom and Achitophel* Dryden uses political allegory to create a typological pairing between two historical moments, extending biblical history to the present day and thereby giving his depiction of the Exclusion Crisis some of the authority of biblical typology. We do not see the same kind of historical detail in *The Hind and the Panther*, in which Dryden puts contemporary events in bestial rather than historical terms. The fable of the hind and the panther is relatively atemporal compared to *Absalom and Achitophel*, which opens by noting the customs of the time period and consistently plays with the coupling of persons from secular and sacred history. In *The Hind and the Panther*, on the contrary, there are few temporal markers. This major difference between *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind Panther* partially results from the former's focus on topical references and the latter's focus on quasi-personifications of churches in bestial form.

After Dryden sets up the main fable of *The Hind and the Panther*, he oscillates between that fable and a more open theological discussion. Dryden constantly drops and then picks up his bestial conceit—using the hind and the panther to contend over the

⁵⁶ In *Religio Laici* (1682), Dryden's arguments against the Catholic Church are often political rather than theological. He writes that "*Common quiet is Mankind's concern*," proposing that the chief concern should be encouraging members of different faiths to refrain from violence against one another. See *Religio Laici*, in *The Works of John Dryden*, op. cit., vol. 2, l. 122. For a compelling discussion of tolerance during in the late seventeenth century, see Jager, "Common Quiet: Tolerance around 1688," *ELH* 79 (2012): 569-96. For a strong discussion of Dryden's Catholicism in *Religio Laici* specifically, see Thomas H. Fujimura, "Dryden's *Religio Laici*: An Anglican Poem," *PMLA* 76 (1961): 205-17.

correct interpretation of Scripture,⁵⁷ the need of churches as intermediaries between God and mankind,⁵⁸ the doctrine of transubstantiation,⁵⁹ and the historical ramifications of the Protestant Reformation.⁶⁰ Dryden only partially converts his signifieds into his bestial framework, as his beasts argue directly about fundamentally human concerns relating to reading and worship. When replying to the panther's argument that everyone should adhere to his or her own interpretation of Scripture, for instance, the hind counters by focusing on the danger of such an argument:

As long as words a different sense will bear
And each may be his own interpreter,
Our airy faith will no foundation find;
The word's a weathercock for every wind;
The Bear, the Fox, the Wolf by turns prevail;
The most in pow'r supplies the present gale.
The wretched Panther cries for aid
To church and councils, whom she first betrayed;
No help from Fathers or tradition's train:
Those ancient guides she taught us to disdain.
And by that Scripture which she once abused
To reformation, stands herself accused.⁶¹

Dryden performs this sort of admixture between theological and allegorical discourse frequently. He refers to the setup of the beginning of the poem—and to the bear, fox, and wolf, to which he has already attached allegorical significance—but, instead of coupling them with representatives consistent with that setup, refers to the churches, ecclesiastical councils, and Scripture that apply to the level of the signified rather than to the level of the signifier.

⁵⁷ Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, op. cit., I. 462-4, II. 186-7.

⁵⁸ Ibid., II. 80-4, II. 524-32.

⁵⁹ Ibid., I. 406-29, II. 31-59.

⁶⁰ Ibid., I. 351, II. 203-17.

⁶¹ Ibid., I. 462-73.

The strangeness of Dryden's beasts having an openly theological conversation has not been lost on his contemporaries nor on modern critics. Charles Montagu and Matthew Prior print a response to Dryden's poems less than a year after the first publication of *The Hind and the Panther*, taking Dryden to task for "confounding the Moral and the Fable together," incorporating the allegorical interpretation of the narrative into the poem itself.⁶² We can see what they mean by this critique thanks to the lines just cited: Dryden does, indeed, mix the signifiers and the signifieds so that the two are very difficult to separate from one another. Montagu and Prior further argue that the design of *The Hind and the Panther* violates the practice of ancient writers, whose "Fables carry a double meaning: the Story is one and intire; the Characters the same throughout, not broken or chang'd and always conformable to the Nature of the Characters they introduce."⁶³ They object that Dryden breaks what they understand to be one of the primary rules governing the allegorical genre: allegories must remain internally consistent, with the signifier never being mentioned explicitly. In doing so, they state very concisely the expectation most readers brought to generic allegories. And about eighty years later Johnson objects to the "original incongruity" of *The Hind and the Panther*, "for what can be more absurd than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a pope and council?"⁶⁴ The distaste of Montagu, Prior, and Johnson for *The Hind and the Panther* carries over to modern criticism. In the 1930s, C.S. Lewis even denies that it is a poem at all, defining a

⁶² Charles Montagu and Matthew Prior, *The hind and the panther transvers'd to the story of The country-mouse and the city-mouse* (London, 1687), Preface.

⁶³ Montagu and Prior's understanding of *The Hind and the Panther* broadly represents contemporary responses to the poem. See Martin Clifford, *Notes Upon Mr. Dryden's Poems in Four Letters to Which are Annexed some Reflections upon the Hind and the Panther* (London, 1687), 18-9. And Thomas Heyrick, in the preface to *The New Atlantis. A Poem in Three Books With Some Reflection Upon the Hind and the Panther* (London, 1687) calls *The Hind and the Panther* "a piece of mortification" for similar reasons.

⁶⁴ Johnson, *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, op. cit., vol. 21, 473.

“poem” as an internally consistent, self-contained literary text. “*The Hind and the Panther*,” Lewis writes in the second epigraph to this chapter, “is full of ‘good things,’ but...what are we to say if not that the very design of conducting in verse a theological conversation allegorized as a beast fable suggests in the author a state of mind bordering on aesthetic insanity?”

Contemporary and modern disfavor of *The Hind and the Panther* is a beginning, not an endpoint. The comments by Montagu and Prior, Johnson, and Lewis are evidence of the conspicuous incongruity of Dryden’s poem. They bring out an important formal aspect of the beast fable, but do not analyze or explain its incongruity. These writers make an interesting formal observation while glossing over the ramifications of that observation through focusing on their evaluations of the poem’s quality; whether or not *The Hind and the Panther* is a good poem is a much less generative question than the effect of its inconsistencies and incongruities. To appreciate the poem in its full complexity, we must shift our focus from what the poem does not do (e.g., follow the purported rules of allegorical writing, keeping the signified only partially in view) to what the poem does (e.g., plays with components of Aesopian fables, breaks the literal level to bring the allegorical level more firmly into view).⁶⁵ We would improve our understanding of the poem by engaging in a positive valuation of its form, rather than judging that form based primarily on earlier precedents. The typical reactions to Dryden’s contemporaries and modern critics, in fact, result from approaching *The Hind and the Panther* as if it were a member of the allegorical genre. Traditionally, as I point out in my

⁶⁵ To date, only a few scholars have looked at what Dryden does with allegory rather than the supposed rules he fails to follow. See Doody, *The Daring Muse*, op. cit., 45, 48, 64, 76-80, 97, 112, 143, 271; Anne Cotterill, “Parenthesis at the Center: The Complex Embrace of *The Hind and the Panther*,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30 (1996-7): 142.

introduction, allegories are integral narratives used to teach readers about some implicit signified, whether that signified is religious or political. The reader will remember Puttenham's description of allegory as a "long and perpetual metaphor" and Bunyan's anxiety about mixing the openly theological discourse of *The Heavenly Footman* with the veiled discourse of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The cited critics are so struck by the incongruities within *The Hind and the Panther* because they try to read it as a generic usage of the allegorical form. But I would argue that *The Hind and the Panther* uses the beast fable form intermittently and inconsistently, and is thus not a member of the allegorical genre so much as it is a poem that makes occasional use of the allegorical mode. In the beginning of the poem, for instance, Dryden aligns churches with particular animals in order to support his own views and opinions, but does not go so far as to commit fully to the allegorical form. He reserves the right to pick up and drop the allegorical beast fable form when it best suits his purpose.

We have already seen the principle of separation in Bunyan's allegories, which register commentary with marginal notations that allow the narrative itself to remain relatively consistent. Aesopian fables, which enjoyed a great deal of popularity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for adults as well as for children,⁶⁶ typically demarcate the fable from the moral in spatial terms. The moral stands spatially separate from the fable, operating outside the allegorical framework as a kind of deciphering key. In *Fables of Aesop and Other Eminent Mythologists*, for instance, L'Estrange

⁶⁶ See Thomas Noel, *Theory of the Fable in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1975); Annabel Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991); Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Mark Loveridge, *A History of Augustan Fable* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

accompanies his fables with morals and lengthy reflections on those morals. A look at two pages (Fig. 6) from L'Estrange's collection gives us a better sense of how these morals and reflections work. Fables II and III are glossed by a single moral, phrased in general terms. The reflection then clarifies and expands the meaning of the moral—specifically, working through the consequences of tyrannical and malicious attacks on the innocent. The point is not that the fables lead naturally to the morals and then to the reflections. On the contrary, the morals and reflections are often overdetermined and sometimes even contradict each other or the fable. What is important is that L'Estrange uses the page's spatial layout to create internally consistent narratives while also pushing his own, at times tendentious, interpretations of those narratives. The spatial separation, as a general rule, keeps the signifiers and signifieds at least partially distinct from one another.

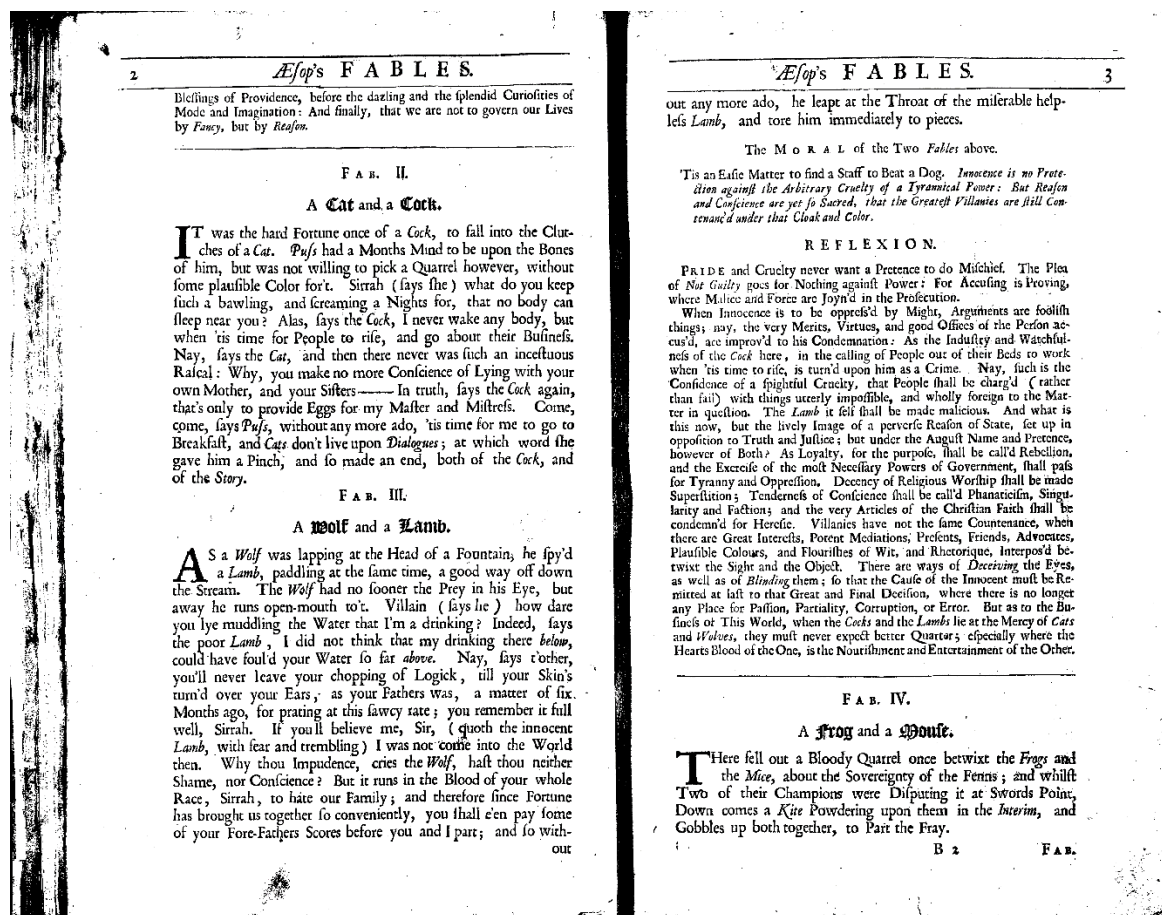


Figure 6. Excerpt from Roger L'Estrange's *Fables of Aesop and Other Eminent Mythologists* (London, 1692). *Early English Books Online*. 4 December 2015.

It is this common practice of dividing fable and moral to which Montagu and Prior refer when they criticize Dryden for “confounding the Moral and the Fable together.” Nowhere does Dryden offer such a deciphering key as those found in L'Estrange's *Fables of Aesop* and other collections printed throughout the period. The lack of spatially separate morals is indeed one of the most striking formal aspects of the text. Dryden combines the signifiers and the signifieds together within the same narrative, consistently moving between veiled, allegorical discourse and open, theological

discourse. *The Hind and the Panther* is in fact an early example of the modal use of allegory, as Dryden uses many components of the allegorical form without the overarching semantic structures associated with traditional allegory—effectively furthering the abstraction of those components from their original genre. Unlike *Absalom and Achitophel*, which is a relatively consistent and extensive political allegory, *The Hind and the Panther* conspicuously breaks its opening setup. It would be very difficult, indeed, to distinguish between the allegorical and non-allegorical modes in *The Hind and the Panther* because it functions by mixing the two indiscriminately. *The Hind and the Panther* is in fact an important early instance of what Frye calls “free-style” allegory, a form in which “allegory may be picked up and dropped again at pleasure” and a chief manifestation of the allegory’s modalization.⁶⁷ As we have already seen, the effect of Dryden’s intermittent use of the allegorical beast fable can be dizzying: he uses the beast fable form to allegorize particular churches, putting in enough detail to make it clear that those churches are his intended signifieds; he then proceeds to mix those signifieds with the signifiers, not only moving between the two levels of significance, but mixing them until they are almost indistinguishable from one another.

Despite the distaste for *The Hind and the Panther*, we can see how the poem helps pave the way for the intermittent use of allegory. Dryden gets a great deal of traction out of a particular subgenre of allegory even if he does not commit to writing an integral instance of the genre in which the chosen conceit functions throughout the entire text. The representational inconsistency of the poem that has struck so many critics results not

⁶⁷ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, op. cit., 90-1. For information about how this free-style use of allegory is adept for modern purposes, see Robert D. Denham, *Northrop Frye and Critical Method* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 238.

from Dryden losing touch with his extended metaphor, but from his experimentation with combining allegorical and non-allegorical modes within a single text without distinguishing them from one another. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of such a use, especially since (as I point out in the introduction) it is part of the tendency of Enlightenment writers to experiment with how allegory could be combined with other modes within individual texts. This modalization is part of what I call the instrumentalization of allegory, as Enlightenment writers including Dryden use various components of allegory despite the ambivalence towards the literary form expressed since the Renaissance. As post-Renaissance worldviews change and English persons become further removed from what Rosen and Santesso call “allegorical culture,”⁶⁸ Enlightenment writers approach allegory not as an obsolete genre (as most scholars suggest), but as a literary form that can be experimented with in creative and surprising ways. In the case of *The Hind and the Panther*, Dryden experiments with allegory by treating it as a mode that can be mixed and matched with non-allegorical modes.

The effect of this mixing of modes becomes especially clear if we turn to the third part of *The Hind and the Panther*, in which Dryden has the hind and the panther conduct an argument through the construction and interpretation of their own beast fables. After indiscriminately mixing allegorical and non-allegorical modes throughout the first two parts, using them as allegorical embodiments of religious sects only intermittently, Dryden returns to the beast fable form. These fables within the fable, like the House of the Interpreter in Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, reflect on the very interpretive methods on which the text and the form more generally rely. The third part of *The Hind*

⁶⁸ Rosen and Santesso, “Swiftian Satire and the Afterlife of Allegory,” op. cit., 11-24.

and the Panther, to put this a slightly different way, is a reflection on beast fables just as the House of the Interpreter is a reflection on Christian allegory. As Dryden himself presents them in his prefatory letter, these fables are “properly parts of it [the poem as a whole], though they are also distinct Stories of themselves, which contain the Common Places of *Satyr*, whether true or false, which are urg’d by the Members of the one Church against the other.”⁶⁹ These two beasts each present the religious arguments typical of their respective sects against the other—some of which are true and some of which are slanderous—veiled within an allegorical beast fable. Dryden presents these beasts as two warring fabulists who use the beast fable form to push their own agendas. What results is a strikingly volatile discussion not only about church history, but about the fable form itself and its usefulness for such discussion.

It is worth stressing the content of the fables themselves. In the beginning of the third part, the panther tells the fable of the swallows (representing English Catholics) that argue over whether to migrate further south in search of warmer climate or to stay on the “steeple height” on which they had just descended.⁷⁰ For the content of the fable, the panther relies heavily on John Ogilby’s translation of one of Aesop’s fables, where a parliament of birds argues over whether to proclaim men—who have been learning how to set traps for birds—friends or foes. In Ogilby’s version, the swallow argues that men are preparing to massacre all birds and become the rulers of the entire world; the linnet contends that proclaiming all men enemies would antagonize them and, accordingly, that the best course of action would be to welcome them as friends. The parliament decides to follow the linnet’s advice, only for the men to ensnare or kill the majority of birds—

⁶⁹ Dryden, “To the Reader,” *The Hind and the Panther*, 122.

⁷⁰ Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, op. cit., III. 445.

leaving the swallow alone only because he had signed a treaty with man. The point of Ogilby's version, printed in 1651, is to demonstrate how civil wars leave nations open to foreign attack: "When Civil War hath brought great Nations low,/Destruction comes, oft with a Forraign Foe." But it is also, as the moral suggests, to show the partiality of parliaments ruled by "private interest" and swayed by "handsome words" rather than the "best advice."⁷¹ In the panther's rewriting of this fable in *The Hind and the Panther*, the martin (representing Edward Petre, an antagonistic Jesuit and privy councillor to James II) advises the swallows to stay where they are, supporting his advice with a "boding dream,/Of rising waters, and a troubl'd stream,/Sure signs of anguish, dangers and distress."⁷² His advice represents the idea that Catholics should focus on their present safety in having a Catholic king and pay little heed to English anti-Catholicism. The swallows decide to follow the martin's advice and are met with a brief season of safety and prosperity as "New blossoms flourish, and new flow'rs arise" not only in the immediate surroundings, but abroad.⁷³ Immediately after this season, however, a stormy night sets in and kills the majority of the swallows. The birds fly into one another and are pelted by "ratling hail-stones mix'd with stone and rain."⁷⁴ The next morning "found/A dreadful desolation reign a-round" as injured swallows are eaten by fellow birds.⁷⁵ The martin and his followers had saved themselves by seeking shelter in a "hollow tree,"⁷⁶ only to be beaten to death with a club by a "sturdy clown."⁷⁷ Through this fable, the hind

⁷¹ See John Ogilby, *The Fables of Æsop, Paraphras'd in Verse, and adorn'd with Sculpture* (London, 1651), II. 40.50.

⁷² Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, op. cit., III. 480-2.

⁷³ Ibid., III. 553.

⁷⁴ Ibid., III. 620.

⁷⁵ Ibid., III. 622-626.

⁷⁶ Ibid., III. 628.

⁷⁷ Ibid., III. 629.

implies that English Catholics have been unduly encouraged by the ever-increasing tolerance of Catholicism in England, Ireland, and Scotland. Eventually, the tide will change and Catholics will again be subject to persecution and death.

The hind counters the panther's malicious fable with the story of the pigeons and the chickens, meant to demonstrate how "concord there cou'd be/Betwixt two kinds whose Natures disagree."⁷⁸ Her fable focuses on peace and reconciliation rather than the hostility and violence that so often characterize the natural world according to the panther and Aesop.⁷⁹ She recasts extremist Anglicans as pigeons, William of Orange and the Whig Gilbert Burnet (in a double representation) as a buzzard, and the Catholic clergy as domestic poultry—all cared for and overseen by a personage known alternatively as the "Plain good Man," "Master of the Farm," or even the "Imperial Owner."⁸⁰ This good man, representing James II, extends alms and tolerance to all of his animals, making little distinction between members of the dominant or minority groups just as James made little distinction between members of the Catholic or Protestant faiths. The pigeons, jealous of what little the chickens have, call for the persecution of all chickens and a renewed commitment to the laws banishing them from the farm. The banishment of chickens from the farm represents, quite transparently, the official English policy towards Catholic clergymen after the Test Acts of 1563 and 1673. The pigeons elect the Buzzard as their leader and he wins over the public through his charisma and good looks just as Absalom does in *Absalom and Achitophel* and Guise in *The Duke of Guise*. The good

⁷⁸ Ibid., III. 900-1.

⁷⁹ The hind's fable, indeed, is based on Aesop's "Of the Doves and Hawkes," a fable that shows the animosity between different groups of birds and, like the Parliament of Birds fable, contains a striking degree of violence. See Ogilby, op. cit., I.20.59-60.

⁸⁰ Ibid., III. 906, 1058, 1228.

man, dismayed by how the pigeons have taken advantage of his leniency and “turn’d his Grace to villany,”⁸¹ strives “a temper for th’ extreams to find,/So to be just, as he might still be kind.”⁸² The result of his desire to balance justness with kindness is a “Gracious Edict” formally extending tolerance to all birds:

He therefore makes all Birds of ev’ry Sect
Free of his Farm, with promise to respect
Their sev’ral Kinds alike, and equally protect.
His Gracious Edict the same Franchise yields
To all the wild Encrease of Woods and Fields,
And who in Rocks aloof, and who in Steeples builds:
To *Crows* the like Impartial Grace affords,
And *Choughs* and *Daws*, and such Republick Birds:
Secur’d with ample Priviledge to feed,
Each has his District, and his Bounds decreed:
Combin’d in common Int’reast with his own,
But not to pass the *Pigeons Rubicon*.⁸³

There are two points worth making about this passage. The first is that the edict extends tolerance to kinds of birds not yet given allegorical significance: the crows, choughs, and daws have not been aligned with specific religious sects either in the hind’s fable or in *The Hind and the Panther* as a whole. Their lack of allegorical identity is part of the point, since the good man is performing a political act that regards questions of creed and religiosity as fundamentally irrelevant. The second point is that tolerance, here as elsewhere in the poem, is closer to restrained belligerence than to acceptance. The hind suggests that religious belief should not enter into public policy and that Catholics should be allowed their own “District” or “Bounds” as long as they do not infringe on the rights of Protestants. As it turns out in the fable, the extension of tolerance to all religious sects is the perfect remedy for political and religious extremism: in the absence of a shared

⁸¹ Ibid., III. 1229.

⁸² Ibid., III. 1231-2.

⁸³ Ibid., III. 1244-55.

object of hatred, the buzzard's followers turn on one another, "Rent in Schism" or "by themselves opprest."⁸⁴ The hind argues that the best policy for dealing with fanatics is to leave them alone until, under moderate circumstances, they lose their fervor or, under more extreme ones, turn on one another in their competition for power.⁸⁵

The fable of the pigeons is strikingly similar to the framing beast fable of *The Hind and the Panther*, in which the hind is protected by the overseeing lion. Its trajectory also closely resembles that of *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Duke of Guise* in that it follows the rise and fall of a good-looking usurper who attempts to level public sentiment against the rightful king. But its ending is certainly closer to *Absalom and Achitophel* because, like King David, the master of the farm quells the opposition by making a pronouncement rather than, as Henry III does in Dryden's *The Duke of Guise*, directly meting out justice in the form of a mass execution. The hind's fable, indeed, stands in stark contrast to the panther's because it presents the possibility of reaching peace and prosperity through nonviolence—as the farm, after the master pronounces his edict, experiences a great increase of "Arts and Wealth," the "secret spoils of Peace."⁸⁶ Tolerance is preferable to national hostility not only because religious belief is "the Royalty and Prerogative of every Private man," as Dryden himself calls it in his prefatory letter to *The Hind and the Panther*, but because tolerance is socially and economically profitable.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ibid., III. 1285, 1287.

⁸⁵ This argument was often advanced by dissenters in the 1660s and 1670s against penal laws that would only unify them against the state. See McKeon, "Civil and Religious Liberty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Case Study in Secularization," in *Representation, Heterodoxy, and Aesthetics: Essays in Honor of Ronald Paulson*, ed. Ashley Marshall (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2015), 168-9.

⁸⁶ Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, op. cit., III. 1266.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 120.

Perhaps the most striking of Dryden's formal innovations in the third part of *The Hind and the Panther* is his decision to include two warring fabulists who cast the same historical and political actors into different roles. Beast fables, here, constitute a rhetorical mode of which the contents and interpretive modes are subject to question. The tales' morals do not stand alone as they typically do in Aesopian fables, where certain interpretations are singled out and privileged above all others. In the source material for the hind's fable, for instance, Ogilby glosses the tale in characteristically general terms:

*Effeminate Nations, to long peace inur'd;
Are by Auxiliaries ill secur'd:
Who ere proove victors, they shall be the prize;
But best your friend knows where the mony lys.*⁸⁸

This conclusion epitomizes how Aesopian fables typically work before and after Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther*. The moral cherry-picks particular details to substantiate a sufficiently abstract aphorism, not only encapsulating the fable in a few lines but tendentiously pushing a certain interpretation. In his translation of Aesop's fable, Ogilby argues that the hawks—whose help the doves solicit to fight against the blood-thirsty kites—represent untrustworthy mercenaries in general. Despite the obvious political facets of Ogilby's version, which was printed for the first time a few years after the English Civil Wars, the basic move in these morals is towards generalization and abstraction. And by separating the morals from the fables themselves, fabulists like Ogilby lend legitimacy to these aphoristic morals because the interpretations themselves do not come into serious question. In *The Hind and the Panther*, however, fables and morals are themselves subject to interpretation. After the panther's fable, for instance, the hind "mark'd the malice of the tale" and offers a counterinterpretation: "But, through

⁸⁸ Ogilby, *The Fables of Aesop*, op. cit., XL.50.

your parable I plainly see/The bloody laws, the crowds barbarity.”⁸⁹ According to the hind, the panther’s fable actually demonstrates the maliciousness of the Test Acts and the unreasonableness of relying on English crowds for choosing a king. Her interpretation takes the martin as representing fanaticism broadly, rather than specifically Catholic extremism, since “No church reform’d can boast a blameless line;/Such *Martyns* build in yours, and more than mine.”⁹⁰ According to the hind, then, the tale demonstrates that extremism is the shared enemy of Anglicanism and Catholicism. Even the hind’s fable, to which the speaker lends legitimacy by ending the poem with angels surrounding the slumbering hind,⁹¹ is above all a rhetorical performance. The hind glosses her fable as one promoting religious tolerance, presenting it as a counterargument to the panther’s. And the panther, importantly, is not persuaded by the hind’s fable: the poem ends with the panther neither commending nor criticizing the fable, but pretending to be tired and retiring to sleep.⁹²

Dryden uses the warring fabulists in the final part of *The Hind and the Panther* to draw the reader’s attention to the overall form of the poem and, correspondingly, to the ways in which Dryden adapts and disrupts that form in the first two parts of the poem. The fables of the swallows and of the pigeons and chickens are self-reflexive, referring back to the form of the poem of which they are a part. They encourage the self-conscious use of the beast fable, presenting it as useful even if often misapplied. The panther’s beast fable serves a function similar to that of Achitophel’s typology, giving an alternative narrative to one provided by a more reliable speaker. The effect is akin to what Frank

⁸⁹ Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, op. cit., III.640, 657-8.

⁹⁰ Ibid., III.653-4

⁹¹ Ibid., III. 1297-8

⁹² Ibid., III. 1289-94.

Palmeri calls “the autocritique of fables,” a self-conscious use of the fable form found sparsely in Jean de La Fontaine’s *Fables* (1668, 1671, 1678, 1679, 1694) and much more frequently in John Gay’s *Fables* and other eighteenth-century versions of the form (1727, 1738).⁹³ Autocritical fables reflect on the very practices they use to create meaning, making problems with the form part of their content. It is helpful to see *The Hind and the Panther* in a similar light, as it critiques the beast fable form at the same time as it incorporates that form into itself.

At this point in the chapter, we can recognize several major similarities between *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Hind and the Panther*. *Absalom and Achitophel* opens with a letter to the reader that positions the poem itself as a form of political argument: Whigs will object to it because of what it suggests about contemporary political events. The poem itself includes an alternative typology, set up by Achitophel when talking to Absalom, and then rejects that typology in favor of its own. There is an analogy to be made between Achitophel’s function in *Absalom and Achitophel* and the hind’s in the final section of *The Hind and the Panther*. Just as *Absalom and Achitophel* rejects Achitophel’s alternative typology by showing it to be an ineffectual argument for compelling Absalom to action, *The Hind and the Panther* rejects the panther’s alternative beast fable by ending with the hind surrounded by angels and by emphasizing the similarities between the hind’s fable and *The Hind and the Panther* as a whole.. In both poems, Dryden introduces a contrary political perspective and then methodically shuts down that perspective to support his own politics. By studying *Absalom and Achitophel*

⁹³ Frank Palmeri, “The Autocritique of Fables,” *Humans and Other Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Culture: Representation, Hybridity, Ethics*, ed. Frank Palmeri (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 83-100.

and *The Hind and the Panther*, we also get a better sense of how flexible different allegorical forms can be in the Restoration. In *Absalom and Achitophel* Dryden adapts political allegory to popular forms like the parallel and typology; in *The Hind and the Panther*, Dryden adapts the beast fable form to the increasing focus on the readers' interpretive practices.

Let me conclude this chapter and the first section of *Enlightenment Allegory* with some observations about what we can take away from Bunyan's and Dryden's allegorical compositions, since at this point we will no doubt benefit from making some generalizations about the role and status of allegory during the 1670s and 80s. It is clear that by the end of the 1680s allegory is filled with possibilities. The allegorical compositions of Bunyan and Dryden demonstrate that problems with the allegorical form, which had been noted since the sixteenth century, did not disqualify Restoration writers from using various components of that form for surprising purposes. The literary form, indeed, shows little sign of dying in the face of the Enlightenment's move towards the empirical and the literal. On the contrary, major writers—of which Bunyan and Dryden are only two examples—are interested in experimenting with the allegorical form. And if nothing else, comparing texts by Bunyan and Dryden shows that these experiments take a variety of forms. Some are integral, generic allegories with an abundance of concrete detail; others are historical parallels that bring two events into a typological relationship with one another; and others, still, are beast fables that mix allegorical and openly theological modes of representation. As we will see in the second part of this dissertation, writers with many different purposes continue to pick up on and revise the tactics used by Bunyan and Dryden.

Despite the differences between them, both Bunyan and Dryden help push allegory in the direction of material signification, development that pertains to both the content and the form of post-Renaissance allegories and pseudoallegories. Even though Bunyan's allegories typically have a soteriological focus, expressing Bunyan's opinions about the nature of spirituality and of divine election, his allegories' abundance of concrete, material detail also shows that they are a part of the same cultural shift evidenced in the rise of empirical science and in the establishment of the Royal Society of London in 1660. Rather than seeing allegory and Enlightenment empiricism as necessarily contradictory, Bunyan uses empirical detail to strengthen his allegories' literal narratives. Dryden moves in a similar direction, in *Absalom and Achitophel* using political allegory to present an event in secular, modern history as the antitype to an event in sacred history and, in *The Hind and the Panther*, using the beast fable form to shine a light on the negative political manifestations of certain religious beliefs. Dryden, in both of these poems, brings attention to the here and now rather than to the heavenly and eternal.

The shift towards the material—which does not mean the end of religion in any way, but the general process by which the earthly world is differentiated from the spiritual one—affects literature in form as well as content. The modalization of allegory we glimpsed in *The Hind and the Panther* is as much a response to the increasing authority of materialism in the post-Renaissance worldview as is the popularity of secular typologies. The movement away from allegorical culture, does not mean the end of allegory because Enlightenment writing thrived on using and transforming literary forms

rather than abandoning them to the past. In the next section of this dissertation, we will gain more of a sense of how the literary form continues to transform.

PART II: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

CHAPTER 3

Allegory in 18th-Century Satire

I am afraid, you are in more [danger] than you imagine...from the choice of your subject, and the allegorical *remoteness* of your satire.—What I mean is, that the necessity your prudence was under, to disguise your design with *caution*, has so perplexed it with *doubtfulness*, that I am fearful, in the hurry of action, some of the *most meaning* allusions, in your piece, may be mistaken.

-Aaron Hill to Henry Fielding¹

Yet there confronting us are Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly*, Skelton's *Bowge of Court*, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and scores of other works from which we form our very conception of satire, all cast in allegorical form. Surely there must be some essential affinity between allegory and satire which accounts for the predilection shown by great satirists for writing in allegory.

-Ellen Douglass Leyburn²

Satire is, in the words of Leon Guilhamet, a “borrower of forms.”³ It frequently appropriates other literary forms such as the pastoral and the epic, reformulating them as instruments of critique and correction. “Among the genres of traditional literary theory,” writes Guilhamet, “satire is most like this form of art [the *bricolage*]. Both employ fragments of an earlier contemporary pattern or system of signs.”⁴ This chapter looks specifically at how eighteenth-century writers borrowed the “pattern or system of signs” characteristic of the allegorical form to satirize real-life persons. What did satirists find

¹ Hill to Fielding, Feb 28, 1736, *The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding*, ed. Martin Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993), 5.

² Ellen Douglass Leyburn, “Notes on Satire and Allegory,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 6 (1949): 323.

³ Leon Guilhamet, *Satire and the Transformation of Genre* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 13, 165. Ronald Paulson includes a similar discussion of satire as a form that uses a variety of forms in *The Fictions of Satire* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), 4.

⁴ Guilhamet, *Satire and the Transformation of Genre*, op. cit., 166. Here, Guilhamet is using Claude Lévi-Strauss’s discussion of *bricolage*, taken from *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 16-36.

useful or fruitful about allegory? What specific formal techniques did they use to encourage allegorical reading?

To address these questions and to think more generally about how writers incorporated the allegorical form into genres such as satire, I will focus on two examples. The first of these is Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), which was originally published with *The Battle of the Books*. This text alternates between snippets of an allegory of three brothers and digressions before, at the end, mixing the allegory and the digressions to the point that they are inextricable from one another. The second of these is Pope's *The Dunciad* (1728; *Variorum* edition, 1729), a poem that uses personified abstractions to savagely attack particular writers and critics.

Neither *A Tale of a Tub* nor *The Dunciad* is an allegory. On the contrary, each of them is a satire that uses particular elements of the allegorical form for their own purposes. In this chapter I will argue that *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad* represent two major methods by which eighteenth-century writers appropriated allegory as an instrument of social satire. Swift encases the allegory of the three brothers within his narrative, keeping sections of that allegory separate from the digressions until the last few chapters. By so doing, he not only maintains a relatively stark distinction between allegorical narrative and digressions for the majority of the text, but also shows the strategic collapse of that distinction. In *The Dunciad* Pope uses personified abstractions, a major convention of allegory, to critique real-life persons who are named within the poem itself. This chapter will put Swift's use of allegory in *A Tale of a Tub* and Pope's use of allegory in *The Dunciad* in conversation with one another—using the similarities,

differences, and tensions between them to improve our understanding of how eighteenth-century satirists used allegorical conventions.

Though the two texts are strikingly different in a number of ways, they are both part of the same process whereby writers increasingly use allegory as an intermittent, almost fragmented mode within texts that are not members of the allegorical genre. Both texts, in other words, move allegory in the direction of being a mode as well as a genre characterized by continuity of narrative. Modal allegory takes the form of an extended metaphor that does not extend throughout the duration of the text; as a result, the writer effectively asks readers to interpret some sections of the text allegorically while reading other sections literally. But how exactly did Swift and Pope encourage their readers to engage in this kind of split interpretation? Throughout this chapter, we will come to a greater appreciation of the exact strategies they used in order to do so.

In many ways, Swift's and Pope's experiments with allegory are tremendously fruitful case studies for thinking about how eighteenth-century writers incorporated elements of allegory into a variety of genres. Our focus will be satire, but certain similar questions can certainly be asked about the uses of modal allegory in prose more generally, in the emerging genre of the novel, or on the stage. What we see in *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad* is not the decline of allegory, but two instances demonstrating how writers used elements of allegory even if the projects of their texts differed greatly from those in traditional versions of the form.

Chapter 3 is divided into two sections. The first will begin by positioning *A Tale of a Tub* within Swift's use of allegory more generally. From there, it moves on to considering the narrative's oscillation between an allegory revolving around three

brothers and digressive asides about modern writers and critics and, then, to a discussion of how these two seemingly separate methods of writing are mixed together by the end of the narrative. The second begins by considering *The Temple of Fame*, Pope's adaptation of Geoffrey's Chaucer's *The House of Fame* (1379). In even the earliest editions of the poem, Pope appends a "Notes" section that includes a defense of allegory. This paratext firmly establishes Pope's belief in the usefulness of allegory as an instructive tool. The poem itself reaffirms this belief, and shows Pope revising Chaucer's poem for his contemporary audience. After my brief discussion of *The Temple of Fame*, I will use the questions generated by that discussion as a framework for thinking about *The Dunciad*. This poem exemplifies how eighteenth-century poets used personified abstractions to render abstract concepts into visible, material form. This use of allegory extends far beyond Pope, including poems written by William Collins, William Blake, and many other eighteenth-century and Romantic writers. The use of personified abstractions in poems is one of the major ways that the allegorical mode continues to persist and even thrive during and after the eighteenth century.

Before moving on to this chapter's two central texts, it is worth noting that Swift and Pope did not create the relationship between allegory and satire. In the second epigraph, Ellen Douglass Leyburn points out that writers used allegory for satirical purposes as early as Erasmus in *The Praise of Folly* (1509), a satirical encomium in which a personified abstraction (Folly) praises herself, pedants, and certain corrupt leaders of the Catholic Church.⁵ Moreover, as scholars such as Kenneth Borris have pointed out, Spenser used allegorical satire from time to time in *The Faerie Queene*; it is

⁵ For a more abstract discussion of the relationship between allegory and satire, see Gerald Bruns, "Allegory and Satire: A Rhetorical Meditation," *New Literary History* 11 (1979): 121-32.

very possible, for instance, that the narrative of Serena in Book VI, Canto viii satirizes Protestant extremism in sixteenth-century England.⁶ There are also hints of satire in Milton's depiction of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*. These examples demonstrate that early modern writers had already begun to approach allegory as a powerful instrument of satire, because it enables writers to make covert comments about particular individuals. Swift's and Pope's experiments with allegory are greatly indebted to these earlier satirical uses of allegory.

I. Oscillating Between an Allegory and Digressions in *A Tale of a Tub*

Swift often used the allegorical form. *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions Between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome* (1701), one of his earliest political tracts, is an historical parallel resembling Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*. In it, Swift conjoins the tense political situation involving the recent impeachments of Lords Orford, Somers, Halifax, and Portland in 1701 with examples from classical history. Frank H. Ellis points out in his edition of *Contests and Dissensions* that Swift proceeds by "way of Allegory," suggesting that the text displays "Swift's ingenuity in finding classical analogues" for contemporary political events.⁷ Swift, as Dryden did in *Absalom and Achitophel*, used allegory to create analogues, or parallels, between contemporary and ancient persons.

⁶ See Donald Cheney, *Spenser's Image of Nature: Wild Man and Shepherd in "The Faerie Queene"* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 108-16; Kenneth Borris, "'Diuelish Ceremonies': Allegorical Satire of Protestant Extremism in *The Faerie Queene* VI.viii.31-51," *Spenser Studies* 8 (1987): 175-209.

⁷ Frank H. Ellis, *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions Between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome: With the Consequences they had upon both those States* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1967), 169, 157. See J. A. Downie, "Swift's *Discourse*: Allegorical Satire or Parallel History?," *Swift Studies* 2 (1987): 25-32.

In later uses of allegory, Swift relies less on parallels between two real historical events and more on fabricated narratives for registering his criticism of contemporary England. In “The Story of an Injured Lady: Written by Herself, in a Letter to Her Friend,” written around 1707 but not published until 1746, Swift represents England’s treatment of Scotland and Ireland as a man’s unequal treatment of two lovers. One woman, representing Scotland, is treated generously while the other, representing Ireland, is treated with contempt.⁸ Swift uses allegory to criticize the English government’s decision to include Scotland, and not Ireland, in the formation of Great Britain in 1707 as well as its general mistreatment of Ireland—anticipating, in terms of content, some of his trenchant criticisms of English policies in *Drapier’s Letters* (1724) and *A Modest Proposal* (1729).⁹ And in “An Account of the Court and Empire of Japan,” written in 1728 and published first in 1765, Swift uses a made-up history of Japan to depict English history from the Revolution to the accession of George II in 1727.¹⁰ These texts are further evidence of Swift’s ability and willingness to write within the genre of political allegory—that is, to use continuous allegorical narratives to instruct readers about historical events and persons.

A Tale of a Tub is perhaps Swift’s most creative engagement with allegory. This text exemplifies how Swift continues to experiment with the literary form even as he

⁸ Jonathan Swift, “The Story of an Injured Lady,” in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, vol. 9, *Irish Tracts, 1720-1723 and Sermons*, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1948), 1-9. For a brief discussion of the allegory behind the poem, see F.P. Lock, *The Politics of “Gulliver’s Travels”* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1980), 97.

⁹ Swift was certainly not alone in criticizing the actions of national governments by casting those governments as persons within an allegorical narrative. Consider, for example, the story of John Bull, an embodiment of England created by Swift’s close friend John Arbuthnot and who interacts with representatives of the French and Spanish governments in *Law is a Bottomless-Pit* (London, 1712) and the many editions of *John Bull in his Senses* printed throughout the decade.

¹⁰ Swift, “An Account of the Court and Empire of Japan,” in *Miscellaneous and Autobiographical Pieces, Fragments and Marginalia* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1962), 99-107.

understands the form as problematic because of its primary characteristic of rhetorical darkness. It is even more ambivalent about its own form than the Restoration allegories we have already encountered. Like several of the texts discussed in the first part of *Enlightenment Allegory*, *A Tale of a Tub* is about figurative reading and allegory in particular: its focus is the conditions and conventions of the literary form it uses, meaning that it shares the self-reflexivity so apparent in texts like *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Hind and the Panther*. In this text, Swift alternates between an allegory about three brothers and narrative digressions, with the allegory retelling the events leading up to, causing, and following the Protestant Reformation and the digressions satirizing moderns' pedantic and self-serving reading practices. These digressions feature a speaker who is a satirical embodiment of the moderns, used by Swift to debunk many of their assumptions about literature and criticism. When discussing the role of *A Tale of a Tub* in the history of allegory, scholars typically follow one of two approaches. The first is to categorize the entirety of *A Tale of a Tub* as an allegory, a member of the same genre as *The Faerie Queene*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Absalom and Achitophel*.¹¹ The second is to focus solely on the allegory of the coats as a fascinating version of the Protestant Reformation, effectively excising the allegory from the text.¹² Neither of these approaches is satisfactory because they each, in one way or another, gloss over the digressions that so often disrupt and sometimes overwhelm the allegory. A more complete understanding of the text will take into account both the content of the allegory

¹¹ Leyburn, for instance, lists *A Tale of a Tub* as an allegory in "Notes on Satire and Allegory," op. cit., 323.

¹² See Philip Harth, *Swift and Anglican Rationalism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 13-51; Jay Arnold Levine, "The Design of *A Tale of a Tub* (with a Digression on a Mad Modern Critic)," *ELH* 33 (1966): 199. It is also common for scholars to study only the digressions themselves, as Miriam Starkman does in *Swift's Satire on Learning in "A Tale of a Tub"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 64-86.

itself and how *A Tale of a Tub* asks its readers to regularly move between that allegory and non-allegorical digressions.

Let's begin by looking at the overall structure of *A Tale of a Tub*. In the original 1704 printing as well as subsequent editions, *A Tale of a Tub* includes various paratexts before moving on to the tale and digressions: a letter "To the Right Honourable, John Lord Sommers," a letter from "The Bookseller to the Reader," an "Epistle Dedicatory, to His Royal Highness Prince Posterity," and a preface. These paratexts set the stage for a text that is particularly observant about contemporary writing and editing practices—criticizing, for example, writers' tendencies to go on for too long and the practice of appending lengthy dedications and apologies to texts. Then, thirty-three pages in, readers are given an introduction to the narrative itself and are finally provided with the first section of the "Tale" on page fifty-four. This section is labeled as part of the "Tale" not by a heading, as later sections will be, but by the phrase "*A Tale*" located at the top of the page. This phrase signals to readers that they have entered into a new narrative, which is at least partially separate from the prefatory materials they have hitherto read. After this first section, the book alternates loosely between sections of the tale and digressions, using section headings to indicate to readers when they are in a certain kind of section. Section III is subtitled "*A Digression concerning Criticks*"; Section IV, "*A Tale of a Tub*"; Section V, "*A Digression in the Modern Kind*"; Section VI, "*A Tale of a Tub*"; Section VII, "*A Digression in Praise of Digressions*"; Section VIII, "*A Tale of a Tub*"; Section IX, "*A Digression concerning the Original, the Use, and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth*"; and Section X, "*A Tale of a Tub*"; Section XI, "*A Tale of a Tub*". This alternation between tale and digression is the most striking formal aspect of *A*

Tale of a Tub. Because of this alternation, Swift's use of allegory is modal rather than generic. Swift, that is to say, uses allegory intermittently and selectively rather than, as is the case with generic allegories, a narrative form characterized by continuity.

Even on the level of the page, *A Tale of a Tub* draws attention to the readers' movements between two partially distinct modes. The digressions feature a speaker who embodies the madness of modern critics, arguing for what Swift understood to be poor printing and writing practices. The tale is an allegory of three brothers—eventually identified as Peter, Jack, and Martin—that attacks many of the actions and beliefs of the Catholic and Protestant dissenting churches. But exactly what evidence is there that the tale of the three brothers is an allegory? First of all, starting with the 1710 edition, Swift himself refers to it as such. In this edition he appends an apology to the original version of the text, in which he writes that “*The abuses in Religion he [the author] proposed to set forth in the Allegory of the Coats and the three Brothers, which was to make up the body of the discourse.*”¹³ Also starting with the 1710 edition, Swift incorporates many of the notes that had been written by William Wotton and others into his text—in many instances, accurately revealing the allegorical signifieds of the narrative. For instance, Swift opens up the tale with “Once upon a time there was a man who had three sons by one wife,* and all at birth, neither could the midwife tell certainly which was the eldest” and follows up this sentence with an annotation to the asterisk, reading “By these three sons, Peter, Martin, and Jack; Popery, the Church of England, and our Protestant dissenters, are designated.”¹⁴ Swift's footnote is taken from Wotton's *A Defense of the*

¹³Jonathan Swift, *'A Tale of a Tub' and Other Works*, ed. Angus Ross and David Woolley (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning (1705).¹⁵ Though Swift savagely attacks Wotton's criticism elsewhere in *A Tale of a Tub*, here he uses Wotton's note as an accurate gloss of the narrative's coded references.

In addition to these two pieces of evidence from the 1710 edition, there are numerous ways in which Swift encouraged allegorical interpretation in the original text. His opening to the tale of the three brothers has a sense of timelessness ("Once upon a time") and vagueness of character ("a man," "three sons," and "one wife") that is reminiscent of fairy tales. By starting the tale this way, Swift sets it up as an instructive tale that can be applied to the readers' own lives and time. With even the first sentence, then, Swift primes his readers to look for meaning that lies outside the literal narrative. Throughout the tale, Swift further encourages his readers to interpret allegorically by setting up a wealth of connections between the tale and the actions of the Anglican, Protestant dissenting, and Catholic Churches.

If the tale of the three brothers can be accurately called an allegory based on Swift's 1710 edition and the abundance of details in the narrative that point towards ulterior signifieds, then the structure of *A Tale of a Tub* asks readers to regularly transition between two kinds of interpretation. In the digressions Swift encourages his readers to read against the speaker, who shares the moderns' belief that contemporary works are superior to ancient ones.¹⁶ And in the sections of the allegory Swift encourages

¹⁵ William Wotton, *A Defense of the Reflections Upon Ancient and Modern Learning, in Answer to the Objections of Sir W. Temple, and Others. With Observations upon The Tale of a Tub* (London, 1705), 49.

¹⁶ There is a great deal of scholarship on Swift's relationship to the battle between the ancients and moderns. For some examples, see Philip Pinkus, "Swift and the Ancients Moderns Controversy," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 29 (1959): 46-58; Joseph Levine, "Ancients and Moderns Reconsidered," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15 (1981): 72-89; and Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), especially 112-5. For a discussion specifically focusing on the background of Swift's *Battle of the Books*, see R.F. Jones, *Ancients and*

his readers to read otherwise, asking them to understand how the literal signifiers are coded references for allegorical signifieds. In both modes, then, Swift encourages his readers to read against the grain of the text, but in very different ways.

Swift balances the negative critique of overly allegorical reading with the more positive use of allegory as a method of criticizing the actions of the Catholic and Protestant dissenting churches.¹⁷ In the introduction as well as in the digressions, Swift satirizes the self-serving process of interpreting literal texts allegorically. For instance, in the introduction, the speaker argues that many critics do not like the “writings of our society [the moderns]” because they are part of the “superficial vein among many readers” who refuse to read allegorically.¹⁸ He then draws attention to the types and fables used by ancient writers to convey divine truths:

But the greatest maim given to that general reception which the writings of our society [the Moderns] have formerly received (next to the transitory state of all sublunary things) hath been a superficial vein among many readers of the present age, who will by no means be persuaded to inspect beyond the surface and the rind of things. Whereas, *Wisdom* is a *fox* who after long hunting will at last cost you the pains to dig out. 'Tis a *cheese* which, by how much the richer, has the thicker, the homelier, and the coarser coat, and whereof, to a judicious palate, the *maggots* are the best. 'Tis a *sack-posset*, wherein the deeper you go you will find it the sweeter. *Wisdom* is a *hen* whose *cackling* we must value and consider because it is attended with an *egg*. But then lastly 'tis a *nut* which unless you choose with judgment may cost you a tooth, and pay you with nothing but a *worm*. In consequence of these momentous truths, the Grubæan Sages have always chosen to convey their precepts and their arts shut up within the vehicles of types and fables; which having been perhaps more careful and curious in adorning than was altogether necessary, it has fared with these vehicles after the usual fate of coaches over-finely painted and gilt, that

Moderns: A Study of the Background of the Battle of the Books (St. Louis, MO: Washington University Studies, 1936), especially 247-78.

¹⁷ H.M. Dargan discusses Swift's use of allegorical conventions in “The Nature of Allegory as Used by Swift,” *Studies in Philology* 13 (1916): 159-179. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Herbert Greene also examines Swift's use of allegory in *A Tale of a Tub* alongside texts including Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* in “The Allegory as Employed by Spenser, Bunyan, and Swift,” *PMLA* 4 (1889): 145-93.

¹⁸ Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, op. cit., 30.

the transitory gazers have so dazzled their eyes and filled their imaginations with the outward lustre, as neither to regard nor consider the person or the parts of the owner within. A misfortune we undergo with somewhat less reluctancy because it has been common to us with Pythagoras, Æsop, Socrates, and other of our predecessors.¹⁹

Swift is characteristically tongue-in-cheek about the speaker's literary and interpretive standards. He shows the speaker piling one metaphor on top of another, comparing the wisdom gained through allegorical reading to a fox that a hunter needs to dig out at the end of a hunt, a chest that has a richer taste when the coat is thicker, a "*sack-posset*" (a medicinal drink made from hot milk curdled with ale) that is sweeter the deeper one drinks, a hen that produces eggs, and a nut that would yield a worm without any sustenance unless chosen carefully. This series of comparisons, rather than clarifying the speaker's point, further disorients readers. Swift uses the word "'tis" to create an anaphoric structure that, by shining a light on the speaker's series of meaningless comparisons, gives the passage a mocking tone. Additionally, Swift uses the phrase "the Grubæn Sages" to associate ancient allegorists with the hack writers of contemporary Grub Street.

By having his speaker go through a prolonged series of meaningless comparisons and showing that speaker's favorable opinion of the hack writers of Grub Street, here Swift teaches his readers to read against the speaker. The speaker's lament for the "transitory gazers" who have become so dazzled by the outward lustre of coaches and other objects that they no longer look beyond that lustre reads like a corrupted version of Augustine's and Bunyan's anxieties about individuals becoming overly invested in the material and literal at the expense of the spiritual (discussed in Chapter 1). Whereas

¹⁹ Ibid., 31.

Augustine entreats his readers to look for hidden meaning in the world and Bunyan warns his readers to not “[play] *with the out-side of [his] Dream*,” Swift shines a light on how the speaker of *A Tale of a Tub* uses the excuse of hidden meaning to justify his own poor interpretations of texts.

Swift is similarly critical of allegorical reading that openly serves the interests of readers elsewhere in *A Tale of a Tub*. Later on in the text, for instance, the speaker praises “the republic of *dark* authors,” taking up the association between allegory and rhetorical darkness that we have already seen in Spenser, Bunyan, and others. “For, *night* being the universal mother of things,” says Swift’s speaker, “wise philosophers hold all writings to be *fruitful*, in the proportion they are *dark*.”²⁰ The darkest of authors “have met with such numberless commentators, whose *scholiastic* midwifery hath delivered them of meanings that the authors themselves perhaps never conceived, and yet may very justly be allowed the lawful parents of them.”²¹ Dark writing amounts to a situation in which readers can use “*scholiastic* midwifery,” a kind of self-serving pedantry, to get whatever interpretations they want out of a certain text (regardless of that text’s literal meaning) and then blame the writer for whatever meanings they find.

In the apology first published in the 1710 edition of *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift connects this attack on self-interested interpretation to commentators on his own text. He addresses the ambiguity inherent in language and places his own texts within a print sphere where critics often misinterpret their objects of study. In the interim between the original publication of the text in 1704 and that of the fifth edition in 1710, several major critics had written commentaries on *A Tale of a Tub*. William King writes *Some Remarks*

²⁰ Ibid., 90.

²¹ Ibid., 90.

on the *Tale of a Tub* in 1704.²² And in 1705 William Wotton, one of the modern critics satirized as a pedant in Swift's *The Battle of the Books*, writes a more meticulous, scene-by-scene explication of several moments in *The Tale of a Tub*.²³ Swift responds to these commentators as "prejudiced and ignorant readers [who] have drawn by great force to hint at ill meanings, as if they glanced at some tenets in religion. In answer to all which, the author solemnly protests he is entirely innocent; and never had it once in his thoughts that anything he said would in the least be capable of such interpretations, which he will engage to deduce full as fairly from the most innocent book in the world." He goes on to argue that "it will be obvious to every reader that this was not any part of his scheme or design."²⁴ Swift extends his critique of self-interested reading within *A Tale of a Tub* to the very kinds of comments that had been made about the text in between its original 1704 printing and its 1710 reprinting. He also appeals to readers in general, arguing that "it will be obvious" that these commentators have participated in kinds of interpretation that are not encouraged by the text itself.

I want to make two major points about Swift's portrayal of dark reading and writing in the paratexts and digressions of *A Tale of a Tub*. The first is that Swift does not disparage allegorical reading and writing in general. The brunt of his satire falls on allegorical interpretation that is not licensed by the text itself and that gives readers far too much control over the text's meaning.²⁵ Swift satirizes what Rosemond Tuve calls

²² William King, *Some Remarks on the Tale of a Tub* (London, 1704).

²³ William Wotton, *Defense of the Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, op. cit. Edmund Curll reprints many of Wotton's notes in 1710, in *A Complete Key to the Tale of a Tub; With Some Account of the Authors, the Occasion and Design of Writing it, and Mr. Wotton's Remarks Examin'd* (London, 1710).

²⁴ Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, op. cit., 4.

²⁵ Gay Clifford similarly calls *A Tale of a Tub* a "deliberate parody of the allegorical method," focusing on how Swift parodies allegorical interpretation rather than allegory writing, *The Transformations of Allegory*, op. cit., 49.

“imposed allegory,” a kind of allegorical interpretation that can hypothetically be practiced on any text in order to benefit the reader’s own thoughts or interests.²⁶ Such reading, Swift suggests, is nefarious because it does not follow naturally from the text being interpreted. He makes a similar suggestion in the allegory itself, when he has the speaker praise those “whose converting imaginations dispose them to reduce all things into *types*; who can make *shadows*, no thanks to the sun, and then mould them into substances, no thanks to philosophy; whose peculiar talent lies in fixing tropes and allegories to the *letter*, and refining what is literal into figure and mystery.”²⁷ The argument, here and in the paratexts and digressions, is less about allegories in general and more about self-interested allegorical interpretation.²⁸

The second point is that Swift’s negative portrayal of a “republic” of dark readers and writers does not preclude him from the more positive use of allegory we find in the tale of the three brothers. Swift uses the allegory of the three brothers to recount the events leading up to, causing, and following the Protestant Reformation. He casts the story of the eventual split between Anglican, Catholic, and dissenting Protestant sects as a domestic drama. In the first section, three unnamed brothers are given their own coats by their dying father. The father tells his sons that these coats “have two virtues contained in them: one is, that with good wearing they will last you fresh and sound as long as you live: the other is that they will grow in the same proportion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves so as to be always fit.”²⁹ The sons are to keep these coats

²⁶ Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery*, op. cit., 219-333, especially 219-20.

²⁷ Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, op. cit., 92.

²⁸ Gordon Teskey suggests that *A Tale of a Tub* is an attack on allegory in general in *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 94. See also Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory*, op. cit., 137.

²⁹ Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, op. cit., 34.

free of embellishment, resisting the ever-changing fashions and maintaining their coats' purity. After the father dies and leaves them to interpret his will, these sons realize that their drab, inornate coats effectively disqualify them from wooing any women, especially the Duchess d'Argent (representing covetousness), Madame de Grands Titres (representing ambition), and the Countess d'Orgueil (representing pride)—three negative personifications.³⁰ Faced with this predicament, the brothers engage in what might be called a series of interpretive games, which Swift uses to represent how self-interest had led biblical hermeneutics into implausible and self-serving readings of God's word. The brothers collectively warp the content of the will in order to justify their decisions to follow the latest fashions—adding shoulder-knots, gold lace, flame-colored satin, silver fringe, embroidery with Indian figures, and points to their coats. Each of these new fashions represents a new interpretive obstacle for the brothers, testing the brothers' collective ability to willfully misconstrue the meaning of their father's will to serve their own interests.

When the brothers want to wear shoulder-knots, they decide that they need to find a "positive command" in their father's will, and therefore attempt to reconstruct the word "shoulder-knot" from, first, syllables and, then, letters. This interpretive method becomes particularly difficult when they cannot find a "K" in the will. Swift writes, "Here was a weighty difficulty! But the distinguishing brother (for whom we shall hereafter find a name) now his hand was in, proved by a very good argument that *K* was a modern, illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages nor anywhere to be found in ancient manuscripts."³¹ This distinguishing brother then argues that the letter "C" is the ancient

³⁰ Ibid., 35.

³¹ Ibid., 39.

equivalent of the modern “K.” From that point on, the brothers have no trouble recreating the word “shoulder-knot” out of the will’s contents and, thereby, justifying their addition of the fashionable shoulder-knots to their previously unembellished coats. As the fashions change, the learned brother carefully reasons through the interpretive obstacles. He uses dubious hearsay—a form of extra-textual justification that could be used to read against the grain of the will—to vindicate their donning of gold lace: “For brothers, if you remember, we heard a fellow say when we were boys, that he heard my father’s man say, that he heard my father say, that he would advise his sons to get *gold lace* on their coats, as soon as ever they could procure money to buy it.”³² Swift repeats the word “heard” to emphasize the sheer ridiculousness of the brother’s claim, since he and his brothers heard the rumor from a fellow who heard it from their father’s servant who heard it from their father. And later on, the brothers decide to add a codicil justifying their decision to add flame-coloured satin to their coats, arguing that this codicil has just as much authority as the body of the will itself.

The fourth interpretive obstacle is the most useful for clarifying how the first section of Swift’s allegory functions. The brothers aim to justify their desire for silver fringes. The will contains an explicit command against this fashion, meaning that the brothers cannot resort to the kinds of reasoning used for the first three obstacles. The result is a clever play with language and an irreverent glance at how some divines warp the meaning of Scripture to their own advantage:

However, after some pause, the brother so often mentioned for his erudition, who was well skilled in criticisms, had found in a certain author which he said should be nameless, that the same word which in the will is called *fringe*, does also signify a *broomstick*, and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph. This, another of the brothers

³² Ibid., 40.

disliked because of that epithet *silver*, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech be reasonably applied to a *broomstick*; but it was replied upon him that this epithet was understood in a *mythological* and *allegorical* sense. However, he objected again why their father should forbid them to wear a *broomstick* on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent; upon which he was taken up short, as one who spoke irreverently of a *mystery* which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into or nicely reasoned upon. And, in short, their father's authority being now considerably sunk, this expedient was allowed to serve as a lawful dispensation for wearing their full proportion of silver fringe.³³

Allegorical or mythological interpretation itself is suspect because it is coupled with self-interest. The learned brother uses his knowledge of "criticisms" to argue that the phrase "silver broomsticks" might have a less apparent meaning and then circumvents his brother's objection to this reasoning by using the mysteriousness of the will and the limited nature of human comprehension to justify his own personal discretion. In this example, mythological or allegorical reading is itself a form of self-interested casuistry: the brother uses the excuse of figurative meaning as a license to vindicate his own desires.

Rather than presenting an image of allegorical reading in which a Christian, assisted by an interpretive guide, learns how to interpret a series of scenes in accordance with Scripture as Bunyan does in the House of the Interpreter scene, Swift demonstrates how interpretive license can be used to twist the meaning of a text.³⁴ Here, *allegoresis* is especially sinister because the text being twisted around is the Bible itself: Swift uses the learned brother's manipulation of a legal, secular text through his knowledge of

³³ Ibid., 41-2.

³⁴ Neil Saccamano argues that in *A Tale of a Tub allegoresis* "is merely an act of violence against the authority of authorial intention and the rule of textual evidence" in "Knowledge, Power, Allegory: Swift's *Tale* and Neoclassical Literary Criticism," in *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit., 306. He overstates the point, because in truth *A Tale of a Tub* is about certain methods of *allegoresis* as they are applied to literal texts.

“criticisms” and specious reasoning to signify the kind of interpretive foul play that allows skilled casuists to reason their way out of sin. Swift’s criticism here is very similar to his satire, in one of his digressions, of the “*scholiastic* midwifery” that allows readers to extrapolate almost any meaning from a text. As Jay Levine has demonstrated, Swift’s focus throughout these early scenes in *A Tale of a Tub* is satirizing “*critica sacra*, the interpretation and (in its most specialized sense) the textual study of Scripture.”³⁵ The critical reading of the Bible became popular during the seventeenth century thanks to publications such as Edward Leigh’s *Critica Sacra* (1642), Matthew Poole’s *Synopsis Criticorum Bibliocorum* (1664-1676), and Richard Simon’s *Critical History of the New Testament* (1689).³⁶ Swift attacks the methods of reading the Bible inculcated in these texts as pedantic and self-serving.

In addition to satirizing the practice of *critica sacra*, this scene also attacks contemporary literary criticism. The learned brother, “skilled in criticisms,” wrestles the text away from its intended meaning by citing past uses of the word “fringe” in other, unnamed texts. The first step of the brother’s manipulation of meaning is to use precedent to justify a sloppy sort of deep reading: the word “fringe” means “broomstick” elsewhere, so who is to say that it cannot mean the same in this text? In having the brother use this erroneous and sinister logic, which is anchored in pedantry, Swift satirizes modern critics’ tendencies to make vague connections between texts to support false claims. It would be a mistake, however, to understand this scene (and the rest of *A Tale of a Tub*) as

³⁵ Jay Arnold Levine, “The Design of *A Tale of a Tub* (with a Digression on a Mad Modern Critic),” *ELH* 33 (1966): 198-227.

³⁶ See *ibid.*, 200.

an argument for superficial over allegorical reading.³⁷ Swift, rather, encourages his readers to find a middle ground between the nefarious deep reading used by both ecclesiastical authorities and modern critics for self-interested purposes and the foolish superficial reading performed by “transitory gazers” who are entranced by the “coaches over-finely painted and gilt.” Swift has taught his readers to not engage in the kind of nefarious deep reading performed by the three brothers, but he has also taught them to properly identify the allegorical signifieds of the tale itself.

The connections between Swift’s satire of *critica sacra* and literary criticism become clearer in the next section of the text, “*A Digression concerning Critics*.” Here, Swift returns to the speaker—who embodies the foolishness of modern critics—to further flesh out what sort of reading is to be preferred. This speaker, in fact, engages in some allegorical interpretations of his own. Working under the assumptions that, first, what he calls “true critics” have been around for ages and that, second, ancient writers needed to hide their admiration for these critics from contemporaries, the speaker reads works by ancient writers like Pausanias, Herodotus, Ctesias, and Lucretius to support his claim that the moderns are superior to the ancients.³⁸ The speaker of these digressions participates in misinterpretations that, though analogous to those made by the three brothers, demonstrate foolishness more than knavery. Swift is not merely repeating the significance behind the first scene in the allegory of the coats. On the contrary, he is

³⁷ Teskey contends that in *A Tale of a Tub* “Swift parodies the outmoded but persistent belief that the most childish or grotesque fables have profound truths hidden within them” in *Allegory and Violence*, op. cit., 94. He suggests that *A Tale of a Tub* seeks to demonstrate the ridiculousness of allegorical interpretation in a literal age. He misses the pivotal point that Swift’s criticism is primarily about applying allegorical interpretations to texts that are meant to be taken literally. Quilligan similarly argues that Swift “asks us to become one of those ‘superficial’ readers who...escape the danger of sinking into the profound abysses of the text,” *The Language of Allegory*, op. cit., 137. But Swift is bothered by superficial reading just as much as he is deep reading. See McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*, op. cit., 61.

³⁸ Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, op. cit., 46-8.

showing another example of misinterpretation, but in a way that belittles the importance of the misinterpreter: the learned brother in the allegory is nefarious; the speaker in the digressions is foolish and illogical.

When Swift returns to the allegory of the brothers after the above digression, he pivots from satirizing the self-interested interpretation of Scripture as a collective reading of a legal document and towards more specifically satirizing the tenets of the Catholic faith by describing those tenets as if they were bizarre scientific experiments. Swift begins Section IV by identifying the learned brother as Peter—a name that establishes him as representing the Catholic Church by referring to Saint Peter, recognized by Catholics as the first pope—and thereby setting him up less as a representative of a self-interested reader of Scripture (as he was in the first section of the allegory) than as a signifier for a more specific belief system. The speaker describes this brother as a “*projector and virtuoso*,” terms that align him with the members of the Royal Society of London. Peter performs eight projects, each of which represents a stage in Catholic dogma. Peter first buys “a large continent, lately said to have been discovered in *Terra Australis Incognita*” at a cheap price, and then sells this to “other customers *again, and again, and again, and again*” after each and every buyer gets shipwrecked on their way to the island.³⁹ Swift compares the Catholic church’s invention of Purgatory to a man defrauding many buyers with a land that may or may not exist, representing Purgatory as a means of extorting money from unsuspecting believers. Peter then creates a “sovereign remedy for the worms,” a quack cure that represents Catholicism’s use of penance to absolve the believer from even the worst guilt over crimes committed.⁴⁰ Swift goes on to

³⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 51.

use Peter's invention of a "*whispering-office*" to ridicule auricular confession, his creation of "an *office of insurance* for tobacco-pipes" to mock Indulgences, and his origination of puppet and raree-shows to poke fun at Catholic processions.⁴¹

Swift mounts a series of *reductio ad absurdum* arguments against Purgatory, penance, auricular confessions, the sale of Indulgences, and religious processions—creating material concretizations that emphasize the absurdity of those particular practices. He encourages his readers to approach Peter's experiments not simply as vehicles for representing particular religious practices, but as literal signifiers that expose the ridiculousness of those practices. To understand the satire, readers must see how the claims made by the Catholic Church resemble those of a mad scientist.

In this second section of the tale, Swift uses allegory to react against an over-investment in empiricism. His literal signifiers associate the Catholic Church's manipulation of believers with the dubious experiments being performed by projectors in the early eighteenth century. In many ways, Swift's critique matches his criticism of the Royal Society of London in Book III of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726),⁴² in which the scientists at the Academy of Lagado perform experiments like "extracting Sun-Beams out of Cucumbers," turning human excrement back into food, and building a house from the roof down.⁴³ In this later text, Swift satirizes quack scientists who get too carried away

⁴¹ Ibid, 51-2.

⁴² Marjorie Nicholson and Nora Mohler unpack the specific persons satirized in Gulliver's voyage to Laputa, in "The Scientific Background of Swift's *Voyage to Laputa*," *Annals of Science* 2 (1937): 299-334. More recently, Douglas Lane Patey looks at Swift's satire of science in more general terms in "Swift's Satire on 'Science' and the Structure of *Gulliver's Travels*," *ELH* 58 (1991): 803-39.

⁴³ Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Albert J. Rivero (New York, NY: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2002), 151-63. The question about reading *Gulliver's Travels* as an allegory pointing towards specific scientists and politicians is too large to cover here. For representative examples see Robert P. Fitzgerald, "The Allegory of Luggnagg and the Struldbruggs in *Gulliver's Travels*," *Studies in Philology* 65 (1968): 657-76; Charles Harding Firth, *The Political Significance of "Gulliver's Travels"* (Norwood, PA: Norwood Editions, 1977); Pat Rogers, "Gulliver and the Engineers," *Modern Language Review* 70 (1975): 260-7; Irvin Ehrenpreis, "The Allegory of *Gulliver's Travels*," *Swift Studies* 4 (1989): 13-28. For additional examples of

with the Enlightenment's increasing focus on the empirical and the concrete.⁴⁴ In *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift not only satirizes these quack scientists, but also argues that the Catholic Church makes similar mistakes and exploits the over-investment in the concrete and material for its own profit.

A Tale of a Tub differs from allegorical texts such as Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, and *The Holy War* as well as Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*. Whereas these earlier texts treat allegory predominantly as a self-contained genre, Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* is one model of how writers can incorporate allegory as mode into a text that is not itself an allegory. By creating a partial separation between the allegory of the three brothers and the digressive asides that also comprise *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift effectively encases an allegory within a satire. He borrows allegory selectively, using it as an occasional mode rather than as a rhetorical structure for the text as a whole. The resulting text is one model of how an eighteenth-century writer can use allegory as an intermittent, almost fragmented mode rather than as a genre characterized by continuity.

The idea that Swift used modal allegory in *A Tale of a Tub* is supported by the fact that, after Section VII, the relatively neat distinction between the allegory and the digressions starts to break down. Section VIII is labeled as a section of the allegory, but is

how to read sections of *Gulliver's Travels* as miniature political allegories, see Leyburn, "Certain Problems of Allegorical Satire in *Gulliver's Travels*," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 13 (1950): 161-89; John Traugott, "Swift's Allegory: The Yahoo and the Man-of-Mode," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 33 (1963): 1-18; Philip Harth, "The Problem of Political Allegory in *Gulliver's Travels*," *Modern Philology* 73 (1976): S40-S47; F.P. Lock, *The Politics of "Gulliver's Travels"* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980), 94-7; Brean Hammond, "Allegory in Swift's 'Voyage to Laputa,'" in *KM: A Birthday Album for Kenneth Muir* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 1987), 65-7; Robert M. Philmus, "Swift and the Question of Allegory: The Case of *Gulliver's Travels*," *English Studies in Canada* 18 (1992): 157-79.

⁴⁴ Richard Ramsey argues that Swift uses similar techniques to critique empirical science in *The Battle of the Books*, in "Swift's Strategy in *The Battle of the Books*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 20 (1984): 382-9.

in fact but is in fact a miniature digression within the allegory. It describes the history of the Æolists, a radical group that has only a marginal connection to Jack. Furthermore, the original 1704 printing mislabels section X, identifying it as “*A Tale of a Tub*” whereas it is actually a digression about modern writing.⁴⁵ To name one more instance, Section XI (which is labelled as a section of the tale) is part digression and part allegory: the first two paragraphs are about how writing is like travelling, and only then does the section shift towards describing Jack’s ability to read literal texts allegorically and his further descent into madness. Swift, thus, breaks down the previously held distinction between the allegory and the digressions. By so doing, he inculcates a degree of skepticism into his readers, teaching them that they are not to rely too heavily on promptings from the writer (whether they be subtitles, headings, or whatever else) to guide their own interpretations. He also demonstrates the ongoing usefulness of allegory as a mode, using it to further satirize Protestant dissenters even though the overarching narrative (the tale of a tub) no longer functions in any consistent way.

In oscillating between a positive use of allegory and digressions that frequently portray allegorical reading in a negative light, Swift asks his readers to find a middle ground between unlicensed allegorical reading that can be used to serve their own self-interests and superficial reading that misses a text’s ulterior meaning. He uses modal allegory to encourage in his readers an interpretive method that is loyal to a text’s content: reading the tale as an allegory is warranted, but the speaker’s reading of literal

⁴⁵ The *Oxford World’s Classics* edition (2008), Angus Ross and David Wooley even goes so far as to correct the original printing. But there is good reason to preserve the original error, since it is more promising to interpret it as a purposeful mistake—therefore reflecting on the speaker—than as simply a printing error.

texts as if they were allegories is not. A reader's interpretive method must be appropriate for the text at hand.

Swift's incorporation of allegory into *A Tale of a Tub* is one model for how eighteenth-century writers incorporated the literary form into satires. Now we will turn to Pope's *The Dunciad*, a very different model than *A Tale of a Tub*. This text, despite its differences with Swift's text, nonetheless participates in the instrumentalization of allegory as a satirical mode. Looking at the poem in detail will provide further insight into how differently satirists borrowed the allegorical form.

II. Pope's Use of Personifications in *The Dunciad*

In early editions of *The Temple of Fame*, Pope includes a short defense of allegory in his "Notes" section. He argues that those modern critics who "have declar'd themselves unable to relish allegorical Poems" ignore the value and beauty of the literary form.⁴⁶ The argument against allegory broadly is, for Pope, indefensible because "if Fable be allow'd one of the chief Beauties, or as Aristotle calls it, the very soul of Poetry, 'tis hard to comprehend how that Fable should be the less valuable for having a Moral."⁴⁷ Pope regards allegorical poems as fables with morals attached to them. He goes on to suggest that "We [readers] find an uncommon Charm in Truth, when it is convey'd by this Side-way to our Understanding; and 'tis observable, that even in the oft ignorant Ages this way of Writing has found Reception."⁴⁸ Pope understands allegory as a tremendously useful way to teach truths to their readers while also charming them. To

⁴⁶ Alexander Pope, *The Temple of Fame: A Vision* (London, 1715), 45.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

conclude from poorly written allegories that “Allegory it-self is vicious, is a presumptuous Contradiction to the Judgment and Practice of the greatest Genius’s both antient and modern.”⁴⁹ Pope adamantly defends the practice of conveying truth to readers through hidden meaning against modern detractors.⁵⁰

The Temple of Fame itself is a complex rewriting of Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The House of Fame* (ca. 1379-80). As Pope acknowledges in the advertisement to the first printing, “The hint of the following piece was taken from Chaucer’s *House of Fame*,” though he has changed the content so that “the descriptions and most of the particular thoughts [are his] own.”⁵¹ Pope treats the content of *The House of Fame* as flexible, changing it to serve his own thoughts and opinions. In *The Temple of Fame* itself, the speaker describes a temple’s structure,⁵² and then delineates the statues of Homer, Virgil, Pindar, Horace, Aristotle, and Cicero that are found within that temple.⁵³ Fame calls people of all nations with her trumpet so that they can approach her to ask to either be remembered or forgotten.⁵⁴ After watching the relatively arbitrary decisions made by Fame, who blows either the trumpet of fame or the black trumpet of ignominy, the speaker applies the lesson of his dream to his own situation. The speaker reflects that “But few, alas! the casual blessing [of fame] boast,/So hard to gain, so easy to be

⁴⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁰ Rosen and Santesso argue that Pope’s defense “has the feeling of protesting too much, an admission that he is defending a paradigm that is no longer socially relevant,” “Swiftian Satire and the Afterlife of Allegory,” op. cit., 17. Their reading of this defense is unsatisfactory, as there is little evidence that Pope believes allegory to have become socially irrelevant.

⁵¹ Pope, *The Temple of Fame*, in *The Major Works*, ed. Pat Rogers (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 103. For more information about Pope’s personal collection of Chaucer’s works, see David Nokes, “Pope’s Chaucer,” *The Review of English Studies* 27 (1976): 180-2. For a more detailed reading of Pope’s relationship to allegorical dream visions in general, see Dustin Griffin, “The Visionary Scene: Vision and Allegory in the Poetry of Pope,” in *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit., 323-350.

⁵² Pope, *The Temple of Fame*, op. cit., ll. 1-136.

⁵³ Ibid., ll. 137-275.

⁵⁴ Ibid., ll. 276-496.

lost./How vain that second life in others' breath,/Th' estate which wits inherit after death!"⁵⁵ He then decides to shun the desire for fame, not because he is indifferent to his legacy, but because he realizes people can exert very little control over how they are remembered. As Pope himself mentions in a footnote to the end of the poem, this moralization is one of the major differences between *The Temple of Fame* and Chaucer's *The House of Fame*: "The hint is taken from a passage in another part of the third book [of *The House of Fame*], but here more naturally made the conclusion, with the addition of a *moral* to the whole. In Chaucer he only answers 'he came to see the place'; and the book ends abruptly, with his being surprised at the sight of a *man of great authority*, and awakening in a fright."⁵⁶ Pope, then, extracts a lesson that is embedded in Chaucer's allegory and attaches it to the end of *The Temple of Fame* so that it more directly encapsulates the moral of the new poem as a whole.⁵⁷ By doing so, he adapts the structure of Chaucer's poem to the fable-moral structure often found in editions of *Aesop's Fables*, where the ending seeks to capture the moral of the narrative.

Pope clearly approves of allegory's ability to bring attention to its tropological, or moral, significance. He claims that allegory can be a charming form of instruction, as it conveys truths "Side-way to our [the readers'] Understanding." He also, as will become clear in this section of the chapter, highly values the use of personified abstractions—a

⁵⁵ Ibid., ll. 503-6.

⁵⁶ Ibid., note to l. 497.

⁵⁷ Maynard Mack argues that, in *The Temple of Fame*, "Chaucer's poem...is pruned and reshaped to make a more rounded moral fabric" in *Alexander Pope: A Life* (New York, NY: Norton, 1985), 164. It is easy, to take this point too far. G. Wilson Knight, for instance, calls *The Temple of Fame* so "lucid, coherent, and objective a child could understand it," *Laureate of Peace: On the Genius of Alexander Pope* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1955), 94. For a compelling rebuttal to Knight's point, see David Wheeler, "'So Easy to Be Lost': Poet and Self in Pope's *The Temple of Fame*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 29 (1993): 3-27. John Aden understands the discrepancies between Chaucer's and Pope's poem as indications of Pope's political intent, and therefore reads it as bordering on a political allegory, in "Pope's *Temple of Fame* and 'dark Politicks,'" *Papers in Language and Literature* 9 (1973): 138-44.

convention of allegory that had become increasingly abstracted from its original genre. The ongoing use of personified abstractions, which is especially conspicuous in eighteenth-century poetry, is one of the major ways that allegory persists in the Enlightenment. Personification remains a vital way for writers to invent what C.S. Lewis calls “*visibilia*” for immaterial concepts, thus rendering abstractions into visible, almost material form.⁵⁸ To name two examples: William Collins opens his “Ode to Pity,” published in *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects* (1746) by describing the relationship between Pity, Woe, and Distress; and William Blake structures “The Divine Image” (1769) around Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love, four abstractions that are themselves indicative of God’s presence. These are just two instances of the well-documented penchant of eighteenth-century poets for using personified abstractions.⁵⁹ The ongoing use of personifications exemplifies what I have called the modal transformation of allegory because it further distances a convention of allegorical literature from its original genre. The use of personified abstractions did not run contrary to the increasing authority of empiricism and of literal signifiers: personified abstractions provided writers with an efficient way of describing unreal concepts as if they were material beings.

The case study in this part of the chapter will be Pope’s *The Dunciad*. I will argue that *The Dunciad* is not so much an allegory as an innovative use of modal allegory,

⁵⁸ Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1936; reprint 1958), 44.

⁵⁹ See Chester F. Chapin, *Personification in Eighteenth-Century English Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954); Earl R. Wasserman, “The Inherent Values of Eighteenth-Century Personification,” *PMLA* 65 (1950): 435-63; Patricia Meyer Spacks, “Horror-Personification in Late Eighteenth-Century Poetry,” *Studies in Philology* 59 (1962): 560-78; Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime*, op. cit.; and Robert W. Williams, “A Poem is a Speaking Picture: Pope and Iconography,” *Sydney Studies in English* 12 (1986-7): 21-35.

because the poem uses the literary form intermittently rather than as a consistently functioning framework.⁶⁰ Pope both adapts the trope of personification to Enlightenment empiricism—by, for instance, using London as a specific topographical backdrop and including specific, named individuals alongside personified abstractions—and uses personification to create a more abstract historical framework that transcends at the same time that it involves particular individuals. The chapter ends by putting Pope’s model of modal allegory in conversation with that of Swift’s *A Tale of a Tub*, making use of the similarities, differences, and tensions between them to open up questions about how elements of allegory could be used intermittently for the purposes of satire.

Let’s begin with Pope’s own discussions of allegory in *The Dunciad*. In the prefatory material, Pope (as Martinus Scriblerus) writes that the poem’s author “wrapped [truths] in an *allegory* (as the construction of epic poesy requireth) and feigns that one of these goddesses [Dulness] had taken up her abode with the other [Poverty], and that they jointly inspired all such writers and such works.”⁶¹ Pope echoes the conventional understanding of allegory as concealing, or wrapping, truths. Pope further describes *The Dunciad* as “a chain of allegories, setting forth the whole power, ministry, and empire of Dulness, extending through her subordinate instruments, in all her various operations.”⁶² The use of the plural here is significant, because it suggests that Scriblerus understands individual scenes within *The Dunciad* as allegories without understanding the whole text as a generic allegory. This point is supported by those moments in the notes when

⁶⁰ For some additional information about the relationship between *The Dunciad* and allegorical convention, see Veronica Kelly, “‘Embody’d Dark’: The Simulation of Allegory in *The Dunciad*,” in *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit., 351-72.

⁶¹ Pope, *The Dunciad*, in *The Major Works*, op. cit., 421.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 422.

Scriblerus glosses particular scenes as allegories-in-miniature. At one point, for instance, Scriblerus notes that “The Allegory of the souls of the Dull coming forth in the form of Books, and being let abroad in vast numbers by Booksellers, is sufficiently intelligible”—a statement suggesting that the scene is an allegory in and of itself, used for a particular purpose but not necessarily attaching to an overarching, consistently functioning semantic structure.⁶³ These kinds of statements, located at the beginning of the poem as well as in the footnotes, gesture towards how *The Dunciad* might be using elements of allegory intermittently—that is, modally.

True to this initial setup, in *The Dunciad* Pope includes several very condensed, efficient versions of the allegorical form in which he describes personified abstractions and then quickly moves on to satirizing real-life persons. One such example comes early on in the poem, when the speaker describes the goddess Dulness’s abode:

In clouded majesty here Dulness shone;
Four guardian virtues, round, support her throne:
Fierce champion Fortitude, that knows no fears
Of hisses, blows, or want, or loss of ears:
Calm Temperance, whose blessings those partake
Who hunger, and who thirst for scribbling sake:
Prudence, whose glass presents th’ approaching gaol.
Poetic justice, with her lifted scale,
Where, in nice balance, truth with gold she weighs,
And solid pudding against empty praise.⁶⁴

The speaker couples each of the four personifications with a brief descriptive clause, using the words “that” (with the first personification), “whose” (with the second and third personifications), and “with” (with the fourth personification) to signal the shift from naming the personified concept to describing it in its new, corrupted state. These clauses

⁶³ Ibid., 493.

⁶⁴ Ibid., I. 45-54

make the passage feel static, treating the individual descriptions as emblematic scenes in which the concept being described is a corrupted version of a traditional Christian virtue. This static feeling is supported by the verse itself. Fortitude and Calm Temperance are each given their own heroic couplets, with the rhyme scheme lending a sense of finality to the descriptions of the concepts. Even the final two couplets, which combine the descriptions of Prudence and Poetic justice, have a sense of neatness: the period at the end of the stanza gives the speaker a chance to move onto a description of what Dulness sees.

The phrase “four guardian virtues” brings attention to how the personifications of Dulness’s abode are debased versions of the four cardinal virtues—Fortitude, Temperance, Prudence, and Justice—which had long been associated with holiness.⁶⁵ Pope wrenches each of these concepts from its Christian context: Fortitude is characterized by a lack of fear rather than, as it is within its Christian context, by courage in the face of fear; Temperance is described as a decision to abstain from eating and drinking for the sake of foolish writing (“scribbling”), rather than from a sense of holiness; Prudence shows individuals when the threat of execution is most eminent, allowing that individual to change their actions and beliefs rather than to stick to their convictions; and Poetic justice, rather than being beholden to truth and fairness, always has its own interests in view. The personifications perform actions consistent with the concepts they embody and therefore resemble Fletcher’s “fated agents,” but only according to the debased form of religious morality on which Dulness relies. Pope depicts

⁶⁵ The depiction of the four cardinal virtues also has a specific history within religious allegory. For instance, see William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A New Translation of the B-Text*, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), Passus XIX, 4.

Dulness as a kind of mock-religion, using personifications to criticize the self-righteousness with which Dulness's disciples understand their own writing and significance. The passage suggests that the followers of Dulness regard themselves in the same light as followers of religious morality.

There is a way in which this scene in *The Dunciad* is a condensed form of the kind of allegory we see at work in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* and earlier allegories, though Pope's motivation is decidedly different. Pope mostly keeps the personifications within ten lines, with the rest of the first book listing the particular writers associated with Dulness. Unlike Bunyan's Palace Beautiful and House of the Interpreter, Dulness's abode is filled with both abstractions and individual, real-life persons. Shortly after the above lines, for instance, the speaker describes Dulness as she "beholds the chaos dark and deep" and then sees authors such as Laurence Eusden, Richard Blackmore, Ambrose Philips, Nahum Tate, and John Dennis—authors who are some of Dulness's disciples.⁶⁶ One of the most important aspects of this scene is that the writer momentarily uses personifications and then moves on to specific individuals.

Pope's use of personifications is decidedly different in Book IV, which describes the return of the Kingdom of Dulness to Earth. Whereas Pope makes his earlier description of Dulness's palace feel static, here Pope creates a scene bursting with activity:

Beneath her footstool, Science groans in chains,
And Wit dreads exile, penalties and pains.
There foamed rebellious Logic, gagged and bound,
There, stripped, fair Rhetoric languished on the ground;
His blunted arms by Sophistry are borne,
And shameless Billingsgate her robes adorn.
Morality, by her false guardians drawn,

⁶⁶ See Pope, *The Dunciad*, op. cit., I. 103-6.

Chicane in furs, and Casuistry in lawn,
 Gasps, as they straiten at each end the cord,
 And dies, when Dulness gives her Page the word.
 Mad Mathesis alone was unconfined,
 Too mad for mere material chains to bind,
 Now to pure space lifts her ecstatic stare,
 Now running round the circle, finds it square.⁶⁷

In these lines, the speaker incorporates a series of concepts into a chaotic, violent scene.

The lines read like a list that names a concept (without qualifying it), says what it is doing or what is being done to it, and then quickly moves onto the next one. The first ten lines, for instance, include nine abstractions besides Dulness: Science, Wit, Logic, Rhetoric, Sophistry, Billingsgate, Morality, Chicane, and Casuistry. The speaker usually dedicates a line, or part of a line, to each personification—where, in the description of Dulness's abode, he usually spends at least a couplet qualifying each abstraction and placing it within a particular context.

The reason for this difference in length is that the scene in Dulness's abode is primarily about definition, whereas the depiction of the return of the Kingdom of Dulness to Earth is about using abstractions to describe the transition from an age of morality and wit to the modern age of sophistry and ostentation as a stark, almost violent transition. Pope transcends his typical focus on the specific to speak in abstract terms about how to understand the state of eighteenth-century criticism. He uses abstractions to bring attention to the macronarrative—that is, to the larger narrative of violent succession (in which a new, corrupt age fights against an older, wiser age) rather than to the individual persons who are a part of that macronarrative.

⁶⁷ Ibid., IV. 21-34.

I have written that *The Dunciad* features only a few—if noteworthy—examples of personified abstractions alongside the lists of particular persons being satirized. On the one hand, this is true: the poem does not, as a general rule, go through lengthy descriptions of personifications as does *The Pilgrim's Progress* and other allegories. But on the other hand, *The Dunciad* is structured around Dulness, a personification who (as the beginning of the poem points out) is looking for a new king. For the remainder of my discussion of poem, I propose looking at how this abstraction works, keeping in mind how Pope uses personifications elsewhere in the poem. I will argue that Pope uses Dulness to endorse a kind of abstract history, with real-life persons representing earthly iterations of a particular concept. Pope has a vested interest in finding a balance between specificity and abstraction, and he strives to bring attention to how particular writers and politicians embrace the principles characterizing Dulness and to how the abstraction itself outlives these particular individuals. This interplay between specificity and abstraction is one major reasons why Pope uses modal allegory.

For the purposes of understanding how the Dulness works as a personification, it is particularly useful to study how the speaker describes her in Book I. The speaker sets up the stage for the rest of the poem by having Dulness look at her various followers and eventually choose the next King of the Dunces. After listing many writers as followers of Dulness, the speaker depicts a scene in which Dulness focuses on one who stands above the rest:

In each she marks her image full expressed,
But chief in BAYS's monster-breeding breast;
Bays, formed by nature stage and town to bless,
And act, and be, a coxcomb with success.
Dulness with transport eyes the lively dunce,
Remembering she herself was pertness once.

Now (shame to fortune!) an ill run at play
 Blanked his bold visage, and a thin third day:
 Swearing and supperless the hero sate,
 Blasphemed his gods, the dice, and damned his fate.⁶⁸

The passage begins with Dulness recognizing her “image full expressed” in the persons already listed in the previous stanza and thus acknowledging each of them as an earthly embodiment of the concept she represents. Dulness then homes in on Bays in particular, seeing in his “monster-breeding breast” an image that is even closer to herself than that found in the others’ breasts. What starts out as a community of individuals who each represents Dulness to the exact same extent ends up being a community where one individual, Bays, is superior to the others. In these lines Pope gradually moves attention away from an abstract concept (Dulness) to various earthly embodiments of that concept (“each” of Dulness’s followers) and then to one earthly embodiment (Bays) of that concept who stands over and above the rest.

The original 1728 printing of the above lines refers to Lewis Theobald by name, setting that writer up as the mock hero of *The Dunciad*. Starting with the 1743 edition, Pope substitutes Bays for Tibbald and then gives readers enough information to identify Bays as Colley Cibber—including references to Cibber’s *Perolla and Izadora* (1705), *Ximena* (1712), *The Nonjuror* (1717), *Caesar in Egypt* (1724) and *Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John* (1745).⁶⁹ But despite the fact that Pope eventually provides his readers with enough clues to identify the new hero of *The Dunciad* as Cibber, it is also true that Pope hides the identity of this new hero for the majority of his descriptions of Bays. Bays is thus a semi-abstraction: he is, at once, a specific hack writer who

⁶⁸ Ibid., I. 107-116.

⁶⁹ Ibid., I. 250-3.

misappropriates texts written by Fletcher, Shakespeare, Quarles, and Ogilby and one who represents hack writers more generally.⁷⁰ This idea that Bays is a semi-abstraction is further supported by the fact that Pope takes the name itself from the Duke of Buckingham's *The Rehearsal* (1682), in which Buckingham uses Bays as a representative of Dryden. Pope borrows Buckingham's figure, suggesting a genealogy of foolish playwrights that pre-exists Cibber himself.

In Book I, the speaker uses Dulness to introduce a list of earthly iterations of the personified concept and then, with Dulness as a focal point, shifts to describing Bays as a figure who is, at once, specific and abstract. Through Bays's speech to Dulness, which comes later on in the book, the speaker continues to implicate other real-life persons and, by so doing, to flesh out a genealogy of poetic Dulness. Bays is, amongst other things, a vehicle for namedropping: in his speech, he implicates writers such as Edward Ward, Nahum Tate, and Thomas Shadwell. This namedropping creates a group of foolish writers. Being included in the poem is, itself, a kind of critique. Pope's tactic of associating a set of named, real-life individuals with personified abstractions is a particularly powerful method of satire. By pushing the association between Ward, Tate, and Shadwell with Dulness, Pope essentially deprives these real-life individuals of self-possessed agency. Pope moves them away from Fletcher's notion of a literary "person," who seemingly has control over his or her own actions, and towards his notion of a fated or "daemonic agent" who acts as if controlled by a foreign spirit.⁷¹ The individuals of *The Dunciad* are hardly self-possessed. They, in fact, act the way they do because they are earthly iterations of a negative concept.

⁷⁰ For Bays's misappropriations of these writers specifically, see *ibid.*, I. 131-141.

⁷¹ Fletcher, *Allegory*, op. cit., 39.

The lines from Book I give an adequate sense of how Pope uses Dulness to depict an abstract kind of history that balances specifics and generals. His speaker associates Bays and various real-life, named persons with a profoundly negative abstraction, shining a light on how Bays and those persons embody a negative abstraction. Pope uses the speaker to describe the concept of dullness and, then, to identify exactly how and through whom the concept acts in the world. The speaker models how to find the abstract in the specific, and vice versa. The effect of this historical perspective is similar to Kantorowicz's "King's Two Bodies" thesis, in which a king possesses both a physical body that is subject to decay and death and a political body which has existed for generations and which will continue far beyond an individual king's death.⁷² In *The Dunciad*, Pope similarly draws attention to how single individuals temporarily embody a concept that has and will exist far beyond its embodiments.

Why does Pope set up the poem this way? First of all, he creates a genealogy of Dulness that takes note of particular individuals, but does not get bogged down in the specifics. The danger of Pope's satire, as far as I understand it, is that readers will pay too much attention to the here and now. That is to say, readers of *The Dunciad* might take delight in how the speaker implicates real-life persons into the poem, but run the risk of not abstracting sufficiently. The poem is about the place of Cibber and Shadwell in literary history, but it is equally about poetic dullness as a concept. There is a danger in paying too much attention to the here and now of political and literary history, because it runs the risk of losing touch with the abstract concepts also at play in the world. For Pope, one of the most effective ways to prevent foolish poets like Cibber from rising to

⁷² Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, op. cit., 81-82.

popularity and fame is to recognize how they embody certain negative concepts: the focus on abstraction, in the poem and in the world, is an important safeguard against corruption and foolishness.

Second, Pope uses the setup of *The Dunciad* to move in and out of the allegorical tradition—using personifications when doing so is useful for the means of satire, but then focusing on particular persons. *The Dunciad* gives a model of modal allegory strikingly different from that of *A Tale of a Tub*, because *The Dunciad* intermittently uses a particular element of allegory (personified abstractions) while *A Tale of a Tub* splits up a relatively self-contained allegorical tale and juxtaposes the resulting sections with a series of digressions. Pope's use of allegory is much looser than Swift's, though he does not go so far as Dryden's sometimes dizzying intermittent use of the beast fable form in *The Hind and the Panther*. Pope's looser utilization of one important component of allegory encourages readers to find the general in the specific, and the specific in the general.

At the end of our discussions of *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad*, we are left with a sense of how modal allegory could be used for a wide variety of purposes. In *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift oscillates between an allegory and another discursive mode—in this case, digressions—to create a heightened version of the self-reflexivity we started to see in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Hind and the Panther*. And in *The Dunciad*, Pope uses personifications apart from their original genre in two major ways: (1) to set up Dulness as a mock-religion using the four cardinal virtues as stand-alone concepts and (2) to gesture towards a sense of history that looks both at the actions of specific individuals and at the overarching macronarrative of which those actions are a part.

Despite the many differences between *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Dunciad*, both of these texts use the allegorical mode to resist a material worldview that focuses too heavily on the here and now. Swift jointly satirizes many of the scientists of the Royal Society of London and the tenets of the Catholic Church that, according to Swift, similarly over-emphasize the importance of the physical and material world; Pope takes aim at an historical view that focuses primarily on specific politicians and writers, encouraging readers to think in a way that balances the particular and the abstract. This shared reaction against overly empirical and concrete thinking is one important aspect of what, according to *Enlightenment Allegory*, is involved in “adapting” the literary form to ongoing historical and literary changes. Adapting allegory means not only bringing aspects of the form into accordance with evolving tastes and investments, but also sometimes using that form to push against those tastes and investments.

These texts also share the propensity to move allegory towards concision and efficiency. They regard the allegorical mode as a way to quickly speak otherwise before shifting over to another kind of mode. In Chapter 4, we will see how several writers of periodical essays also understood allegory as, ideally, concise and efficient. We will also see how these writers worked through the potential problems with using modal allegory and what sort of guidelines they created for helping writers manage components of allegory when the inclusion of those components was not justified by the text’s genre itself.

CHAPTER 4

Allegory in 18th-Century Periodicals

As some of the finest Compositions among the Ancients are in Allegory, I have endeavoured, in several of my Papers, to revive that way of Writing, and hope I have not been altogether unsuccessful in it; for I find there is always a great Demand for those particular Papers, and cannot but observe that several Authors have endeavoured of late to excel in Works of this Nature.

-Thomas Parnell (1712)¹

Others, who aim at fancy, chuse
To woo the gentle *Spenser's* muse.
This poet fixes for his theme
On allegory, or a dream;
Fiction and truth together joins
Thro' a long waste of flimzy lines,
Fondly believes his fancy glows,
And image upon image grows.
Thinks his strong muse takes wond'rous flights
When'e'er she sings of PEERLESS WIGHTS,
Of DENS, of PALFREYS, SPELLS, and KNIGHTS.
Till allegory, *Spenser's* veil,
T'instruct and please in moral tale,
With him's no veil the truth to shroud,
But one impenetrable cloud.

-Anonymous (1755)²

The first of these epigraphs is from a *Spectator* paper written by Thomas Parnell, a poet and clergyman who was deeply invested in the usefulness of allegory as a tool for teaching social and moral values.³ Parnell sought to “revive” allegory, which meant working from within the traditional form and experimenting with that form in new and creative ways. The process of revivification involved discontinuity and continuity: in their periodical essays, Parnell and others changed as well as preserved the traditional

¹ *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford University Press, 1987), No. 501 (4 October 1712). Subsequent citations from *The Spectator* will be from this edition, cited by paper number and date.

² *The Connoisseur*, No. 67 (London, 8 May 1755).

³ In addition to Parnell's admiration for allegory as expressed in *Spectator*, No. 501, consider his poem “An Allegory on Man,” in *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1722).

literary form for speaking otherwise, taking what they could from ancient and more recent precedents while also adapting the form to new literary and historical conditions. This balance of continuity and discontinuity, as I have emphasized throughout this dissertation, is part and parcel of how literary forms like allegory transform over time. Revivification—even if, in fact, allegory was far from dead at any point in its history—resembles parody as a tremendously useful model for historical change.

The second epigraph is from an anonymous contribution to *The Connoisseur*, an English periodical published from 1754 to 1756. The poem is a trenchant critique of the tendency of eighteenth-century writers to imitate writers like Prior, Swift, Milton, Spenser, and Pope rather than follow their own imaginations and creating truly original literary texts. In the quoted portion, the poet suggests that imitations of Spenserian allegory had moved away from a method of veiled discourse—in which a writer commented on an implicit signified—and towards the “one impenetrable” cloud that characterizes utter meaninglessness. According to the poet, modern imitators mistake the use of wights, dens, palfreys, spells, and knights for substance. These imitators erroneously think that their muse “takes wond’rous flights” at the very mention of these conventions, missing the fact that, for Spenser and other allegorists, the conventions were didactic tools used to shroud rather than to obfuscate meaning.⁴ Embedded within this anonymous poet’s critique of what had become of Spenserian allegory is a set of judgments about good and bad allegory: good allegory is a kind of veiled discourse that

⁴ The anonymous poet’s critique is similar, in form, to that of John Gay’s list of pastoral conventions at the end of *The Shepherd’s Week*, in that it draws attention to a traditional form’s absurdity by enumerating the conventions that are used so frequently. See Gay, “An Alphabetical Catalogue of *Names, Plants, Flowers, Fruits, Birds, Beasts, Insects* and other material Things mentioned by this Author,” in *The Shepherd’s Week. In Six Pastorals* (London, 1714).

instructs and delights its readers; bad allegory simply uses the trappings of good allegory, using them simply as matters of course rather than to engage or teach.

Together, these epigraphs embody the tension between innovation and imitation that accompanied eighteenth-century allegory as it is discussed and practiced in periodical essays. Periodical essay writers regularly struggled with how to revamp allegory for eighteenth-century readers without straying too far from literary precedent. This struggle is evident in the critical discussions of allegorical texts as well as in the short allegories included in the periodicals themselves. Many of the periodical papers including allegories, indeed, start out by discussing what can be taken from important precedents before including their own versions of the form.⁵ By doing so, the essay writers place the allegorical narrative within the context of literary precedent.

For the purpose of understanding eighteenth-century attitudes towards allegory, focusing on periodicals is particularly illustrative because they facilitated in-print interactions between various writers and their readers and, hence, encouraged the kind of back-and-forth that helped produce the modern public sphere.⁶ This chapter studies a range of evidence from periodicals such as *The Tatler* (1709-10), *The Spectator* (1711-12), and *The Rambler* (1750-2)—asking questions, along the way, about how essays

⁵ A particularly interesting example is in *Spectator* No. 183 (29 September 1711), in which Addison discusses earlier allegories like those found in the Bible as well as those by Horace, Boileau, La Fontaine, Homer, Spenser, Cicero, Plato, and Xenophon before presenting an allegory of his own. See also, among others, *Tatler* No. 194 (4-6 July 1710) and *Rambler* No. 121 (14 May 1751).

⁶ See Jürgen Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 43. Habermas points specifically to *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian* as venues through which “the public held up a mirror to itself,” with readers and writers discussing how to texts as well as how to understand the world around them. Michael Warner writes about the ways in which Mr. Spectator takes on the “Country posture of disinterested examination,” bracketing the specifics of his own identity to enter the public sphere as an objective, disinterested observer, *Letters of the Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 65-6. Kevin Pask also analyzes the connections between the Habermasian public sphere and the concept of literature as it emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “The Bourgeois Public Sphere and the Concept of Literature,” *Criticism* 46 (2004): 241-56.

contained in these periodicals theorized and practiced allegory. The first section examines how periodical writers wrote about allegory, using their comments as important evidence for understanding how the literary form was approached during the period. The second section uses allegorical narratives printed in the periodicals themselves to expand and complicate the discussions of allegory analyzed in the first section. Whereas the first section focuses on theory, the second focuses on practice. This division, however, is only for the sake of ease. Chapter 4 is based on the conviction that literary criticism and literary practice in periodicals have undeniable effects on one another. I want to use the literary practice of periodical essay writers to open up and complicate their literary criticism, and vice versa.

The main argument of this chapter is that writers of periodical essays were, in general, more invested in adapting the allegorical form for their readers than in abandoning it as overly formulaic or treating it as a remnant of the medieval and Renaissance periods. In criticism, adapting or “reviving” allegory meant abstracting and theorizing the form, and often creating literary principles for how contemporary writers could use it. Many writers, for instance, discussed how successful allegories were characterized by liveliness, internal consistency, and (paradoxically) clarity. In the periodical essays themselves, writers used specific strategies to satisfy these literary principles—including the use of the division between papers to create self-contained generic allegories and the encasement of modal allegory within papers that also included more literal, discursive modes. However, as we will come to appreciate in this chapter, the relationship between theorizing and practicing allegory in periodical essays was hardly unidirectional. In incorporating allegory into their essays, writers did much more

than apply the aesthetic principles set down elsewhere in the periodicals. They worked through the logic of those principles, addressing questions about exactly how writers were to manage allegory in both its generic and modal forms.

Both the theorizing and practicing of allegory in eighteenth-century periodicals participated in the growing focus on how allegories should be written as well as how they should be read. We have already encountered many texts that have a vested interest in guiding their own interpretations: the original printing of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* has a letter that claims to "*discouer vnto you the general intention and meaning*" of the allegory; Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* includes an apology that encourages its readers to interpret the narrative in accordance with particular passages in the Bible and marginal notes to help direct that interpretation.⁷ In English periodicals, the focus shifts from how to read allegory to how to write it.

I. Theorizing Allegory

Eighteenth-century periodicals played a pivotal role in the development of tastes, facilitating discussions about literature and culture between regular writers, more occasional contributors, and readers.⁸ The resulting dialogues often revolved around notions of literary decorum, if we understand this phrase not in the strict, overbearing

⁷ Spenser, "Letter to Raleigh," in *The Faerie Queene*, op. cit., 714.

⁸ See Timothy Dykstal, "The Politics of Taste in the *Spectator*," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 35 (1994): 46-63; Denise Gigante, *The Great Age of the English Essay: An Anthology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), xvii, xxiii. As Mark Schoenfield points out, Lord Byron thoroughly acknowledged periodicals as "the arbiters of literary and artistic taste," *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The "Literary Lower Empire"* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1. Scott Black provides a more specific discussion about how writers and readers engaged one another in dialogue about social politeness as well as literature in "Social and Literary Form in the *Spectator*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33 (1999): 21-42

sense sometimes attributed to the eighteenth century but as denoting a general focus on reception and plausibility and on the congruity of a text's various components. The focus on decorum when discussing allegory is not to be understood as entailing an *a priori* application of literary rules to allegorical texts, but as a closer, more empirically analytical attention to literary form and reader response.

The range of exemplary texts used by periodical writers to discuss and evaluate allegory is quite staggering. We find many of the usual suspects, including Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" in *The Republic*, Homer's epics, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. But we also find myriad texts that might surprise us: Persius's satires, the *Arabian Nights*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and even historical texts such as Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's *The General History of China* (1735). This range of texts has prompted Thomas Vogler to write that "By the end of the eighteenth century 'allegory' had become one of the most important words in the European aesthetic vocabulary. It had also become almost meaningless."⁹ Vogler's point is well-taken, but there are certain patterns that emerge when we look at how writers and critics conceptualized allegory as a literary form. Why did many writers of periodical essays think the form was worthwhile? How did those writers theorize allegory, moving from specific texts to support their more general ideas about how allegory should be managed?

Periodical writers understood allegory as, at its best, a powerful method for delightful instruction. They approached the literary form in a way strikingly similar to

⁹ Vogler, "The Allegory of Allegory: Unlockeing Blake's 'Crystal Cabinet,'" in *Enlightening Allegory*, op. cit., 75. As we have come to appreciate throughout this dissertation—and as Arnold Williams laments in the epigraph to the Introduction—the looseness of discussions of allegory does not fade away with the eighteenth century. Scholars continue to use the term as vaguely referring to non-literal speech, even to the present day.

Philip Sidney's theory of *poesy* in "The Defence of Poesy" (1595). Sidney argues that poesy has the ability to "teach and delight" its readers, and to encourage them "to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger, and teach to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved."¹⁰ For Sidney, literature has the ability to make goodness seem engaging and delightful. In the eighteenth century, many periodical essay writers approached allegory with similar terms in mind. Indeed, they identified allegory as an exemplar of literature's ability to delightfully instruct readers. In *Tatler* No. 147, for instance, Addison and Steele compare learning about virtue through reading allegories to improving one's health through the pleasing exercise involved in hunting:

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. As by the one, health is preserved, strengthened and invigorated; by the other, *virtue (which is the health of the mind)* is kept alive, cherished and confirmed. But as exercise becomes tedious and painful when we make use of it only as the means of health, so reading is apt to grow uneasy and burdensome, when we apply ourselves to it only for our improvement in virtue. For this reason, the virtue which we gather from a fable, or an allegory, is like the health we get by hunting; as we are engaged in an agreeable pursuit that draws us on with pleasure, and makes us insensible of the fatigues that accompany it.¹¹

Allegory exemplifies the standard of delightful instruction that Addison and Steele borrow from medieval and Renaissance writers. It "draws us on with pleasure," teaching us about virtue and morality while keeping us engaged with its literal level. Allegory is a powerful literary form because it inculcates moral, social, and religious values without becoming "uneasy and burdensome" over time, as do texts that explicitly teach their

¹⁰ Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," in *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Gavin Alexander (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004), 11.

¹¹ *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), vol. 2, No. 147 (8 March, 1709), 331.

readers about virtue. Addison and Steele suggest that overtly moral narratives can be especially tiresome for readers and that, therefore, the art of speaking otherwise is pivotal to creating interesting yet instructive stories.

Elsewhere, Addison is especially invested in the idea that allegory is a promising literary form because it pleases readers' imaginations. In *Spectator* No. 339, Addison writes that "Poetry delights in cloathing abstracted Ideas in Allegories and sensible Images,"¹² suggesting that the personified abstractions found so often in allegories are sources of delight because they give corporeal forms to abstract concepts that might otherwise elude description and discussion. Furthermore, in *Spectator* No. 357 Addison writes that allegories should "convey particular Circumstances to the Reader after an unusual and entertaining Manner."¹³ He suggests that the differences between allegory and the texture of real-life, material experience might even be a source of entertainment: the "unusual" way that allegorists approach the world is a welcome and delightful break from literal, direct speech. As a rhetorical method, that is to say, allegory is one way to make otherwise obvious or unremarkable ideas seem new, unusual, and entertaining.

Other writers and critics shared Addison's idea that allegory encapsulated literature's ability to delightfully instruct readers. The anonymous poet cited in this chapter's second epigraph refers to successful allegories of the past—in contradistinction to modern, often bad allegories—as using a veil "T'instruct and please." And when writing about eighteenth-century imitations of *The Faerie Queene* in *Rambler* No. 121, Johnson calls allegory "perhaps one of the most pleasing vehicles for instruction,"

¹² *The Spectator*, op. cit., vol. 3, No. 339 (29 March 1712), 258.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, No. 357 (19 April 1712), 339.

effectively repeating the notion already presented by Addison and the anonymous poet.¹⁴ These comments draw attention to how allegorists can use hidden meaning to simultaneously please and instruct their readers.¹⁵

What can we, at this point in the chapter, take from these discussions of allegory as an instrument for delightfully instructing readers? These examples demonstrate that many of the eighteenth century's most prominent authors of periodical papers were far from regarding allegory as obsolete or as irreconcilable with eighteenth-century tastes. Addison, Steele, and Johnson all understood allegory as a promising didactic tool—understandings that were informed by their readings of *The Faerie Queene* and other precedents. These writers understood the art of speaking otherwise as a means to instruct readers without hitting them over the head with the story's meaning. Their statements are based on the assumption that directly telling readers how to interpret a narrative shuts down those readers' imaginative engagements with the narrative. In the formulation of Addison and Steele, writing only for the "improvement of [the reader's] virtue" would make the text "uneasy and burdensome." It is preferable to keep the meaning at least partially hidden because doing so allows readers to find pleasure and delight in the story while also learning about moral, political, and even religious truths.

¹⁴ Johnson, *The Rambler*, ed. W.J. Bate, vols. 3-5 of *The Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), vol. 4, No. 121 (14 March 1751), 284.. Hereafter excerpts from *The Rambler* will be cited from this edition by number and date.

¹⁵ Readers will remember that Pope also provided a similar discussion of the usefulness of allegory in his *Temple of Fame*, in which he writes that there is "an uncommon Charm in Truth, when it is convey'd by this Side-way to our Understanding," using the terms "Charm" and "Truth" instead of delight and instruction.

Such discussions frequently associate the level of the signifier with pleasure and that of the signified with instruction.¹⁶ They value allegory as a method for encouraging readers to become invested in the literal narrative while, almost unbeknownst to the readers themselves, also learning and internalizing social and moral lessons. The comments linking allegory to delightful instruction presuppose that readers are much more receptive to ideas when they are presented and inculcated through narrative. Eighteenth-century readers—according to Addison, Steele, and others—find delight in a well-chosen pairing between vehicle and tenor, and this delight makes allegory a particularly powerful pedagogical tool.

Though periodical essay writers such as Addison, Steele, and Johnson remained optimistic that allegory was still a powerful pedagogical tool, they also regarded it as a literary form that was easily mismanaged. Because of this, several of these writers formulated guidelines for how contemporary writers should use allegory. For instance, in *Spectator* No. 421 Addison moves from noting allegory's usefulness to listing some criteria for effective allegory:

Allegories, when well chosen, are like so many Tracks of Light in a Discourse, that make every thing about them clear and beautiful. A noble Metaphor, when it is placed to an Advantage, casts a kind of Glory round it, and darts a Lustre through a whole Sentence: These different Kinds of Allusion are but so many different Manners of Similitude, and, that they may please the Imagination, the Likeness ought to be very exact, or very agreeable, as we love to see a Picture where the Resemblance is just, or the Posture and Air graceful.¹⁷

¹⁶ A precedent for this association between the literal with pleasure and the allegorical with instruction can be found in Richard Bernard's *The Isle of Man*, op. cit., a text that was often printed with a list titled "The Contents of this little Booke for spirituall vse, besides the literall delight in the Allegorie."

¹⁷ *The Spectator*, op. cit., vol. 3, No. 421 (3 July 1712), 578.

Addison commingles his thoughts on how allegories can delight the imagination with his more prescriptive thoughts on how contemporary writers should manage them to produce the desired effects. The phrases “when well chosen” and “when it is placed to an Advantage” function as restrictive clauses, distinguishing between the effects of what Addison deems successful and unsuccessful allegories. Addison suggests that allegories are of great value, but only if their use satisfies certain criteria—including a close resemblance between signifiers and signifieds and the agreeability and grace of the writer’s comparison of them. His discussion, to put this slightly differently, hinges on identifying the effects good allegory has on its readers: good allegory causes everything around it to shine with greater brilliance because of the striking resemblance between its signifiers and signifieds. Bad allegory, in contrast, makes unconvincing comparisons and thus lacks grace and justness of representation.

This passage is representative of the broader move in eighteenth-century criticism on allegory towards the correct management of the literary form. Addison argues that allegories are powerful pedagogical tools for making “every thing about [them] clear and beautiful,” but only if they are “well chosen.” For Addison, writers must choose signifiers that are appropriate for representing for representing their signifieds. Eighteenth-century critics such as Addison were especially concerned that writers would use allegory improperly—a concern that, here, manifests itself in the worry that writers might not design an allegory that agreeably demonstrates the resemblance between literal signifier and a figurative signified.

Addison connects the allegorical form to clarity, arguing that well-chosen allegories make everything around them “clear and beautiful.” This should surprise us,

because it departs from the traditional pairing of allegory with hiddenness and mystery. Successful allegories, for Addison, work by initially hiding meaning and then prompting their readers to interpret allegorically rather than literally. The initial hiddenness of the narrative's meaning helps the allegory itself be surprising and interesting. Addison thus brings allegory into accordance with the increasing focus on semiotic transparency—arguing, simultaneously, that allegories are strong pedagogical tools because they initially hide meaning and that, in the end, their meaning must be clear in order to be instructive. Well-written allegories require no explanations, even as they use hidden meaning to make their points.

Addison gives further advice to contemporary writers about how they should manage the allegorical form in *Guardian* No. 152. He observes that he has “revived several antiquated ways of Writing, which though very instructive and entertaining, had been laid aside, and forgotten for some Ages. I shall in this Place only mention those Allegories wherein Virtues, Vices, and human Passions are introduced as real Actors. Though this kind of Composition was practiced by the finest Authors among the Ancients, our Countryman Spencer is the last Writer of Note who has applied himself to it with Success.”¹⁸ Addison thus echoes Parnell's language of reviving allegory and connects his own texts to ancient precedent. In the next paragraph, Addison repeats that allegory can be “both delightful and instructive,” and then proceeds to give some guidelines for how allegories should be written: “in the first place, the Fable of it ought to be perfect, and if possible, to be filled with surprising Turns and Incidents. In the next there ought to be useful Morals and Reflections couched under it, which still receive a

¹⁸ Addison, *The Guardian*, ed. John Calhoun Stephens (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1982), No. 153 (4 September 1713), 497.

greater Value from their being new and uncommon; as also from their appearing difficult to have been thrown into emblematical Types and Shadows.”¹⁹ The initial hiddenness of the morals and reflections makes them shine brighter once readers are given enough information to, first, identify the allegorical signifieds and, second, recognize the surprising and uncommon resemblances between the writer’s signifiers and signifieds.

The projects of distinguishing between good and bad allegory and of creating aesthetic principles for how to use the literary form properly were far from limited to periodical essays. For instance, in “An Essay on Allegorical Poetry” John Hughes uses Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* to support his views about how allegories should be written. Hughes begins the essay, which was appended to his 1715 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, by defining allegory as “a Fable or Story, in which, under imaginary Persons of Things, is shadow’d some real Action or instructive Moral; or, as I think it is somewhere very shortly defin’d by Plutarch, it is that ‘in which one thing is related, and another thing is understood.’ It is a kind of Poetical Picture, or Hieroglyphick, which by its apt Resemblance conveys Instruction of the Mind by an Analogy to the Senses; and so amuses the Fancy, whilst it informs the Understanding. Every Allegory has therefore two Senses, the Literal and the Mystical; the literal Sense is like a Dream or Vision, of which the mystical Sense is the true Meaning or Interpretation.”²⁰ More often than not, according to Hughes, ancient writers used allegories because they “serv’d for the more effectual engaging the Attention of the Hearers, and for leaving deeper Impressions on their Memories.”²¹ Hughes’s points contain many of the concepts we have come to

¹⁹ Ibid., 497.

²⁰ John Hughes, “An Essay on Allegorical Poetry,” in *The Works of Mr. Edmund Spenser. In Six Volumes. With a Glossary Explaining the Old and Obscure Words*, ed. John Hughes (London, 1715), xxviii-xxix.

²¹ Ibid., xxxii.

associate with the allegorical form—including the rhetoric of light and dark (“shadow’d”); dichotomies like imaginary/real and mystical/literal; the criteria of resemblance; and the coupling of amusement and instruction. He also repeats the common argument that allegories leave a stronger impression on their readers than directly didactic texts because they partially hide the moral within a literal narrative.

Later on in the essay, Hughes turns his attention to extrapolating a series of flexible rules from what he regards as successful uses of the allegorical form.²² He lists four major criteria for successful allegories, using *The Faerie Queene* as his chief example: (1) the narrative must be “lively, and surprising”; (2) there must be “Elegance, or a beautiful Propriety, and Aptness in the Fable to the Subject on which it is employ’d; (3) “the Fable [must] be every where consistent with itself; and (4) the “Allegory must be clear and intelligible,” meaning that the reader must be given enough evidence to discern the moral of the story.

Hughes’s essay provides us with a basis of comparison for thinking about the aesthetic principles created by writers of periodical essays. The essay shows a prominent critic using an example—here, *The Faerie Queene*—to support his ideas about how allegory should be used. Hughes presents Spenser as an important allegorist because he experiments with his chosen literary form (and thus departs from earlier examples like Aesop’s *Fables*) without violating what he understands to be reasonable literary guidelines. When it comes to allegory, writers of eighteenth-century periodicals are engaged in a project very similar to Hughes: they use particular examples as evidence of

²² I use the word “rules” here because it is a central term in Hughes’s text, as well as other texts that openly discuss what a literary form like allegory should look like. But these rules are, in fact, flexible guidelines rather than strict rules to be followed.

what allegory should look like and use those examples to theorize the form and to formulate flexible aesthetic principles. Hughes even comes to duplicating several of Addison's aesthetic principles for allegory in *Spectator* No. 421 and *Guardian* No. 152, arguing that the most successful allegories are surprising narratives that make convincing, appropriate comparisons between signifiers and signifieds. He also adds internal consistency to the criteria for successful allegories, with the narrative being "every where consistent with itself."

The aesthetic principle of narrative consistency needs to be understood within the context of the rise of the aesthetic. As M.H. Abrams has pointed out, the aesthetic involved an increasingly powerful drive towards narrative consistency.²³ Critics valued narrative consistency because it could create what has been called "internal probability."²⁴ Even if a narrative were implicitly understood to be fictional, the consistency of its various parts drew readers into the story and made them feel as if they were participating in a literary world with its own rules and conventions. Hughes effectively brings this expectation of narrative consistency to bear on his aesthetic principles for allegory, contending that successful allegories commit fully to their conceit.

Looking at Hughes's essay makes it clear that the comments we have analyzed in various papers from *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian* are part of a more general movement towards not only theorizing allegory, but also providing writers with

²³ See *The Mirror and the Lamp*, op. cit., 271-284.

²⁴ Douglas Lane Patey gives a compelling account of the importance of internal probability in eighteenth-century literature and criticism in *Probability and Literary Form*, op. cit., especially pages 142-5. Patey works closely with George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) to work through the implications of this literary principle.

specific aesthetic principles for writing successful allegories. This general movement accorded with the increasing focus during this time period on art as something that could be judged and evaluated. Listing principles for the proper management of allegory presupposed that such an enterprise was necessary and helpful. As Hughes puts it in his essay, literary rules “are useful to help our Observations in distinguishing the Beauties and the Blemishes, in such Works as have already been produc’d.”²⁵ Hughes argues that formulating rules for allegory will not only help writers who want to use the form, but will also help readers judge and evaluate allegories that have already been written.

Most of the discussions about properly managing allegory that we have focused on so far revolve around allegory as a self-contained genre. But for many writers, it was equally important to create principles for managing allegory as an intermittent mode. How could writers incorporate allegorical conventions into their texts, even if those texts themselves were not allegories? What techniques could writers use to maintain narrative consistency—which, as we have seen, was becoming a very powerful aesthetic principle—even as they were using both allegorical and literal modes? These questions featured prominently in periodical essays discussing Milton’s Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*, an example that proved to be a lightning rod for critics thinking about the proper management of modal allegory. Addison wrote at least seventeen *Spectator* papers on the poem and—thanks partially to the continued publication of them as *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of “Paradise Lost”* after Addison’s death—these papers had an especially powerful influence over how later critics would read Milton’s use of personified

²⁵ Hughes, “An Essay on Allegorical Poetry,” op. cit., xlvii-xlviii.

abstractions.²⁶ Addison approaches *Paradise Lost* as, above all, an epic poem that needs to maintain probability. It is unsurprising, then, that he takes issue with Milton's decision to interweave "in the Texture of his Fable some Particulars which do not seem to have Probability enough for an Epic Poem, particularly in the Actions which he ascribes to Sin and Death."²⁷ And in another *Spectator* paper, Addison argues that although the scene with Sin and Death is "a very beautiful and well-invented Allegory," he "cannot think that Persons of such a chimerical Existence are proper Actors in an Epic Poem; because there is not that Measure of Probability annexed to them, which is requisite in Writings of this Kind."²⁸ In No. 357, Addison brings together many of his points about Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*, using them as examples of "such Shadowy and Imaginary Persons as may be introduced into Heroic Poems." For Addison, writers should relegate "Allegorical Persons" to descriptive digressions, setting them off from literal persons by minimizing their ability to affect the primary storyline. Allegorical persons become improper when they influence a narrative involving literal characters: "when such Persons are introduced as principal Actors, and engaged in a Series of Adventures, they take too much upon them, and are by no means proper for an Heroick Poem, which ought to appear credible in its principal Parts. I cannot forbear therefore thinking that Sin and Death are as improper Agents in a Work of this nature."²⁹ Addison believes that the most effective

²⁶ *Notes upon the twelve books of 'Paradise Lost'* was published well into the 1730s. After that point, Addison's *Spectator* papers were printed under *A Critique and notes upon the Paradise Lost. From the Spectator*. These collections include *Spectator* op. cit., Nos. 269 (8 January 1712), 273 (12 January 1712), 279 (19 January 1712), 285 (26 January 1712), 291 (2 February 1712), 297 (9 February 1712), 303 (16 February 1712), 309 (23 February 1712), 315 (1 March 1712), 321 (8 March 1712), 327 (15 March 1712), 333 (22 March 1712), 339 (29 March 1712), 345 (5 April 1712), 351 (12 April 1712), 357 (19 April 1712), and 363 (26 April 1712).

²⁷ *Spectator*, op. cit., vol. 3, No. 297 (9 February 1712), 60.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, No. 273 (12 January 1712), 563.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, No. 357 (19 April 1712), 338.

way to contain the actions of allegorical persons within predominantly non-allegorical texts is to make them minor characters with little direct influence over the plot.

Addison, it is important to note, is one of the major architects behind the positive reevaluation of the imagination at the beginning of the eighteenth century. For Addison, as such, the problem in *Paradise Lost* is not the unreality of concepts like Sin and Death, but the strictures involved with working within the epic genre.³⁰ Poets can include allegorical persons in their epics, but only if they contain the actions of those persons and prevent them from taking “too much upon them.” This argument, as we will see further in this dissertation’s coda, is largely representative of how many eighteenth-century writers approached the relationship between literal and allegorical persons: Lord Kames and Jean-Baptiste Dubos make similar arguments while using slightly different evidence, and towards the end of the century Johnson gives a strikingly similar analysis of why Milton broke the allegory when he had Sin and Death physically interact with Satan and the land.

Addison’s point about *Paradise Lost* relates more to representational consistency than to any sort of purported animus against allegory. He uses Milton’s Sin and Death as a test case for advising contemporary writers about how to properly manage allegory as a mode within a text that cannot be categorized as a member of the allegorical genre. For Addison—as for Kames, Dubos, and Johnson—Milton should have maintained probability by separating allegorical, imaginary persons like Sin and Death from literal characters. Allegorical persons who are, in Fletcher’s phrase, “fated agents” should be distinct from literal characters who possess agency. I will return to the ideas presented by

³⁰ Christine Rees provides more information about Addison’s discussion of *Paradise Lost* and about how it compares to contemporaneous discussions of Milton’s poem in *Johnson’s Milton* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 109-10, 121-47.

Addison, Kames, and Dubos in the coda to this dissertation—in which I will discuss Johnson’s advice on how Milton could have improved the allegory of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*. For the moment, it is enough to recognize that in many of his periodical essays Addison presents a set of guidelines that would allow writers to include both literal characters and “allegorical persons” within a single text while maintaining decorum.

These frequent discussions about how Milton should have managed an allegory within an epic were fundamentally about maintaining narrative coherence while mixing distinct literary modes. Addison and other critics make explicit a generic distinction between epic and allegory, and use that distinction to dictate when allegory must be used modally—that is, in a different genre such as the epic—and when it is to be used consistently as part of the text’s overall structure.³¹ As a result of this distinction, they approach *Paradise Lost* as a test case for thinking about what literary principles writers should follow when incorporating the allegorical mode into a text that is not a member of the allegorical genre. This approach yields the additional criterion of representational consistency: in addition to following the aesthetic principles for using allegory in general, writers who want to use modal allegory also need to distinguish literal characters from allegorical figures.

Hughes’s essay on allegorical poetry is, again, instructive. Hughes makes an explicit distinction between modal and generic uses of allegory. He argues that writers

³¹ For many Renaissance writers, allegory and epic were not understood as two distinct forms. See Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature*, op. cit., 13-41 and Dale Herron, “The Focus of Allegory in the Renaissance Epic,” *Genre* 3 (1970): 176-186. However, it was very common for eighteenth-century literary critics to approach them as separate from one another and, as such, governed by different conventions.

must distinguish between “Epick and Dramatick Poems” that momentarily use elements of allegory and allegories “the very Frame and Model of which is design’d to be Allegorical; in which therefore, as I said before, such unsubstantial and Symbolical Actors may be very properly admitted” and even made central to the narrative.³² He thus distinguishes between modal and generic usages of allegory, and uses that distinction to dictate whether writers need to set off personified abstractions from literal characters.³³ Hughes, for example, points out that Virgil’s description of personified abstractions in Hell in the *Aeneid*—which Hughes classifies as an epic—is improper because “Persons of this imaginary Life are to be excluded from any share of Action in Epic Poems.”³⁴ For Hughes, Virgil needed to separate his personifications from the more probable characters in the *Aeneid* because the text is, generically speaking, an epic instead of an allegory. His argument about modal allegory in epic and dramatic poetry is very similar to Addison’s approach to discussing how Milton should have set off Sin and Death from literal characters.

Let me turn, for the purpose of clarifying this section’s content, to Gordon Teskey’s discussion of Enlightenment Allegory in *Allegory and Violence* (1996). Looking at this discussion is especially fruitful because Teskey uses much of the criticism we have already analyzed as evidence of Enlightenment allegory being much more vapid and formulaic than Renaissance versions of the form. Teskey writes,

The critical discussion of allegory as a distinct genre, rather than as a rhetorical figure, began in the Enlightenment. The leading theorist was the

³² Hughes, “An Essay on Allegorical Poetry,” op. cit., vliii.

³³ Dubos makes a similar distinction in *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, which is published in English in 1748. Dubos distinguishes between allegorical compositions that contain no literal characters and mixed allegories that contain a combination of allegorical figures and literal characters, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music*, trans. Thomas Nugent (London, 1748), vol. 1, 161-4. These comments will be discussed in more detail in the coda.

³⁴ Hughes, “An Essay on Allegorical Poetry,” op. cit., xliii.

Abbé Dubos, whose demands for coherence on the literal plane was readily accommodated to the Lockean tenor of eighteenth-century English criticism. That an allegory should be constructed with the rigor of a geometric demonstration is a claim that would have been all but unintelligible in the Renaissance, for it presupposes that the reader is a detached subject capable of judging the work as an object. Allegory had become an experience of the subject confined to the self, rather than an experience in the subject extended through a narrative. This is a significant change.³⁵

Teskey is right that eighteenth-century critics tended to approach allegory as an object that could be judged, as the rise of the aesthetic changes the way readers in general thought about narratives. However, he overstates the case when he writes that eighteenth-century criticism suggested that “an allegory should be constructed with the rigor of a geometric demonstration.” As we should understand by now, writers including Dubos, Parnell, Addison, Steele, and Johnson believed that allegory needed to be judged and adapted for contemporary readers, but they did not go so far as to propose specific rules that needed to be followed. Even Hughes, who in “An Essay on Allegorical Poetry” comes closest to laying out formulaic rules, qualifies his principles for allegory by writing that they are not enough to prevent bad allegories from being written. Some good allegorists bend, and even break the guidelines; some bad allegorists follow them.³⁶ This chapter has asked us to understand eighteenth-century criticism as not so much pushing Enlightenment allegory in a rule-oriented direction (à la Teskey) as much as applying reader-centered notions of propriety and decorum to a literary form with a long history and, still, a great deal of usefulness. Very few eighteenth-century critics understood allegory as a rule-riddled literary form, though they did bring a much stronger focus than

³⁵ Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence*, op. cit., 98.

³⁶ See Hughes, “Essay on Allegorical Poetry,” op. cit., xlv.

did sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers to concerns of propriety, consistency, and coherence.

Teskey oversimplifies the “Lockean tenor of eighteenth-century English criticism,” reducing the subject/object separation emerging during the Enlightenment to a dichotomy. But the creation of aesthetic principles for allegory actually involved both approaching texts as objects to be judged based on preconceived criteria and recognizing that created objects like literary works are themselves subjective objects. Eighteenth-century critics believed that readers should place texts at an analytical distance and judge them as created objects, but with the reflexive recognition that all knowledge of these texts somehow depends on its formal shaping by the text itself.

My revision of Teskey’s claim brings us to an important clarification about periodicals, the aesthetic, and allegory. The creation of aesthetic principles for properly managing allegory was not about applying rules *a priori* to literary texts in the way that Teskey suggests. It was about, on the contrary, critics analyzing how a literary structure like allegory acted on its readers and, correspondingly, how the literary form should be managed in light of the reactions it was creating. Allegory needed to be managed in certain ways in order to produce the desired effects. The process of creating aesthetic principles for allegory involved approaching allegorical texts as both objects and subjects, so that those texts are objects to be judged by readers as well as subjects that act upon those readers as objects.

II. Practicing Allegory

In 1783, the Scottish minister and rhetorician Hugh Blair argues that allegorists should, ideally, combine the art of speaking otherwise with a degree of semiotic transparency. He writes that allegorists should avoid being too “dark” in their writing, and should instead aim to balance “light and shade.” For Blair, the allegories printed in *The Spectator* were especially illuminating examples:

Allegories were a favourite method of delivering instructions in ancient times, for what we call Fables or Parables are no other than Allegories; where, by words and actions attributed to beasts or inanimate objects, the dispositions of men are figured. ...Where a riddle is not intended, it is always a fault in Allegory to be too dark. The meaning should be easily seen through the figure employed to shadow it. However, the proper mixture of light and shade in such compositions, the exact judgment of all the figurative circumstances with the literal sense, so as neither to lay the meaning too bare and open, nor to cover and wrap it up too much, has ever been found an affair of great nicety; and there are few species of composition in which it is more difficult to write so as to please and command attention, than in Allegories. In some of the visions of the *Spectator*, we have examples of Allegories very happily executed.³⁷

We have seen this kind of warning before, most conspicuously in Aaron Hill’s concern (in the first epigraph to chapter 3) that the “allegorical *remoteness*” of *A Rehearsal of Kings* would prevent readers from understanding the satire. Blair argues that allegorists should find ways to make the meanings of their allegories known, effectively coupling the traditional literary form for concealing meaning with—somewhat surprisingly—a preference for the direct and transparent. A successful allegory must give readers enough information for them to easily see the hidden meaning despite the rhetorical darkness.

Blair gives voice to a dynamic that has, to a certain extent, always been embedded in allegory’s history. As they have been defined throughout *Enlightenment Allegory*, allegories are more than narratives that readers can interpret allegorically; they are texts

³⁷ Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, op. cit., vol. 1, lect. XV, 375.

that somehow prompt their readers to approach the literal signifiers as representatives of allegorical signifieds and to keep the two levels of meaning in their minds simultaneously. Built into this very definition is the idea that allegorists need to mix “light” and “shade,” sending the reader on an interpretive journey in which they take it upon themselves to uncover meaning and see what the narrative is actually about. But though all texts that can be accurately labelled “allegorical” have some mixture of light and shade, the ratios of these to one another differ greatly based on the text and on the writer’s project.

Blair’s formulation, then, is not a radical shift in understanding allegory. It gives voice, as Addison does in *Spectator* No. 421, to the idea that good allegory leads its readers to the correct interpretation. Both Blair and Addison understand allegory as reconcilable with the increasingly powerful demand for semiotic transparency in Enlightenment England because allegory has always depended on mixing light and dark. What is different between Enlightenment and Renaissance allegory is the degree to which writers push for clarity as a major characteristic of the form. Enlightenment writers and critics emphasized that writing good allegories meant finding ways to lead readers to the correct, clearly identifiable meaning without appearing to do so.

It is important that Blair chooses the allegories printed in *The Spectator* to support his idea that good allegories combine an element of mystery with clarity, thereby suggesting that the periodical (and perhaps other periodicals) helped push allegory towards clarity in practice as well as in theory. Indeed, as we have seen in the first section of this chapter, we can accurately say that writers of eighteenth-century periodical essays often posit aesthetic principles that value the very kind of mixture Blair is discussing

here. The reader will remember that both Addison and Hughes associate good allegory with clear and convincing allegorical signifieds while, at the same time, recognizing the initial hiddenness of meaning as the source of the literary form's pedagogical potential. This section will turn from the aesthetic principles of the first section—including, but not limited to, clarity of meaning—to the practice of allegory in periodicals. What does the practice of allegory in periodicals tell us about how the aesthetic principles often included in the periodicals themselves influence the literary form? What is the relationship between theory and practice? How does the practice of allegory in eighteenth-century periodicals tend towards the kind of semi-transparent allegory that Blair values in 1783?

The first thing to notice is the propensity of eighteenth-century periodical writers for using personified abstractions.³⁸ There are few political allegories.³⁹ I would argue that, in fact, the widespread use of personification is relatively unsurprising because of how it inherently mixes light and shade. Many periodical essay writers—including Addison and Johnson—found allegorical personifications so useful because they simultaneously hide and reveal meaning: they signify ulterior signifieds, with their names identifying the concepts which they represent.⁴⁰ To put this another way, the use of

³⁸ Here is a brief, nonexhaustive list of periodical papers that make use of personified abstractions: *The Tatler* Nos. 4 (19 April 1709), 14 (12 May 1709), 97 (22 November 1709), 147 (18 March 1710); *Spectator*, Nos. 3 (3 March 1711), 30 (4 April 1711), 63 (12 May 1711), 83 (5 June 1711), 159 (1 September 1711), 275 (15 January 1712), 281 (22 January 1712), 301 (14 February 1712), 391 (29 May 1712), 392 (30 May 1712), 455 (12 August 1712), 460 (18 August 1712), 501 (4 October 1712), 511 (16 October 1712), 514 (20 October 1712), 524 (31 October 1712), 558 (23 June 1714), 559 (25 June 1714), 587 (30 August 1714), 599 (27 September 1714), 604 (8 October 1714); *The Guardian*, No. 153 (5 September 1713); *The Rambler* Nos. 3 (27 March 1750), 22 (2 June 1750), 33 (10 July 1750), 65 (30 October 1750), 67 (6 November 1750), 91 (29 January 1751), 96 (15 February 1751), 102 (9 March 1751), 105 (19 March 1751), 120 (11 May 1751), 163 (8 October 1751), 190 (11 December 1752), 204 (29 February 1752), 205 (3 March 1752).

³⁹ Richard Squibbs points out the periodical essay's "direct renunciation of political argument," *Urban Enlightenment and the Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 10. We find this renunciation reflected in the dearth of political allegories published in periodicals.

⁴⁰ This is a more positive formulation of the point made by Maresca that eighteenth-century readers and writers make allegory almost synonymous with the use of personification, "Saying and Meaning," *op. cit.*

personified abstractions was one of the most efficient and effective ways to meet the commonly held aesthetic principle that allegory must be both clear and dark.

As Manushag Powell has noted, one of the defining characteristics of periodicals is “the variety of content, including advertisements, essays, images, letters, fiction, and reportage.”⁴¹ And within the category of “fiction” were many subdivisions, as periodicals contained prose narratives, poems, adaptations of older texts, allegories, and others as well as combinations of these different literary forms.⁴² This variety of content put essay writers wanting to use allegory under a great deal of pressure, especially because (as we have seen) writers and critics largely believed that the indiscriminate mixing of allegorical and non-allegorical writing would amount to absurdity and turn readers away. To satisfy the aesthetic criterion of clarity, writers needed to find ways to keep their abstractions at least partially separate from literal and historical persons. They often met these principles by using the structure of the periodicals themselves, taking advantage of the natural break between papers that helped produce self-contained essays and narratives. This resulted in generic, continuous allegories. For instance, Johnson’s *Rambler* No. 91 is a standalone allegory of Patronage.⁴³ The paper starts out with the

258. Whereas for Maresca the alignment of allegory with personification is part of allegory’s decline, for me it is part of the historical process that pushes allegory in a modal direction without meaning the form’s decline. Personification is one of the major ways in which allegory persists throughout the Enlightenment period. My point is thus closer to that of Fletcher, who writes in his *Allegory* that the use of personification is a “permanently important” allegorical convention, op. cit., 25.

⁴¹ Manushag N. Powell, “Afterword: We Other Periodicals, or, Why Periodical Studies?” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* 30 (2011): 441-50. See also Squibbs, *Urban Enlightenment and the Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay*, op. cit., 1.

⁴² For the relationship between periodicals and the novel, see Clifford Siskin, “Eighteenth-Century Periodicals and the Romantic Rise of the Novel,” *Studies in the Novel* 26 (1994): 26-42. For discussions of the role of “periodical literature” specifically within the context of eighteenth-century American, see *Periodical Literature in Eighteenth-Century America*, ed. Mark L. Kamrath and Sharon M. Harris (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), especially xi-xxvii.

⁴³ Johnson, *The Rambler*, op. cit., 91 (29 January 1751), 116-20. For a compelling analysis specifically of Johnson’s allegories in *The Rambler*, see Lisa Berglund, “Allegory in *The Rambler*,” *Papers on Language*

Sciences threatening to leave their followers after years of poor fortune. Jupiter and the other gods send Patronage to the aid of the Sciences. Johnson proceeds to describe Patronage's family tree and upbringing. Patronage "was the daughter of Astrea, by a mortal father, and had been educated in the school of *Truth*, by the Goddesses, whom she was now appointed to protect. She had from her mother that dignity of aspect, which struck terror into false merit, and from her mistress that reserve, which made her only accessible to those whom the *Sciences* brought into her presence."⁴⁴ Johnson uses the convention of conceptual genealogies to his own advantage, adapting it to his own purpose of explaining and describing the degeneration of patronage as a concept. He makes Patronage part-god and part-human, using her lineage to associate her less with a series of concepts and more with a Greek goddess (who, though not a personification, had culturally been associated with innocence) and corruptible humanity.

Johnson's Patronage takes residence on Parnassus, living in a palace built by the Sciences. She listens to "all whom the *Sciences* numbered in their train" as they ask for admittance into her palace. After a while, the multitudes of people who are unsuccessful in their applications to Patronage get together and, though they were previously too bashful to complain, start to think of Patronage as an erroneous judge. Patronage gives way to the protesting multitudes and she gradually admits a negative personification, Pride, into her palace. She begins to favor one side of her patronage over the other, becoming more terrestrial than celestial"

Patronage having been long a stranger to the heavenly assemblies, began to degenerate towards terrestrial nature, and forget the precepts of *Justice* and *Truth*. Instead of confining her friendship to the *Sciences*, she suffered

and *Literature* 37 (2001): 147-178. Berglund focuses on how Johnson helps push allegory towards concision, but does not make the distinction between generic and modal allegory.

⁴⁴ Johnson, *The Rambler*, op. cit., vol. 4, No. 91 (29 January 1751), 116.

herself, by little and little, to contract an acquaintance with *Pride*, the son of *Falsehood*, by whose embraces she had two daughters, *Flattery* and *Caprice*. *Flattery* was nursed by *Liberality*, and *Caprice* by *Fortune*, without any assistance from the lessons of the *Sciences*.⁴⁵

There are three steps in Patronage's degeneration. First, she allows Pride to enter her palace. Second, she herself becomes a generator of the negative personifications Flattery and Caprice. Third, she and Pride welcome two more negative personifications, Liberality and Fortune, into their palace so that they can nurse and help raise their two daughters. In the passage, Johnson describes the quick corruption of patronage that results as soon as it is allowed to mix with pride. This quickness is emphasized by the language of the passage itself: Johnson introduces only a few abstractions in the first two pages of *Rambler* No. 91, but here introduces six in the matter of a few sentences.

Johnson's *Rambler* No. 91 is a generic usage of allegory that satisfies the criterion for internal consistency by including only personified abstractions that interact with one another. The separation between it and *Rambler* Nos. 90 and 92 is maintained by the break in the periodical, and Johnson goes through the allegory itself with almost no qualifications or metacommentary. Johnson's allegory of patronage is, indeed, very regular in its observance of common criteria for successful allegories: it is a continuous narrative that provides lively, surprising descriptions of several concepts and that clearly depicts the gradual corruption of patronage over time. It satisfies the principles that Addison, Hughes, and others had identified using what they understood to be the best exemplars of the literary form.

But what about those writers who use personified abstractions not in self-contained, continuous narratives that are set aside by the structure of periodical

⁴⁵ Ibid., 118.

publications, but in papers that also include non-allegorical, more discursive modes? As we saw in the first section of this chapter, uses of modal allegory often run into a few more restrictions than the use of generic allegory, because the former frequently need to separate the allegorical from the literal to avoid coming off as absurd or unclear. One such modal example is Addison's *Spectator* No. 35. Addison begins this paper by writing that "Amongst all kinds of Writing, there is none in which Authors are more apt to miscarry than in Works of Humour," and then goes on to point out that works of humor are so difficult to write because they depend on the writer seeming mad while actually having a great deal of sense.⁴⁶ Addison continues, writing that humor is a particularly difficult concept to describe in any definitive terms and then opting to give his own description of it "after *Plato*'s manner, in a kind of Allegory, and by supposing Humour to be a Person, deduce to him all his Qualifications, according to the following Genealogy."⁴⁷ Addison thus sets up his genealogy of Humor by pointing to *Plato*'s "Allegory of the Cave" as an important precedent. He then describes Humor's lineage:

TRUTH was the Founder of the Family, and the Father of **GOOD SENSE**. **GOOD SENSE** was the Father of **WIT**, who married a Lady of a Collateral Line called **MIRTH**, by whom he had Issue **HUMOUR**. **HUMOUR** therefore being the youngest of this Illustrious Family, and descended from Parents of such different Dispositions, is very various and unequal in his Temper; sometimes you see him putting on grave Looks and a solemn Habit, sometimes airy in his Behaviour and fantastic in his Dress: Insomuch that at different times he appears as serious as a Judge, and as jocular as a *Merry-Andrew*. But as he has a great deal of the Mother in his Constitution, whatever Mood he is in, he never fails to make his Company laugh.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *The Spectator*, op. cit., vol. 1, No. 35 (10 April 1711), 145.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 146-7.

Addison uses Humor's genealogy to retroactively explain the difficulty of talking about humor as a concept. Humor descends from Wit and Mirth, and it is because he has "descended from Parents of such different Dispositions" that he "is very various and unequal in his Temper." Addison also uses the second-person pronoun "you" to enlist the reader as a person observing Humor and being confused when Humor is sometimes grave and solemn and sometimes merry. Here, Humor can act in much more various ways than the personifications around him because of his mixed parentage.⁴⁹ Addison uses the conceptual genealogy to work through just how complicated and broad a concept like humor is.

In the original edition, the printer puts the abstractions in boldface type so that they stand out from the rest of the words. The effect is to set off the abstractions as fictive constructions, as related to but also distinct from the discussion of works of humor at the beginning of the paper. The printer of *Spectator* No. 35 uses typography to make the personified abstractions readily identifiable as such and to partially separate them from the more literal discussions elsewhere. This satisfies the desire expressed by Addison and other eighteenth-century literary critics that the modal use of allegorical personifications must properly distinguish those personifications from more literal, discursive modes. But it does so in a way that uses the page itself rather than relegating the personifications to minor actions or to immaterial existences.

After laying out a genealogy of concepts extending from Truth to Good Sense to Wit to Humor, Addison then includes a genealogy of more negative concepts. He traces a

⁴⁹ Humor is, in some ways, analogous to Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. As pointed out in Chapter 1, the name "Christian" does not predict the personification's actions as much as do other names like "Pliable" and "Obstinate." Humor, similarly, can take on a range of different actions and demeanors: he is not nearly as limited as Good Sense, Wit, and Mirth.

family tree extending from Falsehood to Nonsense to Frenzy (who married Laughter) to False Humour. Then, Addison includes what he calls a “Genealogical Table of **FALSE HUMOUR**,” under which he places a “Genealogy of **TRUE HUMOUR**.”⁵⁰ These two tables are visual representations of the very lineages of concepts he has just worked through (Fig. 7). For Addison, the aim of these verbal and visual representations of the genealogies of true and false humor is to show how readers, in real life, can distinguish them from one another. This is why, shortly afterwards, Addison himself lists five rules that could be used to identify false humor—arguing that false humor mocks everything and everyone, rather than (as true humor does) showing a great deal of discretion in mocking and pushing against vice in particular.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid., 147.

⁵¹ Ibid., 148.

196 *The SPECTATOR.* N^o 35.

FALSHOOD.

NONSENSE.

FRENZY.—LAUGHTER.

FALSE HUMOUR.

TRUTH.

GOOD SENSE.

WIT.—MIRTH.

HUMOUR.

I might extend the Allegory, by mentioning several of the Children of FALSE HUMOUR, who are more in Number than the Sands of the Sea, and might in particular enumerate the many Sons and Daughters which he has begot in this Island. But as this would be a very invidious Task, I shall only observe in general, that FALSE HUMOUR differs from the TRUE, as a Monkey does from a Man.

First of all, HE is exceedingly given to little Apish Tricks and Buffooneries.

Secondly, HE so much delights in Mimickry, that it is all one to him whether he exposes by it Vice and Folly, Luxury and Avarice; or, on the contrary, Virtue and Wisdom, Pain and Poverty.

Thirdly, HE is wonderfully unlucky, inasmuch that he will bite the Hand that feeds him, and endeavour to ridicule both Friends and Foes indifferently. For having but small Talents, he must be merry where he *can*, not where he *should*.

Fourthly, BEING entirely void of Reason, he pursues no Point either of Morality
or

Figure 7. Page from Addison's *The Spectator*, No. 35 (London, 1710). *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. 28 February 2016.

There are a number of important points to make about the verbal and visual representations of the two competing conceptual genealogies in *Spectator* No. 35. The first is that Addison uses allegory as a mode of writing. For the first two paragraphs, he writes quite clearly and plainly about works of humor and then, only part-way through the paper, does he include an allegory that uses personified abstractions to demonstrate and clarify what he has already discussed. The conceptual genealogy of *Spectator* No. 35 needs to be understood within the context of Addison's comment in *Spectator* No. 421

that allegories should make things “clear and beautiful.” The inclusion of a table laying out the competing genealogies of true and false humor, too, is for the sake of clarity. The second point, which is by no means clearly distinguishable from the first, is that Addison treats allegory as an explicatory mode. In other words, in “supposing Humour to be a Person,” Addison actually wants to reveal more about what he writes in the earlier parts of the paper. This is an interesting claim because he is effectively using an element of a literary form that (as we have seen throughout) had long been associated with darkness and concealed meaning, and instead aligning that element with clarity.

I would argue that, in fact, it is Addison’s use of modal allegory that helps give the form its explicatory value: it encourages readers to relate the short allegorical description of true and false humor to the more discursive mode of the first part of the paper. By temporarily discussing humor as if it were a person, Addison hopes to give the concept (and a series of concepts loosely related to it) greater clarity because discussing it in explicit terms, paradoxically, proves to be exceedingly difficult. In using allegory as an explicatory mode with the potential of clarifying otherwise difficult-to-explain concepts and ideas, Addison follows the precedent set by Plato in his “Allegory of the Cave.” Plato uses the allegory as an explicatory aside, creating a narrative that works through ontological concepts explained more discursively elsewhere in *The Republic*.⁵² In *Spectator* No. 35, Addison similarly uses an allegorical narrative (described in both written and visual terms) to work through the ideas and concepts brought up in the earlier

⁵² In particular, Plato uses the allegory of the cave to explain his points about education and his theory of ideal forms. Socrates begins the allegory by telling Glaucon “‘If we’re thinking about the effect of education—or the lack of it—on our nature, there’s another comparison we can make. Picture human beings living in some sort of underground cave dwelling, with an entrance which is long, as wide as the cave, and open the light,” *The Republic*, ed. G.R.F. Ferrari, trans. Tom Griffith (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000), VII, 514a, 220. Socrates presents the allegory as a thought experiment demonstrating many of the points he has already made.

sections of the paper. In doing so, Addison brings expectations of literary decorum and propriety to bear on earlier experiments with allegory like Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther*, which (as we saw in Chapter 2) has a vested interest in mixing the allegorical and discursive modes to produce an almost dizzying effect in its readers.

The third important point about the opposing conceptual genealogies in *Spectator* No. 35 concerns how quickly Addison moves through a wide array of concepts connected to true and false Humor. In the example of true humor's family tree, Addison moves with great celerity from Truth to Good Sense to Wit to Humor; in the genealogy of False Humor, likewise, Addison quickly moves from Falsehood to Nonsense to Frenzy to False Humor. It is only after naming these sets of abstractions and supplying the reader with the visual representation of the family lines that Addison slows down and gives more detailed information about what true and false humor are and how they differ from one another. The speed with which Addison introduces and moves from the forebears of True Humor and False Humor is itself worthy of note, because it emphasizes how modal allegory could be used to quickly introduce concepts and ideas without dedicating a great deal of space to using the allegorical form. Modal allegory, that is to say, can be much more concise and efficient than generic allegory.

Comparable examples are found in Daniel Defoe's allegory of Lady Credit in his periodical *A Review of the State of the English Nation* (1704-13) and in Swift's conceptual genealogies in *The Examiner* (1710-14). Defoe returns to the allegory of Lady Credit regularly between 1706 and 1711,⁵³ using her to explain economic concepts that

⁵³ McKeon calls Swift's allegory of Lady Credit "radically discontinuous," a description that is very similar to my understanding of modal allegory, in *The Secret History of Domesticity*, op. cit., 441.

are explained elsewhere more discursively.⁵⁴ In *Review* No. 7, for instance, Defoe spends several pages discussing the role and importance of credit in the War of the Spanish Succession: “Without this Thing call’d CREDIT, we could no more have carry’d on this War, than we could carry our Ships into the Field, or March our Cavalry our [*sic*] the Sea.”⁵⁵ To explain the importance of credit, Defoe lays out an allegorical genealogy. The two sisters Prudence and Virtue marry, respectively Probity and Wisdom. Prudence and Probity have a daughter named Credit, and Virtue and Wisdom have a daughter named Reputation. Defoe effectively domesticates national and private credit, using Lady Credit’s origin and her relationship to other personifications like Reputation to explain the economic advantages of credit. In *Examiner* No. 31, Swift similarly includes a “Poetical Genealogy and Description of Merit” and, in No. 32, describes an allegorical genealogy for Faction.⁵⁶ It is very possible that Addison read and learned from these earlier uses of genealogies, which create webs of conceptual abstractions that are somehow related to one another.

Addison’s use of allegorical genealogy, like Defoe’s and Swift’s, constitutes a positive use of modal allegory. Addison uses the competing genealogies of true and false humor to efficiently demonstrate the difficulty of distinguishing the two from one another, while also satisfying the widespread principle of setting off the allegorical mode from other modes. Discontinuous, modal allegory is not simply a leftover of generic allegory: it is a powerful instrument that allows writers to pick up and drop allegorical

⁵⁴ See Defoe, *A Review of the State of the English Nation*, Nos. 5 (10 January 1706), 31 (14 June 1709), 32 (16 June 1709), 38 (21 June 1711), 58 (8 August 1710), 59 (10 August 1710), 102 (18 November 1710), 116 (21 December 1710), 117 (23 December 1710), 134 (23 December 1710), 135 (3 February 1711), and 136 (6 February 1711).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 7 (1 August 1710).

⁵⁶ Swift, *Examiner*, No. 31 (22 February 1710-1 March 1711); *Examiner*, No. 32 (1 March 1710-8 March 1711).

conventions like personification and to, by so doing, incorporate allegory into a wide range of texts, genres, and mediums.

The general shift from generic to modal allegory is not absolute, but rather leads to the coexistence of the two. In our discussions of British periodicals, for instance, we have seen how generic and modal allegory exist alongside one another within the same medium. Many essay writers approached allegory as a self-contained narrative form that consistently matched up signifiers with signifieds. Many others approached it as an efficient mode that could be used alongside more literal and discursive modes: they picked up and dropped allegorical conventions as they saw fit. The main example of this latter use of allegory, which was becoming increasingly dominant during the eighteenth century, was the use of personified abstractions. And though the aesthetic principles for managing generic and modal allegory were not separate from one another, we have seen how modal allegory runs into a few more restrictions: critics such as Addison, Hughes, and Johnson needed it to be set off from non-allegorical modes in order to be effective.

The coda to this dissertation will take a step back and refocus our attentions by discussing one particular example introduced in this chapter but not discussed in detail. To be more specific, it will go through exactly what sort of assumptions and expectations were behind Johnson's critique of Milton's use of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*. In *Lives of the English Poets*, Johnson presents a very specific set of guidelines governing the use of what he calls "allegorical persons." We should understand Johnson's comments on Milton within the context of this chapter, since Johnson shares Addison's and Hughes's investments in creating loose guidelines for properly managing allegory.

CODA

Johnson on Milton's Allegorical Persons

I want to end *Enlightenment Allegory* not with completely new evidence, but by looking in more detail at evidence already introduced. More specifically, I propose homing in on Johnson's discussion of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which in Chapter 4 we analyzed within the context of Addison's comments on the same poem. What more can we learn about eighteenth-century attitudes from hovering over Johnson's thoughts about how Milton should have distinguished between personified abstractions and literal characters by making the first immaterial and the second material? What does Johnson's *Life of Milton* tell us about how eighteenth-century critics worked with medieval and Renaissance texts to not only judge the merit of those texts, but to formulate aesthetic principles that should be followed by contemporary writers when using the form?

Johnson has had a reputation as a staunch opponent of allegory. Fletcher attributes to Johnson a general "attack on the absurdity of allegory."¹ And Don Cameron Allen argues that "the critical generation of Samuel Johnson" finally issues the *coup de grâce* to allegory after a period of failed revivals of the form by Richard Blackmore and other early-eighteenth-century writers.² Only relatively recently have scholars started to revisit Johnson's relationship to allegory, looking at his literary criticism as well as his literary practice. Freya Johnston, for instance, gives a compelling reading of personifications in *The Vision of Theodore* (1748), an allegory that describes a guide teaching Theodore how

¹ Fletcher, *Allegory*, op. cit., 106n.56. See also Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Insistence of Horror: Aspects of the Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, op. cit., 170.

² Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 309. Theresa Kelley also uses Johnson as evidence that "if eighteenth-century writers were, as Bertrand Bronson puts it, 'fond' of abstractions, they were not in truth fond of allegory," also taking Johnson's criticism as evidence of the death of allegory, *Reinvention of Allegory*, op. cit., 71.

to interpret the personified abstractions on the Mountain of Existence and the text which Johnson himself called “the best thing he ever wrote.”³ Other scholars have turned to Johnson’s personifications in various *Rambler* papers or clues about how he thought the allegorical form should be managed.⁴ In these papers, Johnson uses personified abstractions to instruct his readers about morality and proper social conduct. Johnson’s allegory of Criticism in *Rambler* No. 3, for example, tells the story of Criticism coming to Earth to stand in judgment of artistic creations, only to eventually give its jurisdiction over these creations to Time, Malevolence, and Flattery.⁵ The allegory portrays the original, proper use of criticism and attacks the bitter, trenchant practice that was in vogue in eighteenth-century England.

At the very least, Johnson’s literary practice suggests that Fletcher, Allen, and many other scholars have gone too far in characterizing Johnson as an anti- or post-allegorical writer. There is ultimately little evidence that Johnson opposed allegory in any categorical way, though he clearly had strong reservations about how some writers managed the literary form. Perhaps the most famous of these reservations concerns Milton’s depiction of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*, which has become a *locus*

³ Freya Johnston, “Johnson Personified,” in *Samuel Johnson: The Arc of the Pendulum* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 95-108. For Johnson’s opinion of his own *The Vision of Theodore*, see James Boswell, “*Life of Johnson*,” together with “*Journal of a tour to the Hebrides*” and Johnson’s “*Diary of a Journey into North Wales*” (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1934-64), I.72. See also Lawrence Lipking, “Learning to read Johnson: *The Vision of Theodore*” and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*,” *ELH* 43 (1976): 517-537.

⁴ See Bernard L. Einbond, *Samuel Johnson’s Allegory* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton & Co. N.V. Publishers, 1971), 70-3; Carey McIntosh, *The Choice of Life: Samuel Johnson and the World of Fiction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 86-116; Lisa Berglund, “Allegory in *The Rambler*,” op. cit., 147-178.

⁵ For comparable examples, see Johnson, *The Rambler*, op. cit., Nos. 22 (2 June 1750), 33 (10 July 1750), 65 (30 October 1750), 67 (6 November 1750), 96 (16 February 1751), 102 (9 March 1751), 105 (19 March 1751), 120 (11 May 1751), 190 (11 January 1752), 204 (29 February 1752), and 205 (3 March 1752). The last chapter looked in detail at *Rambler* No. 91, another noteworthy example.

classicus for the claim that allegory rapidly declines throughout the eighteenth century.⁶ Johnson's discussion of Sin and Death will be of special interest to us because, as I will argue, here he most clearly demonstrates how his investment in representational consistency—which pervades much of his literary criticism in *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779-81) but which is especially conspicuous in *Life of Milton*—affects his understanding of how literal and allegorical persons can coexist within a single text. We are right to see Johnson's comments as symptomatic of a more general shift in the understanding of the allegorical in the late eighteenth century, but we are wrong to see them as indicative of allegory's decline. His discussion of allegorical figures in *Paradise Lost* does not in any way contradict his clear approval of allegories that are overarching formal structures—demonstrated most compellingly by *The Vision of Theodore* and his *Rambler* allegories—because it addresses questions not about allegories in general, but about how allegories might be encased within literal narratives. What is important about Johnson's discussion of the angels and allegorical figures in *Paradise Lost* is that it serves as an emblematic example of how eighteenth-century writers had begun to consider components of allegory independent of any larger formal framework.⁷

⁶ Sin and Death are featured in Book II, ll.648-897, 1024-1034. See John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 2007). For typical interpretations of eighteenth-century accounts of this scene, see Joseph H. Summers, *The Muse's Method: An Introduction to "Paradise Lost"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 32-9; James B. Misenheimer Jr., "Dr. Johnson's Concept of Literary Fiction," *The Modern Language Review* 62 (1967): 603; J.R. Brink, "Johnson and Milton," *Studies in English Literature* 20 (1980): 493-503. The argument that Johnson helps further the decline of allegory through his criticism of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost* is also related to the conventional understanding of Johnson as anti-Milton in general. But Stephen Fix has given compelling evidence that Johnson was not in fact antagonistic towards Milton or *Paradise Lost*. See Fix, "Distant Genius: Johnson and the Art of Milton's Life," *Modern Philology* 81 (1984): 244-264; Fix, "Johnson and the 'Duty' of Reading *Paradise Lost*," *ELH* 52 (1985): 649-671. John Mullan gives a more sophisticated reading of why Johnson opposed Milton's use of Sin and Death in "Fault Finding in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*," in *Samuel Johnson: The Arc of the Pendulum*, op. cit., 72-82.

⁷ One classic example of how scholars misunderstand Johnson's discussion of *Paradise Lost* as a general attack on certain kinds of allegory is found in René Wellek's *A History of Modern Criticism* (New Haven,

If we turn now to *Life of Milton*, we see how Johnson's profound investment in representational consistency influences his understanding of *Paradise Lost*.

Inconsistencies, he suggests, disrupt the reader's engagement with the text, putting an end to the imaginative transport on which literature relies. He adamantly objects to those moments in *Paradise Lost* when Milton represents the angels as simultaneously material and immaterial because they produce a "confusion of spirit and matter," preferring instead that Milton had put the angels into fully material form:

Another inconvenience [in addition to *Paradise Lost*'s unengaging and intellectually taxing subject matter] of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not show angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This, being necessary, was therefore defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system, by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit, and sometimes animated body. ...The confusion of spirit and matter, which pervades the whole narration of the war of heaven, fills it with incongruity; and the book in which it is related is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increased.⁸

The literary problem with spirits, Johnson insists, is that they are (like humans) ontologically actual and possessing agency, but also (unlike humans) immaterial and hence unrepresentable in their own terms.⁹ To represent spirits, authors must fully

CT: Yale University Press, 1955). Welleck writes that for Johnson "all allegories which are active agents are absurd," I.82. This argument misses the pivotal point that Johnson, in his analysis of Sin and Death, is talking less about allegories in general than about miniature allegories within literal narratives. See also Fletcher, *Allegory*, op. cit., 31n.

⁸ Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, ed. John H. Middendorf, vol. 21 of *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 196. Subsequent citations from Johnson's *The Lives of the Poets* will be cited by volume and page number.

⁹ Earlier critics also puzzled over the problems with Milton's spirits. See John Dennis, *Proposals for printing by subscription, in two volumes in octavo, the following Miscellaneous tracts, written by Mr. John Dennis* (London, 1721), 17-18; Voltaire, *An Essay Upon the Civil Wars of France, Extracted from curious Manuscripts. And also upon the Epick Poetry of the European Nations from Homer down to Milton*. (London, 1728), 119; and John Clarke, *An Essay Upon Study* (London, 1731), 207.

commit to depicting them as material. For artistic and rhetorical reasons, they must resist the temptation to work the angels' true immateriality into the poem, "keeping immateriality out of sight" because their immateriality is not, on its own, sufficient to engage and instruct readers. They must represent immaterial entities as if they were material. Hence, elsewhere Johnson defends Milton's choice to attribute physical labor to the fallen angels in erecting Pandaemonium in Book I, as their ability to dig into a mountain and extract gold is consistent with their materiality as represented.¹⁰

For Milton, the accommodation of spirits in physical terms was above all a theological issue.¹¹ As he writes in *Of Education* (1644), "because our understanding cannot in this body found it selfe but on sensible things, nor arrive so cleerly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessarily to be follow'd in all discreet teaching."¹² Accordingly, *Paradise Lost* proceeds by, in the words of Raphael, "lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms" because of humans' inability to understand the immaterial on its own terms.¹³ In recent years, scholars have pointed out that Milton often ascribes physical qualities to his spirits, as when he gives Raphael the ability to eat and digest human food.¹⁴ In the 1660s Milton's views were heterodox, and the issue was not only

¹⁰ Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, op. cit., vol. 21, 196. See Milton, *Paradise Lost*, op. cit., I. 670-751.

¹¹ See C.A. Patrides, "Paradise Lost and the Theory of Accommodation," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 5 (1963): 58-63; Kathleen M. Swaim, *Philological Quarterly* 63 (1984): 461-475; Kevin Killeen, "'A Nice and Philosophical Account of the Origin of All Things': Accommodation in Burnet's *Sacred Theory* (1681) and *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies* 46 (2006): 106-122; Samuel Fallon, "Milton's Strange God: Theology and Narrative Form in *Paradise Lost*," *ELH* 79 (2012): 33-57.

¹² Milton, *Of Education. To Master Samuel Hartlib* (London, 1644), 2.

¹³ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, op. cit., v. 573.

¹⁴ For discussions of the materiality of Milton's angels, see especially Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton Among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 136-67; Martin, *Ruins of Allegory*, 79, 84, 162-163; Neil Graves, "Milton and the Theory of Accommodation," *Studies in Philology* 98 (2001): 255; and N.K. Sugimura, "Matter of Glorious Trial": *Spiritual and Material Substance in Paradise Lost* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 179-182, 193-195.

representational but ontological. The question was not so much how to represent immaterial angels to material beings (as it was for Johnson), but whether the angels themselves consist of both spirit and matter. By the 1770s, Johnson was more perturbed by the inconsistency of Milton's literary "system" than by his heterodox belief in the quasi-materiality of spirits. What is important, for our purposes, is that Milton's heterodox materialism bears some responsibility for what Johnson—thanks to his focus on literary rather than theological concerns—sees as nothing more than a literary flaw, an inconsistency that delights children but displeases adults. For Johnson, that Milton "perplexed his poetry with his philosophy" was above all a literary misstep.¹⁵ Milton momentarily lost touch with his general design of describing "what cannot be described," choosing to combine the spirits' immaterial nature with their material representation and producing an inconsistent and incongruous scene. Instead, Milton should have maintained the "consistency of his system" by focusing on what was rhetorically consistent rather than on what was theologically or philosophically correct according to his beliefs. Both Milton and Johnson, then, although motivated by different principles, move in a materializing direction—Milton by giving us angels who are spirits that also possess a material reality, and Johnson by advising a decorum in representation that deemphasizes for artistic reasons the immateriality that is the condition of spirituality.

Johnson now moves directly from Milton's materialized spirits to a discussion of what he calls Milton's "allegorical persons," personified abstractions that (because of their presence in a probable epic) lack the larger framework typical of allegories.

Milton's allegorical persons are mental concepts, like spirits immaterial but unlike spirits

¹⁵ Johnson's focus on the literary merit of *Paradise Lost* instead of its theological foundations is part of the general shift towards reading texts on their own terms. See Abrams, "Art-as-Such," op. cit., especially 29.

lacking in ontological actuality and agency. For Johnson, they are to be represented materially, but with strict limits so as to avoid the impression that they are also real:

After the operation of immaterial agents which cannot be explained may be considered that of allegorical persons, which have no real existence. To exalt causes into agents, to invest abstract ideas with form, and animate them with activity has always been the right of poetry. But such airy beings are for the most part suffered only to do their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale and Victory hovers over a general or perches on a standard; but Fame and Victory can do no more. To give them any real employment or ascribe to them any material agency is to make them allegorical no longer, but to shock the mind by ascribing effects to non-entity. In the *Prometheus* of Æschylus we see Violence and Strength, and in the *Alcestis* of Euripides we see Death, brought upon the stage, all as active persons of the drama; but no precedents can justify absurdity.¹⁶

It is understandable that scholars often read this passage as anti-allegorical. But, in fact, we need to study this comment within the context of Johnson's investment in representational consistency rather than as part of a general push against allegory.¹⁷ Poets, Johnson argues, are welcome to "invest abstract ideas with form," but only if they do not allow them to mix freely with actual entities. Allegorical persons, in other words, are not to behave as "active persons" because doing so would produce representational inconsistencies, as it would put the literal and the allegorical on the same plane of significance. To maintain consistency, writers must distinguish between the literal and the allegorical as modes of representation. This is not a slight against allegory. It is, on the contrary, an argument about how literature functions according to Johnson, and why

¹⁶ Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, op. cit., vol. 21, 198. Johnson makes a similar point when he writes, in his discussion of Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), that "the employment of allegorical persons always excites conviction of its own absurdity," xxiii.1205-1206. Traditionally, scholars have understood this comment as anti-allegorical. But Johnson is in fact restating what he says here, with the term "employment" closely resembling what he calls "real employment" and "material agency."

¹⁷ Johnson supports his notion of representational consistency in his criticism of *The Hind and the Panther* and *Lycidas*, taking the former to task for its "original incongruity" resulting from Dryden's partial conversion of human concerns to the beast fable form and the latter for being neither literal nor allegorical. See Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, op. cit., vol. 21, 175-7, 470.

an indiscriminate mixture of literal and allegorical representational modes (where both include material beings that can interact with one another) is undesirable. Johnson further distinguishes between two sorts of figurative representation, one used for actual but immaterial beings that “cannot be explained” to humans unless changed to material terms and the other used for unreal concepts that “have no real existence” but that are, for Johnson, unquestionably useful in literary texts.

By the time Johnson was writing *Life of Milton*, literary critics were almost without exception aware of the dangers of giving unrestricted agency to personifications. Doing so would compromise the integrity of the figure’s governing concept. In the above examples, allegorical persons are “suffered only to do their natural office, and retire” precisely because they personify preexisting concepts. Fame and Victory can only perform actions that further establish their relationships to the concepts they embody. Introducing Violence and Strength (as Æschylus does in *Prometheus*) or Death (as Euripides does in *Alcestis*) as “active persons” who exert their own will violates their roles as allegorical embodiments. Allegorical persons can only perform what Fletcher calls “fated actions,” which agree with the meaning of the figure’s particular concept.¹⁸ As Johnson writes in the context of Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock*, allegorical persons “may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions,” meaning that they cannot function independently of the concepts they embody.¹⁹ They do not possess agency, because concepts act through them. Their actions and speech are always already conditioned by their governing concepts.

¹⁸ Fletcher, *Allegory*, op. cit., 49.

¹⁹ Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, op. cit., vol. 23, 1205-6.

For Johnson, personification is a useful literary technique because it gives form to abstract concepts, effectively (to echo the language of *Life of Milton*) treating them as embodied agents as opposed to disembodied causes.²⁰ Personification unites the specific and the general, making it possible for the writer to home in on a single, identifiable person representing a purely mental concept. Johnson often uses personifications in many of his *Rambler* allegories, using those personifications to discuss virtues and vices and to teach lessons about social conduct and morality. And Johnson's *The Vision of Theodore* has many powerful scenes in which personified abstractions fight over the fates of those living on the Mountain of Existence. In one such instance, Reason and Religion try to save captives from the clutches of Habit, with varying degrees of success:

Some however there always were, who, when they found Habit prevailing over them, called upon Reason or Religion for assistance; each of them willingly came to the succour of her suppliant, but neither with the same strength, nor the same success. Habit, insolent with her power, would often presume to parley with Reason, and offer to loose some of her chains if the rest might remain. To this Reason, who was never certain of victory, frequently consented, but always found her concession destructive, and saw the captive led away by Habit to his former slavery. Religion never submitted to treaty, but held out her hand with certainty of conquest; and if the captive to whom she gave it did not quit his hold, always led him away in triumph, and placed him in the direct path to the Temple of Happiness, where Reason never failed to congratulate his deliverance, and encourage his adherence to that power to whose timely succour he was indebted for it.²¹

Here as throughout *The Vision of Theodore*, the abstractions are strikingly human-like. Reason and Religion each try their own strategies to free the captives from Habit, the former often parleying with Habit with little success and the latter simply leading the captives away to the Temple of Happiness. But if Johnson does indeed treat his

²⁰ See Johnston, "Johnson Personified," op. cit., 97-9.

²¹ Johnson, *Rasselas and Other Tales*, in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, op. cit., vol. 16, 207-8.

abstractions almost as persons, then what prevents him from running into the same problem that Milton does in *Paradise Lost*? The answer is that Johnson manages *The Vision of Theodore* so that the only character described as literal, Theodore himself, observes from a distance as the personifications interact with one another. He avoids attributing material agency to his personifications, refraining from giving them the ability to physically interact with literal characters or to manipulate the surrounding environment. In other words, Johnson spends the majority of *The Vision of Theodore* describing the actions performed by allegorical persons, but he also consistently maintains the distinction between the allegorical and the literal. The only interactions between Theodore and the allegorical persons are, appropriately, through conversation. Theodore and the personified abstractions can talk to one another, but ultimately inhabit two different planes of existence.

Johnson does not object to abstractions acting as persons *per se*. Indeed, in his *Rambler* allegories and *The Vision of Theodore*, he shows how they can be used to describe and discuss concepts that do not actually exist in the world. Johnson's problem with certain uses of personified abstractions arises when writers mix them with characters represented as literal. In *Life of Milton*, Johnson uses Sin and Death as examples of allegorical persons that act like real agents, arguing that Milton erred when portrayed them interacting with a literal character like Satan. Unlike Edmund Burke, who praises Milton's description of Death as a demonstration of the sublime's obscurity and uncertainty, Johnson criticizes Milton for breaking the allegory by ascribing material agency to Sin and Death.²² By having them pave a road between Hell and Earth, Milton

²² Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London, 1757), II.III.43-44. Jonathan Richardson and his son focus on how Milton's allegory of Sin and

disrupts their allegorical significance—following the ancient precedent of Æschylus and Euripides rather than looking to what contemporary readers would find absurd. He treats them like real persons who can exert influence on Satan’s physical surroundings and therefore as capable of more than personifying abstract concepts:

Milton’s allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portress of hell; but when they stop the journey of Satan, a journey described as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death should have shown the way to hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the passage by building a bridge, because the difficulty of Satan’s passage is described as real and sensible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative. The hell assigned to the rebellious spirits is described as not less local than the residence of man.²³

Johnson’s tone is striking. He focuses on what actions literal and allegorical persons should be “allowed” to perform, with their actions being conditioned by their ontological statuses as actual or virtual. The bridge built by Sin and Death “ought to be only figurative” because, as conceptual abstractions, Sin and Death should not be allowed to produce “real and sensible” changes to the environment. Unlike Satan’s journey from Hell to Eden, which Johnson insists should be literal, the bridge can have no real, material existence.²⁴

In his discussion of Sin and Death, Johnson combines his strictures on the proper accommodation of actual spirits and the literalization of virtual ideas. The allegory of Sin

Death paraphrases James I.15 in the Bible. See Richardson, *Explanatory notes and remarks on Milton’s Paradise Lost* (London, 1734), 71.

²³ Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, op. cit., vol. 21, 198.

²⁴ Detailed discussions of the ontology of Sin and Death can be found in Phillip J. Gallagher, “‘Real or Allegoric’: The Ontology of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 6 (1976): 317; Maureen Quilligan, *Milton’s Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 126; Stephen M. Fallon, “Milton’s Sin and Death: The Ontology of Allegory in *Paradise Lost*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 17 (2008): 329-350. These articles focus on whether or not Milton meant Sin and Death to be understood as real, while this article focuses primarily on how eighteenth-century writers read those personified abstractions.

and Death, encased within the literal narrative of *Paradise Lost*, features a partially accommodated spirit, Satan, physically interacting with two conceptual abstractions. Johnson makes two recommendations for how Milton could have reworked this scene. First, Milton should have made Satan into a purely physical being, putting his immaterial nature into fully material terms for practical, literary purposes, because the true immateriality of angels supplies no images for readers. Doing so would have avoided the inconsistencies that Milton often falls into when describing Satan, who is sometimes corporeal and sometimes “a mere spirit that can penetrate matter at pleasure.”²⁵ Johnson’s solution is perfectly in line with his view of the correct literary representation of immaterial, but real, spirits. Consider, for instance, Johnson’s defense of the fallen angels’ ability to work on the land to build Pandaemonium in Book I. As long as Milton commits to representing the angels as material beings, they should be allowed to exert influence on the land. Secondly, Milton should have kept his conceptual abstractions immaterial so that they cannot physically interact with either Satan (a mostly material being) or with the land (a material substance). By taking these courses of action, Milton could have included both the literal and the allegorical while maintaining a clear distinction between the two, as Johnson himself does in *The Vision of Theodore*. So, when Milton has Sin and Death work the land to build the bridge from Hell to Earth just as the angels mine the land to erect Pandaemonium, Johnson dismisses the labor as “too bulky for ideal architects,” meaning that their immaterial nature disqualifies them from performing such actions.²⁶ Personified abstractions should not be allowed to mix freely

²⁵ Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, op. cit., vol. 21, 196.

²⁶ Ibid., vol. 21, 198. See Milton, *Paradise Lost*, op. cit., X. 293-305.

with literal persons because they are “ideal”—that is, because they exist entirely in the mind.

Johnson calls for Milton to separate Sin and Death from Satan because *Paradise Lost* is not a relatively self-contained allegory like Johnson’s *The Vision of Theodore* or his *Rambler* allegories, but a predominantly literal poem that sometimes makes use of allegorical persons. Although *The Vision of Theodore* does include one character described as literal, the vast majority of the text describes a consistently allegorical scene on the Mountain of Existence, with ontologically similar beings interacting only with one another. The division between Theodore and the personified abstractions is stark, with the first studying and asking about the actions of the latter. And Johnson’s *Rambler* allegories are internally consistent to the point of isolating its personifications from the literal discourse of surrounding papers. No. 22, for instance, depicts the rivalry between Wit and Learning, two personified abstractions who regularly compete with each other in debates. The personifications “both had prejudices, which in some degree hindered their progress towards perfection, and left them open to attacks.”²⁷ Johnson eventually has Wit and Learning marry and become “the favourites of all the powers of heaven,”²⁸ demonstrating that people should aim to balance these two concepts in their everyday lives. Because literal characters are absent from the allegory, Johnson does not run the risk (as Milton does) of failing to distinguish between different levels of meaning.

The danger of mixing literal and allegorical modes of representation is not that readers will mistake allegorical persons for literal characters, but that writers will create absurdities by not properly separating out these personified abstractions that so clearly

²⁷ Johnson, *Rambler*, op. cit., vol. 3, No. 22 (2 June 1750), 123.

²⁸ Ibid., 125.

exist only in figurative terms. To put this another way, it is not that readers will be duped into believing the conceptual abstractions to be literal characters, but that conspicuous falsities will disrupt the reader's engagement with the narrative.²⁹ As Kames, points out, "in writing the allegory can easily be distinguished from the historical part: no person, for example, mistakes Virgil's Fame for a real being."³⁰ Whatever differences may exist between how Kames and Johnson discuss allegorical persons, they share confidence in the readers' abilities to distinguish between literal characters and personified abstractions in literary texts. (Kames contends that doing so is much harder in the case of paintings and images.) Johnson implies such a confidence when writing about how allegorical persons can shock readers with their absurdity if they are not separated from literal characters.

Like many of the analyses discussed in Chapter 4, Johnson's is driven by a series of questions concerning literary decorum. This is most apparent in his discussion of Sin and Death, where he writes about what sort of actions should be "allowed" for conceptual abstractions given their relationship to literal characters. What is the relationship between allegorical persons and literal characters? What kinds of actions should allegorical persons be allowed to perform? When does the writer's use of them become absurd or unnatural? How can writers use allegorical persons without suggesting that these figures are literal? The point is not that Johnson answers these questions exhaustively, but that the questions' increasing relevance to discussions of allegorical figures indicates a shift

²⁹ Knapp argues that treating personified abstractions as if they were "historical" or "real" risks the opposite effect, making literal characters seem as if they were imaginary. See Knapp, *Personification and the Sublime*, op. cit., 60. We see Kames and Johnson working through a slightly different problem: readers will be able to tell the difference between allegorical and literal persons, and the writer's failure to bring attention to this difference runs the risk of striking the readers as absurd or unnatural.

³⁰ Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (Edinburgh, 1762), vol. III, 130.

from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century. These questions would have been all but unintelligible within the context of medieval or Renaissance literature. In his discussions of allegorical persons in *Paradise Lost*, Johnson addresses not so much the viability of allegories as an artistic form relying, traditionally, on an overarching system of meaning, but questions about how bits and pieces of that artistic form can be used even within genres lacking that system of meaning.

Johnson's comments are far from anomalous. Dubos makes explicit the same distinction that remains implicit in Johnson's discussion. He distinguishes between allegorical compositions that include only allegorical persons and mixed allegories that contain both literal and allegorical persons (*personnages allegoriques*).³¹ For mixed allegorical compositions, according to Dubos, authors must not allow allegorical persons to function as "principal actors"; instead they should function minor characters that can exert only limited influence on the plot.³² And Kames writes that "allegorical beings should be confined within their own sphere; and never be admitted to mix in the principal action, nor to co-operate in retarding or advancing the catastrophe."³³ These critics tie allegorical persons' limited agency more explicitly than Johnson does to narrative structure, making the primary plotline the litmus test for distinguishing allegorical from literal characters. However, in the end it is important to understand these critics as participating in the same historical process as Johnson, as they all seek to evaluate how writers can successfully incorporate allegorical persons into predominantly literal texts.³⁴

³¹ Dubos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music*, vol. 1, 161-4.

³² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 178.

³³ Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, op. cit., vol. 3, 248.

³⁴ For some notable examples, see Joseph Spence, *Polymetis: or, an enquiry concerning the agreement between the works of the Roman poets, and the remains of the antient artists* (London, 1747), 312; John Ogilvie, *Poems on Several Subjects* (London, 1762), lxiii; and William Duff, *An Essay on Original Genius* (London, 1768), 172-6.

Johnson borrows the phrase “allegorical persons” from Addison’s *Spectator* papers,³⁵ but uses a different sort of logic to identify acceptable actions for those persons. Addison’s argument about how Milton should have separated allegorical from literal persons relies heavily on the poem’s genre. For Addison, the expectation that *Paradise Lost* needs to be a consistently literal narrative—in which only literal persons are “principal Actors”—comes from its close relationship to the epics of Homer and Virgil rather than to the fantastical allegories of Spenser and Ariosto.³⁶ The question of genre, so pivotal to Addison’s understanding of how Milton should have used the allegorical persons Sin and Death, is almost completely absent from Johnson’s discussion of the scene. For Johnson the expectation of literality comes from the text itself rather than from the genre to which *Paradise Lost* belongs: Milton himself presents Satan as a material and therefore real character that can change (and be changed by) his surroundings. Both Johnson and Addison believe personified concepts like Sin and Death to be fundamentally unreal and therefore as needing to be set off from literal characters in *Paradise Lost*, but use different rationales for justifying their understanding of *Paradise Lost* as a mimetic text.

What does the comparison between Johnson, Dubos, Kames, and Addison mean for reevaluating what happened to allegory during the eighteenth century? Despite differences between their arguments, the comparison demonstrates the centrality of those questions driving Johnson’s discussion as well as the periodical essays on allegory studied in Chapter 4—questions that revolve around literary decorum and how to properly distinguish between different modes of representation. Johnson, Addison,

³⁵ See *Spectator*, op. cit., Nos. 273 (12 January 1712), 297 (9 February 1712), 357 (19 April 1712).

³⁶ See *Spectator*, op. cit., No. 297 (9 February 1712).

Dubos, and Kames all discuss the possibility of encasing allegorical narratives within literal ones, so that an author can maintain probability while also taking advantage of the many uses of allegory. These authors, in their discussions of allegorical persons, conceptualize components of allegorical form (in this case, personified abstractions) apart from allegory. In so doing, they depart strikingly from earlier writers. As Kenneth Borris and Kelley point out, medieval and Renaissance writers regularly mix literal and allegorical modes of representation without the fear of shocking readers.³⁷ And John Steadman argues that in *Paradise Lost* “Milton’s mixture of literal and allegorical modes is a Renaissance epic convention,” suggesting that Milton is following a long history of epic writers who combine the literal and the allegorical without the sense of inconsistency which strikes Johnson, Addison, and others as inappropriate.³⁸ For Johnson and Addison, the mixture of literal and allegorical modes of representation runs the risk of turning away readers and disrupting their engagement with the narrative. From their critical statements we sense, if nothing else, the distance between their historical and literary moment and that of Milton two thirds of the way through the seventeenth century—a distance accompanied by important developments in the secularization of British society and culture, the aestheticization of traditionally religious modes of writing, and the increasingly powerful focus on literary decorum.

The critics I have cited demonstrate how eighteenth-century writers typically prioritize formal over theological considerations. In his discussion of angels and

³⁷ Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature*, op. cit., 31. Kelley also discusses the common mixture between literal character and allegorical figures in *Reinventing Allegory*, op. cit., 75.

³⁸ John Steadman, *The Lamb and the Elephant: Ideal Imitation and the Context of Renaissance Allegory* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1974), 96. Escobedo similarly contends that the general recognition of allegorical persons’ limited agency and the corresponding belief that allegorical figures need to be reined in are very uncommon during the English Renaissance. See Escobedo, “Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels,” op. cit., 787.

allegorical persons in *Paradise Lost*, Johnson is not particularly interested in getting writers to follow the purported rules of literature or even in the true immateriality of spirits. On the contrary, he is invested in making case-by-case judgments about how readers would react to certain moments in the text and how writers might change or manage those reactions. He focuses on how certain artistic choices might, to use Johnson's own word again, "shock" readers and thereby take their attention away from the narrative. His argument for representational consistency is, thus, fundamentally reader-oriented rather than rule-oriented. In his argument that "no precedent can justify absurdity," Johnson pithily suggests that it is not enough for eighteenth-century authors to follow earlier uses of allegorical persons by, for instance, Æschylus and Euripides. Writers must balance the authority of classic authors with the ever-changing responses of their readers. Johnson uses this focus on readers to support his argument that authors must distinguish not only between literal and figurative representation, but between different sorts of figurative representation (that of spirits and that of allegorical persons). This second distinction was rarely made by medieval and Renaissance writers.³⁹

Johnson conceptualizes allegory as both genre and mode, and approaches each of these uses of allegory with their own set of rules. Generic allegory is characterized by consistency. Johnson's *The Vision of Theodore*, *Rambler* allegories, and praise for allegories such as Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Pope's "The Temple of Fame" sufficiently demonstrate his willing to perform within the genre as well as his general

³⁹ Borris, for instance, uses "allegory" and "accommodation" in conjunction with one another, suggesting that Renaissance writers made no consistent distinction between the two, as Johnson does in his discussion of *Paradise Lost*, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature*, op. cit., 212, 250.

approval of that genre.⁴⁰ In his discussion of allegorical persons in *Paradise Lost*, however, his focus is on how writers should properly manage allegory as a mode of writing when the inclusion of allegorical components is not justified by the text's genre alone. Scholars who interpret Johnson's comments on allegorical persons as a rejection of allegory are guilty of misidentifying his specific points about the proper use of the allegorical mode as generalizations about the allegorical genre.

Johnson conceived of *Paradise Lost* as above all a literary text that, as such, Milton should have kept internally consistent even if doing so would not have been wholly consistent with his religious beliefs. Milton should have maintained the distinction between allegorical persons like Sin and Death and literal persons that interact with the material world. It would be a mistake, however, to understand this analytical separation as evidence of Johnson's, or his age's, animus against allegory. In Johnson's discussion of allegorical persons, on the contrary, we find a particularly powerful call for authors to distinguish between different modes of representation that is bolstered by an unwavering commitment to representational consistency. We also find an especially illuminating example of an eighteenth-century critic focusing on readers' expected responses to texts in order to judge what are and what are not appropriate methods of representation. The increasing eighteenth-century concern with the way readers receive and process literature entails the development of the modern theory of the aesthetic, and puts a great deal of pressure on the allegorical form.

⁴⁰ In *Life of Pope*, Johnson writes that in "The Temple of Fame" Pope's "allegory is very skilfully continued," suggesting that there is nothing wrong with the allegory as long as it remains consistent, *Lives of the Poets*, op. cit., xxiii. 1196. Boswell also reports that Johnson calls *The Pilgrim's Progress* one of the only books that readers ever wished longer. See Boswell, "Life of Johnson," together with "Journal of a tour to the Hebrides" and Johnson's "Diary of a journey into North Wales," op. cit., I. 72; Boswell, I. 192.

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